

## Impact of Poverty

### Overview description

Around 200,000 children are living in poverty in Greater Manchester (Greater Manchester Poverty Action, 2020). The impact of poverty carries on through life – only 37% of children in Manchester on free school meals leave school with five GCSEs grade A-C, compared to a national average of 61% (Selvan 2019). And the impact of poverty on healthy years of life has long been recognised, with differences of up to 15 years between rich and poor areas.

### The impact of child poverty

Children and families living and growing up in poverty and low-income households experience many disadvantages. These can have negative health and social consequences during childhood and into adulthood. The impact of child poverty and some of the inequalities it creates are outlined below (Public Health Scotland, 2020):

- Children and families living in poverty suffer greater health and social inequalities than their better off peers.
- The negative impacts of poverty on children start before birth and accumulate across the life course.
- Poverty has negative impacts on children's health, social, emotional and cognitive development, behaviour and educational outcomes.
- Children born into poverty are more likely to experience a wide range of health problems, including poor nutrition, chronic disease and mental health problems.
- Poverty puts an additional strain on families, which can lead to parental mental health and relationship problems, financial problems and substance misuse. This can have a negative impact on parenting behaviours which impact children's outcomes.
- Higher educational attainment and skills are associated with substantially higher earnings and employment prospects for individuals and future generations.

### Child poverty and ethnicity

Recent analysis of data suggests a correlation in Greater Manchester between the ethnicity of an area and the level of poverty (Greater Manchester Poverty Action, 2020). Areas with the highest BAME populations in Greater Manchester have the highest levels of child poverty. Fifteen out of the twenty wards with the largest BAME populations in the city region have a child poverty rate of over 50%.

## How can education settings help?

Below is a summary of some top tips generated by staff, parents and carers, and children and young people (Child Poverty Action Group, 2015).

### School clothing

- Be flexible about uniform and allow for purchase from a range of suppliers.
- Hold regular uniform sales and use positive language (avoid advertising as 'second hand clothing' and instead call sales Pop-up shops, Flash sales or Clothing Recycling Events instead).
- Link uniform sales into other school initiatives, e.g. eco schools and recycling to overcome any perceived stigma.
- Advise parents that you will recycle all lost property after a certain period of time.
- Make PE kit available to children who need it without them having to ask every week.

### Food and snacks

- Provide opportunities for children to eat breakfast before starting school/college.
- Save uneaten fruit, yogurts and snack bars from packed lunches and make them available for children who would like them.
- If someone regularly doesn't have lunch money, discreetly ask about the reasons for this and cover the costs of lunch for an agreed period of time for non-FSM pupils whose parents are having financial difficulties.

### In the classroom

- Let parents know what the school/college will provide for their child (e.g. stationery) as well as what they need to bring.
- Have a stationery box at the front of each classroom that all pupils can use at any time.
- Encourage donations of stationery from the local community to help resource school supplies.
- Be aware that some children may not be having a party and get cards and presents for their birthday so consider how to ensure children's birthdays are celebrated in class.

### Homework and out of school/college learning

- Provide a homework club which has appropriate materials and access to online resources and encourage parents to attend and help support children.
- Bear in mind when setting homework that not all children have access to the internet or money for resources for arts and crafts.

### Charity and fundraising activities/special events

- Encourage 'show and tell' or golden time activities not to involve electronic toys as this may lead to competition and stigmatisation.

- Consider arranging book swaps rather than book fairs which put pressure on parents to buy certain books for their child.
- Instead of asking families for money, explore how children can support good causes in other ways, such as helping at an event to raise awareness or doing a bag pack.
- Is there any way of making school photographs more affordable? Can there be a cheaper digital option?
- Instead of an 'American-style' prom which can become competitive, consider low cost alternatives like a day at the beach or making the event about doing something for the local community.

### School trips and activities

- Add up the amount of money requested from parents in all the letters that are sent home during a pupil's time in school and consider spacing things out more.
- Inform parents at the start of the year how much may be needed for activities so they have plenty of advance warning.
- Revise any first come (with payment)- first serve policies for activities. This is not fair on parents who cannot produce the money immediately.
- Encourage PTAs to allocate a proportion of their income raised to a hardship fund for pupils which the school administers for pupils from low income families. This helps keep the families involved anonymous.
- Reading out the names of those who have not paid for activities can be embarrassing. Make direct contact with the parents and see if you can understand whether there is a reason for non-payment.
- Letters requesting money should come to parents directly through email or sealed envelopes as children may hide them if they are worried their parents cannot pay.

### Other

- Hold high expectations of all pupils but be understanding of the circumstances of each.
- Staff training sessions on the impact of poverty to raise awareness
- Anti-bullying policies should include clear statements on money-based bullying and staff should be mindful of this.
- Developing positive relationships with parents is crucial. Staff being in the playground to meet and greet at the start of the school day has made a big difference in some schools.
- Support parents to claim the benefits they are entitled to by signposting to agencies and other forms of support/advice or hold information events in school.
- Encourage handmade letters and presents for teachers. Discourage class collections of money for teacher gifts or even consider asking pupils not to buy presents at all.

- Review reward and merit systems to ensure they are not given for things that could be related to finances at home, such as 'correct' uniform or having a pencil.

Top  
Tips!

For Early  
Years

Work on building positive relationships, and an open supportive dialogue with parents and carers so you are more able to signpost families in need of support.

Make sure to teach all children, not just those experiencing poverty, about the reality for many families. 'It's a No-Money Day' by Kate Milner is a child friendly picture book to spark conversation and build relatability and empathy.

*Useful Links:*

- Cost of Living: Supporting Families in EYs: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GqmZcxtXY9c>
- Download and share a local services poster <https://www.annafreud.org/early-years/early-years-in-mind/resources/cost-of-living/>
- <https://www.pacey.org.uk/news-and-views/pacey-blog/2019/november-2019/how-to-support-children-and-families-experiencing/>
- <https://www.annafreud.org/early-years/early-years-in-mind/working-with-families-facing-challenges/families-experiencing-homelessness/>

Post-16

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Tips!

It may be important to consider that some young people may be travelling longer distances to get to school. Poorer students may struggle to afford public transport costs which may subsequently affect their attendance. It is important to contact the parents/carers discreetly.

Consider the below document which looks at supporting the attainment of disadvantaged children, a briefing for school leaders

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/473976/DFE-RS411\\_Supporting\\_the\\_attainment\\_of\\_disadvantaged\\_pupils\\_-\\_briefing\\_for\\_school\\_leaders.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/473976/DFE-RS411_Supporting_the_attainment_of_disadvantaged_pupils_-_briefing_for_school_leaders.pdf)

Financial supporting, including information on Bursary's <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-education-financial-support-for-students>.

There are a variety of organisations that support CYP from experiencing poverty with applying for university and provide additional opportunities. Websites below:

- The Sutton Trust: <https://www.suttontrust.com/our-programmes/>
- IntoUniversity: <https://intouniversity.org/centre/intouniversity-manchester-north/>
- NEON: <https://www.educationopportunities.co.uk/about/>

## Useful resources and links

Tackling Child Poverty: A Guide for School:

<https://cpag.org.uk/sites/default/files/2023-08/Tackling%20child%20poverty-%20a%20guide%20for%20schools.pdf>

Manchester Family Poverty Strategy:

[https://www.manchester.gov.uk/downloads/download/7541/making\\_manchester\\_fairer\\_anti-poverty\\_strategy\\_2023-2027](https://www.manchester.gov.uk/downloads/download/7541/making_manchester_fairer_anti-poverty_strategy_2023-2027)

**Wood Street Mission** - Wood Street Mission is a children's charity helping children and families living on a low income in Manchester and Salford.

<https://www.woodstreetmission.org.uk/about-us/who-we-are/>

- They provide practical help to help meet children's day-to-day needs and improve their life chances. Through [Family Basics](#) they provide struggling families with children's clothes, bedding and baby equipment, and toys and books which are important for children's wellbeing and development.
- They promote engagement in education by helping families with the costs of going to school through [SmartStart](#) and run holiday [Book Clubs](#) to promote reading and improve children's literacy.
- They also provide [toys](#) for children to have presents on Christmas Day.

They raise awareness about child poverty through our communications, holding events and giving talks at schools, businesses and groups.

We help thousands of children and their families every year, and all our services are free for families to access on referral.

### Local documents/Strategies

Manchester Family Poverty Strategy

[https://www.manchester.gov.uk/downloads/download/7541/making\\_manchester\\_fairer\\_anti-poverty\\_strategy\\_2023-2027](https://www.manchester.gov.uk/downloads/download/7541/making_manchester_fairer_anti-poverty_strategy_2023-2027)

Greater Manchester Poverty Action. <https://www.resolvepoverty.org/>

## References

Child Poverty Action Group. (2015). *1 in 5: Raising Awareness of Child Poverty*.

Edinburgh Council. <https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Documents/sacfi10b-top-tips-for-schools.pdf>

Public Health Scotland. (2021, January). *Impact of Child Poverty*. Improving Health, Public Health Scotland. [Impact of child poverty - Child poverty overview - Child poverty - Children - Population groups - Public Health Scotland](#)

Selvan, F. (2019, May 29). *Child Poverty – it's time to be outraged*. The Big Life Group. <https://www.thebiglifegroup.com/child-poverty-its-time-to-be-outraged/>