

The Impact of COVID – 19 on Poverty

Part 1

Abstract

Throughout this assignment I will be conducting a researched review on causes of poverty with a particular focus on the effects of covid with children in Wales. Poverty is usually measured by income to a household, though it has been found that people's opinions and experience in poverty brings many factors. Many factors include low pay, lack of affordable housing, and poor access to employment. An important factor to consider is the lack of affordable childcare and limited access to internet in rural areas. The Welsh Government have shown importance to tackling poverty as one of their main objectives (GET REF). The Public Policy Institute for Wales (PPIW) have analysed evidence that has previously been undertaken regarding the causes of poverty and what could be done to potentially help the issue at hand. These include help for young carers that are at risk of experiencing homelessness and many ways to help increase affordability with housing costs.

Part 2

Literature Review

Throughout this assignment, there will be discussion on observation and evaluation of poverty within the UK and the effects that have risen since the peak of covid. This assignment will reflect on how poverty plays a significant role in both adults and children. The COVID-19 pandemic has played a significant role in children, whether it be physical or mental health and their education. Children who contracted COVID-19 during the pandemic experienced fatigue and respiratory issues and many children have had prolonged effect of the illness, this being long covid (Jiang, et al. 2023). As stated in agreeance with this, Madigan, et al. (2023, p.4) explains that children who have had this illness has led to a notable increase among children in regard to mental health issues. Due to the prolonged lockdowns, anxiety, stress, and depression has been heightened and has rapidly increased the lack of social isolation. With school closures creating a disruption in not only their social life but education, this quickly affected children's academic skills and their ability to socialise. Children then coming from families that have lower income, experienced greater difficulties due to having no access or limited access to the internet and digital devices (Jiang, et al. 2023). The significant changes that happened during the pandemic have played a vital role in the effects of children and adults well-being, this including their behaviours. Their reduced physical activity and disrupted sleep patterns have caused adverse effects. Children who were living in resource -rich environments according to Madigan, et al. (2023)

paved a steadier path to the end of COVID lockdowns compared to the those in less supportive households.

Despite the UK being one of the most advanced and developing countries in the world, approximately 11 million people are living in poverty in the UK alone (Cuffe, 2024). This suggests that more than 20% of the population in the UK fall into the category of 'extreme poverty'. All over the world, it has become not only a political issue but a social and economic issue. According to Children in Wales (2024) 28% of children in Wales are currently living in poverty. Following on that children who experience living in poverty can have a potentially devastating effect on the child's education, health, and overall wellbeing – shows a clear understanding of daily deprivation and struggle. However, stated by World Vision (2018) currently, less than 10% of the population live in extreme poverty.

Addressing poverty is critical to help ensure we uphold human rights and to allow all to live with dignity. Unfortunately, there is not one answer for poverty and as explained by Wijekoon, Sabri & Paim (2021) different observations and methods can sometimes create complications. Therefore, only actions that have been taken practically and theoretically to help abolish poverty appear to be unfeasible or unreliable. This review will help ensure that people know what poverty is, a few different approaches to how it is measured, the slight & vital causes behind the issue and how we are able to help the crisis.

Poverty is a multifaced concept that has been defined in various ways. Such as:

- Absolute Poverty – not enough household income to meet basic everyday needs.
- Relative Poverty – to have less than others in society, whether it be income and/or resources.
- Situational Poverty – a temporary state of poverty, which can be caused by a sudden event, for example, illness or a job loss.
- Generational poverty – poverty that would be passed down from one generation to the next
- Rural Poverty – this is where poverty is only concentrated in rural areas. (JRF, 2019).

JRF (2019) states that some of the causes of poverty throughout the UK are caused by the lack of employment and low paid jobs. An effective benefit system, high costs of living such as housing, goods and services (e.g electricity, water) and discrimination for instance – disability, gender, age or religion and trauma. Abuse linked to drugs and/or alcohol abuse, neglect from childhood and problems linked to mental health can also lead to poverty in the UK. Save the Children (2021) further this point by stating almost a third of children living in Wales are currently living in poverty. Comparing children in

Wales to those that live in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland, statistics show between 24-30%, whereas Wales is currently the highest percentage at 31%.

Williams and Doyle (2016) state that tackling this issue is extremely important for Welsh policy makers. However, the UK Government have decreased the spending potential which in turn creates fewer resources for Welsh ministers to help intervene in challenges that are faced in rural communities. Hence, the importance of obtaining the correct and most recent evidence about the causes of poverty in Wales and the best way to tackle it.

Part 3

The two methods which will be used to gather data in this review to gather an understanding of poverty post COVID -19 will be a survey and an interview. Conducting a survey that will target not only the children, but the parents also will provide a nuanced understanding of the multiple impacts that COVID has caused. This method allows both quantitative and qualitative data, this allows us to gather a thorough understanding of their experience. The survey will help gather statistics on how the pandemic has affected both children and parents through healthcare, mental health and education among impoverished families (Munbli, 2022 p.3). This method will ensure a vast reach that small – scale qualitative studies may miss. Having the ability to engage with both children and parents help capture the intergenerational effects and helps us view the difference in family dynamics. This in turn will offer an holistic view on how the pandemic has affected the children's development and their families wellbeing. A survey will help ensure anonymity throughout and will encourage honest responses from the candidates. This is a crucial step which will help allow the understanding of sensitive issues that are related to poverty. By developing policies and interventions while informing support services, this survey will help immediate needs for the children and families and help with the recovery post COVID poverty.

The second method chosen to collect data will be a questionnaire. This method will allow to capture a broad range of needs by the families and their experiences. Questionnaires allow the collection of quantitative data, which can help with the findings of patterns in access to their education, mental health and health care services (Munbli, 2022). In addition to this, it will provide a deeper understanding of not only their psychological but their emotional wellbeing due to the impact of the pandemic. These mixed-methods will allow us to understand on a deeper level to how the multi-faced challenges of the pandemic has impacted families. Questionnaires will gain an insight into a wider audience, which in turn will ensure diversity in the data that will be collected. This method will go hand in hand with the survey method as it ensures

anonymity and it again helps encourage families honest responses while helping reduce the stigma of poverty.

Part 4

Ethical Consideratons

In order to gain research that involves young children and parents, it will involve the navigation of a complex landscape of ethical considerations especially when it involves families who have experienced poverty post COVID-19. We must ensure that the protection of families, along with their consent is at top priority. Gaining consent is a foundational ethical requirement (BERA, 2018). In order for the parents to get a clear understanding of the review, it will involve providing clear, comprehensive information about the purpose of the study. The procedure behind it, the risks of the review alongside the benefits. It is crucial that the participants know the voluntary nature of participation. They will be notified of the right to withdraw during both research methods. Will receive the researchers' details in case of a late withdrawal. And will never be coerced into taking part or remaining in the review process (Blackburn:BERA,2015). Accessible language must be used while conducting the research to help ensure an understanding as there may be varying levels of literacy and education (Emanuel et al. 2000). GET REF

In addition to gaining consent from the parents involved, we must seek assent from child participants. We must ensure the child is of the understanding behind the review, and that they are verbally willing to participate. It is important that the review is explained to the children in an age- appropriate language. The concept of assent respects he developing autonomy of children (Alderson, 2004) GET REF. There should be no incentives given to the children before the survey begins as it will potentially discourage the children to give an honest opinion. Children should also always be made aware of their right to withdraw throughout the process of the survey and questionnaire. If a child is uncomfortable through this process, a simple five minute break from questioning will be granted. If then said child is continuously uncomfortable, the review will be stopped and now questioned any further.