



Bradford District's Child Poverty Strategy 2011-2014

Child Poverty is Everybody's Business!

“To create the conditions in the district where all children, young people and families can maximise their full potential by minimising the adverse effects of Child Poverty”



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The purpose of the Bradford District Child Poverty Strategy is to:

- Provide a framework within which partners can work together with a shared vision to meet agreed outcomes associated with reducing child poverty;
- Enable a wide range of partners to contribute towards the shared objectives of the Bradford District Partnership to reduce inequality in the district and promote improved quality of life for all residents; and
- Ensure that the views of families and children are taken into consideration in the shaping of plans to reduce child poverty.

Foreword

It is with great anticipation and determination that we introduce you to our first Child Poverty Strategy for the City of Bradford and its districts. Child poverty is everybody's business! And this strategy reflects this.

We have worked with partners to not only involve them in developing the outcomes we want to achieve for the people of the district, but also to ensure that the strategies they are developing which focus on their business also reflect on the need to address child poverty. Not every strategy is reproduced here, but there are clear linkages within it.

We have developed a comprehensive Child Poverty Needs Analysis, which has informed our priorities and will go on to inform our Delivery Plan. No one section of society can address child poverty on its own.

Our partners are fully committed to working with us to make a step change in Bradford.

Whilst developing the Strategy and beginning to explore our delivery plan, we have made real strides forward in understanding the issues which impact on poverty across our district. We have also taken account of the current economic climate and focused on what can be done differently, at low cost or no cost, to current budget requirements.

The Strategy will be managed through the Children's Trust, reporting to the Bradford District Partnership.



Councillor Ralph Berry
Executive Lead Member for
Children's Services



Cindy Peek
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Executive summary

Income poverty and material deprivation

Child poverty means growing up in a low income household. When children and families experience poverty and deprivation they have a standard of living that is well below average and which most people would consider unacceptable in Britain today. Tackling income poverty and material deprivation is a central aspect of promoting fairness and equal opportunity.

Research evidence shows that low income and material deprivation are at the core of a complex cycle of interaction between material resources, environmental factors and family circumstances that harm children's healthy development and prevents children in poor families enjoying and achieving in childhood. According to National research, poverty and high levels of deprivation are linked to adverse outcomes across a range of areas including health and education. Whilst 'child poverty' is generally taken to mean growing up in a low income household, there are many views that it also describes the condition in which children live in families where parents are not able to provide the support and care that will promote healthy child development.

Children living in areas of high deprivation are: more likely to die in infancy or childhood; more likely to be injured at home or on the roads; more likely to be subject to safeguarding/child protection measures; less likely to be breastfed; more likely to be obese; more likely to have problems with oral health; and more likely to die younger as adults.

At all educational milestones, children and young people who are eligible for free school meals and/or living in areas of high deprivation are less likely to achieve expected thresholds or targets, and are more likely to be among the lowest

The levels of child poverty in Bradford are unacceptably high, with almost 40,000 (31.8%) of the district's children and young people living in relative poverty as defined by Government.

The purpose of the Bradford District Child Poverty Strategy is to provide a framework within which all services in the district can work together to meet agreed outcomes associated with reducing the effects of child poverty.

Our vision is to ensure that all services of the Council and of local partners are working collectively to do everything possible to reduce child poverty, mitigate its effects and ensure that today's children don't become tomorrow's poor adults.

Childhood experience lays the foundations for later life. Growing up in poverty can damage physical, cognitive, social and emotional development and can affect what is achieved in adult life. While some children who grow up in low income households will go on to achieve their full potential, many others will not. Tackling child poverty will help to improve children's lives today, and it will enhance their life chances enabling them to make the most of their talents, achieve their full potential in life and pass on the benefits to their own children.

achieving pupils in their cohort. This then translates into lower numbers of young people eligible for free school meals at age 15 achieving full level 2 or 3 qualifications at age 19, and higher not in education or training (NEET) rates in areas of high deprivation.

Our commitment to tackle child poverty

Before the Child Poverty Act became law in 2010, Bradford Council had already established a commitment to tackle child poverty through the Child Poverty Commission (Bradford Child Poverty Scrutiny report September 2009). It concluded that:

“It is imperative....that a district strategy is developed and adopted at the highest level to knit together the work of multiple agencies and partners.”

The Act created a duty for the Council to

undertake an Assessment of Child Poverty in the district and to produce a strategy by engaging all relevant partners. The emphasis in this strategy, that ending Child Poverty is Everybody’s Business, reflects the commitment of the Council and the local strategic partnership to take collective action acknowledging that no single agency can act alone to make an impact.

Tackling the causes of child poverty and mitigating its effects is not new and a wide range of existing services are working hard doing just that. In the Bradford district we have taken steps to develop this strategy through partnership involvement at every stage so that services are planned, delivered and all clearly understand the contribution they make to the identified priorities of the Strategy.





1 National context

2.8 million children in the UK live in poverty. If child poverty persists, it will continue to take a heavy toll on society. Research by Joseph Rowntree Foundation has estimated the annual cost of child poverty in the UK at £25 billion in terms of extra spending on services and lost earnings and productivity as an adult.

The Government made a commitment in 1999 to end child poverty by 2020. This is enshrined in the Child Poverty Act that became law on 25 May 2010. The Act creates a framework for national and local action to address child poverty. It requires local authorities and named partners to work together to undertake a Child Poverty Needs Assessment and to produce a Child Poverty Strategy. Local authorities will also need to take account of child poverty when developing the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Children and Young People's Plan. Local Strategic Partnerships will be responsible for implementing the local Child Poverty Strategy.

The primary aim of the Act is to raise family income: either state or wage sourced and it defines families as "in poverty" where the income before housing costs is less than 60% of the median national income. It identifies four areas to address, in order to

tackle the determinants of child poverty:

- Financial support and raising income levels.
- Ensuring parents and carers maximise their education, skills and training in order to increase their income through paid employment.
- Education, health and family support - improving children's life chances to break the cycle of poverty.
- Ensuring children live in environments that encourage learning and skill development. This includes good quality housing and natural environment.

Although the Coalition government has decided not to adopt statutory guidance for the implementation of the Child Poverty Act, it has confirmed its commitment to ending child poverty and to producing a National Child Poverty Strategy in March 2011. Consultation on this: "Tackling Child Poverty and Improving Life chances: Consulting on a New Approach" indicates that it is seeking to help communities and individuals ensure that children have the very best start in life. Clear links are made to the outcomes of the independent reviews on "Poverty and Life Chances" conducted by Frank Field (Report on Child Poverty) and the Graham Allen report on "Early Interventions: The Next Steps" (Allen Report). The Coalition's strategy will focus on early intervention and the 'Foundation Years', employment and skills and financial support.

2 What local data informed this strategy?

The Bradford Child Poverty Needs Assessment, completed in June 2010 (Child Poverty Needs Assessment) provided an objective view of the district and pointed to the key issues that needed to inform strategic development. The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) 2010 identifies child poverty as a wider determinant of health and wellbeing.

The measurement of poverty typically focuses on relative poverty, and is based on the proportion of children living in families in

receipt of Child Tax Credit whose total reported household income is less than 60% of the median, or living in families in receipt of Income Support or Income-Based Jobseekers Allowance. Low income families are defined as those receiving Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit or where the family is out of work (irrespective of total household income from all sources). Eligibility for free school meals is recognised as an appropriate proxy measure of poverty and is often used in relation to educational outcomes.

Key issues:

- In the Bradford district as of August 2007, almost 40,000 children and young people aged 0-18 were living in relative poverty.
- A total of 61% of children in the district live in low income households, compared with 44% nationally.
- Around half of all the district's children living in poverty live in just six wards: Bradford Moor; Manningham; Little Horton; Bowling and Barkerend; City; and Toller.
- National research indicates that Black Minority Ethnic (BME) communities are more likely to live in poverty and in the district there are substantial populations of these communities living in the most disadvantaged areas.
- In recent years, there has been a significant growth in the transient population of the district and it is acknowledged that they are at risk of suffering poverty. More information is required to understand their needs.
- Roughly equal proportions of children in poverty live in families headed by a couple as headed by a lone parent. In Tong ward a higher proportion of children live in lone parent families.
- Larger families in the district are more likely to live in poverty.
- On average, 20% of children educated in the Bradford district take free school meals, although the actual numbers vary from school to school.
- The total proportion of the working age population claiming out of work benefits is high compared with similar places.
- Approximately 25% of children living in the Bradford district live in out of work households, compared with 21% nationally.
- Bradford has a higher proportion of children living in poverty who are from families headed by a couple who are in work and in receipt of Working Tax Credit (WTC) and Child Tax Credit with less than 60% median income.

The result is that the district's children and young people currently living in poverty are more likely to be the district's adults living in poverty in the future.



Future needs and gaps in provision

The number and proportion of the district's total population aged under 18 is increasing, and more of this age group now live in poverty.

- 52,000 adults across the district have no qualifications. This equates to approximately 18% of the working-age population and is the highest of all local authority districts in the Leeds City Region. Growth forecasts for the Bradford district (2009-2019) suggest that the strongest growth is likely to be seen in parts of the service sector that typically employ highly skilled staff.
- Rates of worklessness among the adult population are high, and residents from BME communities are disproportionately affected.
- Although the proportion of Job Seeker Allowance claims of over 12 months has historically been relatively low in the Bradford district (most claims are 6 months or less), there appears to have been an overall nation-wide shift to longer-term claims.
- The take-up of formal childcare by low income families is lower than national (14% compared with 18%) and is not increasing at an equivalent pace.
- The Bradford district has a high proportion of private sector rented

accommodation, and a high proportion of all homes are classed as 'non-decent', often for energy efficiency hazards. The high incidence of non-decent accommodation combined with low average incomes may mean that families are spending disproportionate amounts on heating and need, but cannot afford to maintain or repair their accommodation.

- Higher proportions of disabled children or children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) live in poverty or areas of high deprivation. The costs associated with caring for a disabled child and the difficulties parents face in obtaining and maintaining work can mean that it is difficult for these families to move out of poverty. The proportion of pupils who are SEN without a statement (School Action or Action+) at the end of KS2 and 4 are high in the Bradford district when compared with England overall.



③ What we want to do

Bradford district has adopted the vision that ending Child Poverty is Everybody's Business.

Bradford's Child Poverty Commission made five recommendations which were adopted by the Council in September 2009.

Recommendation 1

- That the Bradford District Partnership develops a Child Poverty Strategy for the district.
- The strategy should form part of Bradford's Community Strategy (the Big Plan II) and make appropriate links to locality and area action planning.
- The local authority should nominate an Executive lead member and a senior Council officer to lead on Child Poverty.

In the progress report presented to the committee on 13 April 2010 the Portfolio holder for Children's Services was identified as the Executive Lead Member and the Deputy Director for Children's Services as the lead senior council officer for child poverty.

The progress of the Child Poverty Strategy should be seen in the context of wider strategic planning overseen by the Local Strategic Partnership and will be positioned within the overall vision for the area contained in the Community Strategy and the Children and Young People's Plan (2011-14).

The Government expects all key local authority services, at the district level, to play their part in tackling child poverty. This includes all those agencies who have an influence in reducing the numbers of children living in poverty or mitigating the impacts of living in poverty including: economic prosperity; employment; skills; education; healthcare; childcare; financial support; housing; transport; planning and regeneration; and leisure.

Recommendation 2

- That the Strategic Director Corporate Services introduces a system which highlights families who would be eligible for free school meals from their existing database of benefit claimants.
- That the Strategic Director for Children's Services arranges for information regarding eligibility and application for free school meals to be sent to families at the same time as school allocation details.

Information regarding the eligibility for free school meals is now included in the school admissions guide issued to parents when they apply for school places in reception year and at secondary school entry. Parents are reminded again through inclusion of this information within their school place allocation letters for Reception Year. Every claimant for housing and council tax benefit is assessed for their eligibility for free school meals and families are actively encouraged to take up this benefit at the same time. Further work is currently underway between the Revenue and Benefits service with the Free School Meals service to identify any additional activities which may be undertaken to ensure that all those eligible for free school meals are supported to take them up.



Recommendation 3

- That the Council together with Education Bradford prepare draft guidelines/advice for schools on how to 'poverty proof' the school day and report to the Committee in January 2011.

From 1 April 2011, schools will receive a 'pupil premium' for each pupil within their school who is in receipt of free school meals, or is a child looked after by the local authority, or is a child of parents who are serving in the armed forces. The local authority will work with schools to support them to utilise this funding in order to 'poverty proof the school day'. These actions will become part of the delivery plan for which schools will be responsible.

Recommendation 4

- That the Council provides a comprehensive range of summer activities for children and young people especially for those from poorer families (e.g. those in receipt of, or eligible for, free school meals).
- That Council provides a free meal to children eligible for free school meals as part of the above summer schemes.

The provision of a full range of summer activity was made in 2010, targeting the more disadvantaged areas of the district. Meals are not offered on these types of activities and resource constraints prevented the provision of free meals within these arrangements.

Recommendation 5

- That full Council considers amending the Housing Strategy to refer specifically to children in sub-standard and inappropriate housing situations.
- That the needs of children in sub-standard and inappropriate housing situations be given a high priority within the Council's Housing Allocations Policy.

The amendment to the Housing Strategy with specific reference to children in substandard and inappropriate housing has not yet been achieved. This will be revised when emerging government policies are clearer, which is likely to be mid 2011.

However, a new housing allocations policy was agreed and implemented in March 2010. This new, needs based, system has a sophisticated banding structure that includes additional priority for overcrowded households (which by necessity include children) and vulnerable young people including care leavers. These arrangements are now under review to take account of anticipated changes to housing and other welfare benefits. This review will include consultation with all key stakeholders. Joint working between Children's Social Care and the specific young person's housing service, 'Take Care Of Yourself', is helping to ensure that the housing needs of all young people are integrated into support systems and accessed through a single gateway to service.

Using the conclusions from the Child Poverty Commission and the Child Poverty Needs Analysis, strategic partners in Bradford district met to consider what the focus of their joint efforts should be. It was agreed that the causes of poverty were many and varied and that it would be unrealistic to aim to eradicate poverty locally, with many factors beyond the ability of partners to influence. However, it was deemed appropriate for an overall vision to be adopted that would seek to minimise the adverse effects of poverty on children and that partners acting together and owning the

contributory factors was a meaningful way of addressing Child Poverty: Everybody's Business.

Other strategic developments were recognised, associated with, for example, Housing, Skills, Regeneration, Education, Infant Mortality, would create the wider environment essential to this approach. Therefore the Child Poverty Strategy is closely associated with other key strategic statements in the district particularly the Community Strategy, Economic Development Strategy, Employment and Skills Strategy, Housing Strategy, Infant Mortality Strategy and is a focus of the Children and Young People's Plan 2011-14. As such the Child Poverty Strategy does not seek to replicate and reproduce all other strategies upon which it relies; rather it challenges other strategies to take account of their responsibilities in addressing the causes and effects of child poverty.





4 The child poverty strategy

A Child Poverty visioning event was held in July 2010 for all strategic partners in the Children's Trust. The aim was to agree the population outcome for the district's Child Poverty Strategy:

"To create the conditions in the district where all children, young people and families can maximise their full potential by minimising the adverse effects of Child Poverty"

The partners agreed that working on the following priorities would help them to make a real difference to child poverty:

- No child to live in sub-standard housing.
- Every family can access the support they need (e.g. debt advice, benefits and careers advice, mental health services, domestic violence support, disabilities services).
- Children and young people take advantage of education, employment and training opportunities. Continue to reduce the gap between children at Foundation Stage, Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4.
- Break the cycle of worklessness by undertaking positive action for vulnerable groups (e.g. low income families, unemployed adults, those who are NEET or are at risk of becoming NEET).
- Positive parenting builds resilience in children and families to address inequalities particularly health related issues.

No child to live in substandard housing:

A key component of tackling deprivation in communities is the quality of the environment in which a child lives. Housing is the most immediate aspect of this. An innovative suggestion arising from partners considering this, relates to the development of bulk purchase of domestic electricity and gas in order to sell on to families in poverty so that costs of maintaining decent standards of warmth in the home are kept to a minimum. Too often, those who can least afford it are only able to purchase utilities through coin operated meterage, which is the most expensive method of purchase. We will also be asking our Housing Partnership to look

at how they can work with the private sector landlords to address the quality of housing for which they are responsible.

Every family can access the support they need:

Parents and their families can be assisted by practical help and advice at an early stage, maximising the opportunities that exist in Children Centres and other child focused settings. We need to ensure that advice is available in areas of greatest disadvantage and cover issues of high demand (e.g. domestic violence, benefit and debts etc.) by tighter commissioning arrangements and integrated working between all providers.

Children and young people take advantage of education, training and employment opportunities:

Children and young people living in poverty often suffer from low self-esteem, lack the resources to fully engage in learning, may not have developed at an early stage to be ready to learn, may suffer from health problems which adversely affect their learning and often fall behind other more affluent peers. We have already developed the Raising Achievement Strategy to support schools and other learning providers to narrow the gap between those who are in receipt of free school meals and those who are not. However, with the introduction of the pupil premium in April 2011, we will work with schools to seek ways in which we can 'poverty proof' the school day. The Economic Development Strategy will have links to the aspirations and learning for those entering the 14-19 aspects of earning so that young people are ready to meet the challenges of developing and growing new business enterprises in Bradford.

Breaking the cycle of worklessness:

We have been particularly successful in reducing the numbers of young people who are not in education, training or employment (NEET), as well as reducing those whose destination is unknown to us. We retain the ambition to have all of our 17 year olds in education, training or employment by 2013 and all of our 18 year olds in education, employment or training by 2015. We also seek to ensure that the 'cliff edge' at age 19 when youth unemployment suddenly rises is addressed through partnership working to 'co-design' employment opportunities for those entering adulthood, which is sustainable through adult life.

Positive parenting builds resilience in children and families to address inequalities particularly in health related issues:

Parenting skills are usually learnt from the way we were parented. However, as the world changes so does the need for differing and supportive parenting skills. We have a range



of provision to support the development of parenting skills, from parental involvement work to family intervention projects, which are delivered in partnership with other agencies as well as parents themselves.

Follow-up evaluation clearly evidences the worth and value which parents and families place upon them. It is clear from analysis, within the Joint Strategic Needs Analysis undertaken between health and the local authority, that health inequalities reflect poverty and deprivation. We are ambitious that the development of parenting skills will build resilience in children and families and that this resilience will impact on their general health. There are clear links here to the Infant Mortality Strategy and other health related plans, such as obesity, nutrition and mental health.

Associated with these priorities is a need to improve data and intelligence gathering so that local services are able to evaluate their impact and know what works.

An additional action being explored is the development of a child poverty impact assessment for use when developing new policies within the local authority and perhaps beyond to involve the Children's Trust. This action should help to mitigate against unintended outcomes which could adversely affect children living in poverty and their families.

This emphasis on reducing the adverse effects of Child Poverty, rather than attempting to address the wider economic aspects of poverty, acknowledges the crucial links with other strategic efforts to regenerate the district, to enhance the skill base and create more and better-paid jobs within a cohesive community setting.



5 Measures of impact

The Child Poverty Act sets out four challenging national targets to be met by 2020. Together these targets provide a clear vision and definition of what ending child poverty means. These targets are based on the proportion of children living in:

- Absolute low income (whether the poorest families are seeing their income rise in real terms) - target is less than 5%.
- Relative low income (whether the incomes of the poorest families are keeping pace with the growth of incomes in the economy as a whole) - target is less than 10%.
- Combined low income and material deprivation (a wider measure of people's living standards) - target is less than 5%.
- Persistent poverty (length of time in poverty) - target is to be set in regulations by 2015.

Further developments will establish what will be measured locally that will show progress towards narrowing the gap for those disadvantaged by living in poverty. However, all of the above targets relate to financial measures. In Bradford we have adopted a focus on reducing the effects of child poverty so that children living in poverty do not become adults living in poverty. Further local measures will be developed so that we can evidence how well we are doing in reducing these effects.



6 Getting from “Talk to Action”

The methodology used to develop the Strategy has taken into account the requirements set out in the Child Poverty Act published in June 2010, for the Council and its partners to work collectively to reduce child poverty in Bradford.

The approach recognises the need to plan strategically for longer term impact and reflects the likelihood of reduced resources being available to take this complex agenda forward. The Bradford approach therefore represents a strong commitment to reduce the levels of child poverty through collaborative ways of working, a better local understanding of children and families in need and improved effectiveness in achieving better outcomes. Wide ranging discussions are already taking place in partnership to explore how to do things differently with a ‘low-cost – no-cost’ reference to developments. We are very aware that if we continue to do what we have always done, then we will continue to get what we have always got. This is not necessarily the way to improve outcomes for those living in poverty.

The initial phase of developing the Child Poverty Strategy will be followed by a Delivery Plan. This will take into account the outcomes from events that have given partners the opportunity to collectively consider how services currently deliver against the priorities and what would need to change to make a difference by adopting our low-cost no-cost approach. This second phase will also identify what measures of impact will be used to monitor progress at service level.

Consultation with children and young people and their carers and/or parents will be undertaken in this next phase.

A key component of this approach is the need for accountability of progress against our priorities. This will use the chosen measures for each priority and will be accompanied by progress reporting in a timely manner.

The Children’s Trust will take the lead in this but other strategic boards will need to ensure that the contribution that they make is fully understood and acted upon. As a district-wide group the Local Strategic Partnership plays a key role in maintaining the wide ownership for the Child Poverty Strategy.

The over-arching district accountability for progress on the Strategy will lie with the Bradford District Partnership (BDP) through its Community Strategy. The lead member for child poverty is a member of the BDP and the lead senior officer for child poverty is a member of the Children’s Trust.

The Child Poverty Strategy, followed by the Delivery Plan, will be published on the Children’s Trust website, together with the Child Poverty Needs Assessment which informs the strategy going forward. An executive summary will be published, alongside a child and young people friendly executive summary which will be developed in consultation with partners as well as children and young people.

The Child Poverty Strategy is a three year strategy, running from April 2011 to March 2014. It will be reviewed and refreshed annually, and, during 2013 – 2014, a new strategy will be developed building on the successes gained between 2011 and 2013.



The wording in this publication can be made available in other formats such as large print or Braille. Please call 01274 433861

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