

Period Poverty in Trafford Brief

Background

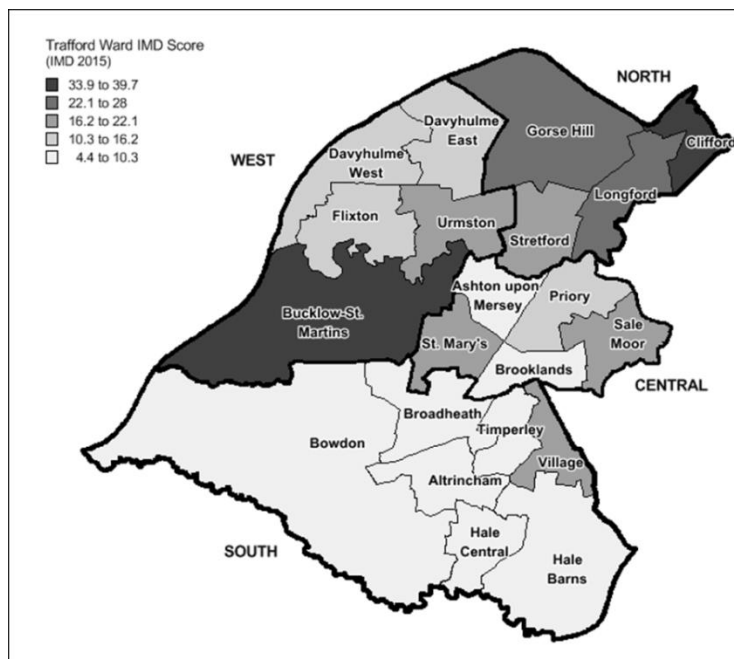
Period poverty has come more into light over the course of recent years, particularly since the release of data from Plan International UK, based on a survey which they held in August 2017.² The survey was taken a representative weighted sample of 1000 girls aged 14 to 21 in the UK, stated that one in ten girls were unable to afford sanitary wear. If this were mapped onto 14 to 21 year olds in Trafford based on Mid-2017 Population estimates³, this would impact approximately 950 girls – possibly more if those who started their periods before the age of 14 were included.

The impact of period poverty can also be very negative, as found in another survey of 1000 women⁵, of which 500 were personally affected by period poverty. The main impacts were discovered to be upon mental health, the ability to socialise, and on education. For example, it was found that of those impacted by period poverty out of the survey's respondents, they were less likely to complete their GCSEs, or go on to further education (such as A Levels).

As defined by the Department for Education, period poverty is '*the suggestion that some economically disadvantaged girls are unable to attend school during their periods as they cannot afford sanitary products*'.¹ From this definition, it can be inferred that those living in the most deprived areas of Trafford are more likely to be impacted by period poverty than those in the least deprived areas.

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Looking at a map indicating the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD 2015) scores of wards in Trafford where a higher score means the area is more deprived, this would imply that girls and women living in the West area of Bucklow-St. Martin's and the North area of Clifford are much more likely to be impacted than, for example, girls in the South area of Bowdon or Central area of Ashton Upon Mersey.



Examples of best practice

Scotland is the first government to implement a scheme to aid in tackling period poverty amongst female students.⁴ The scheme costs £5.2 million, and involves the provision of free sanitary products for students and pupils in any Scottish school or university – and with £500,000 being used by the charity FareShare to distribute sanitary products to an estimated 18,800 people.

Recommendations

From the pilot scheme in Scotland, Trafford could build a similar scheme for dealing with period poverty. A survey could be sent to places such as schools around the borough, to scope out what the current provision for sanitary products is and to identify where people are less likely to be able to afford sanitary products, before considering how would be appropriate to assist in providing such products.

References

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2. Plan International UK, (20 December 2017), '*Plan International UK's research on period poverty and stigma*', <https://plan-uk.org/media-centre/plan-international-uks-research-on-period-poverty-and-stigma>
3. Office for National Statistics, (28 June 2018), '*Analysis of Population Estimates Tool*', <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/datasets/analysisofpopulationestimatestool>
4. Scottish Government News, (24 August 2018), '*Students to get free access to sanitary products*', <https://news.gov.scot/news/students-to-get-free-access-to-sanitary-products>
5. Emma Elsworth, The Independent (18 July 2018), '*Women who experience period poverty more likely to suffer anxiety or depression, study claims*', <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/health/period-poverty-anxiety-depression-study-women-mental-health-sanitary-products-a8452581.html>

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