Tackling the Impact of Poverty on Education

Taking a whole school approach to improving the wellbeing of children from low-income households using the Price of Pupil Poverty Guides and additional comprehensive resources

Information and Practice Guide

Why use the Guides and Toolkit in your school or setting?

Hear from schools/settings who have found the resources invaluable in helping to tackle poverty related barriers to learning for their learners and families

All **Price of Pupil Poverty resources** are available on Hwb and include the following:

Price of Pupil Poverty Guides	The main guides which provide information about the drivers of poverty and suggested mitigating actions across five key areas: Understanding Poverty; School Uniform & Clothing; Food & Hunger; Participation in the Life of the School; Home-School Relationship
Toolkit	A full toolkit to help you to implement the guides in your setting and consisting of: 'How to' guide; Checklist; Action Plan example; Action Plan template; Link to Parent Survey template; Learner Voice Activity PS4/5
Mini Guides	One page 'quick read' guide for each of the five key areas
Governors Guides	Price of Pupil Poverty Guides specifically designed for school governors
Tackling Poverty Related Bullying Mini Guide	Addressing poverty related bullying in schools to reduce its occurrence and impact on the wellbeing and attainment of children and young people
STEM Guide	Mitigating the impact of poverty in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) education
Case Studies	Further information from other settings that have been successfully utilising the resources

The Price of Pupil Poverty Guides have been accessed thousands of times since their publication on Hwb, helping schools and settings across Wales mitigate the impact of poverty on their learners and families.

During 2022-24, **more than 300 schools and settings signed up to receive additional resources and support** in implementing the guides.*

The **additional resources are now *also* available on Hwb** to support you to tailor your approach and develop effective action plans to suit the specific needs of your school or setting.

Read on to learn **how schools/settings have been implementing the Price of Pupil Poverty Guides** using the additional resources to effect real positive change to address poverty related barriers to learning:

Why did schools/settings choose to use the resources?; What did they achieve?; What about the process?; What about the resources?; Why should your school/setting use the resources?; Learnings from the five areas of the guides; Consider working as a cluster.

In a survey of the schools/settings who have already accessed the **additional** resources, **100% of respondents said that the resources had provided an opportunity for their school/setting to reflect on the way that they do things,** including identifying good practice.**

What did schools/settings hope to achieve from using the Price of Pupil Poverty Resources?

'We hope to **bridge the gap** between pupils who live in poverty and those who do not. We want to balance out the school so that **every pupil, no matter what background, has the same opportunities and future goals**. We also want to help families who are in poverty, with guidelines and links to support.'

'A **greater understanding and awareness** of which families are being impacted to try to ensure school does not add to the burden, e.g. trips, events. Particularly those who are not identified using FSM markers.'
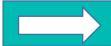
'To **support our most deprived pupils** to be able to engage and be able to take part in all of the school's activities without having to worry.'

'Gain understanding and provide support and targeted actions to remove barriers so that **excellent educational opportunities** and outcomes can be **achieved by all learners**, at all ages.'

'Improve the wellbeing of our learners and families. Provide **a more equitable approach** to whole school processes and tackle poverty. To raise attainment for all learners.'

'To deepen understanding and insight into the impact of poverty of our pupils and to **reduce the impact this has on their learning now and throughout their lives.'**

92% of respondents in the CiW survey said that the resources had helped their school/setting to take positive action to ensure that poverty is not a barrier to pupils' learning/attainment at school. 8% said 'maybe.'

What did schools/settings feel they have achieved/are achieving with use of the Price of Pupil Poverty resources?

'It has **shifted our culture as a whole school** so that poverty and its impact remains a focus for us all.'

'Reducing the cost of the school day has **relieved pressure from families** and **enabled all children** to access events without stigma or worry.'

'All staff and governors now are **more conscious of poverty** in all its forms and therefore make far better decisions for all children in all aspects of school life.'

'We were already poverty aware, but it has **helped with reminders** and to develop a **whole school approach**.'

'We have a **greater understanding** of some of the barriers to learning and have **amended some policies and procedures**.'

'Has helped **frame discussion** so that the **impact of school policies/actions is considered** more fully.'

'POPP (Price of Pupil Poverty) now governs much of our **day to day thinking** and activities planned.'

'As a school we have used the **whole school approach** to gather the views of our stakeholders on tackling the impact of poverty on education. We have used the range of resources available to us to **reflect and action plan** effectively. We, as a staff, have had a real **mindset shift** over the last year, in particular, and this has really made such a difference to the whole school community.'

'We are going to look at our **school trip, uniform and homework policies** after reflecting on the checklist and current practice.'

What did schools/settings feel they have achieved/are achieving with use of the Price of Pupil Poverty resources?

'I think that you cannot underestimate the importance of raising awareness with staff and the school community and it has allowed us to **think "outside of the box"** to support those in need.'

'The work we've done on the cost of the school day has made an **impact across the school community**. We have worked to ensure staff have changed their mindsets and we now plan trips, school fundays etc with the cost in the forefront of our minds. We have discussed this with our parent group and they have shared their views on it, for example, a uniform shop in the foyer etc.'

'We have always tried to ensure that poverty has never prevented a child from accessing opportunities. The resources allowed us to **reflect more on what we do** and what we could tighten up on, remove or update.'
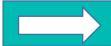
'We have **developed our links** with outside agencies and have **worked in partnership** with these for the benefit of the school community.'

'**Changed policies** to have a poverty statement in each.'

'**Impact on thinking** about school trips, visits, events, celebrations etc to think about having least financial impact for parents.'

'We have addressed everything we identified within the action plan and are now **working on fully embedding the changes**.'

100% of respondents in the survey agreed that their school/setting has been able to start to meet the aims they had originally set out to achieve when deciding to use the resources.

What did schools/settings feel they have achieved/are achieving with use of the Price of Pupil Poverty resources?

Respondents acknowledged a **positive change in the following areas as a result of using the resources** to implement changes to mitigate poverty at their school/setting:

Increase in staff awareness and knowledge of poverty

Whole school approach to thinking differently in relation to poverty and barriers
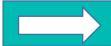
Pupil attendance

Pupil attainment

Policy changes

More effective use/spending of Pupil Development Grant (PDG)

Parental engagement

Community engagement

How easy has it been to implement the resources?:

'The resources **saved so much time** in that I did not have to make templates and action plans myself. The action plan had all the areas that needed addressing, which ensured that I did not miss anything out. The resources **steered me in the right direction**.'

'The resources have been **of great value**. It is always great not to have to "reinvent the wheel"!'

'Guides are very useful to help with action planning and looking at the key areas. **Ideas are clear and suggestions manageable**.'

'Whole school audit [checklist] has been **very useful**.'

'The checklist was useful. This **supported us** in writing our action plan.'

'It was an **easy process** and became part of our School Improvement Planning. An example [action plan template] was of benefit.'

'[The process] has been excellent and really got us thinking differently as a school about your children, families and community. We have always engaged with our families and supported them but this made us ask questions of ourselves.'

'We have made a start but we envisage this being an **ongoing process**.'

83% of respondents in the survey said they have already written actions identified from the checklist/action plan into their school development/improvement plan.

What do schools think about the Price of Pupil Poverty Guides, Toolkit and additional resources?:

'The **action plan** and **checklist** allowed us to identify some good things that we were already doing, but also some things that we could improve and consider.'

'The **checklist** is really useful…expected that we would tick more (the things we do) but actually we don't – really surprised.'

'I have had a good response from **questionnaires** sent to Parents about Financial Barriers to School Engagement. Some great things for us to consider and work on. A great resource.'

'**They [resources] all helped** me complete a working **action plan** for our school.'

'We included using the **toolkit** as a priority within our SDP 2023-24.'

'The **checklist** is helpful in provoking thought and promoting discussion.'

'Using the **checklist** as a starting point and then producing an **action plan** using the action plan **example** to support [was useful].'

'We have found the **action plan** very useful as it has helped us think carefully about strengths and priorities going forward. It's helped us to plan what we need to and when, as well as think about what we are hoping to achieve, in terms of impact.'

'The **checklist** raised issues that we had not thought about. This then enabled us to develop an action plan.'

Sharing Best Practice – Understanding Poverty

Some reflections from schools that have implemented the resources and made changes in the area of Understanding Poverty:

'As a school I thought that we supported all learners, but through evaluating practice we realised that there was so much more we could do to help our families and ultimately support our pupils to be in a place ready to learn.'

'We were already aware of the need to be mindful of the impact of poverty on our families so the toolkit made us reflect more and as it was already in our SDP we have fulfilled what we wanted to do.'

'Following parent surveys we are in the process of revising some of our policies and extending our knowledge and understanding of poverty to enhance our practice. Our action plan will hopefully allow us to address poverty related barriers within our school community.'

'It has helped keep poverty and its impact at the forefront of our minds.'

'All staff and some governors attended an awareness of the impact of poverty in education workshop so are united in the next steps. Sessions also resulted in staff who may not always put thoughts forward getting involved.'

'Although we have been focusing on the impact of poverty pre and post covid, the toolkit focused us and has given us manageable actions. The resources have been invaluable.'

58% of respondents in the survey said that the resources have helped to promote a culture change in their school/setting. 42% said 'maybe'.

Some ideas from schools that have implemented the resources and made changes in the area of School Uniform & Clothing:

'We are in the process of further developing our pre-loved uniform to include items such as coats, bags and lunch bags.'

'Uniform doesn't have to have the school logo, and all can be bought from supermarkets'; 'Uniform swap shop.'

'For the last two years of the pupil's time with us, Year 5 & 6, we purchase every child a Macron Sports Top, a school blazer and school tie. The children wear their blazers and ties for three days and their sports uniform for two days every week. The blazers were an original idea developed through pupil voice; our older pupils wanted to look different. We also buy an introductory pack for all full-time new starters in nursery. This usually contains two t-shirts and a book bag. During the end of the summer, we share details with parents of the prices of school uniform in local stores, just to make them aware of the competitiveness of the market.'

'The school's nearly new uniform shop is open throughout the year and families have a clear understanding of this resource.'

'Swap Siop within our school where parents/carers can take uniform/shoes/bags/books/rugby and football boots/stationery. Can order online to receive these also. School ECO launched the Swap Siop as a focus on sustainability to take the embarrassment off being poor/needing help and keep a check on the online system and take orders through to the receptionist.'

'Our School Council organise a uniform swap. This is now well established and highly valued by our parents. Parents are asked for donations of good quality used uniform items. The children then send out online order forms and bag the clothing. This has proved to be a really successful way of ensuring anonymity and dignity. We also organise a Christmas Jumper swap and dressing up costumes swap at certain times of the year.'

Sharing Best Practice – Food & Hunger

Some ideas from schools that have implemented the resources and made changes in the area of Food & Hunger:

'A scheme on growing produce has been embedded into the curriculum and this is linked to cooking and making food.'

'Lunch is offered in a takeaway container to eat at home and food parcels provided; buddying up with another learner to encourage cooking and explore recipes for healthy eating.'

'We offer Xmas hampers and pre-cooked freezable dinners for families in need.'

'Staff alert parents, via the Dojo App, to sources of support (e.g. School Essentials, food banks) and help with applications for these and free school meals.'

'Now all items in the canteen are labelled, priced and clear.'

'Breakfast club is attended by almost 70% of our pupils and parents really appreciate this.'

'Pay it forward scheme whereby parents/carers can make donations when topping up their child's account. These funds are used to support meals for any pupils experiencing financial hardship.'

Some ideas from schools that have implemented the resources and made changes in the area of Participation in the Life of the School:

'No longer need to dress up on World Book Day – can wear own clothing. All pupils have access to the SAME opportunities during their school life – school trips/rich learning experiences in class/ as a whole school/ after school clubs.'

'We don't charge for trips (except residentials).'

'We have worked with our pupil group to reflect on what we are doing as a school and ways forward. The resources have assisted us and been a useful guide.'

'We also organise a Christmas Jumper swap and dressing up costumes swap at certain times of the year.'

'Inclusivity for all our pupils [has been the biggest change as a result of using the resources].'

'We have all equipment and resources available for all pupils and all subjects with no cost to pupils.'

Some ideas from schools that have implemented the resources and made changes in the area of Home-School Relationship:

'Our website has a padlet that has information about free food, warm spaces, agencies that can support. We receive free bread from Sainsburys three times a week for our family and community to have. Community events each year to promote agencies, charities, businesses, within the local area to support our families. Family council set up to bridge school and family needs and mutually supporting each other. Signpost families to free second-hand white goods.'

'As teachers in the school, we think we know what parents and children need but when you have conversations with parents, we actually don't know.'

'Planning trips and events in advance so that parents could save or pay off monthly over a longer period of time.'

'As a result of the guides and thinking differently we sent re-fills (ink) for printers for families @ home….so they could engage in home learning.'

'As parents are getting to know [us] and see [us] around, they are coming in and taking a look [at the Hub]. One parent [we were] chatting to who was taking pasta and pot noodles, they told [us] that the Community Hub has been really helpful, as their cooker is broken. [We] told them [we] could possibly help with a grant application for a cooker. They said 'wow, you can do that'. and… it was successful.'

'It really opens your eyes… Working with the PTA to consider changes in the way activities are set up to limit cost and pressure for our families.'

'No software is needed for homework.'

What do schools with experience of implementing the resources say:

'It is a very valuable process and can definitely have a positive impact on pupils' wellbeing and educational attainment.'

'It will have a great impact on your pupils and families.'

'Start small using the checklist - it needs to be led by SLT and have a passionate coordinator at school level.'

'When evaluating the action taken, the school reflected that it can often be the simplest solutions that are the most powerful.'

'Do it! You will not regret it - it takes a community to raise a child.'

Consider working as a cluster

Addressing poverty issues <u>as a cluster</u> can help to **mitigate for the impact of poverty on a learner's progression and educational experience <u>throughout</u> their learning journey**. Embarking on the process of implementing the Price of Pupil Poverty guides using the toolkit in your own settings, and sharing findings, ideas and action plans with your partner schools, may help to identify common issues that all schools in the cluster could address to benefit the whole community.

What could the process look like?

- Assemble a poverty action group for your cluster with the full support of your school's SLT. This **could** consist of a member of SLT from each school; a wellbeing lead; family engagement officer; transition lead. Each member of the team should familiarise themselves with the Price of Pupil Poverty guides and the contents of the toolkit.

- At an initial meeting of the group it would be helpful to consider Wales's latest poverty data, plus local poverty data and the impact of poverty on children, young people and their families in the local community. Useful sources of poverty data can be found [here](#) and [here](#). Agree a process plan with future meeting dates. An action from the first meeting could be to send out the **parent survey** and **complete the checklist*** before the second meeting of the group. It would be helpful for a group member to take and circulate minutes and clarify future meeting dates.
  *Completing the checklist should involve other staff members from your own school for a variety of opinion and viewpoints.

- At a second meeting, discussing the **results of the parent surveys and checklists** may highlight some common issues which each school may wish to address in their action plan and/or add to a cluster action plan. Actions from the second meeting could include each school completing their **individual school action plan** to share at the next meeting.

- Subsequent meetings could discuss planned cluster and individual school actions and timescales and monitor progress.

For maximum impact the <u>whole school</u> will be involved in the process of fully implementing the guides and actions will be included in the School Development Plan (SDP).

Findings from cluster work

Five schools (four primaries and one secondary) in Bridgend County Borough Council have embarked on a cluster approach to tackling poverty. Even at an early stage of their process, much has been achieved with benefits and recommendations for this way of working outlined below.

What are the optimal outcomes for working together this way?

'The aim is of course to address levels of poverty and disadvantage within our community. Strengthened relationships between cluster schools and improved collaboration is also a very positive outcome.'

'By continuing to work together as a cluster, we can improve our practices further and ensure a consistent approach that will benefit all of our school communities.'

'All schools will have an action plan and be able to see how each school is working towards those goals.'

Are there any pitfalls for working together this way?

'The only pitfall we have encountered was that there have been times when not all members could attend the meetings. As we have planned our next meeting a term in advance, hopefully, this barrier will be removed.'

'Be mindful of workload.'

What has worked in the process so far?

'The process so far has really helped us to step back and think critically about our school processes and practices. Through the audit tool and action plan templates we have been able to identify areas of strength and areas for further development. These tools have also shone a light on aspects of our provision that we have perhaps not focused on previously. The opportunity to work as a cluster has allowed us to share ideas and solutions and to talk through shared challenges. Whilst our school contexts are all different, there are many similarities and common issues/difficulties. At a time when school budgets are very limited, pulling together as a cluster feels more important than ever.'

'Completing the checklist on Tackling the Impact of Poverty on Education with The Price of Pupil Poverty revealed elements of our practice that could be improved. Working as a cluster and sharing the results of our parent surveys and checklists, we discovered that we all had some similar elements. By devising a cluster action plan, we could work together as a team to improve practice without creating an additional unmanageable workload. This collaborative effort has been hugely beneficial, as we have been able to share ideas and resources to benefit all schools within our cluster. It has also allowed the Deputy Headteachers across the cluster to work together to develop their skills and knowledge.'

'Coming together as a group of deputy heads, discussing issues in each school and looking for solutions.'

Any recommendations for how to improve the process?

'We have set up an MS Team to share resources so that we can all access them and ensure that they are all in one place. This also ensures that any members who have not been able to attend meetings still have up-to-date information.'

'Try to give as much notice as possible of meetings as the calendar becomes full quickly.'

Notes