

Challenges to inclusive and accessible education in Europe

Taken from Eurochild's 2023
report on children in need
across Europe - *Children's
Rights: Political will or won't?*



Eurochild
Putting children at
the heart of Europe

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Introduction

On the 20th of November - World Children's Day - Eurochild released its latest report on children in need titled **Children's rights: political will or won't? Eurochild 2023 report on children in need across Europe**. The report gathered information from 38 Eurochild members in civil society across 26 European countries.¹ The report:

- **Provides an insight into the lived realities for children and families growing up in poverty or social exclusion in our region**, with Eurochild members identifying key challenges at country-level for the fulfilment of children's rights;
- **Assesses the Child Guarantee National Action Plans** in these countries, whether they align with the needs identified, and the engagement of Eurochild members and children's engagement in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the plans;
- Gauges the **extent to which the European Semester 2023 country reports are aligned to children's needs and experiences**;
- Overviews the **priorities of countries in accession regarding the most pressing issues for children**, and their involvement in EU-funded projects.

The report issues seven policy recommendations for national and EU decision-makers in order to prioritise children and the fulfilment of their rights:

1. Put children's rights at the heart of the political agenda
2. Invest in efficient data collection
3. Protect and support vulnerable children
4. Invest in prevention
5. Promote children's well-being online and offline
6. Put children's rights at the core of the European Semester Cycle
7. Recognise children as agents of change in their own right

You can access the [full report here](#).

This sub-report summarises the challenges and developments related to children's right to access education as identified by Eurochild members in 2023.

¹ These 26 countries are: Albania (AL), Belgium (BE), Bulgaria (BG), Croatia (HR), Cyprus (CY), Denmark (DK), England (UK-Eng), Finland (FI), Germany (DE), Greece (EL), Hungary (HU), Ireland (IE), Latvia (LV), Lithuania (LT), Malta (MT), Netherlands (NL), Northern Ireland (UK-NI), Portugal (PT), Romania (RO), Serbia (RS), Slovenia (SI), Spain (ES), Sweden (SE), Türkiye (TU), Ukraine (UA), and Wales (UK-W).

Challenges and developments for children’s right to education across Europe in 2023

As part of our investigation into the situation for children in need across Europe in 2023, Eurochild invited its members to provide data and analysis on different areas in relation to children’s rights, including children’s right to education.²

It is important to note that the information shared here is drawn from Eurochild members’ analysis of children’s rights in their respective countries, and may not capture all concerns and developments in education systems as they relate to children. However, the insights do offer a child-rights perspective on the key challenges in education as faced by children in 19 countries.

The challenges and developments identified in 19 countries primarily revolve around:

1. **Ensuring equitable access to quality education for children regardless of their background.** Children in poverty, with emphasis on addressing the hidden costs and inequalities in education for families (BE/BG/CY/DE/ES/LT/MT/RO/PT/SE/SI/UK-W); children with disabilities (BE/ES/LV/LT/MT); children in migration including child refugees (BE/BG/CY/EL/ES/MT/NL/RO/SE/SI); and children with a Roma or Traveller background (EL/IE/SI) were the most highlighted groups at risk.
2. **Supporting children’s additional needs as they navigate education,** including providing psychosocial support and supporting children’s mental health (BG/CY/ES/MT/SE/SI/TU/UK-W); accessing extra-curricular activities (LT/SE/SI); protection from violence and bullying on- and offline (LV/UA); and discussing climate change and environmental impacts within school settings (RO/SI/UK-W).
3. **Reforming how education systems ensure children’s access to education,** including curriculum changes to meet children’s needs (CY/ES/MT/SI/UK-W); overcoming barriers around language (CY/RO/SI); ensuring access to digital tools (AL/SI); early school leaving (ES/PT/SE/SI); and addressing staffing shortages (DE/LT/PT).

In Eurochild’s recently published report on child poverty: ***Poverty takes away the right to childhood: Children’s perceptions of poverty in 4 EU Member States***, children from four EU countries (BG, EE, HR, MT) in National Eurochild Forums shared their voices on poverty and how it affects the lives of children, including in school settings. The most common response was that **poverty can make children targets of bullying and social exclusion in their school lives.**

The detrimental impact of poverty on the health, education and overall development and well-being of children cannot be overstated. Too often for children and families at risk of poverty or social exclusion, the hidden costs of education are unaffordable. Examples of hidden costs include purchasing school supplies, attending compulsory extracurricular activities, or transportation to and from school.

² As set out in the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child \(1989\) under Article 28](#).

Country-level challenges and developments for children's right to education in 2023

This section details the challenges and developments around children's access to education as identified by Eurochild members across 19 countries in Europe.

1. Albania³

Appropriate housing and free education and support for every child is needed. For Child Rights Centre Albania, an essential service missing in the *National Agenda for the Rights of the Child 2021-2026* is the provision of free meals in educational institutions to all children as well as a functioning child support scheme. A significant step forward could also be achieved by offering free tablets to children starting school for the first time. That way, access to online education would be significantly eased. The national budget measures for education needs to be increased to help.

2. Belgium⁴

The main services needed to support children most in need in Belgium are affordable and quality housing and inclusive education, since children growing up in poverty and children with a migration background are overrepresented in special education.

A promising project in Belgium supporting, among other things, children's access to education is the *ZoJong! Project*. It is an organisation for and by young informal caregivers that won a sustainability award, and provides support to young caregivers through awareness campaigns, workshops in secondary education, packages for preschool education, activities for young informal caregivers and training/lectures for professionals and teachers.

The European Semester 2023 Country report does highlight the high cost of education and its social inequality but gives very little attention to early childhood.

3. Bulgaria⁵

Bulgaria has the largest share of unaccompanied minors who apply for asylum in the Member States of the European Union. Specifically, since the beginning of the war in Ukraine, nearly 150,000 Ukrainian refugees have passed through Bulgaria; the percentage of children among them is consistently around 40%. Less than 10% of those children (approximately 2,200 children) are enrolled in the Bulgarian education system.

Eurochild members underline that all refugee children's access to education and social services must go beyond policy commitments. However, families face several practical obstacles to access education, such as language barriers and low administrative and financial capacity of service providers in enrolling, attending and support for children.

³ Information provided by [Child Rights Centre Albania](#).

⁴ Information provided by [A little Lining Comes](#), [ONE](#) and the [Flemish Child Rights Coalition](#).

⁵ Information provided by [Hope and Homes for Children – Bulgaria](#), [Know-how Centre for Alternative Care for Children - New Bulgarian University](#), and [National Network for Children](#).

Eurochild members recommend a mapping on children’s mental health needs and the provision of support by schools to help pupils cope with the demands of the education system.

Lastly, concerning the importance of investing in children, Eurochild members welcomed the inclusion of the amendment of the Preschool and School Education Act, to make pre-school education mandatory from the age of four.

In the European Semester 2023 Country Specific Recommendations for Bulgaria, the European Commission made social recommendations to allocate higher spending on social, health and educational policy, as well as higher spending on public investment. These are necessary factors to support children’s development. However, to ensure that all children reach their potential, a more targeted approach for children in disadvantage is necessary.

4. Cyprus⁶

PCCPWC recommends the government in Cyprus, especially the Ministry of Education, to involve a significant number of children more regularly in decision-making instead of working with only a small group of organised students, as is often the case.

Many children with a migrant background live in adverse conditions and are deprived of schooling, and their development needs are unmet. PCCPWC recommends that the migration policy in Cyprus is nondiscriminative and recognises the rights of all children.

Children with a migrant background are often placed in mainstream schooling before obtaining adequate language skills or some of them are not even enrolled in any educational programme. The government of Cyprus must ensure that all children have access to an inclusive education. Children with a migrant background should be regularly assessed for academic purposes, their living conditions, mental health, family relationships, and any other needs.

PCCPWC agree with the European Semester 2023 Country Report for Cyprus that there are huge disparities based on children’s socioeconomic status, and in their opinion, this has never been given adequate attention.

To help tackle child poverty and social exclusion, PCCPWC recommend that the government of Cyprus should prioritise:

- Continuous assessment and revisiting of education, health (including prevention) and social protection policies for children with a migrant background.
- Better coordination across the Ministries involved (Education, Health, Social Welfare).
- Personalised schemes for children with disabilities and/or requiring learning support.

Regarding the education system as a whole, there is an emphasis on education performance rather than an education experience for children. PCCPWC acknowledge that the PISA results (2018) for Cyprus are not good, and they believe there is a need for a radical change in the education system, which was promised by the government but has yet to be carried out. PCCPWC states that the changes made to the curricula for 2023-2024, such as the examinations system reform, are not enough. There needs to be a radical rethinking of what the people of Cyprus expect from the system, a radical change in teaching and examining methods and continuous teacher training to implement the changes.

⁶ Information provided by [the Pancyprian Coordinating Committee for the Protection and Welfare of Children](#).

5. Germany⁷

A strong social infrastructure consisting of high-quality and easily accessible institutions is needed to mainly support poor children and their families in the country. Instead of being strengthened, this infrastructure is increasingly at risk due to rising costs and often shrinking communal budgets.

A strong social infrastructure also includes well-trained professionals, so the German government must increase its efforts to fill the current personnel gaps in daycare, schools, youth and social work and other relevant fields.

6. Greece⁸

As stated in the 2022 UN Committee on the Rights of the Child's concluding observations report, public authorities are not treating all children with a migrant background equally – children from Afghanistan and Syria do not receive the same support and services as children from Ukraine.

While refugee children should have access to education regardless of their asylum claims, issues exist in their enrolment on the islands, when children are not registered, or their asylum request has been rejected. Practical barriers exist around the lack of transport to and from schools from campsites, either closed or not, where children are housed. Refugee centres in Greece are mostly based in remote areas.

While primary and secondary education is compulsory in Greece, there are children who face difficulties in accessing it. The rates of school attendance for Roma children are significantly lower than the national average. Only 32% of Roma children are enrolled in pre-school. There is also a distinction between Roma girls, as they are pulled out of the school system sooner than male students. In this regard, the Government should align with the *2020-2030 EU Roma Strategic Framework* to ensure better educational outcomes for Roma students. To ensure all children have access also to online education the measures should be taken for children with disabilities, of minority status, with language barriers, or weak digital connectivity.

7. Ireland⁹

In Ireland, school completion rates for Irish Travellers are significantly lower than the general population, and analysis of census data suggests Travellers benefitted less from overall improvements in educational levels since the 1960s. Traveller and Roma children are significantly less likely to attend early years services, with 17% of services reporting having one Traveller child attending their service, and only 7% reporting a Roma child in their service.

In the 2023 European Semester Country Report for Ireland, there is no substantial consideration of educational disadvantage.

⁷ Information provided by [Child and Youth Welfare Organisation](#), [National Coalition Germany – Network for the Implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#).

⁸ Information provided by [The Smile of the Child](#), [Network for Children's Rights](#), and [ALMA](#).

⁹ Information provided by the [Children's Rights Alliance Ireland](#).

8. Latvia¹⁰

Developing an inclusive education system is a key issue in Latvia. Currently, children with special needs and disabilities are not provided with the necessary support in schools. Often, a teacher must cope alone with a class of 30 children, where some have behavioural problems, and some have learning disabilities. As a result, schools have very high levels of bullying, both by teachers and between children.

In addition, Latvia has the highest school bullying rates among both OECD and EU countries.

9. Lithuania¹¹

According to VŠĮ Auto Moto group, the groups of children most in need in Lithuania are the children at risk of poverty and social exclusion, including those who do not access education due to their family situation.

The VŠĮ Auto Moto group advocates for children and adults with a disability to live a fulfilling life, socialise, and pursue and fulfil their dreams. Children with disabilities living in Lithuania do not often get opportunities to experience informal education, and therefore their rights are not being respected. Lithuania should take action to fully integrate children with special needs inclusively and safely into mainstream schools, but without compromising the rights of all other children and teachers.

There is also a shortage of teachers, including those who provide sports and physical activities. The Lithuanian government should prioritise the recruitment of more teachers and increase teaching salaries and encourage others to offer physical activities to support the development and well-being of children.

The Child Guarantee National Action Plan (NAP) for Lithuania includes a range of key services that would be key to lifting children out of poverty and social exclusion in Lithuania. Relating to education, these include support for purchasing school supplies, additional benefits for children in general education, and organising afterschool activities, also for Roma children and children in migration.

VŠĮ Auto Moto group would like to see a focus on children's informal education and out-of-school activities, especially for those children who have fewer opportunities and are most vulnerable.

The monitoring framework for the NAP includes indicators on the number of children with special educational needs, the level of reading ability, and the number of children receiving preschool education, which are relevant for monitoring the implementation of the NAP.

Regarding the European Semester 2023, inequalities in school education remain a key challenge observed by the Country Report for Lithuania. It further explains that academic performance is closely related to socio-economic background, where learners from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to be attending the same schools. Grouping learners by ability is also a common practice in lower secondary schools, but one that risks increasing the performance gap between learners from disadvantaged and more affluent backgrounds. Another issue is the overcrowding of public schools in the bigger cities.

¹⁰ Information provided by [Association Latvian Child Welfare Network](#).

¹¹ Information provided by [VŠĮ Auto Moto group](#).

The country analysis further summarises that Lithuania would benefit from tackling teacher shortages, increasing the relevance of higher education to the needs of employers, and promoting the skills needed for the green transition.

10. Malta¹²

The Malta Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society (MFWS) identify that stateless children in Malta are deprived of access to services, including healthcare and education. There is no procedure for identifying and determining statelessness in Malta.

Several recommendations to help tackle child poverty and social exclusion for the government of Malta directly relate to children's access to education:

- An adequate living wage for children and families to have a quality of life, necessary nutrition, and effective and accessible access to education, sport, and culture.
- Ensuring that all children should be treated equally and equitably, whoever they are and no matter where they are from.
- More investment in children's psychosocial services in schools.
- A review of the educational system, whereby all abilities are acknowledged, believed in, and appreciated by providing a more person-centred approach to education.

In the 2023 European Semester Country Report, the education data in Malta does not reflect reality. MFWS states a gap exists between how things are on paper and in practice.

As it is evident by the low performance in MATSEC examinations, the education system has flaws which hinder children's performances. The system needs to be inclusive and, as studies by MFWS show, education is still academically oriented and exam-based rather than focused on different skills and/or diversity.

11. Netherlands¹³

The crisis in the Dutch asylum reception is hitting children the hardest, with harrowing living conditions in emergency shelters and problems with access to care. Consequentially, some children do not go to school for months. Children often lack access to education because they do not possess a residence permit.

The Dutch NGO Coalition on Children's Rights recommends that the government develops a national asylum reception programme in which children's rights, such as the right to care and education, are embedded based on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

¹² Information provided by [The Malta Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society](#).

¹³ Information provided by [Dutch NGO Coalition on Children's Rights](#) and [Utrecht University, Strategic Theme 'Dynamics of Youth'](#).

12. Portugal¹⁴

Portugal should take action to reduce inequalities in access to basic services, including improving the timely access to high quality services for all, particularly to children.

Eurochild members in Portugal recommend the Portuguese government considers the need for education alternative curriculums for those children and young people who have dropped out of school at an early age.

In the 2023 European Semester Country Report for Portugal, the main challenges of the education system are identified, which include the quality and equity of education, (low) participation in early childhood education, an ageing teacher population, and teacher shortages. However, solutions are only presented as plans and intentions. For instance, the intention to expand the preschool network aimed to provide free access to all 3-year-olds is dependent on funding, or new legislation to recruit teachers.

The impact of the pandemic on children is briefly mentioned in relation to education, acknowledging potential increased inequalities among students.

13. Romania¹⁵

Around 7,300 children from Ukraine are currently enrolled in the Romanian educational system, and for most of these children, the main challenge to access education is the language barrier.

Children from families in deprived situations face challenges in having their basic needs covered due to the rising cost of living and high rates of inflation. These children are at risk of school abandonment, especially those living in rural areas, where they may start contributing to the family income by engaging in agricultural work. Children living in informal settlements do not have equal access to health services and education. The support packages provided by the government are effective to a certain degree, but they do not remove the vulnerable situation; they only address its effects. While there are local initiatives and programmes for this category, there is no strategy or national plan to address their needs.

Regarding climate change, there are campaigns in schools, often conducted in classes focused on ecology and environmental protection, addressing climate change and its effects. However, overall, children believe that Romania is less responsible in this area than many Western countries.

14. Slovenia¹⁶

In Slovenia the government is currently implementing its *Programme for Children 2020-2025*, aiming at ensuring equal opportunities for all children. The programme focuses on various aspects, including the family environment, housing deprivation, children's health, inclusive preschool and school education, culture, cultural arts education, the most vulnerable groups of children, and preventing the intergenerational transmission of poverty.

¹⁴ Information provided by Sergio Costa Araujo (Individual member), [Nossa Senhora do Bom Sucesso Foundation](#), and [Instituto de Apoio à Criança](#).

¹⁵ Information provided by [Hope and Homes for Children – Romania](#).

¹⁶ Information provided by [Slovenian Association of Friends of Youth](#).

An ongoing education reform in Slovenia prioritises digitalisation as its main ambition. However, it is suggested that emotional and social education should also be considered when revising the school curricula.

Efforts have been made since 2017 to establish adequate accommodation facilities and care arrangements for unaccompanied children, but with limited success. Recommendations include improving the guardianship system, strengthening foster care for unaccompanied and separated children with a migrant background, and providing holistic support in schools. Addressing the language barrier, exacerbated by shortages of skills and personnel to teach Slovenian as a foreign language, is crucial for better educational outcomes.

To address existing gaps in child poverty, proposals include modernising the social security system, reducing kindergarten fees, and removing hidden costs in primary education. Special attention is urged for students from the Roma community to prevent premature school dropout.

In the 2023 European Semester Country Report, the analysis of Early Childhood Education and Care in Slovenia is comprehensive, but there are noted shortcomings in infrastructure, such as playgrounds and community-based centres for extra-curricular activities in many cities.

The Country Report acknowledges the overall positive performance of the education system but highlights a significant shortage of teachers at all levels. Recommendations support increasing language support for children with a migrant background.

A promising aspect is the commitment to green and digital transformations in education, aiming to train a substantial portion of the teaching population in digital and green skills, as well as skills for environmental sustainability and financial literacy. Ongoing school and health reforms are emphasised to ensure that children's rights are respected in proposed policies.

15. Spain¹⁷

Despite an alarming increase in the child population affected by mental health problems, the necessary support measures are still not being established. The specialty of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology should be created, and all schools should have a psychologist as well as invest in awareness raising programmes.

The Spanish Child Guarantee National Action Plan (NAP) explains the challenges that Spain faces in relation to access to education, health, and adequate housing. The document also presents recommendations aimed at safeguarding the rights of children, particularly those residing in vulnerable situations.

The 2023 European Semester Country Report does not provide much information on education in Spain. Although programmes such as the *Programme for Educational Guidance, Advancement, and Enrichment* (PROA+) has led to greater investment in education, there is still little investment in infrastructures, scholarships and grants, school services, training, or programmes to improve and support the quality of education.

With regard to early school leaving, the early school dropout rate in Spain in 2022 stood at 13.9%, still far from the 9.7% average rate in the EU. Another important educational issue in Spain is segregation, which affects the quality, equity, and accessibility of education. The lack of free and accessible places for 0-3 years, the lack of inclusive education for children with developmental

¹⁷ Information provided by [Plataforma de Infancia](#) and [FEDAIA](#).

disorders, or the administrative obstacles that some children face to attend school, especially migrant children, are other educational challenges that Spain must face.

The recommendations included in the Country Report do not mention the reforms that Spain needs to have a clear child-rights focus. For example, in the report, education is considered only to achieve better qualifications in the labour market, not as a right of children and adolescents.

16. Sweden¹⁸

In August 2023, the Swedish government announced that they would investigate the possibilities for staff in schools, social services, and healthcare settings to inform the police if they believe they are working with someone in the country illegally. If such a practice is implemented, Barnens rätt i samhället (BRIS) is very concerned that this will have a negative impact on individuals' trust in state authorities and may negatively affect children's rights to access education and health care.

Disinformation about social services is currently being actively debated in Sweden.

More inclusive schools that provide good quality education for all children are identified among the key services needed to support children growing up in poverty in Sweden. Among the children identified as most in need in Sweden's Child Guarantee National Action Plan (NAP), are young people not in employment, education, or training – 1,800 young people, aged 15-19.

The NAP also includes key services on education, healthcare, including mental health and dental care, school-based leisure facilities, housing, and alternative care, which would be key to lifting children out of poverty and social exclusion in Sweden.

However, BRIS identified several priorities that were not included in 2023 European Semester Country Report or the Country Specific Recommendations. The current developments within the Swedish school system are concerning. BRIS is worried that disadvantaged groups are being marginalised - equal access to high quality education within the education system is crucial and

This priority, among others, was included in the 2023 UN Committee on the Rights of the Child Concluding Observations on the combined sixth and seventh periodic reports of Sweden.

17. Türkiye¹⁹

Mental health support for children in schools appears to be lacking in Türkiye. This is especially important given the widespread effect that digital products have on children's and teenagers' mental health. Teachers often struggle to identify and intervene when children are at risk.

Although schools have counsellors (known as PDR teachers - Psikolojik Danışmanlık ve Rehberlik), they may be unable to provide comprehensive assistance to children and families, due to schools and community systems lacking the necessary tools and support structures.

Hayat Sende strongly recommends the introduction of social workers within schools. Their holistic approach and understanding of children's support needs can help prevent and mitigate risks more effectively.

¹⁸ Information provided by Barnens rätt i samhället (Children's Rights in Society).

¹⁹ Information provided by Hayat Sende Youth Academy Association.

As Türkiye is a country in the EU accession process, Eurochild and Hayat Sende contributed to the [2023 consultation on the Enlargement Package](#), to provide a child-rights perspective and insights on the situation for children in need. One of the five policy priorities recommended is to expand the social work profession to address emerging needs of children such as abuse and bullying, and develop the prevention programmes and counseling services for children at risk.

18. Ukraine²⁰

The Ministry of Education, with its Directorate for the Preschool, School, Out-Of-School, and Inclusive Education – led by Director General Eresko Oleh, holds key responsibilities related to ensuring children’s right to education.

The Ombudsman for Education, Serhiy Horbachov, assigned by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, ensures rights in education and works with appeals from pupils/students, their parents, and educators.

Research on the [sexual abuse of children and the sexual exploitation of children on the Internet in Ukraine](#) (2020 – see slide 26) indicates that 95% of school-aged children have access to the internet at home. The same research reveals that over one year, 14.4% of children in Ukraine were asked about their intimate body parts online, 11% received intimate pictures, 8% were asked to send their intimate photos, 3.4% were asked to touch themselves sexually in front of a web camera, and 1% had intimate meetings offline with people they had met online.

Penalties related to child abuse online in Ukraine include an Administrative Code that ensures a penalty for bullying within educational settings, which considers bullying between school participants, including online bullying, student-student bullying, student-teacher bullying.

Since the full-scale war, it is fair to say that every child has been impacted by the war in Ukraine. The depth of impact and the scope of rights violated include but are not limited to rights to life, health, education, family, identity, information, and participation. Each child’s experience is different, but no child has escaped the consequences of war.

here must be clear penalties for rights violations on children, for example children not being able to go to school because of war and conflict, and a clear mechanism for identifying those responsible and setting penalties.

According to Ms. Klykova, to advance children’s rights as part of the EU accession process, Ukraine should prioritise, among several recommendations, ensuring a National Strategy for Children’s Rights (supported by a relevant action plan) and ensuring all government programmes fulfil children’s rights.

19. Wales²¹

The [Wales Safeguarding Procedures](#) support evidence-based and consistent safeguarding practices across agencies and across Wales. This includes guidance on keeping children safe in [education and schools](#).

²⁰ Information provided by Ms. Polina Klykova, founder of [Children’s Rights Info](#), children’s rights activist, and defender (Individual member).

²¹ Information provided by [Children in Wales](#).

The Young Wales's Report to the UN (2023) identifies climate changes as a key priority with the several recommendations, related to education. The curriculum should embed lessons, resources, and more campaigns on climate change to raise awareness of the reality now, what is being done, and what can be done with practical advice on how children and young people can make a difference.

Mental health is a significant issue among children in Wales, exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis. The Children in Wales publication "State of Children's Rights in Wales" outlines the situation for children regarding mental health and provides recommendations for the Welsh government, including the need to publish statutory guidance to enable school staff to deliver the mental health duty as part of the new curriculum.

The services needed to tackle child poverty include free school meals, as the number of families accessing food banks is growing. Children in Wales call on the Welsh government to prioritise automatic enrolment and extension of free school meals across all ages. Additionally, implementation of statutory school uniforms and other school cost guidance should be prioritised.

A recent example of an intervention demonstrating good practice, where children, families, and communities have been supported, and poverty has been overcome or mitigated against, is the Tackling the Impact of Poverty on Education Programme. This initiative works across Wales with schools to help them identify and implement no- and low-cost solutions to tackling child poverty.

The Price of Pupil Poverty guide sets out the steps schools can take, and the project offers bespoke advice and support, whole-school training for all staff, and guidance for schools to develop their own action plans.

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