



4 Rising Inequalities

Increasing health, wealth, and education inequality has impact. More at the margins of society struggle. The gap between the haves and the have nots increases.

Globally, many nations are experiencing greater inequality. The rich are getting richer, the poor are getting poorer, and in some countries, those in the middle are being squeezed. With 2,000 billionaires having more wealth than the 4.6 billion people that make up over 60% of the world's population, there is a clear focus on wealth inequality.¹¹ However, in many regions, the gap between the have and the have nots is just as much about access to healthcare, education, and the increasingly pivotal digital connectivity. 70% of the world's population still don't have good healthcare, 1 in 3 people don't have access to clean water, and around 40% can't yet access the Internet. Moving ahead, there are many important targets for change. While many are integrated into the UN Sustainable Development Goal's, a major shift in inequality is not expected any time soon. *"As inequality rises in the future, the challenges in society will become more apparent."*¹²

In the UK, many eager for an end to austerity see paying for Covid19 delaying the end of the tunnel. *"Inequality is set to increase significantly for many."*¹³ Wealth inequality had been levelling off in the UK at the start of the century, but now, according to some data, it appears to be accelerating again. *"Health inequality, digital connectivity, and access to education are all growing gaps in many parts of the UK."*¹⁴ As UCL research in London has notably

highlighted, if you move along the Jubilee Line from Green Park to Canning Town, life expectancy drops 1 year per stop.¹⁵

Often within local neighbourhoods, both in cities and in smaller towns, the rate of widening of these gaps is accelerating. *"More people at the margins of society are struggling. There is a group in society who are divorced from the mainstream, excluded from credit or internet access, and who fall through the net and become dependent on the state."*¹⁶ Some highlight that *"the challenge is how to fill the gap. Do people's needs go unmet, or do we grow charity?"*¹⁷ Considering the division between the state and charity, several consider that *"the boundary has slipped considerably further away from the state towards charity, through austerity."*¹⁸

An Implication: The expectation gap for less technically qualified Service leavers widens. As obstacles to social mobility become more entrenched by pervasive inequalities, service leavers' opportunities to succeed diminish.