

# ADDRESSING POVERTY WITH AND THROUGH EDUCATION SETTINGS

Guide for education colleagues

## The problem

- Many children and young people (CYP) in the UK live in poverty and disadvantage, which limits their ability to learn, thrive, and reach their full potential.
- Children and young people facing poverty and disadvantage face systemic barriers, including higher rates of school absence, lower attainment, and poorer mental and physical health outcomes.
- Failure to effectively identify and support children and young people facing poverty and disadvantage, through pupil premium and inclusive practices, risks further widening of educational gaps.

## What you can do as school staff

- Make sure your school is **poverty-informed** by **reducing hidden costs** (e.g., uniform, trips, materials) and ensuring all children can fully participate.
- **Use school-level data** (e.g., free school meal eligibility, attendance, attainment) to identify and target support for the most disadvantaged pupils and develop ways of ensuring FSM is constantly up-to-date.
- Advocate for investment **in programmes that provide inclusive wrap-around support** (e.g., breakfast clubs, after-school activities, family support workers, and enrichment programmes).
- Foster a **whole-school culture of inclusion**, respect, and compassion – training staff to understand the impact of poverty on learning and development.
- **Connect with local community or advice centres.** Make sure every family is signed up for what they're entitled to and getting the support they need – this will also help budgets with FSM and PP.

## Evidence-based insights

**1.05 million** children are living in poverty in the North of England alone.

In London, **32.1%** of students achieved an A or A\*, whereas in the North-East the figure was **22.9%** - representing a difference of 9.2 percentage points, an increase from 8.8 points the year before<sup>1</sup>.

## 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 that 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. More examples from TVEd alongside schools nationwide are featured throughout this [handbook](#).

### OnTrak Community Initiative

A Bradford-based children's charity that addresses poverty by combining alternative education and practical support to promote confidence and real-world skills, allowing pupils facing poverty-related barriers to learning to thrive.

Check out the innovative approaches outlined in this briefing and **consider implementing these practices into your school.**



Scan the QR Code for the report

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