



Healthier Homes for Healthier Children – how an integrated care system can approach child health and housing

Claire Gilbert, Sarah Roxby, Sarah Smith.

'[I see] children being unwell with back-to-back respiratory illnesses, living in overcrowded shared accommodation'

'Child with chest illness living in a damp caravan'

'A top floor flat with a single mother, who was unwell, with poor safety of windows and an active toddler'

These are just a few examples from Poverty and child health: views from the frontline, a national report in May 2017¹.

Poverty affects 30% of children and COVID-19 has widened inequalities for many children². Pre-COVID estimates suggest poor housing affects around 3.6 million children and is a significant cost to the NHS³. Poor home conditions are the 9th most frequent modifiable factor affecting child deaths⁴. Housing can have a detrimental impact on health in three main ways: unhealthy homes, overcrowded homes, or unstable (precarious) homes⁵.

For children and young people



Underlying health issues can in turn raise the risk of being homeless or living in precarious housing

Homes for children and families

References

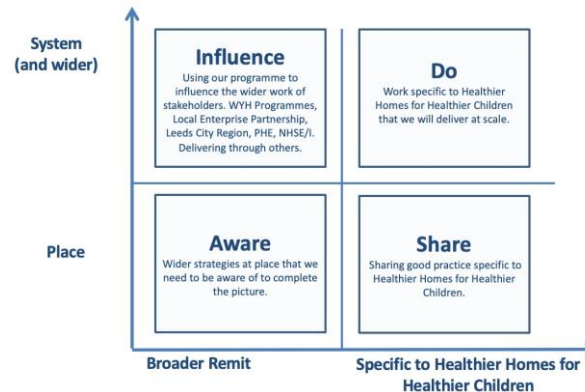
1. Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (2017). [Poverty and child health – views from the frontline.](#)

We are developing a strategy that considers how the West Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership can influence systems to promote children's health through healthier homes.

The Partnership uses 3 system tests for how we can add value through system working:

- To achieve a critical mass beyond local population level to achieve the best outcomes;
- To share best practice and reduce variation; and
- To achieve better outcomes for people overall by tackling 'wicked issues' (i.e., complex, intractable problems).

We have conducted a literature review, looked at local data, and are in the process of undertaking stakeholder consultation using a prioritisation framework:



This will inform system priorities going forwards.

2. Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health. (2020). [State of Child Health in the UK.](#)

3. National Children's Bureau. (2016). [Housing and the Health of Young Children.](#)

As part of this work we are:

- updating the [mecclink resources](#) on housing and health so that partners across their system have access to accurate contact details for housing support
- [fuel poverty leaflet relevant for children](#)
- Advertising project opportunities for [Health Equity Fellows](#) related to this work

Please share these resources widely with your partners!

Fuel poverty

Living in a cold and damp home increases the risk of breathing problems in children such as asthma and bronchitis



Health Equity Fellowship

West Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership

This work is cross-cutting a range of programme areas within the West Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership, including

- A major theme within a needs assessment for children and young people in West Yorkshire
- An additional priority area within the Housing and Health, Improving Population Health Programme
- Being embedded in an 8 year strategy to develop a trauma-informed system across West Yorkshire that includes adverse childhood experiences
- Links with work on Winter Warmth and Fuel Poverty to support the urgent needs of low income families this winter across West Yorkshire

If you are able to help us work towards Healthier Homes for Healthier Children in West Yorkshire, or would like to find out more about his work, please get in contact with claire.gilbert7@nhs.net, we'd love to hear from you

4. National Child Mortality Database (2021). [Second Annual Report.](#)
5. Public Health England (2017). [Improving health through the home.](#)

