

17 October 2016**Agenda Item: 06**

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, YOUTH, FAMILIES AND CULTURE

TACKLING CHILD POVERTY IN NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Purpose of the Report

1. To inform the Committee of the key findings and recommendations of the Child Poverty and Life Chances Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2016.
2. To seek approval of the Nottinghamshire Child Poverty and Life Chances Action Plan 2016-2017, attached as **Appendix 1**.

Information and Advice

3. Growing up in poverty can affect every area of a child's development and future life chances. It is well known that the most disadvantaged children are less likely to achieve their academic potential, secure employment and gain a sense of future financial security. They are more likely to suffer from poor health, live in poor quality housing and unsafe environments. Poverty has blighted the lives of individuals, families and entire communities for generations and is an issue that could undermine the wider social and economic policies across Nottinghamshire. Growing up in poverty can mean being cold, going hungry, not being able to join in activities with friends, and not being able to afford even one week's holiday¹.
4. The government approach to measuring Child Poverty has changed, moving away from focusing on income targets and towards measuring improved outcomes for children and young people around educational attainment, worklessness and family functioning. Improving the life chances of the most disadvantaged children and young people is now a priority for all political parties.
5. Research from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation published in August 2016 indicates the cost of poverty to children's services alone to be £7.5 billion; this makes tackling child poverty a priority for most local authorities².

¹ Child Poverty Action Group 2016

² The Cost of Poverty Joseph Rowntree Foundation 2016

The Nottinghamshire Child Poverty and Life Chances Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2016

Key Findings

6. The child poverty Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) includes information regarding educational attainment, employment, social economic status, health outcomes and social mobility. The chapter links with other JSNA topics, in particular demography information and those which include a focus on health inequalities e.g. obesity.
7. Current child poverty levels in Nottinghamshire indicate that 15.9% of children aged 0-19 years are living in poverty compared to 16% in 2012. This amounts to 26,065 children and young people. There are fewer children in poverty in Nottinghamshire compared to England (18.0%) and the East Midlands (17.0%).
8. The highest levels of child poverty are in Mansfield and Ashfield districts which have remained unchanged since the Child Poverty Strategy was launched. District level data shows the variance of child poverty levels, as follows:

District	% of 0-19 year olds living in poverty
Ashfield	21.5
Bassetlaw	16.2
Broxtowe	14
Gedling	15.1
Mansfield	21.8
Newark & Sherwood	15.1
Rushcliffe	7

9. There are 54 wards in Nottinghamshire identified as target wards, where child poverty levels exceed the national figure of 18%. All districts, with the exception of Rushcliffe, have target wards as identified below:

Ashfield	9 out of 15 wards
Bassetlaw	5 out of 25 wards
Broxtowe	4 out of 21 wards
Gedling	8 out of 22 wards
Mansfield	20 out of 36 wards
Newark and Sherwood	8 out of 25 wards
Rushcliffe	0 out of 28 wards
10. The 2016 Social Mobility Index indicates that out of seven districts four are classed as Social Mobility Cold Spots, meaning that there is low social mobility in these areas. Good social mobility is a key factor in preventing poor children from becoming poor adults³.
11. Worklessness is still a key reason why many children in Nottinghamshire are living in poverty; this may be compounded further with forthcoming welfare reforms. However, the

³ The Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission *The Social Mobility Index February 2016*
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/social-mobility-index>

JSNA also identifies that in-work poverty remains an issue in Nottinghamshire and emerging changes to Universal Credit may exacerbate this.

12. The Nottinghamshire Child Poverty and Life Chances JSNA Chapter is available as a background paper.

Identified Gaps in Service Provision

13. The Child Poverty JSNA has also identified gaps in support available across the County, summarised as follows:
 - a) Effective support for adults with mental health difficulties to return to work.
 - b) Financial support for families where neither parent works.
 - c) Family and parenting support for poorer families with children aged 5-19 years with need below Level 3 of the Pathway to Provision.
 - d) Support for parents with couple relationships to prevent breakdown and financial instability.
 - e) Independent advice for families experiencing debt.

JSNA Recommendations for Commissioners and Planners

14. The JSNA has identified a number of areas for consideration and implementation by commissioners of services for children, families and adults with parenting responsibilities.
 - a) Improve data collection, sharing and analysis
 - b) Actively target and direct limited resources to localities with higher rates of child poverty
 - c) Actively target groups of children and families most at risk of poverty and the associated poor outcomes associated with poverty
 - d) Build a local picture of and better understanding of the link between child abuse, neglect and poverty
 - e) Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) to consider how current adult mental health provision enables people to return to or remain in work
 - f) Consider the effectiveness of any work programme providers in helping those furthest away from the labour market back into work, in particular adults with mental health difficulties
 - g) Consider how to respond to the national Life Chances Strategy. In particular, the recommendation by the Centre for Social Justice of how to best align the Pupil Premium, the Troubled Families programme and the Work Programme, in order to provide a package of universal support to those eligible for Universal Credit⁴
 - h) Consider how economic development can help create a local safety net for low income families

⁴ *Delivering a Life Chances Strategy* Centre for Social Justice March 2016

- i) Consider the social mobility index rankings and identify actions to address highlighted areas and develop a coherent narrative around social mobility and life chances which informs decision making
- j) Consider their role in ensuring people are aware of their entitlement to free childcare
- k) Ensure that all services working with families have an element which specifically supports parents to gain and retain paid employment
- l) Consider how existing data gaps may be filled and move to an evidence based approach to commissioning all services
- m) Consider how to effectively support couple relationships and identify successful models for achieving this
- n) Scope the feasibility of establishing a poverty proofing pilot in Nottinghamshire schools.

Local Action to Tackling Child Poverty

- 15. The Child Poverty Action Plan 2016 – 2017, attached as **Appendix 1**, reflects changes at a national level and seeks to address the gaps identified in the JSNA. The plan focuses on three key expected outcomes.
 - a) Children and families experience fewer negative outcomes from the effects of poverty
 - b) Children and families are able to move out of poverty
 - c) The Cycle of Poverty is broken as children are prevented from becoming poor adults
- 16. Priority actions in the plan include:
 - a) Establishing referral routes for adults with mental health difficulties to employment support
 - b) Increasing awareness and use of the Notts Help Yourself website www.nottshelpyourself.org.uk
 - c) Piloting poverty proofing schools in Ashfield
 - d) Continuing the multi-agency roll out of the Child Poverty workshops
 - e) Increasing the take up of free childcare.

Other Options Considered

- 17. No other options have been considered.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 18. Findings from the 2016 Child Poverty JSNA has identified a number of recommendations which are based on local data and research. These recommendations form the basis of the Nottinghamshire Child Poverty and Life Chances Action Plan.
- 19. As poverty is so multi-faceted and impacts on so many areas of children and young people's lives, Life Chances can only improve by taking a multi-agency approach. The action plan has been developed by the Child Poverty Reference Group, which has

representatives from across services and the districts and identifies practical actions which require a partnership approach.

20. Children living in poverty are at risk of a range of poor outcomes and likewise these outcomes can also impact on future economic status and poverty. Breaking the cycle of poverty is therefore a priority for Nottinghamshire; and work to reduce child poverty levels and reduce the impact of poverty is critical to achieve a wide range of positive outcomes for children, their families and future generations.

Statutory and Policy Implications

21. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Crime and Disorder Implications

22. Recent analysis from the Safer Nottinghamshire Board indicates there is a correlation between areas with high levels of deprivation and high levels of domestic violence and antisocial behaviour, suggesting that tackling poverty is key to reducing these types of offences.

Financial Implications

23. There is currently no direct funding for work to tackle Child Poverty; it relies on core funding streams from across partner agencies.

Human Resources Implications

24. There are no human resource implications as the work depends on work from all partners to take actions forwards as part of their existing work.

Public Sector Equality Duty Implications

25. Families with children under the age of 20 years are the key target population for this work. Services for children and young people will be targeted to the localities with the highest level of need, ensuring that families living in these areas receive a good level of service.
26. Interventions will also target groups most affected by poverty including: families with English as an additional language; parents/carers with mental health concerns; and children/parents with special educational needs and disabilities.
27. Children with one or more disabled parents have a 30% chance of being in relative poverty; parents and children with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) are a key target group as they too are at risk of lower educational attainment and worklessness.

28. Both mothers and fathers are included in plans to tackle child poverty.

Safeguarding of Children and Adults at Risk Implications

29. It is widely understood that poor children are more likely to be on the child protection register than more privileged children and they are more likely to be taken into local authority care. Recent national research from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation indicates there is a link between poverty and child abuse and neglect, this link needs to be better understood in order to target services effectively.

Implications for Service Users

30. There will be a benefit to service users if the action plan is successfully implemented as it will tackle poverty in both the short, medium and long term. The focus is not only to reduce levels of child poverty but also to reduce the impact of poverty on children and families across Nottinghamshire.

Implications for Sustainability and the Environment

31. Economic regeneration is key to tackling child poverty as access to sustained, adequately paid employment is still recognised as a route out of poverty.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That:

- 1) the key findings and recommendations of the Child Poverty and Life Chances Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2016 be noted.
- 2) the Nottinghamshire Child Poverty and Life Chances Action Plan 2016-2017, attached as **Appendix 1**, be approved.

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Constitutional Comments (LM 23/09/16)

32. The recommendations in the report fall with the Terms of Reference of the Children and Young People's Committee.

Financial Comments (TMR 26/09/16)

33. There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

Child Poverty and Life Chances JSNA 2016

<http://jsna.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/insight/Strategic-Framework/Nottinghamshire-JSNA.aspx>

Nottinghamshire Child Poverty Strategy Literature Review

<http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/care/childrens-social-care/nottinghamshire-childrens-trust/child-poverty>

Working Together to Tackle Child Poverty in Nottinghamshire Stakeholder Briefing

<http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/media/110480/child-poverty-briefing.pdf>

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

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