

LIVERPOOL CITY REGION

Halton ■ Knowsley ■ Liverpool ■ Sefton ■ St. Helens ■ Wirral



Child Poverty and Life Chances Strategy
2011-2014

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A message from the chair of the Liverpool City Region Child Poverty and Life Chances Commission

How can local authorities working together combat poverty and improve the life chances of children? That was the aim set by the Liverpool City Region Cabinet when it established the Liverpool City Region Commission on Child Poverty and Life Chances. In establishing our Commission the City Region Leaders wished to see organisations and politics operating in a different way. The City Region Leaders believe that:

- there is more that unites than divides our City Region and that by working together to achieve a greater common purpose the whole region will benefit;
- such cooperative working results in gains larger than can be achieved by local authorities seeking the best policy but in an isolated way;
- the best practice of some local authorities offers an opportunity to improve the performance in all authorities;
- advocating immediate action to help poor families now should not preclude an honest evaluation of the causes of poverty;
- supporting active research, through small scale research trials in one or two clearly defined local areas, so as to learn fully the lessons of reform before it is universalised, offers the best way of increasing the social good while minimising any unforeseen consequences.

The Commission is pleased to present its first Strategy to the City Region Cabinet. Our main recommendations for action draw on local authority best practice in the City Region and, while addressing the City Region Cabinet, many of our proposals to universalise best practice are addressed also to the national government.

A central premise

I brought with me a central premise when accepting the Chairmanship of the Commission. For a number of reasons - the need for two wage earners to ensure children are not brought up in poverty, being one example - successful parenting is now more difficult than it has been in the recent past. But, I believe, there has also been a crucial cultural change. The working class norm of raising children was one of tough love: clear boundaries were set for behaviour but within these boundaries children were nurtured in a loving way, and loving didn't equate to simply giving in to a child's passing fancies. This approach to parenting operated, of course, way beyond working class families but it was a central tenet in the working class commitment to being a respectable family.

For a number of reasons this culture has been ruptured with cumulative consequences. Most parents raise their children in the way they themselves were raised. Once a society begins to lose the art of good parenting (that has been built up over a hundred years or more), a growing disaster looms. More and more parents adopt their parents' practices which are precisely the ones that have failed them.

The great note of hope to emerge from my own personal observation has come from the replies of fifteen year olds who, when asked which six goals they most want their schools to achieve for them, replied unanimously that one of those goals was to be taught how to be a good parent. They were determinately looking to the future, and planning for a better future for their own children.

The only organisations that can respond to this innate human wish to be good parents and offer universal coverage are our schools. The report sets out the need to develop a culture in both our primary and secondary schools that is conducive to the values of well functioning families and the work that secondary schools must do in teaching parenting knowledge through modules spread throughout the GCSE curriculum. It is on this central premise about the crucial importance of effective parenting that the following report is built.

I will now highlight a number of recommendations that I hope the City Region Cabinet will agree to implement.

Breaking the cycle of poverty by enhancing life chances

Our first set of recommendations for action naturally centre on what the Government now calls the Foundation Years, i.e. a child's life from the womb up to that child's first day at school. It is here that we believe we can have the greatest effect in breaking the hold poverty has in blighting families over successive generations.

Our first major recommendation is that the services making up the Foundation Years should become outcome focussed, i.e. be measured on their increasing effectiveness in ensuring that a greater proportion of children are each year ready for school on their first day. We are now piloting across the region a school readiness measure which will provide objective evidence to determine the trends being experienced.

Our second major recommendation to the City Region Cabinet is that we should collect data for each Children's Centre so that we can easily see to what extent each project has made contact, and developed that contact, with the poorest families most in need in their respective catchment areas. Our aim is that each year more children should be ready for the first day at school to develop their full potential and we are devising ways of measuring the performance of the Foundation Years services.

Our third major recommendation centres on how to reinforce a good start in life by the performance of every school throughout the City Region. The life chances of most children are at present determined possibly by the age of three and certainly by five. Poorer and richer children now arrive at school with attainment gaps already well developed. These gaps are not always closed by schools.

We are recommending to the City Region Cabinet that each school in our area should give a clear account of how the pupil premium will be used to boost the education and thereby the life chances of its disadvantaged pupils. We are confident that this action throughout the City Region will be followed nationally by the Coalition Government. To ensure that the level of achievement of the very large tail-end of the distribution of pupil achievement is raised each year, we advocate that each school should be set the goal of narrowing the gap in performance between those on free school meals and those who are not.

Our fourth recommendation is directed towards helping tomorrow's parents. Pupils asked at around age 15 about their hopes for the children they will one day bring up consistently produce the answer of 'wishing their own children to be more successful than they will be'. When pupils are asked a little later in life they affirm these goals but add that they do not now expect their children to achieve the ambitions they set for them. This report has been concerned with what actions we can take now to ensure that the expectations of future parents match the aspirations they hold for the children they one day hope will form their family. None of our recommendations for the Foundation Years can possibly succeed until we realise that the great drivers for change in children's life chances are parents. Pupils themselves record their wish to know how to be good parents.

We advocate to the City Region Cabinet measures to support effective parenting, for example by seeking to remove the stigma attached to parenting classes and by pursuing proposals around family mentor support. Help to ensure that parents achieve the very best for their children should also naturally be a major concern of each Sure Start Children's Centres project and the outcome of each Centre should be carefully recorded.

Studies show that some families often have to pay considerably more for their main utilities. Lacking a bank account some families cannot make standing order payments and standing order payments are the key to being able to shop around each year to find the cheapest supplier, and those who have bank accounts may not be using all of their facilities. Studies show that an average poor family could save substantial sums each year if they could buy their utilities from the cheapest source. A fifth recommendation therefore to the City Region Cabinet is therefore that the best practice we have in Credit Unions, and in campaigns, should be built upon to ensure families acquire and use bank accounts which do not incur penalties, and that a review is conducted of the way that utilities companies support customers to secure the most advantageous tariffs.



These are but a few of the recommendations we have made. What is clear however is that we will fail in our endeavour if public services on their own are left to deliver this strategy. What is required is a collective effort from private, community and voluntary and public sectors, as well as community groups and families. We all have responsibilities towards each other and we will all need to exercise them if we are to achieve our targets. The African saying goes that it takes a village to raise a child; it will truly take the City Region coming together like it has not done before if we are to tackle child and family poverty successfully and raise the life chances of all children and young people.

I commend this report to the City Region Cabinet and through them to the residents of the City Region.

Frank Field

MP for Birkenhead

Chair, Liverpool City Region Child Poverty and Life Chances Commission

Executive Summary

This Child Poverty and Life Chances Strategy sets out proposals for achieving a long-term shared vision:

“Working together as City Region partners we will reduce child and family poverty and maximise opportunities for children and young people in their life chances.

We will achieve this through a dual strategy which ensures an ever growing proportion of children and young people are ready for school and life whilst maximising family resources.”

The evidence base underpinning our strategy is contained within the Liverpool City Region Child and Family Poverty Needs Assessment¹. It shows the scale of the challenge we face ahead; over 91,000 children in the City Region are growing up in poverty, more than a quarter of all children and projections suggest that this will increase over the medium term². Tackling poverty and improving life chances will not be easy, particularly in the current economic climate; therefore this strategy proposes a number of ways that we can boost existing efforts by working together on a number of priority areas:

The public sector has a key role in making this strategy happen, but it cannot be delivered by public bodies alone. The success of this strategy depends on parents, groups and organisations from all sectors to deliver change on the ground. This strategy asks that organisations consider their approach in a number of areas and refine or revise this. A large number of little changes will make a significant impact on the lives of children and families across the City Region. A number of overarching strategy delivery plans are also in development to help coordinate efforts and ensure that progress is made. The impact of our work will be monitored in part, through a series of headline indicators that seek to measure the prevalence and extent of income poverty, as well as monitor our progress in addressing the factors that are key determinants of children's life chances.

Aim 1: Ensure the best possible start in life for children and young people to improve their life chances

Our key actions are to:

1. Support effective parenting and drive improvements in Foundation Years³ services
2. Enhance children's social and emotional development and reduce gaps in educational achievement
3. Promote prevention and early intervention approaches to reduce health inequalities
4. Influence an improvement in the quality of place and support strong communities

Aim 2: Maximise Family Income

Our key actions are to:

1. Improve access to suitable financial services and support families to make good financial decisions
2. Optimise employment opportunities by removing barriers to good quality and sustainable employment
3. Support parents to progress in the work place

¹ <http://www.liverpoolcitystrategyces.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/Child-and-Family-Poverty-Needs-Assessment.pdf>

² Brewer, M., Browne, J. and Joyce, R. (2011) Child and Working-Age Poverty from 2010 to 2020. Institute for Fiscal Studies

³ The Foundation Years refers to a child's earliest years in life, from pregnancy to age five

The following table summarises some of the key actions asked of various stakeholders.

| Individual / Group | Actions requested |
|-------------------------|---|
| Parents | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To set learning culture within the home and positive attitude towards school and education • To ensure secure attachment with all children and young people |
| Schools | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To pilot a school readiness assessment, working with the University of Cambridge • To report on how Pupil Premium funding is being used to benefit the most disadvantaged pupils in individual schools • To report annually on the attainment gap between pupils eligible for free school meals and all children at ages 5, 11 and 16 in individual schools • To reflect the importance of parenting in all subjects in the secondary curriculum • To assess the impact of performance at secondary school by reporting on the numbers of school leavers not in education, employment and training • To pilot a programme on data sharing between primary and secondary schools to ensure pupils' transitions to schools take place effectively • To appoint a lead Governor for life chances |
| Health providers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To increase immunisation rates for all children and young people • To report on the 6 best projects undertaken to improve the health of children in each Council area • To work with Government, Clinical Commissioning Group and Primary Care Trusts to increase the number of midwives and health visitors in the City Region • To ensure those working with children and young people understand the emotional and social development of children and young people |
| Employers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To establish a working party through the Employer Coalition to report within one year on the implementation of a living wage throughout the City Region and to develop a business case for adopting a more flexible approach to employment |
| Councils | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To use all contact with parents to support them as parents to achieve strong attachment with their children • To report on the numbers of children individual Sure Start Children's Centres have contact with within their catchment area and to explain and justify the range of activities they undertake • To report on the 6 more effective practices in the six local authorities aimed at raising aspirations of children and similarly to report on the 6 most effective projects they undertake in supporting parents • To introduce a 50p minimum unit price and bylaw to reduce alcohol related harm • To facilitate a City Region review into utilities companies and their approach to offering tariffs • To encourage adults into informal learning to support their parenting development • To consider implementing supplementary planning guidance on take away provision around schools • To report on the scope and effectiveness of benefit take up campaigns and to promote the effective practice |

| Individual / Group | Actions requested |
|------------------------------|---|
| Housing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To increase the use of credit unions facilities by Housing Association residents • To work with Councils and locally based groups to proactively mitigate the impact of the forthcoming welfare reforms • To maintain housing standards within a rent framework that remains affordable for low income households |
| Credit Unions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To work with partners to promote services and encourage take-up |
| Jobcentre Plus | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To monitor the targets the government has set for the Work Programme private sector providers in placing unemployed claimants in to work • To ensure that Jobcentre Plus and other welfare to work provision focuses on the needs of parents, particularly those with multiple needs • To work with employers to promote the benefits of flexible working |
| Early Years providers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To promote Work Clubs within nursery settings and Children's Centres to support parents in the journey back to work • To gather and share information on the level of engagement with the poorest families |
| Police | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To maintain a comprehensive and multi agency approach to tackle anti-social behaviour • To encourage partners to prioritise neighbourhoods that have a Stronger Communities Initiative (SCI) to test out projects that aim to raise aspirations |
| Transport | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To pilot a cycle hire scheme within the City Region • To provide travel advice to those seeking work • To deliver Sustainable Transport schemes to ensure that parents can get to work and education locations • To share best practice on improving road safety across the City Region |
| Community groups | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support those with children and young people to be effective parents including running quality parenting courses • To raise profile and importance of involvement in early language development |
| National Government | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To change the incentives structure for immunisations • To assess whether the readiness for school index can be used as part of payment by results for Children's Centres • To support and then adopt the work on the healthy development check • To consider changes to the Tax Credits system to better reflect the needs and aspirations of families |

Arrangements for review

This strategy will run until the national 2020 deadline to eradicate child poverty. We will however refresh the strategy every three years, to ensure that we remain focused on present needs as identified by complementary City Region Child and Family Poverty Needs

Assessment. Progress against strategy delivery plans and performance measures will be reported by the Child Poverty and Life Chances Commission to the City Region Cabinet on an annual basis.

I. Introduction

Growing up in poverty can affect every area of a child's development and future life chances. We know that children from low income households are less likely to achieve their academic potential, and secure employment as adults. They are more likely to suffer from poor health, live in poor quality housing and unsafe environments. Unfortunately, poverty has blighted the lives of individuals, families and entire communities for generations and is an issue that has undermined many of the wider social and economic policies across the Liverpool City Region.

We are clear, that to break this intergenerational transmission of poverty our efforts must give equal importance to both, maximising family income and ensuring that children receive the best start in life. The importance of effective parenting for instance, is highlighted in this strategy because we are clear that the parenting children experience can be crucial to opening up their life chances. Failure to provide a child with nurture and support during their critical early weeks and years can herald a pattern of failure and poor outcomes in later life. We, the Liverpool City Region Child Poverty and Life Chances Commission, want to use our collective strength to tackle poverty and support individuals and families to realise their full potential.

Liverpool City Region

The Liverpool City Region is home to 1.5 million people, which includes around 327,000 children in 191,000 families. The City Region comprises the boroughs of Halton, Knowsley, Sefton, St. Helens, Wirral and the City of Liverpool. Together these districts make up a functional economic area with approximately 90% of all residents both living and working in the City

Region. The region is also closely related economically to the surrounding areas of Warrington, Cheshire West and Chester, Ellesmere Port, North East Wales and Cheshire and Lancashire.

Levels of poverty within the Liverpool City Region are unfortunately not new. There have been significant levels of poverty and income inequality for many years, linked to the economic contexts in which so many people found themselves and the historical imbalance between the South East and the rest of the country. Prior to the economic downturn, the Liverpool City Region had enjoyed many economic successes. For example, during 2004-2008 the value of the City Region economy was growing at a faster rate than the rest of the North West. The employment rate, number of self employed people and business base also increased over this period. However, despite achieving an absolute improvement on many economic indicators, the City Region's performance was, and remains more mixed relative to the rest of England.

Our vision

“Working together as City Region partners we will reduce child and family poverty and maximise opportunities for children and young people in their life chances.

We will achieve this through a dual strategy which ensures an ever growing proportion of children and young people are ready for school and life whilst maximising family resources.”

The case for change

Over 91,000 children in the Liverpool City Region are growing up in poverty⁴. The latest projections⁵ suggest that there will be a significant increase in relative and absolute poverty through to 2020 which will mean the Government will not achieve the target of eradicating child poverty by then. Lack of money can directly impact on children's abilities to engage in activities, socialise and access the resources they need. However, poverty is about more than money and its impacts go much deeper than just income and material

deprivation. It is complex and interconnected with a wide range of other issues such as unsafe environments and poor health that together can have a profound and lasting impact on a child's development and future prospects.

The Liverpool City Region Child and Family Poverty Needs Assessment (2011) has given us a detailed understanding of the drivers of poverty in the City Region and its impacts on future outcomes and life chances. The following headline findings illustrate some of the key areas that require change:

| Theme | Notable Findings |
|--|--|
| Foundation Stage Early Years | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More babies are born to teenage mothers in the City Region compared to the England average • At the age of five, the health outcomes of children in the City Region are below the national average on a range of key indicators such as obesity and tooth decay |
| Learning and attainment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are stark differences in educational achievement between children from poor and more affluent families within the City Region. At Key Stage 4 the achievement gap between pupils who are eligible for free school meals and those who are not is a staggering 31% |
| Labour Market | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are 7.7 job seekers chasing every unfilled job vacancy notified to Jobcentre Plus • The level of female claimant count in the City Region is the highest that it has been since September 1995 • Almost one in five adults in the City Region have no qualifications |
| Income, relationships and parenting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three out of every four children who are living in income poverty, live in a one parent family • Economic and social deprivation is generally widespread, but with severe concentrations in some neighbourhoods. Overall, almost one in three households can be categorised as 'Hard Pressed'⁶ • Mental health problems, low emotional health, low parental skills and family attitudes and behaviours have all been identified in the needs assessment as relevant factors |

Figure 1 - Notable findings from the City Region Child and Family Poverty Needs Assessment

Tackling these issues will not be easy; many of the problems that we see today have also afflicted the lives of previous generations. Added to this, the current economic instability has intensified the scale of the challenge. There is a serious risk that substantial cuts to public sector spending combined with a difficult labour market, higher living costs, and welfare reductions will exacerbate child and family poverty in some of the most vulnerable

communities throughout the City Region. In particular, the substantial cuts in public sector budgets demand that spending is focused not just on what is efficient at reducing costs, but what is effective in addressing current and reducing future service demands. Evidence from Action for Children⁷ would unfortunately suggest that this might not be the case with more families identifying a need for support and that their requests for support are not being met.

⁴ HMRC, August 2009

⁵ Brewer, M., Browne, J. and Joyce, R. (2011) Child and Working Age Poverty from 2010 to 2020. Institute of Fiscal Studies

⁶ Based on ACORN Classification Tool

⁷ The Red Book: impact of UK Government spending decision on children, young people and families (2011) Action for Children

Why we need a Strategy

Given the current financial landscape and complex nature of poverty it is questionable how much impact one individual or organisation can have by working in isolation. It makes sense that we build on our strong local and City Region partnerships to address child and family poverty. In 2010, the City Region Cabinet endorsed the establishment of a Liverpool City Region Child Poverty and Life Chances Commission to bring together leaders from the third, private and public sectors. Its primary role is to act as a conscience on matters relating to child poverty and life chances, and to commission activities that will enhance the work of local authorities.

Councils have a statutory duty to complete a local Child Poverty Strategy and this City Region approach is over and above this statutory responsibility. There is a further duty for specific named partners to co-operate in tackling child poverty in local areas, and this is partially delivered through the City Region level Commission.

In summary, this strategy:

- Sets out the Commission's strategic aims and key actions
- Complements local child poverty strategies and action plans by focusing on the big issues that are common across local authority areas
- Highlights the crucial importance of the earliest years of a child's life in determining their life chances
- Confirms the need to work with parents and future parents to ensure they know that they are the most important drivers of their children's life chances
- Identifies the need for businesses to work with a range of partners to support flexible and accessible work
- Provides a platform for raising policy issues to MPs, central government, and European government
- Joins up interventions on cross-boundary challenges such as employment and transport

- Underpins, and is supported by, other City Region strategies such as the Employment and Skills Strategy and the Apprenticeship Strategy

Developing the strategy

The data underpinning our strategy is set out in the Liverpool City Region Child and Family Poverty Needs Assessment (extracts from the Needs Assessment are included in subsequent sections). Our strategy has also benefited from the insights of children and families, community groups and organisations from across the City Region (Annex 1 details the consultation exercises that have taken place and informed our approach). We have also carefully considered the findings from a number of important independent reviews, which are identified in Section 4.

Our approach

Across the Liverpool City Region there are lots of examples of excellent and innovative practices addressing child and family poverty at a local level. This strategy does not replace the work already underway, nor does it attempt to address every challenge; instead it identifies areas where we can add value through interventions on a City Region scale.

We recognise that a sustainable solution to child and family poverty must involve a dual approach that addresses both income deprivation and broader child wellbeing. Therefore in developing our strategy we have considered how we can best utilise the City Region arrangements to enhance efforts to improve the current financial situation for families in poverty. Complementing this, we have explored opportunities to build on efforts to improve the outcomes of children living in poverty so they have a better chance of escaping poverty in later life; ending the intergenerational transmission of poverty.

Aims and actions

Two strategic aims have been agreed to ensure that we are successful in delivering our collective vision.

These are underpinned by seven strategic actions which will be the focus of the Commission's efforts:

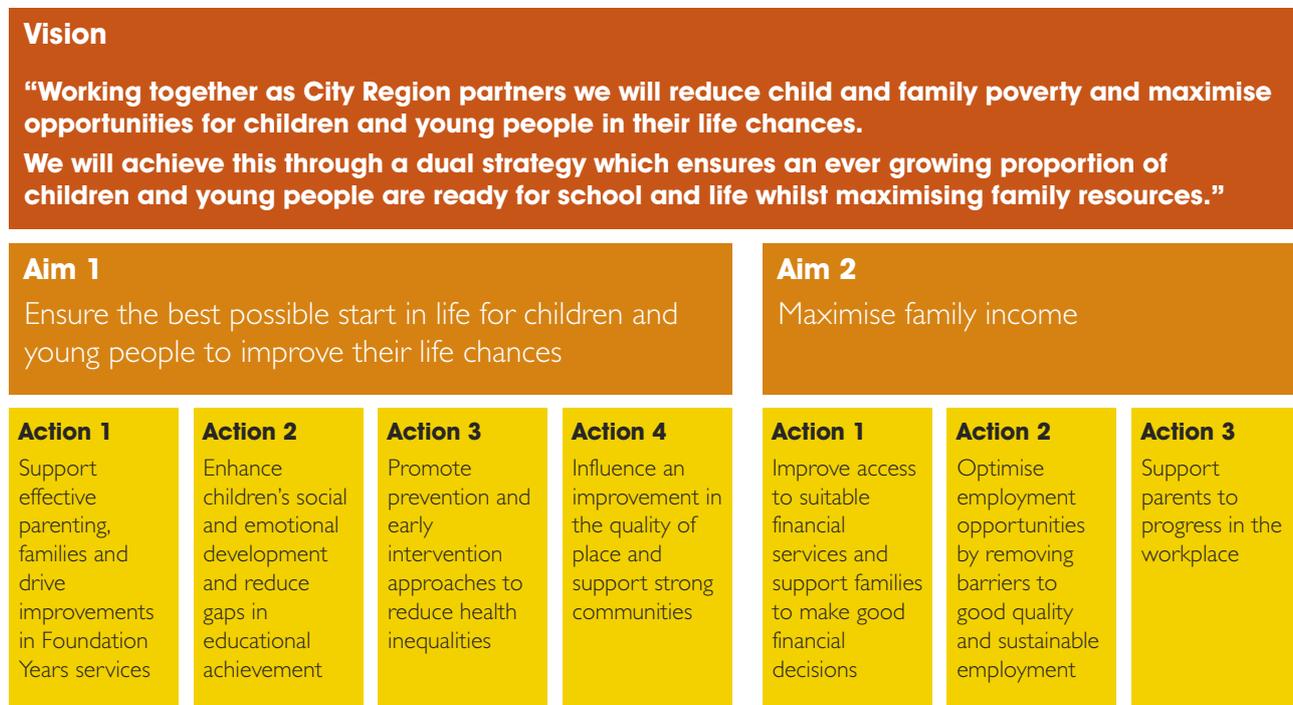


Figure 2 - Child Poverty and Life Chances Strategic Aims and Actions

Section 2 of this strategy looks at each of these actions in detail and explains why they are important, what our evidence base says, and what activities will be undertaken to add value to local work. There is of course significant overlap between these strategic actions. For example, programmes which aim to improve the quality of early years services will also help to reduce the gaps in educational attainment. Our delivery plans are being developed through a coordinated approach to ensure that all activities are aligned and complementary, further details on the delivery plans is provided in Section 5. Tackling the multiple factors that drive poverty and limit life chances will not happen in a week, month or even year. An effective approach will require long-term and sustained commitment from all partners. Therefore our strategy will run until 2020 and be refreshed every three years.

This timeframe coincides with the duty placed on government by the Child Poverty Act (2010) to eradicate child poverty by 2020.

Cost of not changing

As well as there being a moral imperative for reducing poverty and its impacts, there is also a strong economic case for ensuring that children in poverty today do not become the parents of poor children in the future. An in-depth study by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation⁸ cautiously estimates that child poverty costs the public sector between £12 billion and £22 billion a year. These estimates relate to government spending that deals with the immediate fallout of child poverty, including expenditure by social services, school education, police and the criminal justice system.

⁸ Hirsh, D., 2008. Estimating the cost of Child Poverty. York: JRF

However, child poverty also has long-term economic costs to society. Children who grow up in poverty are less likely to work as adults and often receive relatively low earnings if they do. The annual cost of below-average employment rates and earnings levels amongst adults who grew up in poverty is about £13 billion, of which £5 billion represents extra benefit payments and lower tax revenues; the remaining £8 billion is lost earnings to individuals, affecting gross domestic product. Whilst calculations of this nature cannot be exact, the estimates serve to highlight the growing urgency to address child and family poverty collectively and particularly given the increasing pressures on public finances.

There are benefits to applying early intervention models⁹, considering alternative sources of investment¹⁰ and a different performance regime¹¹. These interventions and approaches all have their place, and it remains important to ensure that the right approaches are adopted in the right service areas.

Guiding principles

A number of principles have steered our action planning process. These capture the various ways that the Commission can enhance the impact of local child and family poverty initiatives through use of the City Region arrangements:

- Ensure the City Region voice is at the forefront of policy development, highlighting issues with local MPs, central government and European government
- Evaluate and disseminate examples of best practice in order to raise the effectiveness of programmes across the City Region and to set national benchmarks
- Promote changes to incentives and wider behavioural approaches where these are found to have positive impacts
- Identify and pilot new approaches to addressing child poverty and improving life chances in areas with high levels of need, and roll these out on a wider scale

- Support the involvement of service users in the design and delivery of services
- Promote City Region wide programmes and projects, on issues that are common across local areas or are cross-boundary challenges
- Establish strategic agreements with organisations operating on a large geographical scale
- Promote early intervention approaches where they are beneficial and evidenced
- Support organisations in encouraging the involvement of volunteers
- Lead communications and develop a widespread understanding of the child poverty and life chances agenda across the City Region

It is evident that public services on their own will not be able to deliver this strategy, and this will require a response from the whole community, and probably one that is different to what has been previously delivered¹². Private, community and voluntary and public sectors will have important roles, as well as individuals, families and communities. Public services will look different in the medium term¹³, and so, hopefully, will the need for them.

What this strategy doesn't cover and why

This is a City Region level strategy and as such does not include detailed Council level action plans: these sit within individual Council and partner strategies. However, this document does set out a broad set of priorities for action which will be reflected in delivery plans elsewhere.

⁹ Allen, G., 2011. Early Intervention: Smart Investment, Massive Savings. London: Cabinet Office

¹⁰ Liebman, J.B. 2011. Social Impact Bonds. Washington: Center for American Progress; Mulgan G. et al., 2011. Social impact investment: the opportunity and challenge of social impact bonds. The Young Foundation; Haldenby, A. et al., 2011. It can be done. London: Reform

¹¹ Brien, S., 2011. Outcome based Government: How to improve spending decisions across government. London: Centre for Social Justice

¹² Bertrand, M. and Shafir, E. A., 2004. Behavioral-Economics View of Poverty; American Economic Review, 94(2), pp.419–423

¹³ Cabinet Office, 2011. Open Public Services White Paper: London: TSO; Bassett, D. et al., 2011. Reformers and wreckers. London: Reform; Parker, S. 2011. Next localism: 5 trends for the future of local government. London: NLGN

2. Child Poverty and Life Chances Key Actions

Aim 1: Ensure the best possible start in life for children and young people to improve their life chances

Action 1: Support effective parenting, families and drive improvements in Foundation Years services

“It [school] makes you smart so you can get a better job that pays you more.” (Girl aged 6, 2010)

Why it is important

It is unacceptable that the economic circumstances in which a child grows up, still heavily determines their future life chances and wellbeing. An increasing number of studies suggest that early years interventions can mitigate against the impacts of growing up in poverty and help children to develop the social and emotional bedrock they need to secure a positive future.

What the evidence says

The Foundation Years (from pregnancy to age 5) are a time of rapid development and experiences during this age can have a major impact on future life chances. Studies show that children who achieve well in their earliest years are much more likely to be successful in future education, and in later life. Until recently, the key importance of the quality of parenting has been underplayed. What parents do for their children can be more significant than their income status and can provide a protective factor against poverty.

An example of this can be found within the UK Chinese community where children from poor families as a group do better at GCSEs than all other better off children (except better off Chinese children). In many cases, this can be attributed to parental aspirations and attitudes. In addition, effective parenting has been shown to reduce the impact of genetic predispositions towards particular character traits¹⁴.

The quality of attachment between a child and a parent is also highly important, as it has been shown that attachment patterns correlate strongly with school performance and can help to predict the quality of relationships later in life¹⁵. This attachment is formed within the first year of a child's life. This suggests that it is not about the quality of the interactions or stimulations that is important, but the continuity and sensitivity in care giving relationships: it is more important who parents are rather than what they do¹⁶. The risk of an insecure attachment is linked to insecure, chaotic or unstable environments¹⁷.

¹⁴ Scott, S., 2011. Is character formed by nature or nurture? In *The Character Inquiry*, ed. Lexmond, J. and Grist, M. Demos

¹⁵ Sroufe, L.A., Egeland, B., Carlson, E., & Collins, W.A., 2005. *The Development of the Person: The Minnesota Study of Risk and Adaptation from Birth to Adulthood*. New York: Guilford Publications

¹⁶ Rutter M. and O'Connor T.G., 1999. Implications of Attachment Theory for Child Care Policies. In Cassidy J, Shaver PR. *Handbook of Attachment: Theory, Research and Clinical Applications*. New York: Guilford Press. pp. 823–44

¹⁷ Kraemer, S., 2011. How does insecure attachment impair character development? In *The Character Inquiry*, ed. Lexmond, J. and Grist, M. Demos

High quality early years services are also critical. Frank Field's review¹⁸ found that children who benefited from good quality early education were on average four to six months ahead in terms of cognitive development at school entry than those who did not. These findings are also supported by Graham Allen's review into early intervention, and by the initial evidence from the national evaluation of Sure Start Local Programmes¹⁹. The length of time that a child attends early education also matters. Research suggests these effects are lasting but those children who are most likely to benefit from such support are the least likely to access it²⁰.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile²¹ is an assessment of children's achievement at the end of the academic year in which they turn five. It is used to assess children's development against a range of measures such as personal, social and emotional development, communication and language and literacy. Scores for the City Region show that 53% of children achieved a good level of overall achievement compared to 56% of children in England.

What the existing provision looks like

Surestart Children's Centres were first introduced by the previous Labour Government in 1998 to improve outcomes for pre-school children and their families, with a particular focus on the most disadvantaged. However, evidence from the Field review suggests that the Centres, whilst providing an excellent service, are not achieving their original purpose and being utilised by the most disadvantaged families. In response to such findings, some Children's Centres are now looking at their organisational arrangements linked to the development of Payment by Results for their services²².

Local evidence²³ suggests that the reasons why some families may not access Children's Centres includes lack of awareness of SureStart and what services are available and mistrust of Surestart. However, some parents perceive it to be more trustworthy than other forms of childcare.

There is an important role for community groups and community and voluntary sector (CVS) organisations to refer people to more formalised provision. An example in Wirral is the close links that have been developed between a voluntary Parents and Toddlers group and the local Children's Centre.

Parents learn about parenting primarily through their own parents, as well as friends and professional advice and information²⁴. However, formal parenting support is often fragmented and inconsistent.

Midwives and Health visitors have a vital role in facilitating initial access to SureStart. However the level of information shared between health professionals and SureStart Centres varies. Where information is limited it can impact on a Centre's ability to effectively engage and support children in their catchment area²⁵.

Private childcare providers are experiencing tensions between keeping childcare fees affordable and delivering a high quality service. Recent research suggests that all childcare staff should be qualified to a minimum of NVQ Level 2, and in the future NVQ Level 3. However, it may be difficult for providers to allocate sufficient funds to pay the salaries of higher qualified staff and to pay for NVQ Level 3 training.

A number of independent reports²⁶ have recommended that all childcare staff should be qualified to a minimum of NVQ Level 2 at the moment, and Level 3 in the future. However, consultations suggest that private childcare providers are experiencing tensions between

¹⁸ Field, F., 2010. *The Foundation Years: preventing poor children becoming poor adults*, London: Cabinet Office

¹⁹ Department for Education, 2010. *The impact of Sure Start Local Programmes on five year olds and their families: Research Brief*. London: DfE

²⁰ Ben-Galim, D. 2011. *Parents at the Centre*. London: IPPR

²¹ Achievement of at least 78 points across the Early Years Foundation Stage with at least 6 in each of the scales in Personal Social and Emotional Development and Communication, Language and Literacy (2010)

²² Department for Education, 2011. *Press Notice: Government sets out vision to support parents and families*. Available at: <http://www.education.gov.uk/inthenews/inthenews/a00192408/government-sets-out-vision-to-support-parents-and-families> [retrieved 23 August 2011]

²³ Pharaoh, R., Harris, K. and Basi, T., 2010. *Family Case studies in Knowsley*. London: ESRO

²⁴ Lexmond, J., Bazalgette, L. and Margo, J., 2011. *The Home Front*. London: Demos

²⁵ LCR Child Poverty and Life Chances Strategy consultation feedback

²⁶ Tichell, C., 2011. *The Early Years: Foundations for life, health and learning*

keeping childcare fees affordable and delivering a high quality service. It may be difficult for providers to allocate sufficient funds to pay the salaries of higher qualified staff and to pay for Level 3 training.

What don't we know

School Readiness - there are some assessments available through the Early Years Foundation Stage but these are not directly comparable with educational attainment assessments. There is anecdotal evidence to suggest that less children than previously are ready for school on their first day; the Commission is undertaking some research in this area to assess this assertion.

What we will do to add value to local work

Our strategy to support effective parenting and drive improvements in Foundation Years services will involve the following actions:

- Gather data from each Sure Start Children's Centre in the City Region to assess to what extent each project has made, and developed contact, with the poorest families in their respective catchment area. This information will be used to better target services to the most vulnerable families
- Launch a campaign with Councillor leads for Children's Services to raise awareness about the importance of early language and communication skills amongst parents, practitioners and providers of Foundation Years services, building on the work of volunteers
- Pilot a school readiness index to provide objective evidence on the effectiveness of Foundation Years services in ensuring that a greater proportion of children are ready for school: this will be initially focused on collating existing data but work will be started with the University of Cambridge on options for a new measure

- To assess whether the readiness for school index can be used as part of payment by results for Children's Centres
- Support development of referral pathways to speech and language therapy
- Support effective parenting by seeking to remove the stigma attached to parenting classes and promoting their take up as well as exploring proposals around mentor support for families: this will include working closely with community groups to resource them to support effective parenting
- Encourage adults into informal learning to support their parenting development
- Consider the role of grandparents and assess what support might be beneficial and available
- Ensure that linkages are made between community development, social and economic strategies

Case Study

Using Ethnography to Generate Insight

Through its Child Poverty Programme, Knowsley Council has learnt the value of ethnography as a tool for developing deep and meaningful insight into the quality of people's lives. Ethnographic research involves spending time with people and becoming immersed in their world to understand the rationalities and realities behind their choices and decisions. The insight gleaned from studies with families in the North Kirkby and Stockbridge Village areas of Knowsley has revealed that family circumstances can increase the risks of child poverty, but it can also provide a protective factor against its impacts. These findings provide a valuable tool to inform strategy and service design.



Aim 1: Ensure the best possible start in life for children and young people to improve their life chances

Action 2: Enhance children's social and emotional development and reduce gaps in educational achievement

“If you don't go to school when you go to the shop you won't know if you have the right change” (Boy aged 10, 2010)

Why it is important

Children's life chances are inextricably linked to their educational achievement and social and emotional development²⁷. Parents are and remain their children's first educators, but it is clear that the school system can aid or hinder children and young people in their development. Children in poverty often lack the circumstances which can help them to develop skills in these areas. There is a body of evidence which indicates that working together good parenting, a supportive home learning environment and high quality school education can help to reduce the gap in outcomes between pupils in poverty and those in higher income households²⁸. An effective school can make the difference in the attainment of a child or young person²⁹. Education can be the way in which young people escape the generational disadvantage that blight so many.

What the evidence says

Free School Meals (FSM) eligibility can be used as a limited proxy measure of child poverty. At Key Stage 2 (age 10/11) the achievement gap between City Region pupils eligible for free school meals and their peers is around 18%. At Key Stage 4 (age 15/16) the attainment gap has widened further to a staggering 31%. This shows that there is a link between poverty and attainment, although it is complex³⁰.

Educational disadvantage continues to limit young people's opportunities in early adulthood. Around 24% of young people in the City Region who are from FSM backgrounds gain a level 3 qualification at age 19 compared to 46%³¹ of their peers and only 12% progress to higher education compared to 34% of young people from non-FSM backgrounds³².

Looked after children (sometimes called children in care) are at a particularly high risk of poor attainment and development outcomes which can contribute to poorer outcomes in adulthood. For example, in the City Region just 12% of all looked after children gain 5+ GCSEs at grades A*-C including Maths and English, compared to 52% of all children³³.

In general, consultations suggests that positivity and aspiration tends to be strongest in young children (below age 12), however it then appears to dissipate in the teenage years, and those teenagers living in deprived areas have much lower aspirations than those living in wealthier areas³⁴. This is often because young people do not feel they have the opportunities, means or ability to make those aspirations a reality. One young person hoping to study at university conveyed: “At the end of the day it's all coming down to money”³⁵. Supporting young people to be able to plot out the achievement of their aspirations is imperative.

²⁷ Lexmond, J. and Reeves, R., 2009. Building Character; London: Demos; Hirsch, D., 2007. Chicken and Egg: child poverty and educational inequalities. London: CPAG

²⁸ Field, F., 2010. The Foundation Years: preventing poor children becoming poor adults, London: Cabinet Office

²⁹ Melhuish, E. et al., 2006. The Effective Pre-School and Primary Education 3-11 Project (EPPE 3-11): The Effectiveness of Primary Schools in England in Key Stage 2 for 2002, 2003 and 2004. London: DfES / Institute of Education, University of London

³⁰ DfES, 2009/10

³¹ DfES, 2009/10

³² DfES, 2007/08

³³ DfES, 2009/10

³⁴ The Prince's Trust, 2011. Broke, not broken: tackling youth poverty and the aspiration gap. London: The Princes Trust; Cabinet Office, 2008. Aspiration and achievement amongst young people in deprived communities: a discussion and analysis paper. London: Cabinet Office

³⁵ Cordes, C., 2010. Knowsley Child Poverty Consultation. The Young Foundation

The City Region has made significant progress in reducing the proportion of all young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET). Levels have dropped from 10.9% to 8% over the past four years. However, there are fears that cuts to the education maintenance allowance (EMA), rising university fees and the ending of youth employment schemes such as Future Jobs Fund could reverse this positive trend³⁶.

High transport cost is a growing concern for many young people across the City Region wanting to progress onto further education or to access a school that specialises in a field that they are interested in, but is not located in their local area³⁷. A member of the Liverpool School's Youth Parliament voiced: "I am half way through my 6th form course and if I lose my free bus pass my parents can't afford bus fare to send me to school. What will happen? Am I expected to give up my course?"

What the existing provision looks like

Schools will become increasingly autonomous from local authorities through the Government's Free Schools programme and Academies Legislation. Free schools and academies essentially have more freedom than traditional state schools over their finances, the curriculum, and teachers' pay and conditions.

In April 2011, a Pupil Premium was introduced to provide schools with additional funds to tackle educational inequality by raising the attainment of children from low income or disadvantaged backgrounds. Transparency on how schools have used this funding to support pupils and outcomes achieved will be critical to its success. There is a key role for school governors in ensuring that this happens.

In addition to schools, there are a range of community groups and public sector organisations providing alternative education schemes and supporting children to achieve good emotional wellbeing. Examples include the Tranmere Community Project in Wirral that

works with young people who are disengaged and finds new ways to help them develop their emotional literacy. Merseyside Police also works closely with young people through various schemes such as the Safer Schools Initiative and KICKZ programme to provide safety advice and raise awareness on subjects such as substance misuse and gang violence.

What don't we know?

How effectively the pupil premium will be targeted - it is not clear at the moment what schools plan to spend their Pupil Premium funding on, nor the plans to monitor the impact of this.

Effectiveness of parent / school relationships - the proportion of schools who effectively engage parents in home school relationships nor the number of parents who engage in these.

What we will do to add value to local work

Our strategy to enhance children's social and emotional development and reduce gaps in educational achievement will involve the following actions:

- Schools to report on how Pupil Premium funding is being used to benefit the most disadvantaged pupils in individual schools
- Pilot a programme on data sharing between primary and secondary schools to ensure pupils' transitions to schools take place effectively
- Schools to appoint a lead Governor for life chances
- Work with schools to improve social and emotional development of pupils, particularly during the transition stages in years 6 and 11
- Capture and promote effective practice on the engagement of parents in home school relationships

³⁶ Tai, S., 2011. Child Poverty and Transport Report, Liverpool Schools Parliament

³⁷ Knowsley Young People's Commission, 2010. Unlocking the Potential of Young People in Knowsley. 4Children

- Reflect the importance of parenting in all subjects in the secondary curriculum
- Assess the impact of performance at secondary school by reporting on the numbers of school leaver not in education, employment and training
- Ensure that parenting support for young parents addresses career hopes and aspirations and results in a credible career plan
- Review the performance framework of schools to ensure that all pupils are supported to the best of their ability
- The Commission to report on the best 6 practices in the City Region Councils aimed at raising aspirations of children
- Schools to report annually on the attainment gap between pupils eligible for free school meals and all children at ages 5, 11 and 16 in individual schools
- Capture and promote best practice in supporting attainment of children in care
- Develop foster care friendly manifesto for employers

Case Study

Improving Take Up of Free Schools Meals

Free school meals play an important role in tackling child poverty as they provide pupils with the opportunity to have a nutritious meal and it relieves some of the financial pressures faced by parents. However, many families miss out on their entitlement and fail to claim this benefit. Liverpool City Council has significantly improved the take up of free school meals by integrating the application and processing of free school meals within its Housing and Council Tax Benefit process. Alongside this a pro-active campaign was initiated that involved the interrogation of its revenue and benefit system to identify potential qualifiers. Potentially qualifying households were notified and advised that unless they chose to opt out, their details would be shared with the Children Services department, to attempt to award free schools meals.

This process has enabled 771 children from families on Income Support to receive their award and a further 603 children from families classed as on a low income to also gain their entitlement.



Aim 1: Ensure the best possible start in life for children and young people to improve their life chances

Action 3: Promote prevention and early intervention approaches to reduce health inequalities

“People say that buying healthy food is cheap but they are wrong...Max eats a lot of crap, I know that. But I can't afford anymore and I shop at the dirt cheap places....” (Mother, 2010)

Why it is important

Children from lower income households are more likely to experience worse health outcomes across a range of indicators. This is a critical issue as health inequalities experienced in childhood often continue in later life, limiting children's chances of escaping poverty in adulthood. However, cycles of deprivation and ill health are not unbreakable, early interventions and preventative approaches can help children to overcome the effects of poverty and achieve better health and wellbeing. There is much good work underway³⁸ but the challenge must be to universalise the best.

What the evidence says

Managing on a low income can have a negative impact on maternal health and health-related behaviours. The following section outlines some of the key health issues affecting children and young people living in poverty in the City Region at key stages in their development:

Pregnancy and birth

- Data shows that more babies are born to teenage mothers in the City Region compared to the England average (44.9 per 1000 females aged 15-17 vs. 38.2 females aged 15-17)³⁹. Babies born to teenage mothers have been shown to experience poorer health outcomes than babies born to mothers aged 20-39⁴⁰.

- Maternal smoking during pregnancy remains the greatest cause of foetal ill health and death. In the City Region, areas with elevated levels of smoking at time of delivery (SATOD) also experience high levels of social deprivation. Overall 18.6% of women are known to be SATOD in the City Region, compared to 14.0% of women across England⁴¹.

Pre-school and school years

- The region has lower than average breastfeeding rates, meaning more babies in the City Region are missing out on the short and long term health benefits of being breastfed.
- Inequality in the take up of vaccines can worsen any social inequalities that already exist. The City Region take up rates of Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccine at 24 months and 2 doses at 5 years⁴² exceed the national average; however, they fail to meet the World Health Organisation target of 95%.
- The overall smoking rate is higher in the City Region than nationally. Second-hand smoke has a major impact on the health of children, particularly infants and toddlers. Research shows that children who are exposed to secondhand smoke are twice as likely to suffer from bronchitis and pneumonia⁴³.

³⁸ Nathanson, V. (2011) Social Determinants of Health – What Doctors Can Do. British Medical Association

³⁹ Under 18 conception rate, 2009, ONS / Teenage Pregnancy Unit

⁴⁰ DoH & DCSF, 2008. Getting Maternity Services Right for Pregnant Teenagers and Young Fathers. London: DoH & DCSF

⁴¹ DoH, 2010/11

⁴² Health Protection Agency, 2010/11

⁴³ Helpwithsmoking.com. Available at: <http://www.helpwithsmoking.com/passive-smoking/passive-smoking-and-children.php> [retrieved 20 September 2011]

- There is growing concern that children's diets contain too much sugar, salt, saturated fat and too few vegetables. This is a contributing factor to region's higher than average rates of obesity amongst children at 4-5 years and 10-11 years⁴⁴.
- The average rate in the City Region for alcohol specific hospital admissions for those who are under 18 years old is more than double the England rate (149.02 per 100,000 vs. 64.5 per 100,000). Estimates for risky drinking behaviours across the city region are also higher than the national average⁴⁵. This is a concern as alcohol misuse amongst adults can have an adverse impact on children and family life.

Poverty also has a complex relationship with disability. Parents who have a disabled child, or have disabilities themselves are more likely to be poor as they experience barriers to employment, high living costs, and low wages. At the same time, people with less money are more likely to become disabled because of the close association between poverty and poor health⁴⁶. Nationally 23% of individuals in families with at least one member is disabled are in poverty, compared with 16% of families with no disabled member⁴⁷.

What the existing provision looks like

Under Public Health Reforms, PCT clusters are being established across the country to sustain management capacity; these arrangements also provide opportunities to strengthen collaborative working between local districts. In the City Region, Halton and St Helens, Sefton, Knowsley and Liverpool PCTs form a Merseyside Cluster. Wirral PCT has been clustered with Cheshire and Warrington.

The City Region benefits from an award winning public health network 'Cheshire and Merseyside Partnership in Health' (ChaMPs) that through the Cheshire and Merseyside Directors of Public Health (CM DsPH), provides strategic support and public health expertise to Cheshire and Merseyside PCT Clusters, Councils, the NHS and Clinical Commissioning Consortia. ChaMPs lead on a set of collaborative lifestyle programmes that support the PCT Clusters and CM DsPH to deliver their public health targets. These include tobacco control, alcohol, healthy weight, health inequalities and more.

Heart health charity, Heart of Mersey, is currently working in an advisory role for healthy eating, providing advice and support to local partners. HoM has advocated for healthier diets for pre school children and has supported this by the delivery of training to nursery cooks in Knowsley and Liverpool (with HM Partnerships, Heart of Mersey's social marketing enterprise partner). The Pre School Nutrition Project in Knowsley received a North West Public Health award in 2010.

Health Visitors form a key part of the government's approach to improving the health of the most vulnerable. It has committed to recruiting an additional 4,200 Health Visitors by 2014 to support families as part of a wider focus on support in the Foundation Years⁴⁸. Health Visitors will extend coverage of the Healthy Child Programme (HCP)⁴⁹ for all families, including the most disadvantaged and engage with communities. Alongside this, the government aims to double the places available on the Family Nurse Partnerships⁵⁰ by 2015; several of these schemes are currently delivering successful outcomes in the City Region.

⁴⁴ National Child Measurement Programme, 2009-10

⁴⁵ Local Alcohol Profile for England, 2008-09

⁴⁶ Preston, G., 2006. A route out of poverty? Disabled people, work and welfare reform

⁴⁷ Disability Rights Partnership, 2011. End of a lifetime? Ending Disability Living Allowance to introduce Personal Independence Payments

⁴⁸ Department for Education, 2011. Supporting Families in the Foundation Years. London: DfE

⁴⁹ The HCP is a public health programme for children, young people and families, which focuses on early intervention and prevention. It offers a universal programme of screening tests, immunisations, developmental reviews, information and guidance on parenting and healthy choices

⁵⁰ The Family Nurse Partnership is an intensive evidence-based programme that improves outcomes for vulnerable children and families

What don't we know?

In depth information on poverty and disability -The self declaration of disability status is not fully robust, limiting our ability to appropriately support families affected by disability. This has been identified as an issue in the Equality Impact Assessment for this strategy. Mitigation measures include working closely with CVS disability support and information groups to help us identify and engage with families in need of additional assistance.

What we will do to add value to local work

Our strategy to promote prevention and early intervention approaches to reduce health inequalities will involve supporting ChaMPs on a number of public health priorities:

Smoking in pregnancy and protecting children from smoke

NHS led:

- Develop joint initiatives to reduce smoking in pregnancy, this will include exploring a city-regional maternal stop smoking service to accommodate pregnant women's utilisation of hospital services

All partners:

- Develop and support a joint campaign on reducing risks to children of secondhand smoke in homes and cars

Local Authority led:

- Support implementation of a voluntary smokefree code within play areas of parks

Obesity prevention including promoting breast feeding

Local Authority led:

- Work with parents, Children Centres and schools to promote physical activity for children
- Consider regulating and limiting the number of takeaway food outlets near schools through supplementary planning guidance

All partners:

- Local Children's Trusts and public organisations to implement the UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative at a local level around schools

Access to universal services for vulnerable children including immunisations and health checks

NHS led:

Support ChaMPS to deliver its Vaccination and Immunisation Plan that will include:

- Ensuring robust and clear leadership is in place for vaccination and immunisation across the City Region, particularly from Public Health and Primary Care Commissioning
- Lobbying government to change the financial incentives structure so that general practices are rewarded for increasing immunisation rates to 95% (the current national Directly Enhanced Service (DES) incentive ceases once 90% is achieved)
- Ensuring that the national standards for immunisation training are met

Local Authority led:

- Ensure access to and take up of the healthy child programme through supporting closer working between health visitors, Children's Centres, School Nursing Teams and Schools

The impact of adults on young children from alcohol misuse

NHS led:

- Reduce alcohol misuse amongst young people through supporting effective parenting. One way we will do this is through an innovative train the trainer programme for front line staff in the Fire service and police to provide parents with brief advice on alcohol

Local Authority led:

- Ensure children and adults health agendas are integrated through the Health and Wellbeing boards
- Introduce via a bylaw a minimum price for alcohol of 50 pence per unit to reduce alcohol related harm



Case Study

Working with Volunteers to Increase Breastfeeding

In response to poor breastfeeding rates and knowing the immense health and well-being benefits that breastfeeding brings to both mothers and babies, NHS Wirral commissioned Homestart Wirral to provide breastfeeding peer support to 500 women during 2010-11. Breastfeeding protects babies from infections including gastroenteritis and urinary tract infections and protects women from certain forms of cancer. Armed with this knowledge, Homestart Wirral recruited local women volunteers with personal experience of breastfeeding to support new mothers to breastfeed. NHS Wirral funding was used to employ one full time co-ordinator, an administrator and 14 peer support volunteers, all of whom completed Breastfeeding Network and UNICEF training, local hospital induction and core Homestart induction before starting to support mothers.

The irrepressible passion and enthusiasm of everyone involved resulted in 769 women being supported, 34% living in the most deprived areas and 53% still breastfeeding at 6-8 weeks. This achievement has led to the contract being extended from 2011-13, with further funding to increase the number of volunteers and increased capacity to support more women. An added bonus has been that many of the women supported by the team have gone on to become peer supporters themselves.

Aim 1: Ensure the best possible start in life for children and young people to improve their life chances

Action 4: Influence an improvement in the quality of place and support strong communities

“I want a new house, ours is falling apart. Water is coming through the roof.” (Girl aged 12, 2010).

Why it is important

The physical and social environments that children grow up in can influence their aspirations, outcomes and prospects of breaking intergenerational cycles of poverty. In terms of the built environment, poor quality housing and unsafe neighbourhoods are experienced by many families living in poverty, this is supported by research that shows children from poorer backgrounds are five times more likely to die in an accident and 15 times more likely to die in a fire at home than children from wealthier families⁵¹. Socially, there has been a tendency for policy discourses to describe deprived neighbourhoods as problematic and segmented places which nurture behaviours that deviate from social and cultural norms. However, this view fails to acknowledge the relationships and community resources within low-income neighbourhoods that can provide a valuable source of support and form a protective factor against the impacts of poverty⁵².

What the evidence shows

Housing quality is an issue for parts of the City Region, overall 40% of owner occupied and 55% of privately rented homes fail to meet the Decent Homes Standard⁵³. This can negatively affect children’s physical and mental health.

Cold and inadequate housing, without a warm place to study also makes it difficult to complete homework and undertake extra curricular activities. Social housing has an important role in providing quality and affordable homes for low-income families. The current shortage of housing across the City Region is creating many problems for families with children who cannot access or afford a mortgage. The number on social housing lists has increased by around 6,400 since 2007⁵⁴.

Road traffic collisions affect all neighbourhoods, however low income communities suffer from a higher incidence of pedestrian casualties compared to more affluent areas. In Merseyside, children from the 10% most deprived neighbourhoods are 2.45 times more likely to be killed or seriously injured in a collision than those from outside the deprived areas⁵⁵. National studies suggest that this effect is because children from deprived areas are more exposed to traffic dangers. They are less likely to have a back garden or access to safe open green spaces and are more likely to play on the street unsupervised. Their parents are also less likely to have access to a vehicle and are therefore more likely to make journeys on foot⁵⁶.

Crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) disproportionately impact on deprived communities. Geographical analysis by Merseyside Police suggests that there is a particularly strong correlation in Merseyside between areas with high concentrations of child

⁵¹ End Child Poverty, 2011. Why End Child Poverty? The Effects. Available at: <http://www.endchildpoverty.org.uk/why-end-child-poverty/the-effects> [[retrieved 13 September 2011]]

⁵² Bashir, N. et al., 2011. Living Through Change in Challenging Neighbourhoods: Thematic Analysis. York: JRF

⁵³ Liverpool City Region, 2009. Multi Area Agreement

⁵⁴ Liverpool City Region, 2009. Housing Strategy: Annual Monitoring Report

⁵⁵ Merseyside Road Safety Partnership, 2009. (Note data does not capture Halton)

⁵⁶ Grayling, T. et al., 2002. Streets ahead - safe and liveable streets for children. London: IPPR

poverty and the occurrence of domestic offences⁵⁷. Household chaos has been found to predict behaviour problems and lower IQ scores over and above parenting approaches⁵⁸. There is little evidence to say that poverty itself is directly causing this effect, however research suggests that poverty can make it more difficult to achieve effective family relationships and it can create conditions in a community that hinders social control⁵⁹.

Social networks (for example ties with friends, family and neighbours) can operate as reference groups and set benchmarks for what can be achieved and what is acceptable to other members of the community. In some circumstances this can have a negative impact on young people's aspirations. A study by the Knowsley Young People's Commission found there is a "fatalistic narrative of low expectation". According to a mother "It's like they don't expect kids from Knowsley to go to university".

However social networks and strong family ties can also help to mitigate the daily impacts of poverty by providing sustained and committed support that enables families to manage daily pressures⁶⁰. Mobilising and supporting these assets within the community can bring huge benefits.

What the existing provision looks like

There are 16 Housing Associations covering 95% of the social housing stock in the City Region that have signed up to a Compact to tackle worklessness amongst their residents. All social housing is required to meet a Decent Home Standard, to meet the standard a property must have modern facilities, be warm and weatherproof.

Across the City Region there are excellent examples of projects that are utilising community resources and knowledge to address

child poverty. Such work includes the Knowsley Volunteer Family Mentor Project which created a team of local volunteers to encourage the community and local services to work together to improve outcomes for families in persistent poverty. This initiative supports the local economy not only through volunteers moving into employment and the reduction of families longer term reliance on services and benefits, but also through increasing community awareness and capacity.

A variety of education and training initiatives for vulnerable young road users are delivered by all Local Authorities across Merseyside. This work is supported by the activities of Merseyside Police, the Merseyside Road Safety Partnership and the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service. In recognition of the benefits of generating higher levels of safe walking and cycling, measures have been identified in Merseyside's 3rd Local Transport Plan (LTP3) to provide road safety skills training for vulnerable young pedestrians and cyclists. In further support of this agenda, LTP3 also places a strong emphasis on reducing vehicle speeds by extending the number of 20mph speed limits in residential areas and introducing a range of engineering measures to improve the safety of pedestrians and cyclists across Merseyside's road network.

Merseyside Police places strong emphasis on crime prevention through early engagement with children and young people in the most vulnerable communities. There are a multitude of programmes delivered in partnership with the community and public services to make young people safer and to empower them to make positive life choices. Successes include the Stronger Communities Initiatives that operate in areas with high levels of crime and ASB, and take a holistic approach to making areas safer for residents by working with partners to improve school attendance, increase community confidence, reduce worklessness and reduce crime and disorder.

⁵⁷ Liverpool City Region, 2010. Child and Family Poverty Needs Assessment

⁵⁸ Coldwell, J., Pike, A. and Dunn, J., 2006. Household chaos – links with parenting and child behaviour. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 47, no 1; Deater-Deckard, K., et al., 2009. Conduct problems, IQ, and household chaos: a longitudinal multi-informant study. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 50:10, pp 1301-1308

⁵⁹ Hay, C et al., 2006. The Impact of Community Disadvantage on the Relationship between the Family and Juvenile Crime. *Journal of Research in Crime & Delinquency*, Vol. 43 No. 4, pp326-356

⁶⁰ Pharaoh, R., Harris, K. and Basi, T., 2010. Family Case studies in Knowsley. London: ESRO

On a national scale, intensive family interventions are at the heart of the government's plans for addressing the causes of disadvantage. The government aspires 'to try and turn every troubled family in the country' that experiences multiple problems. It estimates that 120,000 families need targeted interventions because they may have health problems, be addicted to drugs or alcohol, have never worked or cannot control their child's behaviour.

What don't we know?

How to effectively engage with and influence all private landlords - the Rugg Review recommended that a compulsory private landlord accreditation scheme be introduced to regulate letting agents and improve standards, however this proposal was not adopted by the coalition government. Some City Region areas have developed local non-mandatory accreditation schemes, although a proportion of landlords still choose not to engage.

The impact of budget cuts experienced by casualty reduction agencies - Widespread reductions in revenue and capital funding across all casualty reduction agencies have the potential to hinder the recent progress made in reducing the number of road traffic casualties. Although the extent of this effect is as yet unknown, it is likely that a range of road safety activities will be negatively affected by these resource reductions.

The impact of housing benefit reforms - the housing benefit system is undergoing radical changes. Taken together, plans to cap housing benefit based on the size of a property, the recalculation of Local Housing Allowance and the reduction in non-dependent allowances could make it difficult for some families with limited finances to stay within their existing homes⁶¹. There is a prospect that these reforms could induce involuntary movement, which may affect social and family networks.

What we will do to add value to local work

Our strategy to influence an improvement in the quality of place and support strong communities will involve the following actions:

- Encourage partners to prioritise neighbourhoods that have a Stronger Communities Initiative (SCI) to test out projects that aim to raise the aspirations of children and young people
- Maintain a comprehensive and multi agency approach to tackle anti-social behaviour, reducing its impact through problem solving, supporting vulnerable victims and dealing effectively with perpetrators, including restorative justice outcomes
- Work with Merseytravel and Halton Borough Council to capture and disseminate local evaluated best practice on how to improve road safety in residential areas with high levels of child poverty
- To work with Councils and locally based groups to proactively mitigate the impact of the forthcoming welfare reforms
- To maintain housing standards within a rent framework that remains affordable for low income households
- Work with private landlords to raise the standard of privately rented homes

Case Study

Working with the Third Sector and Empowering Young People to make Places Safer

Merseyside Police has strong collaborative partnerships with the third sector and works with groups such as 'Clapperboard' to make young people safer. Young people engaged on this programme have developed resources supporting ASB reduction and firework safety that have been rolled out for use in schools and with young audiences. The Police Force also has a strong Volunteer Cadet commitment and has run a programme for six years. A re-structured Cadet programme will re-launch in late 2011 and will be active in all local authority areas. This will see approximately one hundred 16 year olds from a variety of backgrounds become part of the extended police family.

⁶¹ Ian Cole et al., 2011. Low income neighbourhoods in Britain. York: JRF

Aim 2: Maximise Family Income

Action 1: Improve access to suitable financial services and support families to make good financial decisions

“[Zia] Has debts that she can just manage but they are troublesome none the less and certainly go a long way toward mopping up any spare cash she might be able to save....In order to address some of her debt problems, Zia took a loan from a small loans provider, however the repayments are high”. (Researcher, describing a mother’s financial situation, 2010)

Why it is important

Families in poverty often experience difficulty in accessing mainstream financial services such as bank accounts and affordable credit. As a result many turn to alternative and more expensive sources to finance purchases. Put simply, spending costs more for those who have the least income.

Financial exclusion can also act as a barrier to employment, for example through having no bank account into which a salary can be paid. Additionally those in debt may be concerned about funding the cost of moving into work, such as finding the money to bridge the gap between benefits stopping and their first pay day.

What the evidence says

The development of children is correlated to the levels of income within the household, and this is more pronounced in the early years. Research suggests that the effect of income on the development of children reduces as children move from early years to adolescence⁶². There is a negative impact on the development of children and young people linked to income inequalities.

There is evidence to suggest that due to a lack of affordable credit, the use of high interest shops, expensive catalogues and unlicensed money lenders is endemic in some communities. Consultation exercises suggest that:

- Families go into debt to buy material goods. In some cases parents feel pressured to buy their children the latest toys and gadgets⁶³. This chimes with research undertaken by UNICEF⁶⁴ which suggests that Britain has some of the highest levels of material inequalities, which causes poorer families to feel that they must struggle to buy their children items that are equated to social status. Its report also suggests that children want to spend more time with their parents, and that this would have a better impact on overall child wellbeing than expensive consumer goods.
- There is limited knowledge of what financial help is available. Whilst there is an awareness of credit unions there is little understanding of what they offer: “I used to just put their stuff in the bin! It looks like any of the other loans people give, except I don’t know them do I” (parent, Knowsley)⁶⁵.
- Those in debt can feel embarrassment and worry about the perceptions held by others⁶⁶.

⁶² Duncan, G. J.; Yeung, J.; Brooks-Dunn, J.; & Smith, J., 1998. How much does childhood poverty affect the life chances of children? *American Sociological Review*, 63(3), pp. 406-423; Brooks-Gunn, J., & Duncan, G. J., 1997. The effects of poverty on children. *Future of Children*, 7, pp55-71 (261).

⁶³ Cordes, C., 2010. Knowsley Child Poverty Consultation. The Young Foundation

⁶⁴ UNICEF, 2011. Child Poverty Perspective: An Overview of Child Well Being in Rich Countries, Report Card 7. The United Nations Children’s Fund

⁶⁵ Pharaoh, R., Harris, K. and Basi, T., 2010. Family Case studies in Knowsley. London: ESRO

⁶⁶ Pharaoh, R., Harris, K. and Basi, T., 2010. Family Case studies in Knowsley. London: ESRO

Families in poverty also pay more for gas and electricity as they cannot access cheaper payment tariffs like Direct Debits. There are growing concerns that financial exclusion combined with rising fuel costs will push many more families into fuel poverty⁶⁷ over the next 12 months. This may have a particularly severe impact on families who have a disabled member and are dependent on electrical equipment for care. Of all the regions in England the North West already has the highest number of households with children living in fuel poverty (242,500)⁶⁸, it is imperative that partners continue to monitor this situation.

There are also wider issues on this matter around low financial capability and literacy, such as people's ability to understand financial terms and plan their finances. Financial capability will become even more important when Universal Credit is introduced in 2013. The Universal Credit System will merge a range of 'in-work' and 'out-of-work' benefits into one lump sum which will be paid direct to claimants. This will include housing benefit, which is often currently paid direct to landlords. Therefore claimants will need good financial management skills in order to pay their rent and avoid debt and arrears.

What the existing provision looks like

There is a wealth of advice and support available to individuals, which includes Citizens Advice Bureaux (CAB), Councils, Housing Associations and voluntary groups. However it can be difficult for individuals to understand what support is available for them, in addition to the courage that is required to admit that you need support on this matter:

Families with debt issues may receive advice and support on debt and financial management through referral from other services. An initial review of Family Intervention Projects⁶⁹ showed that debt concerns had been reduced across the cohort during the time that the family was receiving support. This confirms the need for front line workers to be able to signpost families to more specialised support as appropriate.

Credit Unions provide a straightforward approach to saving and loans, and some are now beginning to offer basic bank accounts for individuals to use. They do have capacity issues but these are not widely publicised or understood. The majority of individuals who are at risk of being financially excluded will live in social housing, and there is much good operational work being carried out by Housing Associations⁷⁰. Support could be offered to Credit Unions to improve their efficiency and effectiveness of operations through more joined up work⁷¹.

There are wider issues about the confidence that individuals have in accessing bank accounts. Anecdotal evidence from Credit Unions and financial advisers is consistently identifying that people have bank accounts but they are not using them to their maximum. National research also identified that low income families did not consider that there was an appropriate savings account for them⁷².

The role of the high street banks needs further work and challenge to consider what they could be doing. Additionally, other providers of financial products (such as supermarkets) could improve their offer in this area.

⁶⁷ A household is described as being in fuel poverty when it has to spend more than 10% of its income keeping warm

⁶⁸ National Energy Action, 2009. Fuel Poverty: A briefing for Children's Trust Policy Coordinators in the North West of England

⁶⁹ National Centre for Social Research, 2010. ASB Family Intervention Projects: Monitoring and Evaluation. London: DfE

⁷⁰ Chartered Institute of Housing, 2011. Improving financial inclusion and capability in social housing. Coventry: CIH

⁷¹ Jones, P.A. and Ellison, A. 2011. Community finance for London: scaling up the credit union and finance sector. Faculty of Health and Applied Social Sciences, LJMU

⁷² Dolphin, T., 2011. Designing a life course savings account. London: IPPR

What don't we know

Exactly who is providing which services - local partnerships have varying knowledge and understanding of who is providing financial inclusion and advice services in their district. Therefore we do not have a full picture of the range of voluntary and statutory organisations operating in the City Region. Given the difficulties identified in accessing financial advice services, it is considered that we need to create as many opportunities as possible for people to access them.

Which services are effective - there is a need to better understand what has worked in combating financial exclusion within the City Region and also nationally.

What we will do to add value to local work

Our strategy to improve access to suitable financial services and support families to make good financial decisions will involve the following actions:

- Develop a City Region Financial Inclusion Forum to share best practice and further expertise: this could include a guide for front line workers in signposting individuals to specialist support
- Councils to report on the scope and effectiveness of benefit take up campaigns and to promote the effective practice
- Work closer with high street banks and supermarkets to improve their offer in this area. This may involve encouraging high street banks to better promote basic bank accounts and supermarket Financial Services to expand their offer
- Work with credit unions to better promote services and encourage take-up
- Work with credit unions based in the City

Region to support them in their organisational development

- Identify and promote effective practice on digital inclusion
- Ensure that budgeting advice is offered to individuals at different points, through work with CAB, credit unions, schools, local authorities and others
- Facilitate a City Region review into utilities companies and their approach to offering tariffs
- Work with schools across the City Region to ensure financial issues are covered within the curriculum

Case Study

Tackling Debt and Financial Exclusion

Partners from both the statutory and voluntary sector in Halton have worked together for many years to help the poorest and most vulnerable residents maximise their income, tackle multiple debt problems and address housing and employment issues. A range of services are offered including mobile outreach and evening advice surgeries.

One success story is a Budgeting Officer working in Halton's thriving Credit Union, who in 2009/10 worked with over a hundred clients and helped them to save/ write-off a total of £749,444 of debt. 98% of these clients were parents with dependent children.

Aim 2: Maximise Family Income

Action 2: Optimise employment opportunities by removing barriers to good quality and sustainable employment

“I’m bored and I just want to get out and go back to work. Because I haven’t done anything for so long I’ve forgotten everything... I’m really not good friends with anyone anymore.” (Mother, 2010)

Why it is important

Parental employment is the best route out of income poverty. Not only does being in sustainable and well paid employment provide families with the financial means to move out of poverty, it can also contribute towards positive health, build resilience and social networks and improve confidence and self esteem.

What the evidence says

In the City Region the vast majority of children growing up in poverty live in a ‘workless’⁷³ household (85%) as opposed to a household where one or more of their parents is in low paid work and is deemed to be in ‘in-work’ poverty. There are particularly high rates of out-of-work poverty amongst lone parent families (79.5% of children in out-of-work poverty in the City Region live in a single parent household). For these parents, balancing work and childcare responsibilities presents major challenges. Finding suitable employment opportunities will become even more pressing in October 2012 when reforms to the welfare system will require lone parents with children aged 5 and above to claim Jobseekers Allowance and look for work.

It is often the combined impact of many factors (such as debt, low confidence and complexities of the benefits system) that can make work seem unattainable for some parents. Our local analysis suggests that the most dominant barriers to employment for parents in the City Region include:

Childcare - Generally most parents prefer to use family members to look after their children; where this is not an option, the most frequently cited problems with formal childcare are inaccessibility and high costs. For some families, childcare can consume around a third of their household income⁷⁴. In addition, parents have identified the method of payment for childcare (and associated deposits), a lack of flexibility on open times (particularly outside of 7am-7pm) and reduced provision for children with additional needs as being significant barriers. The quality of childcare available is as important as its affordability and accessibility. Supporting parents to volunteer in childcare can be a route to skills development and employment in the longer term. However, there are emotional reasons for choosing to stay at home and not use childcare, with the recent study by Sigman⁷⁵ identifying some reasons as to why this might be the case.

Employment and Skills - One in five adults in the City Region have no qualifications. A mismatch between skills of jobseekers and the requirements of the jobs on offer also makes it difficult for many parents to find work.

Whilst there are fewer children experiencing in-work poverty than out-of-work poverty in the City Region, it still remains a concern as many families in ‘in-work’ poverty are trapped in cycles of ‘low-pay, no pay’. This is because those in ‘in-work’ poverty are more likely to work in insecure employment and have low skills which increases their risk of cycling between ‘in-and-out-of-work poverty’. The national Commission on Vulnerable Employment

⁷³ This definition is based on DWP data and includes those working less than 16 hours per week on average

⁷⁴ Liverpool City Region, 2010. Child and Family Poverty Needs Assessment

⁷⁵ Sigman, A., 2011. Mother Superior? The Biological Effects of Daycare. *The Biologist* 58(3): pp 28-32

highlighted that there are particular sectors which are prone to vulnerable and lower levels of pay including; care, hospitality and facilities management: these are sectors which are strongly represented within the City Region's economy. One of the main findings from a study into work in deprived communities in the North East⁷⁶ found that the biggest challenge was the lack of accessible and relevant job opportunities: this contributed towards a significant low pay, no pay cycle and recurrent poverty. Previous research⁷⁷ also identified the need for more work to be undertaken with employers and on job creation, rather than just on getting people ready for work.

Job availability is an important and underlying issue on employment. In the City Region it is estimated that there are 7.7 job seekers chasing every unfilled vacancy notified to Jobcentre Plus (July 2011). This is compounded by increasing numbers of redundancies, particularly in the public sector and the expected flow of people from Incapacity Benefit to Jobseekers' Allowance following their reassessment. Without a significant increase in the flow of new vacancies, changes to the welfare system are unlikely to have a positive effect on employment and worklessness is likely to increase.

The predicted number of job losses in the public sector is likely to impact most on women; many of whom will be the primary carer to their children. Those who are low paid, low skilled or in part-time employment are expected to be hit hardest; this may have a disproportionate impact on children and young people whose families are in in-work poverty. The level of female unemployment in the City Region reached its highest rate in August 2011 since September 1996. The introduction of the Work Programme for those who are long term unemployed, and the mandating of people onto this, may have an impact but it would depend upon jobs being available for people to access.

Many parents also feel strong tensions between spending quality time with their children,

especially in the early years, and providing for their family financially⁷⁸. Family friendly recruitment practices and employment policies are key to helping parents maintain a positive balance.

Welfare reforms - Recent evidence⁷⁹ has highlighted the detrimental impact that welfare changes have had on working families. Over the past year we have seen a reduction in childcare allowances through the tax credit system from 80% to 70%, the freezing of child benefit and changes to the rates at which tax credits are withdrawn as earnings increase. These changes may mean that working families have to earn 20% more in 2011 than in 2010 just to maintain the same standard of living. Commentators are concerned that these changes will act as a disincentive to work for many families.

Transport - The City Region has mobility rich and mobility poor communities. Research carried out in disadvantaged areas shows that 59% of households in these areas do not have access to a car and 78% of disadvantaged households do not have access to a bicycle. For low income groups, bus transport remains critical for many in ensuring good access to services and job opportunities. However, affordability remains an issue and a range of improvements will be required around fares, ticketing and information. Bus fares on Merseyside have more than doubled over the last 10 years with a 10% increase in the last year alone. Nearly half of all trips in disadvantaged areas are less than two miles reflecting the low travel horizons of disadvantaged groups, which limits the number of job opportunities and services available to them. Further to this, rising fuel prices may further widen the gap between the mobility rich and mobility poor. A combination of low incomes, low car ownership and the affordability of public transport fares are clear contributors to social exclusion and the isolation of some areas from services and opportunities⁸⁰.

⁷⁶ Shildrick, T., MacDonald, R., Webster, C. and Garthwaite, K., 2010. The role of the low pay, no pay cycle in recurrent poverty. York: JRF

⁷⁷ North, D., Syrett, S., Etherington, D., and Vickers, I., 2008. Interventions to tackle the economic needs of deprived areas. York: JRF

⁷⁸ Britain Thinks, 2011. The Modern British Family: Research for the Labour Party. Britain Thinks

⁷⁹ Hirsh, D. A minimum income standard for the UK in 2011. JRF

⁸⁰ LTP Support Unit, 2010. Merseyside Disadvantaged Communities Study

What the existing provision looks like

Childcare

- Parents of all three and four-year-olds are currently entitled to 15 hours of free childcare which must be spread over 3 days⁸¹. The government plans to extend this offer to all disadvantaged children by 2013. Working parents may also qualify for Working Tax Credit which includes a childcare element designed to help towards the cost of childcare. However, as previously highlighted, the amount that parents can claim to assist with childcare fees has reduced from 80% to 70%.
- Some childcare providers report that there are issues with the funding levels for the free childcare places for three-and-four-year-olds. A proportion are having to subsidise 'free' places so that parents receive them which is impacting on the sustainability of their business⁸².
- Even with the childcare entitlement and tax credits, it is not always more financially rewarding to be in work (particularly for those with more than one young child and lone parents).
- Deprived areas generally have less demand for childcare and less supply⁸³. This could be reflective of market forces as profit for providers can be relatively low and demand is suppressed by parents' inability to afford the childcare on offer. Recent research identified that cost is a major barrier to parents accessing childcare, particularly for those living in severe poverty⁸⁴.
- There are limited choices for families who are economically active for the provision of before school care, after school care and holiday care. This is a particular problem for shift workers who work outside the hours of 7am-7pm.
- Reliable before and after school care will

become important to many more parents when reforms to the Welfare System progress.

- Lone parents face a greater burden of childcare costs: this is pertinent as we know 77% of children living in poverty in the City Region live in a one parent household⁸⁵.
- Early Years Childcare providers commonly charge a significant deposit prior to children commencing care - this can make childcare inaccessible to lower income families, or to parents moving from benefits into training or work.
- Before and after school childcare and holiday childcare does not meet the needs of parents with disabled children in some areas. This correlates with national research, which indicates disabled children are more likely than their non disabled peers to live in poverty as parents are unable to work due to caring responsibilities⁸⁶.
- The additional funding required to care for children with disabilities to pay for specialised equipment and sufficiently qualified staff is cited as a barrier to expanding services for children with disabilities⁸⁷.

Employment and Skills

- There are projections of an additional 130,000 jobs to be created over the next 10 years across the City Region in 4 growth sectors (Knowledge Economy, Culture and Visitor Economy, Low Carbon Economy, Superport and Logistics), and businesses are working with colleges and learning providers to ensure that the right skills are available at the time that businesses require them. These jobs will be at a range of skill levels, and support will be provided to those seeking work to develop their skills. This is a key piece of work assigned to the Liverpool City Region Employment and Skills Board

⁸¹ The government plans to increase the flexibility of when childcare hours can be used, to help parents plan their childcare to fit around working hours. This is likely to be implemented by September 2012, following a consultation

⁸² National Day Nurseries Association, 2011. Available at www.ndna.org.uk

⁸³ Liverpool City Region, 2010. Child and Family Poverty Needs Assessment

⁸⁴ Daycare Trust and Save the Children, 2011. Making Work Pay – The Childcare Trap. London: Daycare Trust and Save the Children

⁸⁵ Liverpool City Region, 2010. Child and Family Poverty Needs Assessment

⁸⁶ Child Poverty Action Group. Policy Brief: At Greatest Risk of Poverty. Available at: <http://www.childpovertytoolkit.org.uk/At-Greatest-Risk-of-Child-Poverty> [retrieved 13 September 2011]

⁸⁷ Daycare Trust, 2007. Listening to the Parents of Disabled Children about Childcare, London: Daycare Trust

through their Skills for Growth Agreements, in support of the broader City Region Local Enterprise Partnership.

- There remains a need to improve the targeting of employment and skills services to parents seeking work. There is a wealth of support on offer through mainstream agencies, but the challenge is to ensure that parents understand what that support is and how it can be accessed. The City Region Employment and Skills Board has a strategic project focused on this function.
- Additional activity has been funded through the European Regional Development Fund to work with businesses to support their job creation and then to link those to people living in deprived areas. This has been generally effective but needs more focus to ensure that this is targeting the right people.⁸⁸ There is more that can be done to bring together employers and jobseekers⁸⁹.
- 16 Housing Associations covering 95% of the social housing stock in the City Region have signed up to a Compact to tackle worklessness amongst their residents⁹⁰.
- The national Child Poverty Innovation Pilots showed the effectiveness of a relationship between a trusted individual and a jobseeker, and that this tended to be more effective when it was not somebody from formal public services.

Transport

The Merseyside Local Transport Plan (LTP) 3 and Halton LTP 3 are the main mechanisms for ensuring equality of travel opportunities for those living and working in the City Region. The Merseyside LTP 3 identifies that:

- Although the region has a comprehensive transport system, people need to be made more aware of the travel opportunities that are available to them. Whilst there is a lot of information available, it is often not always in a form that is easy to access and understand.

- Planning decisions and service-relocation schemes can help to reduce social exclusion, but accessibility is not always fully considered by those outside of transport.
- Transport affordability remains an issue and a range of improvements are required around fare costs and ticketing systems.
- Low cost travel options such as cycling and walking should be better promoted and encouraged.

Partners are currently considering a new package of accessibility based on good practice from elsewhere and locally such as our Let's Get Moving programme⁹¹.

What don't we know

Up to date figures on children living in poverty - official HMRC in-work and out-of-work child poverty figures are already two years old when they are first released: this is an issue of particular concern given the rapid changes to the wider economic context.

The extent of hidden poverty - due to the economic downturn there will be a number of households where one parent has become unemployed through redundancy, whilst the second parent is still in work. Although these families are still benefiting from one salary, they could still experience material and income deprivation due to high mortgage repayments. However these families will be hidden from the child poverty data, as the official measure calculates poverty 'before housing costs' are deducted from the household budget.

The impact of the Work Programme - the Work Programme commenced in June 2011, replacing virtually all national unemployment programmes. It is managed and delivered by a combination of private, community and public sector organisations. The programme aims to ensure good value for money by funding providers on a 'payments by results' basis. At this

⁸⁸ Interim Evaluation of Merseyside Supported Links to Employment Programme (2010) Liverpool City Employment Strategy

⁸⁹ Employment Working Group, 2011. Creating Opportunity, Rewarding Ambition. London: Centre for Social Justice

⁹⁰ Department for Education, 2011. Local Authority Child Poverty Innovation Pilot Evaluation Report. London: DfE

⁹¹ Lets Get Moving programme (2006-10) was an innovative programme providing transport solutions to workless residents in Merseyside to access employment opportunities. It assisted over 15,000 workless Merseyside residents during its life time

early stage it is not clear how sufficient the programme will be in meeting the needs of unemployed parents.

The Full Family Impact of the Welfare Reforms - the changes to welfare payments introduced by the Coalition Government in 2010 and 2011 are already beginning to have an impact e.g. reduction in childcare tax credit has led to reduction in numbers of places available. In addition, the move towards Universal Credit from 2013 should simplify the system but there is a significant risk of unintended consequences on child and family poverty due to the confluence of existing benefits.

The impact of changes to childcare - a number of early years and out of school childcare providers are experiencing difficulties and reducing provision due to financial and demand changes. The eligibility of 'mini jobs' of less than 16 hours per week for childcare tax credits will also have an impact on the amount of support available given that the budget for Tax Credits is fixed.

Economic Outlook - the City Region has not fared as badly in the recession as other areas but the recovery appears to be sluggish. Analysis suggests economic recovery will be a slower process for the City Region than elsewhere due to the composition of the economy, thus compounding our relative disadvantage.

What we will do to add value to local work

Our strategy to optimise employment opportunities by removing barriers to good quality and sustainable employment will involve the following actions:

- Develop a measure of child poverty using local data sources
- Promote flexible client designed work clubs that meet personalised needs and are delivered in settings that are accessible and welcoming to parents
- Ensure that Jobcentre Plus and other welfare to work provision focuses on the needs of parents, particularly those with multiple needs
- Work with appointed contractors for ESF funded support for Families with Multiple Disadvantage to ensure that this is targeted on parents
- Provide market stewardship to the childcare and out of school markets, ensuring a balance between supply, demand, quality and affordability
- Pilot a bicycle hire scheme
- Provide travel advice to those seeking work
- Support Merseytravel and Halton Borough Council in the delivery of their Sustainable Transport schemes to ensure that parents can get to work locations
- Work with the providers of transport in the City Region to ensure that they remain aware of the issues faced by children and young people
- Work with employers to promote the benefits of flexible working

Aim 2: Maximise Family Income

Action 3: Support parents to progress in the workplace

“She left school young but went and studied to become a beauty therapist for 3 years. She spent a year looking for a job, taking her qualifications everywhere looking for employment but found nothing and eventually went and worked in the Jacob’s factory for 4 years”. (Researcher describing a mother’s experience of the job market, 2010)

Why it is important

Throughout the City Region much work is done with individuals to get them into work and across the assessed poverty line. This is helpful but there is a challenge to support individuals to achieve their full economic potential and progress through developing skills and securing higher paid work. There is evidence to suggest that this will also support greater social mobility through the raising of individual aspirations within the family unit. The benefits system does not always provide incentives for this but the planned introduction of Universal Credit should affect behaviour change in this respect.

Universal careers advice and guidance services are available for adults through the Next Step service, to support individuals in making career choices, moving people back into work and supporting individuals who are in work. In the past this service has not always been sufficiently promoted or widely understood within the wider adult population. In previous times, wider support to promote advancement might have been offered through extended family networks, and there still remains a desire to see communities strengthen further their capabilities to promote the available support, or indeed to provide this sort of information and support themselves.

What the evidence says

Activities focused on work retention and in-work progression can be highly effective in supporting individuals to stay in work and progress. This can have an impact in reducing the likelihood of poverty for families with children. However, this area of work remains considerably underdeveloped and leaves considerable scope for improvements to lift working parents and their children out of poverty⁹².

Additional support may be needed to enable people to progress in work. Research by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation⁹³ found that the notion of progressing at work did not accord with everybody, and is linked to wider issues on confidence, aspirations, and social mobility. Advice and guidance should be offered to people to move to sustainable work, which was also found in the evaluation of Pathways to Work⁹⁴.

Earlier reports⁹⁵ suggested that the children in families assessed to be in in-work poverty have parents who are working part time or where one parent is self employed. To avoid in-work poverty, support is required to encourage parents to access full-time work and to facilitate progression wherever we can where this would make a family better off financially. This has obvious linkage with the need to improve the market for childcare support.

⁹² Browne, J. and Paull, G., 2009. Parents' work entry, progression and retention, and child poverty: Research Report 626 London: DWP

⁹³ Ray, K., Hoggart, L., Vegeris, S. and Taylor, S. 2010. Better off working? Work, poverty and benefit cycling. York: JRF

⁹⁴ Dixon, J. and Warriner, M., 2008. Pathways to work: qualitative study of in-work support. London: DWP

⁹⁵ Kenway, P., 2009. Addressing in work poverty. York: JRF

What the existing provision looks like

Next Step Adult Careers Service is delivered across over 150 delivery locations in the City Region. Co-location of Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) provision has been secured in 20 Jobcentre Plus (JCP) offices across the City Region, supporting the Skills Funding Agency/ JCP joint planning commitment. As the Prime Contract holder for face-to-face guidance services for both young people and adults (branded Next Step) Greater Merseyside Connexions Partnerships is currently able to deliver an integrated approach to the provision of Information Advice and Guidance across all ages - a key priority of the City Region Employment and Skills Strategy. Due to the impending changes affecting services for young people nationally, as well as the introduction of the new National Careers Service from April 2012, this integration and coherence may not occur to the same degree in the future.

The City Region has benefited from the provision of strengthened support for employers and individuals, including partners working closely with Jobcentre Plus to support those facing redundancy situations (for example, Burton's, Wirral and Knowsley Councils, Knowsley Housing Trust, CML Wirral) and inward investment opportunities (for example, Jaguar Land Rover recruitment, various Tesco stores).

Unionlearn aims to help unions to become learning organisations, with programmes for union reps and regional officers and strategic support for national officers. It will also help unions to broker learning opportunities for their members, run phone and online advice services, secure the best courses to meet learners' needs and kitemark union academy provision to a quality standard.

The City Region has identified four areas of the economy which it feels are best placed to deliver significant economic growth over the longer term. These are:

- Culture and Visitor Economy, building on the legacy of Capital of Culture
- Low Carbon Economy
- Superport and Logistics, linked to developments at the Port of Liverpool and Liverpool John Lennon Airport
- Knowledge Economy, linked to the developments at Daresbury Science and Innovation Park and capitalising on the development of a Knowledge Quarter in Liverpool

These sectors have the potential to create 130,000 jobs over the next 10 years and the challenge will be for City Region organisations to support businesses in this and to ensure that residents are equipped with the skills that businesses identify they will need.

What don't we know

Effective practice - it is difficult to know who is accessing the current Information, Advice and Guidance provision, nor which forms of advice are most effective in securing progression in work. In addition, there is little evidence to show which interventions are proven to aid job retention amongst those moving off benefits and into work.

What we will do to add value to local work

Our strategy to support parents to progress in the workplace will involve the following the actions:

- Establish a procurement clause to ensure a living wage⁹⁶ for all public sector delivered contracts
- Work with the Liverpool City Region Employer Coalition to consider the implementation of a living wage across the City Region and to receive a report back within a year
- Work with Connexions to promote benefits of Information Advice and Guidance and the opportunities of the lifelong learning account to support progression
- Work with the Liverpool City Region Employer Coalition to promote the best employment practices
- Work with employers to promote greater flexibility in employment practices to support parents and others with caring responsibilities
- Encourage individuals and businesses to invest in skills development
- Provide targeted support to SMEs to enable them to develop and implement flexible approaches to employment
- Task the Employment and Skills Board to work with colleges and training providers on skills development, the provision of learner support to promote access and better outcomes where appropriate, and the introduction of FE loans for those not eligible for full fee remission



⁹⁶ A living wage is an hourly wage rate that is sufficient enough for workers to provide their families with the essentials in life. According to calculations by the Centre for Research in Social Policy, the National Living Wage (outside London) for 2011 is £7.20 per hour

3. The Extent of Child and Family Poverty in the Liverpool City Region

“Every family should be together and happy. It’s not the way it goes, but it should be.” (Grandmother, August 2010).

Levels of poverty within the Liverpool City Region are unfortunately not new. There have been significant levels of poverty and income inequality for many years, linked to the economic contexts in which so many people found themselves and the historical imbalance between the South East and the rest of the country. This was exacerbated by the changes in industrial composition from the 1960s onwards and the deindustrialisation seen in manufacturing and the docks from the 1970s into the 1980s. There was an increase in confidence and employment throughout the 1990s and 2000s, although it was 2003 before the number of jobs returned to the pre 1980 figure.

Examples of this progress are:

- Between 1996 and 2006 the Liverpool City Region (excluding Halton) economy grew from just over £8,000 per capita to over £13,600 per capita. This is a growth of 64.2% over the entire time period – greater growth than both the UK (61.8%) and North West (57.3%).
- Between 1995 and 2006 growth in the City Region’s business density (VAT-registered businesses per 1,000) was significantly higher than across the rest of the UK, at growing at a rate of 21.3% compared to the national rate of 13.5%.

Job availability

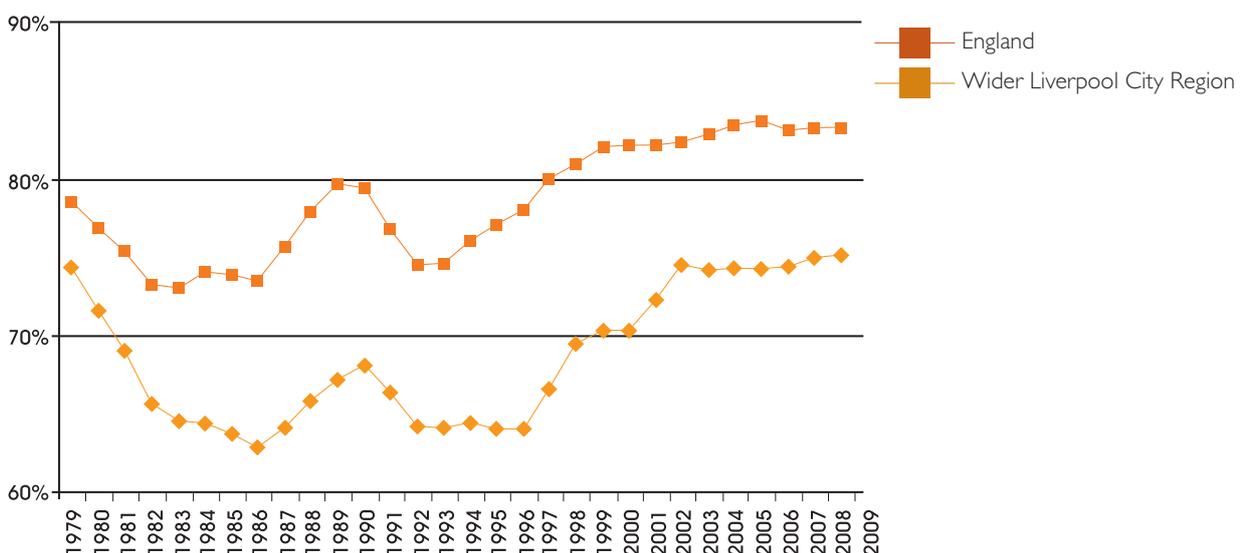


Figure 3 - Job availability trend

The City Region favoured relatively well in the 2008 recession but the recovery has lagged behind that of other areas: there have been 28% more unemployed people per registered vacancy in the City Region as against the national position since January 2009. The projections that the level of jobs would be returned by 2016 now appear optimistic. There are parts of the City Region which are still dealing with the decline seen over previous decades, despite many years of effort and concomitant funding. Some of the issues being experienced today, particularly with aspiration and a working culture, can be traced back to those times. This does not excuse the current cultures and behaviours but perhaps goes some way to explain them and put the issues into context.

The City Region has worked together with business and Government bodies to identify the areas which it is considered are best placed to deliver significant and sustained economic growth. These sectors are Knowledge Economy, Culture and Visitor Economy, Superport and Logistics and Low Carbon Economy: together it is projected that they will create 130,000 jobs by 2020. The emergent Local Enterprise Partnership for the City Region will have a key role in delivering this.

The Liverpool City Region Child and Family Poverty Needs Assessment provides a detailed picture of the drivers and outcomes of child poverty and life chances in the City Region. It has been informed by quantitative data sets as well as qualitative evidence from children, families and partners. The qualitative research is a vital component of our evidence base as it provides valuable insight into the causes and impacts of poverty that is often not revealed by quantitative data and statistics. This section provides an overview of the most salient findings from our analysis.

Measuring child and family poverty

There is some debate on the most appropriate measure of child and family poverty and what this means for different services areas. The measures consider the different dimensions of child and family poverty and its severity: more details can be found in Annex 2. It is clear, however, that for whichever measure is used, the rates of child and family poverty within the City Region are too high, and only concerted and joined up effort will address this.

The most recent official figures on child and family poverty⁹⁷ indicate that on 31 August 2009, 91,355 children in the City Region were living in poverty - around 27% of all children. This exceeds the levels of child poverty across the North West (23.1%) and England (21.3%). Levels of child poverty are particularly high in Knowsley (32.3%) and Liverpool (34.4%).

The following points provide a snapshot of the extent and nature of Child Poverty:

| | Children in Poverty under 16 | | All Children in Poverty | |
|------------|------------------------------|-------------|-------------------------|-------------|
| | Number | % | Number | % |
| Halton | 6,950 | 28.0 | 7,990 | 27.2 |
| Knowsley | 10,170 | 33.1 | 11,850 | 32.3 |
| Liverpool | 27,800 | 35.1 | 32,460 | 34.4 |
| Sefton | 9,950 | 21.0 | 11,665 | 20.3 |
| St. Helens | 8,560 | 26.3 | 9,775 | 25.2 |
| Wirral | 15,335 | 25.9 | 17,615 | 20.9 |
| LCR | 78,765 | 28.8 | 91,355 | 26.8 |
| North West | 310,680 | 23.7 | 357,615 | 23.1 |
| England | 2,131,350 | 21.9 | 2,429,305 | 21.3 |

Figure 4 - Number and proportion of children in poverty in the City Region

- The majority of children in poverty (69,500) live in lone parent families (76.1%), higher than the England average of 67.7%. 71% of these lone parents are over 25 and 97% are women, this is in line with national trends
- Most children living in poverty (85.0%) live in households claiming Income Support (IS) or Job Seekers Allowance (JSA). The remaining 15% live in families who are claiming Working Families Tax Credit (WTC) and/or Child Tax Credit (CTC) and have an income below 60% of the median income
- The majority (78,780 or 86.2%) of children living in poverty are under 16 years of age and 54,950 (60.1%) are under age 11
- The City Region has a higher proportion of lone parent families on IS / JSA benefit (79.5%) than England (74.2%)

Distribution of poverty

Figures presented at a local authority level can sometimes mask the depth of child and family poverty in certain pockets or neighbourhoods.

For example, the average child poverty rate in Sefton (20.3%) is much lower than in Liverpool (34.4%). However, we can see from the map that both areas have neighbourhoods where there are severe concentrations of child and family poverty.

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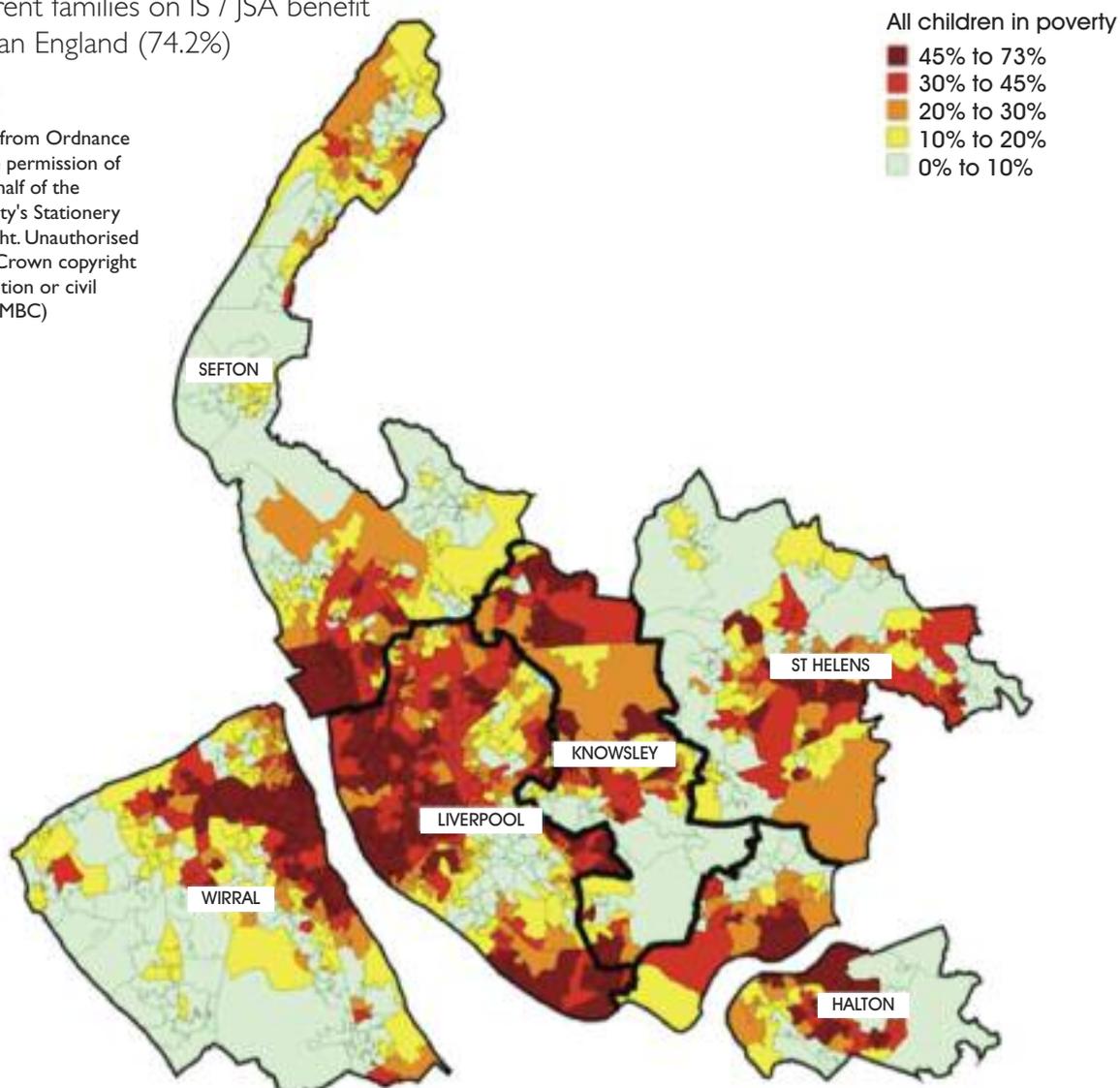


Figure 5 - Percentage of children living in households earning below the 60% median national income across the City Region, by Lower Super Output Area (LSOA).

Changes over time

Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) has provided four years of official child poverty data at the small area or Lower Super Output Area (LSOA). This provides an opportunity to look at the change in poverty over time. In overall terms, more neighbourhoods experienced an increase in poverty, than a decrease, during this period (2006-09).

'In-work' poverty has decreased in the majority of neighbourhoods; however 'out-of-work' poverty has risen, demonstrating that worklessness remains a significant challenge for the City Region.

At greater risk of child poverty

Some groups in society are over-represented amongst families in poverty. However, the majority of these groups are not revealed in the overall official HMRC child poverty figures. The following section highlights some of the risk factors associated with poverty and poor life chances⁹⁸:

Population Groups

- Children in one parent families
- Children in black and minority ethnic families
- Children in families with a disabled member
- Children with disabilities
- Children in large families
- Young people leaving care
- Young people who have been involved in the criminal justice system
- Children who have a parent in prison
- Traveller and Gypsy Children
- Asylum seeker families
- Children of teenage parents

Geographical Areas

- Children growing up in areas with high concentrations of social housing
- 10% most deprived LSOAs

People and families are multi-dimensional and may experience multiple risk factors, this can make it all the more difficult to escape poverty and achieve positive outcomes. In line with early intervention and prevention principles, we will target our approaches towards those who are in poverty and are also at risk of poverty and disadvantage.

Social and economic deprivation

Poverty is of course broader than income deprivation, it is also connected to wider issues of child and family wellbeing. Social classification data such as ACORN (A Classification Of Residential Neighbourhoods) can be used to model general social and economic wellbeing, rather than poverty in its simplest form.

ACORN analysis suggests economic and social deprivation is widespread across the City Region, almost one in three households can be categorised as 'Hard Pressed'. There are particularly high concentrations of these households in Knowsley and Liverpool. 'Hard Pressed' parents will typically face limited opportunities to improve their circumstances as their qualifications and skills are likely to be low.



⁹⁸ Child Poverty Action Group. Policy Brief: At Greatest Risk of Poverty. Available at: <http://www.childpovertytoolkit.org.uk/At-Greatest-Risk-of-Child-Poverty> [retrieved 13 September 2011]; DWP and DfE, 2011. National Child Poverty Strategy: A New Approach to Child Poverty: Tackling the Causes of Disadvantage and Transforming Families' Lives. London: DWP and DfE

Drivers of the cross generational cycle of poverty

The following diagram attempts to capture some of the main drivers of poverty and life chances in the City Region, and illustrates how these operate in a cycle that can lead to cross-generational poverty.

It is not inevitable that disadvantage in Foundation Years will lead to lower income, or less wellbeing in later life, but without the right interventions it is more likely.

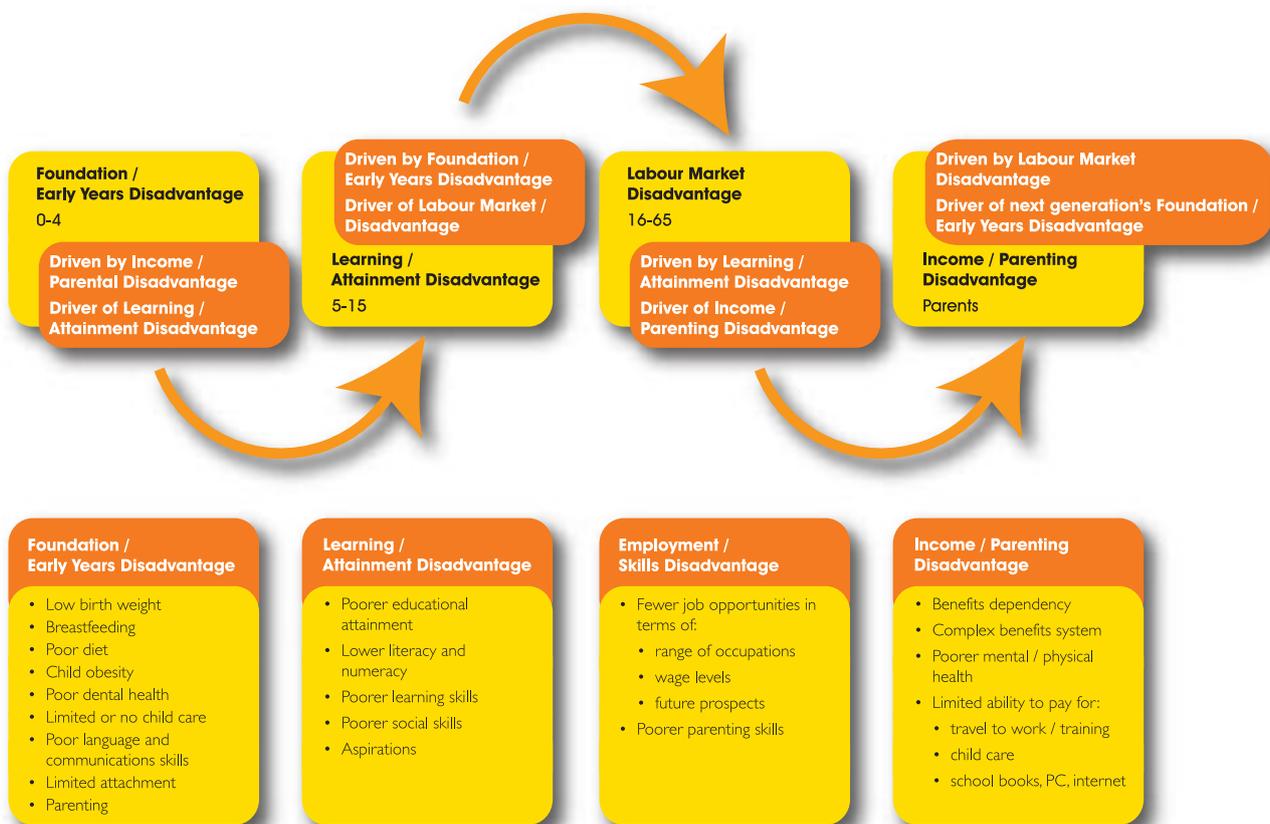


Figure 6 - An illustration of the drivers of the cross-generational cycle of child and family poverty

The gap between the City Region and the National Average

A great deal of data is available that has some bearing on the current state of the City Region in terms of poverty and life chances. The essential message, however, relates to the gap between the City Region and the national average.

The following table simplifies some of the data to illustrate the percentage difference on a number of the most critical indicators. The significant gaps in some of the Foundation Years indicators such as breastfeeding are most notable.

| Drivers of outcomes | Indicator | % Gap | Commentary |
|--------------------------------|---|--------------------|--|
| Pregnancy | Teen conceptions | 11.6% worse | Babies of teenage mothers often experience poorer health outcomes and suffer developmental disadvantage |
| Birth | Low birth weight | 5.6% worse | Babies of a low birth weight are most at risk of dying young or suffering health related problems |
| | Infant mortality | 2.1% worse | Children in deprived families are twice as likely to die at birth or infancy, compared to children in richer families |
| | Breastfeeding | 28.8% worse | Breastfeeding promotes health and prevents disease in both the short and long term, for both infant and mother |
| 5 years | Tooth decay | 37.4% worse | Tooth decay levels tend to be much higher amongst children from disadvantaged backgrounds, making it strongly associated with social deprivation |
| | Obesity Primary Reception | 16.3% worse | An overweight or obese child is at greater risk of developing ill-health now or in the future |
| Primary years | Obesity Primary Yr 6 | 16.9% worse | As above |
| Secondary years | Attainment at Key Stage 4 | 7.4% worse | Success in acquiring formal qualifications bolsters children's self-esteem, and enhances development of self-identity |
| Transition to adulthood | Achievement at 19 years old | 18.6% worse | Young people who have grown up in poverty start their adult life at a distinct disadvantage in the labour market |
| | Young people age 15 from FSM backgrounds who progress to Higher Education | 20% worse | Those who progress to higher education are more likely to secure well paid employment |
| | NEET | 27.8% worse | NEET is a major predictor of unemployment, low income and poor mental health in later life |

Figure 7 - The gap between the City Region and the national average on several key life chances indicators

4. Policy Background

The national context

The commitment to tackling child and family poverty and improving life chances has cross-party support. The Coalition Government's approach builds on work of the previous Labour Government which concluded with the Child Poverty Act 2010.

Child Poverty Act 2010

This landmark legislation enshrines in law the Government's pledge to eradicate child poverty by 2020. It also requires the government to publish a national strategy every three years to meet child poverty targets and report annually on progress (Annex 2 outlines the national child poverty targets). The Act also places a number of statutory duties on local authorities and other local delivery partners to work together to tackle child poverty. Specific duties include:

- Completion of a local Child Poverty Needs Assessment
- Development of a partnership wide local Child Poverty Strategy
- Establishing arrangements to promote co-operation between local partners to mitigate the effects of child poverty

Independent reviews

In the Coalition Government's first months in office in 2010, it commissioned the Field and Allen reviews to inform its thinking about child and family poverty and approaches to tackle it. These are considered here along with others that are important.

The Foundation Years: Preventing Poor Children Becoming Poor Adults (December 2010, Frank Field)

"We have found overwhelming evidence that children's life chances are most heavily predicated on their development in the first five years of life. It is family background, parental education, good parenting and the opportunities for learning and development in those crucial years that together matter more to children than money".

The Field review concluded that the UK needs to address poverty in a fundamentally different way to make real change to children's life chances as adults. The central recommendations from the review have been welcomed by government, which involve:

- Establishing life chances indicators to measure equality in life outcomes for all children
- National and local government to give greater prominence to the earliest years, establishing the 'Foundation Years' (pregnancy to age five) as equal status and importance as primary and secondary school years

Early Intervention: The Next Steps (January 2011, Graham Allen)

“Early Intervention is an approach which offers our country a real opportunity to make lasting improvements in the lives of our children, to forestall many persistent social problems and end their transmission from one generation to the next, and to make long-term savings in public spending.”

Allen calls for all political parties to make a long-term commitment to Early Intervention to provide children with the essential social and emotional security they need to realise their full potential. Allen goes on to suggest that despite its merits, the provision of successful evidence-based Early Intervention programmes remains persistently patchy and is hindered by institutional and financial obstacles. He makes a number of recommendations to encourage the roll out and adoption of proven cost effective early intervention programmes. A second report was published in July 2011, which challenged HM Treasury to gradually rebalance Government spending towards early intervention in the next comprehensive spending review and establish a fund that will raise £200m from private investors.

Review of the Early Years Foundation Stage (March 2011, Dame Clare Tickell)

The Early Years Foundation Stage was welcomed by practitioners when it was implemented in 2008 with the intention of providing a framework to deliver consistent and high quality environments for all children in pre-school settings, recognising the importance of this period in a child's life. This review recommended a reduction of the learning goals, the provision of more consistent information to parents and raising the profile and skills levels of people working within the sector.

Fair Society, Healthy Lives (February 2010, Sir Michael Marmot)

The Marmot Review into health inequalities in England was published on 11 February 2010. It suggests reducing health inequalities are a matter of social justice and proposes a wider approach than purely health to close the health inequality gap. To improve health for all of us

and to reduce unfair and unjust inequalities in health, relevant action is needed across all groups in an approach described as proportionate universalism.

Health and Social Care Bill (2011)

The Government's proposals build on previous initiatives - GP fundholding in the 1990s and practice-based commissioning in the last decade - which enabled groups of GPs to take on responsibility for commissioning some services on a voluntary basis. However, they go much further by making membership of GP consortia compulsory and giving them full budgetary responsibility for commissioning the majority of services. The Bill goes much further than previous reforms in applying market-based principles to the provision of health care. The aim is to increase diversity of supply, promote competition, and increase choice for patients.

The Bill extends the role of local authorities in the health system by creating Health and Wellbeing Boards and giving them responsibility for public health. The aim is to strengthen democratic legitimacy and ensure that commissioning is joined up across the NHS, social care and public health.

The National Child Poverty Strategy A New Approach to Child Poverty: Tackling the Causes of Disadvantage and Transforming Families' Lives

The first national child poverty strategy was launched in April 2011, it forms the Government's response to the Allen and Field review and provides a framework for ending child poverty by 2020. It centres on tackling the causes of poverty, not the symptoms. It entails a strong focus on:

- Supporting Families to achieve Financial Independence - Ensuring that families who are in work are supported to work themselves out of poverty, families who are unable to work are not entrenched in persistent poverty, and that those who can work but are not, are provided with services that will address their particular needs and help them overcome to barriers

- Supporting Family Life and Children's Life Chances - Intervening early to improve the development and attainment of disadvantaged children and young people throughout their progression to adulthood
- The role of Place and Transforming Lives - Increasing emphasis on places and delivering services as close to the family as possible, by empowering local partners and ensuring that local diversity can be recognised and developing strong local accountability frameworks

The Child Poverty Strategy was launched alongside the Government's Social Mobility Strategy; 'Opening Doors, Breaking Barriers'. The strategies bring together the government's social policy interventions. The Government asserts that ongoing progress in delivering social justice and supporting social mobility is essential for transforming families' lives, improving life chances and ultimately ending child poverty. A Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission will be launched to further align these agendas. The Commission's role will be to monitor progress against a range of indicators and report its findings to Parliament.

Wider policy context

The National Child Poverty Strategy is also set against the backdrop of a challenging Spending Review. The Government has made it clear that its central priority is to reduce the financial deficit and has launched a programme of tax increases, welfare reforms and public spending reductions. In total, £81 billion has been cut from public sector spending over four years. For Local Authorities nationally, this means a 28% reduction in funding which will affect the services that are delivered to children and families. This is expected to have a disproportionate impact on areas with higher levels of deprivation such as the Liverpool City Region: the latest estimates suggest that the City Region could lose up to 40% of funding in the Spending Review period.

The localisation of Business Rates will disproportionately affect lower tax base authorities and their ability to grow their tax base to fund services, especially across the Liverpool City Region. Furthermore, over the years the links between funding and relative needs will become more disparate. There is planned to be a 10% national cut of £5bn of Council Tax benefit to be made in 2013-14, which is circa £16m for the Liverpool City Region at current levels of uptake. Authorities will need to decide their local criteria to make the 10% cuts or absorb the benefit reduction within current resources.

According to Government reports the Spending Review will have no measurable impact on progress towards meeting its child poverty targets over the next two years. However analysis by the Institute of Fiscal Studies (IFS), suggests that families with children will be hit hardest by the reforms⁹⁹.

Within this tightening fiscal environment, a collective approach through the City Region Child Poverty and Life Chances Commission can help partners to maximise the impact of limited resources by aligning efforts under common goals and sharing knowledge and effective practice.

Welfare reform

The Government has an ambitious programme of welfare reform across a number of major areas. The centrepiece of this is the introduction of Universal Credit¹⁰⁰ which seeks to streamline a range of different welfare benefits into one overall payment. This is due to be introduced in October 2013, and is designed to ensure that choosing to work always pays. There remain significant challenges in implementing this reform, not least of which being to fully understand the impact it will have on the support provided to families: this detail is inevitably still being worked through.

⁹⁹ Spending Review 2010. Institute for Fiscal Studies

¹⁰⁰ DWP, 2010. Universal Credit: Welfare that Works. London: DWP

There are other more immediate changes to welfare benefits brought in as part of the Government's desire to reduce the deficit, which is balanced with a clear focus to support people into work. These include reductions to childcare element of Working Families Tax Credit, a freeze in the rate of Child Benefit and reductions in the amount of Local Housing Allowance. These are phased over the lifetime of the Comprehensive Spending Review and their impact will need to be closely monitored.

City Region policy context

City Region Local Authorities have a strong track record of working together in partnership on shared strategic priorities and have signed up to the long term vision "to establish our status as a thriving international City Region by 2030".

City Region partners recognise that failure to break the intergenerational transmission of poverty will mean that many children growing up in poverty today will become parents of children in poverty tomorrow and undermine these long-term objectives. The Liverpool City Region Cabinet identified child and family poverty as a priority and commissioned the development of a Child and Family Poverty Framework to join up effort to reduce child and family poverty across the City Region, both strategically and in terms of delivery.

Key elements of the framework include the City Region Child and Family Poverty Needs Assessment, the establishment of the Child Poverty and Life Chances Commission and this City Region Child Poverty and Life Chances Strategy.

The City Region Child Poverty and Life Chances Commission

The Child Poverty and Life Chances Commission first met in January 2011. Its purpose is to advise the City Region Cabinet on approaches to tackling poverty and make

recommendations for their approval. The Commission utilises the skills and expertise of leaders from a range of fields to find practical ways to overcome challenges that transcend local authority boundaries or are common across a number of areas.

The Commission is chaired by Frank Field, Labour MP for Birkenhead and leader of the National Independent Review of Poverty. Other membership includes Councillors, academics and representatives from voluntary, community, private and public sectors. This arrangement helps to ensure that all local authorities have a representative to raise issues and communicate key messages; there are also thematic linkages with Local Strategic Partnerships through the presence of health, police and transport. For the full list of members and terms of reference refer to Annex 3.

The Commission has considered a range of evidence to formulate the first Child Poverty and Life Chances Strategy for the City Region. It focuses on the areas that the Commission believe it can make the biggest difference to tackling child and family poverty using the City Region arrangements. The Strategy is not a stand alone document it complements local child poverty strategies and also supports, and will be supported by, other key City Region Strategies, including:

- The City Region Employment and Skills Strategy (2010)
- The City Region Apprenticeship Strategy (2011)
- Merseyside Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3) and Halton LTP3¹⁰¹
- Liverpool City Region Economic Growth Sector Plans (2010, 2011)

Annex 4 illustrates the interdependencies between the City Region Child Poverty and Life Chances Strategy and supporting documents.

5. Delivery of the Strategy

Leadership

The Liverpool City Region Child Poverty and Life Chances Commission will oversee the successful implementation of this Strategy and report progress periodically to the City Region Cabinet. The Commission will receive operational support from officers through the Liverpool City Region Child Poverty Advisory Group.

Implementation

The success of this strategy depends on individuals, groups and organisations to deliver change on the ground. Most supporting actions will already be in local partner delivery plans, but some will need to be revisited. This strategy asks that organisations consider their approach in a number of areas and refine or revise this. As mentioned earlier, a large number of little changes will make a significant impact on the lives of children and young people across the City Region. The table on the following page sets out some of the key roles for a number of groups and individuals.

Delivery planning

In addition a number of overarching delivery plans are being developed for the strategic projects outlined in this strategy to help coordinate efforts and ensure that progress is made. The delivery planning process began during the summer 2011 with a series of well attended partner workshops. Each plan will identify a strategic owner (this may be a member of the Commission or a senior leader in the City Region), inputs, timescales and outcomes.

Impact

We have agreed a suite of high level indicators to monitor the impact of this strategy and the effectiveness of our delivery plans. Where possible, we have identified measures that are monitored through existing processes, however there are some gaps where we will need to develop new meaningful indicators; full details are provided in Annex 5.

Cost effectiveness

This strategy has been developed at a time of major and ongoing financial reductions; many public and third sector organisations are under increasing pressures to find ways of working that are not just efficient at reducing costs, but also are effective in reducing the demand and need for services. We will support partners to deliver the best possible outcomes at low cost by employing an evaluation framework to monitor strategic projects, promoting early intervention approaches where they are beneficial and evidenced, and we will also test out a cost benefit analysis model to inform the future deployment of scarce resources.

Arrangements for review

This strategy will run until the national 2020 deadline to eradicate child poverty. We will however refresh the strategy every three years, to ensure that we remain focused on present needs as identified by complementary City Region Child and Family Poverty Needs Assessment. Progress against strategy delivery plans and performance measures will be reported by the Child Poverty and Life Chances Commission to the City Region Cabinet on an annual basis.

The following table summarises some of the key actions asked of various stakeholders.

| Individual / Group | Actions requested |
|-------------------------|---|
| Parents | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To set learning culture within the home and positive attitude towards school and education • To ensure secure attachment with all children and young people |
| Schools | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To pilot a school readiness assessment, working with the University of Cambridge • To report on how Pupil Premium funding is being used to benefit the most disadvantaged pupils in individual schools • To report annually on the attainment gap between pupils eligible for free school meals and all children at ages 5, 11 and 16 in individual schools • To reflect the importance of parenting in all subjects in the secondary curriculum • To assess the impact of performance at secondary school by reporting on the numbers of school leavers not in education, employment and training • To pilot a programme on data sharing between primary and secondary schools to ensure pupils' transitions to schools take place effectively • To appoint a lead Governor for life chances |
| Health providers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To increase immunisation rates for all children and young people • To report on the 6 best projects undertaken to improve the health of children in each Council area • To work with Government, Clinical Commissioning Group and Primary Care Trusts to increase the number of midwives and health visitors in the City Region • To ensure those working with children and young people understand the emotional and social development of children and young people |
| Employers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To establish a working party through the Employer Coalition to report within one year on the implementation of a living wage throughout the City Region and to develop a business case for adopting a more flexible approach to employment |
| Councils | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To use all contact with parents to support them as parents to achieve strong attachment with their children • To report on the numbers of children individual Sure Start Children's Centres have contact with within their catchment area and to explain and justify the range of activities they undertake • To report on the 6 more effective practices in the six local authorities aimed at raising aspirations of children and similarly to report on the 6 most effective projects they undertake in supporting parents • To introduce a 50p minimum unit price and bylaw to reduce alcohol related harm • To facilitate a City Region review into utilities companies and their approach to offering tariffs • To encourage adults into informal learning to support their parenting development • To consider implementing supplementary planning guidance on take away provision around schools • To report on the scope and effectiveness of benefit take up campaigns and to promote the effective practice |

| Individual / Group | Actions requested |
|------------------------------|---|
| Housing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To increase the use of credit unions facilities by Housing Association residents • To work with Councils and locally based groups to proactively mitigate the impact of the forthcoming welfare reforms • To maintain housing standards within a rent framework that remains affordable for low income households |
| Credit Unions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To work with partners to promote services and encourage take-up |
| JobCentre Plus | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To monitor the targets the government has set for the Work Programme private sector providers in placing unemployed claimants in to work • To ensure that Jobcentre Plus and other welfare to work provision focuses on the needs of parents, particularly those with multiple needs • To work with employers to promote the benefits of flexible working |
| Early Years providers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To promote Work Clubs within nursery settings and Children's Centres to support parents in the journey back to work • To gather and share information on the level of engagement with the poorest families |
| Police | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To maintain a comprehensive and multi agency approach to tackle anti-social behaviour • To encourage partners to prioritise neighbourhoods that have a Stronger Communities Initiative (SCI) to test out projects that aim to raise aspirations |
| Transport | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To pilot a cycle hire scheme within the City Region • To provide travel advice to those seeking work • To deliver Sustainable Transport schemes to ensure that parents can get to work and education locations • To share best practice on improving road safety across the City Region |
| Community groups | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support those with children and young people to be effective parents including running quality parenting courses • To raise profile and importance of involvement in early language development |
| National Government | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To change the incentives structure for immunisations • To assess whether the readiness for school index can be used as part of payment by results for Children's Centres • To support and then adopt the work on the healthy development check • To consider changes to the Tax Credits system to better reflect the needs and aspirations of families |

Figure 8 - Key actions for strategy delivery partners

Acknowledgements

This strategy draws on research and expertise from a number of groups and organisations. We would like to thank all those who have supported this work from across the City Region and wider; namely:

Centre for Social Justice

Cheshire and Merseyside Partnerships for Health

Demos

Forum Housing Wirral

Fun 4 Kidz

Halton Borough Council

Heart of Mersey

Homestart Wirral

Institute for Public Policy Research

Jobcentre Plus

Joseph Rowntree Foundation

Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council

Liverpool City Council

Liverpool City Region Children's Services Directors Group

Merseyside Police

Merseyside Road Safety Partnership

Merseytravel

NHS Halton and St Helens

NHS Knowsley

NHS Liverpool

NHS Wirral

One Vision Housing

Plus Dane Group

Rainhill Community Nursery

Reform

Resolution Foundation

Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council

Skills Funding Agency

St Helens Metropolitan Borough Council

The Child Poverty Unit

Trades Union Congress

Tranmere Community Project

University of Durham

Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council

Wirral GP Commissioning Consortium

Summary of Consultation Exercises

A wide range of child poverty consultation and engagement exercises have taken place across the City Region to better understand the nature of poverty and how it can be successfully eliminated. Some of these exercises have been commissioned by the City Region Cabinet; others have been led by local partners. This list details the events and exercises that have informed the development of the City Region Child Poverty and Life Chances strategy.

'A Brighter Future' partner consultation events

Over the summer of 2010, formal consultation events were held in each of the six local authority areas to gain an insight into the perceived barriers and opportunities to tackling poverty locally and across the City Region. Events were attended by Councillors and local service delivery partners including those in: health, economic regeneration, financial services, welfare to work, housing, education and training, cultural services and transport.

Halton Neighbourhood Management Employment focus group

Eight focus groups were carried out with unemployed residents across Halton to gather qualitative data on their knowledge and experiences of the New Deal Programme, where they go for support in finding work, their perceived barriers to working and factors that would encourage them to work.

Knowsley Child Poverty Consultation with children and families (Young Foundation)

In August 2010, the Young Foundation held a series of consultation events with residents of Knowsley to expand the understanding of how child poverty impacts on children's lives. Those consulted with include 30 children aged under 13, seven teenagers, parents and frontline service providers.

Liverpool Lone Parent Employment and Skills Advisers

Job Centre Plus (JCP) and Jobs, Education and Training (JET) employment and skills advisers were invited to complete a questionnaire on 'Removing the Barriers to Employment'. The exercise revealed that some recruitment and employment practices can put parents at a disadvantage in the labour market.

Liverpool Schools Parliament

The Schools Parliament highlighted the cost of public transport as a major concern for young people and called a meeting in June 2011 to express their views to the Liverpool City Council Children's Trust Partnership Manager and Merseytravel.

Merseytravel disadvantaged community study

This evidence base report was compiled by Mott MacDonald collecting up-to-date information on transport issues facing disadvantaged communities in Merseyside.

North Kirkby ethnographic research (ESRO)

In March 2010, ethnographic research was carried out by ESRO with 8 different families in the Kirkby area of Knowsley. The families consisted of five female single households and three couple households with the average age of 30 years. The research provided a qualitative insight into the lives of families experiencing or at risk of experiencing poverty in this area, helping to create a deeper and richer understanding of the issues facing Knowsley residents on a daily basis.

Wirral financial inclusion workshop

This consultation event took place in September 2010 and was attended by over 70 people from a wide range of private, public and voluntary organisations including Job Centre Plus, social housing landlords, Merseyside Fire and Rescue, Wirral Council, Wirral Credit Union and Voluntary Community Action Wirral. The purpose of the session was to improve understanding about the needs of the financially excluded in Wirral and to gather views on how financial inclusion could be addressed collectively for the benefit of Wirral residents.

Stockbridge Village ethnographic research (ESRO)

This ethnographic research undertaken by ESRO in 2011 was commissioned by Knowsley Council to work with families living on the Stockbridge Village Housing estate in North Huyton. ESRO worked with seven families spending at least a full day with each, conducting informal interviews and engaging in immersive participant observation research, as well as spending another two days on the estate speaking to local residents and mapping the community.

SureStart Halton

Information on the SureStart service was provided by SureStart staff in Halton and gives an insight into the profile of users, how the service is communicated, barriers to information sharing processes between practitioners and information on outreach work with those classed as hard to reach.

SureStart Liverpool

Liverpool Children's Services commissioned a study in May 2011 to measure progress in service delivery. It involved consultations with local families to gain their opinions on the services provided, develop an understanding of their needs and generate ideas and insight on how to meet these needs. SureStart Staff in Liverpool also provided information on the profiling of users, communication of services, barriers to information sharing between practitioners and information on outreach work with those classed as hard to reach.

Wirral Roots and Wings child and family poverty event

A consultation workshop was held in June 2011 with practitioners and providers in Wirral to explore what more could be done to reduce child and family poverty. The event was solution focused and resulted in practical ideas for tackling poverty which have fed into the strategy development process.

Annex 2

Defining Poverty

Defining poverty is complicated and has long been the subject of political and academic debates¹⁰². The Child Poverty Act 2010 established four national child poverty measures and targets that focus on the economic and material aspects of poverty.

National Child Poverty targets

Relative poverty - To reduce the proportion of children living in relative low income households to less than 10%. Low income households have less than 60% the median income.

This is the headline measure of poverty; it will be used to assess the government's progress against the 2020 child poverty eradication target. HM Revenue and Customs produces relative poverty data at a small area level, which allows local authorities to compare and monitor child poverty in their districts. The measure assesses whether the families with lowest incomes are keeping pace with the growth of incomes in the economy as a whole.

Income and deprivation - To reduce the proportion of children who live in material deprivation and have a low income to less than 5%. This is a wider measure of living standards.

Persistent Poverty - To reduce the proportion of children that experience long periods of relative poverty - the target is to be set in regulations by 2015. Households in persistent poverty have lived in relative poverty for at least three of the last four years.

Absolute Poverty - To reduce the proportion of children who live in absolute low income to less than 5%. This measures whether the poorest families are seeing their income rise in real terms.

Supplementary measures introduced by the Child Poverty Strategy

In addition to the measures set out in the Act, the Government has adopted a number of supplementary indicators as recommended by Frank Field in his independent review. The new measures attempt to monitor the impact of policy on the very poorest and also capture broader life indicators.

Severe Poverty - the proportion of children living in households with income below 50 per cent of the median household income who also experience material deprivation.

Family circumstances and children's life chances - these 10 additional indicators cover NEET, birth weight, child development, attainment gaps, progress to Higher Education, teenage pregnancy, youth offending and family structures.

No targets have been set against these measures; instead the Government will judge success by positive directional improvements. This focus on severe poverty in particular is very much welcomed.

¹⁰² Saunders, P. (2009) Poverty of Ambition: Why we need a new approach to tackling child poverty; Policy Exchange. Oakley, M., and O'Brien, N. (2011) Tackling the causes of poverty; Policy Exchange. Niemietz, K. (2011) A new understanding of poverty, Institute of Economic Affairs. Sodha, S., and Bradley, W. (2011) 3D Poverty, Demos

Liverpool City Region Child Poverty and Life Chances Commission Terms of Reference

Role and responsibilities of the Commission

- To develop an integrated child poverty framework that contributes to increasing life chances and thereby raise the longer term economic growth rate of the City Region
- To commission data and analysis to identify the extent of child poverty across the City Region, ensuring consistency and clarity in relation to data and methodology (thus providing the basis thorough which child poverty needs assessments can be developed)
- Identify geographical locations and groups most at risk/worst affected by child poverty and the lack of life chances
- Report on a timely basis (to be agreed) to the City Region Cabinet and Local Partnerships on progress in the City Region towards meeting the child poverty and life chances targets
- To commission, and ensure implementation of City Region wide programmes and projects, to counter child poverty by addressing life chances
- Evaluate and disseminate examples of best practice in order to raise the effectiveness of programmes across the region and set national benchmarks
- Evaluate and report on the local effectiveness of national child poverty and life chances policies
- Identify and test out new approaches to addressing child poverty and improving life chances
- Ensure the City Region voice is at the forefront of national and EU wide policy development, highlighting issues with central government and other key stakeholders
- Establish linkages between policy and practice, making collective representations to Government as appropriate

Membership

The success of efforts to tackle child poverty and improve life chances will depend largely on strong leadership and ownership of the agenda. Membership of the Commission should include leaders with an ability to focus on identifying and working with key people and influencers across the system that together can bring about effective change. Members of the Commission will be appointed by the City Region Cabinet. It is envisaged that membership will include senior level representatives from each of the 6 local authorities and other key stakeholders.

Chair

An independent chair will be appointed for a term of two years.

Governance

The Child Poverty and Life Chances Commission will report progress to City Region Cabinet.

Secretariat

The secretariat for the Commission will be provided by the City Region Employment and Skills Team, closely supported by a network of officers from the Local Authorities.

Membership of the City Region Child Poverty and Life Chances Commission 2011

Rt Hon Frank Field MP, Chair

Cllr Mark Dennett, Halton BC

Cllr Graham Wright, Knowsley MBC

Cllr Jane Corbett, Liverpool CC

Cllr Ian Moncur, Sefton MBC

Cllr Eric Smith, St Helens MBC

Cllr Sheila Clarke, Wirral MBC

Neil Scales, Chief Executive and Director General, Merseytravel

Dr Diane Grant, Liverpool John Moores University

Alan Manning, TUC Regional Secretary

Helen King, Assistant Chief Constable, Merseyside Police

Frances Street, Chair, NHS Wirral

Dr Dympna Edwards, Director of Public Health, Halton and St Helens

Dr Abhi Mantgani, GP Commissioning Lead, Birkenhead

Debbie Stephens, Chief Executive, fun4kidz

Nick Atkin, Chief Executive, Halton Housing Trust

Bev Morgan, Manager, Homestart Wirral

Jill Quayle, Chief Executive, Tranmere Community Project

Sheena Ramsey, Chief Executive, Knowsley MBC

Annex 4

Child Poverty and Life Chances Strategy Framework



Annex 5

Child Poverty and Life Chances Indicators

| Action | Indicator | Description |
|---|--|--|
| Aim 1 - Ensure the best possible start in life for children and young people to improve their life chances | | |
| Action 1 Support effective parenting and drive improvements in foundation year's services | School Readiness | We will explore opportunities to develop an indicator to provide objective evidence of the effectiveness of Foundation Years Services in ensuring that a greater proportion of children are ready for school |
| | Effective parenting | We will explore opportunities to develop an indicator to monitor the take up of parenting classes and assess their impact |
| Action 2 Enhance children's social and emotional development and reduce gaps in educational achievement | The achievement gap at Key Stages 2 and 4 | The gap in achievement between children eligible for free school meals and their peers as recorded by the Department for Education |
| | Social and emotional development | We will explore opportunities to develop an indicator to assess the social and emotional development of children at secondary school |
| Action 3 Promote prevention and early intervention approaches to reduce health inequalities | Smoking in pregnancy | Women known to be smoking at the time of pregnancy as recorded by the Department of Health |
| | Vaccination and Immunisation | Take up rate of the first dose of the MMR vaccine by 2 years of age, and take up rate of 2 doses of the MMR vaccine by 5 years of age, as recorded by the Health Protection Agency |
| | Prevalence of obesity in children | The prevalence of obesity in children 4-5 years and 10-11 years as recorded by the National Child Measurement Programme |
| | Alcohol-specific hospital admission for under 18s | Children and young people under 18 submitted to hospital for alcohol specific conditions as recorded by the Department of Health |
| Action 4 Improve the quality of places and neighbourhoods and thus minimise the impact of disadvantage | Children involved in road traffic collisions | We will explore opportunities to develop an indicator to monitor children who are killed or seriously injured in a road traffic collision in LSOAs with the highest levels of child poverty |
| | Victimisation | Victimisation rates in LSOAs with the highest levels of child poverty as measured by Merseyside Police |

| Action | Indicator | Description |
|---|--|--|
| | Youth offending | Youth Offending rates in LSOAs with the highest levels of child poverty as measured by Merseyside Police |
| | Households with Category 1 Hazards | The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) is the new risk assessment procedure for residential properties. A successful reduction in Category 1 hazards can help increase the level of decent homes in both social and private homes |
| Aim 2 - Maximise Family Income | | |
| Action 1 Improve access to suitable financial services and support families to make good financial decisions | Financial inclusion | We will explore opportunities to develop an indicator to measure access and use of mainstream financial services, as well as levels of financial capability |
| Action 2 Optimise employment opportunities by removing barriers to good quality and sustainable employment | Proportion of children in poverty | Proportion of children in families in receipt of out-of-work benefits, or in receipt of tax credits where their reported income is less than 60% median income, as measured by HMRC |
| | Local measurement of child poverty | We will explore opportunities to draw on local data sources to develop a measure of child poverty that provides more frequent and up to date information on income poverty than the existing HMRC data which is two years old at the point of release |
| | Out-of-work benefits | The proportion of working age residents claiming out-of-work benefits in LSOAs with the highest levels of child poverty as recorded by the Department for Work and Pensions. This data provides the most up to date picture of unemployment at a small geographical level |
| | Access by public transport, cycle and walking | We will measure access to key opportunities and services - work, education (secondary and post 16), healthcare (GP surgery and hospital) and food stores by public transport, walking and cycling for residents in LSOAs with the highest levels of child poverty using data recorded by Merseytravel and Halton Borough Council |
| | Childcare | We will explore opportunities to develop an indicator to track the take up of childcare entitlements in LSOAs with the highest levels of child poverty |
| Action 3 Support parents to progress in the workplace | Proportion of children in poverty | Proportion of children in families in receipt of out of work benefits, or in receipt of tax credits where their reported income is less than 60% median income, as measured by HMRC |
| | Qualifications and skills | We will explore opportunities to develop indicators to monitor the numbers of parents who access work related training and gain skills and qualifications |

Annex 6

Glossary of Key Terms

| Term | Explanation |
|---|---|
| ChaMPs Cheshire and Merseyside Partnership in Health | ChaMPs is a network working collaboratively to improve and protect public health and reduce health inequalities across Cheshire and Merseyside. |
| CM DsPH Cheshire and Merseyside Directors of Public Health | Cheshire & Merseyside's eight Directors of Public Health who act as a federation to promote and protect health and reduce health inequalities. |
| CCG Clinical Commissioning Group | Groups of GPs that will, from April 2013, be responsible for designing local health services in England. They will do this by commissioning or buying health and care services. |
| Decent Homes Standard | The Decent Homes Standard was introduced by the Government to establish a minimum standard for all social housing. To meet the standard a property must have reasonably modern facilities, be warm and weatherproof. |
| Deprivation | In simple terms, this refers to a lack of goods, services and activities which the majority of the population defines as being the necessities of modern life. |
| Early Intervention | Interventions that are applied 'early', either in the sense of early in a child's life or in the sense of occurring as soon as possible after a problem has been identified. |
| Early Years Foundation Stage Profile | An assessment of children's achievement at the end of the academic year in which they turn five. It is used to assess children's development against a range of measures such as personal, social and emotional development, communication and language and literacy. |
| ESF funded support for Families with Multiple Disadvantage | This programme aims to tackle entrenched worklessness by progressing multi-generational families with multiple problems closer to employment. The focus is on providing a whole family approach, making support available to individual family members across the generations. |
| Family Nurse Partnerships | An intensive evidence-based programme that improves outcomes for vulnerable children and families. |
| Financial Inclusion | This is about empowering people to make good financial decisions and improving access to affordable products and services. |
| Foundation Years | The earliest years in a child's life, from the womb to age five. |
| Free School Meals | Some children are eligible to receive a Free School Meal during a school break which is paid for by Government. For a child to qualify for a Free School Meal, their parent or carer must be receiving particular benefits. The income threshold to qualify for a free school meal is lower than the level used to define poverty, meaning some children in poverty miss out on a free lunch. |
| Fuel Poverty | A household is that has to spend more than 10% of its income on keeping warm. |
| Future Jobs Fund | A £1 billion fund set up to support the creation of jobs for long term unemployed young people and others who faced significant disadvantages in the labour market. It operated from October 2009 to March 2011. |
| Greater Merseyside Connexions Partnerships | Provides information, advice, guidance and personal development opportunities to all young people aged 13 to 19. |

| Term | Explanation |
|--|---|
| Healthy Child Programme | A public health programme for children, young people and families, which focuses on early intervention and prevention. It offers a universal programme of screening tests, immunisations, developmental reviews, information and guidance on parenting and healthy choices. |
| Heart of Mersey (HoM) | A health promotion charity working across Liverpool and Cheshire and across the UK to reduce the risk of Cardiovascular Disease. |
| Life Chances | Refers to the opportunities open to individuals to better the quality of life for themselves and their families to fulfil their full potential. |
| Liverpool City Region | Consists of six local authorities: Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St Helens and Wirral. |
| Liverpool City Region Cabinet | A Cabinet consisting of the leaders for the six local authorities in the Liverpool City Region. |
| Liverpool City Region Child Poverty and Life Chances Commission | A group of leaders from the private, community, voluntary and public sectors that act as a conscience on matters relating to child poverty and life chances, and commission activities to enhance the work of local authorities. |
| Liverpool City Region Employer Coalition | A network of influential employers who work with those involved in the planning and delivery of public funded employment and skills programmes by supporting them to understand employers' needs. |
| Liverpool City Region Employment and Skills Board | A collective of business, political and public sector leaders that aim to improve the performance of the local economy by attracting business investment and developing opportunities for people to acquire skills and access jobs. |
| Liverpool City Region Local Enterprise Partnership | The Liverpool City Region Local Enterprise Partnership leads economic development activity across the City Region to promote growth. |
| Living Wage | An hourly wage rate that is sufficient enough for workers to provide their families with the essentials in life. According to calculations by the Centre for Research in Social Policy, the National Living Wage (outside London) for 2011 is £7.20 per hour. |
| Low travel horizons | An unwillingness to travel long journey times or distances. |
| NEET | Young people aged 16 to 18 years old who are not in education, employment or training. |
| Payment by Results | The government is exploring the use of 'Payment by results' in a number of policy areas to improve outcomes whilst delivering value for money and reducing public sector expenditure. For example 'payment by results' is being trialled in Children's Centres to incentivise local authorities and their partners to support families in greatest need. |
| Pupil Premium | Additional funding for schools to tackle educational inequality by raising the attainment of children from low income or disadvantaged backgrounds. |
| School Readiness | This refers to a child having the social and emotional skills needed to enter and progress within an educational environment. A pilot is currently underway in the City Region to develop a school readiness assessment. |
| Stronger Communities Initiative | The long-term strategy for closing the gap between the most vulnerable communities and the wider area. It involves taking a holistic approach to making neighbourhoods safer by working with partners to improve school attendance, increase community confidence, reduce worklessness and reduce crime and disorder. |
| UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative | A worldwide programme of the World Health Organisation and UNICEF. It aims to ensure a high standard of care for pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers and babies. Support is provided for health-care facilities that are seeking to implement best practice, and an assessment and accreditation process recognises those that have achieved the required standard. |
| Universal Credit System | This is a major feature of the Government's Welfare Reform Bill which is currently progressing through parliament. It seeks to simplify the benefits system by streamlining a range of different welfare benefits into one overall payment. It is due to be introduced in October 2013, and is designed to ensure that choosing to work always pays. |
| Work Programme | The Work Programme commenced in June 2011, replacing virtually all national unemployment programmes. The programme aims to ensure good value for money by funding providers on a 'payments by results' basis. It is funded and managed by private sector organisations. |

LIVERPOOL CITY REGION

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