



## Children and Young People Select Committee

### **Report title: Cost of living crisis**

**Date:** 24<sup>th</sup> November 2022

**Key decision:** No

**Class:**

**Ward(s) affected:** All

**Contributors:**

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### **Outline and recommendations**

This report presents details of some of the key impacts of the cost of living crisis on children and families in the borough with summary details of the Councils approach to identifying need and providing support to residents.

The report includes:

1. Feedback from education providers and commissioned Children and Family Centres on the impact of the cost of living crisis being seen on children and families.
2. Key details on the impact of service delivery currently being seen in education providers.
3. Details of what the Children and Family Centres are doing to support/mitigate the impact. Members of the Healthier Communities Select Committee are recommended to:
  - Note the content of the report

## Timeline of engagement and decision-making

1. Not Applicable

### 1. Background

- 1.1. The cost of living has been increasing across the UK since early 2021. The annual rate of inflation was the highest it has been since 1982 in July 2022, affecting the affordability of goods and services for households. This is a national issue facing all parts of the UK, arising from a number of national and international factors.
- 1.2. According to the Office for National Statistics, 89% of adults in Great Britain reported an increase in their cost of living in July 2022. Coupled with this, real household incomes are expected to have fallen in 2022. In August, the Bank of England expected post-tax household income to fall by 1.5% in 2022, then fall by 2.25% in 2023, before rising by 0.75% in 2024.
- 1.3. Whilst the employment rate (78.2%) in Lewisham is comparable to the London average, our average income is the 8th lowest out of 33 London boroughs, leaving many of our residents more vulnerable to changes in circumstance. Low-income households spend a larger proportion than average on energy and food, so are affected by price increases.
- 1.4. There is not one single factor that causes food injustice (food injustice refers to reliable and fair access to food that is sufficiently nutritious, sustainable, culturally appropriate and affordable). It is the result of interactions between a complex range of factors including; low income, rising food, housing and fuel costs, lack of time, skills and equipment to store and prepare food and decreased access to nutritious and culturally appropriate foods. Those experiencing food injustice will also often be experiencing other forms of disadvantage including; fuel poverty, social deprivation, discrimination, housing insecurity or poor physical or mental health.
- 1.5. Food injustice disproportionately affects different groups of the population, many of these groups vulnerable are over-represented in the Lewisham population

#### Ethnicity

- Black/African/Caribbean/Black British households are more likely to be experiencing food injustice.
- Lewisham is a highly diverse borough with a much greater percentage of people from Black/African/Caribbean/Black British ethnicity

#### Income

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- Households with low income are most likely to be food insecure.
  - 35% of people in Lewisham are living in poverty
  - Lewisham Foodbank are seeing an increase in new referrals of people who have never used the Foodbank before and are in full-time work
- 1.6. Recognising the potential impact of the Cost of Living Crisis in Lewisham, the Executive Management Team (EMT) requested a research task group to be convened, made up of key services from across the organisation and facilitated by the Insight Team. The purpose of this research group is to investigate the effects of the cost-of-living crisis on Lewisham residents and services as it builds.
- 1.7. The objectives of the cost-of-living research task group are:
- To identify key issues of concern affecting residents or services, including unmet needs.
  - To develop support for decision-making and intervention planning, for example evidence and models that help with prioritisation.
  - To produce briefings for wide internal distribution based on these discussions.
- 1.8. A focus is being placed on supporting the development of action, and to identify and address barriers to action. The Senior Responsible Officers overseeing the Cost of Living research group are Pinaki Ghoshal (Executive Director Children Young People) and Catherine Mbema (Director Public Health).
- 1.9. The Lewisham Cost of Living programme covers the following areas for action:
- Food justice programme (Reliable and fair access to food that is sufficiently nutritious, sustainable, culturally appropriate and affordable)
  - Energy advice and fuel poverty support
  - Income maximisation
  - Debt triage
  - Warm welcomes / warm spaces
  - Communications, which underpins all workstreams as we ensure that support, advice and guidance is made accessible to all those who need it
- 1.10. As a result of the initial work by the research group that has taken place to date a number of responses are planned or have started including:
- A new [Cost of Living page](#) on the Lewisham Council website, launched on 9<sup>th</sup> August 2022, signposting residents to the different types of help they may be entitled to via the Council and other partners. The page is prominently featured on the Lewisham Council website homepage and has been promoted via Resident's news and social media. In the first two weeks (9<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> August 2022), this new webpage has received 1162 unique visits
  - Launch of warm welcomes across our Libraries, VCS partners and local businesses
  - Launched food justice action plan consultation
  - Procurement of data dashboard to identify residents most need of support / intervention
  - Supporting improvement of least energy efficient housing stock
  - Rolling out Household Support Fund for vulnerable residents with cost of food and utility bills
  - Supporting residents to maximise their income through take-up of eligible benefits / credits / funds
  - Supporting residents into work via Lewisham Works.

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## 2. Policy Context

### Children & Family Centres and Youth Provision

- 2.1. The Council commissions three providers to run Children and Family Centres. The commissioned providers are key to providing front door services and link families to other services. Collectively they run universal services and targeted services for parents and their children. They participate in foodbank services (or signpost to foodbanks) and warm spaces, whilst signposting families to other essential services such as housing and welfare benefits. The commissioned providers are Early Years Alliance (EYA), Donderry School and Kelvin Grove & Elliot Bank School. EYA runs Children and Family services at three sites namely Ladywell Early Childhood Centre, Evelyn CFC and Bellingham CFC. Whilst the Council commissions three providers to run Children and Family Centres, they all work closely with other services such as Honor Oak – Old Deptford Children and Family Centre and Clyde Nursery.
- 2.2. Youth First are commissioned to provide a youth service in Lewisham. Commissioned services are provided from five adventure playgrounds and five youth centres for young people aged 8-19. Services on offer are universal, targeted and themed, depending on the needs of the Children and Young People. Youth First also participate in Lewisham's Healthy Activities and Food Programme and also contribute in the delivery of foodbanks. Youth First works closely with Lewisham's wider youth services such as employment support, mentoring services and YOS.
- 2.3. Lewisham's youth centres are namely Bellingham Gateway, Honor Oak, TNG Youth and Community Centre, Woodpecker Youth Club, Richard MacVicar (currently used as a youth club as opposed to an Adventure Playground due to Riverside Youth Club being closed), Riverside Youth Club (closed for renovations). Lewisham also commissions Adventure Playgrounds play sessions – these are namely at Dumps; Home Park; Honour Oak; Ladywell Fields (Richard MacVicar Adventure playground is currently used as a Youth Club). Adventure Playground services are located in largely deprived areas or near pockets of deprivation and are a key resource for Children and Young People and their families.

## 3. Cost of living impact seen at Children & Family Centres and Youth Services

- 3.1. The various Children and Families centres and our Youth Services provision report similar concerns and worries being raised by their families, these have been categorised:
  - 3.1.1. **Increase in need for support:** Clyde for example has seen a huge upsurge in families needing practical support, those who just need a shoulder to cry on and a safe space to vent as well as those who need the use of practical support such as laundry facilities or help with toys, clothing, nappies and equipment.
  - 3.1.2. **Food injustice:** Some of the main issues being reported by the Early Years Alliance include the reduced quality of the family diet, as families use food banks more frequently, and also have limited opportunities to buy fresh food. Families are also struggling with the cost of cooking hot food due to the rise in fuel prices, further impacting on their diet. Another key area of concern for their families is not being able to adequately feed their children, and additional concerns as the Christmas holidays are fast approaching. This is echoed by our Youth services which report increasing requests from families for food parcels and note young people are increasingly asking for food as soon as they walk on the site and saying they are hungry.

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- 3.1.3. **Childcare:** For a number of families their ability to afford childcare has been affected, particularly for those families that have more than one child, which in turn impacts their ability to seek or sustain employment.
- 3.1.4. **Growing Utilities, Education and Housing need:** Many families are struggling to afford key items such as buggies and white goods. Families are also worried about not being able to afford internet access, and losing their 'lifeline' as well as affecting older children's ability to do their homework. EYA are also seeing an increase in families seeking advice and support around the quality of their accommodation as they struggle with rising housing and heating costs, being anxious about balancing competing priorities on an increasingly limited budget and worried about how they will afford Christmas this year. Families are worried about how they will manage to pay heating bills, especially as we it gets colder and winter approaches.
- 3.1.5. **Additional needs:** One of the biggest changes for Clyde has been seen in the nursery where there has been a significant increase in the numbers of children with additional needs, many of whom have not been seen face to face and have experienced delay in assessment. Whilst this is a residual effect of the pandemic, families of children with additional needs often incur additional costs and this has caused concern amongst the families Clyde work with.
- 3.1.6. **Household composition:** Another significant change has been the huge increase in the numbers of children living in Special Guardianship Order (SGO) arrangements. Clyde report that their experience of these families are that they are often in overcrowded and unsuitable accommodation and receive no additional funding, support or training to help them with the complexities of supporting and living with children who have experienced substantial trauma. Clyde report that their SGO families tell them that they are worried about the additional costs of having extra family members living with them full time, who they were not expecting to support.

## 4. Additional Support for Families at Children & Family Centres and Youth Services

### 4.1. Clyde

- 4.1.1. Clyde has a long history of having an open door when the community needs support. They have forged links with local organisations and use these links to refer families for support as well as offering physical space at Clyde for these organisations to deliver services for families.
- 4.1.2. **Food/dietary focus:** In order to support and mitigate against the impact of the cost of living crisis, from November, Clyde are planning to restart a number of initiatives for families. These include reopening their Under 5's Stay and Play which will be free of charge for families and include a light breakfast. This provision is being funded by the ward assembly. Another initiative is the Cookery Clubs with Melliot Road, and will include healthy eating and budgeting as a main theme.
- 4.1.3. **Focus on Additional needs:** Clyde will also be running a monthly drop-in for families of children with SEND to meet others and find out more about services and support on offer across the borough.
- 4.1.4. **Employment support:** Clyde report that their volunteering programme has been hugely successful in previous years and this year they are hoping to extend this. By extending

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the volunteering programme Clyde are also able to support families to develop valuable skills and work experience.

- 4.1.5. **Household Support:** Clyde are also hoping to set up an SGO Support Group and are currently consulting families as to the kind of support they would like or need.

#### 4.2. **Early Years Alliance (EYA)**

- 4.2.1. EYA are also focused on providing practical support for families impacted, by working with local organisations.

- 4.2.2. **Utilities:** EYA's is partnered with SELCE - a community energy group who support families experiencing fuel poverty and provide advice and support through on-line and in-person drop in sessions.

- 4.2.3. **Signposting for a range of services:** EYA are also in the process of introducing a dedicated 'COST OF LIVING HUB' on their website which will be an online resource of links to websites, articles and information to support families and signpost them to the help they need. The introduction of the online hub is in response to the data collated by EYA which showed an increase in the number of families accessing existing blog posts related to poverty, on their website during the period July- Sept (Q2). They signpost to services particularly for debt management, support with accessing free childcare entitlement, liaise with housing officers regarding Housing issues/rent arrears and refer and support families to access various charities (such as Little Village) for essential items, clothing, and other child resources.

- 4.2.4. **Financial support:** EYA Family Practitioners also work with families 1:1 on a wide range of issues which impact them financially. They also provide food bank vouchers.

#### 4.3. **Downderry and Kelvin Grove & Eliot Bank**

- 4.3.1. **Food and clothes support:** Downderry run a weekly food bank which also includes school uniform, general clothing, toys, books, baby equipment and household items. Downderry report that in the last 4 weeks they have seen the amount of people supported by this service increase by 32%.

- 4.3.2. **Essentials:** Similar access to support is also offered at Kelvin Grove & Eliot Bank (KGEB), where they have the Sydenham Community Supermarket which is run from their centre. Parents are invited to attend and those unable to afford the subsidised membership fee, are still able to shop free of charge. Families are also able to access clothing, bedding, toys and books.

- 4.3.3. **Advice:** A family support service is also provided at Downderry, working directly with families in need. They offer 1:1 support around a variety of issues and have seen a rise in parents requesting support with housing, specifically regarding rent rises and the benefit cap. They try to ensure that families are receiving all the benefits and financial support that they are entitled to, and are aware of the various government schemes that are in place to support families during this crisis and beyond. KGEB have been using their data to actively target families to provide information around debt management and household bills, as well as support with Universal Credit applications and providing drop-in sessions with their DWP Advisor.

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## 5. Cost of living impact seen at Children and young people in schools and their and their families

5.1. We canvassed schools on the impact of the cost of living crisis and how they are helping to mitigate the impact and support children and families.

5.2. These are the anecdotal responses from 21 schools. The details below are observations/ indications rather than quantifiable cases or analysed data. They give an indication of the impact of the cost of living crisis being seen in schools in relation to pupils and learning. Schools reported **increases** in:

- Children coming to school with no breakfast. This affects their energy levels, ability to focus and learn and impacts upon their mood and behaviour.
- Children telling adults that they are hungry/ did not eat the night before or have little food in the house.
- Families of pupil who do not reach threshold for FSM struggling with feeding their children.
- Packed lunches with small portions and low quality/ nutritional value
- Children asking for seconds at lunchtime.
- Secondary/sixth form pupils asking for school lunch but having no money to pay for it.
- Uptake of free breakfast.
- Children reporting that they have not been out at the weekend for exercise, sport or cultural activities.
- Children in older coats/shoes/uniform; sometimes in clothes and shoes that are too small/ damaged.
- Clothes being washed less frequently.
- Secondary pupils not having the right equipment. Concerns around buying equipment and extra revision guides etc.
- Fewer children new bags and pencil cases this year, which is normally a September feature (and important to children).
- Families not signing up for school journeys/trips where there is a cost (schools try to keep costs to families as low as possible).
- Increased debt for school meal payments.
- Uptake of second hand uniform provision.
- Families who are using food banks- those eligible for FSM and others who are not eligible but who are finding it hard to manage.
- Family instability issues: Zero hours contracts / working long hours / not coping. For many families this started during the pandemic.
- Families living in cramped conditions, overcrowding, renting out own-owned homes and moving to smaller, rented properties. Increase in students being placed in temporary accommodation.
- In addition to increases in numbers of pupils with mental health issues, anxiety and emotionally de-regulated behaviour seen during and since the pandemic, specific issues with pupils worrying over finances in the home.
- Pupils, even young children being aware of, discussing and worrying about financial hardship in their family, energy prices and 'the cost of living crises' itself. Some of this is specific, but headteachers speculate that this is exacerbated by pervasive news

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coverage of such issues

- Students being aware of financial difficulty at home and taking on responsibilities.
- Parents/carers seeking advice and support from school personnel. Increase in parents presenting as very stressed or with mental health concerns since lockdown exacerbated by concerns about cost of living

5.3. Our post 16 providers reported specific issues for their pupils:

- Significant number of students working long hours (and in some cases almost full-time) hours to help pay the bills/ buy food in the household. Some students are now the main earner.
- More students are having to miss days in the sixth form to work as they are fearful of losing their jobs and not having the income to give to their parents or to pay towards their own rent.
- Cases of students being made homeless by parents as they cannot afford to look after older children when there are younger children in the house.

## **6. Additional Support for Children and Families from Lewisham schools**

6.1. We already knew from a survey carried out by Lewisham's Estate Compliance & Contracts Team in September 2022, that 49 of the 61 schools who responded, offer some sort of breakfast provision, with 46 of these providing the service as part of 'wrap around' care provision.

6.2. Since summer holiday 2020, Lewisham schools and settings have distributed shopping vouchers (or hampers in some cases in the early days) to families whose children are eligible for free school meals (FSM) during every school holiday. This currently provides £15 per eligible child per week. This was funded by the Department for Education during lockdown school closures and later through the Council allocating funding via the government's 2020 Winter Grant scheme and lately the Household Support Fund and its extensions.

6.3. For the purpose of this report, we asked schools to tell us about what they are doing to mitigate the impact and support families in the face of the cost of living crisis.

6.4. These are the anecdotal responses from 21 schools. The details below are examples of activity in individual schools, rather than quantifiable cases or analysed data. They give a flavour of what schools are doing to support children and families. Schools are maximising opportunities from free/subsidised food charities such as Magic Breakfast/ National Breakfast programme (where eligible), FareShare; Parent/Teacher Association (PTA) and other school fund raising; local charitable/ Faith groups; school community donations. The capacity to offer support will differ in each school.

6.5. Schools told us they are:

- Promoting Free School Meals (FSM) applications
- Providing Free breakfasts- provided as part of a breakfast club breakfast 'drop in' or in class at the start of the day. However, eligibility for national free breakfast schemes is restricted and, whilst non-eligible schools offer free breakfasts as much as possible, funds to do so are limited or not available to some.
- Working with FareShare, UK national network of charitable food redistributors.

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- Forming agreements with local shops to make 'end of day' food available to children and/or families (this will depend upon locality).
- Carefully watching packed lunches to ensure children having enough to eat; packed lunches are supplemented (again, this depends on available funds raised or received).
- Working closely with food banks- getting fruit at lunchtime/before school. This goes very quickly
- Organising Food bank/hamper collections by the school community, churches, charity. (Schools report that, as prices rise there are fewer families in a position to give donations).
- Liaising between parents and food banks.
- Developing uniform swap/ 'pre-loved' uniform shop.
- Promoting non-branded stockists for school uniform
- Developing Exchange hub for coats, jumpers and winter shoes that are grown out, not worn out. This is dependent on families being in a position to donate good quality second hand clothes, which will be more limited in some schools than others.
- Funding school uniform as well as coats and extra items of clothing including underwear (funded through a charitable source, where this is available).
- Referring families to charities such as Little village, Buttle, Glasspool, Family Fund to help families with clothing and household items.
- Loaning laptops for children to access home learning, whilst devices/budgets are available
- Collecting donations of books and stationary for pupils to access.
- Organising used book swaps.
- Carefully considering the costs of trips (e.g. utilising free transport and free museum access). Subsidising school trips and funding them for Pupil Premium children.
- Utilising Parent/carer newsletter to give examples of free things they can do with their children over weekends / half term, including the holiday activities and food programme (HAF).
- Opening school before and after school for studying. Schools say that rising energy costs will need to be taken into consideration in extending building-use hours.
- Supporting students when made homeless with accessing external agencies and charities.
- Providing small financial payments (through a charitable bursary available to one college via their church) to help with one off purchases to help with learning or the purchase of travel cards, learning materials.
- Pastoral team providing support for students who are struggling with family relationship, then pressured to do paid work and attend the sixth form.
- Helping students liaise with employers to negotiate their working hours, so they can attend lessons and remain on site to study.
- Senior leaders, mentors, family liaison staff providing advice and guidance and signposting parent/carers to support services or just listening.
- Providing Parent Engage workshops

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## 7. Impact of the cost of living crisis on school budgets

- 7.1. Schools are also facing pressures arising from the cost of living crisis. The main funding that schools receive is from the “schools block” element of the dedicated schools grant (DSG). In 2022/23 this provided an increase of 2% per pupil funding. Schools also receive other grants such as Pupil Premium, PE sports grant and universal infant free school meals to name a few. The grants are allocated on an academic year basis and have generally speaking noted a 3% increase.
- 7.2. School’s funding is largely determined by the numbers and characteristics of pupils at the previous year’s October position based on information gathered through the October schools census. Factors such as the number of pupils on free school meals or with English as an additional language, for example impact upon funding. October 2021 was the basis for each school’s funding for 2022/23.
- 7.3. Against this modest uplift in funding, the cost all items including staffing and energy (which collectively make up around 80 to 90 % of increase) has been unprecedented (see below).
- 7.4. In January 2022 inflation was 5.4% and is now circa 10%. Inflation increases affect schools in a number of ways.

### 7.4.1. Workforce costs

- The inflation position is placing pressure on pay awards for teaching and support staff, which following ongoing negotiations are likely to be higher than anticipated levels. On average, 75% to 85% of schools’ funding pays for staff costs.
- The teachers’ pay award has not yet been finalised; 5% has been offered by the DfE. The pay review body has recommended this increase, recognising that this is not affordable within the current funding settlement. As previously stated, the increase in funding is 2% so immediately there is a pressure of 3%.
- To support recruitment and retention within teaching staff, the DfE (supported by the pay review body recommendations) have agreed to continue with the entry level teaching pay increases. For teachers on main scale the increase starts at 7.29% for 2022/23 with a further increase of 4.34% in 2023/24. Tapering down towards the 5%.
- The pay award for support staff has not been finalised. The current proposal is a flat rate rise of £2,355 per person for inner London. In percentage increase terms this ranges from 10% on scale points one to four to 10% on scale points 56 to 65.

### 7.4.2. Contracts and supplies

- Schools buy a range of services via contracts (catering, cleaning, health and safety). Each school will be affected differently depending on their contractual agreements with their various suppliers and the contract renewal dates. Examples of contracts include Cleaning contracts, School meals contracts. Largely speaking schools have been able to work with suppliers to manage this pressure up to now. Providers themselves will be facing pressure of increased costs and could potentially start negotiations. The London Living Wage increase from £10.90 to £11.95; energy, fuel and food etc.
- Increases in costs for general supplies will add to pressures on schools’ budgets.

### 7.4.3. Energy

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- The main factor putting pressure upon schools' budgets is energy. Most schools are in the council's corporate energy contract. Whilst the contract was negotiated in April 2022 and secured prices below current open market energy price levels, the cost has doubled compared to the previous contract. The recent package of support announced by the Chancellor is unlikely to benefit Lewisham schools as the current contract as the threshold applied is higher than the Lewisham contract position. The contract ends in April 2023, so likely a further pressure would arise for next year.

#### 7.4.4. Changes in demographics

- As stated, schools are funded on characteristics on lagged numbers. The main pressure here will be free school meals. The wider economic crisis has meant that more families are eligible for FSM than was the case in October last year (when the funding was set. This issue will also affect pupil premium funding and funding for universal infant free school meals. Table 1 below shows that FSM numbers in Lewisham schools increased significantly between the autumn 2020 census (8,462) and the summer 2022 census (10,122)- an increase of 4.5 percentage points.

FSM numbers in Lewisham schools			
Census	Headcount	FSM	% FSM
Autumn 2020	39,299	8,462	21.5%
Spring 2021	39,192	9,148	23.3%
Summer 2021	39,228	9,563	24.4%
Autumn 2021	38,577	9,483	24.6%
Spring 2022	38,754	9,840	25.4%
Summer 2022	38,876	10,122	26.0%

**Table 1: Funded FSMs by number and percentage of school population in Lewisham schools. Source self-serve suite of School Census reports**

#### 7.4.5. Staffing

- Demand on staff time in supporting families are increasing. Headteachers are concerned about ongoing capacity to meet this demand as budgets become more constrained and school leaders manage competing priorities.
- Staff are reportedly starting to struggle due to high rent/mortgages in London.
- Teachers are leaving to move away from London due to high cost of living, particularly single teachers.

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- Some staff are reporting that they are using food banks.
- Staff are reportedly feeling stressed and anxious due to money worries.
- Staff are reportedly using their own money to make sure children do not go without.

## **8. Financial implications**

8.1. There are no significant financial implications of this report.

## **9. Legal implications**

9.1. There are no significant legal implications of this report.

## **10. Equalities implications**

10.1. While the Cost of Living affects specific groups disproportionately there are no direct implications arising from this report.

## **11. Climate change and environmental implications**

11.1. There are no direct climate change and environmental implications arising from this report.

## **12. Crime and disorder implications**

12.1. There are no crime and disorder implications of this report.

## **13. Health and wellbeing implications**

13.1. It is not only physical health that is affected though as the cost of living crisis can have devastating effects on individual's physical and mental health as well as their social wellbeing.

## **14. Report authors and contact**

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## **15. Appendices**

15.1. A selection of case examples and parents comments

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## Appendix 1

### A selection of case examples and parents comments

**Example 1** - a parent of children who attended Clyde some time ago and who are now in a local primary school. This parent had donated clothing and toys to our "baby bank" while her children were at Clyde. She remembered this and returned to ask if we had clothing for older children. She told me that she had not worked since being furloughed and that she was in worsening financial difficulty. She said that her children were worrying about their financial situation and that she felt a deep sense of shame in not being able to provide for them. We were able to provide her with some school uniform and a range of clothing for her children aged 6 – 9 years. She cried when she saw that we had pyjamas and said that she couldn't remember having luxuries like these. She returned the following day and we gave her bedding, curtains and towels which she was hoping would help keep them warm over the winter.

**Example 2** - single parent of 4, with significant mental health challenges who recently moved to a new flat due to severe overcrowding. The new flat had pre-paid meters and she had to go and stay with a friend for a while as she couldn't afford the payments. She told us that it got more expensive each day and she hadn't known it would be like this. We supported her to talk to the utilities companies as she was struggling to make the phone calls. We loaned her a mobile phone when she couldn't afford to have hers fixed. We introduced her to a children's centre in the area she now lives in and she had a session with our housing and benefits advisor.

**Example 3** - parent of three children, two with social communication difficulties, who also has some learning difficulties herself. Her youngest two children are still in nappies and she has been struggling to buy more so the girls were coming into nursery in their very wet overnight nappies – mum has been in tears about this many times. Both girls were having school dinners but have now switched to packed lunches due to affordability (family do not qualify for FSM). Mum has been in tears many times about how scared she is about the winter, and in particular in affording to keep her flat warm. Both girls have issues with foods and can be extremely fussy eaters – again Mum is worried about how she will afford things and revealed recently that she has skipped meals to ensure that there is enough for her girls to eat. We linked the family with Tom Tom to help reduce parental anxiety and isolation, provided nappies donated by other families and altered the times of the nursery placement to better support the challenges of the morning routine of getting three children to three different schools! We were also able to provide her with a buggy when hers broke unexpectedly.

**Example 4** - parents with two children, youngest child has severe health needs and mum has a disability. Family living in overcrowded conditions, with damp & mould throughout the property. Family Practitioner supported mother to complete a housing medical form for current medical needs, supported mother to apply for DLA benefit for both her child and herself. Family provided with a food bank voucher and links to support information.

#### Parent's comments

"This has made a huge difference for me and the kids, because now I do not have to worry about not having food to feed us all"

"This [The Sydenham Community Supermarket] has been great as not only am I able to do a shop so cheaply, I can still have fresh healthy food for the kids as well"

"Because of you all I received the help I need and I've now got an agreement with my gas and electric company"

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