Working Together to Tackle Child Poverty in Nottinghamshire

Stakeholder Briefing

the nottinghamshire partnership

all together better
The proportion of children in poverty is calculated as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of children in families in receipt of either out of work benefits or tax credits where their reported income is less than 60% median income</th>
<th>Total number of children in the area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Why Tackling Child Poverty Matters

Many people believe there is very little child poverty in the UK today, but this is not the case: currently there are 22% of children living in relative poverty in the UK. This represents 2.8 million children, of which 1.5 million live in families where at least one adult is in work. Poverty damages childhoods: some families cannot, for example, afford to keep their homes warm, or pay for basic necessities and activities, such as three meals a day, school uniforms or social outings. Children who grow up in poverty lack many of the experiences and opportunities that others take for granted, and can be exposed to severe hardship and social exclusion. Their childhood suffers as a result and this is unacceptable.

Child poverty has costs to individuals, to society, and to the economy. The facts across the UK are stark:

- Poverty in childhood can cause poverty in the future:
  - Poor children are less likely to achieve higher level skills and qualifications, which are critical to enter the workforce and progress in work, as well as to thrive in other areas of life. This in turn reduces economic productivity and stunts economic growth, limiting the UK's ability to compete in the global economy
  - Worklessness is often strongly linked to worklessness in previous generations, meaning children living in low income or workless families are considered to be most at risk of struggling to find work in later life
  - Children in workless households have a 59% chance of living in relative poverty
  - Children have a 53% risk of relative poverty in a family where at least one adult works part-time
  - Children in lone-parent families are more likely to live in low-income households than those in families with two adults, although there is a lower likelihood if the single parent works
  - Children with three or more disabled parents have a 30% chance of being in relative poverty
  - Children living in households headed by someone from a Black Minority Ethnic Group are more likely to live in low-income households
  - Only 35.5% of children eligible for Free School Meals receive five good GCSEs, compared to 62.8% of all children
  - Poor children are more likely to be on the child protection register than more privileged children
  - Poor children are more likely to be taken into Local Authority care
  - Children who live in poverty are almost twice as likely to be in bad housing. Children in bad housing are almost twice as likely to suffer from poor health as other children, and children in overcrowded or unfit housing are a third more likely to suffer respiratory problems than other children

### 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.

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.

We will work together to ensure that by 2020 there are less than 10% of children in Nottinghamshire who live in poverty in 2010/11 that equates to less than £361 per week before housing costs for a couple with two children.
Children living in fuel poor homes have a significantly greater risk of health problems, especially respiratory problems. Poorer weight gain and lower levels of adequate nutritional intake have also been found – a “heat-or-eat” effect. Furthermore, adolescents living in fuel poor homes are at significantly greater risk of multiple mental health problems when other contributory factors have been accounted for.

Children in poverty are 13 times more likely to die from unintentional injury and 27 times more likely to die from exposure to smoke, fire or flames.

Poverty is a major cause of ill health with huge public health consequences. For example teenage mothers are 22% more likely to be living in poverty than mothers giving birth aged 24 and over; young fathers are twice as likely to be unemployed at age 30 than men who become fathers after they turn 23 and children born to teenage mothers have a 63% higher risk of living in poverty, have lower academic attainment and are at higher risk of economic inactivity in later life.

Children in poverty are more likely to be born premature, have low birth weight and die in their first year of life.

Poorer outcomes for children and families place extra burdens and costs on public services, such as health care and children’s services. Communities experiencing increased deprivation and inequalities often also face lower levels of social cohesion and increased levels of crime (HMT, DWP, DCSF 2008).

As well as helping families through the current economic downturn, a focus must be maintained on the long-term to give families the opportunities to break out of inter-generational cycles of deprivation.

The Costs of Child Poverty

Failing to prevent children growing up in poor families is expensive for all of us. Children from low-income families are less likely to do well in school, and more likely to suffer ill-health and to face pressures that help to explain higher rates of anti-social behaviours and criminality. This is expensive both in terms of direct costs to services during and after childhood and in costs to the economy when children grow up, with some estimates putting the costs at £25 billion a year. These costs fall not just on children and families in poverty, but on communities and the taxpayer.

Cost to the Economy

Child poverty is estimated to cost the economy £13 billion. This is made up of a £2 billion benefits bill, £3 billion in lost tax and National Insurance and £8 billion in net earnings lost.

Public Sector Costs

Child poverty costs about £12 billion a year to the public sector. 6.7% of primary education and 7% of secondary education spending is as a result of child poverty. £1.653bn is spent on social housing (not including housing benefit) and it will cost £1.697bn to bring the existing housing stock to adequate standards. £0.926bn is spent on fire and rescue, and estimates on crime and policing range from £1.06bn to £4.16bn.

There is a strong case for local partners to focus on tackling child poverty

Families will be better off:
- More children will achieve
- Able to make a positive contribution
- More inclusion and opportunity
- Less stress, debt and difficulty
- Increased wellbeing
- Better long term outcomes

Communities will be better off:
- Less deprivation and disadvantage
- More spending in the community
- Investment in the local economy

Local services will benefit:
- Better outcomes and more targets met
- Reduced need for services leading to savings.

Local Child Poverty Data

A full needs assessment to understand the picture of child poverty in Nottinghamshire is underway and will be published in March 2011. The following data provides a flavour of some of the key issues for children and families across Nottinghamshire.

- In 2008 there were 16.8% of children living in poverty, which equates to 27,080 children. 17.4% of under 16’s are considered to be in poverty. Since 2007 there has been a 0.1% reduction in the number of children living in poverty.

- In districts there is wide variation in the percentage of children living in poverty. In 2008, districts were ranked as follows: Mansfield (22.7%), Ashfield (21.7%), Bassetlaw (18.3%), Newark and Sherwood
(16.8%), Gelding (15.0%), Broxtowe (14.2%), and Rushcliffe (7.9%). All districts have a greater proportion of under 16's who live in poverty.

- In Nottinghamshire in 2008 there were 20,605 children living in households reliant on Income Support or Job Seekers Allowance, of whom 15,205 were in lone parent households. When broken down at district level there is a marked difference in the numbers reliant on Income Support and Job Seekers Allowance - Ashfield (4,305), Mansfield (3,970), Bassetlaw (3,240), Newark and Sherwood (3,100), Gedling (2,530), Broxtowe (2,230), and Rushcliffe (1,230).

- Overall child poverty data masks pockets of deprivation and poverty in each district. Child poverty is concentrated in the north-west of the county, with additional clusters in Retford, Newark, Arnold and Carlton, Hucknall and several scattered wards in Broxtowe.

- Rushcliffe overall has the lowest rates of child poverty in Nottinghamshire, and yet has wards with high levels of child poverty, including Cotgrave, Bingham West and Keyworth South.

- 14,463 school pupils are eligible for free school meals in Nottinghamshire, 12.55% of the whole school population. The highest numbers are in Ashfield and Mansfield districts. There were higher than average absences from school in 2008/09 amongst pupils eligible for free school meals; and they are 5.1 times more likely to be permanently excluded and 3.6 times more likely to receive a fixed period exclusion.

- 46% of 14-18 year olds are confident about the job opportunities available in Nottinghamshire and 41% are not. Only 23% of young people currently Not in Education, Training or Employment (NEET) are confident the job opportunities they want are available in the county.

- There are higher numbers of young people in NEET in Mansfield, Ashfield and Bassetlaw. Teenage mothers and young people with learning difficulties and disabilities are over-represented in NEET, as are looked after children/care leavers and young offenders.

- In March 2009, just under 100 families in Nottinghamshire with dependent children were accommodated in temporary accommodation. This compares to 142 the previous year (JSNA 2010).

**Why Do We Need a Child Poverty Strategy?**

The Child Poverty Act obtained Royal Assent on 25 March 2010. The Act requires the Secretary of State to meet four targets to eradicate child poverty by 2020. It requires a strategy every three years to meet these targets. The Act introduces new duties on local authorities and their named local partners to:

a) **Co-operate** to put in place arrangements to work with partners to reduce, and mitigate the effects of, child poverty.

b) Prepare and publish a **local child poverty needs assessment** to understand the drivers of child poverty in their local area and the characteristics of those living in poverty.

c) Prepare a **joint child poverty strategy** setting out measures that the local authority and each named partner propose to take to reduce, and mitigate the effects of, child poverty in their local area.

d) Local Authorities to take their duty to reduce child poverty into account when preparing and revising their **Sustainable Community Strategies**.

Child poverty is about families, communities and economic prosperity. Therefore, every organisation has a role to play. The strategy will bring together existing priorities and plans in order for all partners to agree collective action to reduce child poverty and mitigate its effects.

**Tackling Child Poverty Effectively Requires a Partnership Approach**

A response to child poverty requires partnership between stakeholders at a local level: public services, private and voluntary sector, along with communities and families themselves. Reducing child poverty is not about children and family services doing something different, or more or less. Acting alone, children’s services can mitigate against some of the impacts of child poverty. But a genuine local collaboration is essential to significantly reduce the incidence and impact of child poverty on children’s outcomes.
The diagram below illustrates the range of organisations and communities that have a role to play in reducing child poverty and mitigating the effects of poverty.

For example, training providers have a role in providing flexible training to meet the needs of parents and employers; housing providers have a role to ensure that children and their families live in good quality, secure and stable environments; visiting midwives are in an ideal position to identify whether a home is too cold and to signpost the parents to ask their fuel supplier about the social tariffs and insulation measures they may be entitled to.

The Four Building Blocks for the Child Poverty Strategy Will Lead to Improved Outcomes

The national Child Poverty Strategy focuses on four Building Blocks of Child Poverty, underpinned by attention to at risk groups; these provide a powerful framework for the engagement of all key partners in progressing the development of a local strategy and needs assessment.
The detail of each building block is provided below:

- **Employment and skills:** Covers worklessness, promoting parental employment by addressing barriers to work – such as ill-health and disability, lack of skills and labour market experience, lack of childcare and flexible working arrangements. It also looks at in-work poverty.

- **Family and life chances:** Recognises that there are significant barriers to some disadvantaged children and young people achieving positive health, educational and future employment outcomes. The aim is to remove these barriers through interventions at key stages and help reduce intergenerational poverty. The approach is to investigate which policies show evidence of having a positive impact on children living in poverty and then identify what further action is needed to improve these outcomes.

- **Financial support:** Explores the potential for benefits to have a positive impact on child poverty to increase take up by vulnerable groups and improve work incentives for workless households. The building block is also exploring financial inclusion, debt and capability to help some of the most vulnerable engage with the benefit system and other forms of support, in conjunction with voluntary and community sector organisations.

- **Place and delivery:** Focuses on housing, transport, crime and communities. Localism and the ‘big society’ approach are driving the agenda, and services are being encouraged to establish a clearer picture of their role and what the impact of their regional and area-based activities are on decreasing child poverty.

### Priorities for the Nottinghamshire Partnership

The Nottinghamshire Sustainable Community Strategy includes six priorities, and these are:

1. A greener Nottinghamshire
2. A place where Nottinghamshire’s children achieve their full potential
3. A safer Nottinghamshire
4. Health and well-being for all
5. A more prosperous Nottinghamshire
6. Making Nottinghamshire’s communities stronger

“We must put Nottinghamshire firmly on the map. We want to increase tourism, and promote the county both nationally and internationally. We want people to feel happy living and working here, and also want to encourage people to visit and explore the county. We want Nottinghamshire to thrive with companies from all over the world investing here. We are proud of our past, but also very ambitious for our future”. (Nottinghamshire Sustainable Community Strategy 2010).

### Priorities for District Local Strategic Partnerships

In two-tier areas, district councils, as partner authorities, have responsibility for a range of services which can impact significantly on reducing child poverty and improving the wellbeing of children in the local area. Other services, such as housing and transport, although not aimed primarily at children, can improve their wellbeing and so mitigate the effects of growing up in poverty. Each District has a Local Strategic Partnership which brings together a range of local services who come together to improve outcomes in a local area. It is envisaged that alongside their Children and Young People’s Plan each district LSP will also be tasked to include child poverty in their local planning through their Sustainable Community Strategies.

The table below shows the relevant priorities for each LSP as identified in their Sustainable Community Strategies and District Council plans. This information will be used to shape the child poverty strategy for Nottinghamshire.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ashfield</th>
<th>Life Chances</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Employment &amp; Skills</th>
<th>Financial Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Improving life chances and helping children and young people to maximise their potential</td>
<td>Making our communities strong, active and cohesive</td>
<td>Creating a diverse, competitive and prosperous economy.</td>
<td>Tackle Worklessness and dependency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Develop and improve Aspiration, Skills and Employment for all and improve educational attainment of our children and young people.</td>
<td>Tackle neighbourhood deprivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ensure we get the maximum benefit from the resources available</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bassetlaw</strong></td>
<td><strong>Broxtowe</strong></td>
<td><strong>Gedling</strong></td>
<td><strong>Mansfield</strong></td>
<td><strong>Newark &amp; Sherwood</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce the number of teenage pregnancies.</td>
<td>Children grow personally and socially outside of poverty, are aspirational and are respected for participating in the community.</td>
<td>Minimise Incidence of homelessness in Gedling.</td>
<td>Narrow the gap between local and national figures for pupil attainment</td>
<td>Focus on wards with hot spot teenage pregnancy rates, making effective use of current resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce the prevalence of childhood obesity and promote healthy living.</td>
<td>Reduce health inequalities.</td>
<td>Improve the quality if housing in Gedling.</td>
<td>Provide better community-based activities for young people</td>
<td>Support work which aims to raise aspirations and self esteem of young people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tackle rural isolation.</strong></td>
<td>Everyone has access to a good quality affordable home, with access to excellent community facilities.</td>
<td>Improve the quality of life of residents in local neighbourhoods.</td>
<td>Reduce drug and alcohol abuse</td>
<td>Reduce the condition of existing homes, taking action to reduce carbon emissions and fuel poverty and raising standards of maintenance and management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Increase the aspirations of young people and support increased attainment and positive contributions.</strong></td>
<td>A clean and green place.</td>
<td>Minimise the impact of unemployment and worklessness.</td>
<td>Reduce domestic violence</td>
<td>Deliver an increased supply and choice of affordable housing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A thriving and vibrant place with access to services, jobs and opportunities for all.</strong></td>
<td>A safe place, where crime is under control.</td>
<td>Raise local skills levels to meet the requirements of ‘high value’ jobs.</td>
<td>Reduce the number of first time entrants to the Youth Justice system</td>
<td>Focused work in areas of deprivation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Improve access to jobs, homes and services through the creation of a high quality transport interchange.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Develop study support for pupils</strong></td>
<td><strong>Provide homes that meet the needs of residents and are affordable</strong></td>
<td><strong>Provide vocational programmes for schools</strong></td>
<td><strong>Facilitate improved access to employment opportunities for local people and publicise job vacancies.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A focused work in areas of deprivation.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Encourage local rural business development and employment opportunities.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Provide vocational based training.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Collaborate with higher and further education organisations to encourage higher educational and skills levels.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Encourage local rural business development and employment opportunities.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Recommendations for Organisations and Frontline Services

Tackling child poverty is not new, we ask for those working in frontline services with children, young people or families to ‘Think Poverty’ when they work with service users. We are encouraging organisations to talk about opportunities to increase skills, employment, benefit entitlements and other interventions available to help reduce poverty in Nottinghamshire.

We are encouraging those working with children and adults to ‘Think Family’. For example consider the needs of an adult as a parent or carer and consider the needs of a family of children accessing services and interventions.

For more information contact: Irene Kakoullis on 0115 977 4431 irene.kakoullis@nottscc.gov.uk or go to www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/childpoverty

References

10. A Bebbington and J Miles The background of Children who enter Local Authority Care British Journal of Social Work 19, 1989 pp349-68
17. UK Public Spending Details for 2009 http://www.ukpublicspending.co.uk/uk_education_budget_2009_2.html
24. Nottinghamshire JSNA September 2010
25. Nottinghamshire JSNA September 2010
26. Nottinghamshire JSNA September 2010
27. Nottinghamshire JSNA September 2010