

# ADDRESSING POVERTY WITH AND THROUGH EDUCATION SETTINGS

## Guide for Child Health Colleagues

### The problem

- There is a cumulative impact of poverty on health and education – including psychological distress, self-assessed ill-health, smoking, obesity, school absence, and poor educational achievement.
- Child poverty directly contributes to the structural inequalities entrenched in society and helps facilitate the long-term problems healthcare services currently face.
- Public services currently face challenges in effectively collaborating to safeguard children's welfare, particularly in addressing and mitigating the negative effects of poverty on their development.

### What you can do as a child health practitioner

- **Consider the social determinants of health** in routine health appointments and refer families to relevant local services.
- **Support school-based initiatives** like 'poverty-proofing the school day' that reduce stigma and hidden costs for children.
- **Embed health support within schools**, such as mental health workers, school nurses, and speech therapists, especially in high-poverty areas.
- **Collaborate with schools and local authorities** to share data on children's health, absenteeism, and social need to better coordinate support.
- **Advocate for access** to free school meals, breakfast clubs, and holiday activity programmes for all eligible families.

## Evidence-based insights

Around **one-third of** the increase in infant mortality in the UK between 2014 and 2017 can be attributed to rising child poverty.

Mitigating inequality in early childhood would reduce the number of children experiencing multiple adversities by more than **80%**.

## Examples of good practice that you may wish to explore:

### Poverty Proofing® the school day

A programme to help schools identify and remove barriers faced by children in poverty to ensure equal access to education and opportunities.

### Department for Education Opportunity Areas

A government initiative that improved education and health outcomes in deprived regions by funding place-based partnerships that connected schools with health and care services to address wider barriers to learning.

### Tackling poverty and disadvantage through a multi-academy trust

A multi-academy trust in Tees Valley addresses educational disadvantage by embedding poverty-informed practices across leadership, teacher training, curriculum design, research, and partnerships focusing on hyperlocal needs and improving outcomes for low-income pupils.

### Wales' whole-system approach to child poverty

Welsh policy uniquely enables tackling child poverty by integrating health and wellbeing into education through initiatives like the new curriculum and data-driven support.

Check out the innovative approaches outlined in this briefing and **consider taking inspiration from these approaches to reflect on how you can help create positive change.**



Scan the QR Code for the report

**Please share this guide and start a discussion with your colleagues about how we can all play our role in building a country that works for all children and young people.**