

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES AND TACKLING INEQUALITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	Agenda Item No. 6
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Report of the Executive Director of Children's Services

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CHILD POVERTY ACTION PLAN

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on the nature and characteristics of poverty within the city and to outline the effectiveness of action planning to support local families in moving out of poverty.
- 1.2 To be mindful that we have a Statutory Duty to work collectively, as equal partners, to do everything possible to reduce child poverty. To ensure, as far as we are able, that today's children don't become tomorrow's poor adults. Childhood experience lays the foundations for later life and we want that experience in Peterborough, to be as positive as possible.
- 1.3 Growing up in poverty can damage physical, cognitive, social and emotional development and can affect what is achieved in adult life. While some children who grow up in low income households will go on to achieve their full potential, many others will not.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1
 - Committee should give consideration of the progress made against the original recommendations of the Draft Poverty & Social Mobility Strategy
 - Understand the breadth of the workforce who need to be aware of child poverty in their work and decision-taking
 - Elect a poverty Champion who can drive this agenda forward across partner agencies
 - Consider how poverty underpins all our work and commit to make this part of our core business
 - Target resource/capacity where it can have the greatest impact by focusing on tipping points that impact on a families ability to cope

3. LINKS TO THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

- 3.1 Family Poverty is part of the Single Delivery Plan - Programme 2 – Creating Opportunities and Tackling Inequalities
- 3.2 There have been two local child poverty measures that estimate the number and proportion of children in low income poverty.

The local child poverty proxy measure (formerly NI 116 proxy measure) is defined as the proportion of children living in families where at least one parent or guardian claimed one or more of the following out of work benefits: Job Seeker's Allowance, Income Support, Employment and Support Allowance, Incapacity Benefit/Severe Disablement Allowance, or Pension Credit at 31 May 2010. The most up to date DWP data prepared for Peterborough is based on 31st May 2010 and indicated 5210 households with children, claiming some form of benefit.

The proportion of dependent children in a Local Authority who live in households whose equivalised income is below 60% of the contemporary national median. IFS (2011) indicated this grew in Gt. Britain by 0.9% from 410 to 414 per week. One factor that has lifted household

income was an increase in benefits, a situation that is likely to reverse following the introduction of welfare reform. Gross median income levels in Peterborough are already significantly lower than the national average (498) at 430.

Statistics for Peterborough (March 2011) demonstrated that an unacceptably high level of 25.3% of our children, 12,144 under 19 years old, are recorded as living in relatively low income households.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 In June 2010, the Child Poverty Act received Royal Assent. This enshrines in legislation a long held government ambition to eradicate Child Poverty by 2020 and places a number of statutory duties on both Central and Local Government.
- 4.2 Local Authorities are required to co-operate with partners (Health Authorities, Job Centre Plus, Police, Youth Offending and Probation Services) to produce a local Child Poverty Strategy and Child Poverty Assessment.
- 4.3 Child poverty is relatively high in Peterborough (25.3%), compared to 16.4% in the East of England region and 21.6% nationally, and rising year on year current projections – although with a health warning - are moving us closer to 29%.
- 4.4 The city also has a high percentage of people earning low wages meaning a high proportion of children are low income yet working households.
- 4.5 There are high levels of debt and poor money management which impacts on the disposable income families have.
- 4.6 The links between poverty and deprivation, poverty and health inequalities, poverty and poorer mental health outcomes, and low levels of educational attainment have been well documented. Growing up in poverty can damage physical, cognitive, social and emotional development, which are all determinants of outcomes in adult life. (Ending Child Poverty: Everybody's Business 2008)
- 4.7 Peterborough has acknowledged key deprived localities where extra resource need to be targeted but also hidden pockets of deprivation that leave families isolated from community support mechanisms that might help.

5. KEY ISSUES

- 5.1 Peterborough's population has a high proportion of children and young people compared to the rest of England.

'In work' poverty and low income levels impact on a significant proportion of our local families at a higher rate than the national average.

Peterborough has a higher percentage of children living in families receiving out of work benefits than the national average.

The percentage of adults qualified to Level 2 is lower than the national average.

Peterborough's average weekly rent is much higher than both the national average and when compared to one of our statistical neighbours.

The take-up of the childcare element of working tax credits among eligible parents in Peterborough has fallen and is below the national average.

Peterborough has a higher rate of children in care per 10,000 population than both the statistical neighbour and national averages.

Peterborough has a higher number of houses of multiple occupation than the two of its statistical neighbours with the closest overall population figures.

Peterborough has a lower percentage of students achieving 5 A*-C GCSEs with English and Maths than both the statistical neighbour and the England averages.

It is expensive to support families once poverty has taken a grip on families budgets and resilience is diminished. Often these families go on to experience multiple and complex problems.

Poverty calls for a multidimensional approach and multiagency teams. It is a framework that potentially offers up the possibility of bringing together many longstanding issues (Teenage Pregnancy, Domestic Violence) and thinking interventions through with a new and critically, yet innovative approach.

The Peterborough Poverty & Social Mobility Strategic Development Plan set out 11 Outcomes it wanted to achieve to tackle Poverty locally. These tool into consideration the building blocks set out by the national Child Poverty Unit (Financial Support, Parental Employment and Skills, Life Chances, Place),and an extensive programme of local consultation and engagement.

Mapping out City Wide Outcomes for partners

SO1 : Strong leadership across agencies that is strategic and inspirational
SO2: A Commissioning process designed with strategic intent to ensure service providers work with us to lift families out of poverty
SO3: Tools that measure poverty and social mobility so we can all understand what is working and what needs changing
SO4: First Contact with families that maximise the opportunity to explore household circumstance and respond to need in a timely way
SO5: A workforce sensitised to the impact of poverty and a think poverty approach embedded in all our work
SO6: Resilient communities supporting statutory services in managing risky behaviours
SO 7: Improved education and personal development of all children and young people to narrow the gap in achievement between the poorest children and the rest
SO 8: Better money management, increased employability and take-up of benefits amongst families
SO 9: Improved health, Healthier lifestyles including a reduction in mental health stress within the local population
SO 10: Creation of inspirational places to live and cohesive communities
SO 11: A Decent Home for All

Update on Action Planning

A Poverty Action Team has been established that will act as a cross partnership strategic group and management framework for work stream leads and be directly responsible for SO 1, 2, 3 & 4.

Work streams that have effectively mobilised are 5, 7, 8, and 10.

Actions we have jointly considered important are detailed below.

<p>1. Improve Processes & Better Communication across Partners</p>	<p>Poverty Action Team established between Children’s Services, Operations, Health, Financial Inclusion Forum and Registered Social Landlords.</p> <p>Poverty impact assessment and outcomes framework for service providers currently being developed by Childrens Services</p> <p>Embed Child Poverty Needs Assessment in Joint Service Need Analysis</p> <p>Embed Family Poverty in Core Strategy & Business Planning Frameworks</p> <p>Ensure Poverty central to Health and Wellbeing Board</p> <p>Commitment to develop a suite of poverty indicators to monitor what we are doing and what is working</p> <p>Develop a Central Communication Portal</p>
<p>2. Developing Excellence at the First Point of Contact (Steering Group Established)</p>	<p>Identify training needs so that all staff understand the cause and effect of poverty and embed in Induction training</p> <p>Critically thinking at every opportunity to make poverty a priority for referral and assessments, neighbourhood teams, home visits, and face to face work across agencies.</p> <p>Ensure staff are able to signpost to services currently provided without delay</p> <p>Empower staff to use their initiative</p> <p>Link with Ofsted Improvement Plan</p>
<p>3. Support for families through transitional (tipping points) times (Steering Group Established PAT)</p>	<p>Draft Early Intervention & Prevention Strategy to focus on integrated working</p> <p>Target groups at critical times through short term interventions including joint visits i.e. Camhs (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) & IAG (Information, Advice and Guidance) to de-escalate need</p> <p>Promotion of better quality and earlier IAG for key groups: Families at the point of diagnosis Birth Relationship Breakdown Temporary Accommodation (inc Homeless) Data set profiling these groups to be</p>

	developed
4. Improving Access to resources for Families in acute need	<p>Re-commissioning of Family Information Service</p> <p>Co- ordination of the emergency services providing for basic human needs including Food Bank, Blankets and clothing and medical needs and for those moving into accommodation i.e. Paint, Furniture, white goods.</p> <p>Innovative delivery of welfare and legal advice for these groups.</p> <p>Support for those with no recourse to public funds.</p>
5. Increase Revenue Flows in Households (Financial Inclusion Forum re-launched, led by CAB supported by CS & SO)	<p>Poverty Conference</p> <p>Reducing the level of debt in the city</p> <p>Increase Levels of Benefit Take Up</p> <p>Promotion of FSM</p> <p>Reduce mental health/depression caused by financial stress</p> <p>Information via Employer Induction Letter for staff on low incomes or part time work</p> <p>CAB based in GP surgery Pilot</p> <p>Promotion of Free Child Care Offer</p> <p>Leaflet of Key Welfare Reforms</p> <p>Disseminated to all Staff</p> <p>Link to Worklessness Group established</p>
6. Addressing Troublesome Behaviour to increase learning opportunities for young people (Steering Group Running)	<p>Consortium of Early Years, Camhs, Education, Youth Offending, Schools. three strategic areas of focus for the group.</p> <p>Supporting children and young people in homes where parents abuse drugs and/or alcohol</p> <p>Engaging parents in recognising and understanding the value and importance of education</p> <p>Securing effective and timely support for children and young people at key transition points 0 -19</p> <p>EHWB Screening Tool – training and support needs of staff</p> <p>Developing Community Parent Peer Champions</p>
6. Community Entrepreneurs embedded within disadvantaged communities (scoping Potential)	<p>Early stages of scoping the potential for Community Gateways Project</p> <p>Skills training for Communities</p> <p>Advise to families about loan sharks, credit unions and debt</p> <p>Target Domestic Violence to improve emotional health and well being of children in those households.</p>

6. IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The implications of the failure to address the poverty agenda is that there will be an increase in numbers and significant implications upon the future lives of Children within Peterborough.

7. CONSULTATION

- 7.1 The Child Poverty needs assessment has been through a formal consultation period.

8. NEXT STEPS

- 8.1 Suggest this becomes a Standing Item to report on urgent progress needed if we want to lift 2000 children out of poverty by 2014.

9. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

- 9.1 Draft Poverty & Social Mobility Strategy (2011)
Child Poverty Needs Assessment (2010)

10. APPENDICES

- 10.1 None