

Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny

28 September 2017



Child Poverty

Margaret Whellans, Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Service

Purpose of the Report

- 1 The purpose of this report is to update Durham County Council's Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny members on the progress of the Child Poverty Working Group (CPWG). The CPWG aims to develop and implement a single coherent and coordinated approach to addressing and mitigating child poverty across County Durham.

Background

- 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 The introduction of 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 The Act, however, repealed parts of the Child Poverty Act 2010, including the duty placed on local authorities to prepare and publish an assessment of the needs of children living in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. The new Act also introduces new measures of child poverty with an emphasis taken away from income. The new measures are:
 - a) The proportion of children living in workless households as well as long-term worklessness households;
 - b) The educational attainment of children (and disadvantaged children) in England at end of Key Stage 4 (GCSE)
- 4 In 2007 14.6% of children aged 16 and under in County Durham were living in workless households in 2015 this figure has risen to 19.3%. This estimates to be approximately 18,000 children and demonstrates a widening gap. It must be recognised however, that two-thirds (66%) of children in poverty live in working households (HBAI 2014/15 BHC). This is attributed to a range of factors including wages not keeping up with cost of living, such as increases in housing, child care, transport, utilities and food as well as changes to tax credits and child tax credits.

- 5 The introduction of Welfare Reform alongside reductions in local government funding requires a coordinated multi agency strategic approach to address the causes of and impact of poverty on children, young people and families living in County Durham.

Progress of Child Poverty Working Group

- 6 In March 2017, Durham County Council Services and partner organisations formed a Child Poverty Working Group. Terms of Reference have been developed which outline the purpose and remit of the working group. (See appendices 2) 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.

- 7 Dr Deborah Harrison, North East Child Poverty Commission has supported the group to formulate an approach to Child Poverty in County Durham in which three key strands have emerged:
 - a. **Language and values associated with child poverty:** this will focus on our attitudes and beliefs towards poverty and will involve the development of a shared language and a media strategy;
 - b. **Poverty Management in communities linked to early help:** this will focus on understanding County Durham's child poverty cohort, developing and implementing targeted, accessible support to families. This strand will also focus on the learning and development needs of frontline staff across the partnership to ensure they are confident to provide access to support to address poverty;
 - c. **Economic- inclusive growth approach:** this will focus on the Children and Families Partnership (CFP) influence on the economic partnership and secondary school sector to ensure major economic developments in County Durham are seen as key opportunities to provide local young people and adults with routes into jobs and apprenticeships, to reduce poverty.
- 8 To date, a range of projects and approaches have been implemented to address child poverty in County Durham and these include:
 - a) Focus on supporting vulnerable parents back to work through the Stronger Families programme;
 - b) Universal Credit and Smarter Budgeting Training for Children Services Social Workers and practitioners;
 - c) Promotion of Advice In County Durham;
 - d) 'Incentive to Save Scheme'- encouraging children and families to join Credit Union with 'proceeds from crime' funding;
 - e) Holiday Hunger programmes in Peterlee and Sedgefield;
 - f) Citizens Advice Bureau available in Children Centres;

- g) 'Durham Savers' Scheme promoted across the partnership including schools;
- h) 'Roots out of Poverty' Workshops for a wide range of County Durham Partnership practitioners.

Next Steps

- 9 The Child Poverty Working Group will develop an action plan and performance measures using the identified three strands as a framework.

Recommendation

- 10 Durham County Council Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny group is requested to note the progress of the Child Poverty Working Group and agree the working definition and the three key stands, which will form the framework of the Child Poverty strategy and associated action plan.

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Appendix 1: Implications

Finance – none

Staffing – none

Risk – none

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty – none

Accommodation– none

Crime and Disorder – addresses impact of poverty on increased criminal behaviours

Human Rights– addresses inequalities

Consultation– none

Procurement– none

Disability Issues– none

Legal Implications– none



Child Poverty Working Group

Terms of Reference

June 2017

1. Purpose

The purpose of the Child Poverty Working Group is to develop and implement a coherent and coordinated approach Child Poverty across County Durham.

2. Context

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. In 2013, a report for the Child Poverty Action Group estimated that child poverty cost the UK at least £29b each year. Of this, £20.5b is a direct cost to government resulting from additional demand on services and benefits, as well as reduced tax receipts. The report also estimated that each child living below the poverty line costs LAs £10,861p.a as an extra cost to social services, housing services and health care.

The government has implemented the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016, which introduces new measures of child poverty:-

- a) **Worklessness:** The proportion of children living in workless households as well as long term workless households;
- b) **Attainment:** The educational attainment of children a(and disadvantaged children) in England at the end of Key Stage 4 (GCSE)

In 2007 14.6% of children aged 16 and under in County Durham were living in workless households in 2015 this figure has risen to 19.3%. This estimates to be approximately 18,000 children and demonstrates a widening gap.

3. Definition of Poverty

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation definition of poverty will be used within the context of the working group.

'When a person's resources are well below their minimum needs, including the need to take part in society'.

4. Objectives of the Child Poverty Working Group

- I. To undertake a detailed analysis and understanding of the data relating to child poverty in County Durham;

- II. Map existing service provision across a range of sectors and identify gaps;
- III. Develop a County Durham Child Poverty strategy and associated action plan which includes prevention, effective management as well as strong focus of breaking the cycle of poverty and deprivation and ensures every child has the best start in life;
- IV. Apply and develop the evidence base in relation to implementing effective action on child poverty.
- V. Ensure the child poverty agenda is considered within policies and plans relating to regeneration and housing, recognising the interplay with child poverty and factors such as housing provision and standards, access to play and other good quality community facilities, and a positive community environment.
- VI. Provide a link between the regional Child Poverty Network, the North East Child Poverty Commission and the County Durham Poverty Action Group as a way of sharing good practice and consider what works.

5. Framework of the Child Poverty Strategy and Action Plan

The objectives will be delivered through three key strands, which will form the framework for the Child Poverty Strategy and associated action plan. The three key strands are:

- a. Language and values associated with child poverty;
- b. Poverty Management in the community linked to early help;
- c. Economic - inclusive growth approach: this will focus on influencing the economic partnership and secondary school sector.

6. Membership

- Director of Children and Young People's Service -Margaret Whellans –Chair
- Head of Children's Services- Carole Payne
- Head of Education – Caroline O'Neill
- Head of Child Health, Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust- Suzanne Lamb/ Pauline Coglán/Jodie Sellers
- Public Health – Gill O' Neill
- Education- Alison Young
- Transformation and Partnerships - Roger Goodes and Andrea Petty
- Strategic Lead Progression and Learning, CYPS- Linda Bailey
- Early Years Development Team - Fiona Callaghan
- Strategic Manager One Point Service - Karen Davison
- Operations Manager – One Point Service- Early Years Lead –Judith Bowman
- Durham Constabulary – David Coxon
- Housing Solutions- Lynn Hall/ Marie Smith
- VCS-Durham Voice- Gary Stokoe

Other partner agencies to be co-opted as necessary

Vice Chair – TBA

7. Frequency of meetings

The group meet bi- monthly. Dates will be agreed in advance.

8. Role of group members

- Ensure regular attendance and representation at meeting or nominate suitable deputy with Chair's agreement
- Ensure sufficient time is allocated to undertake the required activities of the group
- Ensure information is collated from and disseminated within own agency
- Active participation in agenda and discussion, bringing issues to and from own agency
- Ensure implementing of recommendations, actions and procedures

9. Accountabilities

- The chair of the group will report to the Poverty Action Group
- The group will report to the Poverty Action Group on a quarterly basis.
- Children and Young People's and Social Inclusion Cabinet Member
- Children and Families Partnership

Date: June 2017

Review Date: June 2018