

October 2014 Update to  
Building Aspiration: Working Together to Tackle  
Child and Family Poverty in Nottinghamshire

**Developed by the Tackling Child Poverty  
Reference Group**

- What is child poverty?
- Why tackling child poverty is still important to Nottinghamshire
- How the strategy is developing
- Next steps

## 1. Introduction

Nottinghamshire County Council and its partners have created a vision to support the Nottinghamshire Child Poverty Strategy. All partners signed up to the following vision:

**Nottinghamshire's Vision:** Our ambition is for Nottinghamshire to be a place where children grow up free from deprivation and disadvantage, and birth and social background do not hold people back from achieving their potential.

**Nottinghamshire's strategic objective:** We will work together to reduce levels of child poverty and to mitigate the effects of child poverty on children, young people and families, as well as on future generations.

The refresh to the Strategy includes:

- new data on child poverty levels in Nottinghamshire
- a new action plan
- revised governance and performance management arrangements.

### i What is Child Poverty?

Child Poverty is measured using the Children in Low-Income Families Local Measure<sup>1</sup>, which was established in **2011**. It defines the proportion of children living in families either in receipt of out-of-work benefits or in receipt of tax credits with a reported income which is less than 60% of national median income.

Previously known as the Revised Local Child Poverty Measure or National Indicator 116, this measure was renamed Children in Low-Income Families Local Measure to help distinguish these statistics from the Households Below Average Income (HBAI) publication, which provides the definitive national measure of relative child poverty as set out in the Child Poverty Act 2010.

Under the Child Poverty Act 2010 a child is defined as being in relative poverty if they live in a household with an income of less than 60% of the national median income. The Children in Low-Income Families Local Measure is based on administrative tax credits and benefit data sources and includes children who are living in families either in receipt of out-of-work benefits or in receipt of tax credits with reported income less than 60% of median income.

### ii Why tackling child poverty is still important to Nottinghamshire

Poverty can have a profound impact on the child, their family, and the rest of society. It often sets in motion a deepening spiral of social exclusion, creating problems in education, employment, mental and physical health and social interaction. We understand that tackling child poverty will improve the life chances of children and their parents now and in years to come. Tackling child poverty is not just about children and is a deep rooted issue affecting many of our communities. To this end, tackling child poverty is everybody's business and should be reflected in agency plans across the board.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.gov.uk/personal-tax-credits-children-in-low-income-families-local-measure>

Levels of child poverty in Nottinghamshire are slightly below the national and regional estimates. In 2008 it was reported that 16.8% of children (under the age of 20 years) were living in poverty in the County. In 2010 across Nottinghamshire 27,950 children and young people aged 0-19 years (*All Children*) were identified as living in poverty, which equates to 17.1% of the 0-19 years population. In 2011 that figure was reported as 27,700 equating to 17% of the population – a decrease by 0.1%. However, it should be noted that because of the change to the measure these figures are not directly comparable. The latest data, published in September 2014, reports that 26,225 children are living in poverty across Nottinghamshire, equating to 16% of the population, although it should be noted that this data only covers 2012.

Across Nottinghamshire there is some variation in the percentage of children living in poverty. According to the 2014 statistics:

- 72 wards out of 172 have levels of child poverty over the Notts average of 16%
- 52 wards out of 172 have levels of child poverty over the England average of 18.6%
- 10 wards out of 172 have levels of child poverty which exceed 30%.

The environment for tackling child poverty remains challenging. Welfare reform, rising fuel and food prices and lowering wages mean that child poverty figures are predicted to rise nationally over the next few years. The Institute of Fiscal Studies has predicted that relative child poverty will stand at 24% by the financial year 2020/21 – significantly more than the target of 10% set out in the Child Poverty Act 2010. This makes it more important than ever that we focus on effectively mitigating the effects of poverty on children.

## **2. How the Child Poverty Strategy for Nottinghamshire is developing**

Version 1 of the Strategy was developed in partnership and aimed to ensure that work to tackle poverty is embedded into the core business of Nottinghamshire County Council and its partners. The Child Poverty Reference Group asked Nottinghamshire County Council and its partners to adapt and align their existing priorities to tackle child poverty and provide evidence of its impact.

Version 1 of the Strategy was developed using findings from a comprehensive needs assessment, which included a service mapping exercise and literature review containing evidence of what works to reduce child poverty and what mitigates against the effects associated with it. A key recommendation of the needs assessment included the need to use evidence based practice to ensure the interventions we prioritise will have greatest impact.

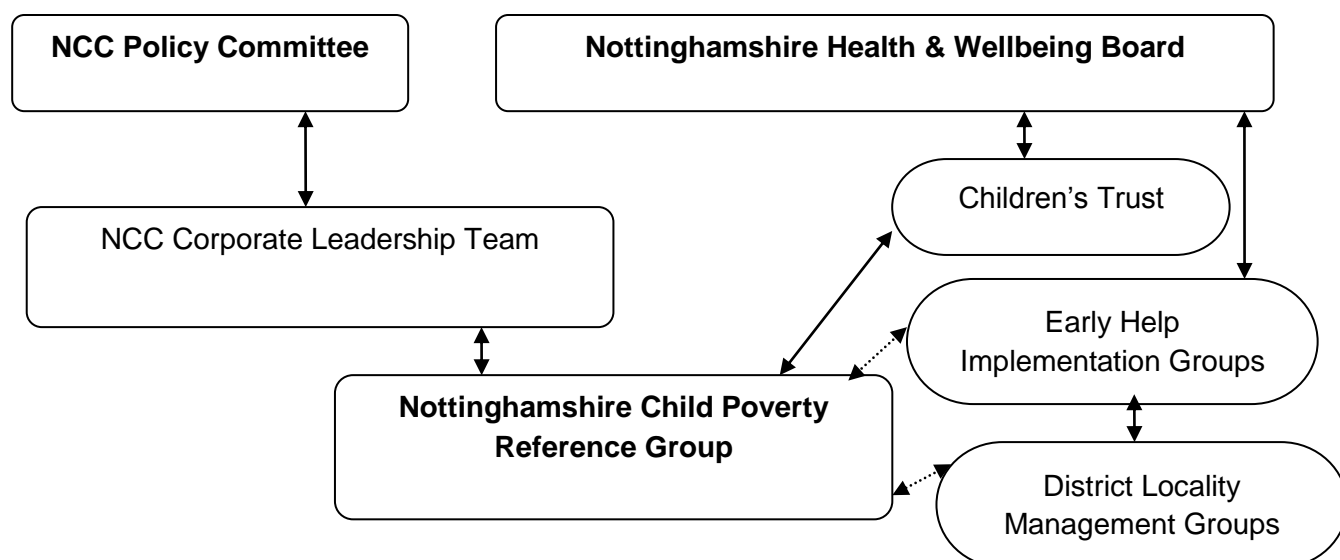
The findings from the needs assessment generated a series of recommendations which have been disseminated widely to inform the actions included in this Strategy. All partner organisations were asked to consider the recommendations which included evidence of what works, to inform a series of organisational pledges.

This refresh of the Child and Family Poverty Strategy develops the dependencies on other key strategies, including the national 2014 Child Poverty Strategy, the Early Years Strategy, the Closing the Educational Gaps Strategy and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy. It is also informed by evidence from the Sutton Trust, the Early Intervention Foundation and the annual report of the Chief Medical Officer. It is overarched by the Early Help Development Plan. The national 2014 Child Poverty Strategy re-affirms the Government's commitment to eradicating Child Poverty by 2020. It seeks to achieve this through creating jobs, supporting families into work, making work pay, tackling low pay and moving people into better paid jobs.

The Early Help offer is monitored on a locality level by the Early Help Implementation Groups and on a district level by the Locality Management Groups. These groups are multi-agency partnerships, chaired by NCC officers, and focus on district priorities and performance to meet a number of key targets.

The Strategy is also driven by the recognition that the effects of child poverty can be best mitigated by actions of partners on a local level and, in particular, targeting work in child poverty hotspots. This includes working with partners to implement the top ten tips for tackling child poverty on a district and ward basis. It is also about partners working together at a local level to ensure the most effective use of key funding streams such as those delivered through the Pupil Premium and Troubled Families. The development of locality based, integrated teams also provides an opportunity to further develop this work.

To this end, in 2014-15 the role of monitoring and reporting on performance to reduce and mitigate the effects of child poverty will be carried out through the Early Help Implementation Groups and the Locality Management Groups, and reported back to the Child Poverty Reference group. In turn the Child Poverty Reference Group will report on the County-wide performance to the Nottinghamshire Health and Wellbeing Board.



### 3. What we are aiming to achieve

The group recognises that the causes of poverty are multi-faceted and any effective strategy must address the primary, secondary and tertiary causes of poverty. There is also the recognition that child poverty levels are likely to rise in the current economic climate. However, there is a lot of evidence to support the view that by building resilience in children, adults and communities, we can mitigate the effects of poverty and prevent poor children becoming poor adults.

### 4. Our overall approach

We have developed a more focussed action plan, which builds on and streamlines the child poverty pledges approach.

This plan recognises that a significant amount of activity is already taking place across the County to address child poverty and this is reflected in key plans including the Early Help

Development Plan, the Closing the Educational Gaps Strategy, the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, the Community Safety Strategy and district council strategic plans.

Therefore, the plan seeks to add value by:-

- focusing on areas where a partnership approach will increase impact
- focusing on areas where further action is needed and where influence and impact is greatest.

Implicit in this is the recognition that tackling child poverty is everybody's business, not just Children and Young People's Services.

The plan format and content has been developed by drawing on models from across the region. It focuses on three key areas:-

- **short term** – mitigating the effects of poverty
- **medium term** – moving people out of poverty
- **long term** – preventing poor children from becoming poor adults.

## 5. Next Steps

- We will link with others both regionally and nationally to tackle child poverty and apply best practice from other areas in Nottinghamshire
- We will work with the Early Help Implementation Groups, Locality Management Groups and locality based teams to ensure that child poverty pledges are reflected in locality action plans and that support for families experiencing the effects of poverty is effectively mapped
- We will roll out child poverty training for frontline practitioners to ensure that their work is effective in tackling child poverty and its effects
- We will work with elected members to further engage them in the work of the Child Poverty Reference Group and the Nottinghamshire Child Poverty Commission
- The Nottinghamshire Child Poverty Strategy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Child Poverty Reference Group
- We will engage children and families experiencing poverty in order to evaluate progress and ensure that the Strategy is effective in meeting the needs of the poorest families in Nottinghamshire
- We will work with workforce development leads across the partnership to ensure the training and development needs of Nottinghamshire's workforce are identified and addressed in order to enable practitioners to take an active approach to identification and support for children and families in poverty.

The next review of the strategy will take place in October 2015.

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