

ITEM 3

DRAFT

Reducing Child Poverty Strategy

Executive Summary

Almost a third of children in Newcastle live in poverty. Although good progress has been made in improving outcomes for children and their families – including amongst the most deprived – in recent years, the aim of this strategy is to accelerate the good work and to make a step-change in outcomes. Our vision is to ensure that child poverty and wider measures of deprivation¹ are below national average levels by 2030, a significant improvement from our current position, where we are positioned 330th of the 354 English Local Authorities.

Our work is occurring against a background of a severe economic downturn, which is likely to lead to more children living in workless households and therefore at greater risk of being in poverty.

In addition to actions that strengthen the economy, our approach to reducing child poverty is two-fold. First, to reduce current instances: helping parents into work and training, improving opportunities for career progression and maximising benefit take up. And second, to reduce the chances of future poverty: working with families and children to break the poverty cycle and raise aspirations.

Our activities are focused in the following areas:

1. Employment and skills

We are increasing opportunities for parents to enter employment, education or training. This will increase family income, the chances of progression to higher paid employment and have a beneficial impact on parental self esteem.

2. Financial wellbeing of families

This means maximising family income - including raising benefit take up, improving debt management, raising financial literacy and increasing access to affordable credit.

3. Improving services to families

These initiatives have a particular focus on parenting services, including supporting families with disabilities. In addition, we are committed to ensuring that all services across the Council have a 'family-focus'.

¹ The Government has made a commitment to eradicating child poverty entirely by 2020. This document outlines activity that will be undertaken by the Newcastle Partnership to help meet this target, and which will also improve other, broader, measures of child-deprivation.

4. Regeneration of local communities

Many of the children living in poverty live in Newcastle's regeneration areas, where physical and social regeneration is raising the quality of life and ensuring Newcastle is a family-friendly city.

5. Raising attainment and aspirations of young people and of their parents

Our work in raising the attainment and aspirations of young people and of their parents is designed to break the inter-generational poverty cycle.

6. Addressing health inequalities

Improving health outcomes among our young children, helping them meet their potential.

All partners are committed to working together to improve outcomes. This means sharing information and best practice and ensuring that support is available to the whole family from all parts of the Newcastle Partnership. For example, debt advice workers can accurately signpost employment or health support; while the Common Assessment Framework is used to provide access to a range of family support.

Table of Contents

Introduction: the importance of reducing child poverty	4
What do we know about children living in poverty	5
Poverty and material deprivation	7
National policies for reducing child poverty	8
Newcastle's approach to reducing child poverty	9
Outcomes that we have already achieved	11
Objectives for reducing child poverty further	14
Working in Partnership and governance	17
Appendices	24

Section 1: Introduction: the importance of reducing child poverty

Reducing child poverty is a key priority for the Newcastle Partnership. It is essential if the city is to meet its vision of a place where residents enjoy equal chances in employment, education, housing and health. It has been identified as one of the five over-arching challenges in the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS), and is a priority indicator in the Local Area Agreement (LAA). Reducing child poverty is also a priority for national Government, which has pledged to halve child poverty by 2010 and eradicate it by 2020.

The importance of reducing child poverty is summarised in Newcastle's SCS:

“Children and young people who grow up in poverty are less likely to: attend school regularly; stay on at school; obtain qualifications; go on to higher education; and aspire to well-paid employment.

Reducing the number of children who grow up in poverty will increase the number of young people with opportunities to succeed as adults. This success will increase the life chances of their children. This is the cycle of opportunity that we want in Newcastle.”

Prior to the economic downturn, good progress had been made in reducing child poverty. In the NE as a whole, the percentage of children living in poverty fell from 34% to 27% between 1998 and 2005.² In 2004, over 40% of children in Newcastle lived in the areas classified as being in the most deprived 10% of areas in the England; by 2007 that proportion had reduced to 35%. Our analysis shows that Newcastle is reducing the numbers of children living in the most deprived parts of the country at a faster rate than in the country or NE as a whole.

But much more needs to be done. On the Government's preferred measure, based upon children living in households with relative low income,³ 29% of children in Newcastle live in poverty. This is significantly higher than the English average of 22%. The city is ranked 330th of the 354 English Local Authorities.

The economic downturn compounds the need for action. In the year to March 2009, unemployment had increased by over 1.5% in Newcastle, with an additional 2816 people claiming unemployment benefits. It is inevitable that this has been accompanied by an increase in the number of children living in workless households

² Bradshaw (2009), “The prevalence, characteristics and distribution of child poverty in the North East Region”. University of York

³ The Government's main measure of child poverty is of children living in relatively poor households – defined as those ‘below 60 per cent of contemporary median equivalised household income’. But the Government also monitors absolute low income – a level below which people lack necessary food clothing and shelter to survive, and instances of relatively low income combined with evidence of material deprivation related to the lack of specific goods and services.

Section 2: What do we know about children living in poverty?⁴

Causes

Unsurprisingly, the probability of a child being in poverty increases sharply if they live in a workless household. In the NE as a whole, two-thirds of such children are in poverty. In contrast, in households where the only/both parents are in full time work, the proportion is just 0.7%. But the probability of the household being in poverty increases to a quarter if the work is part-time, rather than full-time.

The main reason for relatively high rates of child poverty in the NE is lower levels of employment. In 2005/06, 15,300 children in Newcastle lived in out of work families.⁵ This is approximately 30% of all children in the city, compared with 20% in England. More than two thirds of the children in workless households in Newcastle live with single parents.

Although the probability of being in poverty is much higher in workless families, the greater number of working families means that these account for 45% of children living in poverty in the NE. Child poverty is more prevalent in working households in the NE than is the case nationally because pay levels are generally lower – at 90% of the UK average. This is the other major reason for relatively high rates of child poverty in Newcastle.

Underlying determinants of poverty

In addition to the prevailing strength of the economy,⁶ the underlying causes of low-paid work and worklessness are multiple, complex and often-overlapping:

- low skills can make it difficult to find work and can reduce job stability and progression, and can limit an individual's earning capacity;
- high demand on public services in deprived areas can affect access to and quality of service provision, and a lack of safe, pleasant spaces exacerbates children's experiences of deprivation – reducing future chances;
- Poverty in childhood can cause poverty in the future. Poor children are less likely to achieve higher level skills and qualifications, which are critical to enter the workforce and progress in work, as well as to thrive in other areas of life; and
- Some parents find it difficult to work: for example, one in four children in poverty has a parent with a self-reported disability or a long-standing health condition.

Persistent Poverty

⁴ Drawn from Bradshaw (2009), unless otherwise stated.

⁵ Source: Child Poverty in Newcastle Evidence Summary 2008

⁶ DCSF, DWP and HMT (2008) "Ending child poverty: everybody's business"

The National Centre for Social Research study “*The Circumstances of Persistently Poor Families with Children*” analyses the persistence of low income from a large scale longitudinal study of families with children. The definition of poverty used is that of income below 60% of total equivalised disposable family income before housing costs. Persistent poverty is defined as being below the low income threshold in at least three of the four annual observations (Families and Children Study, FACS) from 2001 to 2004. Approximately 20% of families were below the income threshold in any one year but 38% of families experienced at least one year of low income during the period. 12% of families experienced persistent poverty and 26% were “temporary poor”, that is poor in one or two years of the 4 year period.

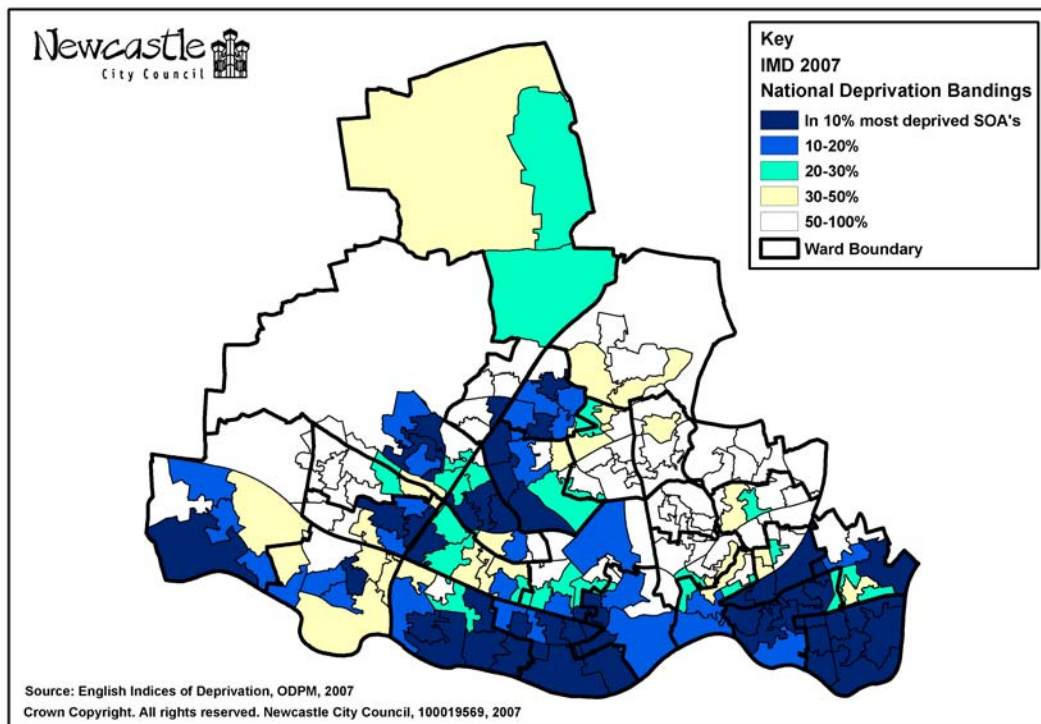
Children in persistently poor families were more at risk of poor outcomes compared to the temporary poor including:

- Having a long term illness or disability (19% to 17%)
- Going without regular exercise (12% to 8%)
- Being suspended or expelled from school (11% to 6%)
- Being in trouble with the police (5% to 3%)
- Living in bad housing (48% to 33%)
- Lacking a number of material deprivation items (3.9 items to 2.6 items)
- Facing multiple (3 or more) negative outcomes (28% to 18%)

Family work status is the factor that bears most on the risk of persistent poverty and being continuously out of work is even more strongly related both for lone parents and couples. The risk of poverty was high for couple families where only one parent worked, particularly if that was the mother. Other factors associated with persistent poverty included not having access to a car (lone mothers), for couple families having a black or ethnic minority mother and parents with no qualifications.

Geographic location

Child poverty in Newcastle is heavily skewed towards the most deprived neighborhoods. Actions to reduce child poverty therefore need to be spatially focussed on these areas. Concentrations of deprivation are illustrated on the map below by the darkest shading of blue, whilst greater affluence is illustrated by lighter shading. It shows that there are areas of intense deprivation in the city – and that these are clustered together. But it is reassuring that since 2004, the number of deprived neighbourhoods in the city has fallen.



Section 3: Poverty and material deprivation

Measures of child poverty based upon relative income are useful, but do not take into account relative costs of living (e.g. housing costs), or other influences on quality of life. Recent analysis,⁷ finds that on six of nine measures of 'material deprivation', poverty is less prevalent in the NE than in England as a whole. Despite this, relatively reassuring, analysis, the Newcastle Partnership's aspiration is to reduce material deprivation. This point to a need for measures that will not just improve employment and pay, but also those that will improve household income, health and family circumstances.

⁷ Bradshaw (2009), "The prevalence, characteristics and distribution of child poverty in the North East region". University of York

Table 1.1: Material deprivation of children (Source: Bradshaw, 2009)

Children would like to have this but cannot afford	North East	North West	Yorks & Humber	London	England ⁸
1) Enough bedrooms for every child over 10	20.4	15.0	18.6	23.1	16.4
2) Celebrations on special occasions	1.7	2.8	3.1	9.8	4.2
3) Leisure equipment such as sports equipment or a bicycle	6.0	6.9	6.6	14.8	7.6
4) A holiday away from home at least 1 week a year	33.9	32.4	30.6	39.8	31.4
5) A hobby or leisure activity	6.1	6.9	5.4	10.5	6.9
6) Swimming at least once a month	8.4	9.6	10.8	15.1	11.2
7) Have friends round for tea or a snack once a fortnight	8.2	8.0	6.7	11.9	7.8
8) Go on a school trip at least once a term	5.6	6.2	3.5	9.2	5.7
9) Go to a playgroup at least once a week	5.7	6.0	6.7	9.5	6.8

Section 4: National policies for reducing child poverty

National policies

At a national level, the Government's response to reducing child poverty is:⁹

- An economic strategy to maximise employment;
- Policies to encourage entry to work ;
- Policies designed to make work pay, including the national minimum wage, improvements in in-work benefits (child benefits, child tax credits, working tax credits and child care tax credits);
- Improvements in out of work benefits;
- Large increases in public expenditure on education, health, transport and childcare.

The Government has developed several policies and initiatives which confirm the Government's commitment to eradicate child poverty:

- *Working for Children* (DWP) Focusing on helping more lone parents into work, training and in-work support
- *In Work better off* (*Green Paper, 2007*): Proposal for Full employment
- The *Child Poverty Review* identifies the need for action simultaneously in number of policy areas such as welfare rights, health, education and housing to increase the collective impact on poverty
- *Ending Child Poverty: Everybody's Business* (2008) puts a renewed emphasis on regional and local action to support national activity and announces a series of Child Poverty Pilots. Any funding allocated to Newcastle will enable us to build on the activity outlined in this strategy.

⁸

⁹ DCSF, DWP and HMT (2008) "Ending child poverty: everybody's business"

- *Every Child Matters* (2003) has as a key outcome for all children “achieve economic wellbeing”
- *The Children’s Plan: Building Brighter Futures* (2007) sets out how Department of Children Schools and Families and the Department for Work and Pensions and the Child poverty Unit will coordinate work across government to break the cycle of poverty from generation to generation to achieve the goal of halving child poverty by 2010 and eradicating it by 2020.
- *The Child Poverty Bill* (2009) has the intention of increasing momentum, building consensus and creating a shared mission in society to make child poverty everybody’s business.

Section 5: Newcastle’s approach to reducing child poverty

In addition to the actions that the Newcastle Partnership are taking to help strengthen the economy (which will provide jobs and career-advancement opportunities), our approach is to reduce the number of children living in poverty, and to break the poverty cycle, by helping ensure that children receive the best possible start to life.

Strategic Framework

The Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement provide the strategic framework for actions to tackle child poverty.

The objectives identified in the SCS which will support the reduction of child poverty include:

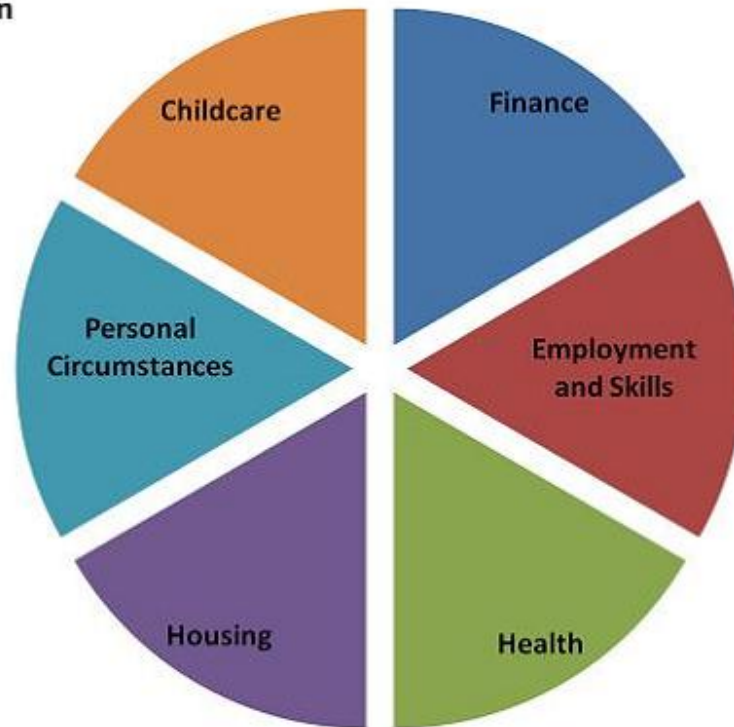
- Strengthening the economy
- Improving the wellbeing, health and independence of communities
- Managing the environmental impact
- Creating and sustaining quality places to live
- Providing safe inclusive cohesive and empowered communities
- Improving outcomes for children and young people

The Newcastle Plan for Children and Young People and the Employability Action Plan (EAP) are the key delivery vehicles for ensuring the aim of eradicating child poverty is met in Newcastle. Recognising that employment is central to our objective of tackling child poverty the EAP has identified workless families and young people not in education employment or training (NEET) as priority groups for action. The Newcastle Plan for C&YP has prioritised delivering measurable improvements for vulnerable groups such as homeless families, BME, children with disabilities and many of these families have experienced poverty and are more likely to be in persistent poverty.

Our activities are focused on a generic 'whole family' approach (graph 1), with activities split into six themes:

Graph 1: A whole-person approach to reducing child poverty

Whole Person



Of course, many of actions that will reduce child poverty are core functions of the Council, Jobcentre Plus, Higher and Further Education Institutions, and other partners. For the sake of brevity, we only very briefly identify this important 'mainstream activity'. Instead, we highlight our assessment of the gaps in this mainstream provision, the Newcastle Partnership's objectives for further activity, and broad actions that are being taken. Specific activities are discussed in more detail in the child poverty action plan. Outcomes that have already been achieved are discussed in box 1.

A key part of our approach is to listen to what children and young people, and parents and carers, tell us. This helps as:

- We can learn from their knowledge of the impact poverty has on their lives and the services they would find helpful

- The participation process can have a significant positive effect on self esteem, confidence and developing a sense of responsibility which are critical to increasing aspirations
- The participation process involves learning skills directly relevant to employment and training e.g. listening, consulting with peers, presentation and negotiation skills

We have commissioned the Participation Unit in Newcastle to explore children's and young people's perspectives on child poverty from disadvantaged and affluent areas of the city to help to shape the child poverty strategy and action plan.

Box 1: Outcomes that we have already achieved

Our work in reducing child poverty can build on recent success

- Fewer neighbourhoods (LLSOAs) are within the 10% most deprived nationally (comparing IMD2007 with IMD 2004)
- Targeted initiatives to reduce worklessness such as Newcastle Futures are having an impact
- The gap in attainment between vulnerable groups and their peers has narrowed
- We are increasing family incomes through benefit take-up

Detailed outcomes include:

Employment

- Between April 2007 and December 2008, 1,079 lone parents registered with Newcastle Futures and 579 (54 per cent) moved into employment.
- Achievement of a Level 2 qualification by the age of 19 (NI 79) has increased from 67% in 2008/08 to 70.6% in 2008/09 however this is still well below the national figure of 77% in 2008/09
- % of 16 to 18 year olds who are not in Education, Training or Employment (NEET) in Newcastle (NI 117) has decreased year on year from 15% in 2003 to 8.5% in 2008/9, narrowing the gap to the national figure of 6.7% (2007/8)
- 96% retention rates and 99.8% achievement rates on mainstream Family

Learning programmes in 73 venues in academic year ending July 2008 (2,509 parent/carer enrolments and 1,298 child enrolments)

Financial well being

- Newcastle Welfare Rights Service advised over 1500 families (2006-8) and the annualized benefit claims for working tax credits were £960,000 for Working Tax Credit and £381,000 for Child Tax Credit.
- Welfare Rights BME Team assisted clients to gain £172,000 in Working Tax Credits and £477,000 in Child Benefit and Child Tax Credit in 2007/8.

Supporting families

- 89% reduction in incidents of anti-social behaviour from 376 recorded incidents for 11 families in the 6 months prior to their engagement with the ASB FIP to 43 incidents in the 6 month following acceptance on to the project.
- 5 of the adults from 11 families progressed to education employment or training during ASB FIP involvement
- 3 Young Dads working with the Barnardos young Dads Project have become volunteers with the project and other young dads have gained employment.
- 17 additional multi agency practitioners trained to deliver Strengthening Families with 10-14 evidenced based parenting programmes being rolled out across the City and Incredible Years training underway
- Parents (including 13 FIP families) accessing one to one support reporting greater confidence in parenting skills

Outcomes of Initiatives to regenerate local communities

- Newcastle Warm Zone has reduced fuel bills by over £3 million p.a. (2007/08 prices).
- In the four years to June 2008 NWZ completed over 67,000 fuel poverty assessments, 13,600 benefit checks and secured £5.25 million in additional benefits.
- NWZ installed insulation in around 29,000 homes and 104 central heating systems (referring hundreds more to other projects).
- Direct participation in decision making is significant in raising the aspirations of the whole community and to developing work related skills. Through Participatory Budgeting children have had a direct say in the allocation of over £3.4 million

- (TellUs Survey) 27% of children and young people thought their views were listened to in decisions made about the local area compared with 26% nationally (2008/09)
- % young people participating in positive activities (NI 110) is 73.5% (rank order 31 out of 150) compared to 69.5% nationally in 2008/09 (Tell Us Survey)

Raising attainment and aspirations of children and their families

- The percentage of children in Newcastle achieving 5 A*-C at GCSE including English and Maths (NI 75) has increased from 33% in 2005 to 39% in 2008 and has narrowed the gap between Newcastle and England from 11% to 8%.
- At GCSE pupils from BME communities out-perform white British pupils. BME girls are the highest performing group
- Pupils from 10% deprived areas are making better than expected progress between 11 and 16 as measured by key Stage 2 – 4 CVA (Contextual Value Added)
- At Moorside primary school 650 parents (over a period of 3 years) have obtained accreditation at different levels for different qualifications in mathematics, English, ICT, Basic Skills, Healthy Cooking and others.
- Newcastle is one of only 10 areas in the Country approved to deliver all of the first five new National Diplomas and 282 learners started in September 2008 on the first diplomas
- NI 106 Young people from low income backgrounds progressing to higher education in Newcastle is 20.3% (2008/09) and is broadly in line with the national figure of 20% (2006/07)
- More and more of our young people are gaining qualifications (Level 2 and 3) with 79% of 17 year olds in Education or Training (NI 91) compared to 77% nationally (2006)
- 2948 young people progressed to higher Education in 2008 up from 1702 in 2000

Addressing health inequalities

- Obesity among primary school age children in Year 6 (NI 56) has decreased from 21.3% in 2007/08 to 20.8% in 2008/09 and although it remains above the national figure of 18.9% (2007/08)
- % of children and young people participating in at least 2 hours of PE and

sport each week (NI57) has increased from 79% in 2007/08 to 92% in 2008/09 compared to 78% nationally (2007/8).

- There is a statistically significant association between participation in Lean East Programme and behaviours associated with a reduction in obesity:
 1. increased fruit and vegetables consumption,
 2. a reduction in sweet and savoury snack consumption at home and school,
 3. Increased walking running cycling and swimming.
- 24,000 children and young people have accessed free sports and leisure activities through FUSION Programme
- 97% of Newcastle schools are implementing the National Healthy Schools Programme
- The ‘Teenage Kicks’ Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) Outreach Team worked with 1,243 young people most at risk of becoming teenage parents and those living in ‘hotspot’ areas of the city in 2008/9.

Section 6: Our objectives to reducing child poverty further in Newcastle

1. Employment and Adult Skills

The Partnership’s work in this area is spearheaded by Newcastle Futures and other members of the Economy Delivery Partnership, building on the provision of Jobcentre Plus and education providers.

To help reduce child poverty, our main objectives for building on the available mainstream activity are to:

- i. Offer support to all workless families in Newcastle, beyond that available from Jobcentre Plus, helping them into employment. In addition, referring on those who secure employment to the benefits advice service, to improve take-up of in-work benefits.
- ii. Offer additional support to those made redundant, beyond that provided by Jobcentre Plus, reducing the chances of parents moving into long term unemployment.
- iii. Ensure that all lone parents are able to access quality and affordable childcare.
- iv. Encourage, and in some cases deliver, training and skills development for parents.

- v. Improve access to employment opportunities within Newcastle City Council, and to encourage the adoption of best practice by other partners.
- vi. Encourage skills development post employment via LSC Train to Gain offer.

Until the economic downturn, the focus of Newcastle Futures has been to provide support for clients in 'priority groups', which are groups who are relatively far from the labour market. This include families with neither parent working, lone parents and young people not engaged in employment, education or training.¹⁰ Our experience (and Government guidance) is that these groups often face multiple barriers to getting a job, and are the most likely to benefit from help, beyond that which is provided by Jobcentre Plus. The Newcastle Futures Partnership provides support for these groups from pre-engagement and job readiness, right through to post-employment support.

The economic downturn is posing additional problems for residents who are being made redundant. The Council is working with Jobcentre Plus, Newcastle Futures and other partners to set up three 'Resource Centers', which will increase capacity and help agencies channel services more effectively. Activities will include:

- Job search and job hunting techniques (including access to the internet for job searching)
- Skills assessment via the LSC Next Steps, with increased access to higher skills partners such as Northumbria and Newcastle Universities and Newcastle College
- Mental health advice and well being
- Debt advice
- Access to other services (e.g. benefits maximisation)

The Council has formed a Local Employment Partnership (LEP) with Jobcentre Plus, improving access to jobs within the Council. For appropriate jobs, clients identified by Newcastle Futures (including Jobcentre Plus referrals) will receive pre-interview to establish job readiness work; a guaranteed interview, with feedback if unsuccessful; and post-joining training and support. The Council is also increasing the number of new apprentices starting this year from 34 to 115. As one of the major employers in the city, these changes will have a direct impact on the labour market, while the Council's will subsequently look to spread areas of best practice to other institutions.

The Children's Trust also has a number of initiatives to improve access to childcare, including increasing the take up of support for childcare costs through

¹⁰ Other priority groups for NewcastleFutures include members of the BME community and those receiving incapacity benefits.

working tax credit and initiatives to provide information and reassurance to parents. It also undertakes a number of skills initiatives, which include activities aimed at enhancing the employability skills of young people, and encouraging their progression in learning and employment. These include:

- Young Apprenticeship programmes in Engineering and Health
- Enterprise Activities
- ESF Youth Participation Project
- Key Stage 4 Engagement Programme
- Development of Foundation Learning Tier provision

Case Study: Newcastle Futures

Newcastle Futures Case Managers work across the city, based in partner premises, in order to build relationships with unemployed parents. As part of this service the Case Managers (brand name Customer Coordinators) deliver Steps to Excellence Courses in Sure Start Children's Centre. These are personal development courses that help customers raise their self esteem and identify future goals. On completion of the course parents continue their action plan towards their goal with the various partners included in the Newcastle Futures Partnership.

2. Financial wellbeing of families

There are a number of well established activities in Newcastle which provide financial guidance and help to residents and families. This includes the Council's Welfare Rights Service, which had over 8800 clients in 2008/9 Citizens Advice Bureau, Moneywise Credit Union, YHN, Trading Standards, Supporting People, and National Energy Association.

The Financial Inclusion priorities are linked to the Government's priority areas for tackling financial exclusion:¹¹

- Access to free face-to-face money advice,
- Access to banking;
- Access to affordable credit

In terms of combating child poverty, the priorities are to:

- i. Ensure that all children eligible to receive free school meals take up this entitlement
- ii. Ensure that all families are able to access debt and financial advice
- iii. Increase entitlement of benefits and tax credits among families

¹¹ Promoting Financial Inclusion, HM Treasury 2004

- iv. Promote financial literacy work in schools and through Family Learning with parents
- v. Encourage employers (and the Council) to promote financial literacy, as part of their workforce strategies.

At present, a quarter of children in local authority schools are registered for free school meals. But the Newcastle Partnership believes that there are many other children who are not registered [awaiting data]. In addition to undertaking a campaign through schools to raise awareness, the Council's welfare rights service is working with the Revenue Collection and Children's Services to actively identify children missing out on their entitlement.

The debt, financial and benefits advice services reach all parts of the community e.g. "Quids for Kids" – which improves the take up of benefits and tax credits – focuses on families with disabled children, low income, from black and minority ethnic groups, lone parents and vulnerable young adults such as care leavers.

We are also looking at how the curriculum in our local schools helps our children and young people learn about money, budgeting, debt etc.

The CAB has a project to help single parents learn more about financial literacy called Horizons which is being delivered in the city. They are also delivering a Money Made Clear project which gives guidance on budgeting, saving, borrowing, mortgages, insurance etc. Both projects are free to clients, independent, impartial and completely confidential.

We are also looking at promoting more affordable types of credit for people who do not have easy access to mainstream finance and who may take out an illegal or doorstep loans. Linked to this, we are training front-line staff on the consequences of illegal loans and making them aware of the alternatives available in Newcastle.

Case Study: Welfare Rights Black and Minority Ethnic Team aims to increase awareness and benefit take up among the BME communities in Newcastle, including the Chinese community. 2.6 Welfare Rights Officers, fluent in all the South East Asian languages spoken in Newcastle offer assistance with claims and three open door advice sessions including a women only advice session which saw 343 women in 2007-2008. The BME team focus on the Bangladeshi and Pakistani communities, where poverty levels in the UK are highest, and to BME women in particular, who face more barriers into employment A new focus is the emerging communities linked to asylum policies and accession arrangements across Europe. The Chinese community is a long-established but "hidden" part of the community, are also supported with a specialist advice session.

3. Improving services to families

Newcastle has a well established network of services for families, which are increasingly integrated and provided by a range public and voluntary sector agencies in localities e.g. Sure Start Children's Centres provide early learning and childcare, health and employment services as well as information and guidance for parents. There are currently 16 Sure Start Children's Centres and two more will be designated by March 2010 providing city wide coverage. Extended Services through Schools are making a significant contribution to preventing child poverty by providing childcare, parenting support including family learning, a wide range of activities for children including study support, access to specialist support services and community access to adult learning. 71% of primary schools and 64% of secondary schools are providing breakfast activities for children compared to 40% and 61% nationally. Targeted Youth Support (TYS) is provided as part of the Integrated Youth Strategy (IYS) alongside Volunteering, Things to Do and Places to Go and Transforming the Youth Service and targets those young people at risk of not being in employment, education or training using persistent absence data to identify young people.

The use of the Common Assessment Framework and 'Team Around the Family' ensure services have a whole-family focus. The Children's Trust is implementing parenting programmes that both engage and challenge parents to develop their skills and confidence. We are helping all partners to "think family" and the City Council is using Area Based Grant alongside the Think Family grant to provide intensive support through Family Intervention Projects (FIP) for families who are experiencing multiple problems. Achieving stability can be the first step on a pathway to employment or training for families with complex needs.

Putting families at the centre of services is key to our approach e.g. Centre West *Support for Families Project* was developed after talking with parents in the school playground about what they would find helpful. We also recognise that families in vulnerable circumstances need targeted support to enable them to help their children to achieve e.g. using the STEPS to Personal Excellence to work with local people to raise their self esteem and to create a positive attitude towards new opportunities.

The Children's Trust is continually building on its provision for families, with the following objectives related to reducing child poverty:

- i. Ensure that all parents who require support in their parenting are able to attend parenting programmes

- ii. To deliver a first class network of services for families, which are integrated and promote early intervention and prevention
- iii. To implement a whole-family approach across the Newcastle Partnership

Case Study: Changing Trax provides 24/7 day week support to families where parental substance misuse is placing the children at risk. The aim is to work in partnership with parents to change their behaviour and prevent the children becoming looked after. The Strengthening Families Programme provides training for parents and children to improve relationships and in doing so improve school attendance, reduce anti-social behaviour and the use of alcohol or drugs. Many of the families are dependent on benefits and have significant debts. As the work progresses the emphasis of the intervention changes from parenting and substance misuse issues to working with parents on their aspirations for themselves and their children. The support provided by Changing Trax is part of the pathway to employment and training for a very vulnerable group of families.

4. Regenerating our local communities

The regeneration programme is designed to improve the circumstances of residents living in the most deprived areas within the City. To successfully regenerate these communities, there needs to be a holistic approach which encompasses social, economic and physical well-being. Central to this regeneration activity is the creation of sustainable communities, with a strong emphasis upon the quality of life and access to quality services for families and children.

The focus of regeneration in the city is concentrated within five areas

- Byker / Ouseburn,
- Elswick,
- North Central,
- Scotswood / Benwell
- Walker Riverside.

The regeneration priorities vary between the areas, but the focus is always to create a better place for existing and future generations to grow, promoting pride in local neighbourhoods. Key areas of work include:

- Improvements to the location, accessibility and quality of services, such as, public transport, parks and green space, housing and employment;
- Improvements to the existing housing stock and developing new housing with high design quality and eco-standards, which enables families and children to live in better homes with reduced emissions and bills;

- Engagement with the community to promote “neighbourliness”, raise aspirations and increase community engagement and ability to influence the physical development of their area,;
- Tenure diversification which will enable affordable access to the housing market and the creation of mixed income areas;
- Introducing economically active households and families into new homes in these areas to improve the local economy, improve owner occupation and promote ownership of the community and neighbourhood;
- Facilitate the co-location of service provision to offer higher quality, complimentary services to all;
- Working with local employment, skills and training providers to promote local access to jobs.

Case Study: Newcastle Warm Zone (NWZ) aims to significantly reduce fuel poverty and improve energy efficiency across all of the city’s 120,000 households by offering an integrated package of free or discounted insulation and heating measures together with benefits and energy efficiency advice. Insulation is free to those in fuel poverty, YHN tenants, over 60s and households with children aged 5 and under. The earlier years of the project were focused on wards with the highest levels of deprivation.). Delivery has also led to estimated reductions in carbon dioxide emissions in the region of 25,000 tonnes each year.

5. Raising the attainment and aspirations of young people

The goal in Newcastle is to provide excellent education provision and % of schools is judged by Ofsted to be good or outstanding. Attainment using the key measure of 5 GCSE’s A* - C including English and Maths (39.2% 2008) is below the national average (47.6% 2008). There is a gap in attainment at all key stages between those children living in deprived areas and for Newcastle as a whole and between children entitled to free school meals and non FSM pupils is significant and only 19.4% of FSM pupils achieved 5 GCSE’s A* - C in 2008. To break the link between disadvantage and attainment is a key objective of the child poverty strategy. Aspiration is a key issue and it is positive that 54% of young people in Newcastle reported that they wanted to continue to Higher Education when they leave school (Tell Us 2008) which is the same as the national average.

The key priorities are

- i. Improve attainment overall at all key stages
- ii. Close the gap in attainment between those living in deprived areas and the city as a whole

- iii. Increase the number of young people progressing to higher Education and
- iv. Increase the proportion of young people in employment, education or training

There are a range of initiatives to raise attainment and to break the link with disadvantage is led by schools and the Newcastle College but includes a large number of partners in the statutory and voluntary sector. The initiatives are helping to provide

- Support for the development of communication, language and literacy skills in early childhood
- Challenge to primary schools and early years settings and targeting and support for vulnerable and under-performing pupil groups
- Targeted funding and interventions are raising awareness of HE
- Adoption of the Aim Higher Curriculum by all Secondary Schools
- Tailored NEET Preventative and Remedial Strategies to potential NEET young people and vulnerable groups
- Out of hours learning is offered by all schools
- Parent Support Advisors linking schools and parents across the city
- A Family Learning Service that is nationally recognised for its innovation, quality and responsiveness to needs of parents
- The Science City's programme is undertaking a 3-year, £1.77million, to give both adults and youngsters opportunities to be involved in science activities and turn their ideas into projects that can improve their neighbourhoods and encourage them to study science, train in scientific skills and find jobs.
- Enterprise champions have been recruited, who will work with young people from disadvantaged communities in secondary and special schools, helping in the development of social enterprises in schools and integration of enterprise into the curriculum

6. Work with partners to address health inequalities

There is a strong link between social and economic deprivation and poor health and this is reflected in the lower life expectancy in the city compared to the national average. The gap between life expectancy in the area of the city with the highest life expectancy and the area with the lowest life expectancy at birth is 12.6 years. This reflects the high level of health inequality and the economic and social disadvantage experienced by some families.

The Health Profile for the city (2009) suggests that the health of children in Newcastle is significantly worse than the national and regional average with regard to the rate of teenage conceptions and tooth decay. It is significantly worse than the national but better than the regional average with regard to smoking and breastfeeding and worse than national but similar to the regional

average with regard to obesity. However children are significantly more physically active in Newcastle than in the region or nationally.

Our goals are to:

- i. Improve the general health of children in Newcastle e.g. through the “Get Active” strategy or the campaigns to increase take-up of immunisations and to reduce smoking
- ii. Reduce the level of health inequality between different parts of the city through actions on specific LAA target such as obesity, breastfeeding and teenage conceptions

The priorities for action include

1. Learning from the Lean East campaign and delivering the most effective elements in the west end of the city
2. Piloting a targeted task force in areas with the highest teenage conception rates, involving school heads, PHSE leads, school health advisers, youth services, contraception and sexual health (CASH) services, GPs and others

Case Study: Lean East is a partnership of health, local authority and community organisations delivering a programme addressing the issue of overweight and obesity. It targets ten schools and their surrounding communities in the East End of Newcastle. The aim is to provide opportunities for children and families to eat healthily have fun and take part in more exercise together. This is achieved by developing a portfolio of activities: On The Go, Free fruit and milk to schools, Smoothie Bar Project, Cooking Skills in the Community, Family Cooking, Bicycle Maintenance and Trips, Hoops for Health (Newcastle Eagles), Breastfeeding Resources and Training, Weight Management and Nutrition Skills Training, Putting the Fun into Exercise (Newcastle Gymnastics Association), Health Trainers and Social Marketing Campaigns. One of the strengths of the Lean East partnership is that there is a wide range of services and organisations working together and so signposting and providing support is inbuilt into the programme so that diverse needs can be met.

Section 7: Working in Partnership and governance

Eradicating child poverty requires action at national, regional and local level in a range of policy areas. A key part of this strategy is to ensure ownership across agencies and policy areas at every level.

We are working closely with other Local Authorities in the region, while One North East has commissioned further research to understand the pattern and severity of child poverty in the North East. The Executive Director of Children’s

Services is leading the Child Poverty subgroup of Centre for Excellence and Outcomes and is contributing to the Association of North East Councils (ANEC) task group on child poverty on behalf of children's services in the region.

Within Newcastle Partnership has established a Child Poverty Steering Group has been established to address the challenge of child poverty highlighted in the SCS/LAA. It has responsibility for agreeing this strategy, overseeing delivery and monitoring outcomes. It is led by the Executive Director of Children's Services and the Assistant Chief Executive. The steering group includes the Director of the LSP and has membership from the key Directorates of the City Council: (Children's Services, Chief Executives, Housing, Regeneration, and Welfare Rights) Newcastle Futures, Health, Jobcentre Plus and the voluntary sector.

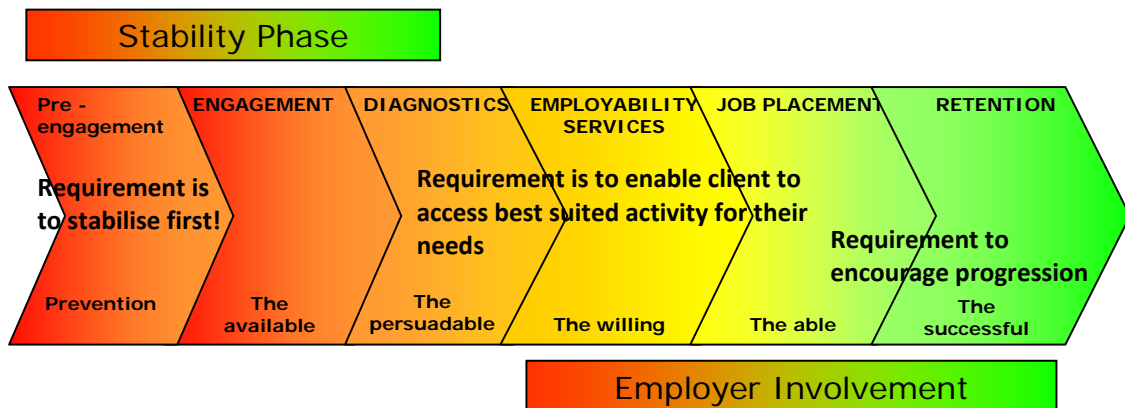
The three prongs to reducing child poverty – employment, income maximisation and breaking the cycle – operate at different time horizons and will have different impacts on the LAA targets related to child poverty. Because of this, the Council monitors a basket of indicators in each area (see appendix 2), to ensure that activity is on-track.

A key outcome from the Council's Child Poverty strategy development has been to identify opportunities for services to contribute to objectives outside their core areas of responsibility. There are also linkages with Newcastle's Social Inclusion Strategy which has nine priority groups, including households on a low income and national cross-cutting priorities, of which child poverty is one.

The diagram illustrates the phases in which individuals go through on their route into employment. The journey is not generally linear, as clients often move back and forth depending on life changes and readiness to move on to the next phase. The pre-engagement phase is very important and necessary within the diagram as many of the unemployed parents in (especially in deprived areas) can lack aspiration to move into employment. Work within Children's Services with parents offer support to stabilise individual's basic needs for childcare while building confidence and aspiration through a varied offer of initiatives such as volunteering. Newcastle Futures Case Managers support individuals from the Engagement phase and ensures that parents make the progress towards employment, working at the pace agreed with the individual.

An example of the pre-engagement phase is services such as the FIP are able to support families to achieve the stability as a first step towards the job market. Another example is the cross-team work between the benefits maximisation team and our employability work. When achieving employment, Newcastle Futures staff refer clients on to ensure that in-work benefits are maximised. Whilst those receiving out-of-work benefits advice can be referred onto Newcastle Futures, for advice on employment.

The Client Journey



Case Study: Emma's Story

Emma is a lone parent with 2 preschool children. She left school at 16 with some low grade GCSEs in several subjects then had a number of temporary jobs and a period of unemployment before becoming pregnant at 18 years old. She has recently started working again and is delighted that her family income has increased and her children are settled with a local registered Child minder. Her mental well being has improved in recent months and her confidence and personal skills have developed enormously.

Emma approached the Information and Resource Service (IRS) at the Sure Start Children's Centre for support in claiming benefits after having her first child. Over a period of time she was encouraged and supported to attend a baby group, training courses, exercise sessions and engage with family support services. Via the service she received support on budgeting and debt advice from A4e. Emma more recently sought information about getting English and Maths qualifications and the IRS worker accessed help from Newcastle Futures (including going with her to an initial appointment). IRS worked with Newcastle Futures, JCP lone parent advisors and Families Information Service, to enable Emma to engage in accredited training, secure funding for and find good quality local childcare. Emma continued to use IRS for job vacancies and help in completing application forms for jobs and benefits

"I found it great to be able to see someone close to home who I could ask about benefits. I didn't have a clue about who could look after my children or where to find out about childcare. It was so useful having someone introduce me to child minders." (Emma)

Appendix 1: Resources and performance management

The multifaceted nature of the Council's work to reduce child poverty is reflected in the number of different resources being aligned to achieve this priority.

Targeting resources at the communities experiencing highest level of deprivation is essential in the City, as the concentration of child poverty in particular neighbourhoods is particularly marked in the city. Funding for schools is weighted to reflect levels of deprivation and a funding formula also weighted for deprivation is being used within Children's Services to commission services.

Funds listed here are those that will have most direct impact:

- Working Neighbourhoods Fund supports Employability Action Plan
- Area Based Grant Flexible Fund will support activity in deprived areas
- Seeking European Regional Development Funding to match Working Neighbourhoods Funding to assist delivery of the EAP
- Funding for Children's Services particularly schools, Children's Centres, Extended Services and Parenting Support
- Choosing Health funding is aligned with WNF to address key health inequalities
- Funding for services providing intensive intervention to support families at risk who experience high levels of poverty such as Changing Tax, ASB and Child Poverty Family Intervention Projects, Youth Crime Action Plan
- Funding for parenting support including Parenting Early Intervention Projects and Parenting Experts

Appendix 2: Performance Management

All partners across the Newcastle Partnership have a role to play in reducing child poverty. Accountability for the LAA targets related to child poverty is with the Economy Works and Skills Delivery Partnership and the Children's Trust Board. The Children's Trust has an Outcome Lead for each ECM outcome and the Child Poverty Group will report through the Achieving Economic Wellbeing Theme to the Children's Trust Board and through Newcastle Futures to the Economy Work and Skills Board.

A Child Poverty Performance Management Framework is being established. This will include a number of national indicators as well as data from the Tell Us Survey and Place Survey. Projects will set milestones and goals for individuals, families and groups as well as measures of project throughput to fully capture their contribution to reducing child poverty.

The list of indicators currently being considered to measure progress in tackling child poverty includes

Theme	Child Poverty Basket of Indicators
Increasing Employment	NI 152 Working age people on out of work benefits. NI 153 Working age people claiming out of work benefits in the worst performing neighbourhoods*
Financial Wellbeing	NI 118 Take up of formal childcare by low income working families. NI 116 Proportion of children in poverty NI 181 Time taken to process housing benefit / council tax benefit new claims and change events
Regenerating communities	NI 187 % of people receiving income based benefits living in homes with low energy efficiency rating* NI 156 Number of households living in temporary accommodation NI 158 % decent homes council homes NI 178 Working age people with access to employment by public transport NI 48 Children Killed or seriously injured in Road Traffic Accidents*
Support for Families	NI 118 Take up of formal childcare by low income working families NI 45 young offenders engaged in suitable education training and employment * NI 115 substance misuse by young people
Health Inequalities	NI 53 Prevalence of breast feeding at 6 -8 weeks from birth* NI 112 Under 18 Conception Rate* NI 56 Obesity among primary school age children in year 6* NI 55 Obesity amongst children in reception class*
Raising Attainment and Aspirations.	NI 75 % of 5 or more A* - C grades at GCSE and equivalent including GCSE in English and Maths* NI 102 Achievement gap between pupils eligible for free school meals and their peers achieving the expected level at Key Stage 2 & 4 NI 92 Narrowing the gap between the lowest achieving 20% in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and the rest. NI 106 Young people from low income backgrounds progressing to higher education. NI 82 Inequality gap in the achievement of a Level 2 Qualification by the age of 19 NI 91 Participation of 17 years in education or training* NI 110 Participation in positive activities* NI 117 16 to 18 year olds who are not in education training or employment (NEET)*
<p>NB * indicates those measures where the national Indicator would be able to be analyzed locally by areas of deprivation to provide a more robust measure of child poverty</p> <p>Further work is required to develop appropriate measures regarding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Access to childcare at times to suit working families ➤ Take up of in work benefits ➤ Volunteering ➤ Training gaps ➤ Credit Union membership ➤ Family Learning ➤ Parenting Support ➤ Dental Caries 	