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COVID-19 led to a global pandemic which impacted individuals across the world, businesses were shut down and the world's economy was at a standstill due to there being a mass number of people being unable to work due to quarantine and individuals self-isolating. Many individuals across the globe suffered financially and mentally, especially those who were already living in poverty. Children also suffered greatly as schools had no choice but to be closed due to a rise in the number of COVID-19 cases. This is what my assignment will be focusing on, it will specifically be discussing the impact that COVID-19 has had on children and families living in poverty.

According to the Institute for fiscal studies and the Nuffield Foundation which focused on the pandemic's impact on inequalities in education and skill, it was found that before the pandemic had happened individual's academic performance varied considerably based on their socioeconomic background (Taylor, 2021). The report stated that those who were not going to university were less likely to receive job offers and jobs that pay a good wage, and this was amplified by the pandemic, where those from lower socio-economic backgrounds went to university less and so in turn, they were less likely to receive job offers leading to an increase in unemployment. However, the impact of the pandemic on children's education could be attenuated by: greater funding for schools from the government, an extension of the school year, increase in the use of technology and the providing of extra tuition for those struggling academically.

The government and schools did take action to ensure that children received an education whilst being in quarantine, children would learn via remote learning online where they would be taught at home on an online service such as zoom, so children still learnt their syllabus. However, teachers and students felt that the standard of education being delivered on online services was of a lesser standard than that which would be given in a physical school and classroom, 74% of teachers felt that they were not able to teach to their usual standard and most students were behind with 44% requiring intensive catch-up programmes (Howard, Khan and Lockyer, 2021). Although students

across the country were receiving online lessons, individuals who were from poorer backgrounds were less likely to receive online lessons and were less likely to receive feedback on their work, many of those economically disadvantaged found it difficult to attain digital devices and internet access to learn (Howard, Khan and Lockyer, 2021), these factors meant that those who were living in poverty were hindered in academic success and so halted on their journey to university and employment. Even when schools were re-opened students were still restricted by social distancing rules, with many individuals taking a substantial amount of time away from education due to self-isolation, this meant that individuals may have adopted poor social skills due to lesser people in their classrooms and being away from the public during lockdown. These factors coupled together made it extremely difficult for those living in poverty which may have obstructed them from employment, leading to further financial turmoil.

According to research there was a surplus of families which had a loss of income, with 4 million children being affected by this. Research has also found that over a quarter of UK families are currently receiving a reduced income, which is directly caused by the pandemic, with 17% of these families having children in their household (Bristol, 2021). Families found themselves during and after covid to pay for essentials such as food and clothing, with households containing children struggling a greater amount. 1 in 5 families struggled to pay for food affecting around 3million children whereas for households without children this rate was 11% for families without children. Families also struggled with arrears on their bills for example 2 in 10 families were behind on their gas, electricity, water and other bills impacting 2.3million children the rate for families without children was 7% (Bristol, 2021). These statistics highlight how covid-19 has troubled families across the UK financially, especially those families in which children reside, with financial arears rates doubling and almost trebling for families with children in comparison to families without children.

With families living in poverty with children it was an extremely calamitous period, as shown by the statistics however this was worsened by the fact that many parents had lost their jobs or had a reduction in the hours that they worked, these factors catalysed the financial hardship faced by millions of family members and children across the UK. On the other hand, the UK government did provide support for those in need during the pandemic, such as providing financial aid for businesses with extra grants (BDO, 2022). On the contrary it was felt by many across the UK that more needed to be done by the government to ensure that families were able to survive during these tribulating times. The government could: increase child benefits, increase eligibility for free school meals and

make the £20 addition to universal credit permanent or extended (Edwards et al., 2020). By doing the aforementioned the government will only then be able to ensure that families and children are being provided for financially receiving essentials such as food, clothing and heating.

With millions of people dying all across the globe covid-19 had many individuals feeling depressed, lonely, stress, sorrow and grief. It was found from research that a mass number of people have reported feeling psychologically distressed, with many reporting having suicidal thoughts, including health care workers (World Health Organization, 2022). Many groups have faced different problems, for example young people having faced schools being closed have been left exposed to social media, this lack of social interaction with others has left children feeling disconnected with those around them and the uncertainty of the outcomes of the pandemic has also left the youth feeling anxiety and post-traumatic stress. During the pandemic some children may have experienced abuse or family stress. 45% of women had also reported encountering domestic violence during the first year of the pandemic. Before the pandemic had occurred those facing greater disadvantages had higher rates of mental health issues (Mental Health Foundation, 2022). This was then augmented by the pandemic, many adults were having feelings of worry and anxiety over things such as; unemployment, finances and coping with the pandemic, 1/3 of UK adults said that they had worries about finances.

The rate of deaths was also greater for those living in impoverished areas in comparison to those residing in more affluent areas, statistics display that lower income areas experienced 55.1 deaths per 100,000 population and 25.3 deaths per 100,000 population in higher income areas (ONS, 2021). This elucidates that there was a greater experience of grief by those living in poverty, these individuals also may have been stressing about payments for funerals, which is not ideal during a period of tragedy for individuals. However, individuals can improve the state of their mental health by seeking psychological therapy such as CBT, by doing so they will be able to gain vital information from professionals on ways in which to deal with the difficulties that they are currently troubled by. Individuals can also try to see if they are eligible for any financial aid from the government, such as universal credit, by doing so not only are they ameliorating their finances, but they are alleviating the stress they feel from financial difficulty. It is imperative that mental health is taken importantly in this modern era, especially due to the fact that depression is now a common illness globally, it is estimated that around 5% of adults face depression (World Health Organisation, 2019), despite depression being so common individuals who are part of the general public are not able to explicitly

imply whether people are depressed or not, this is because depression is not a visible illness. For this reason, individuals facing mental health issues must try and reach out to relatives and friends to ensure a support network, as an individual's mental health problem may be anonymous to those around them.

Another impact that covid-19 had on families and children in poverty was the social development of children. With children being kept inside away from any social interaction in lockdown, during a crucial period of their lives for development. Covid-19 may have led to some children being socially abnormal and unable to interact in the real world. There have been many concerns over the impact on the development of children especially those from poorer backgrounds. Covid-19 may have caused there to have been attachment problems, post-traumatic stress disorder and also a feeling of grief which could have foundational problems and causing long-term effects on children (Pascal et al., 2020). These issues can cause problems for these children when they are adults, for example when applying for a job and getting a job interview, in these sort of circumstances social skills play an integral part in the success of the individual. If they do not have good social skills, they will be unable to be successful in the workplace leading to a cycle of poverty and causing more financial issues. These can lead to more mental health issues and bad habits developing which may be damaging, habits such as: drinking alcohol, smoking, drugs, domestic violence, malnutrition and homelessness which are already situations dealt by those in poverty (American Psychological Association, 2009). Covid-19 may have intensified the pre-existing limitations to the opportunities of children living in poverty. On the contrary there is still hope for these children, for example schools can take action by ensuring need assessments are completed, providing holiday events to reduce insecurity around food, funding welfare advisors to give guidance to parents and applying for grants for services (London.gov.Uk, 2020). By doing so schools can aid in improving the financial well-being and health of children in poverty and put families at ease in the holidays. Children will also be able to gain opportunities to learn which is essential on their journey towards employment.

During the pandemic many families and children were stuck inside their homes, this may have left them to be susceptible to domestic abuse, as they are at home for longer periods of time instead of work or school. Before lockdown happened, poorer households were at a higher risk of domestic violence, with women on poorer households being 3.5 times more likely to experience domestic violence (CPAG, 2019). Due to restrictions enforced by the government individuals were less able to leave their abusive partners and so they therefore endured more abuse for longer periods.

Psychiatrists found that there are many effects of domestic abuse on children also, with there being changes in their behaviours and social interactions. Children may feel: anxious, lower self-esteem, angry, insecure, powerless and confused, children may also be internalising their distress and interact less with others (Women's Aid, 2019). Schools can help through educating young children around this sensitive topic, by removing the stigma around these issues which are very common children may be open to more open discussions, through which teachers and advisors can help. Children can also be taught about the dangers of domestic abuse they could do this by integrating it with lessons challenging gender inequality and stereotypes in order to act as a deterrent to children and may aid in reducing the rate of domestic abuse cases in the near future.

There were many issues which were already faced by families and children living in poverty however many of these issues were exacerbated by the pandemic. Although there was help from the government this was sometimes not enough, especially for those living in poverty, who suffered the most due covid-19. Covid-19 was also very traumatic for many and so it is important for people do seek help from professionals, especially for those in poverty, in order to advance through the adversity, they face on a daily basis. Lower income communities can also come together to help its members with their difficulties.

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