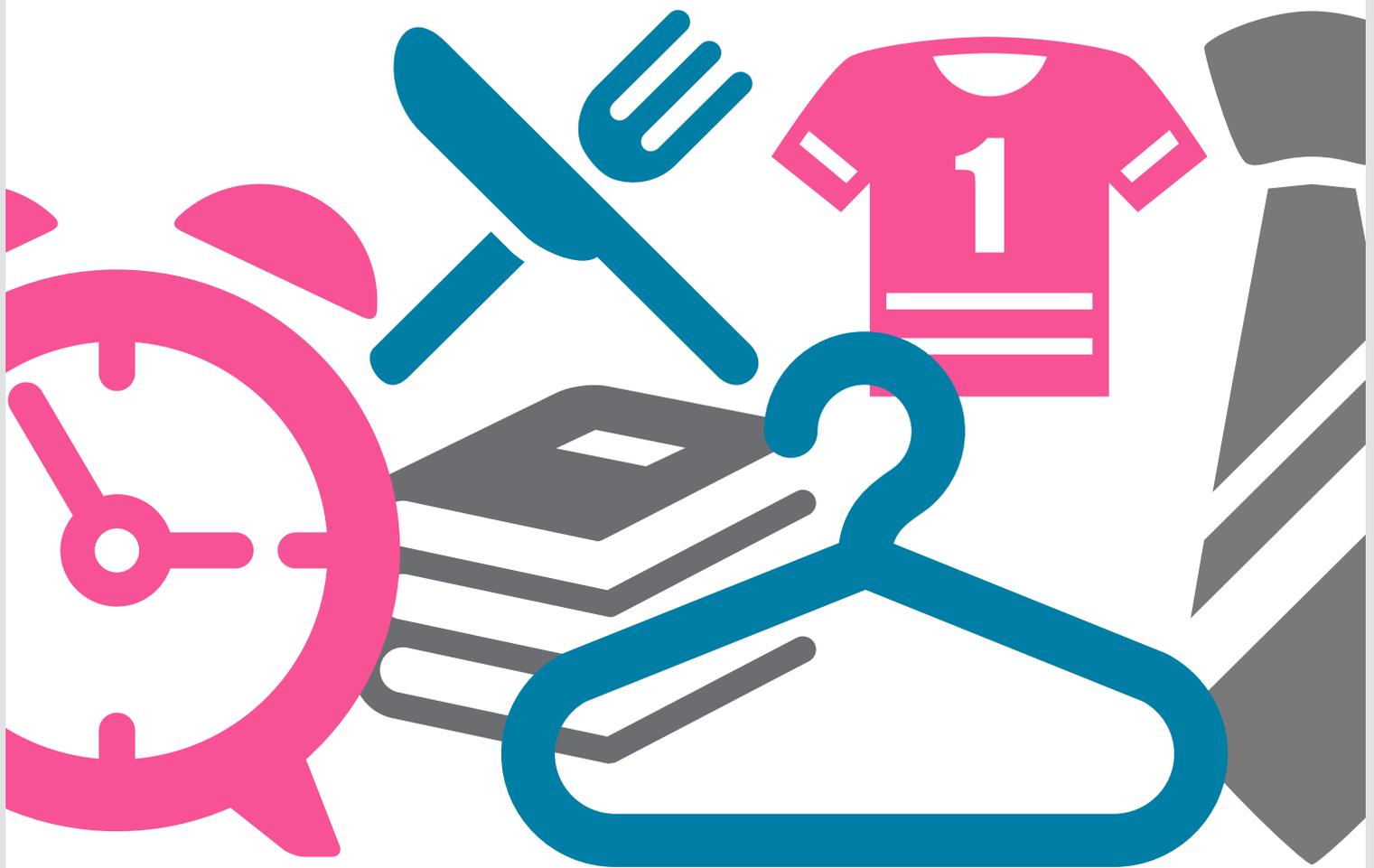


# THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY DUNDEE



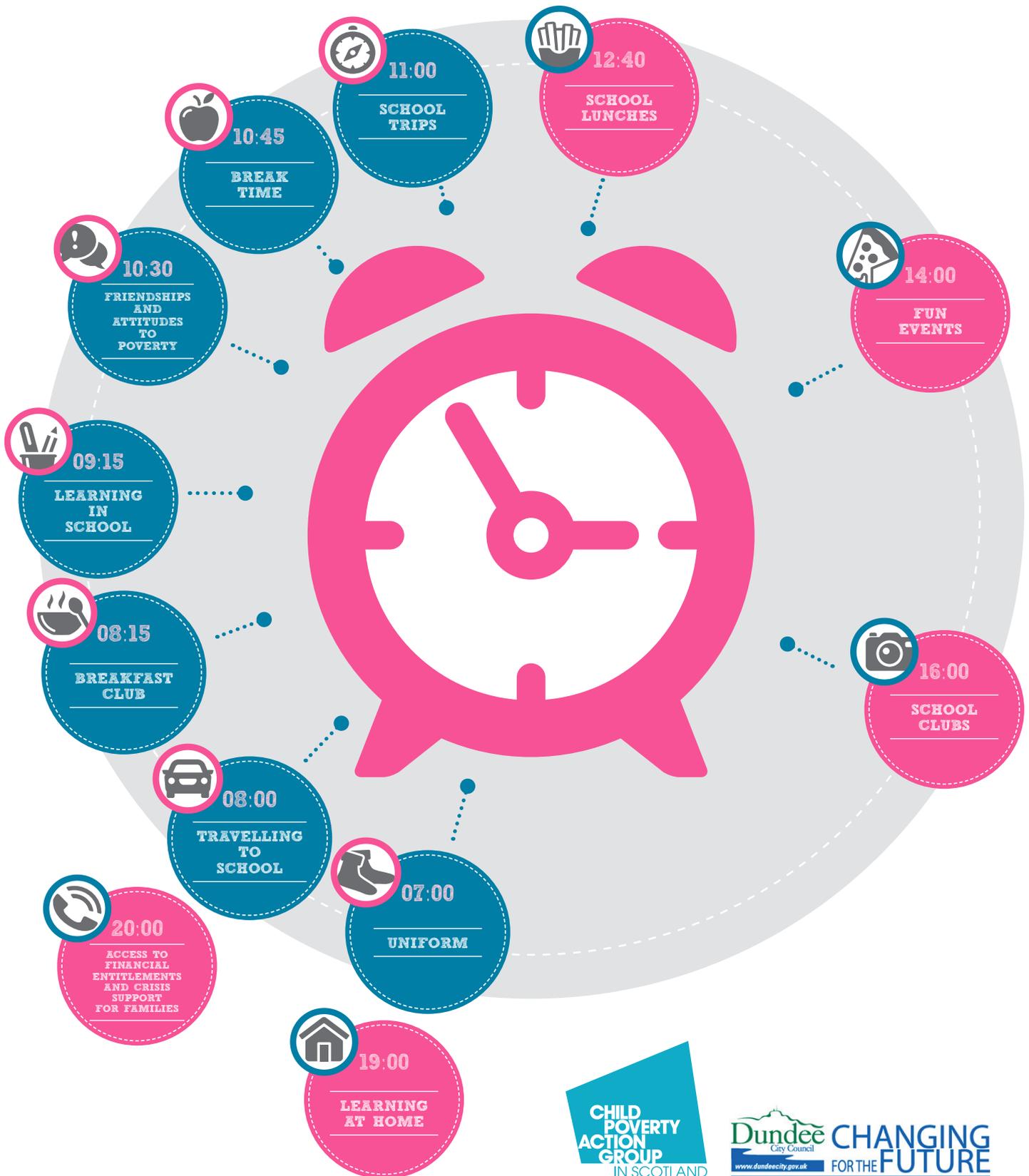
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## Glossary

- CoSD** – Cost of the School Day
- DCC** – Dundee City Council
- ERW** – Education Resource Worker
- FSM** – Free School Meal
- SCG** – School Clothing Grant
- SFDW** – School and Family Development Worker
- PSW** – Pupil Support Worker

# THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY DUNDEE



# FOREWORDS

The Cost of the School Day work has allowed us to confirm some impressions and also to learn new things about the financial pressures facing families and children. It has been a really interesting and worthwhile information gathering and engagement process. The report has been very helpful in planning for equity

**Andy MacGregor,**  
Head Teacher,  
St Clement's  
Primary  
School

If the attainment challenge is going to close the poverty related attainment gap, it is essential that we look at family incomes and how to reduce their expenditure. The Cost of the School Day project does that by examining the hidden costs associated with fully participating in school life. By supporting schools to work with pupils, staff and parents in Dundee to understand these and develop ways to remove financial barriers, the project can also reduce the stigma experienced by pupils who feel excluded because of money pressures. The results will make a huge difference to the wellbeing of pupils and we've made that a big priority in Dundee to underpin sustainable improvements in literacy and numeracy

**Peter Allan,**  
Community  
Planning  
Manager,  
Dundee City  
Council

The Cost of the School Day project has highlighted the importance of removing financial barriers to learning and providing access to the school day for the most vulnerable children and young people across the city. Schools have an opportunity, as a result of the scope of this work, to remove and reduce cost barriers and contribute to closing the poverty-related attainment gap

**Audrey May,**  
Chief  
Education  
Officer,  
Dundee City  
Council

## Acknowledgements

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- **Anne Leary:**  
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- **Jacky Close** and **Danielle Hinton:**  
Faith in Communities Dundee
- All other members of our steering group

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Many thanks to the school staff involved in the project for their practical support and willingness to engage in the project.

Most of all, we are grateful to all the children and young people, and their parents, for sharing their experiences and offering their ideas on how the school day could be made better.

**This report was written by:**

**Marion Fairweather**

Project Manager, Cost of the School Day Dundee

**Susan Epsworth**

Project Worker, Cost of the School Day Dundee

**Dedication to Marion**

This report is dedicated to the memory of Marion Fairweather and her professionalism, warmth and kindness.

# AIM OF REPORT

This report lays out the key findings that have come out of Cost of the School Day Dundee's work with 11 primary schools, 2 secondary schools and 2 Early Years Centres. It highlights the cost barriers to learning and participation in school, the measures schools are currently taking to reduce or remove school costs and recommendations for what more could be done to address the barriers to taking part in the school day.

For each part of the school day, the report will outline our findings, highlight the suggestions that came from children and young people, parents and school staff and set out our key recommendations for individual schools and Dundee City Council.

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| 07:00 | UNIFORM  |
| 08:00 | TRAVELLING TO SCHOOL   |
| 08:15 | BREAKFAST CLUB   |
| 09:15 | LEARNING IN SCHOOL   |
| 10:30 | FRIENDSHIPS AND ATTITUDES TO POVERTY                             |
| 10:45 | BREAK TIME   |
| 11:00 | SCHOOL TRIPS   |
| 12:40 | SCHOOL LUNCHES   |
| 14:00 | FUN EVENTS   |
| 16:00 | SCHOOL CLUBS   |
| 19:00 | LEARNING AT HOME   |
| 20:00 | ACCESS TO FINANCIAL ENTITLEMENTS AND CRISIS SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES |



# BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Cost of the School Day (CoSD) is a Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) in Scotland project. The project supports schools and local authorities to ensure that all children, regardless of financial background, are able to get the most out of the school day. The CoSD Dundee project is funded by the Scottish Attainment Challenge Fund and was commissioned following the Dundee Fairness Commission 2016 which found that:

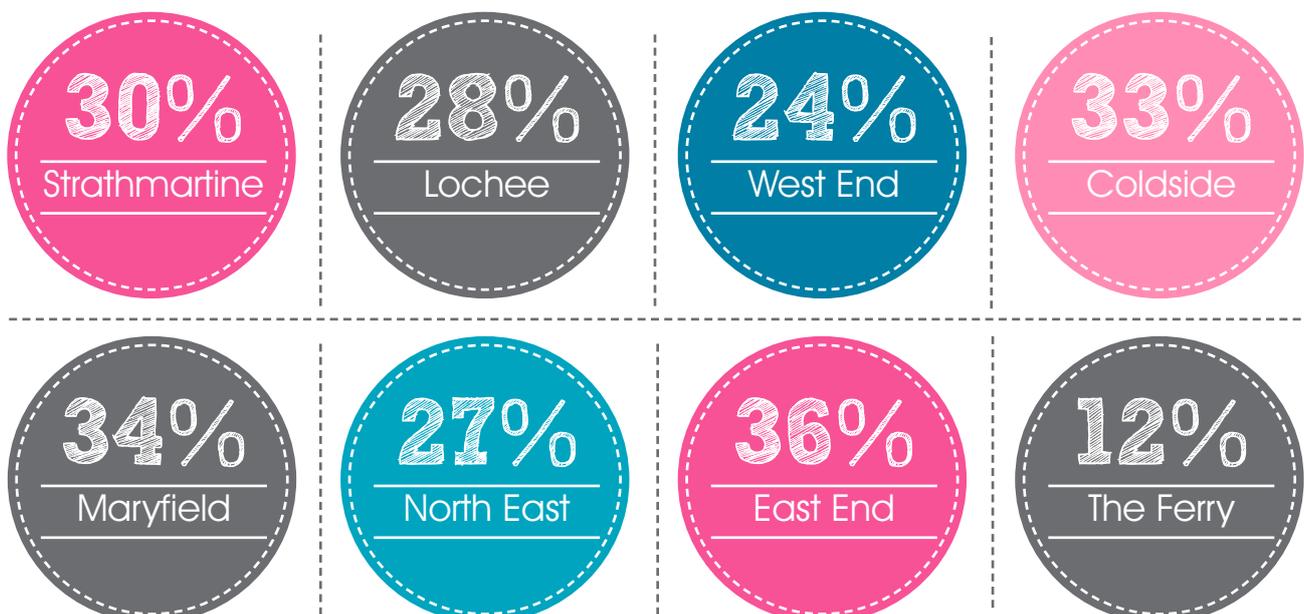
Dundee has the second highest level of child poverty in Scotland, with 28% of the city's children living in poverty. The most recent local child poverty figures (released January 2018)<sup>1</sup> show the statistics by council ward. Over a quarter of children are living in poverty in six out of eight council wards. In Maryfield and the East End this rises to over a third of all children.



**Good quality education is the essential first step towards a future in which horizons are lifted for... children. This is currently undermined by the burdensome consequences of the cost of the school day... [We will] commission a project to address the Cost of the School Day to both reduce stigma and the hidden costs of attending school and associated activities in Dundee.**



## CHILD POVERTY (AFTER HOUSING COSTS) BY AREA



<sup>1</sup> <http://www.endchildpoverty.org.uk/poverty-in-your-area-2018/>

# METHODOLOGY

Between April and December 2017 the Cost of the School Day project conducted

- 62 workshops with 485 primary school pupils
- 22 workshops with 71 secondary school pupils
- 20 focus groups with 205 members of staff in 11 primary schools, 2 secondary schools and 2 nurseries
- Focus groups and informal chats during holiday provision, school events and at nursery gates with 198 parents and carers.

Pupils took part in two participatory sessions based on a case study involving a character from a low income household called Ross/Katie. This provided a way for children and young people to discuss school costs without having to disclose personal information. Children were invited to identify school costs and consider where these might create a barrier to learning or participation in school for pupils from low income households. They were then asked what was currently being done to support families with school costs and what more could be done.

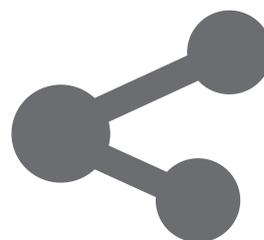
Semi- structured discussion guides were used in parent and staff focus groups to explore key costs and issues across the school day.

All workshops and sessions were recorded and transcribed for thematic analysis. Each school and nursery received an individual report of their findings and were supported to develop an action plan to address issues arising in the report.



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**62 WORKSHOPS WITH 485  
PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS**



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**22 WORKSHOPS WITH 71  
SECONDARY SCHOOL PUPILS**



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**FOCUS GROUPS AND INFORMAL  
CHATS - WITH  
198 PARENTS AND CARERS.**



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**20 FOCUS GROUPS WITH 205  
MEMBERS OF STAFF IN 11  
PRIMARY SCHOOLS, 2 SECONDARY  
SCHOOLS AND 2 NURSERIES**

# SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The evidence gathered by the Cost of the School Day Dundee project shows that schools are generally aware of the financial hardships that their families may be facing and are already taking actions to reduce or remove costs. However, pupils, parents and staff identified issues where school costs still impact on children's ability to fully access the school day or resulted in schools restricting the opportunities they were able to offer.

## Early years

Cost barriers are not a big issue in the local authority Early Years centres we worked in. Parent and carers feel that they get value for money when it comes to snack costs and they don't feel that they are under pressure to give any other financial contributions to the nursery. The main issue that emerged was the fact that children in nursery do not receive free school meals in the same way that P1-P3s do in school. Staff and parents feel that this was unfair and just 'doesn't make sense'.

## Primary schools

Similar issues were identified in each of the 11 primary schools we visited. The 'big issues' for children were the P7 residential trip, trips in general and the cost of school lunches, particularly where there are several children from the family at the school. Parents and staff agreed with this and also identified breakfast clubs and the cost of school uniform as potential barriers for low-income families.

## Secondary schools

In secondary schools, peer pressure and stigmatising attitudes toward poverty became more apparent. Subject costs were identified as being a barrier to young people accessing learning opportunities and the uptake of free school meals was an issue. Young people felt that staff consistency was a problem, be it around the lending of resources, homework or staff's attitudes to school uniform. Trips also emerged as something that young people from low income families struggle to access.

# IN CONCLUSION

Dundee schools and Early Years Centres are already generally mindful of the cost of the school day. This report lays out the steps that they already take to address these costs, and the positive impact that this is having on children, young people and their families. However, there is still some way to go to ensure that all children and young people from low income households are able to access all of the same opportunities as their peers.

We have illustrated where there are still issues, and have set out the barriers to learning and participation that children and young people in Dundee still have to deal with on a daily basis. Working with pupils, parents and staff we have set out a series of 'things to consider' to address costs at each point of the school day, as well as highlighting some key general recommendations. Further, we have highlighted where these recommendations should be raised at a citywide level.

# FINDINGS ACROSS THE SCHOOL DAY

## 1. 07:00 UNIFORM

### 1.1 Overview

#### What works well

- Schools providing second hand uniforms (e.g. recycling of lost property).
- New P1s given school tie by the school.
- Promoting school clothing grant at events.
- Automatic payment of clothing grant to families in receipt of council tax reduction (CTR) or housing benefit (HB).
- School and Family Development Workers (SFDW) supporting families to apply for school clothing grant.
- Schools being mindful of costs when setting uniform policy.
- Strict no-bullying policies with staff acting on teasing and name calling.

#### Issues and concerns

- It was agreed that uniform was one of the biggest cost for families, particularly replacing items throughout the school year.
- Uniform is one of the main indicators of household income. Families are unable to replace items that have been outgrown or damaged and this can risk their children being exposed to comments and feelings of shame and embarrassment.
- Young people in secondary schools felt staff are not always consistent with rules around what constitutes appropriate uniform.
- Some parents reported a pressure to buy branded items only widely available in the official school shop (at a higher cost).

**Not so much the clothes - it's the accessories - the coat, the bag and more what they want to have than what they are supposed to wear.**

(Parent)



## 1.2 Key findings

**School uniform can be quite expensive, especially if you want to look smart.**  
(Pupil P7)

### Uniform costs

Pupils, parents and school staff all recognise that buying school uniform is a significant cost for families. The most expensive items are shoes and jackets, although this depends on where families buy their uniform. Parents expressed frustration that the school shop in the city centre seems to have monopoly on certain items like blazers and charges high prices.

In some schools the uniform is provided by online suppliers. These suppliers often offer good quality uniforms at competitive prices but families without access to the internet or debit or credit cards may not be able to access them.

**You can get uniform from Tesco online but if you haven't got a debit card like we haven't then you can't order online.**  
(Parent)

Families often have to balance quality with affordability, having to buy shoes from supermarkets that get 'wrecked' within a few months. Particularly towards the end of term some parents choose not to replace items and send children to school 'sometimes looking a bit the worse for wear' (Staff). Children also said that it could be harder to find school clothes after the start of term.

### Uniform policies and support available

Schools are aware of the cost pressures around uniforms and try to ensure that school uniform is affordable and easily accessible. While all schools had branded items, including polo shirts and sweatshirts, there was no expectation that pupils had to wear these items and pupils said that teachers would not make a big deal if you weren't wearing school uniform.

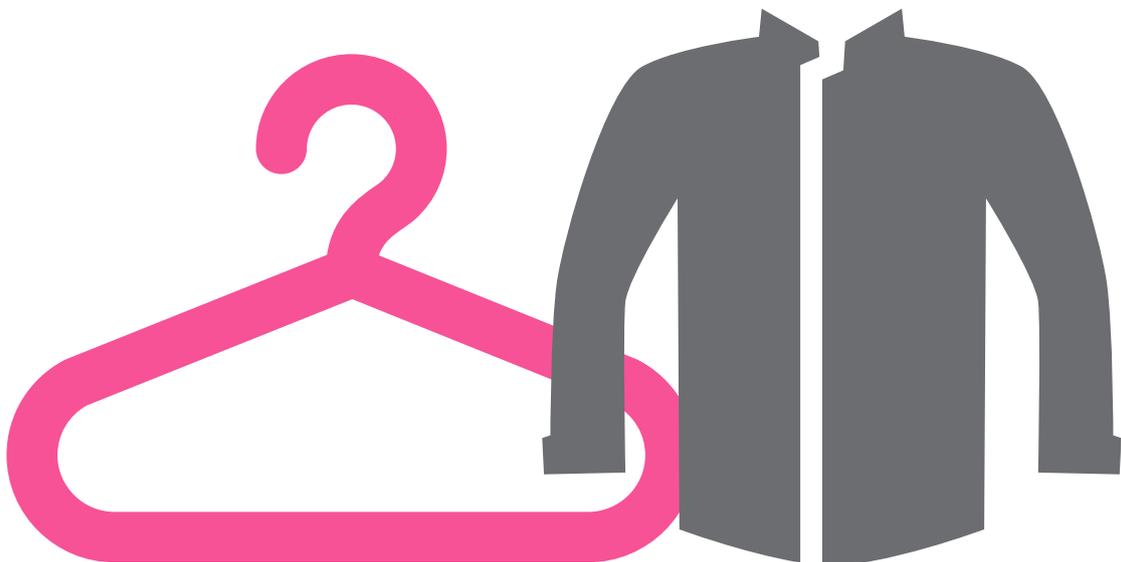
**No, you don't get into trouble if you're not wearing uniform**  
(Pupil P5)

The general consensus was that uniform was a good thing in that it put everyone on the same level.

**Smart uniform means that you can't tell who might be living in poverty**  
(Teaching Staff)

In secondary, some pupils reported being at risk of getting a detention if they weren't wearing a tie or being reprimanded not being in 'proper' uniform.

**You get detention ('no - get told to have it on the next day')...if you don't have your tie on.**  
(Pupil S1)



“They’ll be like ‘where’s your tie?’ especially after assembly... you get told you have to get one for the next day

(Pupil S2)

Young people didn’t necessarily have a problem with this but questioned how someone would feel if they had lost their tie and genuinely didn’t have the money for another one that week. There were many positive stories of pupils in need.

“Some teachers help, mostly the guidance will help...Miss P offered to give (a pupil) a tie that was cheaper than buying it.

(Pupil S3)

However when asked if a young person would feel able to ask for support the responses were mixed.

“It would be hard to tell teachers why you didn’t have the right clothes - would depend on the teacher but they’re intimidating...if you have a problem then it’s not always that easy to talk to them.

(Pupil S3)

Pupils didn’t necessarily feel that the uniform rules were unfair however they felt that it wasn’t always consistent depending on the class or teacher.

“I’ll go into some classes and get shouted at for wearing this hoodie but then others it’s okay - they should all be the same.

(Pupil S2)

“Teachers should react the same way to uniform, it’s crazy that some send you home and some don’t care.

(Pupil S4)

## Visible differences, peer pressure and attitudes

Staff identified uniform as an indicator of family income and they could identify children whose families were not able to buy new or weather-appropriate clothes. This becomes more obvious as the school year goes on.

“You see from day one the ones that it will get worse for, you see it as the term goes on - they all start smart and clean but then some families can replace [clothing] and some can’t.

(Teaching Staff)

“Parents just won’t, or can’t, buy a new shirt toward the end of the year.

(Support Staff)

Many young people we spoke to reported being teased or witnessing what they described as bullying in relation to how someone looks or is dressed. Some children and parents spoke about the pressure to have the “right” clothes, with brands including Nike and Adidas. This appears to be a bigger issue at high school than primary.

“In primary my mate wore Tesco shoes, at High School everyone slated him.

(Pupil S3)

“Kids have told me that, that’s one of the things that hurts the most, when they get picked on for having like broken shoes or like a hole in their top or whatever, because kids are just laughing and say ‘oh, you’ve got a hole in your shoes’ but they don’t realise that it’s actually because they don’t have a lot of money.

(SFDW)

When discussing a new pupil from a low-income family starting the school, young people felt that his situation would depend on who he made friends with.

“Depends who you hang about with whether you’d get slagged... the popular crowd wouldn’t accept you in supermarket clothes.

(Pupil S4)

**He's gonna get slaughtered [with Tesco shoes and a 'crap bag'] you get some nice kids but there are lots of bullies.**

(Pupil S3)

Pupils felt that appearance and income related bullying was more prevalent in the younger secondary years when young people are trying to fit in and 'find their group'. They felt that this kind of discriminatory bullying should be taken seriously but admitted that this could be hard for the school to do.

**If people are slagging others for cheap bags... they should give the pupils a demerit, a detention, a call home and if that keeps going on expel them...it's way different, in primary it didn't matter as much but now in high school it's different, people are a lot more taller... lot more older and they can be worse - even if it's outside of school they're not allowed to deal with it but it's still going to affect in school.**

(Pupil S1)

## Blazers

Senior pupils think that the policy around blazers was quite inconsistent across the city. The price of blazers varies from school to school. Some schools, such as Braeview, have taken steps to offer cheaper recycled blazers whereas others only offer the traditional woollen one.

**They ask you in your prefect interview 'are you prepared to wear a blazer?', obviously everyone just says yes but imagine if you knew you couldn't afford one...you wouldn't get to be a prefect?**

(Pupil S6)

There were further potential barriers in that you are given a band to sew onto your blazer if you are a prefect. The point was made that you might not have the facilities at home to do this.

## Clothing grants

Following the Fairness Commission, Dundee City Council (DCC) increased their clothing grant to £100 per child. Parents felt that this covered most of the school uniform costs and that the application process was straight forward. Parents who receive the grant informed us that the payment had been made in mid-July which gave them enough time to buy clothes.

DCC Benefit Delivery team now offer families applying for housing benefit (HB) or council tax reduction (CTR) the option of receiving automatic payments of the school clothing grant, saving them from having to apply every year. Information about clothing grants is also provided on school websites and social media as well as included in inductions to Primary 1. If the school is aware of a family struggling with costs the SFDW can help them to apply for the clothing grant.

The introduction of automatic payments has simplified the process for families but is only available for families who are claiming HB or CTR. Presently local authorities cannot easily see who is on universal credit therefore making it impossible to automate payments. This could cause difficulties as families move over to the new benefit. Several school staff expressed concern that families who were from outside the UK might not be aware of their entitlements to supports like HB, so they are not able to claim the school clothing grant.

Furthermore, when a young person turns 16 and is entitled to Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) they no longer have access to the clothing grant. However, EMA is not paid before the school year begins so pupils may not have the money required to buy new school uniform for the year ahead.

## 1.3 Things to consider

### Schools

- Ensure that uniform is easily affordable and attainable - if uniform supplier is only available online consider supporting families to make purchases online e.g. at parents evenings and other parental events.
- Effectively promote school clothing grants through all platforms e.g. Twitter, newsletters, events, by text.
- Provide opportunities to buy second hand uniforms throughout the year, promoted in sensitive manner.
- Involve pupils in uniform policy decisions and develop a consistent approach amongst staff regarding uniform and sanctions including the awareness that incorrect uniform may be related to low income.
- Demonstrate staff awareness of bullying related to stigma around clothing.

### Dundee City Council

- Clothing grants are stopped in Dundee after young people become eligible for Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA). Consider continuing clothing grants for pupils in receipt of EMA as happens in some other local authorities.
- Address the issue of EMA not being paid in time to afford new school uniform for the year ahead.

### Pupil suggestions

- Consistency: 'One rule for one person should be the same as for another.'
- Free school tie for new pupils (P1s, S1s, pupils moving school).

### Parent suggestions

- Support families to make purchases online and in the school itself.
- Promote the school clothing grant as many ways as possible.

### Staff suggestions

- 'More of a casual swap shop by the young people themselves'.

## 2.1 Overview

### What works well

- Most children and young people find it straightforward to walk to school.
- Children and young people are encouraged to use bikes and scooters and have a safe place to store them at school.

### Issues and concerns

- Certain circumstances (e.g. living outside school catchment, separated parents) can mean high bus costs for some families.
- For some pupils, travelling to school means taking more than one bus each way. This can affect access to after school activities.
- Difficulties affording travel costs can affect pupil attendance.



**I can't actually afford the bus so I just walk.**

(Pupil S4)



## 2.2 Key findings

### Travel in primary school

Travel was not a significant issue for primary school pupils. The majority get to school on foot, cycle or are dropped off by car. However, some family circumstances such as parental separation mean that significant sums of money are spent on bus travel every week.

**We come from the top of the Hilltown across the city...she's [child at school] moving in with me while her mum has a baby...when she stays with me, it'll happen more. £4 - I have to get a day return, have to go home again after dropping her off.**

(Parent)

Some parents said that schools didn't always understand situations like this or that it wasn't always easy to let them know about changes at home, for example if it was one parent always dropping the child off and the opportunity did not present itself for the other parent to speak to school staff. Parents told us that it could be difficult to tell the school about complex family situations – sometimes there is a lack of confidential space or staff who have the time to listen.

### Travel in secondary school

Some young people reported that they and their peers get up to two buses to school and back every day. Sometimes this is because they live outwith the school catchment and are not within walking distance. Other times, it was due to family circumstances - for example, when young people live between separated parents. Pupils living more than one mile away yet within the catchment area are entitled to a free bus pass.

### Costs when living outwith school catchment

We heard from several young people who stay outwith the catchment for the school that they attend. There were a variety of reasons for this, such as young people changing schools due to bullying or wanting to stay at the same school despite a family move.

**There could be a really good reason for you coming to this school and not the school closest to you but it's like they don't care.**

(Pupil S2)

Living outwith school catchment area can mean having to get two buses – one from home into the city centre and one out to school. A weekly ticket costs around £8.50 but if families are unable to pay this and have to pay daily, travel can cost up to £15 a week.

**Some people just get a day saver because they can't afford a discounted weekly ticket in one go.**

(Pupil S3)

**My friend just moved to Kirriemuir and has to get a bus into town [£4] then another bus £2.80 so it's costing her 6 or 7 pounds every day...bus pass is like £30 a month. It affects going to see her friends too after school.**

(Pupil S5)

### Travelling by bus

Young people say that travelling by bus comes with added pressure if buses are running late beyond their control. They feel that detention for late coming wasn't always fair and reasons weren't always listened to.

In addition, young people pointed out that accessing after school extra-curricular activities become more difficult when you travel to school by bus.

**Supported study and after school clubs might be an issue for some – you might miss your bus or get home really late.**

(Pupil S5)

## Impact of travel costs on attendance

Staff are aware of how difficult paying for transport can be for some families and that this can affect attendance.



**She doesn't come to school very often on a Friday... she lives outwith catchment but wants to come to this school so they pay the neighbour to take her. She doesn't come on a Friday cause there's often no money left to pay the neighbour.**

(Senior Management)

Pupils were aware of the Education Resource Workers who could help if there was something stopping you getting to school on time.



**If you're late all the time someone [ERW] might come to your door or help you if there's a problem.**

(Pupil S3)

However, staff, frustrated that there isn't more help for families, pointed out that this is a quick fix and 'not sustainable'.

## 2.3 Things to consider

### Schools

- Provision of bus tickets if pupils attend something after school - e.g. supported study or clubs - or are struggling with travel costs.
- Where possible take individual circumstances into account when dealing with late coming.

### Dundee City Council

- Explore with bus companies ways to get discounted travel for young people travelling to school.
- Acknowledge that there may be a good reason for a young person travelling from outwith catchment and that it is wrong for them to be penalised financially.
- Ensure that travel costs are not a barrier to school attendance.

## Pupil suggestions

- Dundee City Council should work with bus companies to get young people a discount for travelling to school.
- Bus tickets if you attend something after school e.g. supported study.
- An understanding that there may be a good reason for a family or young person travelling from outwith catchment and it is unfair for them to be penalised financially.
- Dundee City Council should recognise that there may be good reason for a young person attending a school outwith their catchment area and look at possible ways in which to help with transport costs.

## 3. 08:15 BREAKFAST CLUB

### 3.1 Overview

#### What works well

- Breakfast clubs run in primary schools are popular with both parents and pupils who feel that the cost (25p a day) is excellent value.
- Breakfast club, if you have a place, provides a good range of food and supports children to eat in the mornings.
- Breakfast clubs in secondary are free and more of a social gathering to remove stigma.
- Schools and individual teachers provide snacks for children who come to school hungry.

#### Issues and concerns

- Breakfast clubs operate differently in every school and ward.
- Staff to pupil ratios and physical space means there aren't always enough spaces and schools aren't always able to prioritise places for families in need.
- Some parents have had to place children in private breakfast clubs (at a cost of £3 a day) because they were unable to get a place at the school breakfast club.
- Often the food aspect finishes at 8.30am meaning some children don't get anything to eat.
- Missing breakfast means that children are often tired and struggle to concentrate in class.



**Breakfast club is the best thing that happened to young people in my opinion because many children they don't want to eat in the morning but at club they sit with their friends, they eat together.**

(Parent)



## 3.2 Key findings

Pupils and staff identified coming to school hungry as a significant barrier to being able to take part in the school day.

**If you don't have breakfast you're starving and you can't concentrate.**  
(Pupil P4)

Staff report that pupils who come to school without breakfast are tired and unable to concentrate on learning.

**There was a boy in our class, turned up late...he was really red in the face, he'd not even had a drink of water. We could go and get him some juice but it's the simple things like that - we're expecting him to learn.**  
(Teaching staff)

School staff often give children snacks (e.g. fruit and cereal bars) at break time if they have not had breakfast but this still means that children start the school day hungry and unable to concentrate.

### Access to breakfast clubs

#### Primary

Primary children who attended breakfast club spoke about it positively - they get toast, cereal and fruit and they can play games and listen to music. Parents also value the breakfast club as it ensures that their children get breakfast when they otherwise would be reluctant to eat in the morning. At 25p a day, pupils felt that breakfast club costs were manageable even if a family didn't have much money and some parents told us they were prepared to pay more.

However, primary school breakfast clubs have limited places and there is often a waiting list - in one school there are only 25 places available and 20 children on the waiting list. Schools who share breakfast clubs reported this to a greater extent.

**Took me a while...until P3 to get in to breakfast club with the waiting list.**  
(Pupil P4)

**I was lucky 'cause I got to take my big sister's place.**  
(Pupil P5)

Staff spoke of often being unable to offer places to those children who would most benefit from the opportunity - "we can't give places to those most in need" (Teaching staff) - and that there needs to be further discussion around how to ensure those children are prioritised. Also, as breakfast club stops serving food at 8.30am, children whose families struggle to get to school before this are not able to benefit from food available.

Shortage of places can mean that some families end up paying more. Some schools have two breakfast clubs: one with a 25p a day charge and another run by a private provider costing far more, around £3 a day. Where spaces aren't available in the cheaper club it can mean families have to access the private provider.

**We couldn't get into the school breakfast club so I've had to put [daughter] into a private one, it's £3 a day and that's a lot for me. But I'm a single parent and I need to be in work for 9am so I don't have much choice.**  
(Parent)

#### Secondary

Secondary staff have tried to remove as much stigma as possible around their breakfast clubs and have been successful in improving uptake.

**We changed it up to get more young people - waffles on a Friday, toastie Tuesdays... less a 'oh you can't afford breakfast' than a social gathering'... we get around twenty people up every day.**  
(Pupil Support Worker)

However, staff still wish more young people used it. Secondary pupils we spoke to said that they were glad it existed but admitted they may not use it themselves.

**It's embarrassing... you're not going to go to a club if you get breakfast in your house... but that's the point, some people can't afford to.**  
(Pupil S1)

## 3.3 Things to consider

### Schools

- Consider using Pupil Equity Fund for staff hours to increase number of places at breakfast club.
- Explore possibility of providing food like cereal bars, fruit and toast for children between 8.30-9.00am.
- Consider ways to offer a free healthy snack for everyone who needs it that don't require school staff to purchase food themselves.

### Dundee City Council

- Work with schools and provider services to ensure all children who want to are able to access school breakfast clubs.
- Investigate ways to ensure greater consistency in provision across the city.

## Good Practice Example

### Breakfast club in secondary

In both secondary schools we visited, Pupil Support workers provide a free breakfast club for all pupils. One school offers jam rolls for free at morning break. Staff source extra funding and receive food through Fare Share to provide this.

Staff told us that the success of their breakfast clubs is down to the relationships that they have with young people and the way in which the clubs are seen. Many pupils see it as an

opportunity to meet with friends before school rather than solely about the provision of food.



**It works really well having a place that the kids can go – the inclusion base is somewhere casual, there's no big deal about going there to get something to eat.**

(Pupil Support Worker)

## Parent suggestions

- Consult families about breakfast club provision to understand the level of need for the service.

## Staff suggestions

- Consider using Pupil Equity Fund for staff hours to increase number of places at breakfast club.
- Work with Tayside Contracts to ensure that priority children are able to get a place at breakfast club.
- Explore possibility of providing food (cereal bars, fruit etc.) for children between 8.30-9am.
- Toast at the front door: "I bet you they would take a piece on the way in."
- Dundee City Council should work with schools and providers to ensure all children who want to are able to access school breakfast clubs.

## 4.1 Overview

### What works well

- Schools provide equipment for children in class, including pens and pencils – however, staff in all settings report regularly buying materials with their own money.
- Children are normally able to take part in PE if they do not have their gym kit and schools provide spare kits.
- Secondary schools in Dundee have used PEF money to remove some subject costs.

### Issues and concerns

- Secondary pupils felt that the lending of resources wasn't always fair or consistent across departments and between teachers.
- Some staff felt that they were able to buy cheaper and better quality stationery themselves rather than go through the procurement process.
- Instrument hire costs £83. Pupils entitled to FSMs get instruments for free but low income pupils not taking or entitled to FSM may be unable to afford this cost.
- Subject costs in secondary, especially Drama, Home Economics and Technical, can be unaffordable and may be affecting subject choices.
- Subject costs place extra pressure on the teachers who have to ask young people to pay.



**Course fees are just really unfair. It's not a free curriculum... we really want these kids to do Home Economics, especially if they're not academic and might excel in more practical subjects.**

(Teaching staff)



## 4.2 Key findings

### Resources for learning

In all primary schools, children said that basic resources were provided in class and that it was fine to use what you needed.

 **You don't get in trouble if you forget your pencil.**  
(Pupil P4)

However, some classes reported trends for having certain brands of stationery and pencil cases. Teachers thought that these trends could put families under pressure as children wanted to have the same things as their friends.

 **Sometimes it could be expensive for a Smiggle pencil case and that, because they're really expensive.**  
(Pupil P6)

 **My pencil case cost £20.**  
(Pupil P7)

This changes in secondary school. Pupils identified staff that would lend pens, pencils and other resources but said that some are reluctant and that it can come with a deal such as handing over your phone for the duration of class. Most pupils agreed that arrangements for lending resources were inconsistent and that it shouldn't be held against you if you don't have the necessary equipment in class.

 **You need pencils but you can borrow them but they always moan.**  
(Pupil S3)

 **Some classes don't give you pencils - teachers say 'they're not expensive you've got technology so you can afford it'.**  
(Pupil S1)

## Good Practice Example

### Craigie High School

New pupils coming into first year at Craigie are given a pencil case filled with stationery. This means that everyone starts off on the same footing with the same resources.

 **Even if that's all they have they don't start school feeling unprepared or different.**  
(Education Resource Worker)

## Gym kit

Primary children reported that, if they did not have their gym kit they would still be able to take part in the class.



**Don't need to buy a gym kit, just wear what you have**

(Pupil P6)

This was also the case in Secondary schools where staff told us that even football tops were allowed because "it's just much more important that they're taking part". All schools provide spare gym kit if required but willingness to wear this decreases as pupils get older with one describing it as "minging", especially if it was swimming kit.

## Teachers' "own money" and procurement

In primary schools, pupils reported that teachers provided them with pens, pencils and other essential items for class "with their own money" (Pupil P6). There were also reports of staff providing curricular materials like food for Home Economics and boxes for Technical. This corresponds with a recent EIS survey of teachers which found that 51% of respondents had spent their own money on food, clothing or trips.<sup>2</sup>

In one school, teachers raised concerns about the procurement process. They felt that they were able to buy cheaper and better-quality items themselves.



**The pencils that we get [through procurement] are absolutely rubbish, you end up with like 4, 5 going through and you just go 'right, I'm just going to buy myself the actual proper yellow and black ones' as I know they're actually good and I won't have to spend the next week of my life replacing them!**

(Teaching staff)



**You think, it's cheaper if I just buy it myself so you just get it on Amazon.**

(Teaching staff)

While resource provision by individual teachers benefits children, it means dependence on teachers' goodwill and masks the extent of need within the school.

## Musical instruments

In primary schools the Aspire Programme provides children with free opportunities in dance, drama and music. Pupils who had taken part spoke positively about Aspire. However, for standard music tuition there is still a cost for families not receiving FSM at £83 for instrument hire. Pupils felt that this was a big expense and might risk children not participating because of the expense.



**In P7 you get to pick an instrument and if you want to play it you have to pay.**

(Pupil P7)



**I don't (get FSMs) but it's still a lot of money, like, my mum works but it's still a lot of money to pay.**

(Pupil P6)

Although the charge can be paid in instalments none of the children that we spoke to were aware of this.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.eis.org.uk/public.asp?id=3734>

## Subject costs in secondary

Pupils, staff and parents were clear that one of the biggest costs at secondary is course fees for subjects like Home Economics, Technical and Art where pupils are asked to pay to access parts of the core curriculum.

**You have to pay for your [art] exam pieces back, sometimes have to buy your own stuff to make things, like if the department doesn't have tissue paper.**

(Pupil S5)

**Course fees are just really unfair... it's not a free curriculum... we really want these kids to do Home Economics especially if they're not academic and might excel in more practical subjects.**

(Senior Management)

Staff and pupils felt like these costs could be affecting subject choices and future paths. For example, there are an increasing number of jobs within the hospitality industry but "young people might not be taking it [Home Economics/Cake Craft] because of money."

## Home Economics

One Home Economics teacher spoke about the difficulties involved in asking pupils for money that she was aware they may not have:

**If you're collecting money then there are other things you're not doing... you have to cook to attain... you can see the big difference in years that are exposed to more practical work. I've chased one [pupil] up before and I didn't do it again**

(Teaching Staff)

Pupils felt that teachers did try to be sympathetic but that they were under pressure as well and didn't have the budget within their department to cover costs. This year, 2017/18, some subject costs have been covered using Pupil Equity Fund allocations - for example, in one school, S1-3 pupils no longer pay for Home Economics. Pupils thought that this was excellent.

**That's good, yeah that's good [not paying for HE anymore]... it was unfair before.**

(Pupil S2)

## Music

While the cost of instrument hire is managed by Dundee City Council for young people receiving FSMs, other hidden costs exist which can affect participation. One Music teacher told us that:

**They might get instrument hire for free but it's the upkeep of instruments - oil for a trumpet, that's a fiver or tenner that isn't at home... the cost of music books, one book is £20 and you need another in three months... it's twenty to thirty pounds for a box of clarinet reeds.**

(Teaching Staff)

Staff work hard to ensure their pupils can access things like the main music centre and performances at the Caird Hall.

## Drama

In Higher Drama, potentially expensive trips to the theatre are compulsory.

**SQA have dictated to us for last 3 years that they have to do a performance analysis as part of the exam...performance produced in Scotland in the last 3 years, which means that we have to take them to the theatre in order to be able to sit the exam.**

(Teaching Staff)

One school managed to get free tickets for the REP making the 'compulsory Scottish performance' aspect of Higher Drama much easier.

**She's got to go to the REP for free a couple times...it's down to the teacher managing to get the free tickets, it's great**

(Parent)

This isn't always the case however and staff feel it is just another barrier to young people accessing a subject they might otherwise be passionate about.

### Books, resources for revision and UCAS fees

There are further costs for senior pupils like past papers and textbooks. Some staff told us about buying books and resources from their own money to ensure pupils had the items they needed to pass exams. Young people reported inconsistency amongst teachers – some will lend or photocopy past papers willingly but, for some subjects, pupils need to buy them themselves.

Another staff concern was the £26 fee to apply to college or university through UCAS that they felt could be difficult for some young people. They weren't aware of any help available with this.

### Transport costs to different schools

The citywide Pupil Council raised a concern around travel and subject choice. Young people have travel paid for them if they attend the 'city campus', a scheme where pupils go to a different school from their own to enable them to take a certain subject. However young people who visit Dundee College on a similar scheme have to pay for their own travel.



**In one week, I get two bus tickets and two taxis paid for me [to go to a different school] but [my friend] leaves at the same time to go to college and has to pay for the bus herself... it makes no sense.**

(Pupil S6)

## 4.3 Things to consider

### Schools

- Involve pupils in policy decisions and have clear, consistent rules and guidelines around the lending of resources with awareness that not having the 'right' things for school may be related to income.
- Ensure all children and young people are aware of the opportunities available to them in the expressive arts.
- Ensure spare gym kit is plain and kept decent to remove stigma.

### Dundee City Council

- Provide guidance and support to enable all schools to reduce and where possible remove inequalities in access to materials.
- Review policy and practice around procurement so that teachers do not need to spend their own money on equipment for school.
- Remove curricular costs for subjects like Home Economics and Technical Studies which are standing in the way of pupil participation.

### Pupil suggestions

- Have clear, consistent rules and guidelines around the lending of resources with awareness that not having the 'right' things for school may be related to income
- Ensure spare gym kit is plain, clean and in good condition
- Consider using available funds to remove more subject costs

### Staff suggestions

- Review policy and practice around procurement so that teachers do not need to spend their own money on equipment for school (DCC)
- Consider making musical instrument hire free for all children (DCC)

## 5. 10:30 FRIENDSHIPS AND

## ATTITUDES TO POVERTY

### 5.1 Overview

#### What works well

- Children and young people show empathy toward their peers and are open to hearing different stories and experiences.

#### Issues and concerns

- Staff don't always have the time or opportunity to hear children and young person's problems.
- Cultural stigma around poverty and lack of understanding/knowledge of how low income affects families.

“When you're poor, you give up on your dreams.”  
(Pupil P6)

“In classes such as PSHE, pupils should be taught about why they should be considerate towards people who don't have the same amount of money or are going through a rough time at home.”  
(Pupil S4)



## 5.2 Key findings

For young people, friendships were largely spoken about in relation to differences in clothes and possessions – what someone has and doesn't have. Staff said that young people are very aware of incomes and how much their possessions cost.

**If they have a new bag the first question they ask is how much was it? Where was it from? Is it a fake?**  
(ERW)

Fitting in and having the same as their peers is important for young people.

**It was his birthday... he lied to his friends and said he'd got £100.**  
(Teaching Staff)

Parents noted the substantial amount of money they spend for their children to be like their friends and have the same as them, to protect them from bullying.

**Low income families try their hardest to make sure their kids have the same as other kids that's family have high incomes because bullying can take place otherwise.**  
(Parent)

Staff and pupils identified mobile phones as one of the expensive items which marks differences between young people and puts pressure on parents on low incomes.

**I broke my phone and had to take my Gran's small Samsung and I got slagged.**  
(Pupil S2)

Education Resource Workers spoke about young people smashing their phones because they are embarrassed by them. All groups noted that phones are no longer a luxury and that widespread use of social media means they are now essential for young people to communicate with each other and be included. Other expensive items with status for girls include MAC make up, acrylic nails and eyelashes.

Young people said that they could tell Guidance staff if they were upset about friendship problems but there was uncertainty over how much this would help. Issues around bullying are noted in the previous section on school uniform but, broadly, there was agreement that income-related trouble with friendships would depend on who was in your year group and therefore your friendship group.

**It [money] affects social groups – you won't see people from the wealthiest families hanging around with certain people. Social media – there's anonymous comments on Snapchat... there's no way for the school to deal with it without banning phones or Snapchat.**  
(Pupil S5)

Young people told us they had witnessed or been victims themselves of poverty related bullying. They felt that it was a really difficult issue to deal with.

**There was a wee kid standing outside and he was getting bullied [for what he was wearing]...it was so unfair, really sad. School need to better at dealing with all bullying [it] shouldn't happen... we should be talking about this stuff in PSE.**  
(Pupil S2)

Pupils have been learning about poverty in assembly in some schools and they told us that this was a good start. However they felt there needed to be more opportunities for discussion, and that opinions sometimes needed to be challenged.

**Wealth inequality creates a stigma. In this area there's a large gap between the wealthiest families and the least, the people who live in one area and the people who live in another, in tiny houses are often right next to each other.**  
(Pupil S5)

Many of the pupils we spoke to were very empathic and aware of the situation some of their peers might be in.

## Pupil suggestions

- 'Sharing experiences across the school'.
- Include the subject of child poverty in PSHE classes.
- Consistent and strict bullying policy around poverty related stigma.
- A 'communication box' or 'worry box' where pupils can communicate with staff in confidence.

## 5.3 Things to consider

### Schools

- Explore how the subject of poverty can be explored within school in a local context.
- Ensure staff can support pupils by participating in professional learning opportunities on poverty causes, consequences and solutions.

### Dundee City Council

- Include poverty related stigma in anti-bullying guidelines and support schools to include it in their policies and address it in their practice.

## 6. 10:45 BREAK TIME

### 6.1 Overview

#### What works well

- In some schools, teachers ask the school kitchen to provide children with toast or a free play piece if they don't have a snack.
- Schools and individual teachers provide snacks for children who come to school hungry.
- Parents of nursery children were happy with snack selection and value for money.
- Low cost options exist at school tuck shops.



**I forgot my play piece... it's really hard to concentrate.**

(Pupil P7)

#### Issues and concerns

- Some children go without a snack at break time.



## 6.2 Key findings

### Primary school

Primary pupils told us of the wide variety of healthy and unhealthier snacks that they bring for play piece. In many schools there is a school tuck shop where items can be bought from as little as 20p. When asked if they had ever forgot snack, children said they would happily share with friends or tell the teacher.

 **Sometimes the teachers give you money for tuck.**

(Pupil P7)

 **Some teachers have play piece...Mr. L - he had yoghurt coated raisins in his drawer...yuck but better than nothing.**

(Pupil P6)

Pupils felt that all children should have access to an 'emergency play piece'.

Some schools no longer have a tuck shop due to staffing and physical space. Pupils miss the tuck shop and described it as an easy, low cost way to have access to a healthy play piece.

 **I forgot my play piece and I just have to starve till lunch...really hard to concentrate...I used to keep a pound just in case but now there's no tuck shop.**

(Pupil P6)

Staff suggested that local supermarkets and businesses could donate fruit every once in a while. They felt that this would a) mean that no child would be without a snack and b) encourage healthy eating and reduce the number of children bringing in sugary drinks and snacks.

### Break in secondary school

Pupils in secondary were happy with the waffles, bacon rolls and other food on offer in the canteen and felt it was good value. However, young people on FSMs aren't able to afford food for lunch *and* something at break time [see School Lunches for further discussion].

### Pupil suggestions

- Free piece of fruit for everyone at break time.

### Staff suggestions

- Work with local businesses to offer healthy snacks.

## 6.3 Things to consider

### Schools

- Consider ways to offer a free healthy snack for everyone who needs it that doesn't require staff purchasing it themselves.

## 7. 11:00 SCHOOL TRIPS

### 7.1 Overview

#### What works well

- Schools are accessing grants and free visits, including Heritage Scotland, local area re-generation funds etc.
- Schools are accessing activities locally which do not require transport hire.
- Schools and Parent Council fundraising to reduce costs for school trips (including tombola, sponsored walks and dress down days).
- Allowing parents to pay cost of trips in instalments (including after the trip if necessary)
- Offering sibling discounts on trips- e.g. families with twins only needs to pay for one place.
- School and Family Development Worker approaching each family that is not able to attend and exploring if there is anything the school could do to help.
- Providing parents with a breakdown of the costs of the school trip (travel, entry fee, snack etc.) so that they understand where charges come from.

#### Issues and concerns

- The cost of bus hire has meant that schools have chosen to reduce the number of trips that they offer.
- The primary 7 residential trip was identified as the biggest cost by children across the primary schools. Costs ranged from £140- £330. Children in several of the schools spoke about missing the P7 trip because of cost. Not attending meant they missed out on the excitement in the run-up to the trip, opportunity to have new experiences and shared memories with their classmates.
- There are many examples of individual staff members sourcing free or low costs trips for pupils but this is dependent on staff having the time and knowledge to access these opportunities.
- Young people in secondary schools were frustrated that there weren't many school trips and those that did exist were usually quite expensive.



**The P7 trip is like the biggest deal. So many memories.**

(Pupil P7)



## 7.2 Key findings

### Class trips



**It's not just a normal school day – you get to go somewhere different with your friends and learn stuff too.**

(Pupil P6)

Both pupils and teachers spoke about the value of school trips, giving children the opportunity to go to new places, learn new skills and build on what they have learned in the classroom to help make their class topic come alive. Schools are aware of the potential pressure that school trips can place on families and strive to keep costs as low as possible. However many trips still cost around £5 in primary school.

The majority of primary pupils thought that the cost of non-residential class trips would not be a problem and that their teachers say that if there were problems their parents could come to the office and the school would help. The majority of children reported that no one had missed out on a non-residential class trip because they hadn't paid.

### Accessing local facilities

The high and rising cost of bus hire has meant that many schools have chosen to reduce the number of trips they go on. Classes have not been able to take advantage of local facilities unless they are within walking distance.



**The science centre is free to get into but the bus, well- I think we would do a lot more trips if there weren't that cost factor.**

(Teaching Staff)

Parents reported that trips to local places were too expensive. One parent informed us that the school had charged £8 for a trip to Camperdown Park and said that it would be cheaper to get the local bus there.

To overcome cost barriers to local attractions, DCC is offering free trips to four sites in Dundee including Verdant Works and the Discovery, including transport. However, take up has been low and teachers in the schools we worked in were not aware of this service.

### Primary 7 residential trip

The P7 residential trip was identified as the biggest cost in primary school. Our survey of Dundee Primary schools found that the residential trip costs families £184 on average. The residential trip is an event that children look forward to throughout their time in school.



**People look forward to (P7 residential trip) for like six years.**

(Pupil P6)



**The P7 trip is like the biggest deal – so many memories.**

(Pupil P7)

The residential trip offers children the opportunity to try new activities and have fun with their friends. For the P7s it is an opportunity to build strong friendships with their classmates and is one of their best memories from school. Parents also understood how important the residential trip was for their children, giving them opportunities that they would not have elsewhere.



**He'd never been on a horse... he got to go horse riding so it was worth the money.**

(Parent)



**Children report high levels of enjoyment - it is as much about life skills, coping with change, building friendships, challenging themselves as it is about the actual activities.**

(Teaching Staff)

## Differences in cost

Pupils and parents were aware of the P7 residential trip cost increasing- one parent said that she had paid the same for her daughter to attend a 4 day trip as she had paid for her son to attend a 5 day trip several years previously. School staff reported that transport costs are significant and this has added to the cost of the trip.



**The bus to Dalguise [outdoor centre] was £500.**

(Office Staff)

Due to timings and the different levels of fundraising that schools do, schools charge different amounts, often for the same trip - from £140 to £330. This variation across Dundee City Council has been raised by parents who feel that it is unfair that they are paying a different price from a neighbouring school.



**It should be the same across the city.**

(Parent)

Cost varies depending on whether the trip is at the weekend or during the week and at which time of year. The 'cheaper' options can then have disadvantages.



**Feel like we're then forced to go [by costs] when it's freezing cold.**

(Teaching Staff)

## Impact of missing P7 trip

From our survey of primary schools<sup>3</sup> in Dundee, we found that, on average, 4-5 children in P7 classes were unable to attend the P7 residential trip. In some schools, as many as 11 children did not attend the trip. While children did not attend for a variety of reasons, including health and religious reasons, several schools reported being aware that costs prevented children from attending. Several of the pupils in workshops said that they didn't think they would get to go on the trip.



**I probably can't afford it.**

(Pupil P6)

Children unanimously agreed that missing the P7 residential would be a big deal. They thought that they would feel left out, embarrassed, upset and jealous of missing out on a shared experience.



**You would miss out on staying away with your friends.**

(Pupil P7)

In the majority of the schools there were no specific activities planned for children who weren't able to attend. Children would join other classes or help out with the P1 class.



**He'd just have to go and help out in a class and be bored.**

(Pupil P6)

One school sourced funding to allow children not attending the trip to have a week of outdoor learning activities. Although pupils enjoyed it, they said that they had felt a bit 'left out' when everyone came back and was talking about the trip.

<sup>3</sup> All Dundee schools surveyed – 24 responded.

## Families with no recourse to public funds

Several schools indicated that families had decided to opt out of the P7 trip for religious reasons. Some expressed concern that, in fact, they were not able to manage the costs and did not want to ask for help. One SFDW thought that this was often the case for families who had no recourse to public funds (e.g. parents in the UK completing PhDs).

**I think things like school trips, they would just put down that they can't go . . . some families would just say 'oh they're not allowed to go', but I think 9 out of 10 it's because they don't have money for them to go.**  
(SFDW)

## School trips in secondary

A range of school trips are offered across the secondary schools we visited, including a skiing trip at £800, London at £300 through the music department, a Manchester football trip for £150, Dynamic Earth for £20 and trips throughout activity week ranging from free to £50. Staff, parents and pupils agree that income is a barrier to attending trips and that trips can put pressure on families who don't have spare cash.

Many parents were happy with the range of trips offered and thought the schools worked hard to gain access to free opportunities.

**London trip was good value, for what we paid he got to do lots of things... some teachers do a really good job and organise free trips, like she got to go to Scottish Parliament.**  
(Parent)

Pupils, however, felt that the costs of most trips were substantial.

**One was £50, Snow Factory, it ended up not happening 'cause nobody wanted to pay that amount of money.**  
(Pupil S2)

**My brother wanted to go [to France] but 'cause it was so expensive he didn't.**  
(Pupil S3)

**The ski trip is 800 pounds and, like, nobody can pay 800 pounds.**  
(Pupil S2)

**If you don't have money to afford to go on the trip, to get the money you'd need to borrow off your [wider] family and then it wouldn't be fair for them. You might give the money back but I still wouldn't do that.**  
(Pupil S1)

As in primary schools, staff told us that the coach travel costs are high and that this makes accessing local facilities difficult.

## Missing out on trips in secondary

Pupils spoke about not being able to go on school trips with their peers and how this made them feel.

**Last day it was just me in my class, that was rubbish, majority of people were away on the trip.**  
(Pupil S2)

**If you can't afford it you're just sat there in your class on your own and do work while they go - Mr P says if you don't go you need to work.**  
(Pupil S4)

**Nah, too expensive, I'd rather buy food or just stay off - cos if I'm not doing anything on activity weeks I just don't come in because there's no point, you just sit on a class and see a movie when you could just sit in your house and sleep.**  
(Pupil S3)

Similarly, although the school ensured there was a 'free option' during activity week it was often an option that nobody wanted to do and, in fact, carried stigma.

**Some of the trips in activities week are free but they're rubbish, playing board games, just things like staying in class and playing Twister with the teacher. Its like, 'Hi there, I'm off to play Twister with Mr S - where are you going?' 'Valencia!'**

(Pupil S4)

Staff were aware that trips are not easily accessed by all young people and that reducing costs can mean reducing quality and variety.

**Some of our kids are really marginalised... what if you've got two kids at the same school? There's a conscientious effort to put free things on but are the £25 ones as exciting as trips other schools might have?**

(Senior Management)

Staff know that many pupils in the school might not have access to certain opportunities outside of school and try to fill these gaps. One secondary offers a free residential for some pupils.

**At the recent free residential there was a £10 deposit to cover waterproofs, head torch etc. but this year the school covered it so if you don't have £10 that day you still got to go... Hardly any stuff got broken. There were definitely pupils that would have missed out [if we hadn't done that]... even £10 depends on when people have been paid.**

(PSW)

## Hidden extras

Hidden costs on trips can create additional financial barriers to participation. Pupils told us that there is often a limit placed on spending money but often it is ignored.

**Dynamic Earth was £20... it was well worth it but then you need money for food too.**

(Pupil S1)

## Subsidising and paying for places

All schools give parents time to pay for more expensive trips in instalments and try to subsidise costs for pupils unable to pay. There are hardship funds which can be used with Guidance staff discretion to pay for school trips. However, challenges still exist and they find themselves "knocking on everyone's doors for money". Although instalments are helpful for parents, the initial deposit may be unmanageable (e.g. £100 for a skiing trip). And, even when staff manage to subsidise or fund places for some, there are then additional costs – for example, clothing and toiletries for residential trips.

Some pupils had heard of help available from the school to pay for trips but many hadn't and thought it was unlikely. Pupils thought that support would depend on how much the teacher liked you and wanted to help – some wouldn't - and on the cost. They thought it unlikely that help would be given for more expensive trips or, if it was, you would have to pay it back.

**All they say to you is the price - if you get a letter for activity week they don't put on it 'if you canna pay we'll help you', they just put the prices on it.**

(Pupil S3)

They thought it would be helpful for a system to be in place whereby pupils could ask for support without embarrassment.

## Pupil suggestions

- Identify different fundraising activities that don't require pupil donations (e.g. bag packing in super markets, carol singing in local shopping centre).
- Consider offering discounts for families with more than one child.
- Consult more with pupils around which trips are offered.
- Explore why a child is not attending P7 residential to ensure that costs are not a barrier to participation.
- Develop an easy way for pupils (in secondary) to approach staff for help with trip costs.

## Parent suggestions

- Allow families to pay in instalments for all trips and give as much notice as possible to help families manage costs better.
- More consistency and transparency around P7 residential costs (DCC).

## Staff suggestions

- Ensure staff are aware what funding is available (DCC).
- Do a deal with local bus companies (DCC).

## 7.3 Things to consider

### Schools

- Fundraise to reduce costs/subsidise school trips in a way that does not put pressure on school community e.g. bag packing in local supermarket, singing carols in shopping centre.
- Link with Local Learning Partnerships to ensure more knowledge of funding and support from local community officer.
- Allow families to pay in instalments for all trips and give as much notice as possible to help families manage costs better.
- Explore the reasons why some children do not attend P7 residential to ensure that financial reasons are not a barrier and identify any other potential barriers.
- In secondary schools carry out wider consultation around what trips pupils would like and pay money to go on.
- More consistency and transparency around the charging for P7 residential.
- Consider offering discounts for families with more than one child.
- Develop an easy way for pupils (in secondary) to approach staff for help with trip costs.
- Improve communication with parents around help with costs available in the school - e.g. subsidies for trips – as many may be unaware.
- Explore, with pupils, mechanisms which will allow pupils to tell staff when they are finding costs difficult discreetly and without embarrassment.

### Dundee City Council

- Better promote DCC funded school trips to local attractions including Verdant Works and the Discovery.
- Reduce the cost of residential trips – explore potential to get a better deal for all Dundee schools.
- Make a public policy commitment that no Dundee child will miss the P7 residential due to financial costs, and allocate resources to ensure this is deliverable.

## 8. 12:40 SCHOOL LUNCHES

### 8.1 Overview

#### What works well

- Pupils did not report any stigma around having free school meals (FSMs).
- Automatic application for FSMs has been introduced for families claiming housing benefit and council tax reduction with schools also continuing to support families to make the application for FSMs.
- School promotion of FSMs, including in-school bag letter drops, SFDWs helping families to complete applications and social media promotion.
- Letter and text reminders to P4 parents that they no longer automatically receive FSMs and how to make an application.
- Follow up with families that are getting into debt with Parent Pay with offer of support from SFDW.
- Schools ensure that children eat regardless of whether they have money for lunch or not.
- Positive pupil relationships with dining hall staff.

#### Issues and concerns

- The online Parent Pay system reduces risk of pupils losing or forgetting lunch money but several schools report that it has led to some families falling into lunch debt. This means following up with families for late payments with risk to home- school relations.
- In Early Years settings, families eligible for FSMs are able to get free lunches. Nursery staff highlighted risk that non-eligible families on low incomes would remove their children from full time placements due to lunch costs.
- In secondary there is an issue with young people using their FSM entitlement at break, leaving them with nothing for lunchtime.
- Secondary schools find it hard to encourage young people to stay in school to eat.
- Families with many children struggle with the combined cost of lunches.
- Families with children going into P4 aren't always aware of the FSM entitlement or how to apply.



## 8.2 Key findings

**Most of the time they are yummy, there's always something I like.**

(Pupil P5)

School lunches were identified as a significant cost for families, especially difficult for families with several children.

**£2 a day over a year is a lot.**

(Pupil P6)

Some families feel that they can put together lunches more cheaply themselves.

**I'm only allowed school dinners twice a week. My mum thinks they're too expensive, she can make me packed lunches for cheaper, like you can buy multipacks.**

(Pupil P7)

Pupils were largely positive about lunches but raised issues around limited choices available and portion sizes remaining the same from P1 to P7. Some children reported that school dinners 'don't fill me up' and several parents agreed: 'he's always starving when he comes home if he's had school dinners'.

### Snacks in early years settings

Parents were very positive about the snacks provided to their children. They thought that a contribution of £1.50 a week was good value and that there was always a great choice available.

### Parent Pay

The introduction of online payments for school lunches, trips and uniform received a mixed response from parents and school staff. Some parents spoke about it very positively.

**Parent Pay is great. It means that I know the money is getting to the school, not getting lost or spent somewhere else**

(Parent)

School staff felt that it helped remove the stigma of who paid for their lunches and who got a FSM. Younger pupils were often unaware of whether they receive FSMs or not.

**Child 1: I don't pay and I still get school lunches**

**Child 2: No, your parents pay on Parent Pay.**

(Pupils P7)

However, in several schools, families had built up a significant level of debt on Parent Pay. One family owed over £100. School staff suggested that Parent Pay didn't seem 'real' and that since it had been introduced there were increased levels of lunch debt

**We let it rack up too much and then the debt is too much for the parent... it's our fault.**

(SFDW)

Chasing this debt has potential to affect home-school relations. In one school, families were referred to debt collectors.

## Parent Pay in early years

In nursery, Parent Pay can be used to pay for snacks. Several parents said that they found it confusing to use as there was no clear indication of how much money they owed and what they had paid up already.

**I got totally confused, we started that Parent Pay system thing, but I thought there was going to be a bill that came up on that and then you would pay the bill. Cause it works that you put money in and then they take money from but how do you know how much is going to be taken from it?**  
(Parent)

## Free school meals

**I get mine's free...I get it cause the job centre destroyed my mum. You get it if you lose your job or something. There's no way of knowing who's on free meals, it's not a big deal.**  
(Pupil P7)

Since January 2015, children in P1-3 have been entitled to free school meals (FSMs). Parents report that this helps to ease the pressure on family budgets and they are pleased that their children get something hot for their lunch. After P4, eligible pupils can claim FSMs. Some families struggle with the change.

**Children were going into P4, their lunches had been paid for before and they'd [their parents/carers] not budget for it and if you think about it, if you've got like 2 children it's like £2 a day, £20 a week, £100 a month. It's expensive for school dinners if you've not accounted for it.**  
(SFDW)

Several parents not eligible for FSMs spoke about the pressure that school lunches put on the family budget.

**I struggle enough with my oldest, I'm dreading when she (younger daughter) goes into P4. We're going to really feel it**  
(Parent)

**If your mum and dad have two or three kids then that's like £30 a week, that's a lot of money**  
(Pupil P6)

Information about claiming FSMs after P3 is shared on school websites and posters provided by Dundee City Council. School staff say that parents whose first language isn't English were more likely to be unaware of the end of universal FSMs and that some of these families had started getting into lunch debt when their child moved to P4.

The DCC Benefit Delivery service offers all families claiming housing benefit (HB) and council tax reduction (CTR) automatic access to FSMs. This means that families do not need to apply. However, as with the clothing grant, automatic payment depends on families claiming HB and CTR and the implications of the introduction of universal credit will need to be considered. Families from EU countries also may be unaware that they are entitled to these supports.

Schools continue to promote and provide information about FSMs to all parents using newsletters, social media and SFDWs speaking to parents at school events.

## FSMs in Secondary

Secondary pupils broadly agreed that free school meals were helpful and that the process of using payment cards meant it wasn't easy to tell who was receiving them

**It's good that the money goes straight on your card so nobody would know.**  
(Pupil S1)

They were complimentary about the choice of food on offer at both break and lunchtime. Similarly to children in primary, pupils felt that lunch costs could be hard for lots of families

**I think it [FSM] should be for everyone because even if there is two parents it doesn't mean they're going to have more money.**  
(Pupil S3)

The FSM entitlement of £2.05 only covers a 'meal deal' at lunchtime and doesn't leave any money for break. Some pupils spend their FSM allocation at break instead, meaning that either they have nothing at lunch or their parents end up giving them extra money.

**I don't eat at lunch, I just spend my money at break.**  
(Pupil S4)

**There are lots eligible for FSMs but using it for bacon rolls and sausage rolls at break... then the parent is giving £5 for lunch every day. There's immense pressure, they want to be 'like their pals'**  
(Teaching Staff)

Some pupils don't use their FSM because they go out to the shops with their friends rather than eating in school. Staff say that it is difficult to entice them to stay in school for lunch. This can mean that young people don't eat sufficiently at lunch.

**You have to stay here and have your free school meal or you could go with them and just watch them while you're starving.**  
(Pupil S3)

## FSMs in Early Years

Both staff and parents raised the issue of nursery lunches. Children with full-time nursery places pay £2 a day unless the family is eligible for FSM. This was seen as unfair as children in P1-3 have free school meals.

**There's one thing I've never understood, the P1s get FSMs but nursery children don't.**  
(Parent)

**Especially at age 3, that's their growing years, it's so important that they're able to get good food.**  
(Nursery Staff)

Staff spoke about families who find the cost of nursery lunches difficult. They felt that there was risk that parents would remove children from full-time placements to avoid the cost.

**I know one family, they've had to stop (son) attending nursery full time as they couldn't afford it (cost of school meals). Just had to go part time, which is awful, that means that child's gone from loving full time in to part time now.**  
(Nursery Staff)

## Relationships

School staff, including catering staff, try their hardest to ensure that no pupil goes hungry. In one school, staff were concerned that a young person might not be getting any food outside school. They gave her lunch and a packed lunch to take away with her so that she would have something to eat later.

## Good Practice Example

### Braeview Academy

The head cook at Braeview Academy works hard to keep a positive relationship with the pupils and stays aware of their changing circumstances - for example, if someone was receiving free school meals last term but not this term. She is committed to ensuring that young people get what they are entitled to and that they are eating.

**This one boy, his mum got a pay rise [that put him] £5 above free school meals threshold...these are the kids that we have to keep an eye out for. Imagine if that mum had two kids in the school...You have them at parent's night - 'oh didn't even know he got free school meals.**

**I print off who gets free school meals, who isn't using - give it to guidance.**

Catering staff and support staff work closely together, using FSM data and observations to ensure all eligible pupils are receiving their free school meal entitlement and working to remove any barriers that there might be to them actually using it.

**Sometimes kids are too embarrassed to say they've no money for dinners.**

Staff prioritise relationships with the pupils, understanding the impact this can have on young people using the school dining hall and taking up FSM entitlement.

**Relationships matter - dinner staff with young people, dinner staff with support staff and support staff with young people...we know them by name and vice versa.**

## Pupil suggestions

- Make sure new pupils know how to use payment cards.
- 'Remember that people struggle with money, even if they have a job'.
- More money for FSMs to allow for something at break and lunch.

## Parent suggestions

- Let nursery parents choose how to pay for snack; Parent Pay or handing in money directly as not all families are able or wish to use Parent Pay.

## Staff suggestions

- Review policy and procedures around Parent Pay - ensure that if parents are starting to build up lunch debt they have opportunity to meet with SFDW to see if there are supports available.
- Review use of Parent Pay in Early Years Centres to ensure that it is clear for parents (DCC).
- Further promote the uptake of free school meals, with particular focus on families who are not from the UK (DCC).
- Prioritise staff/pupil relationships within the dining hall.
- Extend FSM eligibility - 'that might mean that everyone would stay in school'.
- 'Tayside Contracts and DCC should work together, we should all be keeping an eye on the things that we keep an eye on here [at Braeview]'. (Catering Staff)

## 8.3 Things to consider

### Schools

- Ensure that parents can choose how to pay for snack using either Parent Pay or handing in money directly as not all families are able or wish to use Parent Pay.
- Remind all parents of children going into P4 that there is no longer universal provision of FSMs, particularly families from outside the UK.
- Continue to promote FSMs and offer support to complete the application.
- Review policy and procedures around Parent Pay- ensure that if parents are starting to build up lunch debt they have opportunity to meet with SFDW to see if there are supports available.
- Ensure new pupils are given clear instructions on the use of payment cards in secondary.
- Prioritise pupil/staff relationships in the dining hall.
- Reductions available for school meals for families with several children.
- Look at ways to encourage young people to eat within the school (e.g. extra-curricular activities).

### Dundee City Council

- Review use of Parent Pay in Early Years Centres to ensure that it is clear for parents.
- Further promote the uptake of free school meals, with particular focus on families who are not from the UK.
- Consider extending free school entitlement to all in early years and P4.

## 9. 14:00 FUN EVENTS

### 9.1 Overview

#### What works well

- Strategies to reduce costs of fun events and ensure children don't feel left out:
  - Alternative ways to celebrate World Book Day that don't involve parents spending money.
  - Free things for children to get involved in during events like the summer fair.
  - Collections of 'things' e.g. tins of food instead of money.
  - Staff lending/giving children money so that they can take part in activities.

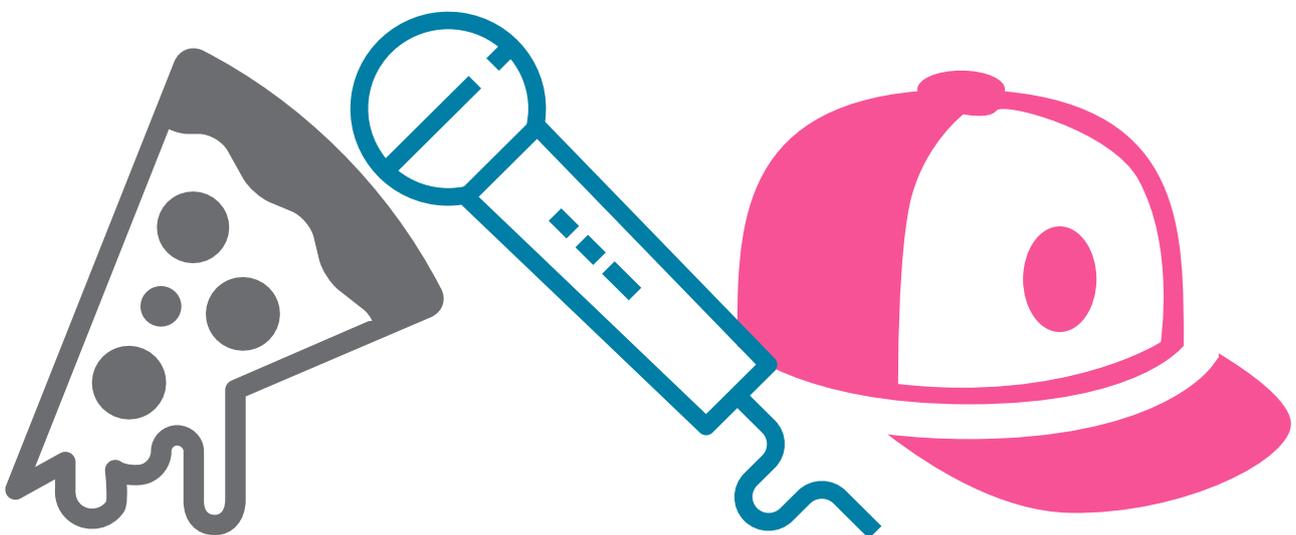
#### Issues and concerns

- Often timing (e.g. at Christmas) means families are paying for several events over a short and financially difficult period.
- Non-uniform days can put financial and social pressure on children and young people.
- Children sometimes miss out on events and report feeling 'left-out' and 'different'.



**Last year for World Book Day... instead of buying a costume you're only going to use for one day the teachers said bring your favourite book and wear your pyjamas.**

(Pupil P5)



## 9.2 Key findings

Across the city, schools hold a variety of fun events like school discos, dress up and down days and fundraising events like school fairs. They are more common in primary school and many are low cost or free. The general consensus was that all schools are cutting down on these events, particularly on dress down days where children and young people pay to dress in their own clothes.

Most children in primary school said that it would be highly unlikely for a child to miss out on any of the fun events in school. Some spoke about friends or members of staff giving them £1 so they were able to buy something at a fair.

### Dressing up

For some dressing up events, children informed us that they were able to make costumes at home or ask the school for a costume. However, often, costumes are purchased.



**Costumes can cost loads of money... even onesie days - people will go and buy new stuff.**

(Pupil P7)

With the best intentions, schools often ask children to wear pyjamas rather than a 'costume' thinking that every child will have something to wear.



**Why would you wear to school the old jammies that you've been wearing for like the past 30 nights? You need new jammies and then that costs money.**

(Pupil P7)

Pupils suggested that spare costumes could be kept in school for events like World Book Day or Christmas Jumper Day.

Parents noted that fun events can add additional stress when little notice is given.



**The school had just gone back from the October holidays and we got the note on the Monday saying they needed luminous stuff to wear on the Wednesday, glow sticks and stuff, and I had to deck out three kids with luminous stuff within 2 days. And you take account of people who are working as well and struggle to have the time, it's not just a financial thing, you know?**

(Parent)

### World Book Day

In time for World Book Day 2018, Dundee City Council cascaded guidance to schools asking them to focus on books and reading and try and steer away from the dressing up side of the event. The council used evidence from children and parents taking part in the CoSD project to develop the guidance. While local newspapers covered this with the headline 'children banned from dressing up', the response to the articles on social media was largely positive and parents were pleased that the local authority is taking financial pressures into account.

## Good Practice Example

### Rosebank Primary

Rosebank Primary aimed to ensure that all children could participate in Christmas Jumper Day without paying.

This allowed children to take part without putting pressure on families to go out and buy a Christmas jumper. There was no set donation requested to take part in this event.



**What they said was just bring in any jumper or t-shirt or whatever and we'll provide stuff to decorate it with, like tinsel, and the kids were all helping make their Christmas jumpers and things, so there was a way to still do it but not feel excluded by that.**

(SFDW)

## Non-uniform days

In some schools, children are asked to bring in food items for donation rather than money on non-uniform days. Pupils and staff felt that these events could still exclude certain children as they might be embarrassed by the 'non-uniform' that they had to wear and might even stay off school as a result.

**People stay off cause they don't have the money... they think their outfit is silly... or they just wear their uniform.**  
(Pupil P7)

**Non-uniform must affect attendance - I wouldn't come if I didn't have the 'right' stuff.**  
(ERW)

Some pupils said that clothes matter on non-uniform days.

**I'd rather wear school uniform because if it's normal clothes every single day then you have to pick out your outfit...sometimes people judge you.**  
(Pupil P7)

Pupils suggested that if events like non-uniform days are going to happen then the school should ask for a donation in a 'chuck it in a bucket' style.

## Fundraising

Schools across Dundee raise thousands for local and national charities and the children and young people we spoke to were very proud of this fact. In general children, parents and staff seemed happy about the amount of fundraising schools take part in and were pleased that as well as helping organisations a large proportion usually goes back into the schools to pay for trips and activities.

A lot of this fundraising happens in the form of fairs and cake sales, usually in summer and at Christmas time. The set up varied from school to school – some were held at weekends, some had an entrance fee and some were free to go to. Pupils were aware of the difficulties that such events might have for children from low income families even if the event itself is free.

**There's nothing to do at the summer fair if you don't have money...even throwing a sponge at the teacher costs about £1 - I would just go home.**  
(Pupil P6)

**Sometimes you just have to sit in class if you don't have any money, it's happened to me - you get made fun of.**  
(Pupil P6)

Some schools ensure that there are free activities at events or free juice and a biscuit for everyone. One child suggested there be a cap on the amount of money that children can bring to events like fairs and coffee mornings to minimise obvious differences.

## P7 leavers

All primary schools celebrate their P7s leaving for high school and try to do in a simple and low cost way. Celebrations are held within the school or locally and are often free to attend. However, staff are aware of the extra pressure surrounding these events and how 'Americanised' and 'prom like' they've become.

**It must be so expensive...new dresses, hair and makeup done, kilts and suits, then they went on the boogie bus.**  
(Support Staff)

**P7s have a party at the end of the year... stretch limos and things like that, and again that's quite difficult because some children can't have that. The ticket's £3 but they get their nails done, dresses, fake tan.**  
(Teaching Staff)

One P7 leavers dance is arranged by parents outwith Parent Council: the school don't have any control over it and feel that it could be putting a lot of pressure on families

**It's not a cost we're putting on them but it's another pressure. Some had hired kilts.**  
(Senior Management)

Other expenses include a leaver's hoodie costing around £15 and a tie for the pupil's new secondary school. These items are often subsidised by the Parent Council.

### Senior leavers

S6 is costly for senior pupils. In one school it is £20 for the leaver's hoodie, £20 for the yearbook and a further £40 for the ticket for the school dance. This is before costs for dance outfits are taken into account. Many of these costs come within weeks of each other.



**There was a boy in our year, I honestly think he left school because he couldn't afford all the extras that go along with being in sixth year.**

(Pupil S6)

## 9.3 Things to consider

### Schools

- Implement suggestions of spare costumes for certain occasions and a 'free thing' at coffee mornings and fairs.
- Monitor attendance at family events with costs attached.
- Ensure no pupil is left out at events like school fairs and coffee mornings.
- Consider 'chuck it in a bucket' voluntary donations rather than specific amount.
- Space events out across the school year to avoid too many events at once and liaise with Parent Council, nursery and individual class teachers to avoid clashes.
- Ensure families get sufficient notice before fundraising events, particularly those where pupils are asked to wear costumes.
- Ensure funds are available to cover school leavers costs if needed.

### Pupil suggestions

- One free activity at all school events.
- Spare costumes kept in school for dress up days like Halloween.
- 'Chuck it in a bucket' instead of specific donation amounts.
- More fundraising to help pupils in the school rather than charities.

### Parent suggestions

- Ensure that families are given sufficient notice before fun events, particularly when pupils are asked to dress up or bring in a donation.

## 10. 16:00 SCHOOL CLUBS

### 10.1 Overview

#### What works well

- Free activities at lunchtime and after school.
- Teachers and other staff giving up their time to run free activities.
- Active Schools Coordinators sourcing additional funding to provide free opportunities for all.
- Support from Active Schools in training staff, pupils and volunteers.
- Older pupils working alongside staff to run clubs.
- Free travel (e.g. secondary minibus) to take pupils to activities outside their local area.
- Often no 'special' kit is needed, just normal gym kit.

#### Issues and concerns

- Activities don't exist in every local area meaning that there is still a transport issue for some.
- Free taster sessions for activities that are high cost leave disappointed children and parents under pressure.



**It's a shame - great people come and do like karate, a taster, but then it costs a fortune...and they might have siblings.**

(Support Staff)



## 10.2 Key findings

Pupils told us about the wide range of activities available at Dundee schools including gymnastics, tennis, hockey, football and karate. In every school in Dundee children and young people have access to free activities and often need nothing apart from their gym kit.

**There would always be something free he [child from low-income family] could do and he probably wouldn't need to buy anything extra.**  
(Pupil P6)

Parents also agree that there are a good range of free opportunities available.

**Most of the clubs are free, some great opportunities - she goes to trampolining, dancing and piano lessons.**  
(Parent)

Staff in many schools give up their spare time to run lunchtime and after school clubs, often involving older pupils in a leadership role.

However there are not always free activities available for all age groups in schools and financial barriers can exist to children and young people merely taking part in the same activities as their peers. There is an inconsistency across the city – in some schools there are no or very few activities that cost but in others the majority are pay to play. This results in some children getting free sports activity if they attend one school and others having to pay for the same activity in another school.

Even when activities are free, they can involve specialist kit or equipment. Children and young people can feel embarrassed by not having what is needed to take part.

**You might feel really upset if you can't afford the strip or boots that everybody else is wearing... you'd feel really jealous.**  
(Pupil P7)

**Some people won't trial [for the football team] 'cause they don't have the equipment so don't want to make a fool of themselves.**  
(Pupil S1)

Transport was raised as a potential barrier: free activities may exist but sometimes there are additional transport costs and considerations.

**There's a minibus to the netball but then we have to get our own way home.**  
(Pupil S2)

**There's a lot of stuff on at Dawson Park but they don't want to go into someone else's community, they've got to get there and get back. Football training – the club folded 'cause parents wouldn't take their kids out the local area to get there.**  
(Support Staff)

**If you're participating in sports you need to pay for transport to other schools.**  
(Pupil S5)

When children and young people were telling us about school clubs that cost money they were usually ran by outside agencies but in the school.

**Dundee's football club do football, it's like £25 for 8 sessions.**  
(Pupil S2)

**There is something free but what if he [child from low income household] wanted to do something that costs.**  
(Pupil P7)

Staff pointed out that these organisations are often given a free let in the school but then charge the children taking part. Free taster sessions can lead to disappointment if children can't afford to then continue.

**It's a shame - great people come and do like karate, a taster, but then it costs a fortune...and they might have siblings.**  
(Staff)



**You might feel sad and left out because you just want to do what you love doing and you can't.**

(Pupil P6)



**You would feel really different because all your friends would be able to pay and you'd be like 'why me?'.**

(Pupil S1)

## Good Practice Example

### Active Schools Dundee

We spoke to Active Schools about some of the good practice happening across the city and what they feel would make a difference:

- Parents volunteering to support/run clubs.
- Schools using the Sport Scotland School Sport Award Self-assessment tool to develop an action plan.
- Schools meeting in cluster Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport (PEPAS) groups to develop PE, Physical Activity and Sport opportunities with a focus on equality and inclusion.
- Schools rewarding and recognising the contribution volunteers make to school sport
- Schools getting to know local sports clubs and encouraging volunteers to be part of the school.
- Schools using PEF money creatively to allow for free to participate activities
- Ensuring outside organisations are aware of a school's demographic e.g. number of pupils in SIMD 1 and 2. Encouraging outside organisations to provide free activity.

## Pupil suggestions

- Consult more with children and young people around what clubs they actually want.
- 'In an ideal world everything would be free so nobody misses out'.
- Use local facilities more so that transport isn't a problem.

## 10.3 Things to consider

### Schools

- Consider using available funds to create free to play opportunities and subsidise school clubs which cost money.
- Consider charging organisations (for room let) who are charging for the club.
- Support staff and pupils to help run clubs in school.
- Consult with children and young people about the clubs they want.
- Identify and support children with barriers to participation e.g. appropriate kit for a specific sport.

### Dundee City Council

- Put guidelines in place on charging for activities and associated costs to ensure consistency across schools.

## 11. 19:00 LEARNING AT HOME

### 11.1 Overview

#### What works well

- In general, homework is not compulsory in primary schools and resources are available to take home if required.
- Many staff realise that pupils might not have access to ICT and so try and set homework that reflects this.

#### Issues and concerns

- Young people don't always have access to ICT needed for homework in secondary schools.
- Accessing ICT outwith their home takes extra planning and is dependent on accessibility (e.g. library opening hours).
- There is often inconsistency around homework policy between teachers and between departments.



**If turned out they didn't have a flat surface in their house, they were having to do their homework on the kitchen counter standing up because there was no single flat surface in the house to be able to do their homework on, and then you think we're giving them loads of grief for not doing their homework and they're trying to do it lying on their bed.**

(Senior Management)



## 11.2 Key findings

### Primary school

There often isn't consistent homework policy and practice across primary classes with expectations set by individual teachers. In many primary schools, staff try to ensure that children felt no pressure to complete any homework tasks and that materials were provided or easy to access in the home.

**My teacher says don't get your mum to buy anything, just use what you have.**  
(Pupil P4)

However, parents in some schools felt that their child's school could do more to ensure that ICT resources aren't a requirement and that homework doesn't involve expense or materials that leave some children feeling disheartened.

**What happened to a book, a pencil, a worksheet? There are no alternatives given, it's study ladder and go online and we have a laptop and we have internet access but there are families that don't, you know? Or you might have them [laptops] and not want kids to go on them.**  
(Parent)

**It's often choice but they'll [the child] say 'such and such brought this into school' it makes you feel like a failure.**  
(Parent)

### Secondary school

At secondary school, completing homework becomes more problematic. Low incomes can make learning at home less than straightforward. Staff spoke about how lack of resources can disadvantage young people's learning.

**[There is] an expectation that they don't have certain things - not so much internet more printer, monitor etc....You might write a sociology essay on paper but then editing it is a massive job. On the computer, they can move bits around and then have an amazing resource for their exam.**  
(Teaching Staff)

A great deal of homework – for example, essays, research and web based resources - requires ICT resources at home and pupils said they thought teachers assumed they have this. Although most have smartphones, they may not have data and it is difficult to use Office software on anything other than a computer.

**It's difficult in any subject that requires an essay - all the teachers ask for it to be emailed to them, they don't like getting it in paper form.**  
(Pupil S5)

**The teacher wouldn't accept my homework 'cause it was handwritten but I don't have a computer!**  
(Pupil S3)

ICT resources are available in the library before and after school and at lunchtime and some departments open up for their classes at lunchtime. However, groups in older years pointed out that lunch only lasts for 50 minutes and they have a lot of homework and revision to do.

**Not open at break [the library]...can't do much after school...if it's to be in on the Monday and it's Friday there's not much you could do.**  
(Pupil S5)



**Need a pass but you can't get a pass... you have to go to the library to get a pass to go to the library. It's restrictive on times too.**

(Pupil S4)

Young people suggested that teachers should be lenient with people and support them to access the resources they need. They say that teachers need to understand that this access is not always straightforward and that they might be working hard to use library computers.

## 11.3 Things to consider

### Schools

- Ensure all children and young people have the resources needed to complete homework (e.g. ICT, craft materials or a homework pack to take home).
- Be mindful of home circumstances: is the environment likely to be suitable? Will they have what they need?
- Consider using available funds for supported study/homework clubs.
- Consider accessibility to libraries both within school and local to pupils.
- Consistency regarding homework policy and practice across both primary and secondary schools.

### Pupil suggestions

- Longer library opening hours in secondary schools with easier access.
- Consistency regarding homework policy and practice across both primary and secondary schools.
- More options for when ICT isn't easily available to a pupil.

### Parent suggestions

- Homework that needs limited or no resources at home.
- More practical homework focused around free activities that families can do together.

## 12. 20:00 ACCESS TO FINANCIAL ENTITLEMENTS AND CRISIS SUPPORTS FOR FAMILIES

### 12.1 Overview

#### What works well

- School and Family Development Workers (SFDWs) and Education Resource Workers (ERWs) have been able to support families to access financial entitlements and access basic support including electricity vouchers, food packages and furniture.
- Increasing household income by helping families claim their entitlements increases the opportunities that children and young people can access.
- SFDW can carry out initial home visits (e.g. to every child starting the nursery) that can result in awareness that further support is required.
- Pupil Support Workers, Guidance and other support staff offer a great deal of help in secondary schools.
- Good relationships between school staff and money-advice and welfare rights services.

#### Issues and concerns

- SFDWs support families where possible but often need to refer families on to Welfare Rights services (like CONNECT) for more complex issues. The referral process can result in delays and missed appointments.
- As universal credit is rolled out in Dundee, there is a need for additional training to enable SFDWs and other family link workers to help families, particularly around benefits for people from abroad.



**There's a lot of things you would never know about if you hadn't gone out to their house. Like he would never have phoned me and said 'oh, I've got no electricity', it was because I was actually in the house that I realised and was able to put some supports in place for them.**

(SFDW)

Increased family income has positive effects on children's well-being and development, including their cognitive ability, achievement and engagement in school and behaviour.<sup>4</sup> This suggests that work to maximise family incomes and ensure that families claim all the support they are entitled to will help in removing barriers to learning and enable pupils to achieve their full potential. School and Family Development Workers (SFDW) can support families to access basic entitlements, including applying for Disability Living Allowance and Carers Allowance. They also help families to get food packages, fuel vouchers and funding for furniture.

Because SFDWs are able to do home visits they become aware of the needs of the families and can ensure that they are getting the right help in times of crisis.

<sup>2</sup> <http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/dps/case/cr/casereport80.pdf>

## Good Practice Example

### Home visits at Balgay Hill Nursery

In Balgay Hill Nursery the SFDW offers a home visit to every child starting nursery. The visit is made with the child's key worker and allows the family to meet nursery staff in a familiar environment. This is welcomed by families and the SFDW estimates that only 5 families have refused a visit over the three years she has been offering this service. As well as helping to build good relations between home and nursery, it provides the SFDW with the opportunity to identify if the family have any particular support needs.

Staff like the SFDWs and ERWs tell us that their ability to carry out home visits makes a big difference in being able to offer support as some parents will be reluctant to approach nursery or school for help.



Like I went into one house, before I'd even started filling in the form the dining table was soaking, it was damp, completely damp, there was no wall paper, the house was like an absolute mess, and they were in private renting so I got in touch with social work who then got in touch with the land lord, and they had to be moved because the home wasn't fit to live in- especially with children. So if I hadn't went out, if I hadn't done that home visit then I wouldn't have known about that.

(SFDW)

## Knowledge of entitlements

SFDWs often support families to access entitlements but are aware that they do not have specialist knowledge and expertise.



I do that [support families with applications] all the time...but just DLA [Disability Living Allowance] and Carers Allowance... I wouldn't feel confident with anything other.

(SFDW)

SFDWs refer families to local Money Advice services, including the council's CONNECT service. This is helpful and ensures that families receive expert advice. However, there are issues with referrals, including delays in families accessing support and appointments being missed, especially if the appointment is in an unfamiliar location.



[I would advise families to] speak to CONNECT but sometimes it's difficult... you have to take them.

(SFDW)

SFDWs felt that it was important part of their role to support families with accessing entitlements.



I don't like to be just automatically 'oh, I can't deal with that' and pass on to someone else because 1. it reduces their confidence in me and 2. it means it takes longer because you're going through someone else so being able to give, even if it's just give a bit of advice there and then, would help.

(SFDW)



It's all about relationships and it's us that they come to.

(SFDW)

## Further training needs

Many SFDWs indicated that they would like more training around supporting families to access financial entitlements as this can make a big difference to families, increasing their incomes and helping them to afford uniform and pay for school meals and trips. In particular, SFDWs would like more information on supporting families from outside the UK who may not be accessing the support to which they are entitled.



**I would like more training because things can get really complex - like when families come from outside the UK and there's certain things they can access and certain things they can't access.**

(SFDW)



**You only get what you ask for- but you're only going to ask for what you know is there.**

(SFDW)

## Universal credit

In November 2017, Dundee became a full-service area for universal credit UC. In other areas where UC has been rolled out there have been issues including delayed payments and administrative difficulties. As SFDWs are working on the front line, supporting vulnerable families, they are likely to be working with people affected by the changes.



**They said the last group to be affected would be families with children so I thought 'I'll deal with it later' but now it's here! So some training around that would be really helpful.**

(SFDW)

The Council is offering an online course on universal credit for staff, including SFDWs, however at the time of interviewing SFDWs [end July 2017] they were not aware of this opportunity. Child Poverty Action Group in Scotland's Welfare Rights Team delivered basic welfare rights and universal credit training to all SFDWs in November 2017.

## Pupil suggestions

- Improve communication with parents around supports available in the school - as many may be unaware.
- Explore mechanisms which will allow pupils to tell staff when they are finding costs difficult discreetly and without embarrassment (e.g. 'a worry box').

## Staff suggestions

- Ensure every school has a safe place that staff and parents can meet confidentially.
- Roll out home visits to all nurseries and to the families of children starting primary school.
- Basic welfare rights training 'should be mandatory' for all school staff as 'you never know who you could help'.

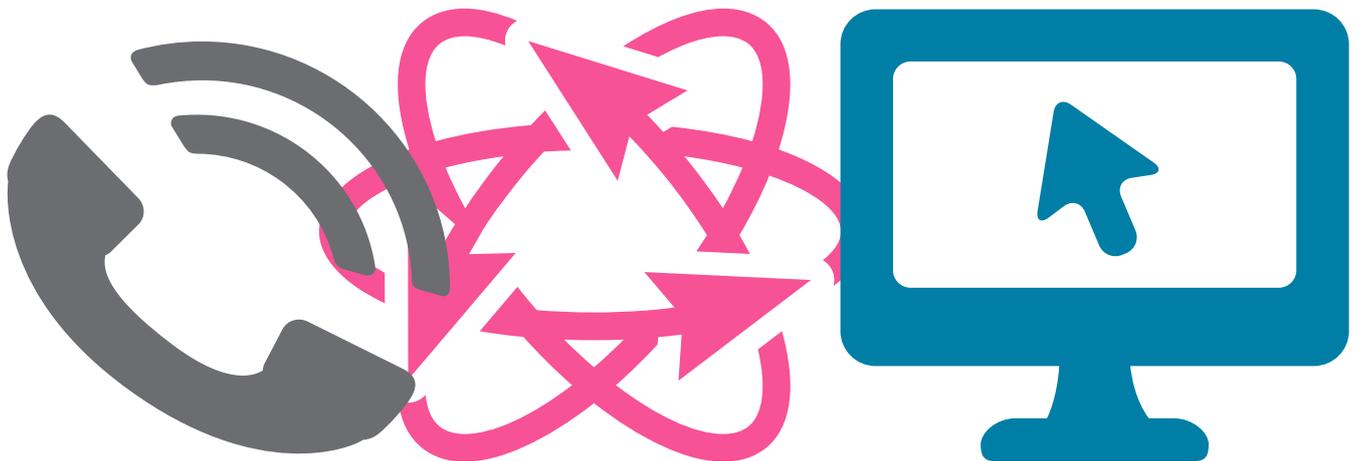
## 12.3 Things to consider

### Schools and nurseries

- Offer home visits to children starting nursery with family link worker to find out if the family requires any additional support.
- Consider offering SFDW home visits for families starting primary school.
- In Early Years centres develop good relationships with parents so that they are able to ask for help and support – parents say that it helps to feel welcomed at nursery and on first name basis with staff.
- Provide space for Money Advice services to hold drop-in surgeries for parents.
- Improve communication with parents around help with costs available in the school - e.g. subsidies for trips – as many may be unaware.
- Explore mechanisms which will allow pupils to tell staff when they are finding costs difficult discreetly and without embarrassment.

### Dundee City Council

- Promote closer relations between schools and money advice services, including exploring the development of more active referral process, with follow up.
- Provide training opportunities for SFDWs and other school staff on welfare rights- particularly on the changes coming from the roll out of universal credit and entitlements for families from abroad.



# USING PUPIL EQUITY FUND TO ADDRESS THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY



**The PEF money has made all sorts possible – it's not that we would ignore what's in the report but some of it is just easier to tackle when there's money to use.**

(Senior Management)

Scottish schools have been allocated additional funding directly from the Scottish Government's £750 million Attainment Scotland Fund. In 2017/18, schools received a share of over £120 million,

and in 2018/19 this is set to increase to over £122 million. Dundee as a local authority has received £4,974,000.

Many suggestions made by pupils, parents and staff in this report are low cost or free. Some might take time, planning and commitment but the benefits can be significant. Some suggestions will cost money. Schools are starting to use PEF to address the cost of the school day and help to support children, young people and their families.

## Good practice PEF examples

### Primary schools

- 'Borrowing library' of gym kits.
- Staff hours for after school homework/'dinner' clubs.
- Staff hours to maximise places at breakfast clubs meaning shorter (or no) waiting lists.
- Free residential trip for P7s over October holidays (additional to usual P7 residential).
- Removing costs to ensure all extra-curricular clubs are free.
- Removing costs to ensure all school trips are free.
- PEF made available to SFDW to run groups and family fun day over holidays.
- Subsidising P7 residential costs and paying for any extra resources needed (e.g. waterproof clothing).
- Subsidising or paying for trip to Christmas pantomime.

### Secondary schools

- Removing subject costs (e.g. Home Economics free for all S1-S3).
- Removing costs to ensure all extra-curricular clubs are free.
- Covering transport costs (e.g. cost of minibus to sports outwith local area).

# GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

## Dundee City Council should:

- Conduct and act on poverty impact assessments when allocating resources within education services and when making decisions on policies which have cost implications for families (e.g. free meals and financial support for uniform, transport and trips) with the aim of removing financial barriers to participation.
- Understand and act on the reasons behind non-uptake of financial entitlements (e.g. free breakfast and lunch and clothing grants).
- Further promote and enhance all financial entitlements (e.g. FSM, SCG, EMA) available to families to maximise uptake and reduce school costs.
- Work with school leaders to ensure that all school improvement plans are developed to take account of child poverty and the need to remove cost barriers for all children in their schools.
- Ensure all staff are able to access Cost of the School Day (CoSD) training.
- Ensure that removing school costs is a key focus for Local Learning Partnerships.
- Explore the potential for schools to link with financial inclusion services to support low income families with income maximisation, including more active referral mechanisms.
- Bring key stakeholders (e.g. Education, Tayside Contracts, Active Schools, Community Learning and Development) together to reflect on and implement the recommendations and 'things to consider' contained in this report.
- Develop and disseminate CoSD guidance to all schools and staff.
- Ensure regular CoSD input on in-service days.
- Commit to addressing citywide issues and concerns as identified in this report (e.g. breakfast club and P7 residential).
- Set up and support opportunities for good practice sharing. Support schools to use the learning and resources presented in this report and connect and learn from others addressing the cost of the school day.

## Schools should:

- Deliver, monitor and evaluate action to address the cost of the school day, either individually or in clusters, using the 'things to consider' presented in this report and taking into account children and young people's recommendations.
- Ensure that all staff are fully aware of the nature, causes, extent and impact of poverty both nationally, locally and within the school.
- Drawing on the 'things to consider' presented in this report, develop school action plans based on consultation with the school community.
- Use available data to understand deprivation related patterns in children's uptake of opportunities (e.g. FSM uptake and participation in extra-curricular activities).
- Plan all teaching, events and activities with affordability, accessibility and the needs of children and young people from low income households in mind.
- Effectively and regularly promote financial entitlements to parents throughout the school year at events like parents evenings and other parental engagement opportunities.
- Wherever possible remove, and at the very least minimise, charging for all school related activities. Where additional charges remain in place, establish discreet, pre-emptive systems for providing financial assistance to avoid singling out or embarrassing children or young people.
- Ensure that there is consistent practice throughout the school in dealing with issues which could be related to low income and poverty (e.g. lending resources, providing subsidies) with an awareness that children and families may hide or not disclose their financial circumstances.
- Ensure effective and sensitive communication between staff where children and young people experience difficulties in school that are related to low income and poverty.
- Explicitly name and discuss poverty with children both to raise awareness and to deal with poverty-related stigma. Engage children and young people in helping to destigmatise poverty in the school.
- Access appropriate local, national and European grant making bodies to further increase participation.

