

Socioeconomic duty toolkit

Using a socioeconomic duty to
challenge poverty in policing



About Revolving Doors Agency

Revolving Doors Agency is a national charity that aims to change systems and improve services for people 'in the revolving door' – people who come into repeat contact with the criminal justice system due to multiple unmet needs such as mental ill-health, substance misuse, homelessness, poverty and other traumatic life events.

We work to create a smarter criminal justice system that makes the revolving door avoidable and escapable. We do this by working alongside national and local decision-makers. We combine lived experience insight, robust research and system knowledge to drive effective policy solutions.

About New Generation Policing

New Generation Policing is delivered by Revolving Doors Agency and supported by three independent funders: the Barrow Cadbury Trust, the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, and the Lloyds Bank Foundation for England and Wales. It is a three-year programme supporting police and crime commissioners and police services to develop and implement new interventions to stop young adults being caught in the cycle of crime and crisis.

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank Dr Steffan Evans from the Bevan Foundation, Nathan Owen from the Equality and Human Rights Commission, Jess McQuail from Just Fair, and Vanessa Ewing from the Scottish Policy Authority for their assistance and guidance in developing this toolkit. We would also like to thank Ellie Harwood from the Child Poverty Action Group for her guidance and for providing a case study for this toolkit.

For their comments on earlier drafts of this toolkit, we would like to thank Lauren Bennett and Anna Henry from Revolving Doors, and Professor Tracy Shildrick from Newcastle University.

Existing socioeconomic duty guidance in place in Wales and Scotland has been integral to the development of this toolkit.

This toolkit was written in October 2021.

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Introduction

Young adults' experiences of policing are tied in a knot with their experiences of trauma, poverty, and structural inequalities.

Living in poverty or in a socioeconomically deprived neighbourhood makes being both the victim and the perpetrator of a crime much more likely. This is a key issue for young adults caught in a revolving door of crisis and crime, as the link between crime, poverty and complex needs is strongest among people committing repeat, low-level offences. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation notes that the group most likely to have contact with the criminal justice system are young men living in socioeconomically deprived parts of the country¹.

Research points towards the danger of prioritising individual-level explanations for crime amongst young adults, and in turn disregarding the 'socio-spatial and historical context that young people find themselves growing up in².' For this reason, in the same way that protected characteristics such as race are being considered through equality impact assessments within policing, it is essential that socioeconomic disadvantage as a structural inequality is considered as well.

The link between crime and socioeconomic disadvantage is often overlooked. Our 2019 review of emerging trauma and poverty informed strategies among police and crime commissioners found that only six police and crime plans (Cleveland, Greater Manchester, Humberside, Lancashire, North Yorkshire and MOPAC) explored the relationship between poverty and crime³.

Although police may take into account individual experiences of poverty when policing, socioeconomic disadvantage as a structural disadvantage which increases the likelihood of being both a perpetrator and victim of a crime is often misunderstood. That is why we are calling on Police and Crime Commissioners to consider acting in the spirit of a socioeconomic duty in their strategic decision making.

This toolkit will outline the differences between poverty and socioeconomic disadvantage, what the socioeconomic toolkit is and why it is necessary, and outline case studies and existing guidelines that could be applied to policing.

What is the difference between socioeconomic disadvantage and poverty?

Before we explore the socioeconomic duty, it is important to understand that poverty and socioeconomic disadvantage, although heavily linked, are not the same thing.

The Fairer Scotland duty interim guidance for public bodies notes that 'in broad terms, 'socio-economic disadvantage' means living on a low income compared to others, with little or no accumulated wealth, leading to greater material deprivation, restricting the ability to access basic goods and services. Socio-economic disadvantage can be experienced in both places and communities of interest, leading to further negative outcomes such as social exclusion⁴.'

Whilst poverty is something that millions of families and individuals may move in and out of over time, related to insecure or unstable employment and income, socioeconomic disadvantage is entrenched, 'persistent' poverty, often linked to class and compounded by other forms of

disadvantage. Whilst someone living in poverty lacks financial resources to meet their needs, someone experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage not only lacks financial resources, but lack many other resources such as social capital, education, employment, safe and secure housing, and good health⁵.

Research carried out by the Ministry of Justice in 2019 into the needs and characteristics of ‘prolific offenders’ found that 43% had been eligible for free school meals, 91% had been excluded from school for a fixed period, and 50% had spent their working age period claiming out of work benefits. These figures were all significantly decreased for those deemed ‘non-prolific’, hence falling outside of the revolving door cohort⁶. The needs of the ‘revolving door’ cohort often extend beyond poverty and are entrenched in socioeconomic disadvantage.

What do young adults say about socioeconomic disadvantage, crime, and policing?

To inform our report, *Broke, but not broken*⁷ and our wider work on our New Generation Policing project, we have spoken to young adults with experience of the revolving door of crisis and crime extensively over the past year to understand more about their experiences of socioeconomic disadvantage, crime, and policing. The headline findings are that:

- Inequalities are at the heart of young adults’ experiences of the criminal justice system.
- Lack of money, lack of opportunities and problematic relationships drive young adults into a cycle of crisis and crime.
- Young adults feel routinely discriminated against because of who they are, who they are friends with, and where they live.
- Young adults believe that police contact can make or break their future.
- Young adults in the criminal justice system feel let down by people and services.
- Young adults feel optimistic about their chances of breaking the cycle of crisis and crime, but they are impatient for change.

What underpins many of their experiences of both crime and contact with the police is profound socioeconomic disadvantage, which they often find to be inescapable and inevitable.

“People are stuck”

Revolving Doors has spoken to many young adults who have first-hand experience of the revolving door of crisis and crime, many of whom live in socioeconomically deprived neighbourhoods and have lived in poverty throughout their lives. *The Knot: Lived experience perspectives on policing trauma, poverty and inequalities*⁸, as well as our *The Knot* podcast series⁹ and focus groups with young adults¹⁰ has put into perspective how socioeconomic disadvantage shapes young adult’s experiences with the police and can lead them into low-level offending if their issues are not adequately addressed.

“Not having financial backing at home leads to a lot of issues – mental and physical – the mental issues drive young adults to commit crime”

“Literally went from the number one poorest borough to the number two poorest borough. That is one of the first things that gets people into crime. It starts with smallest things. It’s ingrained into your mind. It was those little things that led me to end up doing what I was doing in the end. Not having enough to get school dinners on a Friday or to go on a school trip. You can’t go and ask for a tenner from your mum because you know she hasn’t got it. The turning point for me I was 14 and my parents didn’t want to pay for a school trip (but the reality was they couldn’t afford it)... so I decided to find a way to make money¹¹.”

“There was a lack of opportunity for work in the area and I think young people would get involved in anything that would bring them a quick change.”

The vast majority of the 2500 participants that Revolving Doors spoke to for *The Knot* report had experienced profound levels of poverty, such as not being able to adequately heat their homes or live in a home in a good state of repair. Almost none of them had access to hobbies or social activities such as school trips. Our focus groups with young adults reflected similar issues.

“When I was young, at least I had youth clubs, otherwise I would be on the street every single day”

“No one gives us opportunities because of where we come from, there’s nothing on the estate, people stereotype us¹².”

A lack of understanding of socioeconomic disadvantage can damage relationships between young adults and police and lead to reoffending

Young adults feel labelled as belonging to an underclass, which shapes the way police approach and engage with them. Their experience of police contact often creates negative relationships between them and the police, and can exacerbate offending behaviours.

“Always same excuse – ‘we got a complaint’ – but we’ve literally just been standing in the park – it’s always this – and they call back up in front of us while we’re just standing there not doing anything”

“The other day I’m standing in a park with a friend, we get stopped and searched – I was made to feel like a criminal, like a hoodrat”

These negative experiences with the police can lead to trauma and foster tense relationships with the police.

“To be constantly stopped over and over can have a tremendous effect on your mental health and you start to develop some negative feeling towards the police. My friends would say they hate the police for that reason...In a subtle way, my experiences have influenced how I see the police, I’m not completely hating on the police system.”

People experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage are more likely to be victims of crimes, but their experiences of the police can lead to them being hesitant to seek help. This has also been reflected in Revolving Doors’ *We are victims too*¹³ peer study into repeat victimisation among people who moved from street homelessness into supported accommodation in London.

“They scare me a little bit. I feel intimidated by them. I would rather suffer than ask them for help.”

Young adults with lived experience have recommended that when appropriate, police officers should consider diverting individuals who commit repeat low-level offences driven by poverty and trauma away from the criminal justice system, ideally without arresting, to minimise further psychological harm. There are a wide range of diversion initiatives that foster this approach¹⁴.

We are calling on the police to act in the spirit of a socioeconomic duty, to ensure that their strategy and actions help communities and foster positive community relations, rather than exacerbating disadvantage and community tensions.

“Prevention is always better than cure, targeting young people at the start of age of criminal responsibility, or first arrest – rather than a caution or a charge, a plan should be put into place. Whether it be a police officer or independent organisation, interview the young person and find out what support each individual needs on an individual basis – whether it be financial, or other support.”

What is a socioeconomic duty?

A socioeconomic duty aims to deliver better outcomes for people who experience socioeconomic disadvantage. It requires public bodies to make better decisions, by placing the consideration of inequality of outcome arising from socio-economic disadvantage as central in decision-making. Both Wales and Scotland have a socioeconomic duty in place under the Equality Act 2010. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) monitor and develop best practice for the duty. The socioeconomic duty was first undertaken in Scotland in April 2018, and since April 2021 has been in place in Wales.

In Scotland, the socioeconomic duty, known as the Fairer Scotland Duty, places a legal responsibility on particular public bodies in Scotland to actively consider (also referred to as paying ‘due regard’ to) how they can reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socioeconomic disadvantage, when making

strategic decisions¹⁵. The Scottish Police Authority are covered by this duty, meaning they must be able to meet 'the key requirement' in each case:

- To actively consider how they could reduce inequalities of outcome in any major strategic decision they make; and
- To publish a written record, showing how they've done this.

In Wales, several public bodies have been required to comply with a socioeconomic duty¹⁶ since 31 March 2021. Although Police and Crime Commissioners in Wales are not statutorily bound to the duty due to policing not being devolved in Wales, views in a public consultation on the duty favoured Police and Crime Commissioners in Wales being expected to 'naturally embed the socio-economic duty further into their strategic decision making'¹⁷. The Welsh government encourages all public bodies, including those who are not listed within the Regulations, to act in the spirit of the duty - by considering resources made available to support them in their decision-making¹⁸.

What are the benefits of adopting a socioeconomic duty?

We can look to Just Fair's Practical Guide for Local Authority Implementation of the Socio-Economic Duty¹⁹ to ascertain benefits that adopting the duty would have for PCCs and police forces.

These include:

- Improving outcomes for local people experiencing socio-economic disadvantage.
- Supporting cross organisational and cross departmental working within police forces and the Offices of Police and Crime Commissioners (OPCCs).
- Raising awareness of socio-economic inequalities within police forces and among partners that the police work with.
- Ensuring widespread organisational commitment to, and consideration of, socio-economic inequalities.
- Supporting the participation of low-income residents in policing decisions that affect them, especially in the context of (proposed) strategic decision-making within policing.
- Achieving greater consistency in policing - and an increased likelihood of maintaining such consistent practice across political administrations and between changes of individual PCC leadership and turnover of OPCC staff.
- Improving systematic approaches to equality impact assessments and assessment of policy and practice more broadly.
- Strengthening systematic data gathering and analysis, especially in the conduct of equality impact assessments, thereby strengthening accountability and giving police forces a greater understanding of the needs of their communities.
- Supporting the effective and efficient allocation of police resources.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission say that: "We believe the duty can help reduce the most pressing inequalities of outcome exacerbated by the pandemic by helping organisations ensure their decision making takes full account of socio-economic disadvantage. By adopting the duty, regional authorities can help support inclusive approaches to strategic decision-making across their organisations²⁰."

How can police act in the spirit of the socioeconomic duty?

The most effective way for Police and Crime Commissioners and police forces to act in the spirit of the socioeconomic duty is to incorporate the duty into their strategic decision making, by giving due regard to the socioeconomic duty.

How can the socioeconomic duty be implemented at a strategic level?

Guidance for the Fairer Scotland Duty states that the duty applies to strategic decisions, which are 'key, high-level decisions that the public sector takes. Many of these decisions may be made in the context of public service reform and improving outcomes for people and communities. In general, they will be decisions that affect how the public body fulfils its intended purpose, over a significant period of time. These would normally include strategy documents, decisions about setting priorities, allocating resources, and commissioning services – all decisions agreed at Board level²¹'

Considering this, Police and Crime Commissioners can consider incorporating the socioeconomic duty into their Police and Crime Plans, their resource and budget allocation, and reporting on the impact of the duty in their annual reports.

What does giving 'due regard' to the socioeconomic duty mean?

The Fairer Scotland Duty guidance states that the key considerations within giving 'due regard' to socioeconomic disadvantage are: active consideration, participation, and proportionality.

Active consideration

Active consideration means that any public body that is covered under a socioeconomic duty 'must actively consider, with an open mind, whether there are opportunities to reduce inequalities of outcome based on socioeconomic disadvantage. **This is not a tick-box exercise.** Serious consideration must be given – and as early in the decision-making process as possible [...] There is also an expectation that 'due regard' is given both by staff at the formation of any strategy/plan/programme and by decision makers at its adoption²². (Emphasis ours).

Considering this, PCCs should give due regard to socioeconomic disadvantage in their planning, budgeting and resource allocation, to ensure none of these factors disadvantage people who are experiencing socioeconomic deprivation, and furthermore, so that they may serve to improve the lives of people experiencing socioeconomic deprivation.

Additionally, when planning and implementing policing programmes and strategies, Chief Constables, Deputy Chief Constables and Assistant Chief Constables should give due regard to how these policing strategies may affect socioeconomically disadvantaged communities.

Participation

The Fairer Scotland Duty guidance states that 'it may be easier to demonstrate that due regard has been paid if any assessment involves those who may be directly affected by the decision under consideration²³'

Considering this, when developing Police and Crime Plans and reflecting on successes and accountability in annual reports, Police and Crime Commissioners should take reasonable steps to involve socioeconomically disadvantaged communities in developing plans and reports. This could

include consulting with communities on particular elements of the plan by working to understand their experiences of poverty, policing, and crime, as well as understanding how the police can improve their lives and if any policing tactics have a particularly negative impact on them.

The Practical Guide for Local Authority Implementation of the Socio-Economic Duty notes the importance of engaging with residents, civil society, and voluntary community sector organisations. It states ‘consideration should be given to how people experiencing socio-economic disadvantage can inform and shape policy and practice through a permanent forum (for example a socio-economic scrutiny forum). This could build on existing time-limited engagement activities (such as Poverty Truth Commissions) and should be supported by, but independent from, the local authority. The scrutiny forum should consist of substantive and formal processes of engagement and guidance on the socio-economic duty²⁴’.

PCCs could therefore consider setting up and facilitating forums consisting of people with lived experience of socioeconomic disadvantage in their areas, to inform the implementation and monitoring of the socioeconomic duty. There are many available resources on co-production to help guide this process²⁵.

Proportionality

The Fairer Scotland Duty interim guidance states that ‘how much regard is due will depend on the relevance of the decision to the scale of socio-economic disadvantage and inequalities of outcome in relation to each strategic issue²⁶’.

Police and Crime Commissioners and police forces should work with local communities to understand the level of impact their strategies and decisions may have on socioeconomically disadvantaged people. For example, stop and search tactics, use of out of court disposals, and heavily focusing police resources on a particular area will be more likely to impact on equality of outcome for socioeconomically disadvantaged communities^{27 28}.

We can now explore what meeting the duty day-to-day might look like by taking inspiration from guidance in implementing the socioeconomic duty, published in both Scotland and Wales.

Meeting the duty day-to-day: looking to interim guidance in Scotland and Wales

If we look to both the Fairer Scotland Duty's guidance for public bodies²⁹ and the socioeconomic duty statutory guidance in Wales³⁰, we can break down applying the socioeconomic duty to policing into five stages: planning, evidence, assessment and improvement, decision, and publication.

Stage 1: Planning

Planning requires public bodies to determine whether an assessment of socioeconomic disadvantage is needed and if so, how to deliver it. The Fairer Scotland Duty's interim guidance states that the key question to ask at this stage is 'is this a strategic programme/proposal/decision or not?'³¹

Where PCCs and police forces identify that a programme, proposal or decision being taken is strategic in nature, they should undertake the following tasks:

- Develop a plan for the upcoming stages, ensuring that there is sufficient time to do so. Note that PCCs and/or Chief Constables will need to pay due regard during the development of the proposal, not simply when the decision is being taken. This means starting your assessment early.
- Confirm the aims and expected outcomes of the programme/policy/decision.
- Ensure the right people are engaged in the process. Alert appropriate officers within the Office for the PCC or police force that the assessment is now underway and that it may affect the final decision to be made.³²

Stage 2: Evidence

At the evidence stage, PCCs and police forces should consider how to make full use of any data that they hold or how they can access information to consider how they can exercise their socioeconomic duty. Key considerations here would be:

- What does the evidence suggest about this policing strategy's actual or likely impacts on socio-economic disadvantage and the key inequalities of outcome under consideration?
- What existing evidence do we have about the proposal being developed, including what could be done differently?
- Are some communities of interest or communities of place more affected by disadvantage in this case than others?
- What does Equality Impact Assessment planning work – for this issue and previously – tell us about gender, ethnicity, disability and other protected characteristics that we may need to factor into our decisions?
- Is it possible to collect new evidence quickly in areas where we don't currently have any? For example, through consultation meetings, focus groups or surveys?
- The voices of people and communities will be important here. How do we involve communities of interest (including those with lived experience of poverty, disadvantage and police contact) in this process?³³

Here, PCCs and police forces should look at information they do hold relating to socioeconomic disadvantage, by understanding where pockets of deprivation are in their communities and the issues that impact on these communities. They should take steps to engage with socioeconomically disadvantaged communities when developing strategies, programmes, or proposals, to understand any negative or positive impact it may have on them. This can be done by initially referring to the English indices of deprivation³⁴ and Welsh index of multiple deprivation³⁵, and by approaching communities directly or working with third sector organisations who work with communities to hold focus groups and public forums.

When exploring working in partnership with people who experience socioeconomic disadvantage, The Practical Guide for Local Authority Implementation of the Socio-economic Duty notes that ‘meaningful involvement is not about gathering many stories or “case studies”, but about understanding the collective experience, and ensuring that it is accurately and truthfully represented. This includes involving people from the outset, committing to processes of engagement (rather than single events) and exploring how diverse forms of expertise are best incorporated into policymaking³⁶.

Stage 3: Assessment and improvement

Assessment and improvement will involve collating the evidence PCCs and police forces have gathered, and reflecting and considering improvements or changes needing to be made to any proposal, decision or programme. Here, it will be necessary to show how due regard has been given to socioeconomic disadvantage. Key considerations here would be:

- What are the potential impacts of the proposal, decision or programme as we currently understand them?
- How could the proposal, decision or programme be improved so it reduces or further reduces inequalities of outcome, with a particular focus on socio-economic disadvantage?
- Are the views of people who are socio-economically disadvantaged being taken into account in the development process?
- How will this proposal, decision or programme assist you to reduce inequality in outcomes?
- If you are now planning to adjust the proposal, decision or programme, could it be adjusted still further to benefit particular communities of interest or of place who are more at risk of inequalities of outcome?³⁷

The outcomes of the assessment phase, with any options emerging for consideration, should be clearly set out for consideration by the appropriate officer(s) in the next stage. If proposals have changed considerably, there may also be a case for further consultation with communities.

This is a key stage for PCCs and police forces to assess how their strategic decisions may have either a negative or positive impact on the communities experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage they are policing,

Stage 4: Decision

This decision stage allows ‘appropriate officers’ to consider the assessment process from Stages 2 and 3, agree any changes to the policy, proposal or decision and confirm that the PCC or police force has paid due regard to meeting the socioeconomic duty in this case. In terms of who the appropriate officer should be, this would most likely either be the PCC/ Deputy PCC or the Chief Constable/Deputy Chief Constable/Assistant Chief Constable in most cases, depending on the nature of the plan, proposal or decision. Key questions to ask at this summary stage are:

- What does the evidence base underpinning the proposal say about its potential impacts on inequalities of outcome?
- What changes, if any, will be made to the proposal as a result of the assessment? Why are these changes being made and what are the expected outcomes?
- If no changes are proposed, explain why³⁸.

Stage 5: Publication

Here, PCCs and/or police forces need to show they have paid due regard to meeting the socioeconomic duty within their plan, policy or decision. A record from the previous stage, the decision, needs to be set out clearly and accessibly, and signed off by an appropriate officer.

This could be written up in one of the following ways:

- As a section in or an annex to a publication setting out the strategic proposal, plan or decision.
- As a socioeconomic duty assessment document, published separately.
- As a separate section within an Equality Impact Assessment, focusing on the strategic proposal, plan or decision³⁹.

Case study:

Fulfilling the socio-economic duty through action on the Cost of the School Day

The UK Cost of the School Day⁴⁰ programme, delivered by Child Poverty Action Group and Children North East, aims to create a fairer education system for children and young people living in poverty. In Wales, children from poorer families are less likely to be happy at school⁴¹, and are less likely to achieve the expected outcomes⁴² at the end of each phase of education, compared to their better-off classmates. Two thirds of young people say that children from families with less money are treated unfairly by society⁴³.

Systematic reviews⁴⁴ have found that money has a significant role to play in improving children's outcomes. Increasing family incomes has a direct causal effect on improvements in children's health, cognitive development, and social, emotional and behavioural development. Reducing or removing cost barriers in education can therefore act as a helpful way of increasing family incomes and ensuring participation, which ultimately enhances children's wellbeing and improves their outcomes.

The Cost of the School Day approach works with school communities to 'poverty-proof' their settings. Firstly, practitioners consult children and their families around costs, money and the impact of poverty on participation in school life. Using sensitive and age-appropriate methods, practitioners draw out where poverty is creating problems for children and their families. They then work to understand how the school addresses these issues through policy and practice. Finally, they work with the whole school community to develop new approaches that ensure that money is never an issue, and all learners can take part and be happy at school.

Drawing on the evidence collected across multiple settings, practitioners then work with local authorities, school improvement agencies and national governments to change education policy and practice around child poverty.

How does the Cost of the School Day help public bodies fulfil their obligations under the Socio-economic Duty?

The 'socio-economic duty' aims to deliver better outcomes for those who experience disadvantage due to their socio-economic status. The socioeconomic duty states that certain public bodies must consider how their strategic decisions might help to reduce the inequalities associated with socio-economic disadvantage. This includes inequalities in education.



It is important to note that the duty does not extend to schools themselves. In Wales, school Governing Bodies are created by section 19 of the Education Act 2002 and are statutory corporations. They therefore have a distinct legal identity from Local Authorities.

The socioeconomic duty also does not apply to service design and delivery, although it should be expected that services would adapt and improve in response to strategic frameworks that explicitly take socio-economic disadvantage into account. Evidence from Scotland⁴⁵ suggests that, by including consideration of the socioeconomic duty across the preparation of reports and / or within all equality impact assessments, several public bodies were applying the duty more widely. It was not being restricted to high-level strategic decisions but was being considered during project / service development and informing the implementation of frontline service delivery.

The concept of ‘poverty proofing’ has previously been applied to systematic equality impact assessments, most notably in the Republic of Ireland⁴⁶. In the Cost of the School Day context, it means that a school has undertaken a process of speaking to every single child within a school, in order to identify the barriers to engagement, and unintentional stigma and discrimination faced by those suffering the effects of poverty. Applying the insight gained from the poverty proofing process allows public bodies to design policies and strategies that are grounded in lived experience of poverty.

Taking a Cost of the School Day approach enables local authorities (and other public bodies) to fulfil several important aspects of the socioeconomic duty:

- Take account of evidence and potential impact through consultation and engagement
- Understand the views and needs of those impacted by the decision, particularly those who suffer socio-economic disadvantage
- Welcome challenge and scrutiny
- Drive a change in the way that decisions are made and the way that decision makers operate





Consulting with communities of interest

A strong evidence base relating to socio-economic disadvantage is necessary for effective implementation of the socioeconomic duty. Public bodies report that having access to robust data is important, both in considering socio-economic disadvantage within their decision-making process and in understanding impacts or outcomes of these decisions.

In addition, public bodies should seek to understand the needs and views of people affected by socio-economic disadvantage. The Cost of the School Day approach allows local authorities to hear directly from children, young people and their families, creating a nuanced and helpful synthesis of barriers and challenges created by poverty in education.

Improving scrutiny

Guidance from EHRC Wales⁴⁷ suggests public bodies subject to the Duty should work to develop scrutiny frameworks that include scrutiny of impact with respect to inequality of outcome that results from socio-economic disadvantage. Taking a Cost of the School Day approach to consulting with young people provides a mechanism for local authorities to understand the impact and outcomes of their policy decisions on the lives of the families they seek to support.

Changing the way decisions are made

Ultimately, the Cost of the School Day approach is about putting young people in the lead of evaluating how policy and practice affects their experience of education. It provides rich insight into the lived experience of socio-economic disadvantage and the stigma of poverty. Local authorities are then able to reflect on the findings aggregated from schools across their area and feed this into strategic decision-making processes. Examples of how Scottish local authorities have used evidence from the Cost of the School Day process to make strategic decisions around poverty can be found in their Local Child Poverty Action Reports (LCPAR)⁴⁸.

For example, North Ayrshire council⁴⁹ use their LCPAR to draw explicit links between fulfilling their obligations under the Duty and their decision to prioritise action on the cost of the school day.



North Ayrshire Child Poverty Action Plan

Understanding Inequalities – Our Approach

A range of factors which, when distributed unequally in society, result in inequality of outcomes across socio-economic groups.

Inequalities in individual outcomes are directly linked to wider socio-economic inequalities in society. The distribution of power, money and resources has a direct influence on environmental influences such as:

- Availability of health enhancing work
- Access to good quality and affordable housing
- Social and cultural experiences
- Transport
- Education and learning opportunities
- Availability and quality of services

While there will be some fundamental causes of poverty which are out with the control of North Ayrshire CPP, there are many areas where an impact can be made. In order to be most effective, interventions need to be taken at all three levels:

- *Undo* the fundamental causes
 - *Prevent* the wider environmental influences
 - *Mitigate* the individual experiences
- As well as needing to ensure that our approach intervenes at all three levels described above, research also demonstrates that a combination of approaches across three areas of the population is essential to effectively tackle inequalities. These three approaches are:
1. **Targeting** – targeting the worst off in society
 2. **Enhanced** – reducing the gap between groups
 3. **Universal** – reducing the gradient across the population

Our Action Plan will reflect these approaches where relevant.

Our **first Action Plan** was developed in order to ensure clear links to our LOIP and to reflect the above approach. We have used this as a basis of our understanding of inequalities, its causes, and the most effective ways of responding. This, our second annual Action Plan, builds on the work done to date, develops some of the existing work, and introduces new actions, some as a direct result of COVID-19 impacts and local responses⁵⁰.

How does this link to what young adults want from policing?

Our research with young adults⁵¹ tells us that young adults want:

- Police services and the wider criminal justice system to understand the root causes of crime.
- Police officers to receive specialist training on communication and de-escalation.
- To work with police services to keep policing to a high standard.
- Police services to partner with community organisations that can support young adults.

To support positive engagement between young adults and the police, and to focus policing time on more serious, violent crimes, we are calling on PCCs to consider the link between socioeconomic disadvantage and crime in their Police and Crime Plans and adjoining resource allocation, budgeting, and strategic decisions. We hope that this will serve to divert people committing poverty-driven crimes away from the criminal justice system, and into services that can help them turn their lives around – as well as improve relations between the police and communities. In helping to facilitate this, PCCs can take inspiration from the socioeconomic duty which is in place in Wales and Scotland.

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Charity Number 1030846

Registered in England and Wales as Company
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