

Swindon Affordable Schools Network

Checklist for Secondary Schools

May 2024

School name: Type here

Completed by: Type here

Thank you to B&NES Council Public Health & Prevention Team for sharing their Affordable Schools Audit Tool to make this checklist possible.

Review date: Type here

Date completed: Type here

# Why is making school affordable for all important?

In Swindon, **27.5% of** those with young people under 18 in their household were living in poverty in 2023.

The wards with the highest proportion of relative low income families, with children aged 0-15 include:

* Penhill and Upper Stratton: **33%**
* Walcot and Park North: **25%**
* Gorse Hill and Pinehurst: **22%**
* Liden, Eldene and Park South: **22%**
* Rodbourne Cheney**: 20%**

However, all wards in Swindon contain relative low-income families, with children aged 0-15 and so this affects all schools in Swindon.

School is an environment where your family income should be irrelevant. We know that a child’s attainment is likely to be lower if they are living in poverty, but this can be counteracted by positive actions from schools.

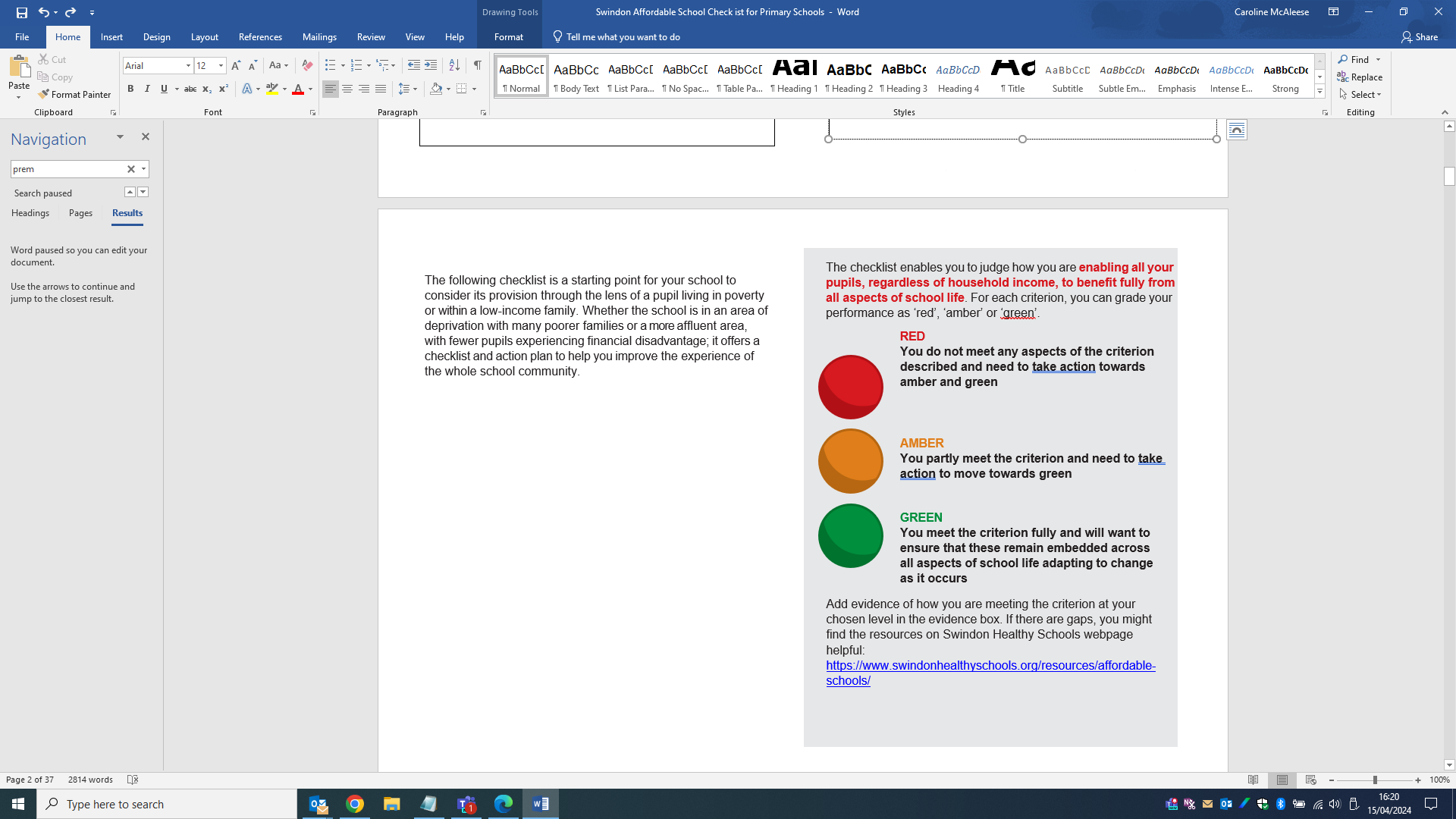
The impact of growing up in poverty on a child’s education and development has long been recognised. We know that poverty is a strong predictor of educational attainment. On average, pupils eligible for free school meals achieve lower GCSE attainment than other pupils. This is based on achieving a “standard pass” in English and maths GCSE. Government statistics show that in 2022, **47%** of pupils eligible for FSM achieved a standard pass in both English and Maths GCSE compared to **75%** of pupils not eligible.

Child Poverty Action Group estimate that in 2021-2022:

* **4.2 million** children were living in poverty in the UK. This is 29% of UK children.
* **47%** of children in Asian and British Asian families, **53%** of children in Black/ African/ Caribbean and Black British families, and **25%** of children in White families were living in poverty
* **44%** of children in lone parents families were living in poverty
* **42%** of children in families with 3 or more children were in poverty, up from 36% a decade earlier.
* **36%** of children living in families where someone has a disability were living in poverty

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The following checklist is a starting point for your school to consider its provision through the lens of a pupil living in poverty or within a low-income family. Whether the school is in an area of deprivation with many poorer families or a more affluent area, with fewer pupils experiencing financial disadvantage; it offers a checklist and action plan to help you improve the experience of the whole school community.



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| **Best practice / green level What we do now** | |
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| **1.1** A named member of the senior leadership team supported by the school’s governing body, has overall responsibility for ensuring the needs of pupils living in poverty are fully met.  **RAG rate**  **for our school**  Type here | Type here |
| **1.2** All policies and practice are regularly reviewed through the lens of a pupil living in poverty including but not exclusively.  **RAG rate**  **for our school**  Type here | Type here |

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| **1.2.1 Uniform & equipment policy:** Required uniform and equipment items are affordable, durable and available from a range of retail outlets.  No pupil is punished or made to feel inferior because they cannot afford uniform items or equipment.  School adheres to: [Statutory guidance: *Cost of School*](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cost-of-school-uniforms/cost-of-school-uniforms)[*Uniforms*](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cost-of-school-uniforms/cost-of-school-uniforms)  **RAG rate**  **for our school**  Type here | Type here |
| **1.2.2 Behaviour policy:** Disciplinary responses to behavioural concerns are informed by an understanding of poverty and how it can affect tiredness, thirst, hunger, stress, irritability, bullying,  mental wellbeing and household responsibilities that may legitimately compete with those of school.  **RAG rate**  **for our school**  Type here | Type here |

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| **1.2.3 Homework policy:** Homework, wherever possible, is designed to require no financial outlay and reasons for not completing homework are assessed through the lens of poverty including digital poverty.  **RAG rate**  **for our school**  Type here | Type here |
| **1.2.4 Attendance policy:** Disciplinary responses to poor attendance and punctuality are informed by an understanding of poverty and how it can affect tiredness, thirst, hunger, stress, irritability, bullying, mental wellbeing and household responsibilities that may legitimately compete with those of school.  **RAG rate**  **for our school**  Type here | Type here |

# Affordable School Programme criterion

## 1. Leadership and management are visibly committed to meeting the needs of pupils living in poverty

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| **1.2.5 Anti-bullying policy:** Recognises that signs of poverty are a common trigger for bullying and specifically addresses this.  **RAG rate**  **for our school**  Type here | Type here |
| **1.2.6 School trips and extracurricular policy:** Extracurricular activities are equally available to all pupils and choices to engage are not limited by cost.  **RAG rate**  **for our school**  Type here | Type here |

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| **1.2.7 Mental health and wellbeing policy:** A whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing is adopted. This will recognise the link between higher rates of poor physical and mental health amongst people living in low-income households.  **RAG rate**  **for our school**  Type here | Type here |

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| **1.3 School Food:** The school continues to meet nutritional standards as set out in the [School Food Standards](https://www.gov.uk/school-meals-food-standards) and meets the healthy eating criterion within the [Swindon Healthy Schools Awards checklist](https://www.swindonhealthyschools.org/swindon-healthy-schools/newswindinhealthyschoolsawards/).  Catering contracts are reviewed regularly to provide more substantial and better-quality meals for all children.  All children are encouraged to take advantage of universal free school meals and free fruit and vegetable schemes at Key Stage 1.  **RAG rate**  **for our school**  Type here | Type here |
| **1.4** Whole school guidance on what support is available for pupils experiencing poverty is available to the school community including staff, pupils, parents/ carers and relevant school visitors.  **RAG rate**  **for our school**  Type here | Type here |

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| **1.5** Subject coordinators take overall responsibility for ensuring the needs of pupils living in poverty are fully met within the curriculum areas that they lead on. This will include taking into account digital poverty.  **RAG rate**  **for our school**  Type here | Type here |
| **Actions required to move forward**  Consider what you want to improve, by when, who will lead it and how you will measure success | |
| Type here | |
| **Sources of information and support** Swindon Healthy Schools Resources:[www.swindonhealthyschools.org/resources/affordable-schools/](http://www.swindonhealthyschools.org/resources/affordable-schools/)  Swindon Borough Council Free School Meals: [www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20032/schools\_and\_education/408/free\_school\_meals](http://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20032/schools_and_education/408/free_school_meals) | |

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| **2.1** The cost of full participation in the school day/year for all year groups is mapped and calculated with pinch points highlighted for those pupils and families living in poverty.  **RAG rate**  **for our school**  Type here | Type here |
| **2.2** The school ensures that fundamental resources and equipment needed are easily accessible, free, or affordable to pupils living in poverty without causing embarrassment and stigma: Including but not exclusively:   * Stationary * PE and games uniforms, boots/ trainers/ swim wear and towels and other related equipment. * Sanitary items for girls and young women who cannot afford them. * Materials and resources required for design and technology and other subjects. * Study/revision guides, books, online subscriptions etc. which are recommended but not compulsory for pupils | Type here |

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| **2.2 continued**   * Digital resources/requirements for pupils experiencing digital poverty.   **RAG rate**  **for our school**  Type here | Type here |
| **2.3** Extra-curricular activities are planned through the lens of pupils living in poverty without causing embarrassment and stigma. This will ensure pupils can access all available activities and do not have to  make choices based on price and equipment needed. For example:   * Ensuring that every child has the opportunity to learn a musical instrument as stated in the [Government’s National Plan for Music](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-power-of-music-to-change-lives-a-national-plan-for-music-education) including by accessing DfE funded Music Hubs, engaging with external providers and by empowering students to come forward and communicate that they want to take part in something, so that any concerns about affordability are removed. * Non-uniform days are considered from the perspective of pupils living in poverty. * Free or affordable provision of sporting trips and equipment for sports/ dance clubs and inter school competitions. | Type here |

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| **2.3 continued**   * Sport/musical and other school tours are free or affordable. * Times of clubs and events do not preclude children living in poverty due to their transport arrangements   i.e. require them to be picked up by parents/carers or miss school transport. Where this is not possible other free or affordable arrangements are established.   * Where possible breakfast clubs are available and arrangements are in place to ensure affordable access to breakfast before school.   **RAG rate**  **for our school**  Type here | Type here |
| **2.4** The school advertises the cost of all trips and extracurricular activities at the start of the year and provides an appropriate payment schedule for all families.  **RAG rate**  **for our school**  Type here | Type here |

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| **2.4.1** Sensitive arrangements are put in place to provide free school meal packages on school day trips.  **RAG rate**  **for our school**  Type here | Type here |
| **2.4.2** Where applicable, language exchanges are planned through the lens of pupils living in poverty to ensure they are free or affordable when travelling abroad and arrangements are in place to make it possible for the foreign student to visit the UK.  **RAG rate**  **for our school**  Type here | Type here |
| **2.5** The school considers the costs for parents/carers to attend school-based events and arrangements are put in to place to support parents/ carers who might find this difficult. E.g., parent/teacher consultations, performances and fayres.  **RAG rate**  **for our school**  Type here | Type here |

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| **2.6** The school prominently advertises to all pupils where they can access computers and the internet in school or in the local community.  **RAG rate**  **for our school**  Type here | Type here |
| **2.7** The school has explored and implemented appropriate fund-raising options that can subsidise the cost of full participation in school life for pupils living in poverty.  **RAG rate**  **for our school**  Type here | Type here |

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| **Actions required to move forward**  Consider what you want to improve, by when, who will lead it and how you will measure success |
| Type here |
| Sources of information and support  Period product scheme for schools and colleges: Updated 7 September 2023 [www.gov.uk/government/publications/period-products-in-schools-and-colleges/period-product-scheme-for-schools-and-colleges-in-england#overview](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/period-products-in-schools-and-colleges/period-product-scheme-for-schools-and-colleges-in-england#overview)  Swindon Healthy Schools resources: [www.swindonhealthyschools.org/resources/affordable-schools/](http://www.swindonhealthyschools.org/resources/affordable-schools/)  National School Breakfast Club funding: [www.family-action.org.uk/what-we-do/children-families/breakfast/](http://www.family-action.org.uk/what-we-do/children-families/breakfast/) |

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| **3.1** Staff are aware of pupils who do not have adequate access to a quiet learning space and/ or computers and Wi-Fi at home and ensure that this is not detrimental to their ability to access the curriculum and homework.  **RAG rate**  **for our school**  Type here | Type here |
| **3.2** Classroom activities that require pupils to share about their home life are reviewed through the lens of a pupil living in poverty and action is taken to avoid embarrassment and stigma.  **RAG rate**  **for our school**  Type here | Type here |

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| **3.3** The school has evaluated GCSE/A-level take up and noted patterns in subjects that incur additional costs.  **RAG rate**  **for our school**  Type here | Type here |
| **3.4** The school offers a free homework club at times within the school day where pupils have free access to ICT and printing.  **RAG rate**  **for our school**  Type here | Type here |
| **3.5** Poverty awareness (including poverty within the UK) is taught through PSHE in an age-appropriate way. This curriculum highlights the diversity of home experiences and for those experiencing poverty they understand where to get help and that they are not alone.  **RAG rate**  **for our school**  Type here | Type here |
| **3.6** Personal finance and money management is taught as part of preparation for adulthood including how to access benefits and support services. E.g. Words that Count.  **RAG rate**  **for our school**  Type here | Type here |
| **Actions required to move forward**  Consider what you want to improve, by when, who will lead it and how you will measure success | |
| Type here | |
| **Sources of information and support** Swindon Healthy Schools resources: [www.swindonhealthyschools.org/resources/affordable-schools/](http://www.swindonhealthyschools.org/resources/affordable-schools/) Words that Count free financial workshops for secondary school pupils: [www.swindonhealthyschools.org/news/items/free-financial-workshops-for-secondary-school-pupils](http://www.swindonhealthyschools.org/news/items/free-financial-workshops-for-secondary-school-pupils) | |

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| **4.1** The school regularly consults with all pupils on their experiences of school life including asking if they feel stigmatised by any aspects of the school day due to their family’s circumstances and asking for suggestions as to how this can be improved.  **RAG rate**  **for our school**  Type here | Type here |
| **4.2** The school engages with local health needs and inequalities data and reviews results for those in receipt of free school meals, in single parent families, young carers, pupils with SEND and looked after children; and acts on these findings.  **RAG rate**  **for our school**  Type here | Type here |

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| **Actions required to move forward**  Consider what you want to improve, by when, who will lead it and how you will measure success |
| Type here |
| **Sources of information and support** Swindon Health Needs Analysis data: [www.swindonjsna.co.uk/health-needs-assessments2/](http://www.swindonjsna.co.uk/health-needs-assessments2/)  Swindon Healthy Schools resources: [www.swindonhealthyschools.org/resources/affordable-schools/](http://www.swindonhealthyschools.org/resources/affordable-schools/)  Swindon schools surveys: [www.swindonhealthyschools.org/schools/school-surveys/](https://www.swindonhealthyschools.org/schools/school-surveys/) |

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| **Best practice / green level What we do now** | |
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| **5.1** All staff are aware of and involved in completing this checklist.  **RAG rate**  **for our school**  Type here | Type here |
| **5.2** Staff have received training on the impact of poverty on pupils and are provided with regular information about local services that can support families around income maximisation, debt, fuel costs and food poverty.  **RAG rate**  **for our school**  Type here | Type here |

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| **Actions required to move forward**  Consider what you want to improve, by when, who will lead it and how you will measure success |
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| **Sources of information and support**  Index of training and materials which aim to support the children’s workforce to reduce the impact of childhood poverty and disadvantage: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7a1da340f0b66eab999d9c/DMSS-POVERTY_INDEX.pdf> |

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| **6.1** The school has a good knowledge of which pupils are at risk of underachievement and the relationship between this and family poverty. Progress data for these pupils is shared with teachers and support staff at regular intervals throughout the academic year.  **RAG rate**  **for our school**  Type here | Type here |
| **6.2** The school frequently monitors the attendance of pupils living in poverty noting any trends including physical and mental health, family and other related causes of absence.  **RAG rate**  **for our school**  Type here | Type here |

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| **6.3** The school monitors and evaluates the impact of interventions and support provided to pupils living in poverty.  **RAG rate**  **for our school**  Type here | Type here |
| **6.4** The school regularly explores the take-up of after-school provision and notes patterns relating to families living in poverty and acts on findings.  **RAG rate**  **for our school**  Type here | Type here |

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| **Actions required to move forward**  Consider what you want to improve, by when, who will lead it and how you will measure success |
| Type here |
| **Sources of information and support** Swindon Healthy Schools resources: [www.swindonhealthyschools.org/resources/affordable-schools/](http://www.swindonhealthyschools.org/resources/affordable-schools/) |

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| **7.1** The school effectively communicates to all parents/carers the financial support available to those unable to afford essential and optional school items.  **RAG rate**  **for our school**  Type here | Type here |
| **7.2** The school supports parents/carers with making a free school meal application including providing ICT facilities for online applications and this is frequently promoted to families.  **RAG rate**  **for our school**  Type here | Type here |

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| **7.3** Families are advised of or referred to affordable food providers, money advisers and other relevant outside agencies who can support them if they are struggling financially.  **RAG rate**  **for our school**  Type here | Type here |
| **Actions required to move forward** |  |
| Consider what you want to improve, by when, who will lead it and how you will measure success | |
| Type here  **Sources of information and support** Swindon Healthy Schools resources: [www.swindonhealthyschools.org/resources/affordable-schools/](http://www.swindonhealthyschools.org/resources/affordable-schools/)  Swindon Borough Council Free School Meals: [www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20032/schools\_and\_education/408/free\_school\_meals](http://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20032/schools_and_education/408/free_school_meals) Swindon Cost of Living padlet: <https://padlet.com/SBCFood/addressing-the-cost-of-living-s1u8wc9jaaxsixlx> | |

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| **8.1** The school identifies individual pupils affected by poverty and prioritises them for all available targeted support i.e. physical and mental health, narrowing the gap, and other interventions.  **RAG rate**  **for our school**  Type here | Type here |
| **8.2** The school liaises with partner services regarding the learning and health needs of individual pupils affected by poverty.  **RAG rate**  **for our school**  Type here | Type here |

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| **Actions required to move forward**  Consider what you want to improve, by when, who will lead it and how you will measure success |
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| **Sources of information and support** Swindon Healthy Schools resources: [www.swindonhealthyschools.org/resources/affordable-schools/](http://www.swindonhealthyschools.org/resources/affordable-schools/)  Swindon Borough Council Free School Meals: [www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20032/schools\_and\_education/408/free\_school\_meals](http://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20032/schools_and_education/408/free_school_meals)  Swindon Cost of Living padlet: <https://padlet.com/SBCFood/addressing-the-cost-of-living-s1u8wc9jaaxsixlx> |