

Challenge Poverty Week

Lesson for Colleges

4-10 October 2021

#ChallengePoverty

#NowIsTheTime



- **What is poverty?**
- **Extent of poverty**
- **Causes of poverty**
- **Effects of poverty**
- **Solutions to poverty**
- **Policy ideas**



What is poverty?



**Activity 1: Watch Breadline Kids [BBC documentary]
[from 17 mins]**

In pairs, think about these questions:

- **What does it mean to be 'on the breadline'**
- **What are the financial, physical and emotional challenges that the families face**



What is poverty?

What is poverty?

Poverty means not being able to make ends meet. Not being able to heat your home, pay your rent or buy essentials. It means waking up every day facing insecurity, uncertainty and impossible decisions about money.

How is poverty measured?

The measure used by the Scottish and UK Governments is Households below the average income (HBAI). You are considered to be living in poverty if your household income is less than 60% of the median household income.



Extent of poverty

Poverty in Scotland

It is estimated that 19% of Scotland's population (1.03 million people each year) were living in relative poverty after housing costs in 2017-20

Child poverty

It is estimated that 24% of children (240,000 children each year) were living in relative poverty after housing costs in 2017-20.
(Source: Scottish Government)



Effects of poverty

Living in poverty means a household's income is less than 60% of the median household income. But what does this mean for people's day-to-day lives?



Activity 2: In pairs, think about the every day effects poverty might have on a person's life.



Effects of poverty

Here are some effects poverty can have on a person's life:

- **Children going without things they need, like toys or school uniforms.**
- **Adults not being able to afford things they need like household goods, cloths or travel costs to work or job interviews.**
- **Social exclusion - being unable to participate in aspects of society like school trips or social activities.**
- **Not being able to pay essential bills like heating or electricity.**
- **Mental health problems like anxiety or depression. Going without the things you need or enjoy can make life difficult and stressful.**



Causes of poverty



Activity 3: What causes people to be living in poverty?

In pairs: write as many things you can think of that cause someone to be living in poverty (in the UK).



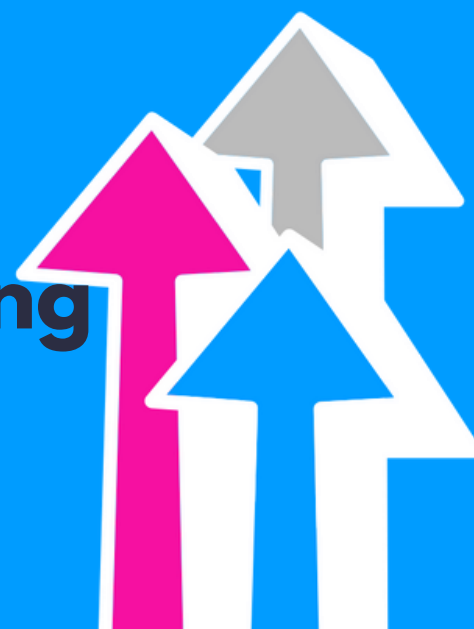
Causes of poverty

Unemployment/insecure employment

Unemployment/insecure employment, low pay, and the cost of living are some of the reasons why many people are living in poverty.

Households in which no one is in paid employment are most likely to experience poverty. It is estimated that in 2017-20, 68% of children in relative poverty after housing costs were living in working households (160,000 children each year). (Source: Scottish Government)

Job insecurity and short-term, part time working patterns are contributing to the numbers of people in poverty.



Causes of poverty

Low Pay

Employment does not guarantee a route of poverty. 182,000 children in Scotland live in poverty despite having one person in their household in work.

Low pay is a major contributory factor to poverty in Scotland. This is known as 'in work poverty'. Those living on the national minimum wage (NMW) struggle to keep their head above water.

The real Living Wage is £9.50 per hour, but 470,000 people in Scotland don't earn the real Living Wage.



Causes of poverty

Cost of living

The price of essential items such as food, energy and transport have risen in recent years. This puts pressure on low income households. The poorest fifth of households spend twice as much of their income on food and fuel compared to households in the top fifth of income.

Low income families struggle with the costs involved in sending children to school, e.g. uniform, travel, trips.

Affordable childcare can be a barrier for women going out to work. Nursery fees and after school care is expensive.



Solutions to poverty

There are many actions we could take to pull people out of poverty in Scotland.

- **Boost incomes**
- **Improve social security system**
- **Lower cost of living**



Solutions to poverty

Living wage and secure jobs

Too many people are struggling with 'in work' poverty. It is essential that people receive a real Living Wage. People need job security and opportunities to develop their skills and progress at work.



Solutions to poverty

Improve social security system

When it was set up, the social security system aimed to support people from the 'cradle to the grave' and part of this was a benefit system that would act as a safety net when people are in need. Recent changes to the benefit system are pushing more people into poverty.

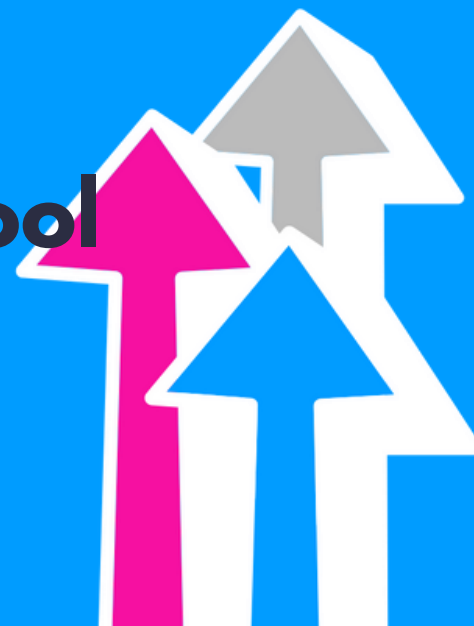
- There needs to be an increase in benefit rates.
- Benefit rates should rise in line with inflation.
- We need to ensure people are accessing the benefits they are entitled to.



Solutions to poverty

Cost of living

- **Companies should ensure that the poorest in society are not paying more for essential items.**
- **We need to look at the cost of the school and remove financial barriers to education. Introduce free school meals, adequate clothing grants. Review the cost of travel and school trips to make them affordable for all.**
- **Increase provision of affordable childcare, both nursery and after school care.**



Policy ideas

The Scottish Government has passed legislation to eradicate child poverty by 2030. However, at the moment it looks likely that this target will not be met. You have been hired by the Scottish Government to look into ways to tackle this issue.



Activity 4: How could we solve poverty?

In groups, think about what help the government currently give to those living in poverty. Now think what would your group do to reduce the number of people living in poverty? Write / design a poster with your policy ideas.



Share your ideas!

Once you have finished your poster, share on social media using the hashtags:

#ChallengePoverty #NowIsTheTime



Tag us so we can share your posters! @CPW_Scotland



Voicing concerns



Activity 5: voicing concerns about poverty

With a partner: think of the different types of help that is on offer from guidance tutors, the library, student services and the students union at your college

List all the types of help you could sensitively recommend to a person who was experiencing difficult times to make their life easier and less stressful

How would you word your advice? When would you voice a concern to your tutor?





Write to your MSP/MP

- 1. Go to challengepoverty.net/letter-to-politicians/ and download the template letter.**
- 2. Add your name and constituency to the letter.**
- 3. Email the letter to your MSP and MP.**



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