

Poverty Action Strategy and Action Plan

Consultation

July 2022

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Background

- Poverty Action strategy and plan for County Durham since 2014 and reviewed regularly
- 2020 review broadened the scope to include the immediate impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and deliver targeted interventions with the aim:

“to improve the standard of living and daily lives of those residents in County Durham who are currently experiencing immediate financial hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic and associated economic shocks; and to help alleviate long term issues that can lead households on low incomes to experience financial pressures and poverty”



Partnership working has been key....



- Advice in County Durham Partnership - referral portal, partnership training
- Social landlords - DHPs
- Private landlords – ‘stop before you serve’
- Schools – food vouchers for FSM eligible children, poverty proofing the school day
- Partners working with families and children – Covid Winter Grant/Local Covid Support/Household Support Fund etc.
- Holiday Activities with food programme
- Partners identifying vulnerable households and administering support – food/fuel
- GPs – Warm Homes referrals
- Health Visitors – Healthy Start voucher take up
- Foodbanks – grant funding, DCC staff volunteers
- The Bread and Butter Thing – grant funding
- Community Groups and AAPs – holiday activities with food programme and bespoke community initiatives/projects
- Credit Union – promoting safe credit and a savings culture
- AND MANY MORE!

Emerging issues...

- 'Cost of living crisis':
 - Wages forecasted to fall in real terms (after inflation) this year and next
 - National Insurance increase
 - Highest recorded levels of inflation since 1992
 - Food prices rising at quickest rate in a decade
 - Increase in household energy costs as a result of increased wholesale prices and an increase in the domestic energy price cap
 - Increased fuel costs for drivers and increased public transport costs
 - Increases in the costs of consumer goods such as white goods and furniture due to supply chain bottlenecks and rising inflation



Equals =

- Increased demand for financial support from the council
- Increased demand for support from partners
- New cohorts of residents requesting support for the first time

.... challenges

- Increase in levels of poverty
- Changing access to services
- Impact on volunteering
- Increased complexity of need
- Comms: Need for good, easily accessible information on provision
- Focus on areas we need to improve (customer journey)
- Improving data sharing
- Building on what's in place....innovating through collaboration
- Organisations returning pre-COVID service levels at different times
- Yet unknown post-COVID issues/'cost of living crisis' impacts



Where we are now...



- Current review identifies opportunities for additional preventative work to prevent households getting into financial difficulties
- Builds on where we've been and where we want to get to:
 - Embraced new ways of working
 - Rapid responses
 - Collaboration between services
 - Good information about our communities
 - Sense of public confidence in what we were delivering
 - Voluntary sector partnerships delivered in the main
 - Community spirit came to the forefront

Thrive Model





Inclusive economic strategy

- Communities and businesses asked to play a crucial role in developing an inclusive and pioneering economic strategy through “Our Big Econ-versation”
- New strategy developed which aims to:
 - build on our strengths
 - ensure people and places are at the heart of all future plans
 - rebuild a powerful economy
- Summer 2022 – consultation on the draft strategy
- Late Autumn 2022 – launch County Durham’s Inclusive Economic Strategy

Revised strategy and action plan

Vision: *To work together with communities so fewer people will be affected by poverty and deprivation in the county*



Objective 1: Use intelligence and data to target support to low-income households

Objective 2: Reduce the financial pressures on people facing or in poverty

Objective 3: Increase individual, household and community resilience to poverty

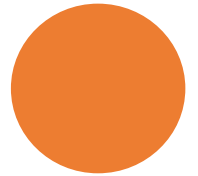
Objective 4: Reduce barriers to accessing services for those experiencing financial insecurity

Child Poverty

- **Multi-agency working group**—developed a Plan on a Page 2022-23
- **Vision:** *Children, young people and families have the resources to meet their basic needs, including accessing opportunities to take part in society*

Priorities:

1. To understand the level and impact of poverty on children, young people and families in County Durham in order to better target support and resources;
2. Practitioners across the County Durham Partnership have the skills and knowledge to help support children and families who are affected by poverty at the earliest opportunity;
3. Promote social inclusion to ensure ALL children , young people and families have access to culture, leisure , sport and wellbeing activities;
4. Raise aspirations and resilience of children and young people making the move into further education, training or employment.



Priority Actions

- Utilising THRIVE Model revise and relaunch '**Cutting Cost of the Schools Day**' programme
- Deliver DfE Holiday Activities with Food programme
- Train staff in **financial ability** and to use **AiCD Portal**
- Increase the uptake of **Healthy Start Vouchers**
- Through co-production with children and families to develop and implement a programme to increase the uptake of financial support including **Free School Meals** available to families.
- Utilising the Approach to Wellbeing model to develop and implement an approach to promoting social inclusion for children, young people and families to facilitate **accessible leisure, cultural, sport and wellbeing activities**.
- Durham Works will provide support to **young people who are NEET** to progress into sustained education, employment and training pathways, including **Apprenticeships**;





Group discussion

- Are these the right objectives?
- Where are the gaps/what more do we need to do?
- Are there any groups of people missing?
- [Strategy and action plan available online](#)
- Feedback and comments before **26 August 2022** via
- <https://online1.snapsurveys.com/Poverty> or
- Email: povertyaction@durham.gov.uk

Next steps



- May-August 2022 – consultation with key partners and stakeholders
- September 2022 – strategy and action plan finalised
- November 2022 – Cabinet approval
- November 2022 > - delivery