

DRAFT v:1



CAN YOU IMAGINE A CITY WHERE CHILD

For over a decade, levels of child poverty in Milton Keynes have been tracked and recorded by a variety of organisations, using a variety of measures and printed in a variety of reports.

The one constant is that and experience of poverty among children on MK remains unacceptably high.

The MK Child Poverty Partnership exists to challenge the automatic continuation of this reality. Unchecked, the daily reality of thousands of children will remain miserable, education and employment levels will remain life-affectingly low and more generations will be born into a pre-determined life story.

POVERTY IS A THING OF THE PAST?

But if we can reverse the trend, intervene and assist in meaningful and consistent ways for a long period of time, we believe we can build a city where multi generational poverty is eradicated. When this happens, the city, public health, public finances and individual lives are all improved. Join us to create a different future!



THE NUMBERS

HOW MANY CHILDREN LIVE IN POVERTY?

18,000

MK Community Foundation
Vital Signs Report 2023

22,940

MK Council Child Poverty
Commission Report 2020

30% of
MK
kids

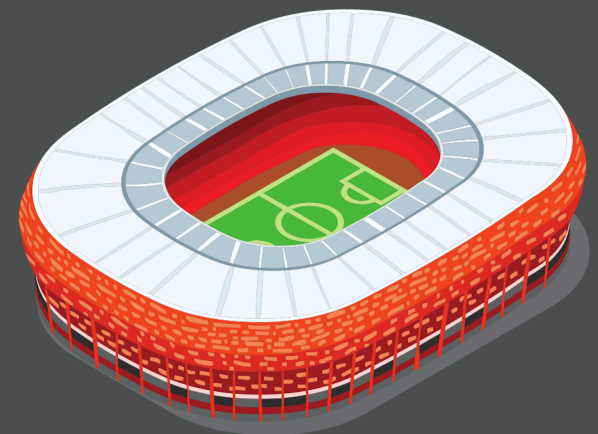
End Child Poverty



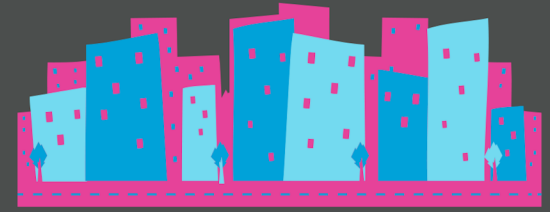
For context, the record attendance for a football match at
Stadium MK is

28,127

set when MK Dons played
Chelsea in the FA Cup



If you lined each to these children up at 1m intervals, the line would stretch from



WILLEN LAKE to LEIGHTON BUZZARD



9.9%

of MK households had nobody in work

Vital Signs 2023

27.6%

Less than 1/3 of MK children on free school meals continue to university education

Vital Signs 2023

2

a child who consistently misses meals is likely to score 2 GCSE grades lower than peers
Leeds University

STORIES BEHIND THE STATISTICS

"I had enough money to either wash the children's dirty school uniform or feed them after school...but I could not afford both food and washing powder"

"A student of ours recently lost a parent to illness. They were home alone completing their schooling while two older siblings were at university. With no access to benefits or a job."

"Placed into emergency accommodation in a hotel, a pupil at our school had to travel for over an hour on the bus to get to school. They had to leave the hotel before it started serving breakfast, but did not arrive at school until after breakfast club had finished".

"My mum had a job but she was not able to keep it because of her poor mental health. Soon after that she was unable even to leave the house. We had no money because she had no job. It happened fast."

"I hate the end of school term. Everyone says 'have a great holiday' but I won't because every day will be a long and boring struggle"

"After food, rent and child care costs, I used to have £27 most months left over. Then the cost of living crisis happened. Everything is more expensive. I can't stop paying rent so have had to stop paying for food"

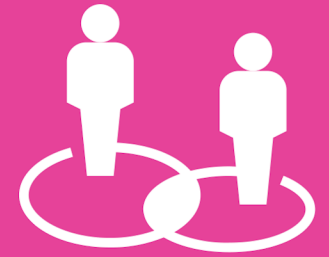
A CHILD CAUGHT IN POVERTY MIGHT:

- **Experience hunger**
- **Experience increased stress and anxiety worrying about carers**
- **Struggle to access school or school-work consistently**
- **Suffer stigma from poor hygiene or ill-fitting clothes, leading to social isolation**
- **Suffer higher levels of respiratory illness due to cold or damp living conditions**
- **Believe that they will never know a life not defined by poverty**
- **Experience housing insecurity**



ONE GEN

**COMMITTING FOR A GENERATION, TO BUILD A CITY
WHERE CHILD POVERTY IS HALVED AND MULTI
GENERATIONAL POVERTY IS ERRADICATED.**



IF WE ARE TO CREATE LONG-TERM, SUSTAINED AND LIFE-ALTERING CHANGE, THEN ALL SECTORS OF SOCIETY NEED TO BE EMPOWERED FOR INVOLVEMENT.

CIVIC, HEALTH, EDUCATION, CHARITY, BUSINESS AND INDIVIDUALS MUST ALL FIND THE ABILITY TO POSITIVELY FLIP THE FACTORS WHICH AFFECT POVERTY

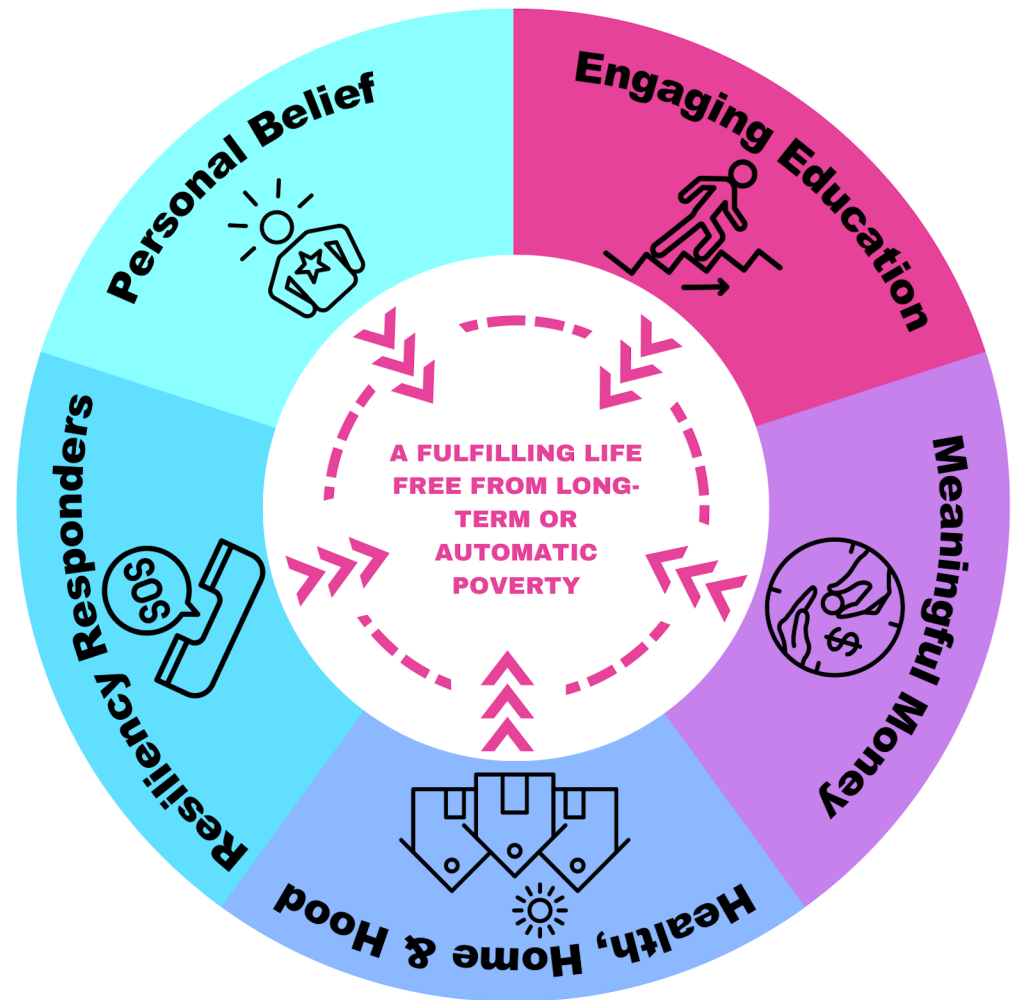
IMPACT FACTORS

Building on a wide body of evidence from long-term studies, government papers and practitioner experience, we have developed the 'One-Gen Poverty Impact Factors'.

When absent or ignored, these 5 factors have a detrimental impact, leading to poverty in the life of a child, often continuing into adulthood.

But when these factors are **flipped into positive expressions**, they can have a transformational impact for generations.

Having identified the factors, our job is to flip them.



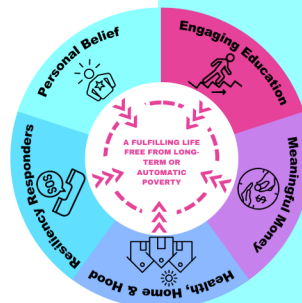
FLIP THE FACTORS



A THEORY OF CHANGE

Identifying factors of detrimental impact also identifies the corresponding beneficial flip side.

If we build systems, programmes and projects which create the conditions of the beneficial flip side, we will create a city-wide environment which is of positive and pre-emptive benefit to children; ensuring minimum time spent in poverty and increasing the chance of an adulthood not typified by financial hardship.



PERSONAL BELIEF

An innate and strongly held hopeful conviction that a fulfilling life, free from poverty, is personally accessible

The absence, or destruction of this belief can lead to fatalism which reduces personal involvement in factors of potential benefit.

For instance, a lack of visible pathways through education into local employment, or no role models of success, will disincline a child to engage in education processes...because they perceive there simply to be no point trying.



A tenacious, integral, optimistic belief based on plausible expectations that a future life of fulfilment and freedom from long-term poverty is possible.

This belief (which may be fragile) is supported and enhanced by continual exposure to opportunities, role-models and milestone successes.



ENGAGING EDUCATION

An education experience which is consistent, inspiring and equips students for entry into adulthood and the workplace

An education experience marked by repeated absenteeism, interrupted lesson delivery, inconsistent teaching quality or irrelevant / inaccessible curriculum content which provides a school leaver with neither the qualifications nor personal skills to enable employment access.



A continuous experience of engaging education provision. Barriers to access are not only removed, but high-quality teaching is focussed on learning, innovation, involvement and an outcome designed to enhance future life expectations.

Pupils are mentored through an education experience with employability being a higher goal than exam grades achieved.



MEANINGFUL MONEY

A variety of employment opportunities which are attainable, physically accessible, with potential for advancement and which pay enough to enable and sustain freedom from poverty

A lack of employment opportunities, pay levels which make work worthwhile, or an inability to access such employment safely - all of which conspire to reduce household income



A wealth of attainable employment opportunities with clear promotion pathways. Sources of work are physically accessible, employees are trained for future retention rather than treated as disposable and life-sustaining income generation is the norm for the city.

Women who earn are also able to keep and control this money.



HEALTH, HOMES & HOOD

A domestic and neighbourhood life which is free from danger. Where local infrastructure (digital & physical) actively enhances ability to learn, earn, relate and enjoy good health

Typified by a sense of personal danger, fear, ill-health or infra-structural poverty.

Homes can be contributors to ill-health through violence, abuse, neglect, over-crowding or lack of sufficient resources.

Neighbourhoods can perpetuate isolation, fear and poverty through lack of care, insufficient transport, poor community building, no play opportunities, lack of access to food.



Safe, secure, dry, warm housing that is affordable and provides domestic stability. Children live free from danger or fear and are able to learn in connected environments. Neighbourhoods are safe, clean & planned with health, play and community building in mind.

Health is sustained through fresh food, expert advice, addiction support and medical assistance being available locally.



RESILIENCY RESPONDERS

Help-agencies able to quickly provide holistic assistance, transformational support or mitigating action in moments of difficulty, trauma or crisis.

Disjointed, unreachable or under-resourced help services with elevated eligibility criteria, long lead-times and complicated referral processes.

Help not given at point of need, leading to a deeper descent into poverty spiral.



A network of emergency responders who can provide holistic bridging support through practical help, advice, guidance and intervention where needed to maximise resiliency to life changes & traumas - ensuring the time a child's life is adversely affected by poverty is as short as possible.

Such assistance is publicly funded, understanding this to be ultimately cost effective.



ONE GEN

The logo for 'ONE GEN' features the words 'ONE' and 'GEN' in a bold, white, sans-serif font. A white arrow starts from the bottom left of the word 'ONE', points horizontally to the right, then turns diagonally upwards and to the right, ending above the word 'GEN'.

The 'One-Gen' initiative aims to get all sectors of society, across the city of Milton Keynes, to involve themselves in pre-emptive action to improve the lives of children trapped by poverty for the advancement of those individuals and of the city as a whole. Short term thinking, emergency-only responses or siloed action will only have short term, contained effects. The poverty emergency demands more coordinated and long-term action.

CIVIC ASKS

In order for some things to change, policy level changes are needed, with long-term planning undertaken by local government. With this in mind we have "civic asks" for each of the impact factors. These are advocacy priorities which can only be implemented at the macro level, but which will have wide-ranging and multi generational impact.

ONE GEN COMMUNITY

Civic asks however will not be enough. Local businesses, educators, charities, community groups and individuals must all also be able to play their, equally important, part. The One-Gen Workshops enable local, contextualised community involvement in tackling child poverty within our own communities and neighbourhoods. These small actions can combine for huge impact.

Civic Asks

PERSONAL BELIEF

Mentors in every school to work with pupils in order to engage students with life choices, affirm self-esteem, conduct personality inventories, monitor progress and reward involvement.

Recognition of progression through rewards and awards

High impact storytelling and exposure to success stories

ENGAGING EDUCATION

Co-Ordinated pathways for forgotten students to access higher education careers alongside mentors

City wide focus on education for employability

Incentivised partnerships between educators and local business

Funded early year places and nursery cost support

Tech infrastructure support for pupils not online at home

Increased adult learning access

MEANINGFUL MONEY

Incentivised MK Gold Business standard awarded for those paying real living wage, employing locally, considering support staff and supply chains, ensuring safety of workforce and access of under-educated onto advancement pathways the training and Flexi-working etc.

Local credit union offering interest free loans during universal Credit wait if unmanageable debt would otherwise result.

Universal basic income to be explored for all 16-18 year olds in education

HEALTH, HOME & HOOD

Food deserts across MK to be identified and turned into oasis of supply

Mental Health advocates in every secondary school

Child poverty to be central to all planning considerations

Full scale renovation of redways and bus system enhancing safe travel

Addiction support enhanced

Save the Children Early Years intervention programme established

Innovative use of solar power to drive energy costs down while creating civic income

RESILIENCY RESPONDERS

Funding support services, whether civic or charity who can assist families to resist the poverty trap

Networked emergency response charity involvement to actively address crisis moments in families to arrest descent into inescapable poverty

MK app/website funded where individuals can seek help personally, quickly, without referral or social services

One Gen Community Workshops

While local government projects will have impact over multi-year investment periods on a large scale, local community involvement is VITAL in order to address root-causes of poverty. A multitude of community groups, businesses, local leaders and schools who take local action will have immediate and targeted effect.

HOW MIGHT THIS WORK?

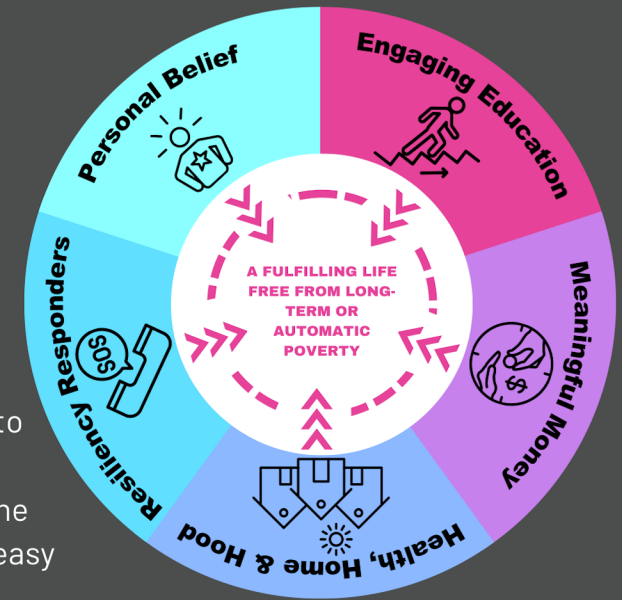
Firstly, an interested group conducts an audit into the nature of poverty within the area of their reach AND the skills, interestes and resources they have within their own hands.

Once this audit is done, an action plan is developed. There may be funding available for ideas emerging from these workshops.

Once the action plan is finalised, immediate action can be taken. It is most likely that a community group might only be able to influence one of the impact factors, but the difference each of these workshops leads to will be multiplied by the efforts of hundreds such groups across the city.

FOR EXAMPLE

- An audit on one estate discovered that residents were scared to use the bus service as the lights on the underpass needed to access the stop were always broken. A local task force under the 'Health, Home & Hood' banner could seek funding to create an easy reporting and repair system.
- MK College reported that some students were reluctant to engage in T-Level courses due to the additional costs of business clothing and shoes required for the workplace. Various answers could be implemented to ensure that students could access an Engaging Education giving them access to more Meaningful Money in the long term.
- A large local firm of educated professionals considered the contracted cleaning workforce for the first time, investigating the levels of pay and hours of work common among its extended employees.





www.mkcpp.org.uk

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