

COFFEE AND CHAT:
**The Impact of
Poverty**





**"Anyone who
has struggled
with poverty
knows how
extremely
expensive
it is to be poor."**

James Baldwin

***"The difference between rich and poor,
and how different people live is at its
most extreme in Surrey".***

(From the Surrey Uncovered report 2013, Surrey
Community Foundation)

Aims of TODAY

Relationships & Connections

Nurture relationships and a shared purpose across teams and organisations in Surrey.

Collaborative Learning

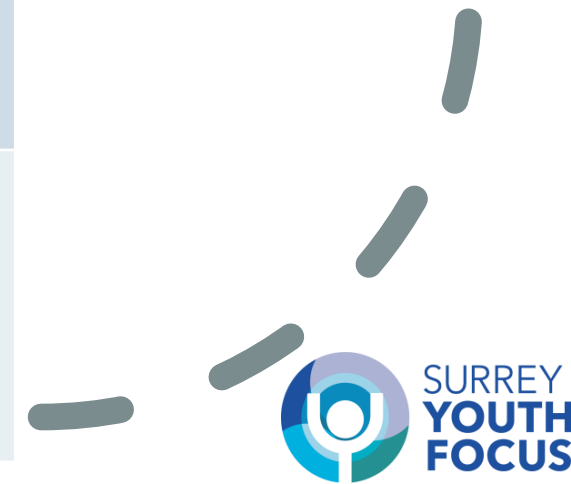
Participate in needs led **learning and networking opportunities**. **Share knowledge and skill** across teams and organisations in Surrey.

Innovation & Transformation

We will embrace and evolve **new ways of working** by learning through others and sharing **emergent thinking to continually innovate and transform opportunities** in support of children and young people in Surrey.

Our time together

The challenge, the data and Surrey context.	Amy Laidlaw from SCC (Team around the school).
Working with families with babies and young children.	Sara Beadle from Stripey Stork.
Working with care leavers, 16 – 17-year-olds	With Anna Menzies from Transform Housing.
Break out rooms for support and learning.	All
Closing reflections How will we commit to action and continue to work together?	All





Voices from Epsom & Ewell High School pupils who took part in the 'Cost of the School Day' project



"At the beginning, it made me feel a bit embarrassed, because loads of people are aware of it. As you go into high school you're using your fingerprint on your meals so you've got to explain if the money's not there why you get that meal. But as I've grown older, I've not become embarrassed, because it's part of me by now. I can't be embarrassed by my own self or my own circumstance."

"People are respectful, but there are always assumptions made of those who receive free school meals. Some students lack understanding that some kids can't afford certain things they take for granted."

"I don't always feel full because all I get is a small snack and a drink – or other times, I don't really get anything, because there isn't much there or the food has been sat out for so long and isn't hot."

"I picked the pizza, but was told I couldn't have it and was given a panini instead. It was so embarrassing in front of my friends."

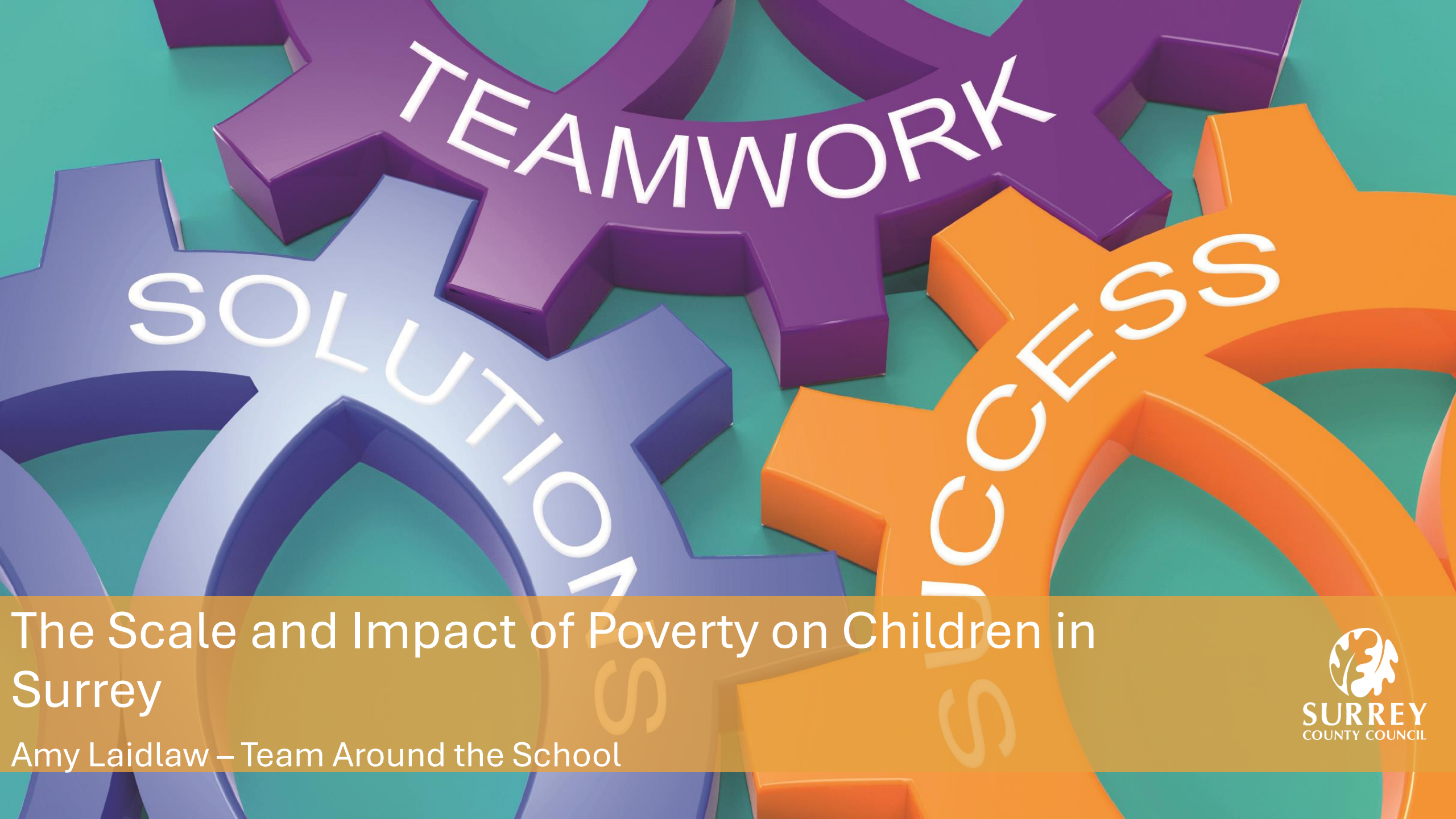
Amy
Laidlaw

Team around the
school coordinator,
Surrey County
Council



The Scale and Impact of Poverty on Children in Surrey





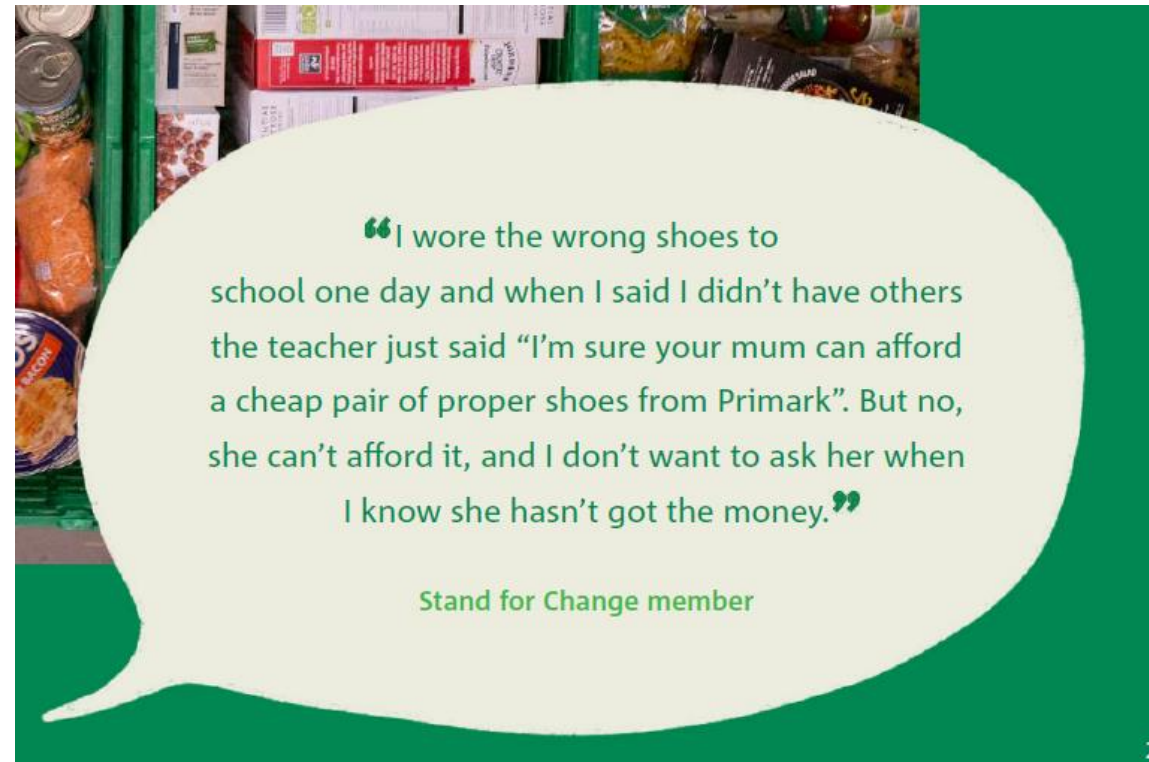
The Scale and Impact of Poverty on Children in Surrey

Amy Laidlaw – Team Around the School

Child Poverty: Meaning

In short, child poverty means parents can't afford the basics of food, clothing and shelter.

The Children's Society



[Youth-perceptions-of-poverty-in-the-UK-report](#)
[Trussell Trust](#)

Poverty: National Context

Measuring Poverty 2024 - Social Metrics Commission, October 2024

36% of children in the UK
are now growing up in poverty

5.2 million children

3 in 10



9 children in poverty in every class of 30

Key Characteristics

Poverty rates are higher for **Black and Minority Ethnic** families



More than half (54%) of all people in poverty live in a family that includes a **disabled** person

Poverty rates are **higher** for those in **lone-parent** families



Surrey Context

Around **8.6 %** of children in Surrey are growing up in poverty

Approx. **20,000** children

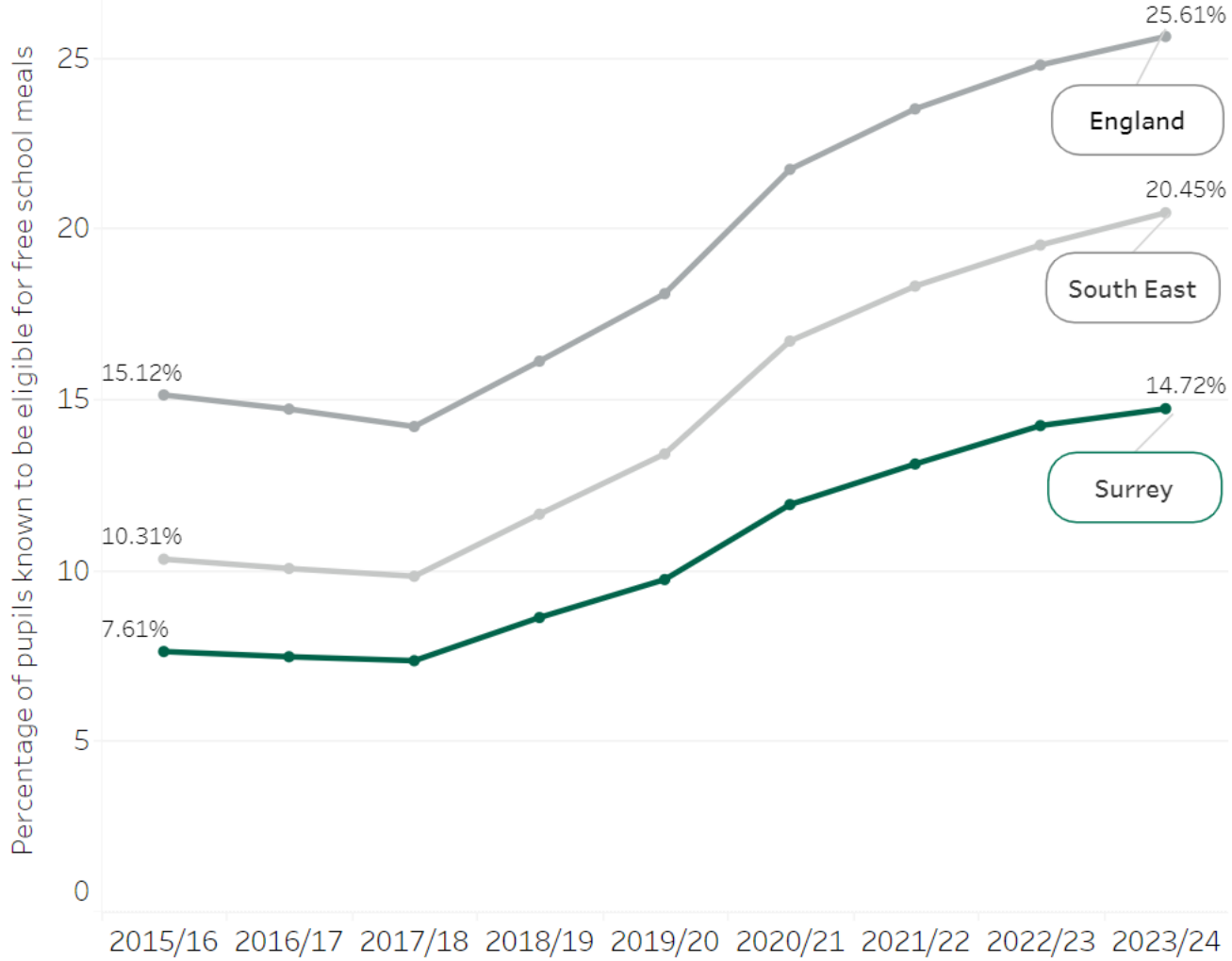
1 in 12



2 or 3 in every class of 30

Surrey Context: Free School Meals

Percentage of **Surrey** pupils known to be eligible for free school meals



Surrey Context: Ethnicity

The five ethnic groups with the highest proportion of Surrey pupils eligible for FSM are:

Ethnic Group	% Eligible for FSM
White Gypsy/Roma*	64.4%
White – Traveller of Irish heritage	55.4%
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	30.2%
Black – Black Caribbean	28.4%
Black – Any other Black background	23.8%

* White Gypsy/Roma are the only group to have higher rates of FSM compared to national rates.





Surrey Context: Gender

- 60% of Universal Credit claimants are women, with higher-than-average proportion of female unemployed claimants in Surrey. Surrey also has a wider median gender pay gap for full time work of 14%, compared to 8% nationally.
- Yet we know that nationally and locally girls and young women outperform boys and young men across most educational measures.

Key Stage 2	Girls in Surrey	Boys in Surrey
Expected standard combined	69%	58%
Higher standard combined	11%	8%

- Girls outperform boys across all ethnicities, with the largest disparity in ‘any other ethnic group’.
- Gender disparity persists into post 16 education, where Surrey’s young women outperform the regional average for attaining A*-B grades at A-level, while our young men fall below the regional average.

Surrey Context: Places

Adding to the disparity in Surrey is the regional differences with our county. Much work has taken place to try and understand and improve outcomes in the areas that are most affected by deprivation.

A series of [key neighbourhoods](#) and priority towns have been identified, where partners from the public, private and voluntary sectors are coming together to work alongside communities to address these inequalities.

It is understood that people in these areas experience worse outcomes across a range of factors including life expectancy, mental wellbeing, and educational attainment.

Key neighbourhoods

	Lower Super Output Area (ranked on IMD Score)	IMD Decile (lower number is more deprived)	Key Neighbourhood/ Electoral Ward	District / Borough	Primary Care Network	Health Area Surrey Heartlands (SH) / Frimley
1	Reigate and Banstead 008A	2	Hooley, Merstham & Netherne	Reigate and Banstead	Horley	East Surrey (SH)
2	Woking 005G (merged with 004F)	2	Canalside	Woking	WISE 3	NW Surrey (SH)
3	Guildford 012D	2	Westborough	Guildford	GRIPC	Guildford & Waverley (SH)
4	Guildford 007C	2	Bellfields and Slyfield (was Stoke)	Guildford	GRIPC	Guildford & Waverley (SH)
5	Spelthorne 001B	3	Stanwell North	Spelthorne	SASSE Network 3	NW Surrey (SH)
6	Mole Valley 011D	3	Dorking South (was Holmwoods)	Mole Valley	Dorking	Surrey Downs (SH)
7	Reigate and Banstead 005A	3	Tattenham Corner & Preston	Reigate and Banstead	Banstead Healthcare	Surrey Downs (SH)
8	Epsom and Ewell 007A	3	Court	Epsom & Ewell	Epsom	Surrey Downs (SH)
9	Spelthorne 002C	3	Ashford North and Stanwell South	Spelthorne	SASSE Network 3	NW Surrey (SH)
10	Woking 005B	3	Goldsworth Park	Woking	WISE 3	NW Surrey (SH)

What are the Impacts of Poverty?

The knock-on impact of poverty on children's development is borne out in data, with babies and young children who grow up in poverty more likely to have poorer health, education and economic outcomes throughout their lives.

Opening Doors: Access to early childhood services for families impacted by poverty in the UK

December 2024, UNICEF and NSPCC

What are the Impacts of Poverty?

➤ Attainment Gap

By the time children are starting school there is often already a gap of 11 months between the lowest income children and their richer classmates

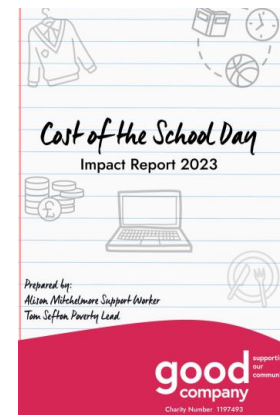
(Sutton Trust)

Indicator	Good to be	Latest Surrey result	Change from previous Surrey result	Latest Borough and District result
Attainment gap between non-/disadvantaged pupils: Early years foundation stage good level of development*	Low	27.2% (2024)	-0.1 27.3% (2023)	Best: Tandridge 16.4% Worst: Mole Valley 33.7%
Attainment gap between non-/disadvantaged pupils: Key stage 2 reading, writing and maths*	Low	26.6% (2024)	-5.2 31.8% (2023)	Best: Reigate and Banstead 24.7% Worst: Waverley 38.4%
Attainment gap between non-/disadvantaged pupils: Key stage 4 (attainment 8 score)**	Low	17.4 (2023)	17.4 (2022)	Best: Tandridge 14.0% Worst: Surrey Heath 25.4%

What are the Impacts of Poverty?

➤ School Absence and Participation

- Poverty not only affects a pupil's ability to attend school, but also the likelihood of their engagement with classes and social groups beneficial to their health and wellbeing (Robinson, 2024).
- Persistent absence is 3x more common in economically deprived families
- Children eligible for free school meals were more than three times more likely to be severely absent than their more affluent peers over the 2022/23 academic year.



THE COST OF
THE SCHOOL DAY
CALENDAR
2024/25



What are the Impacts of Poverty?

➤ Physical Wellbeing

The [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#) and the [Surrey Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#) give a rich and thoroughly evidenced picture of the health inequalities across Surrey. Patterns of life expectancy and how long people can expect to live in good health are considered in depth and are detailed across areas in Surrey.

What are the Impacts of Poverty?

➤ Mental Health Challenges

Children living around debt are five times more likely to be unhappy than children from wealthier families.

The Children's Society

A DUAL CRISIS - The hidden link between poverty and children's mental health



Young people described feelings of **shame** and **embarrassment** related to poverty and mental ill health, and a sense of **social isolation** at not being able to talk to their friends or professionals about their financial hardship.

It is “impossible to overestimate how important poverty is as a driver” for so many of the social challenges experienced by children and young people (Commission on Young Lives, 2023)

Final Thoughts

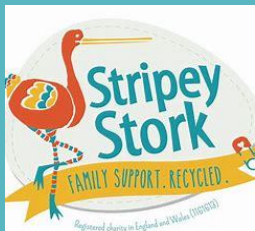
- **Humans before professionals**
- **If it's predictable, it's preventable**
- **Talk about the issue**

Turning the page on Poverty [A practical guide for education staff to help tackle poverty and the cost of the school day](#)



Sara
Beadle

Operations
Manager
Stripey Stork



The impact of poverty on families with babies
and young children



The impact of poverty on families with babies and young children

Sara Beadle, Operations Manager

www.stripeystork.org.uk

@stripeystork

STRIPEY STORK



- ♥ We are: a Baby Bank covering Surrey and Croydon
- ♥ We give: practical support for families with children 0-18, by referral
- ♥ We help: over 11,500 families per year, with over 1,000 professionals referring
- ♥ We provide: preloved and new items, prioritising safety and quality
- ♥ Most common reasons for referral: debt, mental health, domestic abuse, seeking asylum, child protection, being isolated and vulnerable, homelessness or housing issues



POVERTY IN SURREY



"When I lived in London, everyone talked about where to get help.... but it's hard in Surrey, because it's thought of as quite an affluent area." Mum to two children.

- ❖ Perception of Surrey as a place without poverty
- ❖ High living costs driving not just the lowest income families into poverty
- ❖ Middle income families facing hardship who don't meet accepted definitions or thresholds – eg pupil premium
- ❖ Less normalised – social stigma and sense of 'failure'
- ❖ Comparison creates stigma – children comparing themselves to others who have very different economic situations

IMPACT OF POVERTY



Issue

- Lack of essentials for safety, warmth and comfort – beds, buggies, clothes, shoes
- Fuel poverty – damp and mould
- Domestic abuse -financial abuse or instability can keep victim and children trapped living with abuser
- Instability – temporary accommodation, frequent moves, changing schools or moving areas
- Food and hygiene poverty – prohibitive cost of fresh food, lack of cooking or washing facilities, lack of toiletries and nappies



Impact

- Compromising safe sleep, cold, poor health, barrier to getting around and accessing support
- Health issues, cold, poor sleep, lack of privacy, lack of space to play
- Unsafe living situation, potential for trauma and upheaval
- Lack of belongings, lack of support network, lack of continuity with supportive adults / professionals
- Children going to school hungry, or with dirty clothes, bullying / shame, malnutrition and poor health

IMPACT OF POVERTY



Issue

- Lack of stimulation - toys, books, sensory support
- School poverty – cost of the school day – uniform (average £422 secondary, £287 primary) food, devices, transport
- Losing out on participating in everyday life – birthday and Christmas presents, attending parties, clubs and school trips
- Stigma of poverty itself – negative connotations breed fear and worry
- Mental Health – effect of poverty on parents/carers can make seeking help much harder



Impact

- Delayed development, poor social skills
- Effects of stigma and bullying, lack of access to education, isolation, exclusion from activities, punitive approaches
- Inhibits peer relationships, affects children's sense of belonging and confidence – especially older children
- Shame can prevent parents/carers from asking for help, fear of judgement or of losing care of children
- Lack of opportunity for early intervention, increased complexity




CASE STUDY



“Sometimes we find ourselves sitting in the car at 6pm, hungry and cold, waiting to hear where we’re being moved to. There’s no stability or routine for the children. At a time when they should be winding down for bed, we’re waiting on news of where that bed will be.”

Lisa, Mum to two children.*

*names have been changed



CASE STUDY



Child poverty is complex: Lisa's family were affected by all of the following:

- ♥ Homelessness
- ♥ Food Poverty
- ♥ Overcrowding
- ♥ Instability
- ♥ Lack of Stimulation
- ♥ Unable to participate in everyday life
- ♥ School Poverty
- ♥ Poor Mental Health

WHAT WE CAN DO



Work together:

- ♥ Raise awareness of support available
- ♥ Know what's out there and how to access it
- ♥ 'Warm' referrals
- ♥ Create spaces in communities where families are comfortable going for support

Talk about it:

- ♥ Normalise needing help and talking about money issues – use language people are comfortable with
- ♥ Don't wait to be asked – offer help
- ♥ Train staff in poverty awareness

WHAT WE CAN DO



Show Understanding:

- No judgement – look at your comms
- See the person – know their name
- Expect complexity – where there is one poverty factor, there will be more
- Understand that helping with issues caused by poverty will build trust and make other interventions easier
- Create hope – help them see the light at the end of the tunnel



Involve people in poverty in decisions that affect them:

- 'nothing **about us** without us is for us' – Poverty Truth Commissions involve people with lived experience in the design of services aimed at supporting them
- Run by Good Company, Epsom, and involving users of Epsom Foodbank, Stripey Stork and other local services.
- Understand how it feels for someone accessing your service
- Small changes / big impacts (removing complicated referral criteria, providing continuity of care)



Useful links:

www.stripeystork.org.uk

Poverty Truth Commission:

<https://goodcompany.org.uk/end-poverty-pledge-resources/>

Child Poverty Action Group: www.cpag.org.uk

Anna
Menzies

Service
Manager
Pound
House,
Woking



Working yourself into (more) poverty



Working yourself into (more) poverty

Anna Menzies

Service Manager Pound House

Pound House, Woking

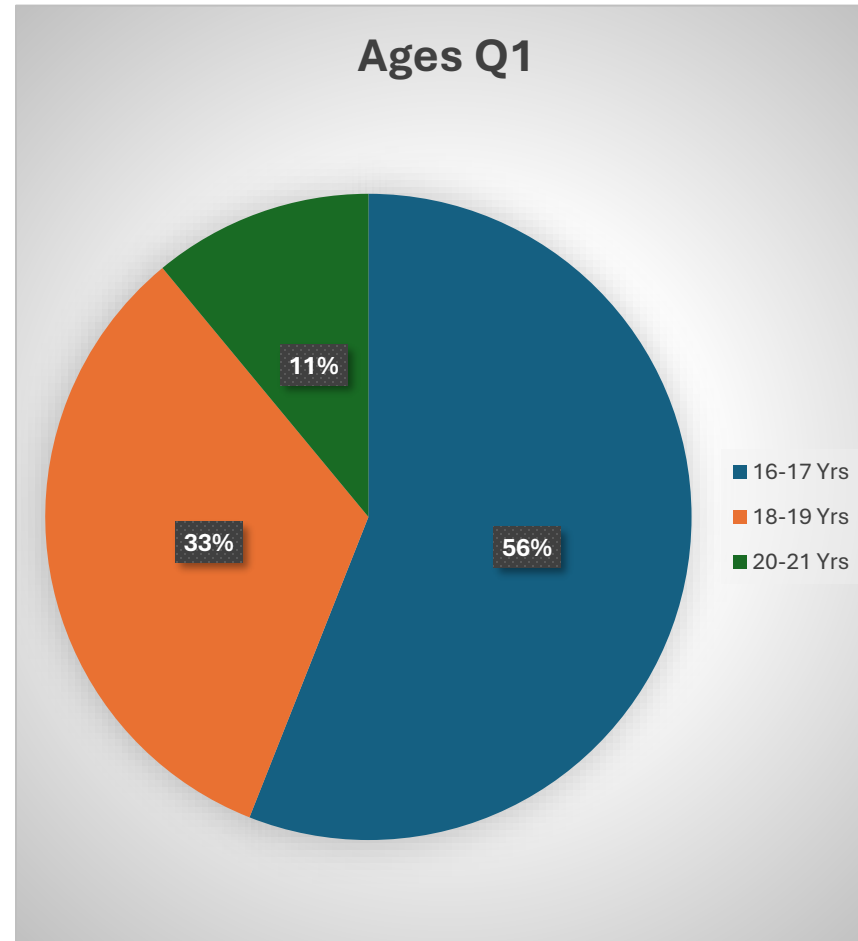


- 12 Bed Hostel for 16-21 year olds
- This includes 2 emergency beds
- In the past year we have housed 26 young people.

Age of our clients

2024 -25 Q1

- 16-17 years - 10
- 18-19 years - 6
- 20-21 years - 2
- Clearly shows a recent incline in 16 – 17 year olds



Referrals

Our referrals come via the Gateway Team (part of Surrey County Council) on a system called 'Care Place' or via borough council housing departments.

We also have two 'emergency beds' which are funded year round and SCC can place young people into these at short notice. A lot of these young people will then move into a permanent bed.



Referral backgrounds

**2023-
24**

- Care experienced **12**
- Asked to leave by parents **1**
- UASC **8**
- Mental health **2**
- Youth justice **2**
- Homeless **1**



The problem

- Our clients, particularly the care experienced, are under huge pressure to be in employment, education or training. They have regular meetings with professionals repeatedly asking what their plans are.
- Under 18 they get just over £70 per week Independent Living Allowance from Social Services for food and all other expenses. Twice a year they get a clothing allowance of around £150.
- Under 18 their housing costs are met by SCC so they can earn with impunity. But it's not that easy to find a job when you're under 18.
- In an ideal world, at 18 the young person will get a part time job with fixed hours that keep them below the threshold where they start to lose Universal Credit (£132.78 per week).

But...

- This doesn't happen. They start a job, generally a zero hours contract. They are pressured to do more hours, they think they will lose the job if they say no, so they agree.
- We show them the benefit calculator, we plead with them to cut their hours, give us their wage slips and save at least half their wages while we wait for the council to recalculate their benefit.
- Unfortunately, for this cohort, professionals are not to be trusted.

Voice of the young person

- Client A – took a six week temp job, earned £2,000, now in arrears of £1,566.89

"I sit with no money for so long. I start working and all people want to do is take what I'm earning. It's not fair. I may as well not work. How am I supposed to save money, start driving, work and live? Aint got no one there to give me what I need. I have to get it myself."

Family means everything

- Client B – Former UASC. Worked while he was under 18, mainly to send money back home to a family member looking after his siblings. Turned 18 and took a summer job in the college holidays. Ignored advice to keep his hours down. Now in arrears of £2,137.40. Guildford Council won't let him bid until his arrears are cleared.

Any answers?

- Fix the education system? Ensure no one leaves without a useful qualification? Add this requirement to UC?
- Surrey is known as an immensely wealthy area – and it is. Most of our young people have an amazing cushion of support.
- But the children and young people I work with are so vulnerable. They have no support network. Many live with deep, ongoing trauma. Where is their cushion?

Breakout rooms

20
minutes

Around the room:

- Brief introductions
- Anything you're currently doing that others might find useful to know.

As a group discuss:

- Reflections so far?
- How could you continue to work together on this?
- **One action you could take away**

Next steps and Future Coffee and Chats

<https://surreyyouthfocus.org.uk/events>

<https://surreyyouthfocus.org.uk/bulletins>

[End Poverty Surrey – Good Company](#)

Next Coffee & Chat – Early March

A Good Death: supporting life limited children, their family and friends.



COFFEE AND CHAT: The Impact of Poverty

