



PLANT YNG NGHYMURU
CHILDREN IN WALES

Annual Child & Family Poverty Surveys 2021: Findings

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About the surveys

- 2 surveys (26 April – 30 May 2021)
- 1 for Practitioners & professionals
- 1 for Children & young people
- 5th year (2020 was a short COVID related, practitioner survey only)



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Question areas

Practitioners and professionals

- Overarching poverty issues
- The impact of COVID
- Universal credit
- Free school meals
- Food banks
- Digital inclusion
- Education

Children and young people

- Overarching poverty issues
- The impact of COVID
- School
- Home
- Community



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Practitioners & Professionals

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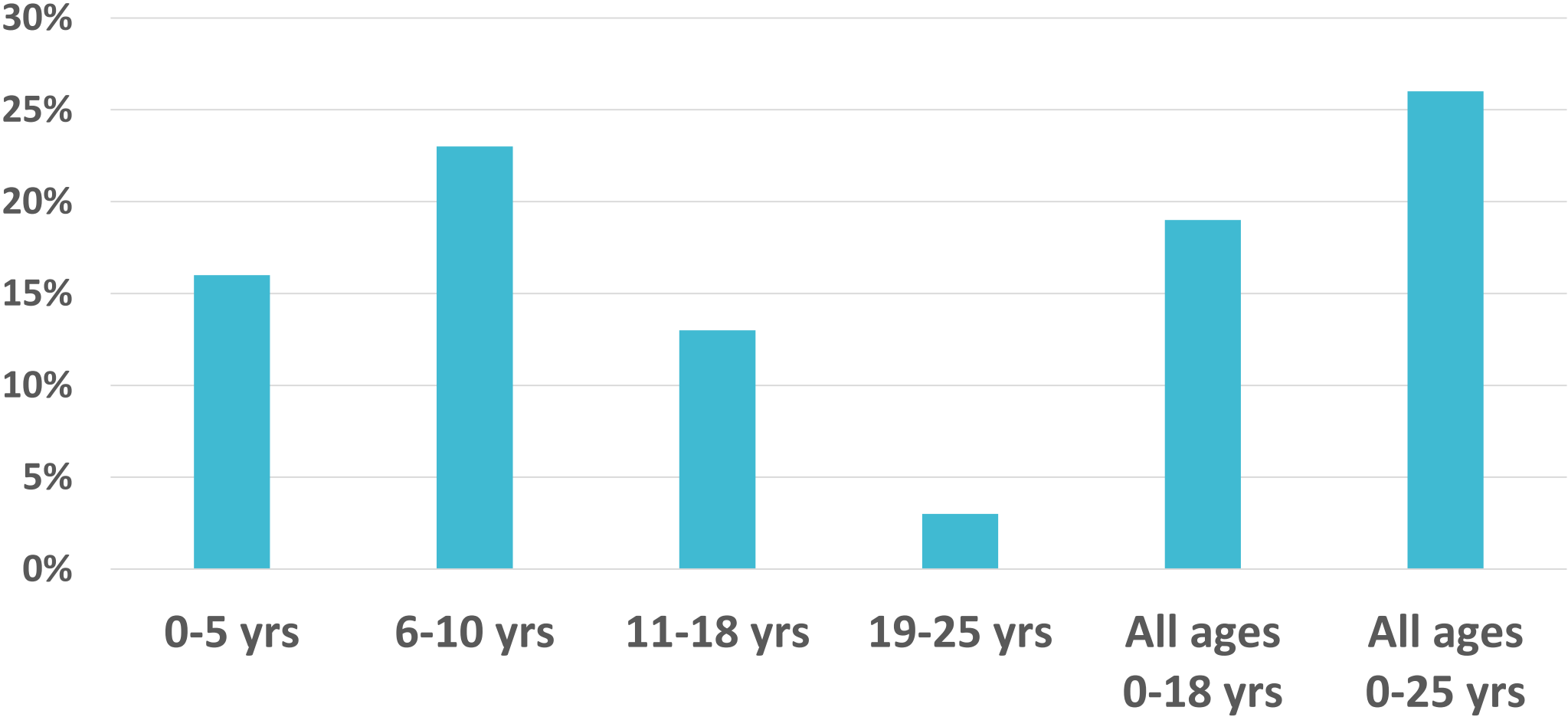
Respondents

Sector breakdown:

- 29% Third sector
 - 34% Education
 - 25% Local authority
 - 12% other
- 116 responses across 21 of the 22 local authority areas
 - 80% worked directly with children and families
 - Representing min. of 33,000 families

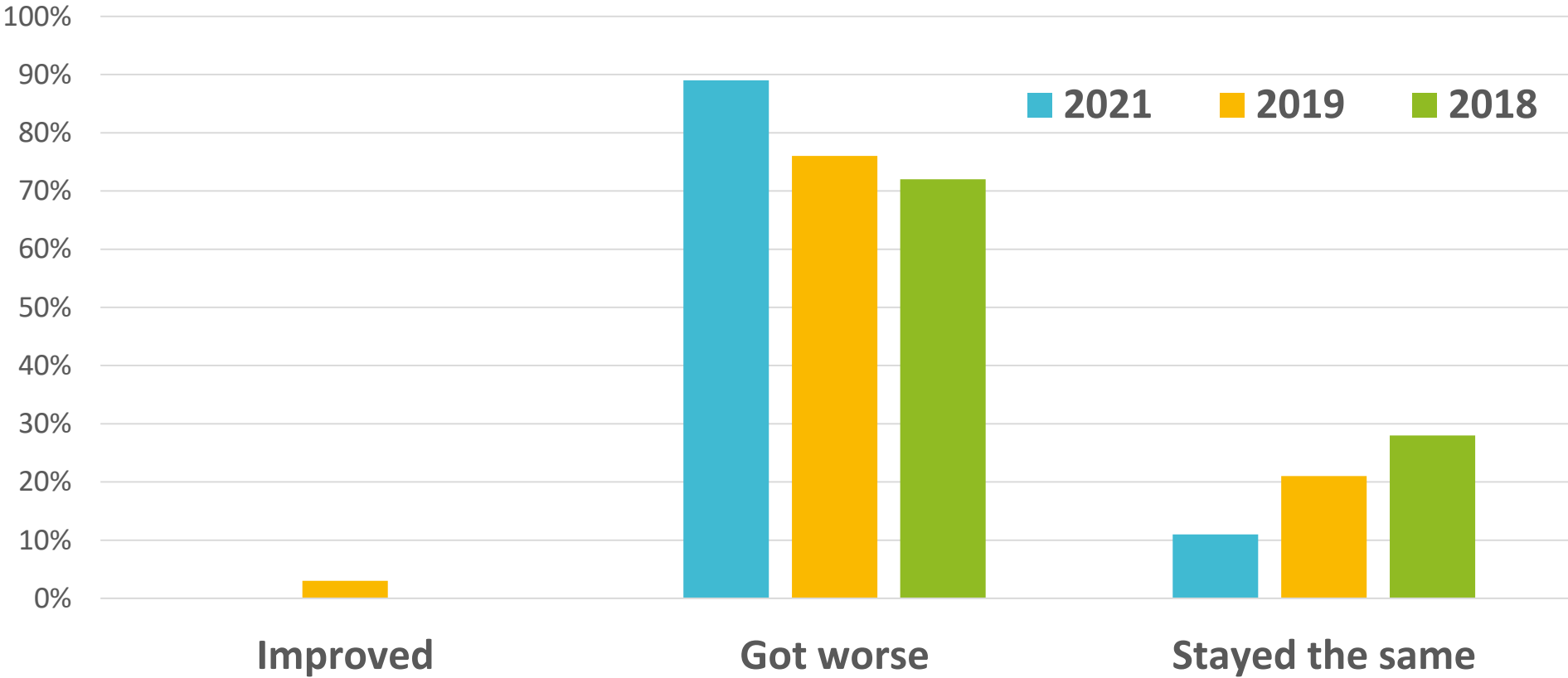


Age range remit of respondents

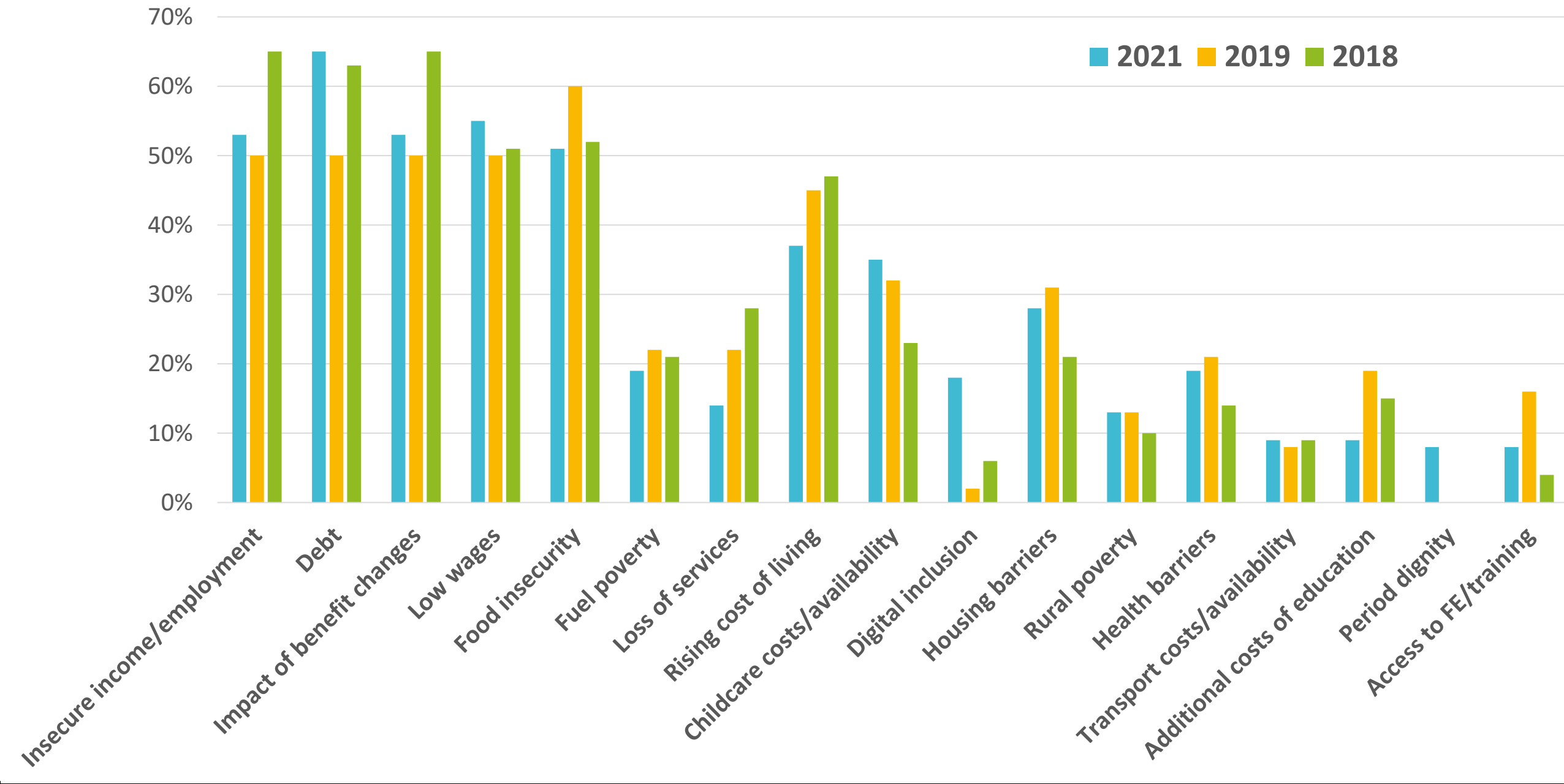




Has the situation changed in the last year?

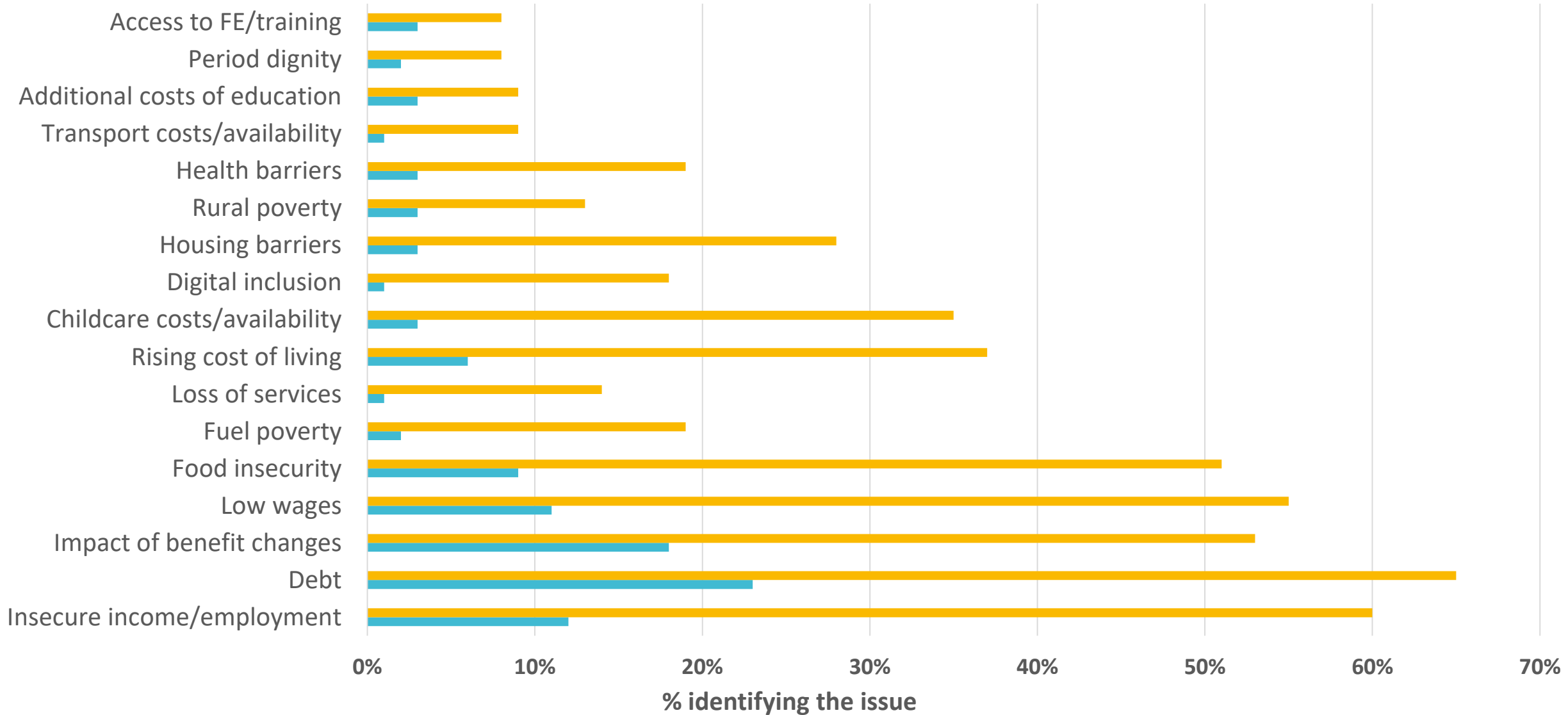


Top 5 ranked poverty related issues - 3 year comparison



Top 5 identified poverty related issues

■ Top 5 identified issue ■ 1st Identified issue





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Debt

- 81% stated more families being pushed into poverty because of job losses or reduced hours
- Long wait for UC (5-6 weeks). Families going into debt and unable to repay
- Increase parental anxiety, inability to cope
- Struggle to budget and plan (UC, zero hours and short term contracts)
- Furlough = 80% of income only
- Takes families years to pay off debt, unable to get out of the poverty cycle
- Dramatic increase of debt levels and families now in debt.
- Increase of 'in-work' poverty
- Increased food & utility bills over last 12 months
- Increase in childcare (hours needed and costs)
- Decrease in free childcare (family/friends)
- Giving up jobs because of lack of, or affordability of additional childcare
- Low income working families relied on additional hours
- Increase in the number of children taking food
- Increased number of children anxious about family finances affecting concentration and focus



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Debt

“We’ve got less money than we’ve ever had before. My mum worries about money all the time, especially the debt man coming round. She looks really scared and cries afterwards”

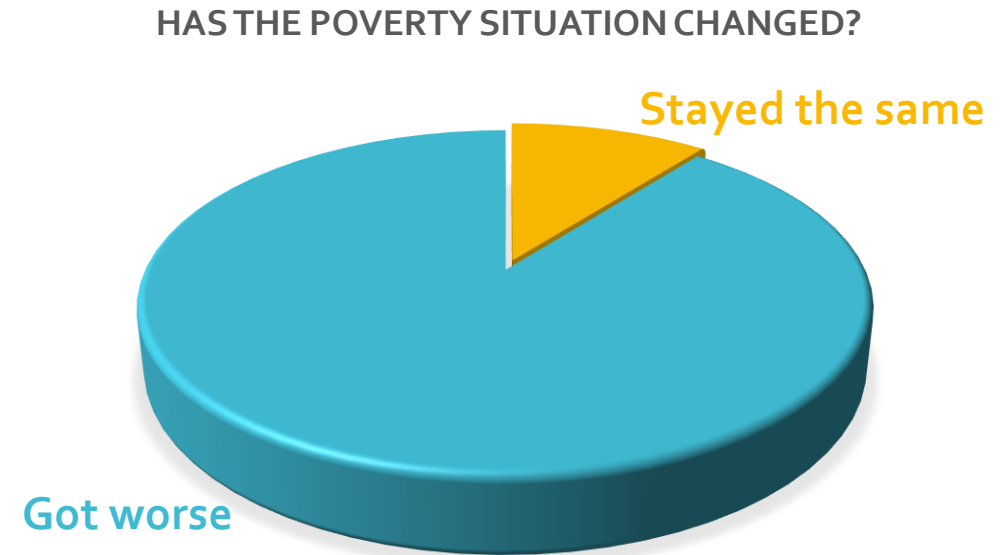
(14-16 yrs)



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Impact of COVID

- More debt, more families in debt
- Job losses – redundancy, seasonal, childcare, zero hours
- Dramatic increase in poor mental health – adults and children
- Youth homelessness – relationship breakdowns, anxiety, financial





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Universal Credit

Uplift – Did it help?

- More food
- Reduced stress & anxiety
- Reduction in families sinking further into debt
- “Dire circumstances”. Did help, but this alone is not enough

Removal – What will happen?

- Increased food bank usage
- Increased debt & rent arrears
- Poorer living environment
- Greater anxiety, stress and humiliation for adults and children
- More hungry children
- More children struggling at school



“Even with the increase, families have still been struggling. More will need to access food banks or be unable to get their children to school”

“That money has either filled the gap between rent or provided warmth and food”

“For many families who have struggled and been forced to live on the bare minimum, this £20 can be almost a week’s worth of meals”

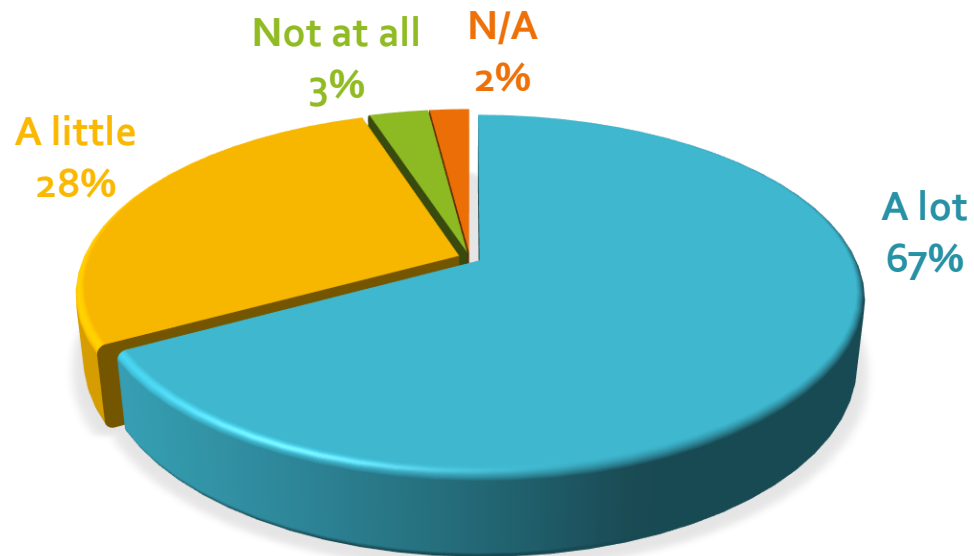


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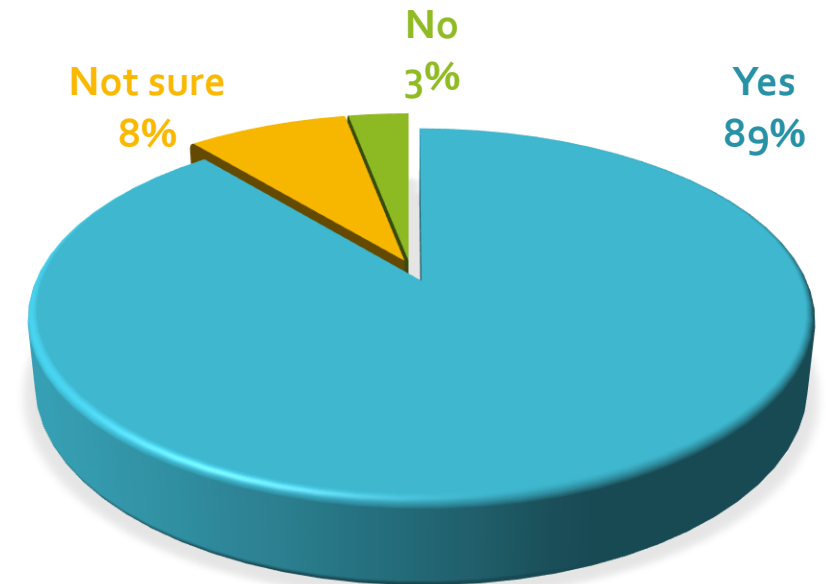
Free School Meals

*"Some children
will have toast
for breakfast and
for an evening
meal"*

HAS THE PROVISION OF FREE SCHOOL MEALS DURING HOLIDAYS AND LOCKDOWN HELPED FAMILIES?



DO YOU BELIEVE THAT MORE CHILDREN SHOULD BE ENTITLED TO FREE SCHOOL MEALS?





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Digital Inclusion

Access to device

- 55% had to share a device
- 21% temporary (school)
- 11% no access/suitability
- 12% full access

Access to data*

- 54% limited due to cost
- 42% shared with sibling
- 40% shared with adult
- 21% no access (cost)
- 13% no connectivity

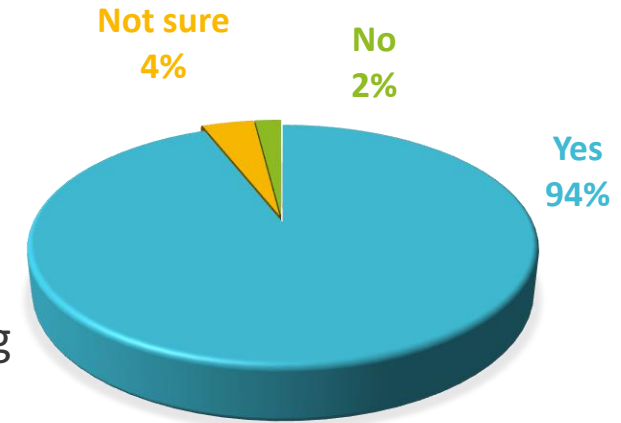


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DOES POVERTY AFFECT CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S
EXPERIENCE OF SCHOOL AND LEARNING?

Education

- 94% said that poverty affected C&YP experience of school and learning
- Children felt left out, isolated, disengaged, different, inadequate
- Children lacked confidence, had low self esteem, lower life expectations, unable to concentrate
- Children were anxious, worried and stressed
- Unable to take part in activities (school trips, clubs, charity & donation events at school)
- School uniforms, PE kits, trips and meals had the greatest financial impact on families

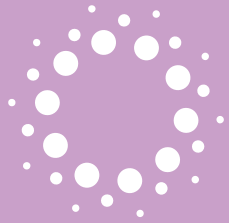


Dominant, recurring themes:

Bullied because they lived in poverty

Hunger

Increase in poor emotional health



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Children & Young People: Their voices





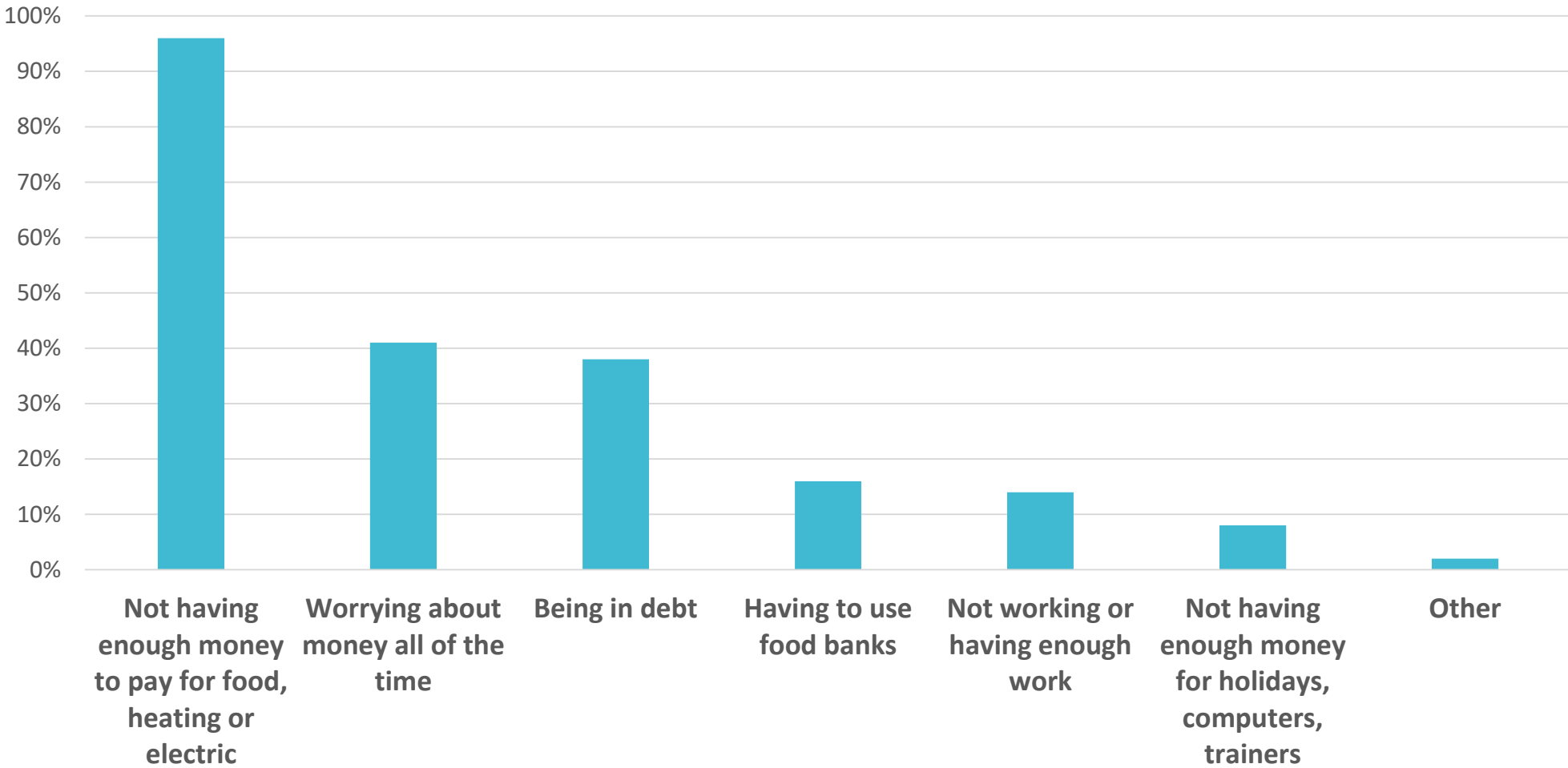
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About the respondents

- 82 children and young people
- Age range – under 10yrs to 25yrs
- Highest number of responses aged 10-13yrs
- 13 local authority areas
- At least 34% likely to be living in poverty



"What do you think affects children who live in poverty the most?"





The impact of poverty

- Anxiety, depression, stress
- Left out, socially isolated, feeling different
- Bullying as a result of poverty
- Poor emotional health
- Hunger
- Stigma of poverty

"Always feeling worried about money"

(14-16 yrs)

"Very depressing, wish I wasn't born"

(10 yrs)

"It affects their quality of life, physical and mental. Gives them too much stress. Makes them feel less than other people"

(14-16 yrs)

"Leads to bullying, leads to lack of confidence and feeling as if they're not worth being part of society as no-one cares"

(Under 10 yrs)

"They will feel like a dog in a cage with no means of escape"

(Under 10 yrs)

"It shouldn't happen"

(10-13 yrs)

"This is upsetting"

(10-13 yrs)

"I go hungry and feel different to my friends"

(14-16 yrs)

"Constant worry and anxiety over what's going to happen"

(14-16 yrs)

"They do not have money to get into school"

(10-13 yrs)



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School and poverty

Issues identified were:

- 73% being bullied/looked down on
- 60% not having enough money to take part
- 44% not having enough money for uniforms or equipment
- 36% not enough money to buy lunch or snacks

85% mentioned bullying

"It affects them badly if they are bullied...feel like the worst person on the face of the earth"

(Under 10yrs)

"Not being able to buy the correct uniform or supplies. This can then lead to them being bullied which further affects depression and mental health"

(14-16 yrs)

"Feel embarrassed...don't want others to know about having free school meals"

(14-16 yrs)

"Feeling shy and timid"

(19-25 yrs)

"Have to pretend you've done things when you haven't so that others don't know. Live in the make believe so that you're not bullied"

(Under 10yrs)



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Home and poverty

Issues chosen were:

- 73%: living in a cold and damp house
- 70%: being worried they haven't got enough money to stay in their home
- 46%: not being able to have friends over because they are embarrassed

"Having a damp house and no bed"

(10-13 yrs)

"They would go in their bedroom and cry because they get bullied and made fun of"

(Under 10yrs)

"Living in fear from maybe having to move to an area that is not nice and no money to buy extra treats or even enough food that is healthy"

(10-13 yrs)



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Home and poverty

*"Being
lonely,
depressed"*

(10-13 yrs)

*"Hunger, sad
parents"*

(10-13 yrs)

*"Feeling
withdrawn or
distanced"*

(19-25 yrs)

*"Not being able to
relax at home
because always
worried about
money"*

(14-16yrs)

*"Their parents are
upset and stressed
and it means
everyone in the house
is sad"*

(Under 10 yrs)

*"You all sleep in
the same room"*

(10-13 yrs)



Community and poverty

Issues chosen were:

- 79%: living in a place where you don't feel safe to go outside
- 46%: Not having transport to get around
- 44%: Not having money to pay for transport
- 42%: Not enough money for leisure/sports centres or cinemas

"Just have to be inventive with my stories of why I can't go places"

(Under 10)

"Can't go out with friends because of not having money to get food or anything and if there is money, feeling bad for spending it"

(14-16 yrs)

"People are going to bully you"

(Under 10)

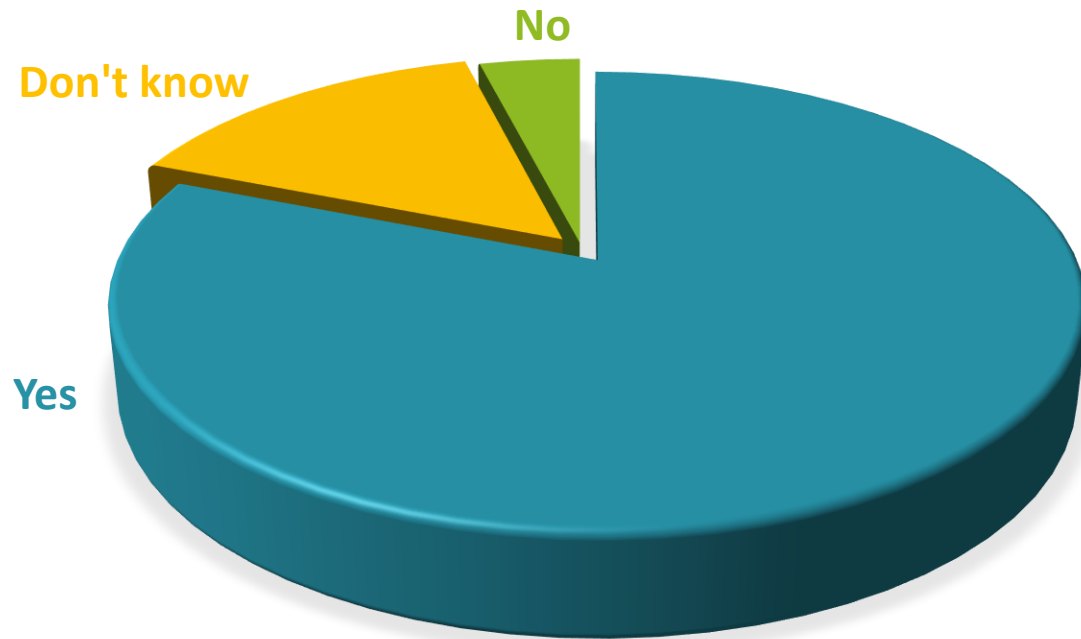
"My youth club is now free to go to, but not able to join in, no spending money"

(14-16 yrs)



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COVID and poverty



"HAS COVID MADE THINGS WORSE FOR CHILDREN LIVING IN POVERTY?"

- Education
- Social isolation
- Loss of family income and employment
- Lack of food
- Emotional health



COVID and poverty

*"No money,
not enough
food"*

(Under 10)

*"More time at
home in bad
situations"*

(10-13yrs)

*"Because of
increased isolation
and unable to
connect with people
especially through
social media"*

(10-13yrs)

*"Not being
allowed to see
friends and not
enough money for
food"*

(Under 10)

*"Stuck inside,
no toys"*

(Under 10)

*"Now they have to
worry about
getting COVID and
trying to stay safe"*

(10-13yrs)

*"They not had the
connection with
other people and
not had a quiet
place at school"*

(10-13yrs)

*"Isolated from close
family...we have missed
out on lots of lessons,
missing all my school
friends for months at a
time"*

(10-13yrs)

*"Parents lost their
money and they've had
to pay for extra food as
we've been home all the
time, I needed more
than normal and
everyone has been
stressed"*

(10-13yrs)



Final thoughts from children and young people

- The need to change the situation
- FSM for all children
- FSM during holidays, for those living in poverty
- The stigma of poverty
- The impact of poverty on emotional and mental health

"Affects every aspects of their lives"

(10-13 yrs)

"Poverty shouldn't make people define the young people"

(10-13 yrs)

"No home and no food. Bullied because you are poor"

(Under 10 yrs)

"Children in poverty just want to be equal to everyone else. It's not fair that there is a low cut off line for help with budgets"

(Under 10)

"[Poverty] affects in many ways and unless you experience living with very little money, how would those in charge know what it is like, they do not. Stop making a judgement on those who try very hard to manage with very little spare money. Give us all free school meals"

(10-13 yrs)



If I was the First Minister....

"This is a really big question. Make sure children and young people have safe places to go, make things more equal"

(14-16yrs)

"....The man who got elected seems like a really nice man, but...."

(16yrs)

"Make school meals and trips free for everyone"

(Under 10 yrs)

"Minimum wages raised, especially for apprenticeships"

(14-16yrs)

"Free school meals at summer holiday time"

(Under 10)

"I don't know, I'm only 10"

(10-13 yrs)



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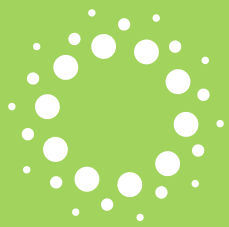
Overarching issues

Practitioners and professionals

- Increase in the numbers of families struggling to cope financially and emotionally
- More children being hungry
- Poor emotional and mental health of both adults and children
- Increasingly difficult and desperate choices for families
- Long term impact of poverty on children

Children and young people

- Practicalities of living in poverty (debt, lack of money and food)
- The emotional and mental health of those living in poverty and those 'witnessing' poverty
- Bullying as a result of living in poverty
- The detrimental impact poverty has on all aspects of children and young people's lives



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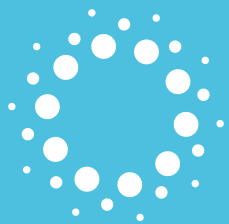
Thank you. Any questions?

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[Child and Family Poverty Survey Report
2021](#)

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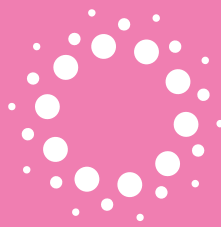
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WHAT CAN CHILDREN IN WALES OFFER YOU?

* A fantastic, low cost Membership Scheme - gain access to our exclusive member-only benefits and access to our brand new membership platform **www.childreninwalesmembership.org.uk**

* A high quality and varied events and training course programme - book onto any of our events or open courses via our website or, alternatively, you can commission us to develop a bespoke training course just for you by emailing **training@childreninwales.org.uk**





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* A pathway to working directly with children and young people from across Wales. Our Young Wales initiative is all about listening to children and young people and ensuring that their voices are heard, so if you need to reach out and work with them on a specific project then please contact our Young Wales team.

We now have a section dedicated to children and young people on our website:

www.childreninwales.org.uk/children-young-people





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Poverty-related events and training courses

12 October 2021 - Impact of Neglect training course

15 October 2021 – Child Poverty Awareness training course

4 November 2021 – Price of Pupil Poverty Guides webinar

Date tbc – Poverty and the Early Years webinar

