



Case Studies 2012

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

Citizens Advice Bureau - Female, aged 45

The client had worked but was forced to give up because of physical health problems. She was married to a husband with mental health problems who was trying to do some temporary work, they have one child aged 12. They have lived in the same rented accommodation for 10 years and are currently paying rent of £525 a week.

They were in receipt of almost full Housing Benefit to cover the rent but due to the Housing Benefit cuts, this was reduced to £290 a week.

We assisted them with an application for a Discretionary Housing Payment to RBKC and an award was made to cover the rent, albeit until only August 2012 on the basis that a search should be made for cheaper alternative accommodation.

This is not easy because of the family's health problems and it appears that ultimately if unable to pay their rent, they will be dependent upon RBKC providing them with accommodation as they are 'priority need' within the terms of the Housing Act 1996 because of the child within the family. *(Even without the child we believe that they would be considered in 'priority need' because of their health problems).*

The Bureau is concerned because if she does not secure further Discretionary Housing Payments when the 6 month period has expired, she will need to move and find a property within the £250 LHA Cap.

Dalgano Neighbourhood Trust Healthworks Project

Across the partnerships on the Healthworks project we have seen a big impact. Some examples below:

French African Welfare Association

Report people having difficulty managing financially, they are seeing people with no understanding of the changes to benefits

taking place. They report that people are actively seeking work, but having difficulties finding employment.

Asian Muslim Women's Association / Midaye Somali Development

Report women they are seeing as suffering from stress, anxiety and depression. There are concerns they will

lose their homes as many have larger properties to accommodate children.

Iraqi Women's League

Also seeing similar issues, they report an individual case of a woman being asked to

leave her hostel and not being provided alternative accommodation in London.

African Refugee Project

Report ongoing poverty and homelessness for recently arrived families with a recent case of someone claiming

disability allowance with severe health problems losing benefits after being re-assessed.

Action Disability Kensington & Chelsea - Female, aged late 50s

Ms A was referred to Action Disability Kensington & Chelsea by a friend and neighbour.

She had completed the assessment for transition from Incapacity Benefit to Employment and Support Allowance and said that she was now required to go to interviews at the Jobcentre, where the Personal Advisor commented that she was unfit for work!

Ms A has impaired memory and difficulty concentrating on or processing complex information, making communication difficult, as well as other physical disabilities.

Her physical disability and problems with memory and communication make it difficult for her to get out and about, and she had become depressed and isolated. In addition, she had not been dealing with her correspondence and bills were left unpaid. She was getting into difficulty with debt without support.

Ms A and her friend had tried to refer her to Social Services for a community care needs assessment, but were put off at the first stage of contact – the dedicated social services call centre – having been told she

could not be provided with any services because she 'just has some problems with balance'.

We helped Ms A to apply for Disability Living Allowance (DLA). The DWP decided that she did not qualify for any award.

We referred her for Advocacy support to access Welfare Benefits advice (to prepare submission for her Appeal Tribunal) and to attend an oral hearing with her.

The tribunal found she was entitled to DLA – higher rate mobility component, and the lower rate care component.

We helped her complete a new ESA form – Limited Capability for Work Questionnaire – and referred her for Advocacy support at the face-to-face medical assessment by ATOS. She was found unfit for work or work-related-activity.

Without referrals to Advocacy and support to access Welfare Benefits/Money Advice services, Ms A was socially isolated, housebound, depressed, and unable to tackle barriers put in her way when she tried to access any services/benefits/support to which she is entitled.

Family Friends - Female, 10 yrs old

A child was referred to Family Friends by her Clinical Psychologist in March 2011.

Her parents had recently split up and home life was unsettled as a result. Dad was temporarily still living at home until he found his own place and Mum was adjusting to being the main carer for the five children.

The child was finding it hard to get any positive attention at home and mum was struggling with boundaries and routine. A volunteer was placed to help her manage the changes in her life and to give mum some breathing space.

Finances were a struggle as Dad's work in the Arts was not stable and he was looking for more regular manual work to support the family. However, school was stable as all children were attending local schools and nursery drop-ins and the family had support from the mental health team in their borough and from the Family Friends volunteer.

Unfortunately due to the change in the family's situation they were told by the borough that they needed to be re-housed. This meant that the children would have to change schools and end their involvement with their support network (Clinical

Psychologist and Family Friends) who were borough based. This caused Mum and the children a great deal of upset and additional change when they were adjusting to the new family arrangements. At a time when

school, mental health and voluntary support were able to provide much needed consistency for this family this was prematurely cut short due to being re-housed.

London Citizens - Family, 2 parents and 3 children

The family's youngest child was 1 month old and the father worked locally in a hotel. Their situation changed and they were put in temporary housing in Abbey Wood, Greenwich.

The school-aged child in this family needed special help, which the school had provided and the child was responding. However, when the mother and children had to make the journey, 3hrs on train, bus and tube, the child was then too tired to concentrate. The day is too long for young children. Also they often have to stand on the public transport.

The family's friends and extended family all live near the school and church. The children can no longer take part in afterschool clubs and activities because of the journey they must make now.

The mother is working tirelessly trying to bid and score points for permanent accommodation. In fact after I first spoke with her she said she felt renewed "fire in her belly" to continue her search.

The school social worker and deputy head had also given her help and support.

NEXT POVERTY WATCH MEETING:

Thursday 13 December

10 – 12 noon

Rm 7, London Lighthouse, 111-117 Lancaster Road, W11 1QT

- Including a presentation and discussion on poverty and impact on mental health
- A presentation and discussion on the Change for Children Project (participating groups will present an update on current surveys they are carrying out with their client groups)

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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[**www.kcsc.org.uk/povertywatch**](http://www.kcsc.org.uk/povertywatch)