



EXTENDED SCHOOLS PROVISION

Briefing on how extended schools provision can help to tackle child poverty

April 2021

Schools have a unique place within their communities. With an extended school day, schools can and do support children's development and learning, support mental health and wellbeing, mitigate the effects of child poverty, and help prevent poverty by supporting parents to work. These activities have always been a valuable part of school life, but there is an even greater need now to support schools to deliver these services as the pandemic continues to affect the learning of children and the financial circumstances of families. **Crucially, the government must provide schools with dedicated funding and a clear long-term vision for delivering these services.** CPAG estimates that it would cost the government **£2.6 billion a year to fund every primary school, and £525 million a year to fund every secondary school in England** to deliver core extended schools activities, and an additional **£500 million to provide mental health practitioners and family support workers.** We estimate that it would cost **£10 million a year to fund an extended schools coordinator in each local authority** across England.

CPAG is calling on the government to:

- Provide a statutory framework and strategy with adequate additional, ring-fenced funding so schools in England can provide programmes, activities and services that go beyond the core function of classroom education.
- Ensure every school has the funding and resources to provide comprehensive before- and after-school care, and holiday provision which is suitable for its pupils and families.
- Ensure every school can provide additional services that support families in their community with their wider needs eg, dedicated mental health and wellbeing practitioners, and welfare rights advisers.

This briefing will cover:

1. Background on extended schools
2. Benefits of extended schools and why they must be a key part of the COVID-19 recovery plan
3. CPAG's extended schools statutory framework and funding plan

If you have any questions, or would like to meet with us to discuss extended schools provision, please contact David Bradley on dbradley@cpag.org.uk.

1. Background on extended schools

The term 'extended schools' refers to services delivered by schools that go beyond the core function of the classroom education of children within the normal school day. National policies have changed since their inception, but many schools continue to provide elements of extended schools, whether on their own or in partnership with other schools. These include:¹

- Before- and after-school childcare and holiday childcare/play provision
- Homework clubs/additional classes for disadvantaged children
- Sporting and cultural enrichment activities
- Support services for children delivered within school – eg, therapeutic services
- Support services for parents – eg, adult education or parenting classes
- Activities targeted at the wider community

Ring-fenced funding for extended schools in England ended in 2011, so continuing to fund these types of activities has become increasingly difficult for schools. Despite this challenging environment, there is evidence that extended schools programmes continue in schools across England, and some schools have pooled their resources so every child has access locally.

There is no national data on the number of schools with extended schools provision for school-aged children. However, the available research shows there is a lack of consistency in what is available for families. A survey from 2015 showed that, while breakfast clubs are widespread among schools (75 per cent have them), other extended schools provision is much less common. Only around half the schools surveyed provided after-school childcare clubs, and only 29 per cent provided holiday childcare.² More recently, the Coram Family and Childcare Survey 2020 found that two in five councils in England reported not having enough childcare for parents who work full time (44 per cent).³ These worrying gaps in childcare for school-aged children have ramifications for families across the country. The Coram Family and Childcare survey also showed the biggest gaps in childcare provision have been for older children, especially 12 to 14-year-olds, for disabled children and for parents working atypical hours.⁴

A fully-funded extended schools strategy could help to address this postcode lottery in provision. Statutory provision would help to address inconsistencies, and ensure that provision was accessible, reliable and accountable. The statutory provision should not include any mandatory extension of lesson time or delivery of the curriculum as a response to the pandemic, but focus instead on additional learning and development opportunities for pupils. This approach would not preclude the voluntary sector or local authority being a key delivery partner, but would embed collaboration as part of a co-ordinated school strategy.

2. Benefits of extended schools and why they must be a key part of the COVID-19 recovery plan

Extended schools programmes are proven to deliver a variety of benefits for children's education and social and emotional development, as well as improving family finances. They prevent and mitigate the worst effects of child poverty. The pandemic has created the perfect storm for many households, and families with children have been hit the hardest financially.⁵ When you combine this with a widening attainment gap, and worrying levels of child poverty, the evidence shows that funding extended schools provision should be an important part of the short- and long-term educational and economic response to the pandemic.

Attainment and lost learning

Extended schools programmes can engage pupils more positively with their school⁶ and narrow the attainment gap between disadvantaged children and their peers.⁷ For example, attending an after-school club improves the attainment of disadvantaged children more than non-disadvantaged children, helping to close the gap between poorer children and their better-off peers.⁸ Research has also shown that extended schools programmes can positively engage parents with their child's education and school more widely.⁹

Many schools are rightly concerned about tackling 'lost learning'. Prior to COVID-19, the attainment gap had stopped narrowing for the first time in a decade. At age 16, there is an 18-month gap between disadvantaged young people and their peers.¹⁰ The Education Endowment Foundation suggests school closures are likely to have widened this gap, and that progress made since 2011 will have been completely reversed.¹¹ Time spent learning outside of lessons¹² and expert guidance are both factors in raising attainment, and targeted support out of school hours can provide opportunities for both.

Health and wellbeing

Play and physical activity are important for children's health and wellbeing, and extended schools programmes can improve children's access to sports and cultural facilities.¹³ Accessing these opportunities has a positive effect on children's relationships. Research has found that children participating in extended schools activities get on better with their peers¹⁴ and these activities can also improve pupil/teacher relationships.¹⁵

Lockdown conditions have had an undeniable effect on children and young people's social and emotional wellbeing. A YoungMinds survey of young people with mental health needs found that 80 per cent agreed the pandemic had made their mental health worse, and 87 per cent agreed they had felt lonely or isolated during the lockdown period.¹⁶ Social interaction and attachment building is fundamental to young people's development; an extended period of isolation may have disrupted this. Children and young people may also have been exposed to additional stresses such as financial worries and anxiety about the virus. CPAG and Children North East's Cost of Learning in Lockdown reports (June 2020 and March 2021) highlighted some of the struggles families faced during lockdown, particularly around mental health and adjusting to the new set of circumstances. Children also talked about anxieties related to school work and their futures.

"My eldest has gone into a sort of social isolation, where she is really unsociable with us all. My main concern about the impact of school closure is their own mental health, their own anxiety." (Mum of three)¹⁷

Extended schools provision can serve as a space to expand any existing therapeutic or mental health services with specialised practitioners and targeted support. The provision also creates a nurturing environment that supports children to re-build social connections in a more informal setting than the classroom.

Supporting family finances

Extended schools programmes support parents in a number of ways. Breakfast clubs, after-school clubs and holiday clubs can provide convenient and often low-cost childcare for parents.¹⁸ This can support parents to work, which can provide a route out of poverty, or prevent families falling into poverty. Seventy-five per cent of children living in poverty are in working households,¹⁹ with childcare costs accounting for 56 per cent of the overall cost of a child for working couples.²⁰ Free before- and after-school childcare could have a significant effect on family finances, especially for families living on low incomes. Providing additional services, such as welfare rights advice in schools, has also been shown to help families access their entitlements and improve the

relationship between parents/carers and schools.²¹ Research also shows that women's commuting times fall significantly after their first child.²² If women take work closer to home because of caring responsibilities, they may be less likely to find a job well matched to their skills or with a high-paying employer.

Job losses and a reduction in income related to the pandemic mean many families have struggled to stay afloat. People in lower-paid jobs are most likely to be affected; 30 per cent of the lowest paid employees have been furloughed or lost their jobs as a result of the crisis (compared to eight per cent of the highest earners).²³ Over 4.8 million households were receiving universal credit in November 2020 (the latest available data), 2.2 million more than in March 2020.²⁴ Some families have been excluded from accessing financial support from the social security system during the pandemic, including some migrants even though they are unable to work because of the crisis.²⁵

Childcare costs present an additional barrier for many families trying to access work. Extended schools provision can perform a dual function in supporting with childcare and acting as a hub for families to access support and build relationships with staff. Schools may wish to consider how additional support for parents and carers can be integrated into any extended schools provision on offer. For example this could include compiling local directories of support services, or funding a small number of welfare rights advisers to deliver regular advice sessions to parents.²⁶

Benefits for the wider community.

Extended schools programmes can have a positive effect on a school's relationship with the wider community. Establishing extended schools programmes often requires a school to build partnerships and relationships with community organisations in their local area, and research has shown that schools with extended schools programmes have better links with their local community.²⁷ Where these relationships already exist, schools were well placed to respond quickly and flexibly to the pandemic by utilising these connections.

The evidence is clear that extended schools provision can play a vital role in school COVID-19 recovery plans, addressing some of the most acute effects that the pandemic has had on children and young people. Extended schools will not only have a positive effect on children, but will also help families facing financial difficulties and increasing childcare costs.²⁸

Case Study: Surrey Square Primary School

Surrey Square Primary School is located next to the Aylesbury Estate in Southwark, London – one of the largest housing estates in Europe. Deprivation is a feature of the lives of many of the children who attend. Five per cent of the school population live in families with no recourse to public funds. The school was aware that these children were living in a constant state of insecurity, with many of their basic needs going unmet.

The school has a range of initiatives to support families on a low income, including a free breakfast club for all children, subsidised after-school clubs, adult education, and volunteering opportunities for parents and carers. It offers crisis support when needed, including food, clothing and bedding, as well as referrals to other services. In addition, Surrey Square has introduced support to help parents address some of the underlying causes of poverty and deprivation in their lives.

In addition to helping families meet these basic needs, Surrey Square is piloting a project with Citizens UK and Coram Children’s Legal Centre to provide legal advice for families who need help with immigration issues. Families will be able to access this advice at the school.

3. CPAG’s extended schools statutory framework and funding plan

As child poverty rates across the UK continue to rise, and children’s education is being disrupted in many ways by the pandemic, schools need greater support to continue their frontline work. Extended schools programmes are proven to be an effective way to bolster provision for pupils and support families who might be struggling.

CPAG believes that urgent measures must be taken to transform the current piecemeal extended schools provision into a **long term, robust and sustainable intervention to improve educational attainment, support development and wellbeing, and reduce child poverty**. Below we have outlined the core extended schools activities we believe should be available to all families in England, with costings, as well as the additional services that should be developed by schools according to the needs of their school communities. We have also included some further considerations for the government when developing this important framework.

CPAG’s vision is for extended schools provision to be fully funded and put on a statutory footing, ensuring every child and family has access to these services. There are different ways this could be legislated for and implemented, with the involvement of local authorities to relieve responsibilities on individual schools.

The pandemic has shown how essential and increasingly urgent this longer-term vision for extended schools provision has become. However, CPAG recognises that a phased approach to implementation may be helpful, for example by piloting the model regionally first, or by focusing initially on rolling out one component of the provision such as breakfast clubs nationally.

Core extended schools activities

The government will need to ensure that every school has the funding and resources to provide comprehensive before- and after-school care, and holiday provision which is suitable for its pupils and families.

Many schools rely on a combination of charities and fundraising to prop up their extended schools activities, which can be both resource intensive and unreliable. Providing adequate funding would eliminate this

additional strain on schools, allowing them to focus on the quality of the activities and services, and take up. Funding would also remove the need for parents to pay for activities, which would eliminate a barrier to participation and further help to combat child poverty.

Based on the research and CPAG's experience, in order to deliver improved educational attainment, support development and wellbeing, and reduce child poverty, the extended schools provision would need to be able to provide:

- Childcare between the hours of 8am and 6pm to ensure adequate hours for working parents and carers.
- Food as part of breakfast clubs and during after-school provision.
- Free or subsidised after-school clubs that offer a range of activities including: sports, artistic and cultural opportunities, access to technology for completing homework for older students, or structured opportunities for play aimed at younger pupils.
- Holiday activities for children that utilise the facilities and locations of schools in communities.

CPAG estimates that it would cost the government **£2.6 billion a year to fund every primary school and £525 million a year to fund every secondary school in England to deliver the core extended schools activities** outlined above. This includes before- and after-school childcare as well as 13 weeks of holiday provision. The cost is based on a 38 per cent take-up rate of pupils in primary schools (Magic Breakfast's research shows this is the average take up of breakfast provision across schools) and an adjusted 20 per cent take up in secondary schools, which equates to **2.5 million pupils benefitting from this policy**.²⁹ We also estimate that it would cost **£10 million a year to fund an extended schools coordinator in each local authority** across England.

These aspects should form the foundation of a statutory framework, with schools given the freedom and funding to include additional services that respond to the needs of their families.

Additional services to be developed by schools

The government should ensure that schools have the financial resources to develop additional services that will benefit and support families in their school communities.

CPAG's research shows that schools are often the first point of call for families looking for additional support. Secure funding would allow schools or groups of schools to provide a comprehensive package of support that is tailored to the needs of their communities. Additional services may include but are not limited to:

- A trained family support worker or mental health practitioner, who has the capacity to deliver intensive pupil and family interventions to the school community.
- Access to welfare rights workers, employment support, adult education teachers and therapeutic services.

CPAG estimates that it would cost **£350 million** to hire a family support worker for every school in England, working part time in primary schools and full time in secondary, as well as an additional **£150 million** to provide local mental health practitioners who oversee a case load from a number of schools (ten primary and one secondary).³⁰

Developing an extended schools statutory framework

While it's clear what the foundations of a statutory framework for extended school activity should look like, CPAG recommends the government also puts mechanisms in place to better capture and learn from existing extended school programmes to shape the framework and provision. These mechanisms could include surveys with schools in England and further qualitative research of existing models.

CPAG also recommends certain considerations are made when developing the statutory framework to ensure it is an effective anti-child poverty measure, these include:

- The statutory framework should be designed with the involvement of young people and families, so that it meets their needs.
- The framework should be underpinned by a clear strategy with achievable targets, for example minimum hours provided during term time and provision throughout the school holidays.
- Provision should be available and free to all children, with a particular focus on ensuring disadvantaged children are included, ensuring a non-stigmatising offer to families.

A large number of schools across England incorporate different elements of extended schools provision into their day, and this helps to serve their school community beyond the core function of a school. However, this currently relies on leadership in individual schools and adequate budgets, meaning some families are missing out depending on where they live. Although schools know their communities best, the government must help to resource these programmes and provide direction.

To develop and deliver these activities and services that will benefit children and families as part of the recovery of the pandemic and beyond, the government needs to provide schools in England with additional, ring-fenced funding and a clear vision for their delivery.

About Child Poverty Action Group

Child Poverty Action Group works on behalf of the more than one in four children in the UK growing up in poverty. It doesn't have to be like this. *Our vision is of a society free of child poverty, where all children can enjoy a childhood free of financial hardship and have a fair chance in life to reach their full potential.* We use our understanding of what causes poverty and the effect it has on children's lives to campaign for policies that will prevent and solve poverty – for good. We provide training, advice and information to make sure hard-up families get the financial support they need.

About the Cost of the School Day project

The Cost of the School Day project was started by CPAG in Scotland in 2014 with the aim of reducing the financial barriers that prevent pupils from fully participating in the school day. The Cost of the School Day approach involves working with whole-school communities to identify and reduce cost barriers faced by pupils from low income backgrounds, including eating at school, uniform costs and school trips. Following the success of this project in Glasgow and Dundee, and working in partnership with Poverty Proofing the School Day experts Children North East, CPAG has expanded the project to local authorities in England, Wales and new parts of Scotland. Beyond school-level interventions, we also work with local authorities to bring about system and policy change. Find out more at: cpag.org.uk/cosd

¹ M Haddad, H Lambie-Mumford and L Sims, *Extended Schools*, Child Poverty Action Group, 2018

² Diss and M Jarvie, *Unfinished Business: where next for extended schools?*, Child Poverty Action Group, 2016

³ L Coleman, M Dali-Chaouch and C Harding, *Childcare Survey 2020*, Coram Family and Childcare Trust, 2020

⁴ See note 3

⁵ T Lee, *Families Hit Harder Because Nothing for Children in Covid-19 Response*, Child Poverty Action Group, May 2020

⁶ H Carpenter and others, *Extended Services Evaluation: end of year one report*, Department for Education, 2010

⁷ C Cummings and others, *Evaluation of Full Services Extended Schools Initiative: final report*, Department for Education and Skills, 2007

⁸ M Callanan and others, *Out of School Activities During Primary School and KS2 Attainment*, Institute of Education, University College London, 2016

⁹ See note 6

¹⁰ Education Policy Institute, *Preventing the disadvantage gap from increasing during and after the Covid-19 pandemic*, May 2020

¹¹ Education Endowment Foundation, *Impact of school closures on the attainment gap*, June 2020

¹² Institute for Fiscal Studies, *Learning during the lockdown*, May 2020

¹³ See note 2

¹⁴ See note 6

¹⁵ H Carpenter and others, *Extended Services in Practice: a summary of evaluation evidence for headteachers*, Department for Education, 2011

¹⁶ YoungMinds, *Coronavirus: Impact on young people with mental health needs*, Summer 2020

¹⁷ Child Poverty Action Group and Children North East, *The cost of learning in lockdown*, June 2020

¹⁸ See note 15

¹⁹ Department for Work and Pensions, *Households Below Average Income, Statistics on the number and percentage of people living in low income households for financial years 1994/95 to 2019/20, 2021*

²⁰ D Hirsch, *The Cost of a Child in 2020*, Child Poverty Action Group, October 2020

²¹ W Sugarman and others, *Tackling Child Poverty Through Schools Pilot Project*, February 2020

²² R Joyce and A Norris Keiller, *The 'gender commuting gap' widens considerably in the first decade after childbirth*, Institute of Fiscal Studies, November 2018

²³ L Gardiner and H Slaughter, *The effect of the coronavirus crisis on workers*, Resolution Foundation, May 2020

²⁴ Department for Work and Pensions, *Households on Universal Credit*, March 2020

²⁵ Child Poverty Action Group, *Mind the Gaps: reporting on families' income during the pandemic*, July 2020

²⁶ GLA, *Tackling child poverty through schools*, 2020

²⁷ C Cummings and others, *Evaluation of Full Services Extended Schools Initiative: final report*, Department for Education and Skills, 2007

²⁸ M Jarvie and others, *Childcare Survey 2021*, Coram Family and Childcare, March 2021

²⁹ *Estimated costs for extended schools provision are based on a 38 per cent take-up level in primary schools (based on research from Magic Breakfast) and 20 per cent for secondary schools. Hourly rates for staff have been calculated using a national weighted average of the real living wage and the number of staff required calculated using supervision minimum guidelines. Pupil numbers, number of schools and number of holiday weeks are official figures. Total hours of funding needed per school = staff x hours x days. Total hours for national provision = total hours per school x number of schools. Total cost = total hours x hourly wage.*

³⁰ *Costing estimates based on average salaries for family support workers (FSW) and mental health practitioners (MHP). FSW are calculated at 0.6FTE for primary and 1.0 FTE for secondary schools. We have assumed a caseload of 10 primary schools and 1 secondary school per MHP.*