



**Evaluation of the Get Fair campaign**

**Final Report**

December 2009

*With funding and support from*



Newton Hall  
Newton  
Cambridge CB22 7ZE  
Tel: (01223) 871551  
Fax: (01223) 871303  
[cpc@campolco.co.uk](mailto:cpc@campolco.co.uk)

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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### *Get Fair formation and activities*

1. The wish to develop stronger collaboration between third sector organisations working on UK poverty goes back quite some time. Inspired by the success of the 2005 Make Poverty History campaign, poverty groups started thinking about launching a Make *UK* Poverty History campaign, in particular following the December 2006 National Poverty Hearing.
2. The Get Fair campaign, a co-ordinated umbrella mobilisation of third sector organisations, was launched in May 2008. The main objectives of the campaign were to encourage individuals to take action on UK poverty and encourage more coordinated lobbying by Get Fair coalition members. The campaign took as its starting point earlier research by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) showing that “*the public are currently a long way from supporting an anti-UK poverty agenda*”.
3. The Get Fair campaign was not the only force working towards getting poverty higher on the (political) agenda in 2008 and 2009. Get Fair operated alongside the End Child Poverty campaign and in a wider context of cross-party political support for the UK Government’s commitment on child poverty. The recession similarly encouraged increased political (and public) attention for poverty issues.

The main Get Fair activities during 2008-2009 were:

May 2008	Parliamentary launch of Get Fair
September 2008	Launch of Get Fair website
October 2008	End Child Poverty rally (organised by End Child Poverty and supported by Get Fair)
November 2008	Get Fair open letter to party leaders
January 2009	Scottish launch of Get Fair
February 2009	Poverty & Homelessness Action Week (PHAW)
April 2009	Preparatory sessions for June 2009 lobby
June 2009	Lobby of MPs by constituency activists

### *Achievements*

4. Get Fair can boast significant achievements in terms of its reach:
  - The campaign secured a membership of more than 60 third sector organisations, reflecting the diversity of the sector and including key players such as Oxfam, Help the Aged, Shelter and Save the Children. The coalition went beyond traditional poverty groups and also included housing and human rights charities and charities supporting children and older people;
  - Get Fair reached out to close to 300 British policy-makers, including at least 160 MPs and more than 120 MSPs – these results are similar to the reach of other fairly small advocacy initiatives undertaken by individual third sector organisations;
  - The campaign website received visits from more than 5,500 unique visitors and more than 750 individuals registered their email address on the website; and,
  - More than 4,000 individuals participated in various Get Fair activities, in particular the January 2009 PHAW initiative and to a lesser extent the June 2009 constituency lobby.
  
5. Similarly, Get Fair can boast significant success in terms of impacts:
  - Get Fair led to closer collaboration between individual third sector organisations. In some cases, Get Fair member organisations also reported an increase in their membership or access to senior politicians who would have been beyond their reach without Get Fair;
  - Reactions from politicians to the June 2009 constituency based lobby varied. Some lobbies were seen as preaching to the converted but MPs commented that the lobby reminded them about the importance of UK poverty and showed that there was a constituency base for action on UK poverty. One MP raised Get Fair in Prime Minister's question time following the lobby visit. Examples of practical impacts of the lobby are rare, but in a couple of instances an MP agreed to follow up on issues raised, for example by getting in touch with a local councillor; and,
  - By and large, Get Fair activists had already been committed to fighting UK poverty and felt confirmed in their views, but hardly anyone said that there had been no impacts at all. Large proportions were now more likely to pay attention to what politicians were saying or were more likely to email or write to a politician. Encouragingly, a small proportion indicated that they were now less likely to think that poor people partially had themselves to blame. Despite years of campaigning experience, activists still felt re-energised by the lobby:

*“I am used to lobbying but I am always very stimulated by the contact with policy-makers. It encourages you to do things”*

### *Challenges*

6. For most Get Fair member organisations, involvement was limited to sharing information about the Get Fair campaign with their own supporters, members or partners. The main Get Fair activities with a public engagement component, the January 2009 PHAW event and the June 2009 constituency based lobby, were coordinated and managed mainly by a few faith-based organisations.
7. Get Fair suffered from a persistent lack of real ownership of the campaign beyond a core group of mainly faith-based organisations. There were a number of reasons for this:
  - The internal debate early on whether or not Get Fair should run simultaneously with End Child Poverty and the slow Get Fair start-up process affected the enthusiasm of partners;
  - Resource constraints meant that not enough time and efforts could be put in the partnership management process. There was no campaign manager;
  - A vicious circle was created: active involvement in the grassroots activities mainly came from a limited number of faith-based organisations, which led people to see Get Fair mainly as faith-based and further discouraged active involvement by other groups – this was however not true for all Get Fair member organisations and some non-faith groups were actively involved;
  - Resource constraints created a second vicious circle: member organisations did not feel a sufficiently strong sense of ownership and enthusiasm for the campaign to commit resources to it and without additional resources it was difficult to invest sufficient time in nurturing the membership; and,
  - The very active involvement of Church Action on Poverty, de facto acting as campaign manager – often as a direct result of work being placed with CAP by the Get Fair coalition – allowed the rest of the steering group “to become complacent”. The steering group also suffered from lack of continuity and frequent changes in membership. This effectively left Get Fair without strong leadership. Get Fair (recently) established a tighter Executive Group of 5 people and started moving away from being a single focus campaign towards offering a campaigning ‘space’ for coalition members. Members of the Executive Group feel that this has given a clearer focus for decision-making and leadership.

8. Mobilisation of activists proved difficult. Although most Get Fair member organisations have supporters, these supporters are not usually asked to engage in the kind of local activities Get Fair modelled itself on: grassroots activity, which is loosely inspired on one central campaign message but lets individual activists choose the type of activity and specific messages they wish to focus on. The supporters of other organisations are sometimes asked to participate in advocacy efforts, but the campaign asks tend to be more specific and controlled. In other instances, supporters are not asked to support any advocacy efforts: they rather engage in local community projects or support the organisation financially.

*Lessons learnt*

9. The main reasons for organisations to sign up to the campaign were:
- Support for the principles of what the Get Fair campaign stands for;
  - A clear link between UK poverty and the organisation's own remit;
  - Belief that joining forces must be more effective; and,
  - A desire to change people's perceptions of their organisation.
10. The widest involvement of the Get Fair membership was reached when Get Fair decided to write an open letter to the three party leaders, which was signed by almost 30 third sector Chief Executives. More generally, involvement of member organisations was wider in policy advocacy at the *national* level and less pronounced in *grassroot* events (PHAW and the constituency based lobby).
11. In its attempt to link national policy asks to local priorities and grassroots activity, Get Fair at times risked falling between the national and the local level and achieving neither: local activists do not like being pushed into focusing on national issues they feel are irrelevant or too complicated; member organisations feel that Get Fair failed to reach the (national) debate that really matters to politicians. Linked to this is the challenge devolution poses to campaigns and the need to engage with policy-makers at local, regional and national level – including both the devolved administrations and the UK level.

12. Activists, even committed ones, need support and guidance. There is always a risk that they will not bother in the end with the lobby, just opt for an email instead of the face-to-face contact or just lobby on their own instead of trying to get others involved. People with wider pre-existing networks of organisational contacts tend to be both more active and more effective in getting others involved in the lobby. The briefing sessions organised in advance of the lobby went some distance towards providing this support.
13. Get Fair messaging was seen as “*worthy and dull*” and many were unclear as to exactly what was being asked – of politicians, of individual activists and of member organisations. Somewhat paradoxically, Get Fair policy asks get across as both too vague and too technical. A challenge in this context has been the tension between the Get Fair coalition as a brand and member organisations’ own brands.

#### *Conclusions*

14. Despite challenges in terms of securing more active involvement of the wider Get Fair membership, Get Fair has built up momentum over the past 18 months and a clear majority of activists and Get Fair member organisations were likely to engage in Get Fair in the future – which pleads for a continuation of the campaign.
15. Earlier JRF research has highlighted the lack of funding for public awareness building activities and funders would do well to note that the Get Fair campaign (i) is unique in its ambition to unite a divided sector and focus on challenging public opinion; (ii) has delivered modest but real impacts despite significant challenges; and, crucially, (iii) has shown a proven willingness to critically assess and reinvent itself since the May 2008 launch, including through the research findings of this evaluation.
16. Future coalitions and campaigns should draw lessons in particular in terms of the importance of nurturing the coalition membership.
17. The core challenge for the Get Fair coalition itself is to break through the vicious circle of lack of ownership among its coalition membership. This requires:

- Developing a clearer strategic vision as to what is expected of the Get Fair membership and, equally importantly, how the overall Get Fair campaign can relate and add value to what individual member organisations are doing. Investing heavily in nurturing the membership remains crucial;
- Addressing the tension between on the one hand the explicit ambition of Get Fair to challenge public opinion and encourage local activism and on the other hand Get Fair member organisations' wish to engage in national policy advocacy. There is no easy answer to this tension. If a coalition is to be successful, it absolutely needs to start from coalition members' own priorities, which in the case of many Get Fair partners is national policy advocacy. However, the uniqueness of Get Fair lies precisely its focus on challenging public opinion. At the very least, there needs to be a discussion with the wider partnership as to (i) whether or not Get Fair continues to aim for an impact on public opinion and, if so, (ii) whether the grassroots activism approach is the way forward; and,
- A full time campaign manager is a necessity – the campaign manager role should focus on coordinating and facilitating implementation of the decisions made by the Get Fair coalition. A facilitative leadership style – suggesting initiatives and creating opportunities but leaving agenda-setting and prioritisation up to the wider membership – would be ideal.

#### *Background about the research*

18. The research methodology consisted of:

- Telephone interviews with Get Fair members (15), Get Fair activists (10) and MPs (4);
- An online survey of recipients of Get Fair e-alerts (39 responses); analysis of Get Fair media coverage; and,
- Analysis of feedback from Poverty and Homelessness Action Week organisers (78) and participants (80) and constituency lobby organisers and participants (14).

# 1. INTRODUCTION

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## *Background to the Get Fair campaign*

- 1.1. The wish to develop stronger partnership working between third sector organisations working on UK poverty goes back quite some time. On December 6<sup>th</sup> 2006 more than 300 people from all over the UK gathered in London for a National Poverty Hearing, an event where people living on low income told about their experience of poverty. Inspired by the successful 2005 ‘Make Poverty History’ campaign, National Poverty Hearing participants starting thinking about launching a ‘Make UK Poverty History’ campaign.
- 1.2. Following the National Poverty Hearing, the third sector undertook a number of activities to work towards a UK poverty coalition, in particular:
  - A consultation among third sector organisations asking what people felt were the three most important things the Government could do about UK poverty;
  - Analysis of these responses by Peter Ambrose, Visiting Professor at Brighton University and Associate of the Zacchaeus 2000 Trust – this analysis suggested that there were three broad priorities: income, housing and benefits; and,
  - A meeting of about 30 Chief Executives of third sector organisations in the summer of 2007, chaired by Save the Children and aimed at establishing a plan of action towards a UK poverty coalition.
- 1.3. The summer 2007 meeting presented the sector with a dilemma: children charities had recently launched an End Child Poverty campaign and, having already secured funding for this campaign, suggested that End Child Poverty should be prioritised and that any other national UK poverty campaign should wait. Other organisations, in particular faith-based groups, feared that a unique opportunity would be missed if the momentum created by the National Poverty Hearing was allowed to slip away. In the end, the ‘Get Fair’ campaign was launched in May 2008 and operated parallel to the End Child Poverty campaign.

1.4. The Get Fair campaign is a co-ordinated umbrella mobilisation of more than 60 voluntary and community sector organisations. The main aims of the campaign are:

- To challenge UK poverty with a view to positively changing public attitudes – the campaign took as its starting point research by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) that “*the public are currently a long way from supporting an anti-UK poverty agenda. They are not aware of the problem and do not believe that it is a legitimate issue*”; and,
- To ensure that all major political parties deliver on their existing commitment to end child poverty by 2020 and extend this goal to ending poverty across all generations.

1.5. The Get Fair campaign further specified its aim relating to changing public attitudes:

- Initially, the Get Fair campaign set itself a target of encouraging at least 100,000 individuals to take action on UK poverty. The figure of 100,000 was dropped fairly early on in the campaign<sup>1</sup>. Still, the target provides a useful starting point for this impact assessment: Get Fair clearly defined the public engagement component of its campaign in terms of individuals’ increased willingness to take action on UK poverty. A specific target was introduced for the June 2009 Get Fair constituency-based lobby: Get Fair aimed to *encourage at least 150 constituencies to engage directly with the campaign*;
- The Get Fair campaign also aimed to encourage “*greater and more informed public debate about the reality of UK poverty within both national and regional/local media, including creating more positive and empathetic public images of people in the UK*”. During the later stages of the campaign, the focus shifted away from influencing media outputs. This impact assessment will look at media impacts, however taking into account this change in focus.

1.6. Get Fair also aimed to encourage “*more coordinated lobbying by Get Fair member organisations, achieving significantly increased impact on MPs and political parties*”.

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<sup>1</sup> Following the mid-term review it became apparent that the Get Fair steering group had to scale down its public engagement ambition given the amount of time and resources available to the campaign.

- 1.7. As the October 2008 baseline report already pointed out, the Get Fair was not the only force working towards getting poverty higher on the (political) agenda. As mentioned earlier, Get Fair was launched alongside the End Child Poverty campaign. Get Fair operated in a wider context of cross-party political support for the UK Government's commitment to halve child poverty by 2010 and end it by 2020. Fairness terminology already featured highly in the political discourse of Labour and Liberal Democrat politicians and the Conservatives had already started raising the poverty and social justice stakes.
- 1.8. The economic turmoil and recession similarly encouraged increased political (and public) attention for poverty issues, including for example increased media coverage of fuel poverty in the context of the rising fuel prices in 2008 as well as concerns about bankers' bonuses entering political discussions.

*Background to this evaluation*

- 1.9. The objectives of the evaluation were three-fold:
- To measure and assess the impact of the campaign;
  - To facilitate a learning process around 'what works' in the campaign; and,
  - To assess how the campaign has added value to the existing efforts of member organisations.
- 1.10. The next chapters look in detail at the impacts of the Get Fair campaign to date, including impacts on (i) the third sector, (ii) politicians and policy-makers and (iii) the media and the wider public. Chapter 3 aims to draw a number of lessons from the Get Fair campaign to inform future coalition campaign efforts around UK poverty. More details about the research methodology and about the challenge of assessing campaigning impacts can be found in Annex A.

## 2. IMPACTS ON THIRD SECTOR ORGANISATIONS

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### 2.1. Who has been reached?

2.1.1. Get Fair has succeeded in building a wide and diverse coalition of 63 third sector organisations (Table 2.1.):

- The coalition goes beyond traditional ‘poverty’ groups and also includes housing and human rights charities and charities supporting children and older people. The Get Fair membership includes a range of different types of organisations, including campaigning, service delivery and membership (second tier) organisations.
- Most members (6 in 10) are small, but a significant number of medium-sized and large organisations have signed up, including key players such as Oxfam, Save the Children and Help the Aged.
- In terms of geographical reach, the campaign is mainly strong among London-based organisations (36 members) and in Scotland (18 members). Its reach across the English regions and in Wales and Scotland is more limited, but some Get Fair partners cover the whole of England, England and Wales or the whole of the UK.
- There is a strong faith element in the campaign. At least 14 organisations (or one in five) have a faith element, in all but three cases Christian-based<sup>2</sup>.

Table 2.1: Overview of Get Fair membership (August 2009)

Type of organisation	Campaign	15	24%
	Faith based	9	14%
	Membership	17	27%
	Service delivery	14	22%
	Multifunction	8	13%
	<i>Total</i>	63	
Size of organisation	Large	12	19%
	Medium	12	19%
	Small	38	61%
	<i>Total</i>	62	

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<sup>2</sup> This is only partially reflected in the overview table as some faith-based organisations were classified for example as campaign organisation or as service-delivery organisation.

Target audience	Age	8	13%
	Generic poverty	14	22%
	Housing	14	22%
	Human rights	14	22%
	Not poverty	13	21%
	<i>Total</i>	63	

Source: Differentiation of the current membership suggested by the Get Fair steering group and CPC calculations.

Note: Not all organisations were classified across all five indicators, which explains why the totals do not always add up to 63.

2.1.2. The number of coalition members has remained fairly stable over time: only 5 additional members joined since the evaluation baseline in September 2008. There has not been an active campaign to engage additional organisations after the initial launch; a significant proportion of members had already committed to Get Fair before the actual launch of the campaign. Get Fair steering group members were each given a target number of organisations to recruit, linked to their own organisational remit or focus but the success of this has been mixed: due to resource constraints, some steering group members seem to have mainly used email alerts to recruit new organisations, not necessarily following up after the initial email was sent – as opposed to proactively ‘selling’ the campaign to potential new members.

2.1.3. As reported in the October 2008 baseline report, organisations signed up to the Get Fair campaign for a number of reasons:

- Support for the principles of what the Get Fair campaign stands for (doing something about UK poverty);
- A fit between the issue of UK poverty and the organisation’s own remit, priorities or ethos. In many cases organisations initially hoped that the Get Fair campaign would help them further their own, often more specific aims and objectives, for example focusing on a specific target group or policy ask. In one or two cases organisations had not previously worked or campaigned on poverty but they had seen the effects of poverty among the people they work with and therefore involvement seemed a logical next step;
- Belief that joining forces must be more effective – though mainly as a matter of principle; only one organisation referred to practical scope for collaboration including for example the potential for economies of scale by pooling resources; and,

- A significant minority of organisations explained that they had also joined the campaign hoping to change people’s perceptions of their organisation/members or increase the organisation’s profile. One interviewee commented that sending out Get Fair information to his stakeholders was not just about telling people about Get Fair but also about showing stakeholders that their organisations was actively involved in a national campaign on UK poverty.

2.1.4. Almost entirely absent were passionate commentaries that this was finally a campaign that was going to make a difference to poverty in the UK. Instead, people commented laconically that it just “*seemed like a good idea*”. A couple of organisations commented that they might at some point have had second thoughts about their involvement or even internal discussions about discontinuing their involvement.

2.1.5. Anecdotal evidence suggests that a small number of organisations approached by Get Fair declined membership. There were a number of reasons for this including resource constraints, a general uncertainty as to how the campaign was evolving or in isolated cases a strategic choice to become a member of End Child Poverty instead.

2.1.6. It is difficult to benchmark the size of the Get Fair coalition. Organisational membership of the different national anti-poverty coalitions in the UK ranges from about 25 to several hundreds. Membership of campaign-based coalitions similarly ranges quite widely: for example, the Fair Pay Network counts 16 members, the Still Human Still Here coalition 39 and the End Child Poverty coalition more than 150. No direct comparison is possible but Get Fair appears to have secured a respectable reach. However, unlike the End Child Poverty and Fair Pay Network coalitions, trade unions are missing from the Get Fair membership.

## **2.2. To what extent have member organisations been involved?**

### *Level of involvement*

2.2.1. The level of involvement of Get Fair members in the campaign has varied, but has remained fairly limited for a large proportion of the membership:

more than 6 in 10 were considered (by the Get Fair steering group<sup>3</sup>) to be less actively involved in the campaign. Only about one in five of the large or medium-sized organisations were considered to be very actively involved; the figure was even lower among the smaller organisation with only 15% being very active in the campaign.

- 2.2.2. Encouragingly, one in seven of Get Fair members who were already involved with the campaign at the baseline stage (summer of 2008) were considered to have become more involved since. Only one member was considered to have become less involved. Faith-based organisations were among the most active Get Fair supporters: over half of the organisations that were quite or very actively involved are faith-based. About a quarter of quite or very actively involved organisations were Scottish.

**Table 2.2: Level of involvement of Get Fair members**

	August 2009		Summer 2008	
	No.	%	No.	%
Very active	11	17%	8	14%
Quite active	12	19%	9	16%
Less active	40	63%	40	70%
<i>Total</i>	63		57	

Source: Differentiation of the current membership suggested by the Get Fair steering group and CPC calculations.

#### *Nature of involvement*

- 2.2.3. The timeline below (Box 2.1) provides an overview of campaign activity. It is not intended to be exhaustive but to illustrate the type of activity carried out under the Get Fair banner over the last 18 months.

#### **Box 2.1: Timeline of the Get Fair campaign**

<sup>3</sup> These paragraphs only offer an initial and partial assessment of involvement, based on the steering group's own direct interaction with the Get Fair membership. Some Get Fair-inspired activity by the membership would have been invisible to the steering group, resulting in an underestimation of member involvement. Conversely, however, interviews with members also indicated that members classed as active by the steering group did not always live up to this classification.

May 2008 – Get Fair coalition members held a meeting in Parliament with the Minister and Opposition front bench teams for Work & Pensions, chaired by journalist Polly Toynbee.

September 2008 – The Get Fair website was launched and a YouGov poll on public attitudes to poverty in the UK was published.

October 2008 – The End Child Poverty rally in Trafalgar Square where an estimated 10,000 people marched to end child poverty.

November 2008 – The Get Fair Open letter to Prime Minister Gordon Brown, Leader of the Conservative Party David Cameron and Leader of the Liberal Democrats Nick Glegg was published (a response was received from Gordon Brown in December 2008 and Nick Clegg in January 2009).

January 2009 – The Scottish launch of the Get Fair campaign took place in the Scottish Parliament, hosted by Bill Wilson MSP. 18 MSPs signed the Scottish poverty pledge during the event, and a further 50 signed later (including the First Minister of Scotland Alec Salmond and Leader of the Scottish Liberal Democrats Tavish Scott).

February 2009 – Get Fair supported Poverty and Homelessness Action Week.

April 2009 – Briefing sessions were held for organisations and individuals interested to participate in the constituency lobby.

June 2009 – MPs were lobbied by Get Fair activists in their constituencies. A poverty pledge was published for MPs to sign<sup>4</sup>.

July 2009 – Representatives from Get Fair met the Secretary of State and Shadow Ministers for Work and Pensions in short succession.

- 2.2.4. For most (small) organisations, Get Fair activity was limited to sharing information about the campaign with their members and supporters. They did this by publicising the campaign on their website or in their newsletters or by issuing press releases. At least one third of partner organisations referred to Get Fair on their websites<sup>5</sup>, ranging from a one-line reference to their Get Fair membership or a single press release supporting the Get Fair campaign launch to a link to the Get Fair campaign on the home page or a fairly substantial description of Get Fair on the website's 'what we do' or 'get involved' sections. Six organisations give this type of more substantial information about Get Fair; 3 include a link to Get Fair on their home pages. For example, Refugee Action included Get Fair as one of their campaigns in their 'campaigning' section and Young Christian Workers adopted Get Fair as their main campaign, added a link to Get Fair on their home page and

<sup>4</sup> "I undertake to use, or support the use, of all policy powers available to parliament to meet poverty targets and include concrete measures in my party manifesto to achieve a lasting reduction in poverty in the UK"

<sup>5</sup> This estimate is based on a brief scan of the websites of all Get Fair partner organisations (who have a website) at the time of the final evaluation. Twenty organisations were found to have included information about Get Fair on their website. It is possible that other organisations featured Get Fair on their website but have removed the reference since. A comprehensive scan of all Internet pages was outside the scope of this evaluation so it is also possible that a limited number of references to Get Fair were not picked up.

included a substantial description of the campaign. In most cases, Get Fair pops up a number of times on the website but in a less prominent location – in a number of different press releases or online alerts. An interesting example is Oxfam’s UK poverty blog which featured the personal story and journey of a Get Fair activist who got involve in the June 2009 constituency lobby; another is YMCA’s RSS newsfeed at the time of the Get Fair media launch.

- 2.2.5. Many coalition members recalled passing information about Get Fair to their membership via email alerts or in a regular newsletter. About one in two of the Get Fair members who were interviewed had referenced Get Fair in their email alerts to their supporters, members or partners. However, only in a limited number of cases had this been regular updates on the campaign activity.
- 2.2.6. A handful of member organisations contributed financially to the campaign with contributions ranging from £1,000 to £30,000.
- 2.2.7. Some small organisations, specifically faith-based organisations, had stronger links with local community groups and in places had significant success in mobilising local organisations and individuals to get involved in Get Fair activity, in particular the January 2009 Poverty and Homelessness Action Week and the June 2009 constituency-based lobby. Poverty and Homelessness Action Week was run by and large by three Get Fair members (Church Action on Poverty (CAP), Housing Justice and Scottish Churches Housing Action). In this context, it is important to note that Action Week had already been organised in 2008 (prior to the Get Fair campaign) and that stakeholders generally felt that Poverty and Action Homelessness Week 2009 would also have taken place without Get Fair – as such, it cannot be considered additional. The organisation of the June 2009 constituency lobby was similarly mainly in the hands of a limited number of faith-based organisations, in particular CAP, but a limited number of other organisations were involved in promoting the lobby on their website or in newsletters and in organising the 12 briefing sessions. Unlike Poverty and Homelessness Action Week, the June 2009 constituency based lobby would not have taken place without Get Fair.

2.2.8. Key coalition activities aimed at reaching out to the policy-makers have been the following:

- The open letter sent to the party leaders was signed by 27 chief executives of member organisations. The fact that Get Fair managed to bring such a large number of organisations together to lobby the government on UK poverty was seen as an important achievement;
- The January 2009 launch of the Get Fair campaign in the Scottish Parliament was actively supported by 9 coalition members; and,
- A limited number of coalition members participated in the meeting with the Minister and opposition front bench teams.

2.2.9. In addition to the above, individual coalition members have undertaken other additional activities to support Get Fair:

- Church Urban Forum together with CAP had a Get Fair stall at the Green Belt (Christian festival) over the September 2008 bank holiday weekend;
- Church Urban Forum used Get Fair messaging when they organised their annual conference in December 2008, which was themed around poverty and inequality;
- Faith in the Community Scotland produced a leaflet for the Get Fair coalition about poverty in Scotland which was distributed to all MSPs;
- Citizen's Advice Scotland together with the Get Fair coalition organised and contributed to the costs of the Scottish Get Fair launch in January 2009. Through their networks, they invited local groups to attend the launch and recruited local people with experiences of poverty to tell their stories;
- Young Christian Workers built up their 2009 activity and messaging to their members around Get Fair and adopted Get Fair as their main campaign aim. As a part of this, they printed 3,000 postcards to be distributed to their member organisations (80 organisations working directly with young people) which are designed to be sent to politicians by young people. Their key leader training of 18 people to date has also happened under the Get Fair banner. A local MP in Manchester came to see a group of young people to talk about poverty; and,
- Get Fair campaign messaging will feature heavily in BASSAC's annual national conference in March 2010.

## 2.3. What have been the impacts?

2.3.1. The Get Fair coalition has provided a setting where diverse organisations from grassroots community organisations, faith groups and national umbrella organisations can come together and represent a united front and voice against poverty in the UK. The coalition has been successful in attracting a significant number of diverse partners across the third sector and impacted on member organisations and the sector more widely in a number of ways:

- Most organisations interviewed suggested that the key impact of Get Fair coalition to them had been its role in bringing together organisations that had not previously worked together, generating a forum for discussion. Several of the partner organisations interviewed indicated that the cooperation will continue. One service provider highlighted that through Get Fair they had become involved with church organisations for the first time;
- Get Fair has enhanced coalition members' awareness of each other's remit and capabilities, leading to wider collaboration via discussions on how to add value to existing activity, pull resources and intelligence to mutual benefit, and plan where and how they can work together. Several organisations have been in talks with some of their Get Fair partner organisations to develop joint work adjacent to the campaign;
- In several occasions senior politicians and policy makers have invited member organisations for subsequent meetings to discuss issues. A number of the partner organisations interviewed indicated that they would not have been able to secure a meeting with senior politicians or policy makers without Get Fair;
- There has been an increase in the supporter base for at least one organisation as a direct consequence of Get Fair – one organisation commented that they increased their supporter base by 7-8% while recruiting supporters to the Get Fair campaign;
- Many of the individuals we spoke to acknowledged that they had not been very involved but hoped to contribute more in the future. Participation in coalition activity has generated an appetite to 'do more' and work together in the future, particularly in the activities aimed at influencing policy making. Several individuals suggested the importance of a 'common voice' for the sector when lobbying the major parties ahead of the national election in 2010; and,
- Get Fair linking national campaigners and local activists has been particularly beneficial, although limited. Involvement of local groups in various Get Fair activities, specifically the constituency lobby but also Poverty and Homelessness Action Week was seen to have built a level of capacity at the grassroots level, in preparation for the next national election.

- 2.3.2. Sector collaboration at the regional and local level has been more limited. This will be discussed in more detail later in the report (5.2 Working in coalition).

### 3. IMPACTS ON POLICY-MAKERS

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#### 3.1. Who has been reached?

3.1.1. At national level, Get Fair engaged face-to-face with about a dozen senior politicians:

- Get Fair organised a series of Chatham House Rule meetings including a March 2008 meeting with 5 senior Conservatives; two meetings with a senior Labour figure (June 2008 and July 2009) and a meeting with a senior Liberal Democratic figure (June 2008);
- Stephen Timms MP, Minister of State for Work and Pensions; Andrew Selous MP, Shadow Minister for Work and Pensions; and Danny Alexander MP, Liberal Democrat Shadow Secretary of State for Work and Pensions attended and spoke at the parliamentary launch of the Get Fair campaign in May 2008; and,
- John Battle MP, Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on poverty attended and spoke at the parliamentary launch in May 2008;

3.1.2. Get Fair collaborated closely with John Battle MP to introduce an Early Day Motion (EDM) on Get Fair in the House of Commons. The EDM on the ‘Get Fair Coalition and Poverty in the UK’<sup>6</sup> was introduced in May 2009; by the end of August 2009 83 MPs had signed the EDM. This represents roughly one in eight of all MPs. It is difficult to assess this figure but a glance at other EDMs in the current parliamentary session (2008-2009) can offer some broad benchmarking indications. The number of signatures to EDMs varies significantly from as little as 1 to more than 300 with an average number of signatories of 41. Twelve<sup>7</sup> other EDM relating to UK poverty have so far been introduced in 2008-2009, mostly relating to child poverty or fuel poverty. The number of signatories to these other UK poverty EDMs range

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<sup>6</sup> The Early Day Motion reads: “*That this House believes that as the fifth largest economy in the world it is unacceptable that 12.8 million people, 1 in 5 of the population, are living in poverty in the UK; further believes that with the economy in recession and rising unemployment, the Government must commit to further measures to protect the poorest in society; and supports calls by the Get Fair Coalition of charities, faith and community groups for the Government to increase levels of income to a minimum living standard for a lasting reduction in poverty in the UK*”.

<sup>7</sup> There have been thirteen EDMs but one was suspended.

from just less than 30 to just over 200. The average number of signatories is 87 – or roughly equivalent to the reach of the Get Fair EDM.

- 3.1.3. The Scottish launch of the Get Fair campaign was attended by 18 MSPs. They all signed the Get Fair Poverty Pledge; a further 50 MSPs, including Alex Salmon and Tavish Scott, signed this Poverty Pledge at a later stage. The Scottish Get Fair campaign designed a Get Fair handbook discussing the different aspects of poverty which was sent to all 129 MSPs.
- 3.1.4. An open letter was sent to the leaders of the three main parties signed by the Chief Executives of 27 Get Fair member organisations. The letter was calling on the Government, with cross party support, to launch a UK Economic Recovery Plan to invest in housing, energy efficiency, job creation and income protection measures for the most vulnerable, combined with measures to prevent irresponsible lenders and energy companies profiting at the expense of their poorest customers.
- 3.1.5. The Get Fair website offered individual Get Fair supporters an online facility to contact their local MPs to sign the Poverty Pledge and to demonstrate their commitment to the campaign asks. A total of 146 MPs were contacted through this online facility. The vast majority of MPs (110 or 75%) were only contacted by one Get Fair supporter; 25 MPs (17%) were contacted by two Get Fair supporters and 11 MPs (8%) were contacted by three or more Get Fair supporters – Patricia Hewitt MP and Kate Hoey MP were the MPs contacted by the highest number of Get Fair supporters (5 each).
- 3.1.6. The Get Fair campaign also organised a UK-wide constituency lobby, whereby MPs were visited by local activists. The aim of the Get Fair constituency lobby was to challenge MPs across the country to demonstrate their commitment to the UK poverty agenda by signing the Get Fair Poverty Pledge and/or the EDM on Get Fair. The lobby took place on 26 and 27 June 2009. There are no exact figures available for the number of MPs who met with Get Fair supporters. The number of people who registered their intention to act as organiser of a local lobby stands at 47 named individuals

covering 63 constituencies. There is verifiable evidence of a lobby actually taking place in 28 constituencies; in all likelihood the number of lobbies taking place sits between 28 and 44<sup>8</sup>. Between the e-action and face-to-face lobby meetings, at least 160 or a quarter of MPs were reached by the campaign.

- 3.1.7. To test whether there is a link between the June 2009 Get Fair lobby and the signing of the EDM the research team identified the MPs who were lobbied or received a Get Fair e-action message *and* signed the EDM. For 35 or two in five of all signatories, the e-action or lobby took place before the MP signed the EDM. In several cases only a few days passed between the e-action (or lobby) and the signing of the EDM, suggesting, if not conclusively proving, that the Get Fair activity indeed encouraged the signing. One MP who was interviewed by the research team explicitly confirmed that the visit by the Get Fair lobby group had triggered his signing of the EDM.
- 3.1.8. A breakdown of the reach of the Get Fair e-action and constituency lobby by region and by party can be found in Annex C. There was only very limited activity by Get Fair supporters in Northern Ireland, which is not unexpected given the fact that none of the Get Fair member organisations are based in Northern Ireland. Scotland scores fairly high in terms of the e-action but there is only one verifiable example of a lobby delegation visiting an MP in Scotland: a Scottish Get Fair partner confirmed that their focus was mainly on MSPs and less so on Scottish MPs. Wales saw 4 lobby events (which is a similar figure to many English regions) but uptake of the e-action in Wales was significantly lower than elsewhere. Get Fair mainly reached Labour MPs: more than half of all verifiable lobbies targeted a Labour MP. Liberal Democrats were most likely to be lobbied by Get Fair: no less than one in ten received a Get Fair lobby.

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<sup>8</sup> Get Fair monitoring data suggests that lobby activity took place in 44 constituencies. However, feedback received from local activists (in 1 case confirmed by the MP concerned) indicates that in at least 3 of these constituencies no lobby actually took place: the activists may initially have been planning a lobby activity but this did not go ahead. This makes it difficult for the evaluation to take the figure of 44 at face value. Verifiable evidence confirming lobby activity is available for 28 of the 44 constituencies. Evidence includes for example telephone interviews with organisers, completed feedback forms received by the evaluation team and copies of informal feedback sent to Get Fair by activists. The real number of instances of lobby activity taking place probably sits between 28 and 44.

3.1.9. Overall then, the Get Fair campaign directly engaged with close to 300 British politicians, including MPs (at least 160 contacted in the lobby or e-action) and MSPs (leaflet sent to all 129 MSPs). Assessing this figure is difficult as there is only limited evidence to benchmark this figure against. The figure is significantly lower than the 4,000 emails sent to MPs in the context of the Make Child Benefit Count campaign coordinated by the Child Poverty Action Group and one of the (large) Get Fair partners commented during the baseline interviews that they would call 1,000 responses to a campaign action targeting MPs a good response; any less than 600 would be seen as disappointing. That being said, the Get Fair engagement with MPs is the same order of magnitude as the number of emails and letters sent by Refugee Action in the context of their Destitution campaign (400 emails sent). This suggests that Get Fair held its own compared to other fairly small scale advocacy initiatives undertaken by individual third sector organisations. What does not appear to have happened is that Get Fair delivered a multiplier effect: taking a few hundred lobby activities as a benchmark for a campaign by an individual organisation, in principle the Get Fair coalition may have aimed for a multiple of these few hundreds, mobilising the supporter bases of its coalition members.

## 3.2. What have been the impacts?

### *Awareness of the Get Fair campaign?*

3.2.1. It is difficult to assess the overall awareness of the Get Fair campaign by MPs. External stakeholders commented that all MPs should be aware of the Get Fair campaign:

- John Battle MP, Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Poverty, sent an email to all his colleagues when Get Fair was launched, alerting them to the campaign;
- All MPs are alerted to new EDMs and as such should have noticed the EDM on Get Fair; and,
- Most MPs would have been alerted to the Get Fair campaign when it was raised by Betty Williams MP during June 2009 Prime Minister's Question Time.

3.2.2. That being said, at least one of the MPs the research team spoke to commented that he had not been aware of the Get Fair campaign prior to the letter sent to him/her by the evaluation team. This MP did not meet with a Get Fair group but there is evidence that three individual Get Fair supporters sent a message to this MP through the Get Fair e-action. It is possible that a technical fault meant these messages were not delivered or that the e-action was not remembered by the MP. Whatever the reason, it is important to realise that the 'reach' of the campaign as discussed in the previous section does not automatically mean that all 160 MPs are fully aware of or familiar with the Get Fair campaign.

*Willingness to engage with the campaign*

3.2.3. A significant achievement for the campaign is that by and large politicians have been willing to engage with the Get Fair campaign. This is true both at national and at local level:

- As mentioned earlier, Get Fair secured face-to-face contacts with about a dozen of senior politicians across the three main political parties; both the Work and Pensions Minister, Yvette Cooper MP, and her Tory counterpart, Nigal Waterson MP, were said to have committed to continuing a dialogue with Get Fair on ideas on National Minimum income levels, as well as in relation to more immediate needs including rising youth unemployment and concerns about fuel poverty;
- Both the Prime Minister and Leader of the Liberal Democrats responded to the letter sent by Get Fair to the party leaders. The picture is not however completely positive: there has not been any official response to the open letter from the Conservative party;
- Only a limited number of local activists were interviewed but they generally commented that it was fairly easy to secure a meeting with their local MP. The only constraint appears to have been finding a time in the diary that suited both the MP and activists: not all MPs were able to meet with Get Fair representatives on June 26<sup>th</sup> or 27<sup>th</sup>. One obviously has to be careful with arguments from silence, but email feedback received by Get Fair from local activists similarly never referred to difficulties in getting MPs to agree to a meeting. Several of the activists who were interviewed also commented that the MP ended up spending more time with them than had originally been scheduled, in a number of cases up to an hour;
- 83 MPs signed the EDM – as mentioned earlier, this is almost twice the average number of signatories for any EDM and roughly the same as the average number of signatories for EDMs relating to poverty;

- 68 MSPs or just more than half of all MSPs signed the Get Fair Poverty Pledge;
- 15 MPs signed the Get Fair Poverty Pledge, 8 of whom had not signed the EDM<sup>9</sup>. As with the EDM, assessing this figure of 15 is not straightforward. It can only be benchmarked against the total number of individuals who were invited to sign the poverty pledge and no exact figure is available: there is no hard evidence as to how many lobby activities took place (probably between 28 and 44) and it is unclear how many of the activists asked their MP to sign the Poverty Pledge. Assuming that about 30 MPs were asked to sign the Poverty Pledge, about one in two agreed to do so.

*Putting poverty higher on the agenda?*

3.2.4. Interviews with lobby organisers paint a highly diverse picture of MPs' reactions to the lobby. Negative descriptions of reactions included a sense that MPs were "a bit dismissive" or "following the party line" or that, while MPs were happy to see them and seemed genuinely interested, the lobby felt "a bit like preaching to the converted". The interviews held with MPs by the evaluation team confirm this fairly mixed picture: for example, one MP commented that the lobby felt a little like "a tick-box exercise". That being said, there was anecdotal evidence that UK poverty was put higher on policy-makers' agenda as a result of Get Fair: MPs reported to the research team (and were reported to have commented to local activists) that they had already previously been committed to fighting poverty and social injustice but that the lobby acted as a useful reminder and, importantly, as an indication of a constituency base for action on UK poverty.

Box 3.1: Examples of feedback from or about MPs

*"Our MP commented that it was good to be lobbied. He was sympathetic to the whole agenda anyway, but he has his mind on so many different things and a lobby helps him focus and remind him about things"*

*"We got a letter back saying thank you and please keep me informed. Some of the stuff was well-known but we also introduced some projects he had not known about"*

<sup>9</sup> Some of them were not able/allowed to sign the EDM. Ministers and whips do not normally sign EDMs. Under the Ministerial Code, Parliamentary Private Secretaries "must not associate themselves with particular groups advocating special policies", and they do not normally sign EDMs. Neither the Speaker nor Deputy Speakers will sign EDMs. Internal party rules may also affect who can sign early day motions. The standing orders of the Parliamentary Labour Party require Labour Members to consult the Chief Whip before tabling an EDM.

*“Our MPs were happy that they were brought up to speed with issues – they knew roughly what was going on but have a more comprehensive and up to date understanding of the issues now... He was keen to support the issues and offered to take on the issues further. Some of the organisations have been invited back to discuss in more detail what they do”*

*“He seemed happy to see us. He seemed genuinely concerned, but there wasn’t much that was new for him: he is pretty well keyed in. I am not certain it was right to lobby our MP – maybe it would have been better to lobby the Council? They are the ones who can make a difference. And we should have lobbied the DWP – they are the ones who control the benefits”*

*“Her response was that she was doing all of this anyway ... she was a bit dismissive – she told us that we had to move on; that she may have tweaked one or two things but that she was happy with the [Welfare Reform] Bill as it stood”*

*“He signed the Poverty Pledge but I got the sense that he was following the party line: on the living wage, he only spoke about raising the minimum wage, on housing he talked about the complexities and difficulties and on benefits he suggested putting welfare reform on hold”*

*“It felt a bit like preaching to the converted: he agreed with the right to work for asylum-seekers and had already signed the EDM on free prescriptions”*

*“I learnt something around JSA in terms of how income and assets can have an impact. I am now more sympathetic; I feel I should do more locally, get involved. I am representing a mixed area. The discussion made me more focused: I need to spend more time on issues affecting the people in my constituency. I hope to have a closer look at the local statistics and figures and use these to argue in the House of Commons. The lobby was refreshing and interesting: they talked about issues that are important to local people as opposed to the third world. This was why I joined the party all those years ago. It illustrated practical ways of going about things”*

- 3.2.5. One MP who was interviewed by the research team felt that Get Fair had supported the shift towards ‘fairness’ terminology in the Government’s messaging. This individual accepted that the Prime Minister’s use of fairness predated the campaign, but felt that the campaign may have reinforced the terminology and shown that there was a level of public support for this terminology. It has not been possible to find additional evidence to support (or contradict) this particular opinion.

#### *Getting politicians to act on UK poverty?*

- 3.2.6. The most visible indication of an impact was the question about Get Fair by Betty Williams MP during Prime Minister’s Question Time. Other ‘action’ on UK poverty included signing of the Poverty Pledge and signing of the EDM: as reported earlier, the Poverty Pledge was signed by 68 MSPs and 15 MPs; the EDM was signed by 83 MPs.
- 3.2.7. At local level there were a limited number of interesting examples of follow-up action. For example, one lobby raised the problem of 16 year old

homeless people in B&Bs quite far away from their previous homes; the MP asked them to write him a letter (which they have since done) and promised he would get in touch with a senior Councillor to discuss the matter.

## 4. IMPACTS ON THE WIDER PUBLIC

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### 4.1. Who has been reached?

#### *Numbers reached*

4.1.1. It is difficult to give a precise figure as to how many people were reached by the Get Fair campaign, but some tentative estimates can be made.

- When including all Get Fair media coverage, opportunities to view the campaign easily runs into a couple of million of individuals: there are a limited number of examples where Get Fair reached coverage in the national press. However, these tended to have been fairly short references to the campaign and the main impact (if any) may be increased name recognition for the campaign. It is very difficult to argue for any impacts in terms of changes to people's attitudes towards poverty on the basis of these short references to the Get Fair campaign. A more detailed discussion of media coverage can be found in annex D;
- There is evidence of email alerts about Get Fair being sent to about 333,000 individual supporters<sup>10</sup> and given that only a quarter of the Get Fair membership were interviewed for this evaluation, it is fair to assume that the real figure of will have been higher than 333,000; and,
- Umbrella or network organisations further highlighted the Get Fair campaign to about 1,500 other organisations or link officers<sup>11</sup>. Again the real figure may well be higher. These link officers or member organisations may also have decided to further spread the information but there is no information about this.

4.1.2. The hundreds of thousands of people mentioned in the previous paragraph only give an indication of the number of individuals who had an *opportunity* to learn about Get Fair. Actual *involvement* with the Get Fair campaign is obviously more limited:

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<sup>10</sup> Four partners reported sending out emails to their supporters' base of 300,000; 20,000; 10,000 and 3,000 respectively – the former two organisations sent out regular alerts about Get Fair, the latter two only reported a single email alert about Get Fair

<sup>11</sup> Four organisations reported highlighting the Get Fair campaign to 800-1000 link officers (through a General Assembly and email alerts to more than 400 people), 400 member organisations, 100 link officers and about 80 organisations.

- More than 5,500 unique visitors visited the Get Fair website at least once, with just over 3,000 visiting the site more than once<sup>12</sup>;
- Overall, 777 individuals registered their email address on the Get Fair website. Registration peaks occurred in September-October 2008, March-April 2009 and June 2009 – presumably linked to Get Fair communication in the context of the media launch (September 2008), the briefing sessions to prepare for the constituency lobby (April 2009) and the lobby itself (June 2009);

**Table 4.1: Registration on Get fair website by month**

Month	05/2008-08/2008	09/2008	10/2008	11/2008	12/2008	01/2009	02/2009	03/2009	04/2009	05/2009	06/2009	07/2009	08/2009	09/2009
No	107	136	62	20	24	54	42	114	63	33	74	19	14	15
%	14	18	8	3	3	7	5	15	8	4	10	2	2	2

- A total of 199 individuals participated in the Get Fair e-action, between them emailing a total of 146 MPs;
- At least 78 individuals organised more than 80 Poverty and Homelessness Action Week events or activities. At least 4,000 individuals participated in these events<sup>13</sup>. Three quarters of activities were linked to Church services, where PHAW materials were used as part of an existing service or where a special service was organised around homelessness and poverty. As such, the ‘participation’ of 4,000 individuals in Poverty and Homelessness Action Week events does not necessarily presume an active decision to participate in the event; for many it was the (unintentional) result of their decision to attend church; and,
- There is hard evidence of 28 lobbies taking place and the actual number of lobbies is probably between 28 and 44. Numbers range from just 1 to 50 individuals participating in a single lobby event – the latter being an exceptionally high number. Most lobbies saw

<sup>12</sup> Of these 3,000 repeat visitors about 1,000 individuals visited the site twice, just over 1,200 between 3 and 8 times, about 500 between 9 and 25 times and just more than 250 more than 25 times. About half of all visits lasted less than 10 seconds and average time on the site was just less than 3 minutes – but more than 1,700 visits lasted more than 3 minutes and more than 120 visits lasted more than half an hour. About a third each were direct visits to the site, referrals through search engines and referrals from other websites – the single most important in the latter group was the Church Action on Poverty website which was the source of referral for almost 500 visits.

<sup>13</sup> This ranges from just a handful taking part in one of the sleep-outs to up to 300 coming to attending one of the Voices from the Edge performances. The vast majority of events had less than 100 individuals. Average attendance at events stood at 68 people.

between 3 and 6 people visiting their MP. A rough estimate of the total number of people participating in the 28 lobbies is about 200<sup>14</sup>.

*Characteristics of audiences reached by Get Fair*

4.1.3. Feedback forms, responses to the online survey and telephone interviews with activists give some indication<sup>15</sup> of who the Get Fair supporters and participants are:

- Given that three quarter of PHAW events were linked to Church services, event participants mainly consisted of Church-goers. A clear link with a faith-based organisation (often CAP) is also evidenced for a large proportion of the online survey respondents and activists who were interviewed by the research team;
- PHAW participants, online supporters and lobby organisers roughly split evenly between men and women;
- In terms of age range, there appear to be more supporters and participants in the older age ranges. More than three quarters of PHAW participants were older than 45 and two in five of all participants were older than 60 (39%). Two thirds of online survey respondents were older than 50; only one individual was younger than 25 – this is particularly surprising given that younger people are more likely to actively use the Internet. One of the constituency lobby organisers interviewed for the evaluation was in her eighties and a number of others (though not all) were past retirement age;
- The vast majority of Get Fair supporters and participants had previously been involved in campaigns. 10 of the 14 constituency activists who completed a feedback form had previously been involved in UK poverty campaigns (PHAW and/or other campaigns relating to UK poverty); all 14 had previously been involved in campaigns on international poverty. Several of the activists who were interviewed commented that they had met with their MP a number of times previously and one MP similarly commented that the Get Fair lobby had come from his “*regular correspondents*”. However, there were some for whom the direct contact with their MP was new, even if they had been involved in other types of campaigning activity in the past. The ones who had previously met

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<sup>14</sup> For 10 of the 28 lobbies there is data on how many individuals participated: in these 10 lobbies a total of 101 individuals met with their MPs on June 26-27<sup>th</sup> 2009. Extrapolating this figure to the 28 lobbies, it can be estimated that just over 200 people lobbied their MP.

<sup>15</sup> It is important to note that the people who responded to the evaluation questions are not necessarily representative for the wider Get Fair audience: for example, PHAW feedback forms were only completed for 2 PHAW events and it can be argued that the online survey was more likely to get a response from individuals who have been more actively involved in Get Fair.

with their MPs had not necessarily raised UK poverty issues with him or had previously focused on local rather than national issues.

*“This was not the first time but in the past the focus has been on what to do at the local level – in 80-90% of the time. This lobby was different as it looked at the national context”*

- A similar picture emerges from the analysis of the responses to the online survey: 7 in 10 had been involved in UK poverty campaigns previously (more than a third had been involved in PHAW 2008 and about half had already been involved in UK poverty campaigns) and more than 8 in 10 had been involved in campaigns relating to international poverty. Only 1 respondent indicated that s/he had never previously been involved in any campaigns. The figures are slightly lower for PHAW participants but still more than half of participants had been involved in campaigning previously: one third (33%) had previously been involved in campaigning on UK poverty and around half (51%) had been involved in campaigning on other issues<sup>16</sup>.
- This link with previous campaign experience is also reflected in people’s reasons for signing up to the Get Fair campaign. The main reasons for registering on the Get Fair website were that individuals ‘always try to support social justice campaigns’ and ‘always felt strong about UK poverty’. All but one of survey respondents rated these reasons as very or quite important and more than three quarters selected the very important option.

## **4.2. What have been the impacts?**

4.2.1. Unsurprisingly, given that many of the Get Fair supporters and participants had previously been involved in UK poverty campaigning, significant proportions commented that they had already been committed to fighting UK poverty prior to their participating in Get Fair events and felt confirmed in their view. This was true for two in five (39%) of PHAW participants, 8 in 10 of respondents to the online survey and close to 9 in 10 of constituency lobby participants. That being said, very few individuals felt that there had been no impacts of their involvement in Get Fair. None of the online survey

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<sup>16</sup> These figures are not representative for PHAW activities overall: three quarters of PHAW activities were organised in the context of the Sunday Church service; feedback forms were completed during two events organised specifically for PHAW.

respondents felt that there had been no impacts and only 2 (of the 14) activist and 3 (of the 81) PHAW participants felt that there had been no impact. The main impacts identified were that people were as follows:

- PHAW participants were most likely to say that they knew more about UK poverty and felt more strongly about UK poverty. This was confirmed in feedback from the PHAW event organisers: three in four of individuals who responded to this question refer to changes in participants' awareness or perceptions: for example, they refer to people commenting that the event was thought-provoking or that people were visibly shocked by a performance or presentation; in a limited number of cases, they simply referred to positive audience feedback. One event organiser commented that the homeless people who had presented their stories to the Church congregation had been empowered and had felt an increase in their self-esteem as a result. It is important to remember, however, that Poverty and Homelessness Action Week would in all likelihood also have taken place without Get Fair and as such these impacts cannot directly be attributed to Get Fair;

### Box 1: Examples of comments from PHAW participants

*"It's so easy to fall into poverty now than it's been in past history"*

*"A very humbling experience hearing from service users"*

*"It was an excellent, well organised & informative session; all credit to the organisers. The speeches from service users directly were brilliant"*

*"An eye-opener on the problems in [the area], highlighting them"*

*"Excellent! Makes you think what can we do? Many many thanks!"*

*"The overview produced by the Council was amazing and shocking, it has made me realise that poverty is much more widespread in the Borough. Low literacy and numeracy with low aspirations"*

*"When talking to people in the town about why we were doing this, the overwhelming majority were surprised to learn we had a homelessness issue at all in our area (rural town and villages)"*

*"I have discovered that I live in poverty! My income is less than your figure - however I am not poor! I think you need to re-think - crying wolf will not help - things are due to get much worse..."*

- Online survey respondents were most likely to indicate that they would be paying closer attention to what politicians were saying on UK poverty and would be more likely to sign a petition on UK poverty or email or write to their MP;
- Lobby organisers indicated both high levels of increased knowledge about UK poverty and increased attention to what politicians are saying and willingness to email their MP. One of the activists commented that they had discussed an issue relating a negative experience at a local jobcentre and had decided to write to their MP

about this – something that they would not have done prior to their participation in the Get Fair constituency lobby;

- Encouragingly, 10 of the 14 lobby organisers commented that it was very likely that they would participate in future UK poverty campaigns, including the 3 individuals who had not previously been involved in UK poverty campaigns. Even among individuals with quite extensive previous campaigning experience, there were examples of impact: for example, one individual who had visited his MP on several occasions explained that he had again felt re-energised by the lobby and encouraged to continue to do things.

### **Box 2: Comments from lobby organisers and participants**

*“I learnt that the issue was already being discussed in Government circles”*

*“This was the very first time I has been involved in anything like it ... I learnt quite a bit about the area where I live. It is a fairly well off area. I am now much more aware of the problem; of the fact that there are pockets where people struggle. I hope to remain involved. I have been paying more attention; before it did not really register”*

*“I am used to lobbying but I am always very stimulated by the contact with policy-makers. It encourages you to do things. The other person – who did not have any lobby experience – was quite excited about it and commented that it felt important”*

*“I now realise that there are things that can be done; I am more aware and more focused on poverty in the UK; before I would always automatically think more about international poverty. For a poor person in the UK it is little consolation that he is better off than a poor person in Africa”*

*“I am glad I did it, although I was very nervous”*

- Encouragingly, a small number of people felt that they were now less likely to think that poor people (partially) have themselves to blame: this was true for 4 respondents to the online survey and 13 PHAW participants (11% and 16% of all respondents respectively). Almost all these individuals had a campaigning background and they were often committed to social justice issues, but in most cases their past involvement in campaigns was around issues other than UK poverty. Given that the sample size of both research instruments is fairly small, it is difficult to take these percentages as conclusive evidence. Importantly, however, they give an indication that (i) people’s attitudes can indeed be changed and (ii) this may well be true for not insignificant groups of individuals.

## 5. LESSONS LEARNT

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### 5.1. Introduction

- 5.1.1. The overall impacts of the Get Fair campaign have been mixed to date. There are a number of strong positives, including clear impacts in terms of improved collaboration between individual Get Fair partner organisations, MPs suggesting that the Get Fair constituency lobby has acted as a useful reminder and a valuable indication that there is a constituency basis for action on UK poverty and clear impacts on individual Get Fair activists, who feel confirmed in their commitment to the UK poverty agenda, have often learnt new things about UK poverty, are more likely to contact their MP in future or pay attention to what politicians are saying on UK poverty. Encouragingly, a small proportion indicate that as a result of their involvement with Get Fair they are now less likely to think that poor people partially have themselves to blame.
- 5.1.2. That being said, Get Fair has encountered a number of difficulties, in particular a challenge of engaging the wider membership more *actively* in the campaign. Directly linked to this is a sense that the Get Fair campaign did not reach its full potential in terms of reaching activists and MPs. Get Fair reached out to a respectable 300 British politicians, engaged about 200 people in its e-action and a similar number in its constituency-based lobbying. However, it did not encourage the 10,000s or even 100,000s of people who in principle were in its reach through the networks of the Get Fair membership, to take action on UK poverty.
- 5.1.3. This chapter tries to draw some lessons around this issue, to inform future campaign activity on UK poverty. It focuses in particular on what limited more active involvement by Get Fair coalition members (section 5.2) and what ‘worked’ in getting individuals to take action on UK poverty (section 5.3). It also looked at the wider support needs of activists (section 5.4) and the ‘messaging’ used by Get Fair (section 5.5).

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## 5.2. Working in a coalition

- 5.2.1. For most Get Fair members, their actual involvement in the campaign was fairly limited. The most active involvement was achieved mainly in the context of Get Fair's advocacy work at national level: for example, coalition members got actively involved in the open letter to the three party leaders (signed by 27 chief executives), in the parliamentary launches in Westminster and Scotland and in meetings with senior politicians. Active involvement in the grassroots level Get Fair activities – the constituency lobby and Poverty and Homelessness Action Week – was essentially limited to a handful of organisations, with CAP in particular playing a key role. A significant number of coalition members featured the lobby on their websites or in their newsletters and some hosted briefings to potential activists – but one cannot escape the impression that their efforts were often only half-hearted: the focus was on *informing* their networks as opposed to really *selling* the lobby or actively encouraging their supporters or partners to get involved – as confirmed by Get Fair members themselves<sup>17</sup>.
- 5.2.2. Partners pointed to a number of different reasons for the fairly limited involvement in the campaign and in particular the grassroots activities: essentially, many member organisations are orientated towards political advocacy at national level without any strong links to grassroots groups or activists. Many organisations have 'supporters' but these supporters are not usually asked to engage in the type of lobby activity that Get Fair modelled itself on: faith-based activity at grassroots level, which is loosely inspired on one central campaign message but lets individual activists choose the type of activity and specific messages they wish to focus on. The supporters of other organisations are sometimes asked to participate in advocacy efforts, but these asks tend to be more specific and controlled more rigorously from the centre. In other instances, supporters are not asked to support any advocacy efforts at all: they rather engage in local community projects instead or are supporters in the sense that they contribute to the organisation financially.

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<sup>17</sup>

A clear exception is the Young Christian Workers, who even developed their own take on the June 2009 lobby when it aspired that a direct dialogue with an MP proved too daunting for many of their young people.

The diversity of the Get Fair membership base, although a clear asset in many respects, thus became a key challenge for the campaign in its grassroots focus.

- 5.2.3. This raises a bigger question. The Get Fair campaign was initially explicitly conceived as a campaign which would mobilise large numbers of activists – as evidenced in the initial target of action by 100,000 individuals – and would change public opinion. Does this mean that the Get Fair campaign had unrealistic expectations of grassroots mobilisation and, if so, where does this leave the UK poverty sector and attempts to change public opinion? Should alternative supporter mobilisation mechanisms, for example with campaign asks that are more specific and controlled more rigorously from the centre, be considered or should the focus move away from the grassroots level altogether and move towards for example use of media channels and celebrities to reach the wider public? The response to this question depends on whether or not the coalition can agree on a more specific message and whether a more newsworthy angle can be found.
- 5.2.4. Other factors played as well in limiting partner organisations’ involvement, including concerns about the clarity of communication and messaging (see further) and a persistent lack of real ownership of the campaign beyond a core group of faith-based organisations. The ‘wait and see’ attitude evidenced during the baseline stage of the evaluation, where organisations seemed hesitant to get actively involved in a campaign when it was not yet clear how successful Get Fair would be, continued throughout the campaign. The internal debate early on around whether or not Get Fair should run simultaneously with End Child Poverty and the slow Get Fair start-up process did affect the enthusiasm of partners and Get Fair does not appear to have truly succeeded in re-igniting partners’ enthusiasm afterwards – Get Fair was “*not what gets people up in the morning*”. This lack of enthusiasm continued as resource constraints meant that not enough time and efforts were put in the partnership management process.
- 5.2.5. All this led to a vicious circle: active involvement (in the grassroots activities) mainly came from a limited number of faith-based organisations, in particular CAP, which led people to see Get Fair mainly as faith-based and further discouraged more active involvement by other groups. This was however not true for all Get Fair member organisations and some non-faith groups took

real ownership of the campaign. Activists, member organisations and policy-makers alike indeed stressed that Get Fair was seen first and foremost as a campaign led by faith-based organisations. This was particularly true for the constituency based lobby. Individuals who participated in lobby briefings commented that most activists came from faith-based groups; activists also commented on all Get Fair communication coming from CAP; an MP suggested that the activists were “*purely religious*” groups. One lobby organiser commented that others he had contacted were surprised because he was “*not church-based and was still interested in a CAP action*”. The fact that some of the communication had CAP logos rather than or alongside the Get Fair branding further reinforced this impressions.

*“We think of Get Fair as the slogan of a CAP campaign”*

*“Why have they chosen a different name? That is also the reaction I get from others: yet another name ...People know CAP, they shouldn’t change names for the Get Fair campaign”*

- 5.2.6. This is directly linked to the resource constraints which acted as a barrier for the campaign throughout. Crucially, Get Fair never had a full-time campaign manager which would have been required to manage a coalition of this scale and ambition. It is true that the absence of a central secretariat structure did not prevent Make Poverty History from being successful, but even the decentralised Make Poverty History campaign employed three members of staff centrally. With the exception of part-time consultancy support to advice on the political lobby effort at national level, CAP was the only organisation to specifically dedicate staff resources to the Get Fair campaign. The baseline evaluation report made a number of recommendations relating to the importance of encouraging wider ownership for the campaign among the membership and nurturing the existing Get Fair membership<sup>18</sup>. Very little of this was implemented and it can reasonably be argued that resource constraints would have made any attempt at implementation difficult. Again, Get Fair appears to have got trapped in a vicious circle: member organisations did not feel a sufficiently strong sense of ownership and enthusiasm for the

<sup>18</sup> E.g. creating a membership liaison role, launching a newsletter explicitly targeting its own membership (as opposed to the wider supporters’ base) and by sharing out strategic responsibilities among members reflecting the diversity and differentiation among Get Fair members.

campaign to commit resources to it and without additional resources it was difficult to invest sufficient time in nurturing the membership. Faced with a tough choice between investing its scarce resources for Get Fair in nurturing the membership base and focusing on actual campaign activity, CAP mainly opted for the latter – indirectly reinforcing the impression of Get Fair as a campaign managed by CAP and the faith groups.

- 5.2.7. This in turn allowed the steering group, in the words of one of its members, “*to become complacent*”. Essentially, CAP, although technically one steering group member among many, effectively acted as a de facto campaign manager – often as a direct result of work and responsibilities being placed with CAP by the Get Fair coalition. However, this was done without the benefit of a steering group with (line management) responsibility over CAP’s actions. This effectively left the Get Fair campaign without strong leadership. CAP took leadership in the sense that they took initiative and carefully steered limited resources towards achievable goals. However, it was leadership without followers. Leadership should have come from the steering group collectively. This probably needed greater distance between the steering group and a dedicated (as opposed to de facto) campaign manager. The de facto campaign management by CAP arguably also made it harder (for CAP) to pinpoint the diversity in the membership and member organisations’ approaches to lobbying and to experiment with possible compromises to ensure that Get Fair offered relevant opportunities to get involved to all. Unsurprisingly, some felt that too much emphasis had been put on the lobby at the expense of other Get Fair activities: “*it felt too focused, felt that Get Fair was all about this lobby*”. This is not to say that Get Fair was wrong to go ahead with the constituency based lobby: at the start of 2009, apart from the joint letter, Get Fair had achieved relatively little and was in need of a practical success. Moreover, the constituency lobby was built into the Get Fair work plan from the outset. The quote does illustrate, however, that not all partners felt any strong sense of ownership for the lobby.
- 5.2.8. The lack of leadership and direction was felt by the wider membership (outside the steering group) who quoted this as one of the reasons for their more limited involvement: faced with resource and time constraints of their own, Get Fair became for member organisations “*number 23 on the list of things to do*”. Some partner organisations felt not sufficiently informed about

what was expected of them as a member. It was claimed by coalition members that they had never been told by the steering group what was expected of them in practical terms and that there was a general lack of direction to the campaign.

*“We did not participate in the Poverty Action Week, as we felt that there was no need for us to participate, it was more of a CAP thing, they coordinated it. We never decided not to participate but we were not asked to participate either. Maybe I received an email about it, but don’t recall any specific invitation to get involved”*

*“There does not seem to be any ownership for the campaign. Members have not been proactively asked whether the lobby was a good idea”*

5.2.9. It is important to note that the steering group faced a number of challenges preventing it from fully taking up its leadership role, in particular staff changes and resource constraints in the organisations that were represented in the steering group. It is also important to note that, more recently, the Get Fair campaign has tried to address this issue, by establishing a tighter Executive Group of 5 people and quarterly Get Fair member meetings instead of replacing the steering group, and by moving more towards being a coalition and offering a campaigning space for coalition members than being a single focus campaign. Members of the Executive Group feel that this has given a clearer focus for decision-making and leadership.

5.2.10. A few smaller coalition members questioned the value added by some of the larger ‘powerful’ organisations. It was particularly disappointing for some that these organisations have been so reluctant to lend their resources, for example sharing some of their existing networks in the media and relationships with celebrities, or to see beyond their own campaigning asks:

*“There is a huge amount of vested interest in campaigning, organisations should grow up and recognise the relationships between different issues”*

However, this reluctance to engage was not limited to the larger organisations; a general ‘wait and see’ attitude prevailed across the membership. Against this background, it is perhaps not as surprising that organisations were not keen to risk exposing their hard won media and

celebrity contacts in a campaign which they were not convinced would be a complete success.

### 5.3. Engaging activists

- 5.3.1. Information about Get Fair and Get Fair activities appears to have mainly spread through organisations' existing communication channels to their supporters. A rough estimate is that about half of Get Fair activists first heard about Get Fair or about a particular Get Fair activity through an organisation or local group they were already involved in<sup>19</sup>. This was often CAP; other organisations quoted included other church or faith-based groups, or in the case of PHAW, homelessness organisations involved in the PHAW event. Five of the six constituency lobby organisers who were interviewed were previous CAP members and had been encouraged to take up the lobby by a message from CAP:

*“When I saw that it was CAP, I signed up to it because I thought it was something I ought to do”*

The engagement chain for the sixth organiser was quite different and rather interesting: he had formerly been employed by one of the large Get Fair members and was asked by his former employer to lobby one of the Get Fair target MPs. What is interesting is that this was not a structured process of getting the organisation's wider network involved; it was simply the case that the individual involved was known to have done a lot of campaigning previously and was thought to be up for the Get Fair lobby.

- 5.3.2. Word of mouth appears to have worked as well, in particular in the context of specific events: invitations to participate in a PHAW event came from friends

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<sup>19</sup> This rough estimate of half of Get Fair activists is given because both the PHAW feedback forms and the online survey point in this direction: more than one in three (36%) had first heard about the PHAW event through an email or mailing from a local group and another one in five (20%) had first learned about the event 'some other way', mainly through a verbal invitation from their local church or homelessness organisation; just less than one in three (31%) of survey respondents first learnt about Get Fair through the organisation they are supporting or volunteering for and just less than one in five (19%) through the organisation they are working for.

or relatives for nearly one in four (23%) of participants and most if not all of the constituency lobby organisers who were interviewed looked for additional activists in their social circle. About one in four of online survey respondents commented that they had encouraged others to register their email addresses on the Get Fair website.

- 5.3.3. The efforts undertaken by individual lobby organisers to get other people involved in the lobby varied, as did the success of these efforts. People who had a wider existing network of contacts, in particular contacts with relevant organisations (as opposed to personal contacts), tended to be both more active and more effective in their outreach. Individuals with fewer organisational links tended to find it quite difficult to get others involved: some decided to lobby on their own; others actively tried to get people involved, for example by sending out emails or leaving messages for people and in one case giving a presentation, but found people often did not respond to emails or did not return phone calls. One individual with only limited organisational links of her own, commented that she struggled until she met a vicar with past involvement in campaigns and better networks than her own. Individuals who proclaimed themselves old hands at the game of getting others involved commented that what works best is being “*a little pushy*”, playing on people’s sense of self – pointing to their skills set and explaining why it is important that they are on board, and stressing that only a limited time investment is required.

*“I got in touch with some local organisations I have been involved with in the past: Crisis UK – I am a volunteer there – the local parish priest, a City Councillor who is a friend of mine, someone in MIND – I have been involved in their campaigns. I gave a presentation at Crisis during a members’ meeting but only one signed up; the others weren’t interested”*

*“I have lived in the area for quite a while. I used to sit on the local community council and got in touch with other councillors. I also got the Citizens Advice Bureau manager involved. I spoke to someone at the old people’s unit who was interested but could not make the meeting. Similarly, the Chief Executive of Scottish Churches Housing could not be there. It is about drawing on local connections ... I got about 25 people to sign the petition”.*

*“We just got all the members of our group to contact the organisations they knew. For example, I contacted Women’s Refugees, the Credit Union, a number of local youth projects ... It is fairly straightforward – you just ask people”.*

*“I know a lot of the churches locally and got in touch with them”*

- 5.3.4. Several of the lobby organisers and participants who were interviewed commented on the ‘absence’ of other Get Fair member organisations. This is

potentially worrying as they spoke about their disappointment and disillusionment that there was no sign of a coalition. Partners similarly spoke about people's disappointment during lobby briefing sessions: participants had expected to see more people in the briefing sessions. Particularly disappointing is the experience of the lobby organiser who called all the Get Fair coalition members whose geographical coverage included their area but failed to encourage a single one to get involved.

*“Supposedly there are 50 members in the Get Fair coalition – I did not see much of that. Get Fair did not work in coalition. This was very different with Make Poverty History, we did work in coalition then”*

*“What happened to the coalition of 50? ... No one I spoke to knew anything about Get Fair. I did not get a lot of interest. You need to belong to something bigger which is why we have now joined forces with [name of organisation]”*

*“Involvement of the partners was quite patchy ... Some did not even put the lobby on their website ... We could have done with more publicity; they could have done more to promote it with other organisations”*

- 5.3.5. Interestingly, there is some evidence to suggest that campaigning on one issue does not exclude campaigning on other issues: 6 in 10 online survey respondents had been involved in campaigns on at least three different issues (choosing between UK poverty, international poverty, human rights and environmental issues). Just more than 1 in 10 had only campaigned on one issue (prior to their involvement in Get Fair) which tended to be international poverty. Grassroot organisations, local groups and activists commented about time constraints and having to choose between different campaigning opportunities, but these choices appear to be chronological rather than exclusive: for example, one Justice and Peace group commented that following their involvement in the Get Fair lobby, they would now focus on climate change given the coming Climate Change summit in Copenhagen.

## 5.4. Supporting activists

- 5.4.1. Lobby organisers and participants often felt quite strongly about social justice issues and were happy to get involved with the Get Fair campaign, but often still opted for the path of the least resistance, taking a fairly 'passive' approach to 'activism', suggesting that providing sufficient support is crucial.

*“I was lobbying on my own, as the group I was involved with in the 90s no longer*

*exists”*

*“I considered it [getting other organisations involved]. I have a lobby background so I know that a network of organisations is more powerful. But it takes time to build a network. I considered reaching out for example to Help the Aged, but I did not have the resources to tackle that”*

*“I did not get involved in the lobby and I did not send an email to my MP: I did not know of any groups locally and felt it would have been too much work to get anything set up in the time”*

*“I had to drop out of different things – not just Get Fair. It was too time-consuming; I cannot go to meetings all the time”*

#### *The constituency lobby briefings*

- 5.4.2. Support offered to the activists mainly took the form of 12 lobby briefings, organised to help prepare activists for their meeting with the MP. There were obvious challenges in organising these sessions, in particular the diverse nature of participants and the difficulty of meeting the needs of this diverse audience. This applies both to pitching the sessions at the right level and organising the sessions at a convenient time. Organisers tried to address this diversity, for example by organising sessions during the weekends and during the week, during and after office hours.
- 5.4.3. Feedback from these briefing sessions is somewhat mixed. Session organisers felt that the briefings added value to Get Fair lobby by developing materials, sharing their skills as campaigners and providing factual information on specific policy issues. Organisers however also voiced their disappointment over the limited attendance, consisting almost exclusively of church-goers with very limited representation from other Get Fair members. Feedback was quite critical in places. It was suggested that some briefing sessions had not been engaging or informative enough. The assumption that a group of individuals who were previously unknown to each other and with no previous campaigning experience would come together and set up a lobby was seen as unrealistic; it was felt that more thought and guidance should have been put in place for lobby sessions, more clearly setting out what people should do. There does not appear to have been much focus on exactly who else to involve in the lobby and how to go about engaging other activists. It was also suggested that timing of some of the briefing sessions (over a weekend, after office hours or during office hours) might have limited participation.

*“I expected I would be told what to do; get information on MPs targeted, choose which ones to target on the day and something along the lines ‘this is what we will be doing’. Organisations did not seem to understand that there was work to be done, they had not really worked through what was expected from them”*

*“They did not explain the need for this activity, they assumed that people already had all the knowledge and buy-in, and that all are already up for lobbying MPs”*

- 5.4.4. Activists themselves were generally positive about the sessions, in some cases indicating that the session was what really convinced them to go for the lobby. Individuals commented positively on the role-play and on the fact that practical information was made available about their MPs. Their reactions did appear to vary however depending on who the trainers were: some were described as “*brilliant*”; others as not “*engaging*” – one of the sessions was seen as not at all engaging for young people: one member organisation commented that young people had returned from a lobby event not seeing the point in going to their MP. One of the more experienced activists did not think the session had been worth attending because it had been “*too basic*”. Some activists commented that they did not attend the training because there was no session nearby or because getting to a session would have been too expensive.

*“This finally convinced me to get involved and that it was important. It was a lot of work but I saw that it was doable and worth doing”*

- 5.4.5. Not all of those who participated in the sessions organised or participated in subsequent lobby event. A number of individuals representing coalition members in sessions decided not to get involved in the lobby, largely because they felt the remit of the lobby was too narrow. A basic parliamentary rule also means that as a constituent, you can only lobby your own MP:

*“I wanted to lobby a specific MP who is responsible for housing issues, not to be restricted to lobby my local MP”*

*“I went to a briefing session but felt there was no need to get involved as my MP was not one of those targeted by the lobby”*

*Other support materials*

- 5.4.6. A specific issue raised by a number of individuals were *difficulties with the online registration process*. The research team came across a limited number of individuals who had signed up for the Get Fair alerts (either online or by asking Get Fair staff to include them on the recipient list) but never received any emails. One individual had contacted the registered organisation for his area for the constituency lobby but never got a reply from them. Another individual stated how his contact details were included on the Get Fair website although he had specifically requested not to be the named constituency organiser during the briefing event; moreover, he had then been contacted at least on two occasions by activists interested in joining him but although he got a notification about emails he was unable to access them. Finally, one MP had never heard about Get Fair although Get Fair data suggests that he had received messages through the Get Fair e-action from three individuals. It is hard to assess these comments: they may well be isolated incidents; however, given the challenge of engaging activists (and encouraging involvement of the wider membership) it can be argued that Get Fair can hardly allow itself the luxury of these incidents.

**5.5. Communication and messaging**

- 5.5.1. Somewhat paradoxically, Get Fair messaging is seen as both too technical and too vague. The key Get Fair messages are generally seen as too broad or even unrealistic and it was suggested that more specific policy asks are necessary to achieve any real impact: it can be argued that no one would disagree that UK poverty need to be tackled; it is the causes of poverty and practical solutions to it that are politically sensitive and are debated and contested. Exactly what is Get Fair asking for? At the same time, some of the campaign calls were seen as too technical and keeping people briefed and on messages proved particularly challenging at the local level. This paradox of excessive technicality *and* vagueness is linked to the lack of direction and leadership in the campaign: Get Fair has struggled to find a centre of gravity to define what its key aims are and how they want to get there.

- 5.5.2. This is partially linked to the nature of coalition campaigning: securing agreement on campaign messages and key policy asks in a coalition context is challenging. Several of the larger coalition members reportedly did not want to develop Get Fair as a brand and a campaign in its own right which contributed to the decision by the campaign to move towards being a coalition space in which member organisations can identify issues for collaboration and joint campaigning.
- 5.5.3. A second message coming through is that communication to coalition members and individual supporters has not been clear enough. Stakeholders identified a clear need for more direction in terms of what is required or expected from coalition members. Terms of Reference (July 2009) go some distance in clarifying the roles of coalition members and executive committee, but it remains to be seen whether this will be sufficient. There was some feedback about people being told about the constituency based lobby and being not clear exactly what was being asked of them. This comes partially back to the different model of engagement at the grassroots level: CAP activists may be used to a fairly loose lobby strategy, others are not.
- 5.5.4. A particular challenge has been Get Fair’s attempt to marry national policy asks with local grassroots activity. This has not only caused difficulties for the Get Fair partners (as described above) but also for the local activists. Lobby organisers felt they were being pushed into focusing on national issues which were not seen as particularly relevant for them and which they didn’t feel sufficiently knowledgeable about – in an isolated case leading to a group deciding to continue to lobby but break away from Get Fair.

*“We have decided to break away from Get Fair. We don’t want to do both the local and the national work. It is just too much; we do not know enough about the national stuff. You should not bite off more than you can chew”*

*“It was supposed to be about writing the manifestos. That wasn’t as relevant for us. We just wanted to pick up local issues with our local MPs. There should have been more emphasis on the local level. Two-three weeks before the lobby an email was sent round with a list of target constituencies and that came over quite badly – it almost implied that what we were doing was not important enough”*

As such, Get Fair risks falling between a national and local lobby focus and achieve neither. One of the MPs similarly raised this issue: he spoke of a disconnect between grassroots level campaigning – or what people on the ground are actually talking about – and the debate politicians take note of –

what is said on Newsnight; his view was that “*Get Fair may have scored at the local level but did not get through to the debate that counts*”. A similar view was reflected in many of the partner interviews who felt that Get Fair needed to invest more in creating wider appeal and a sharper image to capture the media and the wider public. Get Fair was described by several as “*dull and worthy*” – in other words, not striking the right tone to get through to the debate that counts.

- 5.5.5. It is difficult to draw clear conclusions from the disconnect between the local level and the national debate on the basis of the Get Fair evaluation evidence alone. One Get Fair member felt that this disconnect may go some way to explaining why engaging people with national UK poverty campaigns continues to be troublesome. The main message might perhaps be that it may be important to choose more clearly and more explicitly as to what the priority aim of the campaign is (*either* mobilising the public *or* achieving policy change) and developing a campaign strategy and coalition approach accordingly. That being said, some steering group members felt that it should be possible to combine both objectives and target both local activists and national policy-makers.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

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- 6.1. The overall impacts of the Get Fair campaign have been mixed to date. There are a number of strong positives, including:
- Success in terms of securing a wide and diverse membership of 63 voluntary and community organisations and clear impacts in terms of improved collaboration between individual Get Fair partner organisations;
  - Outreach to close to 300 British politicians (MPs and MSPs) and reactions from MPs which suggest that the Get Fair constituency lobby acted as a useful reminder and a valuable indication that there is a constituency basis for action on UK poverty;
  - Clear impacts on individual Get Fair activists, who feel confirmed in their commitment to the UK poverty agenda, have often learnt new things about UK poverty, are more likely to contact their MP in future or pay attention to what politicians are saying on UK poverty. Encouragingly, a small proportion indicate that as a result of their involvement with Get Fair they are now less likely to think that poor people partially have themselves to blame.
- 6.2. That being said, Get Fair has encountered a number of difficulties, in particular a challenge of engaging the wider membership more *actively* in the campaign. Linked to this is a sense that the Get Fair campaign did not reach its full potential in terms of reaching activists and MPs: Get Fair reached out to 100s of activists; it did not encourage the 10,000s or even 100,000s of people who in principle were in its reach through the networks of the Get Fair membership, to take action on UK poverty.
- 6.3. The most active involvement of the wider Get Fair membership was achieved mainly in the context of Get Fair's advocacy work at national level; active involvement in the grassroots level Get Fair activities was much more limited: many Get Fair member organisations have members or supporters but these supporters are not usually asked to engage in the type of loose grassroots level activity that Get Fair modelled itself on.
- 6.4. Other factors played as well, including a persistent lack of real ownership of the campaign beyond a core group of faith-based organisations. This led to a vicious circle: active involvement (in the grassroots activities) remained limited to a number of faith-based organisations, which led people to see Get

Fair mainly as faith-based and further discouraged more active involvement by many (not all) non-faith groups. Lack of ownership also meant that partners were reluctant to put any significant resources into the campaign, which meant Get Fair never had the full-time campaign manager which a coalition of this scale and ambition required. CAP, the only organisation to put a dedicated staff resource to the management of the campaign, became the de facto campaign manager – indirectly reinforcing the impression of Get Fair as a campaign managed by the faith groups. This in turn allowed the steering group, in the words of one of its members, “*to become complacent*” and effectively left the Get Fair campaign without strong leadership – which was felt and commented upon by the wider membership. The de facto campaign management by CAP arguably also made it harder (for CAP) to pinpoint the diversity in the membership and in members’ approaches to lobbying: CAP understandably approached the campaign from the perspective it knew best (the grassroots level).

- 6.5. Paradoxically, Get Fair messaging was seen as both too vague and too technical. The messaging was widely considered to be “*worthy and dull*” and many were unclear as to exactly what was being asked – of politicians, of supporters and of member organisations. To some extent, Get Fair messaging fell between the national and the local level: local activists did not like being pushed into focusing on national issues they felt were less relevant or too complicated for them; partners (and one MP) felt that Get Fair failed to reach the (national) debate space that really mattered – including making inroads in the media.
- 6.6. Despite obvious challenges, it is clear that Get Fair has built up a certain momentum over the past 18 months. Several activists explicitly asked the research team about the future of the Get Fair campaign, expressing their hopes that it would continue. Activists expressed a clear interest in receiving future information about Get Fair and about UK poverty and a clear majority said they were likely to engage in Get Fair lobby activities in the future. Similarly, the great majority of member organisations stated that they were committed to continue to support Get Fair and many suggested a willingness to do more in the future.

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6.7. The core challenge for Get Fair is to break through the vicious circle of lack of ownership. This requires:

- Developing a clearer strategic vision as to what is expected of the Get Fair membership and, equally importantly, how the overall Get Fair campaign can relate and add value to what individual member organisations are doing. The recommendations of the baseline report relating to investing heavily in nurturing the membership still stand. Get Fair has decided to move more towards being a ‘coalition space’ for member organisations to work in and develop joint projects. Still, coalition members will only be interested in operating in this coalition sphere and using Get Fair branding for their activities if Get Fair is genuinely seen as an asset;
- Rethinking the campaign’s strong focus on the grassroots perspective – coalition member involvement is strongest in action at the national level; this is the level partners feel most comfortable at. There is a tension between the explicit initial ambition of Get Fair to challenge public opinion and encourage *local* activism; and Get Fair partners’ wish to engage with the campaign mainly at the level of *national* advocacy. The October 2008 baseline report already identified a certain ambiguity among members as to whether changing public opinion or aiming for policy change was more important for the Get Fair campaign. At the very least, there needs to be a discussion with the wider partnership as to (i) whether or not Get Fair continues to aim for an impact on public opinion and, if so, (ii) whether the grassroots activism approach is the way forward.
- Rethinking the role of CAP as de facto campaign manager, ideally creating more distance between CAP and the campaign. There may even be something to be said for a Get Fair campaign manager to be line managed by another Get Fair partner organisation – allowing CAP to focus on its strength and continue to organise its grassroots activists under a wider banner of the Get Fair campaign; and,
- A full time campaign manager is a necessity: external funding must be sought and/or a central campaign team consisting of secondees from partner organisations must be put together. Securing resources will be a challenging task, but scaling up the Get Fair campaign without resources is a near impossible one. Without a full time campaign manager, Get Fair is unlikely to ever move up from being “*number 23*” on people’s to do list.
- The nature and scope of the campaign manager’s role must be agreed by the Get Fair coalition, but what is essentially needed is someone to coordinate and facilitate implementation of the decisions made by the Get Fair coalition. A facilitative leadership style – suggesting initiatives and creating opportunities but leaving agenda-setting and prioritisation up to the wider membership – might be ideal.

- 6.8. Critics may wish to point to Get Fair's ultimately relatively modest achievements in terms of reach as a vindication of their decision not to provide financial support or get heavily involved. A more constructive way of looking at it may be to assess Get Fair's modest but real impacts against the odds the campaign was up against: a lukewarm initial endorsement from the sector, the absence of a campaign manager, the focus on grassroots activity that was unfamiliar to much of the membership and the lack of sustained and clear leadership did not stop Get Fair from signing up more than 60 organisations, leading to tangible examples of improved collaboration in the sector, being mentioned during Prime Minister's question time and leading to clear and positive impacts on its activists including, encouragingly, reactions that people are now less likely to think that poor people partially have themselves to blame. Get Fair as it currently stands clearly has its imperfections, but it is unique in its ambition to unite a fairly divided sector in need of a stronger common voice and, against the odds, has a lot to show for itself after only 18 months. Importantly, this includes a proven willingness to critically assess and reinvent itself – funders and the sector as a whole would do well to take notice.

## ANNEX A RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

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- A1 Assessing the impacts of campaigning and lobbying is difficult and the evaluation of the Get Fair campaign is no exception. The more obvious constraints included the limits of the evaluation budget and a dependency on individuals' willingness and ability to take part in the evaluation. For example, some MPs explicitly declined the request for an interview and Get Fair preferred not to send a reminder about the online survey to the Get Fair subscription list: this reminder would probably have boosted the response rate, but the campaign was keen to limit its demands to its fairly young supporters' base.
- A2 In most instances, sample sizes of responses are too small to allow for statistically significant analysis – this is true of responses to the online survey and feedback forms and for the telephone interviews held with MPs and individual Get Fair activists – but this evaluation makes no apologies for this. All too often, impact assessments of campaigns do not go beyond output measures (numbers of individuals reached) or intermediary outcomes (press coverage secured). This evaluation actively attempted to go beyond Get Fair members' own views of final outcomes and impacts and get first hand reactions of people who lobbied and were lobbied. What is lacking in terms of sample size is made up in terms of depth – some interviews with activists lasted up to an hour – and the evaluation can present strong qualitative evidence of (i) what was achieved and (ii) the processes that allowed or prevented Get Fair from reaching its achievements.
- A3 The main research methods and instruments used were:
- Desk research, in particular a review of Get Fair materials and of key sources around political, public and media attitudes to poverty in the UK (to help develop the baseline);
  - Two rounds of telephone interviews with roughly a quarter of the Get Fair membership reflecting the diversity of the Get Fair membership: 15 telephone interviews were done in August-September 2008 and 14 telephone interviews were done in July-August 2009.
  - Collection, collation and analysis of feedback from PHAW event organisers: a total of 78 event organisers sent written feedback either by completing the evaluation form provided or responding via email.

On top of this, just over 80 questionnaires were returned by event participants from two separate events, one in Edinburgh and one in Barnsley. Given that participant feedback forms were received for only two events, the responses are not representative of the wider audience of Poverty and Homelessness Action Week. They do however give a clear and detailed *snapshot* of who was reached and what were the impacts of these two events and taking together with the feedback from the 78 event organisers allow to paint a clear picture of the Week. In addition, 15 feedback forms had been analysed by the Sheffield ‘Voices from the Edge’ performance organisers.

- Collection, collation and analysis of feedback from lobby organisers and participants: a total of 14 feedback forms were completed. This was complemented by telephone interviews with 10 lobby organisers and participants across 6 different lobby activities, including events across the UK (including 1 in Wales, 1 in Scotland and 4 in England and including lobbies targeting Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat MPs). There is verifiable evidence of 28 lobbies taking place (the real number of lobbies is probably somewhere between 28 and 44); an estimated 200 people took part in the 28 lobbies. Against this background, the number of feedback forms and telephone interviews can be assumed to offer a fair reflection of the diversity and range of Get Fair lobby experiences.
- An online survey of individuals who registered their email on the Get Fair website: overall, 39 individuals completed the survey (out of 777 individuals who registered their email address on the Get Fair website or a 5% response rate). It is important to note that the 39 individuals who responded are not necessarily representative of the wider supporters base: in particular, more active supporters may well have been more likely to participate in the survey. This must be taken into consideration when evaluating the responses;
- Telephone interviews with 4 MPs (including Liberal Democrat and Labour MPs only; none of the Conservative MPs who were contacted consented to being interviewed)
- Analysis of media coverage for the campaign, collected and collated through a variety of means, including ad hoc collection by Get Fair partners and the research team and systematic media monitoring by a professional media monitoring company from May 2009 onwards – only one piece of media coverage was retrieved through the professional media monitoring company.

A4 A brief baselining exercise was undertaken in August and September 2008. This included the development of a baseline for the political climate, third sector collaboration around UK poverty, media coverage on UK poverty and previous experience and successes in terms of encouraging individuals to

engage with the UK poverty agenda. An abbreviated version of the baseline exercise can be found in Annex B.

### *Political climate*

B1 Although obviously dated, the 2005 election manifestos formed a useful starting point for the baselining exercise. The three main political parties (Conservatives, Labour and Liberal Democrats) each referred to poverty and fairness in their 2005 manifestos (see table 3.1).

Table 3.1: References to poverty, poor and fairness in 2005 manifestos

	Poverty	Poor	Fair
Labour	32	24	18
Conservatives	4	3	4
Liberal Democrats	11	15	61

Source: Conservative, Labour & Liberal Democrat election manifestos 2005 & CPC analysis

- The Labour manifesto included most references to poverty and poor (56 in total), followed by the Liberal Democrats (26). The Conservatives only referred 7 times to poverty and poor.
- A large proportion of references to poverty and poor relate to international poverty: 20 of the 56 Labour references, 13 of the 26 Liberal Democrats references and 2 of the 7 Conservative references.
- About half of the remaining Labour references point to pensioner poverty (19 references). Pensioner poverty is referred to 3 times by the Liberal Democrats but not at all in the Conservative manifesto. Two of the Labour references to pensioner poverty explicitly relate to fuel poverty; fuel poverty is also mentioned twice by the Liberal Democrats (not in connection with pensioner poverty). The Conservatives do not mention fuel poverty at all.
- Labour refers 7 times to child poverty (in one case implicitly in the context of family poverty); the Conservatives mention child poverty once. The Liberal Democrat manifesto does not talk about child poverty. Labour and the Liberal Democrats both mention poor students (Labour twice and the Liberal Democrats once).
- Most of the remaining references to poverty relate to poverty at a more generic level, for example Labour's point that work is the best anti-poverty strategy, the Conservatives referring to the importance of a strong economy in tackling a series of problems including poverty and the Liberal Democrats' concern that the poorest 20% of households pay more taxes as percentage of their income than the richest 20%.

- Fairness is clearly the domain of the Liberal Democrat manifesto with no less than 61 references (including fair, unfair or fairness): fairness is explicitly named as one of the three key principles on which the Liberal Democrat manifesto is built. Labour refers to fairness or fair 18 times, including 5 times in an international context – the remaining references cover a wide range of issues including fairness at work, fairness in immigration policy, in pensioner reform and in the context of Child Support Agency claims. The Conservatives mention fair and fairness 4 times: twice in the context of immigration policy, once in the context of illegal traveller sites and once in the context of equal opportunities.

B2 For each of the three main political parties it was possible to complement the analysis of the 2005 election manifestos with more recent indicators of (declared) interest in UK poverty and ‘fairness’. In the case of the Conservatives and Labour, the evaluation could also build on baseline positions developed by the Get Fair campaign itself:

- *Labour* has focused its UK poverty agenda particularly on children and families, including its prominent child poverty reduction and eradication targets which have elicited similar commitments to end child poverty from the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats. Labour has also evoked a vaguer aspiration of ending pensioner poverty, without however adopting specific targets. Labour has not committed or referred to an aspiration to eradicating UK poverty overall. Labour’s overall approach to poverty has centred on strong promotion of employment as the best route out of poverty – often focusing on worklessness rather than poverty and preferring the language of social exclusion over explicit references to poverty. Even Gordon Brown’s 2008 party conference speech only mentioned poverty a few times<sup>20</sup>.
- The *Conservatives* have come a long way since their 2005 election manifestos, in particular in terms of their declared interest in the social justice agenda, mainly framed as the need for mending Britain’s broken society. The Conservatives have signed up to the Government’s commitments on child poverty and, unlike Labour, they have also evoked an aspiration to eradicating UK poverty (across generations): at the launch of the ‘Making British Poverty History’ report, David Cameron pledged that he wanted his Government to be judged on its effects on the least advantaged. The title of the report comes close to a Conservative commitment to the objective of eradicating UK poverty – although the report does not

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When excluding the references to child poverty (4 times) and international poverty (twice), Gordon Brown referred to poverty/poor people only twice. The speech referred to fair/unfair/fairness no less than 45 times.

contain this as an explicit objective nor is there a timetable for achieving this objective. David Cameron's September 2008 conference speech however had only relatively little attention for poverty (fairness was not mentioned at all) – the central argument of his approach to social justice was “*progressive ends*” (mending the broken society), “*Conservative means*” (a focus on family, schools and sanctions for workless individuals who refuse reasonable job offers). Other Conservative MPs have likewise stressed the importance of poverty as an issue for them personally or for their party including Andrew Selous MP mentioning in his maiden speech that he wished to see the Conservatives become the party of the poor and the disadvantaged. The establishment of the Centre for Social Justice by Iain Duncan Smith and its reports on Breakdown Britain and Breakthrough Britain are similarly signs of the Conservatives' declared interest in social justice themes.

- The *Liberal Democrats*, during their September 2007 conference launched the ‘Freedom from Poverty, Opportunity for All’ paper and adopted a resolution on UK poverty explicitly stating that “*creating a fair society in which everyone has the opportunity to fulfil their potential, free from the barriers imposed by poverty and inequality is a core Liberal Democrat principle*”. The resolution confirms the Liberal Democrats' commitment to the 2020 target on ending child poverty and suggests for example raising the level of child benefit by up to £5 for every family, restoring the link between the basic state pension and earnings and uprating the minimum wage each year in line with the recommendations of the Low Pay Commission. Fairness was still an important theme during Nick Clegg's September 2008 conference speech which referred to the Liberal Democrats economic recovery plans as Fairer ‘Futures’ – even if he referred to fairness significantly less than Gordon Brown (12 compared to Brown's 45).

B3 The baseline was further complemented by the views of Get Fair members and partners, who during the September 2008 interview phase referred to a number of strong points in terms of the pre-Get Fair political situation:

- All major political parties have committed themselves to ending child poverty and all political parties have been willing to engage with the campaign, which was considered “*to be saying something*”. Labour, Conservatives and Liberal Democrats spoke during the parliamentary launch of the Get Fair campaign – at ministerial or shadow ministerial level – and all three parties agreed to participate in Chatham House style events with Get Fair campaign partners offering an informal opportunity to discuss the campaign.
- The current Prime Minister and other politicians were believed by several to be personally committed to the UK poverty agenda – some referred to instances where individual politicians had explicitly told them about their personal commitment and their frustration about

their hands being tied because of resource constraints and fears that the electorate would not support transfer of more resources to disadvantaged groups.

- Conservatives MPs were reported by at least two Get Fair partners to have said that poverty will be a key election issue in the next general elections. The fact that the Conservatives have been putting poverty on the agenda implies that Labour will need to put their own house in order for the next general election – as explicitly recognised by Labour MPs according to a Get Fair member with informal contacts with the Labour Party headquarters.

B4 However, several partners felt that, although the genuine personal concern for poor people and disadvantaged groups was there, this concern was easily superseded by other priorities and that little progress had been made in practical and policy terms. Also, they felt that the *solutions* suggested by political parties often focused too strongly on sanctions and conditionality of support (in particular the Conservatives) or on work as the best route out of poverty – ignoring the issue of the working poor). Interviewees did however refer to a difference between the Scottish and the English context in particular given the development of the Scottish Anti-Poverty Strategy.

B5 In September 2008 it was already clear that the Get Fair campaign was not the only force working towards getting poverty (fairness) higher on the political agenda: fairness already featured highly in the political discourse of Labour and Liberal Democratic politicians and the Conservatives had already started raising the poverty and social justices stakes. The economic turmoil and recession similarly encouraged increased political attention for poverty issues including for example increased media coverage of fuel poverty in the context of the rising fuel prices earlier in 2008 as well as concerns about bankers' bonuses entering political discussions.

#### *Media*

B6 A September 2008 report on Media, Poverty and Public Opinion in the UK (by the Scottish Poverty Information Unit (SPIU) and Cultural Business Division at Glasgow Caledonian University) provides useful background information in terms of current levels of media coverage of UK Poverty. In particular, this report has found that:

- Coverage of poverty is peripheral in mainstream UK media with only 640 news reports (or a small proportion of overall output)

referring to poverty over the course of one week. Just under half of this coverage refers to domestic poverty; just over half to international poverty. Poverty itself is rarely the main focus of a news report. However, media stakeholders feel that the demand for poverty news has gone up, and the UK government's poverty targets have become a 'hook' for more stories.

- Poverty is rarely mentioned in non-news broadcasts: discounting the documentaries specifically about poverty included in the study, in over forty hours of television analysed between January 2005 – October 2007, the word 'poverty' appeared only twice.
- People actually experiencing poverty featured in fewer than one in eight of the UK poverty reports. Reports draw upon stock phrases and a familiar journalistic repertoire: the government is portrayed as active, people experiencing poverty either stigmatised or as passive victims. Some documentaries and forms of reality television (e.g. *The Secret Millionaire*) provide examples of a more sympathetic view of people experiencing poverty.
- Journalists depend heavily on government, politicians and officials for information on poverty particularly for policy and statistics. Campaigning organisations are regarded as becoming more effective.
- Regional and local media tend to report more positively than national media – the national press was felt to be more cynical about Government action related to poverty.

B7 Baseline interviews with Get Fair partners present a similar perspective: partners generally feel that there is only limited attention for poverty in the media, but a limited number commented that they felt that attention for poverty was growing, referring to increased interest in pensioner poverty and housing over the last few years and, more recently, increased interest in fuel poverty and the credit crunch – although in the latter case focusing more on the banks themselves than on the poor. Many Get Fair partners felt that portrayal in the media of poverty was often stereotypical, either taking the perspective of poor people as undeserving or as victims. However, they stressed that a lot depended on individual journalists (some were reported to be very sympathetic) and on the type of newspaper (distinction between broadsheets and tabloids).

*Impact on the wider public*

B8 The Get Fair campaign sits against the backdrop of the 2007 JRF-funded study on 'Attitudes to Poverty, Findings from the British Social Attitudes Survey' (by the National Centre for Social Research). The information is

dated (the British Social Attitudes Survey analysed dates back to 2003), but still presents useful background information:

- By and large the UK public tends to interpret poverty in absolute terms: nine in ten think that someone in Britain is in poverty if they have not got enough to eat and live without getting into debt but only one in five agree that someone in Britain is in poverty if they have enough to buy the things they really needed, but not enough to buy the things most people take for granted.
- The two most common views as to why people are poor are that it is just an inevitable part of modern life (32%) or that it reflects laziness or lack of will power (28%). Nearly one in five (19%) think that it reflects social injustice, while 13% think the poor are ‘unlucky’.
- Around four in ten agree that government should redistribute income from the better off to the less well off; three in ten disagree. More than half (61%) think that ‘ordinary working people do not get their fair share of the nation’s wealth’ only one in ten (13%) disagrees. One in three think that unemployment benefits are too low and ‘cause hardship’; 40% think that they are ‘too high’ and discourage job-seeking.

B9 Overall, Get Fair partners commented during the August-September 2008 baseline interviews, that it was difficult to engage the wider public and encourage individuals to take action on poverty. Several felt that it was easier to engage people on international poverty – linking this to the fact that getting involved in domestic poverty is a “*huge personal challenge: it is about the person living in the flat opposite you*”. A number of organisations indicated that it was relatively straightforward to get people to do some things (such as getting people to donate food, clothes, other goods or even money) but that it was extremely difficult to go beyond this, because this often means asking people to go against their own interests: for example asking landlords to lower their rents or asking parents to give up their child’s place in their first choice school to allow the school to allow more children from low income families in.

B10 Evidence from other poverty related campaigns<sup>21</sup> suggests that they typically encourage several hundreds to several thousands supporters to directly engage with the campaign. This ranges from an online registration of their email

<sup>21</sup> Cambridge Policy Consultants. What works in building public support for the UK poverty agenda? (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, July 2009).

address on the campaign website to more active levels of supporter engagement such as writing to their MP or participating in a rally or other activity. Comments by two Get Fair (medium-sized or large) partners that they would consider “*a few 100s*” or “*less than 600*” individuals involved in a single action targeting MPs to be disappointing; one of these organisations indicated that they would generally consider 1,000 responses to be a good response.

- B11 This evidence also suggests that successful coalition building works better if there is a focus on a highly specific message with a clear solution where all involved stand to gain something, that ‘success breeds success’ and that investing in partnership management, starting from partners’ own priorities and perspectives, is important. A broader comparison with other coalitions was beyond the scope of this evaluation.

## ANNEX C REACH OF GET FAIR BY PARTY AND REGION

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C1 More than half of all MPs reached were Labour MPs; in percentage terms reach was highest among Liberal Democrat MPs – almost one in three of all Liberal Democrat MPs received an email from at least one Get Fair supporter. Reach among Conservatives was just less than one in five. London stands out as the area where the e-action reached the highest number and percentage of MPs. Reach in Scotland and England was higher than in Wales and Northern Ireland – none of the Get Fair member organisations are based in Northern Ireland.

Table 3.1: Reach of Get Fair e-action by region

	Nr	%
London	24	33
North East	8	27
South West	14	27
North West	18	24
West Midlands	14	24
East Midlands	10	23
East England	13	23
South East	15	18
Yorks & Humber	9	16
Scotland	16	27
England (total)	125	24
Wales	4	10
Northern Ireland	1	6
Total	146	23

Table 3.2: Reach of Get Fair e-action by party

	Nr	%
Lib Dem	19	30
Labour	88	25
Conservative	34	17
Other	5	14
Total	146	23

C2 Liberal Democrats were most likely to be lobbied: at least one in ten of all Liberal Democrats received a Get Fair delegation. The highest number of MPs who were lobbied are Labour MPs (at least 18 MPs). Relatively few Conservative MPs were lobbied: 6 MPs or just 2% of the total number of Conservatives. Most MPs were reached in Yorkshire and The Humber; there is no verifiable evidence of lobbies taking place in the East of England or the South East. Wales and England score higher than Scotland (only 1 evidenced lobby) and Northern Ireland (no evidenced lobbies) – none of the Get Fair member organisations are based in Northern Ireland.

Table 3.3: Reach of Get Fair lobby by party

	Nr	%
Lib Dem	6	10
Labour	18	5
Conservative	4	2
Other	0	0
Total	28	4

Table 3.4: Reach of Get Fair lobby by region

	Nr	%
Yorks & Humber	5	9
East Midlands	4	9
South West	4	8
North East	2	7
North West	4	5
West Midlands	2	3
London	2	3
East England	0	0

South East	0	0
Wales	4	10
England (total)	22	4
Scotland	1	2
Northern Ireland	0	0
Total	28	4

C3 The table below shows the number of signatories to the EDM by party and by region. Labour MPs represent the largest group of signatories (54 out of 83) but the Liberal Democrats score higher in percentage terms: Liberal Democrats were twice as likely to sign the EDM than Labour MPs. MPs from the devolved administrations were similarly almost twice as likely to sign the EDM than English MP. Within England, there appears to be an element of north-south divide with MPs from the North more likely to sign than MPs from the Midlands or the South; London features in between. However, this correlation is far from absolute: the North East scores lower than the rest of the North and the South West scores higher than the rest of the South. It so happens that the North East saw less local Get Fair lobby activity (only 2 organisers featured on the Get Fair website) and that the South West was the region with the most intense Get Fair lobby activity.

Table 3.4 Signatories to the Early Day Motion by party and region

		Nr	%
Yorks & Humber	56	11	20
North West	76	14	18
North East	30	3	10
London	73	10	14
East Midlands	44	4	9
West Midlands	59	4	7
East England	56	3	5
South East	83	5	6
South West	51	6	12
Total England	528	60	11
Scotland	59	11	19
Wales	40	8	20
Northern Ireland	18	4	22
Total	645	83	13

	Nr	%
Labour	54	15
Conservative	1	0.5
Lib Dem	19	30
Other	9	24
SNP	2	29
Plaid Cymru	1	33
DUP	1	11
SDLP	3	100
Ind	1	14
Other	1	13
Total	83	13

## ANNEX D IMPACTS ON THE MEDIA

D1 Impacts of the Get Fair campaign on the media have been fairly modest. Systematic media tracking of references to the Get Fair campaign in the media was only started in May 2009, but prior to that Get Fair coalition members made an effort to collect and collate examples of media coverage. The data available suggests that there have been at least 98 instances of media coverage for Get Fair or Get Fair activities<sup>22</sup>.

Time	Nr	Get Fair context	Media channel
July – August 2008	5	Announcement of Get Fair & Open Letter to the Government by faith based organisations	xPress Digest (RuralNet) The Universe** The Baptist Times The Tablet Third Sector
September 2008	11	Media release to launch Get Fair and publication of YouGov poll results	Ekklesia The Universe The Daily Mirror (online) The Guardian UK Reuters (online) Inspire Magazine Independent Catholic News Christian Today Church Times The Catholic Herald Religious Intelligence
October 2008	4	End Child Poverty Rally	Real Life (Journal of Young Christian Worker) Faith Based Regeneration Network Blackpool Community News Manchester Evening News
October 2008	1	Lecture by Housing Justice	Christian Today
November 2008	6	Open Letter by Get Fair to Leaders of the three main political parties	The United Reformed Church New Start Magazine The Baptist Times** Methodist Recorder Faith Based Regeneration Network
November 2008	46	Get Fair joining a wider call (from trade unions, third sector organisations and others) asking the Prime Minister to scrap the	Mainly local press, but also including national coverage including for example Daily Express and Metro

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Media coverage for End Child Poverty was excluded, unless there was an explicit reference to Get Fair. Media coverage for Poverty and Homelessness Action Week was included, but it is important to note that none of the 19 articles featuring Poverty and Homelessness Action Week referenced the Get Fair campaign.

		planned welfare reforms	
January 2009	19	Poverty and Homelessness Action Week	10 local press 2 Scotland 3 faith based 4 national media (BBC online, Morning Star, Times online and ITV teletext)
April 2009	1	Budget announcements	Ekklesia
May 2009	1	Interview with Young Christian Workers (Get Fair member)	Catholic Times
June-July 2009	4	Get Fair Constituency Lobby	Hartlepool Today Tewkesbury ADMAG Flintshire Chronicle Evening Leader
TOTAL	98		

Source: CPC analysis of media coverage collected by Get Fair coalition, by Durrants (media monitoring) and through Google News.

- D2 To a large extent the media coverage has been limited to a specialist press, in particular faith-based publications and local press coverage, in particular for Poverty and Homelessness Action Week, to some extent the June 2009 constituency lobby. Get Fair reached its widest media impact by joining a wider call to the Prime Minister to scrap planned welfare reforms: no less than 46 examples, mainly local press, were found. The *depth* of media impacts is however questionable: the media coverage was literally limited to a reference to Get Fair as one of many groups supporting the call; no information was given about the Get Fair campaign and one can assume that the call to the Prime Minister would also have been covered by the media had Get Fair not lent its support to it.
- D3 For most of the media coverage the readership is relatively small. For example, the Catholic Times has a readership of 18,000. However, there were a number of instances where Get Fair reached the national media. The widest coverage was an article published in the Daily Mirror ‘*Labour has a poor record on stamping out poverty – domestic news article*’, which reached a readership of 1.5 million.
- D4 The coverage varied from one line mention of the campaign to front-page news or a detailed three page feature. A more detailed analysis of the content of the Get Fair coverage was undertaken for the period between June and December 2008:

- The majority of coverage used poverty statistics;
- Several pieces included a case study to illustrate causes of poverty and what it is like to live in poverty;
- Out of the pieces where Get Fair was a main story, five pieces used a photo;
- Several pieces used expert quotations in the articles, most commonly Get Fair Campaign Chair, Vice Chair or Co-ordinator, but also experts in the field of finances & debt and Church representatives;
- The vast majority of pieces of coverage stated the main aim of the campaign was to end or challenge poverty in the UK. The ones who did not mention poverty in the campaign aim, stated the campaign aim was to address the wealth gap and wealth distribution in the UK. Less than half defined that the coalition aim is to demand government action for poverty; six also mentioned 2020 deadline for poverty eradication and three cited the campaign aim is to tackle child poverty. Three pieces added that the campaign aim was also to confront the negative images of the poor;
- Very few provided any information on concrete ways to get involved in the campaign or what could readers do to support the coalition. For example, only one article specifically prompted people to register support to receive campaign updates and other information. However, there were a few that detailed specific actions that can or should be taken by individuals and/or organisations: