

Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee

7 October 2022



Child Poverty in County Durham

Report of John Pearce, Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 The report accompanies a presentation to Durham County Council's Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny members on the progress of the Child Poverty Working Group (CPWG) in addressing the impact of poverty on children, young people and their families in County Durham since the last update in January 2022.

Executive summary

- 2 Poverty can affect every area of a child's development: social, educational, health and personal. Living in a poor household can reduce children's expectations of their lives and lead to a cycle where poverty is repeated from generation to generation. As adults, they are more likely to suffer ill health, be unemployed or homeless, and become involved in offending, drug and alcohol abuse and abusive relationships.
- 3 Child poverty in County Durham continues to be on the rise with an estimated 28.9% of children under the age of 16 living in relative poverty in the year 2020/21 and 27.3% for children aged 0-19 years. Between 2015/16 and 2021/22 the number of pupils known to be eligible for, and claiming, free school meals increased by 60%, rising to over 21,200 eligible pupils. We also know approximately 24% of families eligible for FSM do not take up the offer.
- 4 The County Durham Child Poverty Working Group under the guidance of the Poverty Action Steering Group has continued to be proactive and responsive to the impact of poverty, the additional burden COVID-19 presented and the current cost of living crisis. This has involved the proactive development and implementation of a range of support to mitigate the impact of poverty for children and families including the County Durham Fun and Food programme, dissemination of the Household Support Fund, ongoing promotion of Healthy Start and further development of the Cutting Cost of the School and Preschool Day. A comprehensive Child Poverty Briefing outlining

all available help and support has been circulated to all Council Members in September 2022.

Recommendation(s)

- 5 Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee are recommended to:
 - (a) note the contents of the report; and
 - (b) provide comment to inform future priorities.

Background

- 6 Poverty can affect every area of a child's development: social, educational, health and personal. Living in a poor household can reduce children's expectations of their lives and lead to a cycle where poverty is repeated from generation to generation. As adults, they are more likely to suffer ill health, be unemployed or homeless, and become involved in offending, drug and alcohol abuse and abusive relationships
- 7 It is estimated that approximately 4.5 million children live in poverty in the UK and poverty rates are highest amongst families with children. (Social Metrics Commission 2020). The poverty rate for people living in couple families without children is 11% (1.4 million people). This compares to 26% (5.9 million people) for people in couple families with children and 48% (2.4 million people) for those in lone-parent families. Nearly two thirds (63%) of people in poverty live in a family where someone works at least part time.

Child Poverty Working Group

- 8 The Child Poverty Working Group recognises the need to coordinate a multi-agency strategic approach to address the causes of and impact of poverty on children, young people and families living in County Durham. The working group have agreed the Joseph Rowntree Foundation definition of poverty: ***'When a person's resources are well below their minimum needs, including the need to take part in society'***. The group agreed this definition describes not only monetary and resource poverty but also poverty of opportunity.
- 9 The CPWG has developed a plan on a page (see Appendix 2) to prioritise actions to mitigate the impact of poverty on children and families across County Durham. The Child Poverty plan on a page and associated action plan will be presented to Cabinet in November. The plan focusses on four key priorities which are:
 - (a) 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

- (b) Practitioners across the County Durham Partnership have the skills and knowledge to identify and support children and families affected by poverty at the earliest opportunity
- (c) Promote social inclusion to ensure all children, young people and families have access to culture, leisure, sport and wellbeing
- (d) Raise aspirations and resilience of children and young people making the move into further education, training or employment.

Priority 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

County Durham Child Poverty data and intelligence

- 10 The percentage of children living in relative poverty (aged 0-19) 2020/21 in County Durham is 27.3% compared to 28.9% in the Northeast and 18.5% in England. County Durham has seen an increase from 24.4% in 2019/20.
- 11 Following the Spring 2022 school census, Free School Meals (FSM) eligibility in County Durham is at 29.4% (21,200 pupils) compared with 23.9% (17,200 pupils) in the Spring 2020 census, an increase of 4,000 pupils.
- 12 A recent report by the North East Child Poverty Commission: '[Getting the building blocks wrong: Early childhood poverty in the North East](#)'. highlights almost two in five children in the Northeast (38%) are living in poverty. This rises to almost half – 47% – of Northeast children living in a household with an under 5. The report also highlights the northeast is experiencing a much steeper increase in 'in-work' child poverty than that seen across the UK.
- 13 The Research & Public Health Intelligence Team have developed detailed child poverty data which is now readily available on [Durham Insights](#).
 - (a) **Relative Poverty:** In the financial year 2020/21 an estimated 28.9% of children under the age of 16 were living in relative poverty in County Durham. Across the Northeast the figure was slightly higher at 29.6% while nationally (England) the figure was 18.5%. For County Durham this is an increase from 18.5% in 2015/16, with the number of children in living in relative poverty rising from an estimated 16,400 (children under 16) to 26,300.
 - (i) An estimated 30.5% of children aged 0 to 4 were living in relative poverty – an increase of 30.6% in the number of children aged 0 to 4 since 2015/16.
 - (ii) The number of children aged 5 to 10 increased during this period, rising by 76% to 27.6% of children aged 5 to 10.
 - (iii) The 11 to 15 age group increased the most, increasing by 81.7%, rising to 28.9% of children aged 11 to 15.

- (iv) The 16 to 19 age group increased by 36.6%, rising to 23.6% of children aged 16 to 19 living in relative poverty.
- (b) **Absolute Poverty:** In the financial year 2020/21 an estimated 26.4% of children under the age of 16 were living in absolute poverty in County Durham. Across the Northeast the figure was slightly higher at 27.1% while nationally (England) the figure was 15.2%. For County Durham this is an increase from 17.2% in 2015/16, with the number of children living in absolute poverty rising from an estimated 15,300 (aged children under 16) to 24,100.
- (i) an estimated 28.3% of children aged 0 to 4 were living in absolute poverty – an increase of 29.8% in the number of children aged 0 to 4 since 2015/16.
 - (ii) The 5 to 10 age group increased during this period, rising by 71.7% to 25% of children aged 5 to 10.
 - (iii) The 11 to 15 age group increased the most, increasing by 78.7%, rising to 26.5% of children aged 11 to 15.
 - (iv) The 16 to 19 age group increased by 34.6%; this meant a rise from 15.2% to 22% of 16 to 19's living in absolute poverty.
- (c) **Free School Meals:** Between 2015/16 and 2021/22, figures released by DfE estimated the number of pupils known to be eligible for and claiming free school meals increased by 60% rising to over 21,200 eligible pupils, while the number of pupils on roll increased by 2.3%. Across England the number of pupils known to be eligible for and claiming free school meals increased by 52%, rising to 20.8% with the number of pupils on roll increasing by only 0.6%. The Research & Public Health Intelligence Team has disaggregated FSM eligibility data from the school census to local areas to produce a local FSM proxy measure (Ward, Area Action Partnership (AAP) and Family First Areas (FFA) with the following results:
- (i) Aycliffe West ward had the highest eligibility at 46.5%, followed by Peterlee East (49.2%), Horden (44.6%) and Woodhouse Close ward (43.7%);
 - (ii) Of the 63 wards, 32 had higher proportions than the county average;
 - (iii) Bishop Auckland and Shildon AAP had the highest proportion of pupils eligible for FSM at 37.4%, followed by the 4 Together AAP with 36.7%;
 - (iv) Of the 14 AAPs, six had higher proportions than the county average;

- (v) Easington Families First Area (FFA) had the highest proportion of pupils eligible for FSM at 39.5%, followed by Shildon, South Church & Chilton FFA at 38.7%. Of the 14 FFAs, nine had higher proportions than the county average;
 - (vi) Children with a SEN Support Plan or Education Health and Care Plan show disproportional disadvantage, for example, 61.5% of pupils living in the Urpeth Lower Super Output Area (LOSA) were eligible for FSM, with on average over one in four (28.6%) eligible for FSM across the county.
 - (vii) one in four, round 24% (DfE) of families eligible for FSM do not take up offer in 2020/21.
- (d) **Deprivation Measure:** County Durham is ranked 48 out of 151 upper tier local authorities in England with rank 1 being the most deprived (2019) (up from the ID2015 ranking of 59th).
- (e) **Universal Credit Claims:** The number of households in County Durham claiming Universal Credit (UC) has increased by 52.6% since February 2020, rising to nearly 43,500 households in May 2022. This large rise in is, in part, likely due to the effects of the COVID19 lockdown. Within this group the proportion of households claiming UC with children is around 44.9%, with the largest concentration in single parent households where 33.2% of households claiming UC were single parent households (14,400 households in May 2022). 'Couple' households with children represented around 11.8% of UC households, a rise of 65.9% since May 2022, rising to 5,100 households.
- 14 It is clear from the data and intelligence collated on child poverty in County Durham that more children are living in poverty that in previous years. One third of children aged between 0-4 years live in households deemed in relative poverty. Steep increases in the % of children of school age living in poverty is also seen across County Durham. Localities such as Peterlee, Easington, Woodhouse Close, Shildon and Newton Aycliffe West consistently have high levels of child poverty. It is also evident children with Special Needs and /or Disability (SEND) are overrepresented in child poverty measures.

Priority 2: Practitioners across the County Durham Partnership have the skills and knowledge to identify and support children and families affected by poverty at the earliest opportunity

Training for frontline staff

- 15 A Financial Ability Training programme has been developed for all frontline practitioners including Social Workers and One Point staff and key partners. The training will help equip frontline staff to discuss family finances, effective

budgeting, as well as provide access to range of help and support available to families.

Advice in County Durham Portal

- 16 The Advice in County Durham (AiCD) portal provides a quick and simple referral pathway to a broad range of support services for families including benefit and debt advice. All One Point Service practitioners have been trained and registered to use the Advice in County Durham (AiCD) portal. Plans are currently underway to implement a new system to replace current portal and once completed a plan will be implemented to train health visitors, school nurses and children services social workers to use a new the new portal.

Help and support available for families

- 17 A dedicated web page [Help with your money](#) has been developed for County Durham residents and provides specific help and guidance to families with children. The page has information on a range of support available including applying for Healthy Start, applying for Free School Meals (FSM), debt advice/financial help and help with heating and fuel bills. Practitioners have access to the Financial Support leaflets and are encouraged to share with families that they are supporting. Please see Appendix 3 for leaflets.

Healthy Start Voucher Scheme

- 18 The County Durham Healthy Weight Alliance aims to increase the uptake of families accessing the Healthy Start Vouchers and to increase the uptake of fruit and vegetables. Healthy Start Vouchers have recently changed to a prepaid card method that is topped up each week to spend on milk, fresh, frozen, and tinned fruit and vegetables, fresh, dried, and tinned pulses, and infant formula milk. Healthy Start vouchers are available for women from the 10th week of pregnancy to the child being four years old where they are eligible for certain benefits [Healthy Start: do I qualify?](#). What families can get:
- a) £4.25 each week of your pregnancy from the 10th week
 - b) £8.50 each week for children from birth to 1 year
 - c) £4.25 each week for children between 1 and 4 years
 - d) vitamin coupons
- 19 Due to the recent change to the prepaid card arrangement and the need for families to register for this method, take up rates are not yet available.

Cutting the Cost of the School and Pre School-Day

- 20 The need to address poverty within education settings is a priority. Evidence suggests the cost of the school and preschool day to be significant on low-income families and has the potential to negatively impact on educational opportunities and outcomes. The Child Poverty Working Group aims to support all schools, nurseries and colleges to mitigate the negative impact of poverty on children and has developed a range of cutting cost of the school/pre-school day initiatives.
- 21 The 'Cutting the Cost of the School Day' (CCSD) was developed and introduced in 2019. The associated training aimed to support educational settings to gain a deeper insight into the scale and impact of poverty on children and young people, to challenge the stigma associated with living in poverty and support settings to develop practical steps in which to cut the cost of the school day.
- 22 Prior to Covid 106 schools/nurseries have undertaken the training programme. 97% of participants reported that the training offered them the opportunity to learn something new with qualitative feedback highlighting the importance of spending time reflecting on poverty from an educational perspective.
- 23 Due to the impact of Covid, the CCSD has not been delivered to schools since 2020. This has however provided an opportunity to revise the programme and develop a bespoke programme for nursery schools. The Thrive model has been applied to this work, ensuring all schools, nurseries and colleges get a range of resources and information to help them consider the impact of poverty for their pupils and the educational establishments in areas of high deprivation will be targeted and offered more in-depth training and support during 2022/23.

Support to pay for school uniforms

- 24 The Department for Education has published new statutory guidance for schools which seeks to make school uniform more affordable for families. The guidance includes measures on second-hand uniforms, schools' arrangements with suppliers, and ensuring parents have access to clear information about uniform policies. The Children's Society in collaboration with Child Poverty Action Group has developed guidance for schools to help [Affordable School Uniforms: A Guide](#).
- 25 A dedicated web page has been developed for families to find out about this support [Help with buying items for school - Durham County Council](#). Families who are in receipt of child benefit and require help with buying items for school can also apply for a NE First Credit Union Family Loan. This can provide a parent with a loan of up to £500 without having a credit check. A Family Loan allows families to access a cash loan up front to purchase the required items as well as giving the option to save each month for the future. In a partnership agreement between Durham County Council and NE First

Credit Union, an interest free loan of up to £450 plus £50 savings deposit is being offered to qualifying residents. CYPS practitioners are able to refer families who they feel might meet the requirements for the loan. With a sharp rise in applications to high interest lenders expected in the coming months, with rates as high as 2000% APR, this loan can offer a significant lifeline for anyone who needs emergency money.

Free School Meals

- 26 Eligibility for free school meals increased across the county between 2015/16 and 2021/22 and pushed the total to 21,200 eligible pupils, however, nearly one in four, around 24%, were not claimed in 2020/21. A number of specific actions have been taken to increase the uptake of FSM for eligible families including;
- (a) introduction of biometric systems in schools (mostly secondary) so that FSM pupils/students are not identifiable;
 - (b) pupil led School Nutrition Action Groups (SNAGS) are encouraged to consider how their school approaches FSM take up. Schools then develop their own action plans to address the issue;
 - (c) encouraging schools to use the FSM eligibility checking system (run by the catering support team) so that families do not have to produce benefits related paperwork – and take it to admin within a school;
 - (d) monitoring of take up within each primary school in the School Meals contract. Schools with low take up are discussed and relevant action plans are developed to encourage take up for all pupils (not just FSM);
 - (e) schools sharing clear and simple information on their websites about the benefits of FSM / Healthy Start vouchers and how to apply.
 - (f) schools encouraging parents to apply as it supports the school with Pupil Premium funding.
 - (g) schools introducing a 'free' breakfast for any FSM pupil – (encourages pupils/ families to apply for FSM).
 - (h) extending the lunchtime period in secondary schools so that students can use their FSM entitlement for mid-morning break (especially for pupils may not have had breakfast).
- 27 Data and intelligence regarding the uptake of Household Support Fund vouchers aimed at FSM eligible families will be used to identify schools with low take up to better understand barriers to FSM. Schools with low uptake will also be targeted through the Cutting Cost of the School Day development and implementation.

Period Products Scheme

- 28 The [Period Poverty scheme](#) has been extended into the academic year 2022/23 and is available to all state maintained schools and 16 to 19 education establishments in England. It provides anyone who has periods access to tampons, pads and more through their school or college if, for example, they can't afford period products, have forgotten to bring them to school or college or have come on their period unexpectedly. Further information and guidance is available [Period products in schools and colleges - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) A communication to schools took place in September to ensure all schools have access to this offer.

Additional access to financial support for families

Household Support Fund

- 29 The Household Support Fund has continued to provide vulnerable families with additional help and support. In the Spring Budget, the Government announced a further allocation of HSF, with Durham's allocation being £4,676,099 to be administered between 1 April and 30 September 2022. The grant conditions for this round stated that at least one third of the total funding will be ring-fenced to support households with children and provided the following support from DCC:
- (a) A one-off food voucher payment of £75 to families with children on FSM (aged 0-19).
 - (b) a one-off distribution of food vouchers to care leavers, worth £60 each.
 - (c) **School Support Fund** - Schools/colleges receive a small grant to support their most vulnerable families facing financial difficulties and ensure that children and young people can attend education settings with the required resources. The funding can support any family the school/college have identified are facing financial difficulty (this includes children not eligible for EYPP or Free School Meals). Funding can be used to support pre-school and 6th form provision attached to a school. Funding can support such things as:
 - (i) essential school uniform and equipment including stationery, school bags.
 - (ii) winter clothing (including coats, hats, gloves, underwear /socks
 - (iii) footwear
 - (iv) pe kit
 - (v) family food parcels / vouchers
 - (vi) essential household items including white goods
 - (vii) other essential items (including clothing, bedding, personal hygiene and cleaning products)

Stronger Families Grant and Greggs Foundation Trust Fund

- 30 The Stronger Families Grant (£50,000 p.a.) and Greggs Foundation Trust contribution (£13,500 p.a.) continues to be utilised by frontline practitioners in Children Services and the wider County Durham Partnership. In the financial year 2021/22 approximately £50,600 has been expended across all Stronger Families grants with 311 awards to families including disposal of bulky waste, home safety equipment, household furniture such as beds and carpets. An ongoing Service Level Agreements (SLA) have been extended with East Durham Partnership and County Durham Furniture Help Scheme to provide furniture and white goods, ensuing local community provides are also supported.

Feeding Families Food Parcels and Hygiene Packs

- 31 In partnership with the Northeast charity Feeding Families and the Rotary Club, approximately 20 food parcels are delivered fortnightly to 4 DCC One Point buildings across the county. Demand for these continue to be high and are accessed by frontline practitioners supporting those most in need.
- 32 This partnership has been in existence since 2021 and in addition to the Christmas hamper scheme, it ensures year-round supply to food for our most vulnerable children, young people and families.
- 33 The partnership recently extended their offer and we have now arranged for hygiene packs to be delivered to the Adolescent Safeguarding and Exploitation Team. Packs include a range of personal hygiene products and will be specifically made up for teenage males and teenage females. Several charitable organisations such as 'Just Love' are delivering hygiene packs to a range of community centres and church groups for distribution to young people and families. Work is underway to map this type of provision across County Durham.

Reducing Food Waste -The Bread-and-Butter Thing (TBBT)

- 34 TBBT is an affordable food service, with hubs across County Durham. Members of TBBT pay £7.50 for at least £35 worth of food including fruit and vegetables, chilled goods and cupboard staples. The food comes from supermarket surplus, food factories and farms. This means contents vary from day to day depending on what is available. Most members feel that they save around £25 a week and just 'top up' from the supermarket when they have seen what is in the TBBT bags each week. Members do not have to come every week. They will receive a text from TBBT each week, and if they do not want to access the provision that week they can easily opt out.
- 35 County Durham currently has 10 TBBT hubs at Annfield Plain, Bowburn, Bullion, Eden Hill, Leadgate, Spennymoor, Bishop Auckland, Crook Willington, Ushaw Moor and Haswell. <http://www.breadandbutterthing.org/members>

Priority 3: Promote social inclusion to ensure all children, young people and families have access to culture, leisure, sport and wellbeing

DfE Holiday Activities with Food Programme 2022 - Fun and Food

- 36 DfE have provided funding to support the delivery of free holiday activities and healthy food for disadvantaged children (2022-2025). Durham have been allocated £2,338,740 to provide free 'holiday clubs' targeted at children on free school meals and vulnerable children for Easter, Summer and Christmas holidays 2022. The aim of the programme is for children who attend provision:
- (a) to eat more healthily over the school holidays;
 - (b) to be more active during the school holidays;
 - (c) to take part in engaging and enriching activities which support the development of resilience, character and well-being along with their wider education attainment;
 - (d) to be safe and not to be socially isolated;
 - (e) to have greater knowledge of health nutrition;
 - (f) to be more engaged with school and other local services and
 - (g) children and families develop their understanding of nutrition and food budgeting and are effectively signposted towards other information and support for example health, employment and education.
- 37 The programme has been branded as 'Fun and Food' in County Durham. A dedicated webpage is now available for families and providers.
www.durham.gov.uk/funandfood
- 38 All activities are listed on the County Durham Families Information Service so that families can find out about activities taking place across the county and we have various press releases and social media campaigns. Fun and Food in County Durham now also has a Facebook group with 2200 members [Fun and Food County Durham Facebook](#) .
- 39 Within the terms of the DfE funding half terms holidays are not funded, however DCC recognised the need and demand for holiday activities with healthy food during half term holidays and has therefore provided an additional £150,000 from the Poverty Action Steering Group (PASG) for May and October half terms in 2022, thus providing a consistent offer for children and families.
- 40 Throughout 2021, which did include some restrictions due to Covid, a total of **41,000** children and young people engaged in Fun and Food provision. To date in 2022 approximately **48,174** children and young people attend Fun and Food activities, with 2,038 children with Special Educational Needs/ Disability attending. Please see a video of our summer programme [Summer Fun and Food in Durham](#) .

Education Fun Fund

- 41 The Children in Care Council (run within Investing in Children) exists to give children in care and care-leavers a voice and help them to have a say in the way their care service is run. All children and young people that are looked after in County Durham are automatically members of the CICC (Children in Care Council) and can take part in discussions and issues raised. In April 2021 Durham Children in Care Council (CICC) established the Education Fun Fund (EFF). The project evolved when CICC members identified that young people should be more involved in shaping how the Pupil Premium Fund supports their education.
- 42 Durham County Council's Virtual Headteacher allocated £5000 for CICC to develop a project so that young people can be supported to apply for up to £150 towards something that is educational and beneficial to them but also includes fun and enriching activities.
- 43 The members of CICC together with Investing in Children would like to further develop the EFF and be able to support young people that are not care experienced. This could include vulnerable young people that are supported by a Social Worker, enabling vulnerable young people to take part in engaging and enriching activities which support the development of resilience and well-being along with their wider education attainment.

Improving access to Leisure Centres

- 44 The Child Poverty Working Group has been working closely with Culture, Sport and Tourism Service (CST) to consider how to increase the opportunity for children impacted by restricted family finances to have access to Leisure Services. The project involved consultation and research into the barriers around access to our current leisure facilities for children, young people and their families, particularly in relation to cost and pricing. The consultation identified several key improvement areas, such as access to a recycling scheme for swim related products such as costumes and goggles which was launched in January 2022 and supports those that cannot afford to purchase these often-costly items.
- 45 Through-out 2022, Culture, Sport, Tourism Service have worked closely with the 'Fun and Food' programme, and Education Durham to introduce free top up swimming lessons to those in lower socio-economic areas that missed out on school swimming during COVID as they are the least likely to be accessing the learn to swim programme. Access to free holiday and weekend inflatable and swimming sessions has been extremely popular, with **31,540** free swims across the summer and **216** families attending free 'splashability' sessions for children with SEND. Due the popularity, CST will continue the free-swimming offer on a weekend with a free fun session on either a

Saturday or Sunday until Christmas. 'Splashability' will continue at Peterlee, Stanley Louisa and Spennymoor which were the most popular sites.

- 46 Leisure Centre staff have also accessed support and training addressing inclusion to ensure that facility staff are fully informed about issues relating to poverty and to ensure that children young people and families are treated appropriately.
- 47 CST is also currently developing a physical activity framework which will ensure that the service has a more targeted approach to support health inequalities and to address the barriers to children and families accessing sport and leisure facilities, which includes affordability.

Family Centres in County Durham

- 48 County Durham has 15 Family Centres based within areas of high deprivation and provide a range of family support for families with children 0-19 years and up to 25years for young people with SEN/D. As part of the menu of support and advice available through Family Centres all 15 County Durham Family Centres provide access to: -
 - (a) a community pantry with non-perishable foods;
 - (b) signpost to Community Fridges and Food Banks;
 - (c) pre-loved clothes including winter coats and shoes, school uniforms, baby clothes and equipment;
 - (d) personal hygiene packs;
 - (e) access to Citizen Advice Bureau, Credit Union and budgeting training programmes/cooking on a budget courses;
 - (f) Holiday Activities with Healthy Food Programmes;
 - (g) Young Parents Programme access to credit union and incentive to save scheme.
- 49 The government recently launched its vision for a network of Family Hubs across England. The Family Hub and Start for Life programme is designed to provide 'one stop shop' access to family support, when it is needed – from pregnancy, through the child's youngest years and later childhood, and into adolescence until they reach the age of 24 and will aim to ensure that all families have access to the same high-quality services and supportive relationships within their local area. This vision aligns to County Durham's Family Centres current offer and also provides an opportunity to strengthen the support available to families especially those in the ante-natal and early post-natal period, which can be a particularly stressful time financially for families. Debt and welfare advice will be a minimum requirement for all Family Hubs.

Priority 4: Raise aspirations and resilience of children and young people making the move into further education, training or employment.

- 50 The proportion of young people 16-17 year olds Not in Education, Employment and Training (NEET) in County Durham is current 5.2% compared to 4.9% in the North East and 2.8% in England. The proportion of young people in County Durham 'not known' is currently 0.7%, across northeast this is 1.2 % and 2.0% in England. The combined NEET and not known data shows County Durham is currently 5.8%, northeast 6.1% and 4.8%. The proportion of NEETs in County Durham equates to 579 young people and the proportion of young people whose destination is 'Not Known' equates to 73 young people. It is important to note that a proportion of the 579 young people who are NEET are not available to engage in education, employment or training because of issues such as ill health. DurhamWorks report an increasing number of young people with issues related to their mental health.
- 51 A range of support is provided to children and young people to raise their aspirations and resilience as they prepare to progress into further education, employment, or training. For example, primary and secondary schools are offered a range of work-related learning and enterprise programmes. These engaging activities help to promote a range of career sectors, develop skills and aptitudes that employers value, as well as provide opportunities for pupils to meet with Business Ambassadors from local businesses.
- 52 Through the DurhamWorks Programme for Schools, pupils who are identified as being at risk of being not in employment, education or training (NEET) in future, are provided with a range of support to enable them to progress into sustained post-16 learning. This includes one-to-one mentoring support, activities to improve motivation and prepare for transition, as well as opportunities to learn more about the world of work. Young people are informed about opportunities to combine study alongside part-time work, if progressing into further education.
- 53 Young people who do not make a successful progression into post-16 learning receive support through DurhamWorks. They receive transition support, the opportunity to obtain English and maths qualifications, as well access to a range of provision to support their progression into education, employment and training. This includes opportunities to volunteer as a pathway into sustained future employment.

Future Developments

- 54 The CPWG will continue to be proactive and responsive to the needs of our communities, especially during the ongoing cost of living crisis. The child poverty data and intelligence will provide a better understanding of our communities impacted most by poverty and therefore help us to ensure all efforts are targeted at these communities. The CPWG plan on a page and associated action plan will be reviewed in line with the broader Poverty Action Group priorities and will include:-

- (a) Continue to develop and innovate County Durham's Fun and Food programme in co-production with young people and families;
- (b) provide all schools, nurseries and colleges with 'Cutting cost of school/ pre-school day' information and target education establishments in area of high deprivation and with low FSM take up for additional help and support such as staff awareness;
- (c) Implement the County Durham Family Hub and Start for Life programme;
- (d) Work with schools, parents and young people through the Cutting the Cost of School Day to understand the extent and impact of digital poverty for children, young people and families.
- (e) Work with Public Health, CST, young people and families to explore the impact of transport costs for young people and families accessing cultural, leisure and wellbeing activities.

Conclusion

55 Poverty continues to be a key and growing concern for children and families living in County Durham. We understand the negative impact living in poverty has on a child's life chances. Current data and intelligence tell us in all measures of poverty are increasing for children and young people living in our county. The current cost of living crisis will only exacerbate the financial pressure on many families. The CPWG is committed to developing and implementing a range of programmes and initiatives to help mitigate the negative impacts of poverty on the everyday experiences of children and young people in our county. Ongoing support and oversight from elected members are welcomed.

Background papers

- None

Other useful documents

- None

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 placed a duty on government to report on child poverty. The Act, however, repealed parts of the Child Poverty Act 2010, including the duty placed on local authorities to prepare and publish an assessment of the needs of children living in poverty in their area.

Finance

Probity of DfE Holiday Activities with Food Funding. Probity of Household Support Fund

Consultation

Consultation with children and families will take place in developing Holiday Activities with Healthy Food programme.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

Equality of opportunity for children and families most at risk of negative impact of poverty

Climate Change

None

Human Rights

Equal opportunities

Crime and Disorder

Research shows families living in poverty are more likely to be involved or victims of crime and anti-social behaviours.

Staffing

None

Accommodation

None

Risk

None

Procurement:

None

Appendix 2: Child Poverty Plan on a Page

Attached as a separate document

Appendix 3: Information Leaflets for Families

Attached as a separate document

Appendix 4: Healthy Start Leaflet for Parents

Attached as a separate document

Appendix 5: Cutting the Cost of the School Day

Attached as a separate document

Appendix 6: Fun and Food



