



AndreX

NPC
New Philanthropy Capital

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

HUMAN RIGHT TO HYGIENE

Understanding how we can change the
systems that stop people living well

October 2022



This report draws on research commissioned by In Kind Direct,
supported by AndreX and carried out by New Philanthropy Capital (NPC)

EVERY PERSON DESERVES TO FEEL CLEAN.

For people forced to make the daily decision whether to heat, eat or be clean, this human right is simply beyond their reach. There are **14.5 million people living in poverty in the UK.**¹ As the cost of living crisis deepens, this number will inevitably increase, and have a disproportionate effect on those already struggling.

There is increasing awareness of the many ways people experience poverty, with over 90% of adults having heard of food or fuel poverty.² Although they share common causes, each manifestation of poverty comes with its own set of dynamics and cruelties. Collectively, they describe the experiences of an increasing number of people who are unable to access what they need to live well.

Just 37% of British adults have heard of hygiene poverty³, a phrase first used by In Kind Direct in 2017 to reflect the lack of affordability for basic hygiene products for people living on lower incomes or in crisis. It is often a precursor to other forms of poverty, with many having already forgone basics like toothpaste, toilet roll or washing powder before going to a foodbank. Across In Kind Direct's UK network of charitable organisations, more than half of the people being supported lack access to the hygiene products they need.⁴ For wider UK society⁵, an estimated 3.15 million adults are living in hygiene poverty. This winter could see that figure exceed 8 million, as more people struggle to stretch their weekly budgets to cover essential hygiene products. For people going without hygiene products because they cannot afford them, the majority are experiencing this for the first time this year.



Nearly

1 IN 4
adults going without
hygiene products are
now too embarrassed
to leave their home⁶

“

We have been partners with In Kind Direct for 24 years to get our products into the hands of families and individuals furthest away from being able to go into a shop and buy them. We believe clean is a feeling everyone should have, and we're proud to stand with In Kind Direct in being a force for clean. Alongside donating a million toilet rolls this year, we are committed to being part of the change to the systems that make this necessary.”

Matt Stone
Marketing Director – Family Care,
Kimberly-Clark

Over

1 IN 3
adults in low-income
families have received
support from a local
organisation this year⁷

8.4m
adults are expecting
to have to go without
a hygiene product
this winter as they
will no longer be
able to afford them⁸

This research is the first-ever mapping of the systems that affect our ability to access hygiene products and services, and the reinforcing cycles that are created when people go without. This includes the shame and stigma experienced, the negative effect on mental and physical health, and the reduced ability to engage with work, education and social opportunities.

With this new insight, In Kind Direct and others across the voluntary, corporate and public sectors are now better equipped to tackle hygiene poverty together, as the endemic issue it is. In this report, In Kind Direct sets out a roadmap of actions to achieving change. We believe this can guide the creation of a National Implementation Plan. We invite you to join us and take action today.

**TOGETHER, WE CAN
PROTECT THE HUMAN
RIGHT TO HYGIENE.**

“

For 25 years, we have supported communities by distributing donated products. But this is a solution to a problem that should not exist – people forced to share toothbrushes, make their own period products, or reuse nappies. As we continue to respond to today's need, our research provides a practical roadmap to changing the systems that make hygiene poverty inevitable, and threaten the survival of the local charitable organisations struggling to meet the growing need for their support. As more of us are facing the daily decision to turn the heating on, put a meal on the table, or run the washing machine, the time to act is now.”

Rosanne Gray
CEO, In Kind Direct



Over

480k

women have had to go without period products this year and admit they've had to make their own because they can no longer afford to buy them.⁹



WE HAD A FAMILY IN NEED... THE MUM WAS USING PLASTIC FOOD BAGS WRAPPED IN TOILET TISSUE AS SANITARY TOWELS. THE BAGS WERE THOSE TAKEN FROM SUPERMARKETS NEAR TO THE FRESH FRUIT AND VEGETABLES, THE TOILET TISSUE WAS TAKEN FROM THE SUPERMARKET CUSTOMER TOILETS. THE FAMILY HAD A TEENAGE DAUGHTER WHO WAS DUE TO START HER PERIOD AND THEY WERE WORRIED THAT THIS IS ALSO WHAT WOULD NEED TO BE DONE. WE SUPPLIED THE MOTHER WITH TAMPONS FROM IN KIND DIRECT AND WILL SUPPORT THE DAUGHTER WHEN THE TIME COMES WITH PADS.



Mesopotamia
Nottingham¹⁰

ABOUT IN KIND DIRECT

Who we are

We are a UK charity who work with charitable organisations and companies to ensure everyone has access to the products they need to keep clean, safe and well.

What we believe

Everyone deserves access to life's essentials and no usable product should go to waste.

Our purpose

We create powerful partnerships, enabling more communities to thrive.

What we do

We distribute products including personal hygiene, household, clothes, toys and technology, donated by the manufacturing and retail industry, to charities, community groups, food banks and schools across the UK. We are currently supporting 275,000 people each week. In 2021 we unlocked £27m in savings into the voluntary sector. This helped charitable organisations meet the increasing need in their communities, at a time when their own resources are depleted, and costs are rising.

Our role

We are a practical response to the widening gap in society. We help meet today's need and use our insights to reduce tomorrow's. 2022 is the second year of our ambitious five-year strategy to triple our impact by 2025. We will do this by:

- **Continuing our 25 year history of distributing products to people that need them today**
- **Connecting charities, companies and other organisations to find new solutions**
- **Building a strong evidence base of real-time local insight**
- **Amplifying the voice of local organisations and advocating for change on behalf of communities**
- **Delivering targeted projects that meet the needs of those we exist to serve**

ABOUT THIS REPORT

Human Right to Hygiene is led by the UK charity In Kind Direct. It draws on research commissioned by In Kind Direct, supported by Andrex and carried out by New Philanthropy Capital (NPC). It is supplemented by qualitative interviews and surveys carried out and commissioned by In Kind Direct, as well as research from our peers. The systems mapping research uses a well-established methodology. It builds a visual analysis tool to help 'zoom out' to understand wider systemic factors to societal issues, and their multiple connections and causes. This map has seven interlocking sections, covering key groups of people and contributing factors to hygiene poverty:

- **Groups with particular vulnerabilities**
- **Children and young people**
- **Political and public factors**
- **Income factors**
- **Household expenditure factors**
- **Social and emotional factors**
- **Support system factors**

Leverage points have been identified for each section in the full NPC report. Three "external shocks" are also identified; events that sit outside a system but bring significant knock-on effects. These are inflation, cost-of-living increases and change to the benefits system. Affecting any of these would have a significant impact on the whole system.

View and navigate the full systems map [here](#).

Read the full NPC report on In Kind Direct's [website](#).

We are grateful to those that gave their time and insight to help create and validate this pioneering research:

- **All Yours Period Box CIC**
- **Baby Basics Portsmouth**
- **British Gas Energy Trust**
- **Business in the Community (BITC)**
- **Croydon Refugee Day Centre**
- **FareShare UK**
- **Joseph Rowntree Foundation**
- **Kimberly-Clark**
- **Little Edi Foundation**
- **Oasis Partnership**
- **One Community Development Trust**
- **Procter & Gamble**
- **Sense**
- **Telford Borough Council**
- **The Hygiene Bank**
- **The Oak Foundation**
- **The Salvation Army, Gateshead**
- **Trussell Trust**

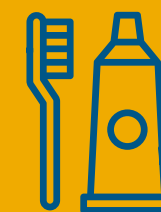
All details correct on publication, October 2022. For more information about our research, contact Charlotte Walshe, Partnerships & Impact Director at research@inkinddirect.org

“

THERE ARE CERTAIN TIMES YOU DON'T WANT TO GET OUT OF BED IF YOU'VE NO MONEY, NO FOOD, AND YOU'VE GOT NO PRODUCTS TO MAKE YOU FEEL FRESH AND CLEAN. I MEAN, THAT'S THE START TO YOUR DAY. JUST FEELING FRESH AND CLEAN. TO ME, THAT'S EVERYTHING. IF YOU'VE NOT GOT THAT, IT LOWERS YOUR MOOD. IT CAN PUT YOU IN A DEPRESSION EVEN MORE AND JUST MAKE YOU FEEL ROTTEN.

”

**Mother of three
Glasgow¹¹**



73%

of In Kind Direct's network believe access to hygiene products is very important to the wellbeing of the people they support¹²

KEY THEMES

Four key themes emerged through this research, validated through insight from In Kind Direct’s charitable network. They are significant in both the level of impact they have for people, and their influence across systems.

1 Building compassion and awareness

Being and feeling clean is fundamental to a person’s wellbeing. Poor hygiene can lead to shame, stigma and social isolation. This can create a repeating loop of withdrawal and mental health decline. Despite almost 4 million adults relying on support from charities and foodbanks this year¹³, it is likely many more feel too embarrassed to ask for help to access hygiene products. 23% of adults experiencing hygiene poverty feel too embarrassed to even leave their home¹⁴. As well as limiting learning, social and employment opportunities, shame also reduces the likelihood of a person seeking help. Shame and stigma are reduced as public awareness of an issue and its causes grow.

37% of British adults have heard of hygiene poverty¹⁵

36% of those going without hygiene products have avoided socialising with friends and family¹⁶

2 Breaking the generational poverty cycle

Families in hygiene poverty can by necessity begin to normalise going without - sharing a toothbrush, using makeshift period products, bathing less or washing clothes less often. This reinforces poor hygiene and its consequences, as well as increasing family stress and feelings of shame. 24% of adults that have gone without are now sharing products between family members¹⁷. When a child or young person experiences hygiene poverty, it can increase their chance of being bullied, leading to withdrawal and depression, which can result in lower educational attainment, therefore damaging future life chances and perpetuating this cycle¹⁸. Around a quarter of the British population have periods, yet the current provision of Period Product schemes across the UK is not meeting their needs.

17% of low-income families say they will be relying on a charity to access unaffordable items this winter¹⁹

1 in 5 adults with children in the household who have reported going without hygiene products this year say they are worried about their children being bullied²⁰

3 Recognising specific needs and times of crisis

Particular groups are more at risk of experiencing poverty, such as people with specialist product needs like incontinence aids or medicated products. Families with additional care needs are up to 40% more likely to be living in poverty²¹. Alongside older people, refugees and migrants, these groups are more likely to be on a fixed income, reliant on benefits, or working part time²². They are disproportionately affected by cost increases and are less likely to have the time to be active consumers. Add to this the death of a loved one, the loss of a job, taking on a caring role, or the end of a relationship and anyone can be pushed into crisis. Navigating new realities and finding support can be daunting. This includes moving from one system to another, such as leaving hospital, care, prison or arriving in the country. Not feeling clean affects wellbeing and can exacerbate existing prejudices.

40% more likely to be living in poverty for families with additional care needs

2 in 3 of households in poverty have at least one working adult in them²³

4 Tackling money worries

The causes and ramifications of hygiene poverty mirror those of poverty more broadly. Constant micro-budgeting increases stress. People already in poverty will pay a premium to access things like lower energy tariffs. Worryingly, as the cost of living increases, 2.4 million adults expect to turn to charities, food banks or community groups to access unaffordable items this winter.²⁴ But these organisations are also struggling. Across In Kind Direct’s network, over half are worried about keeping up with the increased need for their services this winter and a third have seen a reduction in their own income.²⁵ 25% of charities across England and Wales lost 40% of their income during the pandemic²⁶.

Hygiene poverty is often a precursor to extreme poverty, with housing and food generally prioritised. This provides the opportunity for earlier intervention. We must also ensure the survival of the local and specialist organisations relied on to intervene and give support. This means unrestricted funding and including charities in initiatives that support businesses.

1 in 2 of low income households have had to go without hygiene products because they can no longer afford them.²⁷

OVER HALF of adults who have had to go without hygiene products are in employment²⁸

ROADMAP TO CHANGE

In Kind Direct has developed a roadmap of actions that can have the greatest leveraging effect to end hygiene poverty, summarised below. We believe the next step is the development of a practical and timebound National Implementation Plan, supported by the creation of a dedicated Hygiene Poverty Alliance.



Assess

Strong evidence base to increase understanding

- Centralised real-time local insight from community-based organisations
- National data through inclusion of hygiene poverty in deprivation indices
- Mapping of at-risk groups and regional hotspots to increase equitable access to hygiene products and schemes
- Shared learning between UK nations e.g. government-run Period Product Schemes, their current impact and limitations
- Manufacturer and retailer insight on the barriers to affordable essentials



Act

Alleviate immediate needs and pilot new solutions

- Sustainable provision of community services e.g., showers, laundry facilities
- Targeted initiatives that remove stigma, build good hygiene habits and address immediate needs, creating ripple effects over time:
 - Good hygiene lessons and products for school children
 - Advice and starter kits shaped for new parents
 - Support and home packs for people leaving hospital
- Targeted interventions to meet the specific needs of vulnerable groups :
 - Increasing access to the right hygiene products
 - Signposting to relevant specialist advice and services
- Continued provision of hygiene products and beyond, to meet the needs of households e.g. tech and connectivity, clothing, appliances, toys and books
- Improved retail choices, especially in rural areas e.g. home delivery coverage, public transport links to shopping centres



Amplify

Raise awareness, build momentum for change

- A national public-facing awareness campaign for hygiene poverty
- Businesses evaluating their own policies to reduce in-work poverty
- Ensuring hygiene poverty is represented in wider cost of living strategies
- Engage funders on the benefit of hygiene poverty-focused programmes
- Improved retail choices, especially in rural areas e.g. home delivery coverage, public transport links to shopping centres



Advocate

Consolidate and campaign to tackle root causes

- Support campaigns for change to “external shock” factors (inflation, cost of living, benefits system), led by trade membership bodies, advocacy organisations, national alliances and think tanks.
- Support campaigns to remove barriers for vulnerable groups e.g. sanitary accommodation, carers’ support, inclusive working practices
- Immediate and long-term financial support and concessions for low-income households, and SME provisions extended to charitable organisations
- Evidence-led advocacy through e.g. All-Party Parliamentary Groups (APPGs) and Local Authorities



We have been supporting an elderly gentleman during the pandemic who needed help with his home. We used cleaning products [from In Kind Direct] to help tidy his home and make it safe, toiletries to help him feel better and bedding and protection pads to help him stay cleaner. As a result, his wellbeing and physical health have increased dramatically. He said ‘You have made me feel cared for the first time in a very long time.

Daventry Volunteer Centre
Northamptonshire

We believe times of crisis are when long term change happens. So we’re calling on businesses, charities and public bodies to join us today and protect the human right to hygiene.

TO START A CONVERSATION, CONTACT RESEARCH@INKINDDIRECT.ORG

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