

Reducing Child Poverty in Rotherham – Everybody's Business

Introduction

Childhood experiences lay the foundations for later life. Growing up in poverty can damage physical, cognitive, social and emotional development, which are all determinants of outcomes 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 improve children's lives and 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 (Ending Child Poverty – Everybody's Business, 2008)

Research shows that children who grow up in poverty have a greater risk of having poor health, being exposed to crime and failing to reach their full potential. As a result their education may suffer, making it difficult to get the qualifications they need to move onto well-paid employment. This limits their ability to earn enough money to support their own families in later life, creating the on-going cycle of poverty. However, poverty is not solely related to income; poverty of ambition and aspiration is also a key factor determining a child's life chances.

The Child Poverty Act 2010 places a duty on all local authorities to produce a partnership strategy to reduce child poverty in the area. The strategy should bring together all key partners and local organisations to work together to contribute to the Government target of eradicating child poverty by 2020.

There is currently a large amount of work on-going across the borough which is working towards tackling the factors associated with child poverty; this strategy is not intended to repeat what may already be taking place through other strategies and plans, but to draw it all together to form a coherent picture of what is being delivered, whilst also adding value to the existing work through actions which have a partnership focus.

Shared Vision

Vision to be agreed

Local Needs Assessment

Along with a local strategy, the Child Poverty Act 2010 places a duty on local authorities to produce a local assessment of need. The assessment pulls together all direct and indirect factors which are associated with families living in poverty.

The factors which affect child poverty are multi-faceted and complex; they interlink to create a cycle of poverty which many families find it difficult to get out of. The local needs assessment highlights this complex range of factors which affect children and their families.

Through developing the local assessment, a deeper understanding has been gained of the role all partners and agencies have in reducing poverty in the area, which has been used to develop the local strategy.

Rotherham Strategy

Tackling child poverty requires action across the whole partnership; ensuring all agencies work together to address these key issues. However, although work is required across the broad range of factors associated with poverty, most will be gained by addressing the top level issues which result in a family being unable to achieve a decent standard of living.

Measuring Success of the Strategy

National Indicator (NI) 116 is the key indicator for measuring the reduction in child poverty both nationally and locally.

NI 116 is measured by the proportion of children living in families in receipt of out of work (means-tested) benefits or in receipt of tax credits where their reported income is less than 60% of median income. Benefits include:

- *Income support (IS)*
- *Jobseekers Allowance (JSA)*
- *Working Tax Credit (WTC)*

The indicator shows children in poverty within local authority and super output areas, which can be separated out to show the proportion by age, family status and benefits claimed. This indicator will be the key to measuring the success of the Rotherham strategy, and the contribution being made to the overall Government target of eradicating child poverty by 2020.

Pledge to reduce child poverty by.....% by 2015 – local target to be developed

Basket of Indicators

Although NI 116 will ultimately be the way in which the reduction in the overall proportion of children living in poverty is measured, action is needed across the broad range of factors associated with child poverty. To measure outcomes in these other areas a set of indicators will be developed for each of the building blocks below; this will draw on indicators from the National Indicator Set as well as locally developed indicators.

Think Family Toolkit

The 'Think Family Toolkit' identifies a number of warning signs which would identify a child, young person or family as vulnerable in some way. They would become a priority for the provision of universal or targeted support. These warning signs can be considered as risk factors and may include:-

- signs of neglect
- poor attainment at school
- homelessness or housing issues
- poor school attendance
- a learning disability
- domestic abuse in the family
- young carer
- teenage pregnancy
- social exclusion
- mental ill health of a parent or carer

Rotherham has produced a basket of indicators made up of these risk factors and allowing up to three local indicators. Anyone working with children, young people and families would have access to this matrix which would act as an early warning that there are concerns about an individual child, young person or family. The matrix will form the basis of discussion around the needs of named children, young people and their families who have been identified as having issues that in some way make that child or family vulnerable and thereby reduce the potential for meeting the ECM outcomes.

This basket of indicators will support the child poverty strategy by identifying children and families affected by the factors associated with living in poverty and ensuring they receive the support they need.

Child Poverty Building Blocks

The government has developed 4 'Building Blocks' as part of their strategy to reduce child poverty, which the Rotherham strategy is based upon:

- 1. Financial Support:** Improve material and financial support for families
- 2. Employment and Skills:** Increase parental employment and skills to help raise incomes
- 3. Life Chances:** Improve poor children's life chances so they do not result in poor outcomes in later life
- 4. Place:** Tackle deprivation within communities

'Financial Support' and 'Employment and Skills' will be the blocks which have the most impact on reducing the overall proportion of child poverty in the borough (NI 116). This will be done through helping families to increase their incomes, by ensuring they are not financially excluded and are receiving the appropriate benefits they are entitled to, as well as improving employment opportunities and supporting families into sustainable employment.

However, to tackle the wider determinants and stop the cycle of poverty which many families find themselves in, work will be needed on 'Life Chances' and 'Place'. Work related to these blocks will ensure all children get the best start in life; they are able to live in decent homes and in safe communities, with access to health benefiting green spaces. Ensuring children are not negatively affected in by poor outcomes during their early years and childhood. By supporting all children to develop good communication, language and literacy skills, they will be better able to go on to achieve and take-up employment opportunities as they get older – enabling them to look after their own families and stay healthy in later life.

A set of objectives and actions have been developed for each block, setting out what will be done locally to tackle the issues. .

Financial Support				
Key Objective	How We Will Achieve This	Key Outcomes Expected	Links to Other Strategies/Plans	Strategic Lead
Reducing financial exclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting the use of the 'nellbooker' on-line booking system for financial advice services and Credit Unions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. of agencies signed up to, and using nellbooker • Number of contacts to services 	Financial Inclusion Strategy 2010	VAR

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure families have access to financial information and advice including benefits and debt management • Providing a programme of financial capability/inclusion training for front line workers working with families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No of frontline workers trained to promote financial inclusion services 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure families have access to information on childcare availability and financial support available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (3 yearly) with annual updates • Families Information Service enquiry levels 		Early Yrs and Childcare

Employment and Skills

Key Objective	How We Will Achieve This	Key Outcomes Expected	Links to Other Strategies/Plans	Strategic Lead
Increase family incomes by ensuring more parents can enter, stay and progress in work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create flexible employment opportunities locally • Work with all employers to promote family friendly policies within the workplace • Business start-up initiatives • Jobcentre Plus Welfare to Work Programmes • Engage employers to create an understanding of the child poverty agenda • Encourage employers to develop more flexible working arrangements • Ongoing development of career opportunities with the Early Years and Childcare sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in the number of households dependent on Working Age Benefits • Increase in the overall Employment Rate for Rotherham 	Local Economic Plan 2010	Jobcentre Plus Early Yrs and Childcare
Ensure all adults have the skills necessary to take up employment opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising Aspirations of Parents • Delivery of multi agency employment support offer within Children's Centres, to include Get Britain Working measures and access to latest vacancies via JCP website • Development of Volunteer/Workforce Peer support opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualification levels within the early years and childcare sector • % of teenage mothers aged 16-19 in education, employment or training • Uptake of volunteering opportunities within Children's 		Jobcentre Plus with early Yrs and Childcare

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion of education/training opportunities linked to the local labour market Delivery of employment support offer at Children's Centres in conjunction with JC+ and other agencies including Job Clubs Development of Volunteer/ Workforce Peer support opportunities 	<p>Centres</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progression and Qualification levels achieved through access to adult and community learning 		
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Life Chances				
Key Objectives	How We Will Achieve This	Key Outcomes Expected	Links to Other Strategies/Plans	Strategic Lead
All children supported to develop work place skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued focus on communication, language & literacy Rotherham Ready project All children supported to reach full potential 		Children and Young People's Plan	Schools and Lifelong Learning
Every child is given the best start in life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving key health indicators affecting young children 		Children and Young People's Plan Public Health Strategy Strategies and plans relating to: Infant Mortality/ childhood obesity/breastfeeding	Health
Parental support is available for all families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family Intervention projects – bespoke to individual families Delivery of the Children's Centre service offer working in partnership with Health, Job Centre Plus, Schools, Private, voluntary and community sector 2 Year Old Offer to be developed in line 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alignment of service delivery and the consultation with parents Monitoring of Children's Centre performance Ofsted Inspection Results Monitoring take-up levels of early education. 	Prevention and Early Intervention Strategy Children and Young People's Plan	Prevention and Early Intervention Early Yrs and Childcare

	<p>with Government guidelines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all parents are aware of and take-up their child's early education entitlement • Provision of high quality child care • Parents supported to engage in their children's learning • Working in partnership to target most vulnerable groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring take-up of 2 Year Old Pilot and outcomes • % of outstanding and good Ofsted gradings for early years and childcare settings and Children's Centres • Percentage of children who achieve a total of at least 78 points across the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) with at least 6 points scored in each of the personal, social and emotional development (PSED) and the communication, language and literacy (CCL) • Narrowing the gap between the lowest 20% in the EYFSP and the rest (PSA 11) • Number of child protection plans and CAF's • % of parents in Children's Centre areas satisfied with services • % of families with children under 5 who access Children's Centre services • % of vulnerable families and target group accessing Children's Centre services • %increase in parental and community representation on Children's Centre advisory boards 		
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Place				
Key Objectives	How We Will Achieve This	Key Outcomes Expected		Strategic Lead
All family housing is fit for purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase standard of suitable homes • Working with private landlords to ensure 		Housing Strategy	Housing Services

	housing meets families needs			
Strengthened social capital locally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voluntary sector development • Community cohesion • Increase volunteering in Rotherham • Increase parental and community representation of children's Centre advisory boards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • %increase in parental and community representation on Children's Centre advisory boards 		VAR
Families have access to adequate green spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring all areas are safe and accessible • More people involved in local decision making 			Green Spaces

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