



Entrant company name: **Fanclub & smol**

Entry title: **Clean Up Child Hygiene Poverty**

Category: **Education Campaign**

Brief, objectives & budget

Imagine not being able to afford the basic essentials to keep yourself or your loved ones clean. That's hygiene poverty. It has a heart-breaking impact on children's wellbeing and their education, and it's the UK's teachers who are witnessing the effects that this is having as parents struggle to send their kids to school in clean clothes.

Despite well documented research pinpointing the growing effects of hygiene poverty on the nation's school children– much it from smol in partnership with The Hygiene Bank through its Suds in Schools free mini laundrettes initiative– incredibly, it was not placed on the agenda of the Government's newly-formed Child Poverty Taskforce.

Faced with this stark omission, laundry challenger brand, smol, set out to headline the scope and severity of child hygiene poverty in a mission to get it the recognition it deserves at a governmental level.

Using earned media as a driving force, our objective was to position smol as a galvaniser of real change in tackling hygiene poverty in schools.

Budget: £44,200 (includes all fees and hard costs)

The idea, research & planning

smol has been supporting school communities with free laundry capsules and mini laundrettes since 2022, and as such, has the ear of the nation's teachers. Teachers were telling the brand that hygiene poverty was still on the rise and that, bereft of support, they were having to personally step in to help- at a cost of not just their time but their own money too.

Undertaking its own national research, smol found that 80% of school staff had in fact seen a rise in hygiene poverty in schools over the past 12 months, and incredibly, over a third (40%) of teachers were washing pupils' uniforms- leaving them feeling 'distracted', 'powerless' and asking for 'radical change to be implemented'.

With the government turning a blind eye to hygiene poverty, we looked to galvanise the nation's teachers in bringing this overlooked issue to Westminster's attention to 'Clean Up Child Hygiene Poverty.'

Strategy, creativity & innovation

Delving deeper, smol's research calculated that the UK's school staff had collectively spent £40m of their own money supporting pupils in hygiene poverty over the past year.

Homing in on this personal interjection by the nation's teachers, we approached and secured the backing of national teachers' union, the NASUWT and working alongside long-term partner, The Hygiene Bank, we called on the government to 'Clean Up Child Hygiene Poverty'.

A washing line consisting of 40 school uniforms, one for every £1m spent by the UK's teachers on child hygiene poverty, was erected in the shadow of Westminster to create a visual backdrop at which head teachers, alongside smol and The Hygiene Bank, launched the campaign to the media and ultimately got the Government to answer our plea.

Delivery & implementation of tactics

To shine a light on the scale of the issue, we spoke to school staff, revealing how hygiene poverty has changed in the past year, how it is impacting children and staff themselves, and how much staff are spending of their own money to help. We then took our findings to the teacher's union, NASUWT, who agreed to come on board with their members to back our campaign and call for change.

Armed with our research findings, spokespeople from smol, The Hygiene Bank, headteachers and the NASUWT, unveiled the campaign in Westminster backed by a giant washing line with 40 pieces of laundry- each representing £1m of money teachers spend out of their own pocket every year on keeping their pupils clean- (£40m collectively to be precise).

We also sent a countersigned letter to the chairs of the Child Poverty Taskforce from the heads of smol, The Hygiene Bank and NASUWT, and hosted an associated template letter on the smol website, which could be used by the public to write to their MP to do the same.

Together with film and stills, we targeted written and broadcast media to inspire awareness and conversation. Following an exclusive first look at the research findings and content with PA's education correspondent, we kick-started our earned media call to action.

Measurement, evaluation & impact

Earned media sparked a huge nationwide discussion with Sky News and LBC hosting dedicated features. Driven by the branded visual assets, in total the campaign created over 1,600 pieces of print,online and broadcast coverage- including 1,326 broadcast mentions alone, of which there were 35 one-to-one broadcast interviews with our campaign spokespeople. The campaign reached titles including the Daily Mail, the Daily Telegraph, BBC, Mumsnet, Virgin Radio, Capital, Heart and the Evening Standard.

In addition, there were over 190 organic social engagements from notable accounts including Mumsnet. But that's not all. The campaign reached the desk of former Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, the guiding force behind child poverty charity, Multibanks, who adopted our research and included it as proof points in its Christmas 2024 campaign to further highlight the effects of hygiene poverty on British school children.

The activity directly drove 6,000 people at launch to the campaign landing page which hosted the template MP letter. Providing a much needed instant impact for families experiencing hygiene poverty, smol's Donate A Wash initiative amongst customers saw 32,152 washes donated in October with similar levels in the preceding two months. The Hygiene Bank saw a 400% increase in donations compared to a regular month and 200% increase in engagement on their Facebook and LinkedIn pages.

But ultimately, the campaign galvanised teachers to work with smol to elicit an all important response from the Government which acknowledged the campaign with a written statement picked up by the media promising 'to listen to frontline staff and struggling families... and tackle the challenges felt by those living in poverty' as part of their Child Poverty Taskforce. An important step in the ongoing fight to Clean Up Child Hygiene Poverty.

The text in this case study is presented as submitted in the original award entry. Where necessary, entrants have removed or redacted information considered sensitive or confidential.