

Warwickshire Child Poverty Strategy



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Vision: To reduce, and alleviate the impact of child poverty in Warwickshire by 2020.

Overarching Objectives

1. To move people out of poverty.
2. To break the cycle of poverty.
3. To mitigate the effects of poverty.



Strategic Priorities

Priority One: Creating Employment Opportunities to help Move People out of Poverty

1. To boost the local economy through major infrastructure projects which will help attract inward investment, and create employment opportunities for local people.
2. To work with the commercial/private sector to ensure that developments will benefit local communities. This includes local procurement opportunities, and through the provision of training opportunities, apprenticeship schemes, work experience programmes and employment opportunities which will encourage people into work.
3. To work with partner organisations to help support local people, particularly hard to reach groups to benefit from local employment opportunities.

Priority Two: Intervening Early to Break the Cycle of Poverty

- Supporting Children's Centres to provide holistic family support. Encouraging positive parenting techniques to promote family stability, a culture of encouragement and aspiration, and provide a strong and stable foundation for learning.
- Referrals or sign-posting to partner organisations on a range of issues including financial support, improving skills, returning to work, housing, health.
- Effective engagement with pregnant mums, particularly from 'hard to reach' groups, to ensure effective ante-natal and post-natal care including emotional, mental and physical wellbeing.
- Supporting interventions which help reduce teenage conceptions, and therefore reducing the numbers of children born into poverty, by raising aspirations, improving educational attainment and addressing benefit dependency. Increasing the take up of family planning advice for those in poverty to help prevent a cycle of poverty amongst large families on low incomes.
- To recognise the value of children's centres as a 'hub' for developing community support structures and building capacity within communities e.g. widening participation and engagement with parents. Encouraging volunteering opportunities, developing confidence, aspiration and positive role models.
- Promoting healthy lifestyles and improving outcomes for families.
- To continue working with families and schools in raising educational attainment.



Priority Three: Improving Financial Capability and Financial Awareness

Working collaboratively with the voluntary and community sector to provide advice, information and training on financial matters which may be preventing families from being economically active.

- Debt management and prevention.
- Welfare and benefits advice.
- Financial capability and budgeting (money management).
- Financial awareness.

Priority Four : Addressing Housing Needs and Homelessness

Quality and stability of housing is important. Poor quality housing and overcrowding can contribute significantly to negative outcomes for children and inhibit the learning environment, and affect the emotional, mental and physical wellbeing of the whole family.

- To increase the amount of affordable housing across the boroughs/districts which is available for families and young people who are in poverty, or at risk of poverty.
- To support people who are at risk of becoming homeless, and homelessness prevention activities, helping to reduce the demand on housing.
- Bringing void properties back into occupation for the benefit of families, as part of an empty properties strategy.
- Giving greater priority to families where there is overcrowding.

Measuring Progress: How will we know if the Strategy is Working?

The Frank Field Review argues that a major limitation of the existing child poverty measures is that they have incentivised a policy response focused largely on income transfers which is financially unsustainable.

A more effective approach would be to use a set of measures that will incentivise a focus on improving children's life chances, and ultimately break the transmission of intergenerational disadvantage. For Warwickshire, proxy measures could include, for example:-

- Improving the take up of free school meals.
- Decrease the number of JSA claimants by helping people into employment.
- Reducing the number of teenage conceptions in Warwickshire.
- Improve educational attainment, particularly in areas where attainment is low.
- Increasing the numbers of mothers and fathers attending ante-natal care.
- Localised measures through children's centres.



Accountability

Within the County Council a Corporate Group, including key partners in the public and voluntary sectors, is in place to oversee the implementation of the new Child Poverty Duty and to drive forward the objectives of the strategy.

The Strategic Director for the Communities Group will be the lead accountable officer for the child poverty strategy, on behalf of all partners where there is a 'duty to cooperate'.

Programmes and actions within WCC, and partner organisations will deliver aspects of the strategy, and will feed into the annual reporting of progress on the eradication child poverty as outlined in the new duty.

By focusing resources on communities most in need, linking with the localities agenda, we can develop localised community action plans that can begin to address local needs, to build capacity and resilience within communities and raise aspirations that accords with the Big Society agenda.

Next Steps

To agree, with partners, an action plan that will outline the contribution of each partner in helping to achieve the vision of this strategy.

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Contributors to the Strategy

Sector Specialist for Child Poverty :

WCC Children's Trust
Young people/Youth Parliament
Special Schools
Parent Support Advisors
Early Intervention Service
Youth Service
North Warks and Hinckley College
Area Offices
Police
Voluntary and Community Sector
CAB
School Improvement Officers
Extended Services
Connexions
NHS
Public Health
Leaving Care Team
Integrated Disability Team

Centre for Excellence and
Outcomes (C4EO)
Commissioning Support Services
Early Years Team
County, Borough and District Officers
Respect Yourself Campaign
Gypsy and Traveller Services
CAF Team
Family Nurse Partnership
Safeguarding Services
Warwickshire Observatory
Credit Union
Multi-agency Commissioning

Appendix 1

Two key Reports which have informed the strategy are the **Independent Review on Early Intervention: Good Parents, Great Kids, Better Citizens by Graham Allen MP, and the Rt. Hon. Iain Duncan Smith MP.**
And The Foundation Years : preventing poor children becoming poor adults, An Independent Review by Frank Field MP, Dec 2010.

The premise of the two reports is that good early intervention is the key determinant for tackling social disadvantages and inequalities later in life. Providing children with the social and emotional support needed to help fulfil their potential and break the cycles of underachievement which blights some of the poorest communities. Specifically that children's life chances are most heavily predicated on their development in the first five years of life, and that family background, parental education, good parenting and the opportunities for learning and development in those crucial years matter more to children than money.

An independent review of best practice in early intervention was published in January 2011.

The Marmot Review :

Giving every child the best start in life is crucial to reducing health inequalities across the life course. The foundations for virtually every aspect of human development – physical, intellectual and emotional – are laid in early childhood. What happens during these early years (starting in the womb) has lifelong effects on many aspects of health and well-being—from obesity, heart disease and mental health, to educational achievement and economic status.

Addressing health inequalities in Warwickshire and supporting families to choose healthier lifestyles will be a key determinant of future life outcomes, including educational attainment and employment opportunities which will help to break the cycle of poverty.

Appendix 2

The Definition of Child Poverty

The most commonly used threshold of low income is a household income that is 60% or less of the average (median) British household income in that year. It uses disposable income rather than pre-tax income, as this is the money that the household has to live on.

Incomes are adjusted for household size and composition to put them on a comparable basis. Clearly, a lone adult does not require the same income as a family of four in order to have the same standard of living.

The latest year for which household income data is available is 2008/09. In that year, the 60% threshold was worth: £119 per week for single adult with no dependent children; £206 per week for a couple with no dependent children; £202 per week for a single adult with two dependent children under 14; and £288 per week for a couple with two dependent children under 14.

These sums of money are measured after income tax, council tax and housing costs have been deducted, where housing costs include rents, mortgage interest (but not the repayment of principal), buildings insurance and water charges. They therefore represent what the household has available to spend on everything else it needs, from food and heating to travel and entertainment.

For further information please contact:

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