

3. Considering our future

We have worked as a team of trustees and staff to listen to and understand local data and listen to the views of children, families, colleagues and staff/volunteers about our future. This information has helped us to consider what is important about in our next three years.

The changing needs of children, families and communities

We estimate there are around 3,300 children aged 3-11 in Kings Hedges, Arbury, East Chesterton and Orchard Park. The Red Hen Project worked with families of children going Arbury, Chesterton, Kings Hedges, Orchard Park, Shirley, St. Laurence and The Grove Schools, and there were a total of 2067 children on the rolls of these schools.

At the time of writing, there are huge social and economic changes underway in Cambridge, the UK and around the world, and these are having, and will continue to have a significant impact on the children and families we work with, and on us as a charity. In the wake of the global pandemic and the current costs of living crisis, many of these changes cannot be predicted easily.

Poverty

Central to our mission is the ambition to reach out to those who are facing challenges in their lives, and one of the most common of these challenges in the areas we work is financial deprivation.

Nationally, a total of 22% – or around 14 million people – live in poverty, a figure that has remained reasonably stable since the mid-2000s and lower than the 24–25% experienced during the 1990s. The child poverty rate fell from 34% to 28% between 1998/99–2004/05. This is considered to be as a result of social policy success, such as Child Tax Credit. The child poverty rate has remained at around 30% since 2005/06 with a fall in 2010/11, largely due to median income falling after the financial crisis. Before the pandemic, child poverty was forecast to rise, driven by the phasing in of the policy of limiting some social security payments to two children ([The Health Foundation 2020](#)).

The impact of the pandemic on children living in financial hardship is, as yet, not fully clear. But there are reports that inequality has increased with relative poverty growing while absolute poverty remains more stable¹.

According to the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) from 2015, from both national data (Office of National Statistics) and local analysis done by Cambridge Insight, Arbury, East Chesterton, Kings Hedges and Orchard Park are among the most deprived areas of Cambridge. 13 out of 19 (68%) LSOAs (Lower Super Output Areas) in the wards are in the bottom two deciles of deprivation compared to LSOAs across Cambridgeshire. 10 out of 19 (53%) LSOAs in the wards are in the bottom 3 deciles compared to LSOAs nationally.

From the more recent 2019 IDACI scores, there is relatively little change in the wards relative poverty compared to LSOAs nationally, with 16 out of 19 (84%) LSOAs seeing a shift of one decile or less compared to LSOAs nationally, including 7 improving up one decile and 5 falling down 1 decile in relative poverty since the 2015 index.

Cambridge City overall is in the seventh decile, meaning it is among the 30% least deprived areas nationally. When coupled with the relative poverty across the Northeast of the city presented above, this presents a clear picture of the disparity that children and families face in the wards that The Red Hen Project supports.

¹ Relative poverty is measured against the current average income in the UK, whereas absolute poverty is measured against a baseline average income (usually from 2011), which is adjusted each year with inflation.

THE RED HEN PROJECT

HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT THIS PLAN, AND THE FUTURE OF RED HEN?

- **Donate** funds – a one off, or even better, a regular donation to secure our service
- **Volunteer** – your time, skills, and expertise
- **Fund** us – we deliver impressive impact for grant givers, trusts, and foundations
- **Partner** with us - to make a difference to children and families in our community
- **Commission** our service – to save money spent on more intensive intervention later

Get in touch to discuss to arrange a chat to explore how you or your organisation can join us making a difference to children's lives

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