

London Child Poverty Summit 2025

Digital Briefing and Action Pack



Finding the Bridge

A poem by Harriet Ekpo
Written for The Childhood Trust

Keynote

Tania Duarte
We and AI

Tania explored how AI impacts poverty and childhood, challenging dominant tech narratives and asking what AI means for those at the margins.

[View presentation](#)

Finding the Bridge

In order to bridge the digital divide,
we have to have a map to find it,
where is this bridge?
and who gets shown the way across—
could I have the same access,
can I walk the same path as you?

when some of us grow up on one side of the screen,
watching the world move faster than we can load it,
what does it mean to be digitally connected

when every scroll is currency,
moving me closer then further, like a tidal wave

how do I reboot to find myself closer to you?
when an unpaid phone bill means my access is cut
off,
and I am made a solitary node

searching for my network.

Pause to read
or scroll to fast
forward

Key topics of conversation

AI Governance & Ethics

- AI Governance and legislation
- Risks of AI to those in poverty
- AI's 'climate cost'

Critical Thinking, Literacy & Education

- Responsibilities and AI literacy in adults
- Distinguishing truth from myth
- The pros and cons of AI in education and accessibility

Future skills and employment

- Job displacement & future skills gap
- Job creation and AI as a tool for greater accessibility

Questions you asked

People keep on talking about how it transforms learning experiences for SEND young people, but I haven't heard any concrete examples. What can this look like?

What are some best practices of AI use you have seen in organisations working with young people?

Is AI justifiable? Vast resources, energy, brains and financial investment whilst we have not addressed global issues like poverty & climate change

What can we do practically to support young people in a digital age

How can we support parents to use AI in a safe way and ideally one that benefits their child's development? Especially in the early years

How to address the issues AI brings while not overlooking the benefits it brings?

Workshop summaries

	Summary	Outcome/recommendations
AI Toys in Early years (0-5yrs) with The University of Cambridge	Inspired by the University of Cambridge and The Childhood Trust's ongoing research project, workshop participants began by discussing scenarios about dilemmas in young children's interactions with AI toys. Participants came up with their own prioritisations for supporting children in poverty and considered the actions they could take in their own organisations to ensure the most impact.	The workshop resulted in rich discussions which will be analysed as part of the ongoing "AI in the Early Years" research project, ensuring that the research identifies areas of impact and actionable change from the perspectives of charity leaders and other workshop participants. After identifying these areas for action and impact, we hope that workshop participants left feeling empowered to put young children in poverty at the centre when considering how to approach the growing role of AI in children's lives.
Primary age (6-11yrs) with AI Youth	The workshop explored how AI tools and apps are increasingly part of children's lives and the implications for wellbeing, learning, and safeguarding. Through four scenarios, participants examined emotional, ethical, and practical challenges when children interact with AI. Working under time pressure, each group completed three practical challenges – writing a personal statement for a job role, creating an affordable and balanced weekly meal plan, and finding free or low-cost local activities for a young person in Tower Hamlets. Through these tasks, participants gained insight into how differing levels of digital access can shape opportunities, limit choices, and impact problem-solving in everyday life.	The session highlighted the growing impact of AI on children's social, emotional, and educational experiences, raising key safeguarding and inclusion challenges. Participants identified the need for practical guidance and training on AI-related risks, scenario-based tools for staff, and clear frameworks for responsible AI use in schools and youth settings. There was strong interest in resources that support charities with updated safeguarding policies, tips for child safety, and strategies to address digital inequality. Attendees also called for access to expert voices, relational discussion toolkits, and youth-led insights to ensure responses reflect real needs.
Secondary age (11-16yrs) with Mayor's Fund for London Youth Board	This interactive workshop immersed participants in the real-life digital challenges faced by young people living in poverty. Attendees were divided into three groups with different levels of technology access: one with unrestricted internet and phone use (but no AI), one limited to AI tools such as ChatGPT, and one with no digital tools at all. Working under time pressure, each group completed three practical challenges – writing a personal statement for a job role, creating an affordable and balanced weekly meal plan, and finding free or low-cost local activities for a young person in Tower Hamlets. Through these tasks, participants gained insight into how differing levels of digital access can shape opportunities, limit choices, and impact problem-solving in everyday life.	The workshop sparked meaningful dialogue and practical commitments among participants. Young people led conversations that helped adults understand the emotional, educational, and social impacts of AI and digital inequality and had the following recommendations: Digital literacy & critical thinking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teach social competence, critical thinking, and questioning of AI outputs. Educate on AI types, purposes, and limitations. Age-appropriate & gradual technology use <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement controlled access for young people (e.g., limited smartphones, supervised laptops/routers). Encourage healthy digital habits and responsible use Digital well-being & societal impact <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limit overuse, dependency, and parasocial attachments to tech. Address environmental costs of tech production and corporate responsibility. Equity and accessibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure disadvantaged groups are not left behind. Avoid regulations that unintentionally restrict working-class access.
Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) with AIConfident	This exploratory workshop brought together charity sector professionals supporting children with SEND to discuss how AI might help families in poverty better access education and support. Participants discussed some use of AI, digital inequalities, and associated risks, identifying key challenges and brainstorming practical, inclusive ideas for using AI ethically to improve access, learning, and communication. The session focused on exploring how AI could be used in ways that reduce, rather than deepen, inequality.	There were a number of shared understandings of the opportunities and risks of AI for families in poverty and SEND contexts. More details on which tools can be most useful in supporting SEND families and how they are used was a clear next step for many. Concrete examples of AI in safe practice and collaboration was a key request. Many expressed commitment to exploring pilot projects and collaborative approaches that leverage AI to enhance communication and educational access, while addressing digital inequality and safeguarding concerns.

Our collective action – a request from young people

We started with priorities voted on by young people and used them to spark an interactive session. Attendees built on these ideas and agreed on three actions:

- 1. Bridge the digital divide - Ensure fair access**
Advocate and act so that poverty never limits a young person's access to safe, empowering technology.
- 2. Amplify youth voices - Let us be heard in the digital debate**
Make sure young people's real experiences shape decisions about technology, education, and support.
- 3. Protect our wellbeing online - Prioritise mental health**
Work to make online spaces safer, kinder and more supportive.



Tools and resources

A list of helpful tools, organisations, and frameworks shared during the Summit to support your work on AI, safeguarding, and youth wellbeing.

Safeguarding and AI Safety <ul style="list-style-type: none"> London Grid for Learning – Safeguarding and online safety resources for schools and charities. NWG Network Webinar – Safeguarding Children Online: CSAM, AI, Harms & Social Media's Impact Tips for AI Child Safety – Guidance for schools, parents, and charities on safe AI use. Center for AI Safety (CAIS) – Focused on societal-scale risk mitigation and safety standards.
Relational discussion topics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rithm Project Toolkit – Tools for relational and wellbeing-focused discussions. Young Women's Movement Guide to AI – Gender-aware perspectives on AI.
Scenario building and other LLMs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ChatGPT or Other LLMs – Useful for creating realistic scenarios with the right prompts. Additional Case Studies (Note: Some include sensitive topics such as suicide and self-harm): Adam Raine, Sewell Setzer III, Teen Deepfakes, AI Beauty Filters
Policy frameworks and research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AIConfident – Tim's work on policy and health research discussions. AILit Framework – Home for AI literacy and ethical guidelines. Charity Excellence Framework – Offers structured frameworks for charities. UNESCO – Global governance and frameworks for ethical AI. The Alan Turing Institute (Children's Rights and AI Team) – Academic research and child-centred policy development.
Primary Digital Curriculum <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kids n Clicks – Free resources for primary learners on digital literacy and safety.
Access to Expert Voices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CAST – Digital transformation support for charities. Charity Digital – Guidance and resources for tech adoption in the charity sector. We and AI – Public engagement and education on AI ethics and societal impact.
Youth Perspectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> FlippGen – The UK's youth-led digital wellbeing movement, offering insights into what young people need from charities and support services. KidsOnlineWorld – Information about the latest apps and websites children and young people are using.

These tools are in no way endorsed by The Childhood Trust or any financial supporters of the London Child Poverty Summit. Use of these are at your own discretion and we advise ethical and responsible use of AI.

More on the way...



What now?

Bookmark this page so you can refer back to tools and resources as and when you need.



AI confidence course

Build your AI confidence as a charity leader with a [five-module course](#), developed by **AIConfident**. Supported by The Childhood Trust, this programme has been specially designed for those in the voluntary sector to build their knowledge and lead with confidence when it comes to AI. [Take a look.](#)

Digital Hub coming soon!

You may have heard that The Childhood Trust is launching a **new digital hub** connecting all those involved in child poverty in London. There will be **chat forums, direct messages, a resource hub and London charity directory**.

A number of you expressed a desire for an **AI Working Group** – the hub can provide the forum for this.

Make sure you're signed up to [our newsletter](#) to hear more about the launch or get in touch if you would like a sneak peek before general release – email yoctan.vilchez@childhoodtrust.org.uk



Connect with The Childhood Trust, speakers and contributors

Speakers

Josephine McCartney
Chief Executive at The Childhood Trust

Rob Smith
2025 Summit host

Harriet Ekpo
Spoken word poet

Tania Duarte
Founder of We and AI

Panelists

Saihaheen Kaur Chauhan
A Level student interested in AI and human behaviour and volunteer at We and AI

Mariya Stoilova
Postdoctoral Researcher in the Department of Media and Communications at LSEE and Manager of the Digital Futures for Children centre

Nicki Watts
Founder of AI Youth

Sabeehah Mohamed
Researcher in AI Ethics and Policy at The Alan Turing Institute

Katie Taylor
Head of Communities and Social Change at Toynbee Hall

Workshop hosts

Jenny Gibson
Professor of Neurodiversity and Developmental Psychology at the University of Cambridge

Jo Hutchinson
Digital and AI Strategist at AIConfident

Emily Goodacre
Postdoctoral Researcher in Developmental Psychology at the University of Cambridge

William Sarendon
Mayor's Fund for London Youth Board

Fireside chat

Tim Cook
Founder of AIConfident

Tania Duarte
Founder of We and AI

Organisations



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info@childhoodtrust.org.uk

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