

Hygiene poverty on the rise in the U.K.

7th November, 2022



With the spiralling cost of living, many people are making drastic cutbacks. In the UK, millions of people can no longer afford essential hygiene products. This has been termed "hygiene poverty". A report from the charity Hygiene Bank states that up to 3.2

million adults are affected by this. Britons are foregoing basic goods such as soap, deodorant, toothpaste, shaving products, toilet paper and sanitary products. They are facing the harrowing decision of eating and heating their homes and not buying hygiene products. Hygiene Bank described the problem as a "hidden crisis". It said the situation is "much more widespread than we feared. It's increasing, and it's disproportionately impacting the most vulnerable".

Hygiene poverty is having a devastating impact on people's daily lives. Many people feel too ashamed to leave their house because they are worried about looking dirty or smelling bad. Hygiene Bank's chief executive Ruth Brock warned of the terrible repercussions of being unable to maintain basic hygiene standards. She said many people cannot "access their life chances". She said: "We have mums telling us...that they want to be last on the nursery drop-off because they're too embarrassed and ashamed to see other parents." Many people with acne are worsening their condition because they cannot afford soap. Others are avoiding all social contact by not answering their phone.

Sources: cosmopolitan.com / bbc.com / yahoo.com

Writing

Soap should be provided for free by all governments. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

cost of living / cutbacks / hygiene / poverty / charity / soap / deodorant / crisis / impact / daily lives / looking dirty / smelling bad / life chances / nursery / acne

True / False

- 1) Everyone in the U.K. is making drastic cutbacks. T / F
- 2) As many as 3.2 million Britons are experiencing hygiene poverty. T / F
- 3) Some people in the U.K. have to choose between food and toilet paper. T / F
- 4) A charity said hygiene poverty was "a crisis in full view". T / F
- 5) Some people do not leave their house because they might smell bad. T / F
- 6) Mums in hygiene poverty want to be first in the nursery school drop-off. T / F
- 7) Hygiene poverty worsens the condition of acne sufferers. T / F
- 8) People don't answer their phone because they worry they are dirty. T / F

Synonym Match

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

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. spiralling | a. disastrous |
| 2. drastic | b. affecting |
| 3. harrowing | c. pay for |
| 4. crisis | d. distressing |
| 5. impacting | e. levels |
| 6. devastating | f. escalating |
| 7. repercussions | g. extreme |
| 8. standards | h. disorder |
| 9. condition | i. emergency |
| 10. afford | j. consequences |

Discussion – Student A

- a) Why is there hygiene poverty?
- b) What other kinds of poverty are there?
- c) What hygiene products are essential?
- d) What would you do without hygiene products?
- e) Should governments make things like soap available for free?
- f) Have you ever had to make cutbacks?
- g) What do you think of the prices of things like deodorant?
- h) What do you think of the term 'hygiene poverty'?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| 1. the spiralling | a. to leave their house |
| 2. Britons are foregoing basic | b. the most vulnerable |
| 3. a hidden | c. with acne |
| 4. the situation is much more widespread | d. impact on people's daily lives |
| 5. it's disproportionately impacting | e. crisis |
| 6. Hygiene poverty is having a devastating | f. the terrible repercussions |
| 7. Many people feel too ashamed | g. cost of living |
| 8. chief executive Ruth Brock warned of | h. all social contact |
| 9. Many people | i. than we feared |
| 10. Others are avoiding | j. goods such as soap |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- What advice do you have for people in hygiene poverty?
- Have you ever worried about looking dirty or smelling bad?
- How high are your hygiene standards?
- Would you tell a friend if they had poor hygiene standards?
- How can governments help with hygiene poverty?
- Would you avoid people if you smelled?
- What questions would you like to ask the head of the charity?

Spelling

- people are making adircst cutbacks
- no longer afford iasetlens hygiene products
- Britons are grefiono basic goods such as soap
- ddaoetonr, toothpaste, shaving products
- They are facing the nhwrragio decision
- impacting the most avlreuelnb
- having a vaetindtsag impact
- Hygiene Bank's chief vciutexee
- warned of the terrible pnrscesesruio
- people cannot aseccs their life chances
- be last on the rnruyse drop-off
- people with ecan

Answers – Synonym Match

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

Role Play

Role A – Soap

You think soap is the most essential item. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their items aren't as important. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): wifi, toilet paper or a bicycle.

Role B – Wifi

You think wifi is the most essential item. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their items aren't as important. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): soap, toilet paper or a bicycle.

Role C – Toilet Paper

You think toilet paper is the most essential item. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their items aren't as important. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): wifi, soap or a bicycle.

Role D – A Bicycle

You think a bicycle is the most essential item. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their items aren't as important. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): wifi, toilet paper or soap.

Speaking – Essential items

Rank these with your partner. Put the most essential items at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|------------|----------------|
| • Soap | • Toothpaste |
| • Coffee | • Deodorant |
| • Wifi | • Bicycles |
| • Medicine | • Toilet paper |

Answers – True False

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