An increase in the number of children and young people living in poverty in England has made schools and colleges increasingly important as sites of support and action. Participants in this interdisciplinary event indicated that they had increased their understanding of the many, different and often hidden ways in which poverty shapes the lives of children and young adults. Together the presentations and workshops highlighted the value of reflecting on the prevalence of poverty at school. It also suggested the value of critically assessing what we currently focus on as a precursor to identifying what else might be needed.

Summary of key learning points

- The high level of childhood poverty in the UK today and the huge impact this has on life choices and opportunities.
- The critical role of educators across all kinds of educational settings: How important we are in children’s lives!
- The need to understand poverty as it works across the life course – from Early Years to Further and Higher Education: How it begins way before they reach us at Secondary.
- The differing needs of students living in poverty.
- The need to ensure that all staff have knowledge and understanding of young people’s needs and circumstances.

Recommendations for policy and practice

- Develop more nuanced understandings of the types of family poverty within a school context as these could inform more focused support strategies.
- Ensure that all staff are ‘poverty aware’ as it is not enough for just the few that work closest with students and families to be sensitive to this.
- More work around Cost of the School Day and Poverty Proofing including:
  - ensuring that young people are supported when making curriculum choices so that cost does not limit options and future progression
  - providing funding for school uniform
  - understanding and mitigating the costs of transport to school.
- More focus on poverty in Higher Education courses.

I had assumed that working is something they all do – not that it might be a sign of poverty.

The ‘road map’ that young people need is not provided to many in the poverty trap.

The life plan for disadvantaged students may hinge on that one bit of luck. We need to recognise this and put real support in place.
Instead of working against the odds to pile enough blocks under a child for them to ‘see over, the fence’... I would like to see the fence knocked down – to permanently challenge/remove structural barriers.

Details of presentations:

**Professor Simon Pemberton** (University of Birmingham) drew on research conducted with young adults that highlighted how the experience of growing up in a low income household continued to shape their trajectories both into and through Further and Higher Education and later on into employment.

**Dr Sandra Lyndon** (University of Chichester) drew on research conducted in two early years settings to explore the links between dominant political and media discourses and practitioners’ narratives of child poverty. She highlighted issues of stigma but also how a ‘curved ball’ can precipitate experiences of hardship.

**Dr Matt Barnes** (City University of London) highlighted the need for schools to develop more nuanced understandings of the families they work with when presenting the four different typologies of family poverty that were identified when data from a household survey conducted in Scotland were analysed: workless families; part time work with low assets; struggling to get by; working home owners.

**Kate Anstey** (Child Poverty Action Group, CPAG) presented the *Cost of the School Day* project and facilitated an in-depth discussion of the many hidden costs of schooling and what can be done to anticipate and mitigate their adverse impacts on children and families.

Details of workshops:

**Dr Carla Solvason** (University of Worcester) and **Dr Rebecca Webb** (University of Sussex) drew on their TACTYC research conducted in maintained nurseries to facilitate a discussion of the linkages between poverty and three discourses: ‘Welfarist’; ‘Social Mobility/Closing the gap’ and ‘Pragmatist/I just do it...’ with a view to better understanding the implications for poverty-informed practice in this sector.

**Dr Louise Gazeley** (University of Sussex) drew on research conducted in four 11-18 schools to highlight the importance of recognising that all schools – irrespective of important contextual differences - are working with young people in poverty and need to do more to ensure that they are included in widening participation interventions.

Thanks for a great day! Uplifting to be in a room full of people who care and want change.

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Presentations and photographs on the CTLR website: [www.sussex.ac.uk/education/ctlr/activity/annualchangeevent2019](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/education/ctlr/activity/annualchangeevent2019)

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