

"Bed poverty" on the rise in the UK

5th October 2023



A children's charity has reported that more than a million children in the UK live in "bed poverty". This means they have no bed of their own to sleep in. They either sleep on the floor or share a bed with parents or siblings. The charity, Barnardo's, said

bed poverty is a result of people becoming poorer. The cost of living has greatly increased in the UK. Rising food prices and higher gas and electricity bills mean people on low incomes cannot afford basic items. Barnardo's said for many families, a bed is now a "luxury" item. It said around 700,000 children are sharing beds, while 440,000 children sleep on the floor. This makes children tired, so it is difficult for them to concentrate at school.

Lynn Perry, the CEO of Barnardo's, said bed poverty was just one sign that many people in Britain are struggling. She said: "Bed poverty is just one aspect of child poverty." She added that it highlights the painful challenges that many parents face. She said parents do not have enough money "to afford the essentials needed to raise happy and healthy children". She said: "Families in crisis are having to prioritise essentials such as food, heating and electricity over things like replacing mouldy bedding or fixing a rotten or broken bed." Ms Perry warned that bed poverty is affecting children's mental health. She called on the government to take "urgent action to address these deep-rooted issues".

Sources:
[theguardian.com](https://www.theguardian.com) / [churchtimes.co.uk](https://www.churchtimes.co.uk) / [independent.co.uk](https://www.independent.co.uk)

Writing

Governments should give beds to poor families for free. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

charity / million / bed / poverty / children / cost of living / food prices / concentrate / Britain / struggling / challenges / money / crisis / electricity / bedding / urgent

True / False

- 1) The WHO said a million children worldwide have no bed. T / F
- 2) Many children in the UK share a bed with a brother or sister. T / F
- 3) More children sleep on the floor than share beds. T / F
- 4) Having no bed affects how children study at school. T / F
- 5) A charity said bed poverty shows there is child poverty. T / F
- 6) Some parents have too little money to keep their children healthy. T / F
- 7) Families can afford to fix broken beds. T / F
- 8) The charity boss said the government would not address these issues. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. siblings | a. repairing |
| 2. incomes | b. thing |
| 3. item | c. focus |
| 4. tired | d. necessities |
| 5. concentrate | e. salaries |
| 6. aspect | f. problems |
| 7. essentials | g. brothers or sisters |
| 8. fixing | h. emergency |
| 9. urgent | i. worn out |
| 10. issues | j. feature |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) Have you ever struggled because of money?
- c) Why do you think there is child poverty in the UK?
- d) How sad is it for parents to choose between heating or eating?
- e) How important is it for children to sleep on a bed?
- f) How can bed poverty affect children's health?
- g) What can the government do to address the 'deep-rooted' issues?
- h) What questions would you like to ask the charity?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| 1. share a bed with parents | a. rooted issues |
| 2. bed poverty is a result of people | b. and electricity bills |
| 3. The cost of living | c. at school |
| 4. Rising food prices and higher gas | d. afford the essentials |
| 5. it is difficult for them to concentrate | e. are struggling |
| 6. many people in Britain | f. becoming poorer |
| 7. Bed poverty is just one aspect | g. take urgent action |
| 8. parents do not have enough money to | h. of child poverty |
| 9. She called on the government to | i. or siblings |
| 10. address these deep- | j. has greatly increased |

Discussion – Student B

- How important is your bed to you?
- What do you think of 'bed poverty'?
- What would you do if you had no bed?
- What do you think of the UK having bed poverty?
- What's the cost of living like in your country?
- What do you think of a bed being a 'luxury item'?
- Have you ever had to share a bed?
- What advice do you have for poor parents?

Spelling

- A children's rhyaict
- share a bed with parents or lbssinig
- a rtelsu of people becoming poorer
- higher gas and eteclirctyi bills
- a bed is now a urxuly item
- toeectrnca at school
- people in Britain are sutnirgggl
- one asptce of child poverty
- it highlights the painful shalecnle
- enough money to arofdf the essentials
- fixing a nrteot or broken bed
- take renugt action

Answers – Synonym Match

1. g	2. e	3. b	4. i	5. c
6. j	7. d	8. a	9. h	10. f

Role Play

Role A – No Beds

You think having no beds is the worst aspect of poverty. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least damaging of these (and why): poor diets, no Internet or worn-out clothes.

Role B – Poor Diets

You think having poor diets is the worst aspect of poverty. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least damaging of these (and why): no beds, no Internet or worn-out clothes.

Role C – No Internet

You think having no Internet is the worst aspect of poverty. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least damaging of these (and why): poor diets, no beds or worn-out clothes.

Role D – Worn-out Clothes

You think having worn-out clothes is the worst aspect of poverty. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least damaging of these (and why): poor diets, no Internet or no beds.

Speaking – Poverty

Rank these with your partner. Put the worst aspects of poverty at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|---------------|--------------------|
| • No beds | • No heating |
| • Poor diets | • No entertainment |
| • No holidays | • No healthcare |
| • No Internet | • Worn-out clothes |

Answers – True False

1	F	2	T	3	F	4	T	5	T	6	T	7	F	8	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.