

COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY

Overcoming poverty-related stigma and barriers to participation at school

Child Poverty Action Group in Scotland

1. The scale and impact of child poverty
2. Brainstorm exercise: school costs
3. Cost of the School Day in Glasgow: financial barriers to participation and good practice in overcoming them
4. Group exercise: problems, good practice and what more can be done in your settings?

CHILD POVERTY

1 in 5 children (210,000) in Scotland are growing up in poverty

Lone parent family with 2 children < £278 p/w
2 parent family with 2 children < £355 p/w

Lacking resources to participate in the activities and have the living conditions and amenities which are the norm in 21st century Scotland

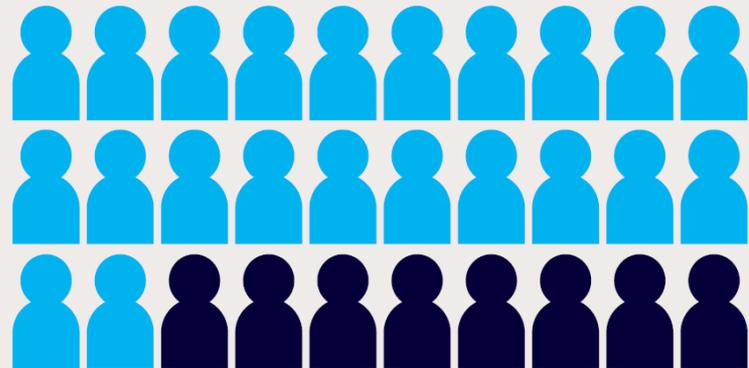
Rising levels of material deprivation. Families with children using food banks: 1,861 in 2011/12 to **36,114** in 2014/15

56% of children in poverty live in households with at least one adult in employment.

Spread and scale of poverty varies across Scotland but exists in every council ward and in every school.

Glasgow has the highest rate of child poverty in Scotland with one in three children (more than 36,000) growing up in poverty

8 CHILDREN IN AN AVERAGE GLASGOW CLASSROOM OF 23 LIVE IN POVERTY



But 26% of Glasgow schools have more than $\frac{3}{4}$ of pupils living in the 15% most deprived datazones in Scotland.

Health and wellbeing

- Children growing up in low income households have poorer health and wellbeing outcomes including health, social, emotional and behavioural problems. Lower birth weights, more likely to be in an accident, poorer nutrition, mental health problems and lower subjective wellbeing.

(Director of Public Health, 2015)

Education and attainment

- Significant and persistent gap in attainment between children from low-income and high-income households. Lower attainment linked to deprivation throughout school. Children from deprived households leave school earlier. Low attainment strongly linked to destinations, job prospects and future earning power.

(Sosu and Ellis, 2014)

COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY

- Project working with schools in Glasgow to **identify** and to **overcome** financial stigma and/or barriers to participation throughout the school day.
- 339 children and young people (P5-S6) and 111 school staff in 8 schools, 2014/15. 4 Secondary and 4 Primary Schools. Mixed deprivation levels. Focused on policies and practices throughout school day which could minimise or remove problems identified

1. How do education policies and school practices impact on the participation and school experiences of children and young people from low-income households?

2. How can education policies and school practices reduce or remove stigma, exclusion or disadvantage for children and young people from low-income households? What works well right now? And what else should be done?



2 minute brainstorm with your neighbour

What are the main costs across a school day?

Results: financial pressures on family budgets

07:00 Uniform

“A lot of our children don't have indoor shoes, or if they do have them, they're falling apart. They're a danger, actually, they're too small, you see their feet hanging out the back of them... Some don't have jackets or have got the same jacket all year, some of them are not waterproof.” (Staff)

12:30 Eating at school

“Some of the kids are coming in hungry, they've not had breakfast, or they'll tell you that they've not had dinner. You know then that there's not much money at home and parents can't afford food for them.” (Staff)

“If you have three children-- that's £3 for breakfast every day, and that's £4.50 for lunch every day. So that's a lot of money over a month.” (Staff)

19:00 Homework

“Last year we got 3 [home craft] tasks in a row and my mum says we should get them at different points in the school because we need to buy lots of things and it cost a lot of money.” (P6)

08:00 Travelling to school

“We have to pay for two people to get the bus, that's £10 a week each to get the school bus without a pass. The first year, I got a pass.” (S4)

09:15 Learning at school

“She says that you should bring your own stuff, but with some teachers, they bring stuff for you. With other teachers they do have stuff but they say that you should bring your own. Because one of our rules is 'be prepared' it could get you into trouble.” (P6)

11:00 Trips

“Even the wee trips they're maybe not getting to go on. Getting a 10 or 15 pounds out of them cannot be done.” (Staff)



Results: financial barriers to participation (1/2)

08:00 Travelling to school

“Sometimes we get phone calls - not every single week, but occasionally - to say that they've not been at school because they've no money for bus fare... Or else they'll maybe be in late on whatever date it is that the giro comes. They need to wait to get that before they have the bus fare in.” (Staff)

“See, it's the Possil bus. It stays for five minutes, and if you've missed it, you're screwed... [to stay for supported study] you either need to walk it home, or you need to pay extra for the bus.” (S6)

19:00 Homework

“My teacher said the other day, if youse don't finish this you'll have to do it for homework but I don't have the Office stuff that you need to use, like spreadsheets and that, because I've no paid for it and you need to pay for it, it's extra, and I was like I don't have it, say if I don't finish this how will I do it and she was like, ‘I don't know, you'll find a way somehow.’” (S4)

“Parents who are themselves educated, less impoverished and able to provide everything from separate bedrooms to personalised tutors have a massive advantage.” (Staff)

09:15 Learning at school

“Aye. I didnae want to pay 50 pence on Home Eccies. I didn't want to pay that because I couldn't be bothered because then that takes money off my lunch money, and I was like, nah.” (S4)



Results: financial barriers to participation (2/2)

11:00 School trips

“Everyone when they come back they talk about it for ages like, ‘oh that was AMAZING!’” (P6)

“My mum felt guilty that I couldn't go... Why do we have costly trips then? It puts people under pressure and it makes people embarrassed and disappointed if they can't go.” (P7)

14:00 Fun events

“You see one or two [at charity coffee mornings], you know, if they don't have it... ‘Got fifty pence?’. ‘No, no, it's okay. I don't want cakes.’ And that breaks my heart. Because that's their-- maybe they don't really want a cake, ‘no, no - it's okay, I didn't want one’ - but that's maybe their defence.” (Staff)

16:00 School clubs

“We used to get told we had to bring... old trainers to wear on the pitch. But everyone didn't have trainers.”

“I don't have more than one pair.” (P7)

“We provide computing clubs, homework clubs, sports clubs, lots of clubs, and they're all free because we know the cost of things. I would love to take them all to Bellahouston [for a block of dry slope skiing lessons] but I couldn't in all consciousness ask parents for £50.” (Staff)

Results: stigma and difference

07:00 Uniform

“There's a set uniform, obviously, trousers and shirts, but you can still tell like who's richer and poorer by like the jackets, the shoes, the bags.”

“There's some people you get that are nasty and pure heavy cheeky.” (S3)

“Some people get paid monthly and they cannae even get new shoes until next month, but they expect it the next day and give you detention until you get black shoes.” (S4)

11:00 School trips

“I think my grandad put some in, and my mum put some in, and the school put the rest in. And they were alright about that but then I still felt like some of my teachers were looking down on me for that.” (S5)

14:00 Fun events

“We get kids that don't come in on the non-dress code days. Why? Because they don't have anything new.”

“The kids would never admit that. They don't say, ‘It's because I've nothing new.’ It's just, ‘Oh, I wasn't well that day, Miss.’” (Staff)

10:30 Friendships

“A lot of people, I think, that have maybe got a lower income, round about the school, seem to be isolated and they've no got a lot of friends.” (S4)

12:40 Eating at school

“If your pals are going out at lunch you'll be a loner. It puts you out the group because they're going out and then you're sitting there on your own [with a free meal]” (S3)

- Remove need for badged sweatshirts
- Improving promotion of clothing grant

Clothing grant levels to be reviewed by Glasgow City Council

Increase to free transport boundaries reversed by Glasgow City Council

- Resources on hand in class for everyone
- Developing consistent expectations around resources

- Inclusion of issues in Health and Wellbeing work
- Review of toys and games brought to school

- Improved distribution of free meal forms at induction
- Support for parents to complete

- Review of trips offered
- Subsidy systems which avoid children having to ask for help

- 'Chuck it in a bucket' fundraising
- Review number of non-uniform days

Glasgow City Council exploring potential for trips and clubs fund

- Reduction in number of craft tasks
- Consistent support to access ICT – homework clubs

Conclusions

“What we have truly realised is that small changes really do make a big difference. Imagine if every school took a little time and started to think, reflect and make some simple changes - what could we achieve together?” **Head Teacher, Glasgow**

- School costs can be significant and difficult for families on low incomes
- School costs mean some children at risk of missing out on same opportunities and experiences as their peers and of feeling different/excluded
- Solutions to this lie within the school community - small policy and practice changes can be easily made, often at no or low cost
- Bigger changes need to be a priority for local authorities
- Strategies to narrow attainment gap fruitless without focus on cost barriers which shape and limit children’s opportunities. You can’t learn and thrive if you can’t participate.

