



Case Studies 2013

Poverty Watch is a local observatory which brings together the voluntary and community and statutory sector to share evidence on poverty and its impact. The evidence we collect will be used to help influence local decision making on tackling poverty and inequality.

Below are some examples case studies contributed to Poverty Watch by local voluntary or community organisations.

If you have case studies or evidence you would like to share with Poverty Watch visit www.kcsc.org.uk/povertywatch or contact Angela Spence at angela@kcsc.org.uk

Action Disability Kensington and Chelsea

Case Study 1

Ms A is a 44 year old, disabled lone parent. She has a 16 year old daughter and sons aged 14 and 11. In previous years, Ms A has planned and budgeted for school uniforms, shopping around for offers and spreading out the purchases. At the time when Holland Park School introduced a new uniform Ms A had prepared school uniforms to last for 2 years, due to the single stockist policy, these items are now redundant.

Last September, Ms A purchased a full set of boys and girls uniforms. Both of the older children have grown and most of these items, especially the most costly trousers, jackets and shirts are now too small. She is not able to re-use some of her daughter's uniform for her older son and the older son's uniform, while saveable, is still too big for her younger son.

Excluding shoes and the PE kit, Ms A will need to find an extra £675 in her household budget over the next month.

Ms A would be willing to sell on her daughter's uniform and purchase second

hand items but has found that the school offers no option to purchase such items. Ms A mentioned that even only offering second hand jackets and coats would make the whole uniform more affordable.

When Ms A discussed this cost with her children they said that they didn't want her to approach the school to ask about second hand items or to request financial assistance, as this would be embarrassing and stressful.

As a result of the cost and the emotional stress Ms A's youngest son has already missed an early orientation day. Her older son experienced being refused access to the school premises because his new school shoes did not conform to uniform policy.

Ms A appreciates and agrees with the need for a uniform policy and wants to comply, but has no means of financing the purchases. Her children have recently been assessed for payments made directly to young carers and she is distressed that she may have to ask them to use these payments to (partially) cover uniform costs.

Case Study 2

Mr H has a life-limiting illness and is housebound. He was referred to ADKC by one of his health professionals, for help to complete his ESA50 – Limited Capacity for Work Questionnaire.

Two home visits were carried out by ADKC to assist Mr H to complete his form and copy his supporting medical evidence to submit with his completed form.

Mr H said that he could not get help from anywhere else with his form, and had

already received a reminder letter from ATOS. Having previously been found fit for work by ATOS when he was unable to get help to complete and submit his ESA on time, he had to go through the stress and upheaval of appealing, he is anxiously waiting for the decision on his current assessment.

The resulting stress was further impacting on his health.

Case Study 3

Ms X is unable to plan a journey to somewhere she hasn't been before or complex journeys on public transport since her stroke. Her benefit payments stopped while she was in hospital because she missed a deadline for returning her ESA/Limited Capability for Work questionnaire. She contacted her social worker for help, who arranged for her to receive an emergency food voucher.

Ms X lives in the north of the borough and was unable to get to the food bank in Chelsea so she offered to return the food voucher and borrowed money to buy bread and milk.

It took several appointments at ADKC for Ms X to complete her Disability Living Allowance claim with support. She received

a decision a fortnight later, that she is not entitled to any award of DLA. She is currently waiting for her appeal hearing to be listed.

Case Study 4

Mr M has restricted mobility and chronic pain, and has also been treated for severe depression. He is socially isolated and only engages with ADKC projects/services when he needs help with form-filling or referrals to other advice/series.

He lives alone and does not know any of his neighbours in the adjoining flats in his apartment block.

Westway Development Trust (Supplementary Schools)

During a BVOAG meeting this year RBKC councillors confirmed that the housing benefit cap would not affect GCSE students. However it came to light that a mother who had received DHP whilst her son was in Year 11 at Holland Park was rejected the next year when her second son was in year 11.

Concerns were expressed that because Holland Park teach their courses annually rather than on a two year cycle, like most other schools. This would make it difficult

for her son to transfer into Year 11 at another school as he would have a missed a year's work and this would severely affect his grades which are currently very good. The boy was also becoming very anxious about the situation.

The council agreed to award the mother DHP to ensure her son could complete his exams but due to the high private renting costs the mother will have no choice but to move and was advised to seek housing advice.

Age UK Kensington and Chelsea

Case Study 2

A visit was made to Ms E who lives alone. It was established that with her energy supplier – EDF, Ms E consumes gas of 2171 kwh per annum and electricity of 473 kwh per annum. Her home is well insulated and she spends a total of £250pa on fuel (heating costs are not included in the rent).

Ms E explained that she turns off the heating in winter to keep the fuel bills low. She is 82 years of age and suffers with osteoporosis, arthritis (in her knees, shoulders and neck), deep vein thrombosis, cellulitis, vascular disease, throboayto paenia, dizziness and is hard of hearing she explained that being cold in winter would exacerbate these health problems.

Ms E says her only source of income is a State Pension of £0-11pw and guaranteed pension credit of £145-29pw (She should therefore qualify for the Warm Home Discount and the Winter Fuel Payment). She also receives Housing Benefit of £122.98pw which is the total amount of the rent. Ms E is overdrawn at the bank and says that she does not have any savings. Her council tax is paid by Council Tax Reduction.

It was agreed with Ms E to submit a claim to the Foundation to get her into credit so that she does not ration her use of fuel. A claim for a grant for £400 was awarded. I also arranged for Ms E to be registered on EDF's priority register because of her health. She also agreed to try to claim Attendance Allowance (AA). If she is awarded AA then her Pension Credit may be increased for the award of a severe disability premium.

Case Study 2

Mr W's brother passed away in May 2013. The funeral was in Weston-Super-Mare on 31/5/13. He is 78 years of age. His only source of income is Pension Credit of £145.40pw less a deduction of £10pw for water rates and water rates arrears. He says that he has no savings. He needed help with the travelling costs and two nights B&B. Mr. W was not responsible for the cost of the funeral therefore a funeral grant from the social fund was not appropriate.

Under the previous Social Fund Rules to April 2013 Mr W could have claimed a Community Care Grant for travelling costs. Under the new rules we made an application for a Local Support Payment but was refused a grant. We made a claim for a budgeting loan but the DWP were not able to make a decision in time. We approached Campden Charities and Friends of the Elderly but was refused. Finally at the 11th hour the Kensington and Chelsea District Nursing Trust awarded a limited grant because of his health.

If you would like to contribute to Poverty Watch visit our website or contact Angela Spence at Kensington & Chelsea Social Council:

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