



Safeguarding Newsletter: Child Poverty

UNDERSTANDING THE CURRENT SITUATION

August 4th 2020 - Buttle UK have published 'The State of Child Poverty 20' - a unique insight into the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic inside the homes of some of the most vulnerable families in the UK.

Key Findings of the Survey:

Impact of crisis on children and young people's education:

During lockdown, there have been multiple pressures on children's education - food poverty and a lack of digital access being two of the main issues. The result has been that those living in poverty have either had no home schooling at all, or have found it incredibly difficult to learn at home. The implication is that the education gap has widened, and many vulnerable children will have been left behind by the crisis. The impact of being cut off from peers has also impacted mental health. All of these issues will need focused intervention if these children are to make up the lost time and have a chance in life.

Impact of crisis on the mental health of children living in poverty:

COVID-19 has significantly impacted the mental health and behaviour of children living in poverty. Being unable to leave often ill-equipped homes, homes with little in the way of stimulating activities or the opportunity to play with friends, has had a huge impact on children's mental health. Struggling to afford basics such as food and utilities, as well as parents not having any down time away from their children, has led to increased tensions in many families. These are family situations that were already under stress before the lockdown, with children experiencing a variety of adverse childhood experiences (such as neglect, domestic abuse and parent alcohol/substance abuse) that have been exacerbated by the crisis.

Impact of the crisis on employment and the family's financial wellbeing, and meeting basic needs.:

COVID-19 has impacted considerably on the financial wellbeing and their ability to meeting their children's basic needs.

83% of frontline workers have seen an increase in need for foodbanks and 64% for local authority welfare assistance.

Frontline workers reported major difficulties during lockdown for families in accessing basics. 57% could not afford essential household items; 47% of families were unable to afford food.

www.buttleuk.org/news/the-state-of-child-poverty-2020

What is Poverty?

Poverty is about more than just money, but a lack of money is the defining feature of being poor. Poverty is a very real issue in the UK today.

The sociologist Peter Townsend, who was a founding member of Child Poverty Action Group, defined poverty in 1979:

"Individuals, families and groups in the population can be said to be in poverty when they lack resources to obtain the type of diet, participate in the activities and have the living conditions and amenities which are customary, or at least widely encouraged and approved, in the societies in which they belong."

This shows how important it is to understand that poverty is relative – you are poor if you are unable to live at the standard that most other people would expect. A child can have three meals a day, warm clothes and go to school, but still be poor because her parents don't have enough money to ensure she can live in a warm home, have access to a computer to do her homework, or go on the same school trips as her classmates.

Please contact Alison Hill, District Safeguarding Officer for more help and guidance by calling 07483 362 735

Marcus Rashford and Free School Meals

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, free school meals during term-time were available to school children in low-income families. This benefit was worth around £440 per child per year. As of January 2020, 1.4 million pupils – about one-in-six – were eligible for means-tested free meals, bringing the total yearly cost to around £600 million. Additionally, free meals were available to all children in Reception and Years 1 and 2.

When schools closed in the first coronavirus lockdown, families whose children qualify for free meals were provided with food vouchers. The government said this would not carry on during the summer holidays. However, they backed down after a campaign involving Mr Rashford, who relied on free school meals in his childhood. The footballer then called for the voucher scheme to be extended until Easter 2021.

The idea was rejected by MPs, with the government saying it had already increased universal credit and provided £63m to local authorities to help people facing hardship. The government now says it will give local authorities £170m to provide food in the Christmas holidays, while schools will continue to provide the meals in term time. The grant will also be spent on helping hard-hit families with their bills.



How can we help?

I have been overwhelmed by the community response to the government's refusal to provide free school meals over last month's half-term holiday. My Facebook feed was quickly full of local cafes, coffee shops and takeaways offering meals to local children and I live in a small town / large village.

The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.

- Edmund Burke

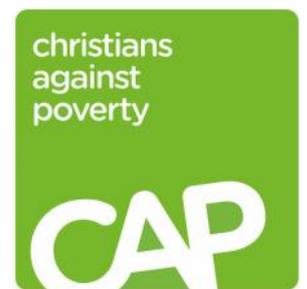
I know that so many churches in the Sheffield District are running clubs and schemes to support their local community. Those churches not in a position to provide an outreach programme are supporting others that can and there is a real sense of people pulling together for the good of people not as fortunate as themselves.

The reality is that if we, as a nation, are ever going to end child poverty there needs to be a commitment at every level of government to make it happen. The following organisations all have campaigns which seek to drive through lasting change:

- Child Poverty Action group - www.cpag.org.uk
- Gingerbread - www.gingerbread.org.uk
- The Children's Society - www.childrensociety.org.uk
- The Joseph Rowntree Foundation - jrt.org.uk
- Save the Children - www.savethechildren.org.uk

Christians Against Poverty

With a small donation and big faith, John Kirkby started Christians Against Poverty in 1996. He believed God was calling him to sacrifice his career in finance and use his knowledge of the industry to help the poor.



Since then, CAP has rapidly grown its debt centre network and expanded its services to tackle the causes of debt and poverty too. As well as CAP Debt Help, we now help people step into employment through CAP Job Clubs, help people get control of their habitual dependencies through Fresh Start and a brand new service, CAP Life Skills, to equip people to live well on a low income. Our vision is to bring freedom and good news to the poor in every community through a nationwide network of CAP projects.

"I am overwhelmed by what God has done. To see thousands of lives changed every year is truly wonderful. I do believe that God has given us a 21st Century answer to one of the most pressing social needs within society today. Jesus met people's needs with love, compassion and practical help. Our desire is to simply do the same and watch the miracles unfold. Please get involved in this amazing, God inspired ministry."

John Kirkby Founder

To find out more go to www.capuk.org or call 01274 760720. You can also get information by writing to CAP at: Jubilee Mill, North Street, Bradford, BD1 4EW