

In partnership with West Midlands Combined Authority

More than the essentials: poverty and its wider impact

Tuesday 3rd March 2026

Healthwatch Dudley and Black Country Foodbank presented their findings from a year-long engagement with local people.

What they found was clear: poverty is entrenched and services do not meet the complex and intertwining needs of people experiencing financial hardship.



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people from the local authority, police, NHS and charity sector.

We gathered professionals from different sectors to explore poverty in Dudley borough and ask attendees to commit to change.



Katie Chiverton shared the experiences of local people, highlighting how barriers – such as digital exclusion and no access to transport – can make it almost impossible to access support.

A co-ordinated and community focused approach is needed to address poverty in Dudley borough.



Helen Rowe shared the impact of poverty on people's physical and mental health.

She also challenged the view of the "undeserving poor", highlighting that poverty is not just a series of "poor choices".

"I think that often it can be easy to make assumptions relating to people living in poverty."

I think this research will make me think more about the biological impacts of poverty."

How do you feel about addressing poverty in Dudley borough?

- Collaborative
- Essential
- Unsure where to start
- Determined to help people
- Positive
- Combative
- Apprehensive but positive
- Enthusiastic



Lydia Hester-Collins presented the Dudley Financial Wellbeing and Mitigating Poverty Strategy.

The strategy focuses on a co-ordinated approach to preventing poverty and supporting those in financial hardship.

"I wont stop banging the drum for health inequalities."



"I comit to consider the circumstances of those living in poverty that I work with."



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commitments from partners

