

Scottish Churches
Housing Action



no room for homelessness!

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PRESS RELEASE

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New drama highlights poverty and homelessness

Traverse Theatre in Edinburgh will host the Scottish premiere of *Voices from the Edge*, a drama based on the words and experiences of people who have been homeless and living in poverty, on Sunday 8 February, as part of Poverty & Homelessness Action Week.

The drama is written by Christine Bacon, and performed by Actors for Human Rights, the national outreach project of iceandfire theatre company. The Edinburgh performance is one of 10 in locations throughout the UK as part of the action week, which aims to highlight Britain's problems of poverty and homelessness, particularly at a time of recession. It features the stories – in their own words – of Bernadette, Daniel, Kevin and Laura, who together have experience of street homelessness, unemployment, disability, domestic violence, and seeking asylum.

“We were looking for an accessible way of presenting real stories of the lives of people who are often under the radar of mainstream society,” says **Alastair Cameron** from the action week planning group. “Christine Bacon’s experience of presenting hard issues in an engaging and entertaining way was ideal. We’re grateful to the Traverse for making the theatre available for this one-off production.”

Christine Bacon adds, “Human rights are often dismissed as things that ‘other people’ need, usually people living in far-flung places. This play will encourage us to look in our own back yards and see how core human rights values such as dignity and worth, equality and respect are undermined by poverty in today’s Britain.”

In the play, **Daniel**, 59, a rough sleeper, says, “Street living is not an easy option as some would have you believe. The reality is that for many homeless people, living on the streets is the only real option.”

The world premiere of *Voices from the Edge* will be in Leeds on 31 January, and other venues for performances include Liverpool, London – where actor Simon Callow will be one of the performers – Birmingham, and Falmouth in Cornwall. The full list of venues, and other activities during Poverty & Homelessness Action Week, can be found at www.actionweek.org.uk.

Ends

NOTES

1. The only Scottish public performance of *Voices from the Edge* is at the **Traverse Theatre, Cambridge St, Edinburgh, at 6.00pm on Sunday 8 February**. Entry is by donation, and advance booking is recommended, by contacting Valerie Sparling on 0131 477 4500 or val@churches-housing.org.
2. Scottish Churches Housing Action brings together the major Christian denominations in Scotland under the slogan *No Room for Homelessness!* It campaigns for the rights of homeless people, promotes the development of volunteer projects, and encourages the churches to make land and property available for affordable housing. www.churches-housing.org
3. The Poverty & Homelessness Action Week partnership comprises Church Action on Poverty, Housing Justice and Scottish Churches Housing Action. The week runs from Saturday 31 January to Sunday 8 February, and includes Homelessness Sunday (31 Jan) and Poverty Action Sunday (8 Feb). www.actionweek.org.uk
4. Actors for Human Rights is the outreach network of iceandfire theatre, dedicated to drawing public attention to a range of human rights concerns. www.iceandfire.co.uk/afhr

For further information contact

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