

# Sheffield's Tackling Poverty Strategy 2015-18

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# Introduction

It is with anger and sadness that we write this introduction to Sheffield's Tackling Poverty Strategy, which includes our Child Poverty Strategy. Anger and sadness that in our city today people are still struggling to feed themselves and their children and families, that people are working all the hours they can find for low pay and without certainty, and that despite such hard work, they are scraping by, or sometimes not even that.

We also write with admiration and determination. Admiration for the expert management of household budgets, care for families and contributions to communities that citizens make in spite of incredibly difficult and hugely stressful circumstances. We will do more to make it easier for Sheffield people to help themselves and each other and to continue to focus on helping people earlier and helping those in greatest need. And we are determined to keep working at this together with all our partners in the city.

We are not starting from scratch; we achieved some important progress against the targets in our last strategy and are continuing to work towards the recommendations of the Fairness Commission. For example, we have the third highest proportion of teenagers in apprenticeships of any local authority in the country and we are launching Sheffield Money, which will provide an affordable and ethical alternative to high-cost credit.

However, we know that we have much more to do and that we won't achieve everything we need to in the lifetime of this strategy, or probably even the next. We know it will take a long time to shift the poverty and inequalities in our city but we know that it is possible to use public policy to do this. Child poverty did fall in the decade to 2010 and pensioner poverty has fallen in more recent years, both at least in part driven by deliberate targeting. We do need to do things differently though because despite significant efforts, poverty still exists. The evidence about the most effective ways to tackle poverty has some gaps and is still emerging and we want to learn from and build on this.

We have a clear vision and shared strategic priorities. We have some firm commitments from partners to take action that will begin addressing each of these priorities. We know where some of the gaps are and where we need to do more. We also know that we don't have all of the resources and powers we need to achieve our vision, but we have already begun to demonstrate how devolving powers can allow us to do more and better locally. We will build on this approach and make the case for how and where more local control could be more effective.

We want to thank partners who have worked so constructively together in difficult times to come to this shared agreement of the vision and strategic programmes required. We want to thank also the officers from the Council who have provided support to this project.

When the period covered by this strategy ends, we want to be on our way to achieving our vision. Stay involved as we try to make Sheffield an even better place for everyone.

*Cllr Julie Dore, Leader of Sheffield City Council*

*Dean Peter Bradley, chair of Sheffield's Tackling Poverty partnership reference group*

## Summary

Poverty and inequality are scars on our city. Around 1 in 5 Sheffield people live in poverty at any one time and the latest data showed that there are around 25,705 children of all ages and almost a third of all children under ten in Sheffield currently living in poverty. Almost two-thirds of the financial impact of the government's welfare reforms will be felt by families with children. Poverty harms them - both now and for the future - and harms our whole community.

The Child Poverty Act (2010) places a statutory duty on local authorities and named partners to co-operate to assess need and formulate strategies in response to this need. Our work to tackle child poverty will be an important focus within this broader strategy to tackle poverty in Sheffield. We have long been committed to working to address poverty and inequality for all the people of Sheffield and we know that we cannot tackle poverty for children without supporting the households and communities within which they live. Therefore this is a strategy to tackle all-age poverty.

Our vision is for children and adults in Sheffield to be able to afford to meet their fundamental needs.

We know that we won't achieve everything we need to in the lifetime of this strategy, or probably even the next. We know it will take a long time to shift the poverty and inequalities in our city but we know that it is possible to use public policy to do this. Factors outside of local control mean that child and all-age poverty is set to rise over the next three to five years. This makes achieving our vision even more challenging.

This strategy's development has been overseen by the Tackling Poverty Partnership Reference Group, chaired by Dean Peter Bradley, with representatives from various organisations, including Sheffield Executive Board, SY Police, the Clinical Commissioning Group, Jobcentre Plus, South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Authority, and the Voluntary, Community & Faith sector. It sets out how we will work towards meeting this challenge over the next three years and the ambitious approaches that will be needed to make significant reductions in the longer-term. At the heart of the strategy is a commitment to those in Sheffield who are struggling to meet minimum needs – children, families, people and communities. We know no single organisation can do this alone, so we are committed to acting together as a partnership across the city to tackle poverty. We will ensure that the actions in our strategy are taken and every time we make a major decision, we will consider the impact of what we do on poverty and people in poverty.

As a partnership, we need a coherent and comprehensive approach covering the wide range of complex issues that mean poverty is still a reality in Sheffield. This is backed up by both the evidence and our consultation. We have developed a set of strategic programmes under the following three headings:

1. Change **the way we do things** so that tackling poverty is always a priority (including tackling the stigma often felt by people in poverty and by considering poverty when making major decisions)
2. Take action to **make things better for children and adults who are struggling and in poverty now** (including providing advice, reducing the cost of everyday essentials and reducing crime)
3. **Tackle some of the root causes of poverty and give our children the best chance of a poverty-free future** (including improving skills and employability, increasing the supply of good quality jobs, improving access to good quality, affordable childcare, giving children a great start in life and a good education, improving health and tackling health inequalities and providing more affordable, decent homes)

We know that we need to go further than the commitments that we have made so far as a partnership. So, as a partnership, we will use our vision and strategic framework to guide us and add, over the lifetime of the strategy, to the commitments that we have already made. The Action Plan, attached to the strategy is a 'living document'. It will be developed, added to and strengthened over the course of its lifetime. We will develop bolder and more ambitious actions, create opportunities and respond to changing needs and emerging evidence relating to adults and children in poverty.

Critically, if we are to have a chance of achieving our aim to reduce poverty in the future, this continued work must include exploring ways to tackle the issues that are currently outside of our control as well as those that we are more easily and directly able to influence. We must also evaluate how effectively each of our actions reduces poverty. We will maintain a focus on the specific impact on children as part of this.

We have started by identifying the critical issues outside of our control. We will develop robust, well-evidenced proposals for some of these issues and make the case to Government about how and where devolving powers and funds at the local level could reduce poverty. For other issues, it will be more effective to raise awareness and, in some cases, influence national decision-makers, or to seek sources of funding and resources by working in a partnership to do things differently.

We have focused on the needs and priorities of children and adults in Sheffield and considered the best available evidence about what works in tackling poverty. We are building on the important work that already has been done and continues to be done by partners across the city. This strategy cannot include every action that will help to reduce poverty and its negative effects, but we will continue to prioritise tackling poverty and increase our impact through 'poverty proofing' our decisions.

The combined impact of the specific actions within this strategy is hard to quantify and poverty in Sheffield is also influenced by national and international circumstances. We will review our progress regularly as a partnership to ensure we are on-track and manage any risks as early as possible in order that we maintain our position as the core city outside of London with the second lowest rate of relative child poverty.

In order to assure themselves that delivery is on-track as well as maintaining a focus on the overall vision, the partners will review a set of key indicators and will receive an annual report on progress against the actions set out in the strategy. They will also receive exception reports to alert them to any risk of under-performance against the targets. We recognise that things might change over the life of the strategy and that actions may need to be altered to address those changes, but we will maintain our focus on achieving progress towards our vision using our strategic framework as a guide.

## What did we achieve with our last strategy?

We published a self-assessment of our previous Strategy as part of the consultation documentation.

This section summarises our achievements as well as the areas in which we did not meet our targets.

### A reminder of our goals

Sheffield's Child & Household Poverty Strategy 2012-14 set the following overarching goals:

- Increase understanding of the impact of poverty and what can be done to tackle it
- Raise aspiration, engagement and attainment in learning for children and young people in poverty
- Raise the skills and aspirations of parents and carers for themselves and their families
- Build resilient communities
- Increase access to employment for disadvantaged groups
- Reduce health inequalities

Underneath each of these headings, we agreed a set of actions and indicators. We also said that:

*Throughout all of our interventions, we must maintain a watchful eye on how those groups we have identified as being particularly at risk of poverty are being supported and assess whether interventions designed to meet the specific needs of the 'at risk' groups are required.*

Overall, 71% of all targets were on-track or achieved. There were two targets for which we could not provide an exact progress measure due to the fact that the metrics for Early Years changed and we could not compare our progress against the original targets. We achieved most progress in the following areas:

- Increased understanding of the impact of poverty and what can be done to tackle it
- Increased access to employment for disadvantaged groups.

The areas in which we were off-track or missed targets are shown in more detail in the full document, along with explanatory information and any action being taken to address under-performance. The following areas were identified as the ones where we did not achieve as much progress as we had wanted to (although in many cases significant progress was achieved, but the targets set were stretching and ambitious):

- Provision of advice
- Parental engagement and parenting programmes
- Narrowing the gap in educational attainment
- Prevention of homelessness
- Insulation and affordable warmth schemes
- Reducing health inequalities

We have considered these areas, along with new and emerging needs and evidence, in determining our goals and strategic approach.

# Poverty in Sheffield – a summary of our needs assessment

## What do we mean by poverty?

*‘When a person’s resources (mainly their material resources) are not sufficient to meet their minimum needs (including social participation)<sup>1</sup>.’*

(JRF, 2012; 2014)

Poverty is experienced differently by different people. It can mean many or all of the below:

- not having enough to eat and not being able to eat well
- living in cold, poor quality accommodation
- not being able to afford childcare or transport to go to college or work
- having to pay more for things than people who have more money
- growing up without access to the experiences and opportunities that enable you to succeed in life
- having family relationships damaged by stress and desperation
- becoming isolated
- not being able to afford a basic holiday
- not having clothes that keep you warm and dry
- not being able to buy your partner or child a birthday present
- not being able to pay for your loved one’s funeral
- skipping meals so your children can eat
- feeling stressed and in despair
- feeling powerless and unheard
- being made to feel ashamed and having low self-esteem
- being placed in a criminalised environment
- being at increased risk of mental and physical ill health
- dying at a younger age.

As part of our joint working as a partnership, there was common agreement that poverty is all around us, it is expensive for the whole of society and it is a problem for all of us.

## Around one in every five people in Sheffield live in poverty and almost a third of children under 10

- Around 20% of people in Sheffield live in relative poverty (below 60% of median income) at any one time. In 2012 this included 23% of all Sheffield children and almost a third of all Sheffield children under 10.
- A far greater number of people will experience poverty over the course of ten years – potentially 40%.
- Despite efforts to reduce poverty, the proportion of people living in relative poverty is stable and reducing slightly but at the same time the poor are getting poorer: nationally, income for the bottom fifth of people in 2011/12 was 5% lower in real terms than it was ten years before.
- There are geographic variations in poverty in Sheffield. 125,000 [22%] Sheffield people live within areas ranked as the most deprived tenth nationally, and 47,000 [8%] live within the least deprived tenth nationally.
- The face of poverty has changed:
  - Pensioners are now less likely to be in poverty than previously, but other groups are more likely to be in poverty. Poverty amongst pensioners is directly linked to their experience in earlier life.
  - Nationally, falling poverty rates for disabled people have reversed, with poverty starting to increase.

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<sup>1</sup> A number of proxy measures are used by government and others to seek to quantify poverty, but the JRF definition is the expression of what poverty means to an individual.

- People from minority ethnic backgrounds are more likely to be poor than white British people.
- Care leavers, and carers (both young carers and adult carers) are at increased risk of poverty.
- Children in large or single parent families are at greater risk of poverty. Almost two thirds of children living in single parent families live in poverty.
- Asylum seekers and refused asylum seekers experience destitution and benefits levels are insufficient to meet all but the most basic of needs.
- Compared to all other local authorities in England, Sheffield has relatively more deprivation, although it is not amongst the most deprived local authorities in the country. Sheffield is the 6th most deprived of the eight English Core Cities.

### **There are a number of key drivers of poverty**

- Key factors keeping people in poverty now are: long term unemployment or poor pay and instability (short term, part time and zero hours contracts); lack of qualifications; family instability; family size; ill health and disability and (for the relatively few families affected by it) drug and alcohol abuse.
- Key factors increasing the likelihood of poor children growing up poor are: poor brain development influenced by poverty in early years; low levels of educational attainment; low parental qualification levels; childhood poverty; poor quality home learning environment; non-cognitive development (such as motivation, perseverance and self-control); child, or parental ill-health; long term parental worklessness and low earnings; and lack of guidance to help children to realise their aspirations.
- The length of time spent in poverty increases the risk of poor outcomes for children in their adult life.
- Consultation indicates to us that lack of affordable local childcare is preventing mothers from accessing work or training.
- The changing shape of the labour market means that there are more low skilled and low-paid jobs and fewer semi-skilled jobs which can attract higher wages.
- Our consultation tells us that for new arrivals, lack of English language and lack of access to high quality English classes limits opportunities to find work.
- Welfare reforms are having a significant impact on the income levels of those affected. Benefit levels have been frozen, meaning real terms cuts whilst the bedroom tax affects over 4000 families in Sheffield. Delays in the system are creating acute hardship for many and over 7% of claimants are sanctioned each month.

### **Poverty has short term and long term effects on well-being**

- More people in Sheffield are turning to food banks for help: there are now at least 16 food banks operating in Sheffield. People using food banks have experienced low wages, unemployment, changes to benefits, benefit delays and sanctions. Schools are reporting having to feed children when they arrive having not had breakfast.
- The cost of a minimum food shopping basket has increased faster than general food inflation. This appears to be associated with prices of lower cost food rising more than average.
- 7% of people do not have access to a current account, and around 12% of people in Sheffield rely on high cost credit options such as payday loans and doorstep lenders.
- 11% of people live in fuel poverty.
- Poverty is strongly correlated with loneliness and social isolation, especially amongst older people.
- Poverty is closely correlated with poor health outcomes throughout life. As an example, infant mortality is more than a third greater in the most deprived areas of Sheffield compared with the least deprived. The rate of premature mortality from all causes of death is almost three times greater in the most deprived wards than it is in the least deprived.
- Mental health problems are more prevalent in areas with high deprivation, and health trainers are reporting seeing increased mental health problems related to financial worries.

- Living in a deprived area increases the risk of being a victim of crime. People living in poverty are at greater risk of domestic violence and sexual exploitation.

## Poverty is expensive

- The poverty premium means that many goods and services are more expensive for people who are unable to access services online, to buy without credit, or to access affordable credit.
- Research commissioned by the Child Poverty Action Group has estimated that each child living below the poverty line is estimated to cost around £10,800 annually. The costs are made up of services needed to deal with the consequences of child poverty, lost tax receipts from people earning less as a result of having grown up in poverty, benefits for people spending more time out of work as a result of having grown up in poverty and lost earnings. The annual cost of child poverty in Sheffield has been calculated to be £265m and this likely to be a conservative estimate.

## There is more to do to put the right conditions in place for people to escape poverty

- Well-paid employment helps people to escape poverty, but employment does not always prevent poverty. We know that across the nation in 2011-12 almost two-thirds of children in poverty were living in a household where someone worked at least some of the time.
- Sheffield has fewer jobs per resident than other Core Cities and the England average. However, unemployment/employment rates are improving: Jobseekers Allowance claims in August were at their lowest level since 2008, and Sheffield has the highest proportion of young people in work-based training of all the Core Cities.
- Poor health reduces people's opportunities to work. Disabled people and people with long term health conditions in particular are less likely to be employed than the general population, and so at greater risk of poverty. Sheffield ranks lowest of all Core Cities on the percentage of people with severe mental health illness who are employed.
- Childcare enables parents to work, and high quality childcare helps increase educational attainment. Children in the most deprived wards are less likely to make use of their entitlement to free early learning at three and four than those in the least deprived wards.
- The gap in attainment of five A\*-C grades at GCSE including English and maths between children eligible for free school meals and the city average was 26.8 percentage points in 2013. This was wider than in previous years. Our analysis suggests that children make reasonable progress whilst at school and that the gap is largely due to children starting from a low base, so investing in the early years is key.
- The proportion of people in Sheffield with no qualifications has dropped. The information from the Census indicates that the population in Sheffield aged 16-64 with no qualifications was 15.9% in 2011 compared to 33.8% in 2001 and our annual monitoring indicates that the downward trend continues. However, there is still a clear correlation between poverty and low skills levels.
- One of the most effective ways of increasing income in the short term is increasing benefit take-up. Almost a third of eligible people in the UK in 2009-10 were not claiming the full amount of the means-tested benefits to which they were entitled.
- Online access is increasingly important for people to stay connected, claim benefits and secure the services they need, but 11% of people in Sheffield have never used the internet and many more do not have ready access to it.
- The stigma associated with poverty, and the way in which people are treated by service providers is reported to make it more difficult to escape poverty.
- Public sector reductions have resulted in cuts those services designed to help people to escape poverty.

A detailed needs assessment is available here: [note that a link will be added once this is approved]

## The scale of the challenge

We must acknowledge the scale of the challenge we face. There have been significant budget cuts already for many public sector organisations and there are more to come. This has made it more difficult for those organisations (and organisations dependent on public sector funding, such as the voluntary and community sector) to provide support to the most vulnerable people in the city. There have also been significant cuts to benefits as part of the wider welfare reform agenda affecting around one in seven people in the city and, again, the full extent of these changes has not yet been felt. Both of these things, coupled with the impact of the recession, mean that even preventing things from worsening will require significant effort and commitment.

### Impact of welfare reform locally

Recent research carried out by Beatty and Fothergill at Sheffield Hallam University has evaluated the cumulative impact of the welfare reforms on Sheffield, both at ward level and by household type. When the reforms have come to full fruition, Sheffield can expect to lose some £169m a year in benefit income. Their findings provide a clear indication of the groups which will be most affected by the welfare reforms. Households with dependent children across the city will experience an average loss of £1,690 per year. This increases for lone parents to an average of just over £2,000 per year. As a rule of thumb, it would be reasonable to assume that in the hardest-hit wards at least a third of the overall financial loss arising from welfare reform has still to make itself felt. Of the total of £169m a year that Sheffield is expected to lose when the reforms have come to full fruition, some £108m – approaching two-thirds – is a financial loss faced by households with dependent children. The financial loss in Sheffield arising from DLA and incapacity benefit reform is estimated to be £56m a year – a third of the total financial loss arising from welfare reform. It is estimated that around £75m a year of the financial loss arising from welfare reform might be expected to fall on in-work households. The financial loss to in-work households would therefore account for around 45 per cent of the total financial loss to Sheffield arising from the reforms.

### What can be achieved at a local level

We need to acknowledge the limits of local action when considering the scale of the challenge facing us. Many critical drivers of poverty, such as the performance of the global economy and the impact of national policies, ranging from fiscal and benefit changes to education reform and the Work Programme, are outside of the control of the Council and its partners in the city. If we are to have a hope of reducing poverty in Sheffield, more of these things that are currently managed at a national level must be targeted at tackling poverty and we must be able to influence and control many more of them locally.

### National targets and progress

The Child Poverty Act (2010) and subsequent national child poverty strategies aspire to eradicate child poverty in the UK. The ambitious targets set by the government included reducing by 2020 the proportion of children:

- living in relative poverty to below 10% of the population
- experiencing material deprivation to below 5%
- living in absolute poverty to below 5% of the population
- living in persistent poverty (target being finalised).

The scale of the challenge involved in meeting these targets is such that many experts do not now believe it is possible to meet them within the agreed timescales. The more optimistic assumptions (Reed & Portes, June 2014) are based on 100% take-up of means-tested benefits and Universal Credit. Their projections suggest that by 2020:

- relative child poverty will be 21%

- absolute child poverty will be just over 24%

They go on to state that 'even heroic assumptions about parental employment rates and earnings would still leave over 3 million children - 21% - in absolute poverty by 2020.'

The latest national Child Poverty Strategy 2014-17 states that '*This Government remains firmly committed to the goal of ending child poverty in the UK by 2020*'. The evidence review published alongside it considers a wide range of actions which will have the best chance of success. There is a strong emphasis on the importance of work in the national strategy. Research on behalf of the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission (SMCPC) found that achieving the 2020 targets within the current tax and benefit system would require parental employment rates of close to 100% combined with big increases in the working hours of families in working poverty over and above the requirements of Universal Credit. The analysis concludes that these 'employment outcomes for parents are implausible - they are far more ambitious than have ever been achieved in the United Kingdom or anywhere else in the world.' However, they have not modelled what could happen if the savings in welfare spend and increased tax revenues from increased working were all to be targeted at poverty reduction.

# What works in tackling child and all-age poverty?

Broadly flat poverty rates over the last twenty years reflect the challenges in tackling poverty effectively. The evidence about what works that is available is largely focused on national government approaches rather than approaches that would result in a city-level shift.

The New Policy Institute's historical review of national anti-poverty strategies considered the success of anti-poverty strategies and found those key characteristics that correlated with success included:

- **Political commitment:** the most effective strategies all had commitment at a high level, from both politicians and civil servants. This gave impetus and leadership to the strategy.
- **Responsibility and accountability:** in some of the strategies reviewed, the lines of accountability for delivery were not clear. These were often the less successful strategies.
- **Links to economic policy:** if anti-poverty strategies are to have real purchase they must be developed alongside economic policy.
- **Institutional arrangements:** the creation of dedicated institutions or systems of governance helps the development process. They also offer some security against changes in political leadership.
- **Co-ordination** (the all-government approach): the multifaceted nature of poverty means that tackling it requires high levels of co-ordination across government.
- **Implementation:** the development of a strategy means very little if it is not put into practice. There remains a gap between what is often committed to in strategy documents and what is delivered. Often gaps emerged when moving from the national picture to local delivery.
- **The involvement of external stakeholders:** these are a vital source of information and should be involved in implementing the strategy.
- **An effective system of monitoring and review:** measuring results is crucial to maintaining momentum and ensuring various parts of government are meeting their objectives.

International evidence suggests that only with a multi-faceted approach can we hope to achieve significant impact. There are, broadly speaking, three main approaches to tackling poverty:

1. Increasing the income of people affected through increased earnings and/or progressive taxation policies
2. Reducing the levels of people's expenditure required to maintain a basic standard of living (for example through provision of low / no cost childcare, health services)
3. Intervention approaches (such as work in early years to improve children's life chances) to alleviate or remove the impact of poverty on outcomes and reduce the likelihood of intergenerational poverty.

These approaches are not mutually exclusive. In fact, evidence from countries which have reduced the link between children's backgrounds and their outcomes shows that they achieved this through a combined approach of fiscal transfers, active labour market strategies and investment in education. Obviously local government does not have the ability to bring into effect the same level of change that national government can, but it is likely that a similarly multifaceted approach will be most effective.

Based on a reading of the available evidence on what works in tackling poverty, we propose that work should be focused in the following areas.

## Making things better for people who are in poverty

- Reducing costs including: food, fuel/ energy, transport and credit (this may in some cases be via improved access to the internet)
- Increasing benefit take-up (particularly in the run up to the introduction of Universal Credit)

- Providing high quality advice /advocacy / access to service including debt-advice that is impartial and free
- Providing access to emergency support (often financial) including affordable small-sum loans that could help low-income households to cope with both peaks in expenditure and cover everyday expenses following an unexpected fall in income
- Reducing homelessness
- Providing spaces where children and adults feel safe to play and exercise
- Creating neighbourhoods and environments that enable people to thrive.

## Tackling root causes and giving children the best chance of a poverty-free future

- Helping people access work, progress within work and improving work conditions (including pay)
- Creating an inclusive economic growth strategy that will deliver more and better paid jobs
- Improving adult skills and employer-sector led skills development
- High quality, accessible and affordable childcare and transport – as an enabler to work
- Developing opportunities and support for those who are not in work
- Increasing affordable housing supply
- Improving access to health, health outcomes including mental health and maternal health
- Creating a better home life (including the home learning environment, interactions with a primary care giver and emotional development)
- Establishing high quality early years provision (childcare to support child development , focusing on programmes which promote structure, attunement and regulation)
- Providing a good education (good schools and further and higher education and teaching, increasing attainment and closing attainment gaps, also softer skills)
- Cultivating lifelong and community learning and building resilience of individuals, families and communities
- Reducing barriers and supporting those with complex needs (e.g. youth offending, domestic violence, safeguarding).

## How we do things

This last section is about the way in which service providers, including those whose services are not directly aimed at tackling poverty, work. Evidence points to the below being useful:

- Targeting support at the people who need it – including focus on the groups most at risk of poverty
- Making it easier for people, including the whole household approach, and making every contact count
- Building on strengths and assets within communities and families, including resilience
- ‘Poverty proofing’ our decisions, making sure people, especially those making decisions about service delivery and policy changes, think about how their actions affect people struggling for money
- Changing perceptions and attitudes to poverty – reducing the stigma of poverty and the extent to which we value contributions that are not about paid employment
- Involving people experiencing poverty in solutions to tackle it
- Digital inclusion.

We know that intervening as early as possible and preventative approaches are more effective, particularly when collective responsibility is taken across a range of partners focused on reducing inequalities.

In August 2014, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation published a set of 33 research summaries [Reducing Poverty in the UK: a collection of evidence reviews](#) assessing the evidence base for solutions to poverty. It completes the first phase

of a programme to develop anti-poverty strategies for the UK and its devolved administrations. The next phase will see more detailed policy development and modelling work to test different approaches.

Sheffield is engaging with Joseph Rowntree Foundation and others to ensure we keep up to date with emerging research and contribute to it where appropriate.

# Sheffield's priorities and approach

Our aim is to work towards a Sheffield in which people have sufficient income and resources to meet their fundamental needs. Through consultation we have developed a shared understanding of our ultimate goals.

## **Making things better for children and adults who are struggling and in poverty**

In our ideal Sheffield, no-one would live in poverty, but we do not have control of the systems necessary to achieve this. However, we aim for a Sheffield where **the most damaging and degrading elements of poverty are eliminated**. This means that:

### *Poverty does not affect people's chances to be safe and healthy*

- No-one goes hungry or is malnourished because people can access and afford a healthy nutritious diet, and people have a healthier relationship with food, diet and exercise.
- Adults can afford to dress themselves and their children appropriately for the weather.
- People live in affordable, safe, warm, decent homes.
- There is less addiction, substance misuse and problem gambling, and more support for those who need it.
- People in poverty are no longer at greater risk of being victims of crime, particularly domestic violence, prostitution and sexual exploitation.
- Children and adults feel safer and live in neighbourhoods and environments that enable people to thrive.

### *Poverty does not prevent people from living a full life*

- Children and adults can enjoy safe places to play and exercise.
- Costs of food, fuel, energy, homes, transport do not rise more quickly than increases in income.
- People are less isolated and can socialise with friends.
- People can afford basic things to participate such as buying a birthday present or children having friends round for tea.
- People taking unpaid caring roles are supported properly and we reduce the number of unpaid carers.
- There is good access to affordable transport.
- People can access the internet.
- Children and adults can learn for the love of it.

### *The right systems are in place to help people to minimise their financial problems*

- The 'poverty premium' is reduced.
- People can access affordable, appropriate credit.
- People are able to save.
- Problem debt is reduced and people are able to access help to deal with it.
- People are confident and able to manage their budgets, navigate financial systems and get help where they need it.
- The benefits system is sufficient to meet need and is clear, understood and responsive. It is trusted and used by those who need it.
- Sanctions are not used excessively or unfairly.

Although we may not be able to eliminate poverty without broader systemic change, we want to see it drastically reduced, and we believe that the way to do this is by **tackling some of the root causes of poverty to give our children the best chance of a poverty-free future**. What does this look like?

*The right conditions are in place for people to escape poverty through employment*

- We have well-paid, flexible, stable, decent jobs with sufficient hours, good employment practices and promotion and progression opportunities.
- We reduce discrimination and have more equity of opportunity and access to different jobs.
- We have a more mixed-skill economy with a range of opportunities for different interests and skills levels.
- People can afford and access suitable childcare (in terms of hours and location and caring for specific needs).
- Jobs are safer.

*People are able to gain the skills that they need to access good jobs*

- Young people leave school with the right qualifications and skills they need for work and life, and adults can continue to improve their skills throughout life.
- Training is affordable, high quality and appropriate for the jobs market.
- There are traineeships and apprenticeships for all young people who need them.
- People can afford childcare to go to college and parents and carers are able to access education, training and employment.
- There are opportunities for people who are not in work, including well-supported and structured volunteering opportunities.

*Barriers are reduced for people who are at greatest risk of poverty*

- We have sufficient high quality affordable ESOL provision.
- There is appropriate support in place for disabled people and those with health conditions to find work if they are in a position to do so.

*The right conditions are in place for people to have good physical and mental health*

- Financial stress is reduced and people are better able to cope with the stresses of everyday life.
- There is appropriate support for mental ill-health.
- Children and adults have improved emotional stability and intelligence.
- People are able to have fulfilling relationships, improved communication and wellbeing.
- People with chronic conditions get the care and support they need to manage their condition(s) and thereby continue to lead fulfilling lives.
- Children with health issues get prompt and appropriate care to resolve the issue or, if on-going, to manage it as effectively as possible so as to have the least possible impact on their growth and development.
- Communities are strong and resilient.

*Families and schools are able to give children and young people the best start in life*

- Parents are supported and knowledgeable - their parenting capacity and styles support best outcomes.
- Children have improved cognitive functioning, self-regulation, empathy and physical health.
- Children grow up with access to the experiences and opportunities that enable them to succeed in life.
- Children start school ready to learn and for life.
- Every school is a good school.
- Children can and do access enrichment opportunities.
- There is access to excellent careers guidance, at the right times, and support to realise aspirations.

*Sheffield is a more equal city*

- Health inequalities are reduced
- We narrow the gap in outcomes of all kinds between groups.
- There is less financial inequality

We know we cannot achieve all these goals within the lifetime of this strategy, but these are the outcomes we are working towards. We have set realistic interim targets as part of this strategy.

## Guiding principles and scope

This strategy replaces the Child & Household Poverty Strategy that ran to the end of 2014. The Child Poverty Act (2010) places a statutory duty on local authorities and named partners to co-operate to assess need and formulate strategies in response to this need. Our work to tackle child poverty is an important focus within this broader strategy to tackle poverty in Sheffield. This means that we have prioritised action that will support families with children.

The Tackling Poverty Strategy Partnership, committed to be informed and influenced by the following when developing the contributions that partners in the city could make to the strategy:

- the needs of children and adults in poverty in Sheffield
- the evidence available about the most effective ways to meet these needs
- responses to its consultation.

Our analysis of these things suggests that we need to maintain a balance between making things better for people who are in poverty and tackling some of the root causes of poverty.

The responses to the consultation yielded a disparity of views and different priorities. There was a view expressed by some organisations that focusing on a small number of actions would be more effective. We know, though, that no single action will allow us to make a significant change to levels of poverty and hardship.

## Approach and strategic programmes

We think that it is sensible for individual organisations and services to focus on a few areas where they can make most difference, but that, as a partnership, we need a coherent and comprehensive approach covering the wide range of complex issues that cause poverty. Therefore, we have developed a shared agreement of the strategic programmes that are needed and sought individual contributions to each of these. We have organised these strategic programmes under the following three headings:

### 1. How we will do things

- Telling the story of poverty in Sheffield - tackling the stigma
- Poverty proofing – putting consideration of poverty at the heart of decision-making

### 2. What we will do to make things better for children and adults who are struggling and in poverty now

- Providing advice, advocacy and access to entitlements and direct financial support
- Reducing the costs of everyday essentials
- Supporting neighbourhoods and environments that enable people to thrive and reducing crime – including domestic abuse, sexual exploitation and substance misuse

### 3. What we will do now to tackle some of the root causes of poverty and give our children the best chance of a poverty-free future

- Providing skills and employability support
- Encouraging the creation of good quality jobs with fair terms and conditions
- Improving the affordability, availability and accessibility of flexible and good quality childcare – moving towards a point at which it is available where and when people need it
- Maximising entitlements for those who cannot work

- Giving children the education and enriching experiences and raising expectations to improve achievement and future life-chances
- Reducing health inequalities and improving health and access to health services
- Strengthening community resilience and tackling loneliness and isolation
- Reducing barriers for those with multiple and complex needs
- Increasing access to jobs, services and leisure activities
- Increasing the supply of affordable decent homes

Some of these strategic programmes also serve other purposes and, in some cases, the activities within them are well-developed, clearly defined and comprehensive. In these cases, we don't need to do much that is different, but if they were to stop or change significantly, we would struggle to meet our objectives. We have therefore differentiated between programmes and projects that:

- fall directly within the remit of the Tackling Poverty Strategy and where the partnership should be the main accountable body
- require an approach that meets the aims of both the Tackling Poverty Strategy and another agenda requiring a joint approach
- are led elsewhere but are critical to the success of the Tackling Poverty Strategy resulting in an interdependence.

### **Achieving greater impact**

Our long-term goal of reducing poverty in Sheffield must include exploring ways to tackle the issues that are currently outside of our direct control as well as those that we are able to influence more easily. We have started by identifying the critical issues within our strategic programmes, where, with greater influence, resources and powers, we could achieve a significant shift in poverty and we have prioritised action for households including children. The areas in which we believe a bolder and more ambitious approach is needed are set out under each of our proposed strategic programmes. These are areas in which we want to influence national decision-makers, look at alternative ways of doing things and secure new sources of funding.

We know that we need to go further than the commitments that we have made so far as a partnership and we want to be more ambitious and far-reaching. We will use our vision and strategic framework to guide us. Over the lifetime of the new strategy we will build on and add to the commitments that we have already made, create opportunities and respond to changing needs and emerging evidence relating to adults and children in poverty. The Action Plan, attached to the strategy, is a 'living document' that will also be added to and strengthened as the strategy and our ambitions develop. We must also evaluate how effectively each of our actions reduces poverty. We therefore want to work with a research partner to understand the impact of our actions on poverty in the city and on children and others living in poverty. We will use this to improve our understanding and make any necessary adjustments to our Action Plan.

### **Making things better for children and adults who are struggling and in poverty now**

- Maximising the income of struggling households, especially those with children, by providing the advice and support needed for them to access affordable credit, to claim the benefits to which they are entitled and to receive money advice.
- A welfare system that provides sufficient support for people when they need it – including reducing delays and sanctions.

### **Tackling some of the root causes of poverty and giving our children the best chance of a poverty-free future**

- An even sharper focus on the early years work to give our children a great start in life.

- Supporting struggling households with high quality, accessible and affordable childcare and transport.
- Cultivating 'Good growth' – developing an inclusive economic growth strategy that delivers more and better paid jobs with fair terms and conditions, including the commitment of businesses to the Living Wage.
- Working with teenagers and young adults to make sure that they remain engaged with education, employment and training.
- Helping teenagers and adults to improve their skills levels so that they can move on to better paid work and sustainable careers.
- Better connecting those facing the greatest barriers to work with job opportunities, including disabled jobseekers and those with health conditions.
- Tackling stigmatisation and putting consideration of poverty at the heart of decision making.

### **Making the case for devolution**

We will develop robust, well-evidenced proposals in relation to these objectives and make the case to Government about how and where devolving powers and spending to the local level could reduce child and all-age poverty. This is more than an aspiration. We know from experience that it can work. For example, we have already secured the right to direct the use of £27m of skills funding to create more and better apprenticeships and we have agreed with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to pilot a project to demonstrate better ways of helping people receiving Employment & Support Allowance (ESA) to prepare for, access, and progress within work.

### **Influencing national decision-makers**

We will capture and record evidence to build the case for change. We have experience of doing this within our partnership, as demonstrated recently by the investigation undertaken by Sheffield Citizens Advice into the impact of benefits sanctions, which is contributing to the national campaign for changes to the sanctions regime.

# Our strategic programmes

This section of our plan sets out what we will do, why we should do it and our commitments and aspirations. The full and rich picture of commitments from partners and detailed performance monitoring framework is included in our separate action plan which is still subject to development.

## 1. How we will do things

We have identified two programmes for this section. We must also recognise in this section that if we are to succeed, we must continue to build and improve our partnership working at strategic level, and inter-professional and interagency working at operational levels. Our continued work [to achieve greater impact](#) in which we will use research to understand our impact better will build on the partnerships we have developed to date.

### Telling the story of poverty in Sheffield - tackling the stigma

We know that the way in which we do things can either help or hinder us in our efforts to achieve better outcomes. For example, people have told us that even if a service can't help them, if they are treated with respect and empathy they are more likely to seek help elsewhere. Similarly, being given help but feeling judged can lead to people disengaging from support.

*"It's ten times worse if they've got a bad attitude. That's worse than anything, whether they give you any help or not. If you leave that building feeling like dirt, you won't want to go back and ask for help again."*

#### Key commitments include

- When we talk about poverty, we will include positive stories and recognise the different contributions people make. We will use the Fair City campaign to take opportunities to tackle stigma and bust myths.
- We will update and promote our training materials for staff and continue to focus on being helpful and respectful.

### Poverty proofing – putting consideration of poverty at the heart of decision-making

We know that at times some of our decisions can be made without fully considering the impact on people in poverty in the city, especially when the impact might be unclear or unintended. 'Poverty proofing' is about assessing policies and actions at the design or review stage to assess their impact. This must include consideration of how well we are meeting the needs of the people and communities who are most likely to experience poverty and whether people who have experienced poverty, including children, have been involved in designing solutions. By doing this we expect to be better able to assess what the poverty impact of any changes to services could be. This will help the partnership to make better decisions by taking account of the impacts on poverty.

#### Key commitments include

- The Council will include poverty as part of the Equality Impact Assessment and bring people with experience of poverty together with decision-makers in areas of critical importance.
- The Clinical Commissioning Group has made tackling poverty a priority and it will reflect this both in its 'Commissioning Intentions' and by including a mandatory paragraph about how inequalities will be addressed in the Mandates for Programme management process.
- The Voluntary, Community & Faith sector will continue to make a significant contribution to tackling poverty and supporting those who are struggling with it through its day-to-day work. It supports the principle of poverty-proofing and tackling poverty is often the main criterion against which many of the decisions made

by organisations in the sector evaluate their success. The sector will also continue to be involved in strategic development in this area.

- The Council and its partners will maintain a focus on children and the other groups most at risk of poverty and make sure the outcomes for these groups are improved through the actions we take.

#### *Our aspirations include*

- If we can work with more partner organisations in Sheffield to encourage them to take a more proactive approach to poverty proofing we think it would help to reduce poverty in Sheffield.

## **2. What we will do to make things better for children and adults who are struggling and in poverty now**

We have identified three programmes for this section.

### **Providing advice, advocacy and access to entitlements and direct financial support**

Our consultation bore witness to the fact that many people in Sheffield are living in extreme hardship. And this is supported by the evidence from our detailed Needs Assessment that showed that increasing numbers of people in Sheffield are hitting crisis point in terms of their financial situation. People in Sheffield are impressive in their resilience but we believe that part of this strategy has to be about making things easier for people who are in acute need.

#### *Key commitments include*

- We will protect and sustain access to high quality advice services including money advice targeted at life events and debt advice.
- We will continue to provide direct financial support for things like Council Tax and people in short-term acute need.
- We will inform people about and help them prepare for the impact of welfare reforms, including the introduction of Universal Credit.

#### *Our aspirations include*

- We would like to develop a Sheffield proposition for a more comprehensive safety-net and work towards its implementation.

### **Reducing the costs of everyday essentials**

There are people in Sheffield who cannot afford feed their families, heat their homes, pay their bills or replace basics such as cookers and washing machines.

We will help them to make their money go further (we know many people manage incredibly well within a tight budget) by working together to reduce the costs of basics.

#### *Key commitments include*

- We will increase access to affordable credit for Sheffield citizens through developing Sheffield Money as well as an expansion of Sheffield Credit Union. This will mean that families are able to use ethical, affordable loans, rather than having to rely on high-cost payday and doorstep providers.

#### *Our aspirations include*

- We would like to investigate funding opportunities to cover the costs for credit union accounts for a time-limited period to help people to budget for their bills.

## **Neighbourhoods and environments that enable people to thrive - reducing crime including domestic abuse, sexual exploitation and substance misuse**

We know that poverty has a scarring effect where the longer, or more frequently, people live in poverty, the deeper and longer the impact, including deteriorating health, the breakdown of relationships and reduced life chances.

There is a clear correlation between poverty and domestic abuse with research showing that children living in 'hard pressed' areas were over six times as likely to experience domestic violence as those in affluent areas. We also heard from people through our consultation that many parents did not feel safe in their communities and mentioned the state of local public spaces as a concern in terms of free places to play and for leisure activities.

### ***Key commitments include***

- We will 'poverty proof' our Domestic Abuse strategy and the commissioning and service delivery to reduce substance misuse.
- We will work to ensure that our standards of play and parks provision in disadvantaged areas are at least equal to the city average.

## **3. What we will do now to tackle some of the root causes of poverty and give our children the best chance of a poverty-free future**

We have identified ten programmes for this section, the majority of which are joint approaches or are interdependent with the Tackling Poverty Strategy.

Unemployment damages health and self-confidence. The longer it lasts, the less likely an individual is to find sustainable, well-paid work. At the same time, we know that more than half of people in poverty nationally are working. For work to end poverty, jobs must be sufficiently well-paid and sustainable with fair terms and conditions. The evidence suggests that a combination of the following things will give us the best chance of success:

- Creating an inclusive economic growth strategy that will deliver more and better paid jobs.
- Supporting those jobseekers facing barriers to work to prepare for access and sustain employment.
- Equipping adult and young people with the higher level skills needed to secure and retain better paid work and career progression.
- Commissioning high quality, accessible and affordable childcare and transport as enablers to work
- Improving access to health services, including mental health.
- Reducing barriers and supporting those with complex needs (e.g. vulnerable young people and adults, youth and adult offenders and victims of domestic violence).

For those people who cannot work, a combination of the following will be important:

- Benefit levels being sufficient to meet needs and people accessing the benefits to which they are entitled
- The affordability of housing, childcare (if needed), transport and health and support services.

## **Skills and employability support**

### ***Key commitments include***

- We will develop pathways to apprenticeships and work for those teenagers and young adult least likely to access these opportunities by conventional means.
- We will provide a specific employability support programme for young people and adults facing significant barriers to work, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities or health conditions.

### ***Our aspirations include***

- We will seek to negotiate with Government a devolved and integrated employment service for those furthest from the labour market and co-commissioning of a more responsive Work Programme from 2016.
- We will seek to use the city-region's new Skills Bank to create a 'skills escalator' that gives those in work access to better paid jobs and career progression.

### **Quality jobs with fair terms and conditions**

#### ***Key commitments include***

- The Council and the University of Sheffield will continue to pay directly employed staff a living wage.

#### ***Our aspirations include***

- We have an ambition to develop an inclusive economic growth strategy and we want to work with partners across Sheffield City Region to build a shared plan to achieve this.
- Ultimately we would like to work towards ensuring that all Council contractors pay a living wage and that every GP practice, each Foundation Trust and their suppliers are paying the living wage, recruiting locally (and training local people where necessary). We recognise that this may take some time.
- The Clinical Commissioning group would like to consider tackling poverty questions when procuring services to understand what providers can bring to the local economy and system as an employer. This could include, for example, consideration of local businesses ('Sheffield Pound'), employment and training of local people, wages and benefits and conditions of employment for employees and local procurement policies. We would also like to work with key partners in the business and public sector to showcase the positive benefits they have recognised from paying the living wage and broader commitments to fair employment practises. We would like to see an increased number of jobs with living wage and Fair Employer Code.

### **Improved childcare affordability, quality, availability, flexibility and access – where and when people need it**

#### ***Key commitments include***

- We will explore more innovative approaches including flexible childcare through the expansion of the 2 yr Free Entitlement to Learning (FEL).

#### ***Our aspirations include***

- We will explore options to reframe the financial subsidy for childcare so that more of the money is targeted at those on the lowest incomes.

### **Maximising entitlements for those who cannot work**

#### ***Key commitments include***

- We will protect and sustain access to high quality advice services, including money advice targeted at life events and debt advice.

#### ***Our aspirations include***

- We want to consider the options and funding for increasing take-up of benefits, starting with focus on the families of children most in need.

- We want to work with other Core Cities to negotiate with government for the devolution to cities of the management of benefits.

### **Giving children the education and enriching experiences and raising expectations to improve achievement and future life-chances**

The causes of poverty and therefore the means by which we tackle them are often interdependent. Educational attainment, for example, is the single biggest factor that can protect children from the perpetuation of inter-generational poverty. At the same time, analysis suggests that approximately half of the attainment gap between children eligible for free school meals and the rest could be eliminated by increasing to the national average incomes at the bottom end of the income distribution.

The following things have been identified as critical to children’s cognitive and social and emotional development, which in turn leads to improved educational and behavioural outcomes at school:

- sensitive and responsive interactions with the primary care giver
- high quality home learning environment
- high quality early years provision: staff qualifications have been shown to have the biggest impact on the quality of settings and therefore on children’s outcomes
- household income has a significant impact on children’s outcomes through reductions in parental stress and improvements in family resources
- parental qualification levels. This has a two-fold impact in terms of the ability to provide a high quality home learning environment and higher skill levels leading to progression in work and increased income.

#### ***Key commitments include:***

- We will incorporate the Best Start principles into the City’s A Great Start in Life Early Years Strategy which will be disseminated across the city.

#### ***Our aspirations include:***

- We will continue to seek funding to enable a great start in life for all children across Sheffield and to focus on soft skills in early years and schools.

### **Reduce health inequalities and improve health and access to health**

Relationships between health and poverty are complex, with health conditions frequently playing a part in reducing people’s income, but many conditions are also caused and worsened by poverty. We want our Health Services to be designed and delivered in ways that reduce health inequalities and improve access to care for those most in need

#### ***Key commitments include:***

- Delivering the Health & Wellbeing Strategy and the Health Inequalities Plan.
- Delivering the key work-streams led by the Children’s Health & Wellbeing Board.

#### ***Our aspirations include:***

- Exploring the provision of free meals for children in early years settings. We are not in a position to fund this, but would like to explore the possibility, to seek funding and to analyse the impacts of this intervention.
- We want to improve access to, and outcomes from, health care for those most in need.
- We want to improve support for emotional wellbeing for children and young people with appropriate access to specialist services for those with more severe problems.

## **Programmes to build resilience and community – tackling loneliness and isolation**

Access to support networks is a protective factor against many of the negative impacts of poverty. This was supported both by research and feedback as part of our consultation.

### ***Key commitments include:***

- Use of the £1m Transformation Challenge to expand the Community Support Worker programme in 2015/16.

### ***Our aspirations include:***

- We want to seek funding to continue and expand this programme in 2016/17 and beyond.

## **Reducing barriers for those with multiple and complex needs**

We will continue to use keyworkers to support families and individuals who are in need of extra help and support. We know that young people who are carers, or looked after are at greater risk of poverty and we want to change this. We know that teenagers and young adults who disengage from education, employment or training need a different and more appropriate offer of support.

### ***Key commitments include:***

- We will use our existing keyworker services, combined with appropriate packages of interventions to support those individuals and families most in need of extra help and support.
- We will build on our early intervention and prevention work.

### ***Our aspirations include:***

- We want to work with a research partner to evaluate the impact of these services on reducing poverty.

## **Increasing access to jobs, services, leisure and participation**

Free services can help to reduce material poverty by reducing the amount people have to spend to achieve a decent standard of living. The affordability of transport to get to work and to access services and leisure facilities is also important. Affordable safe access to the internet and the ability to use it can save people money and increase their ability to search for and apply for work, develop skills and access the services they need.

### ***Our aspirations include:***

- We want to develop a comprehensive approach to digital inclusion in Sheffield although, at present, we don't have the resources to do this. We want to work together as a partnership to see whether we can secure the resources to do this more systematically.

## **Increasing the supply of affordable decent homes**

Housing is often the biggest cost facing individuals and families. The lack of affordable decent housing has many negative consequences for people. Provision of more affordable, decent homes can reduce financial strain and the problems caused by homelessness or inadequate accommodation.

### ***Key commitments include***

- We will increase the supply of affordable housing by maximising use of HRA to increase housing stock levels in the city and deliver 1,000+ 'new' Council homes by 2020.

## Monitoring implementation and progress towards our vision

The partnership, led by the Council with its statutory responsibility for tackling child poverty, will oversee the further development and implementation of this strategy. It will do this by reviewing an agreed set of key indicators captured in its annual report and, if necessary, by reviewing any emerging underperformance in exception reports. We recognise that things might change over the life of the strategy and that actions may need to be altered accordingly but we will maintain our focus on realising the vision set out here. The initial set of indicators includes:

Making things better for children and adults who are struggling and in poverty now	Tackling some of the root causes of poverty and giving our children the best chance of a poverty-free future
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of households living below 60% of the median income level</li> <li>• 20th percentile hourly pay - gross</li> <li>• Number in receipt of Council Tax Support</li> <li>• Financial distress: number of claims into crisis loan element of the local assistance scheme, per 100 population</li> <li>• % of people living in fuel poverty</li> <li>• Number of food banks operating</li> <li>• Accounts in arrears for Council Tax payments</li> <li>• Number of advice centre queries relating to debt and affordable credit</li> <li>• Number of refugees and asylum seekers receiving food vouchers (section 4) and cash support (section 95) as a proportion of the population</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of population within the 20% most deprived areas of England and Wales</li> <li>• Ranking of households at risk of poverty [Experian/Mosaic-based measure]</li> <li>• % of population in receipt of key out-of-work benefits aged 16-64</li> <li>• % of 16-64 year olds with no qualifications</li> <li>• % of 16-24 year olds who are NEET – not in education, employment or training</li> <li>• Narrowing the gap between children in poverty and the rest at Foundation Stage profile</li> <li>• Number of homelessness acceptances per thousand households</li> <li>• Slope index of inequality in healthy life expectancy</li> <li>• Take up of formal childcare by low income working families</li> </ul>

### Targets

#### Headline target

A realistic, but challenging outcome of the firm commitments made in our action plan is that, as a minimum, we maintain our position as the Core City with the second lowest rate of relative child poverty.

#### Specific targets

As it develops, individual targets are being set in the action plan that accompanies this strategy. Where a contributory action is shared, or led by another elsewhere, associated targets will be jointly agreed and reported.

### Evaluation

Some of the strategic programmes will be subject to individual evaluations when we piloting new approaches but an overall evaluation of the strategy will seek to understand the impact of poverty on children and adults in the city and the most effective actions required to combat this.

## Partners to the Strategy

The Tackling Poverty Strategy Partnership Reference Group was set up to:

- oversee the engagement with children, young people, families and individuals and use their views and experiences to help shape the development and implementation of the strategy
- Influence and inform the content of the strategy
- capture the contributions that partners will make to the to the strategy.

Dean Peter Bradley, as the Sheffield Executive Board's lead on inclusion and poverty, chaired the group. Members included:

- Abtisam Mohammed, Fairness Commissioner
- Andy Hayter, South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service
- Andy Niblock, on behalf of the Food Executive
- Ann Pittard / Penny Curtis, University of Sheffield
- Antony Hughes, chair of the City Wide Learning Body
- Chris Roberts, South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive
- Cl Simon Wanless, South Yorkshire Police
- Clive Clark, Director of Operations at Sheffield Health & Social Care NHS Trust
- Cllr Jackie Drayton and Cllr Mazher Iqbal, Cabinet members for Child Poverty and Tackling Poverty and Increasing Social Justice
- Debbie Mathews, representative from the Voluntary Sector
- Frances Potter, Sheffield Citizens Advice
- Isabel Hemmings, Director of Strategy, Sheffield Children's Hospital
- Jackie Robinson, on behalf of Early Years providers
- Jacquie Stubbs, Fairness Commissioner
- James Henderson, Sheffield City Council
- Jill Mitchell, Great Places
- Joel Hanna, Youth Justice Service
- Margaret Ainger, GP Clinical Commissioner
- Richard Wright, Chamber of Commerce
- Shamsa Latif, Jobcentre Plus
- Steve Slack, Fairness Commissioner
- Tony Maltby, 50+ and Fairness Commissioner

## Signed

Cllr Jackie Drayton, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Families

Cllr Mazher Iqbal, Cabinet Member for Communities & Public Health

Jayne Ludlam, Executive Director for Children, Young People & Families

## Appendix – action plan

NOTE: This is a living document, there is further work ongoing to confirm and finalise all actions and aspirations.

### 1. How we will do things

#### Telling the story of poverty in Sheffield - tackling the stigma

What we will do / what we want to do	Who will contribute to this	How will we measure success?	Relationship to Strategy*
Update and promote the training materials for staff, which increase understanding of poverty and what people can do to help, and continue to focus on being helpful and respectful.	Partners to the strategy (Council-led)	Training modules updated by December 2015 Aspects of the training modules used/attended by all partners who deliver services	Directly within
When we talk about poverty, we will include positive stories and recognise the different contributions people make and work through the Fair City campaign to take opportunities to tackle stigma and bust myths.	Partners to the Strategy will seek opportunities to do this more proactively The Fair City Campaign will support this	We have not set a target for this, it will be by report on an annual basis.	Directly within

#### Poverty proofing – putting consideration of poverty at the heart of decision making

What we will do	Who will contribute to this	How will we measure success?	Relationship to Strategy*
The Council will include poverty as part of the Equality Impact Assessment and bring people with experience of poverty together with decision-makers in critical areas.	Sheffield City Council	Within three years, we will have an effective process in place to consider the impact on poverty of every key decision	Directly within
Tackling poverty is a priority for the Clinical Commissioning Group and we will reflect this in Commissioning Intentions, we will also include a mandatory paragraph about how inequalities will be addressed in the Mandates for Programme management process.	Clinical Commissioning Group	Inclusion in Commissioning Intentions and Mandates for Programme management, date by which this is done to be agreed.	Directly within
The Voluntary, Community & Faith Sector will	Voluntary, Community & Faith Sector	We have not set a target for this, it will be by	Directly within

What we will do	Who will contribute to this	How will we measure success?	Relationship to Strategy*
continue to make a significant contribution to tackling poverty and supporting those who are struggling with it through its day-to-day work. It will support the principle of poverty-proofing and many organisations' main objectives are so aligned with tackling poverty that it is already the main principle by which decisions are judged. It will also continue to be involved in strategic development and leadership in this area.		report on an annual basis.	
When we identify public policies or procedures that have an adverse effect on people in poverty we will seek to secure changes to such policies.	Voluntary, Community & Faith Sector led – to include other partners to the Strategy as appropriate	By assessing whether policy changes are made and have a positive effect.	Directly within
Fair employer (see below under quality jobs section for detail)	See below	See below	Directly within
We will continue to develop methods for listening to and involving people with experience of poverty and changing what we do in response	Partners to the Strategy	We have not set a target for this, it will be by report on an annual basis.	Directly within
Maintain a focus on children and the other groups most at risk. For each of the key performance measures in this strategy, we will seek to understand levels of access to services and achievement of outcomes for each of the groups most at risk. We will then address problems as they are identified.	Partners to the Strategy	As part of the annual report, partners will provide an update about what they have done for the groups identified as most at risk. Where outcomes for groups at risk are worse than average, success would mean narrowing gaps over the life of the strategy.	Directly within
Ensure staff are talking to the people they support about money and providing support directly or via sign-posting to other services	Partners to the Strategy who deliver services	Partners can demonstrate that they include financial issues as a routine part of standard assessments (partners will self-report on this) Where financial issues are identified within an assessment, support is given directly or via sign-posting (we will ask for monitoring	Directly within

What we will do	Who will contribute to this	How will we measure success?	Relationship to Strategy*
		information for example via case recording, and may also carry out audits)	

## 2. What we will do to make things better for children and adults who are struggling and in poverty now

### Providing advice, advocacy and access to entitlements and direct financial support

What we will do	Who will contribute to this	How will we measure success?	Relationship to Strategy*
We will explore ways to simplify the financial support we provide for people in crisis	Sheffield City Council	By March 2015 we will have completed a high-level review of the schemes to identify potential options for improvement. These will be considered by key stakeholders and a proposal will be presented to CMT. If CMT wish the feasibility of any of the options to be investigated in further detail, this will be carried out by summer 2015. Any changes to be implemented would then be planned at that point and include agreement on measures to monitor success.	Directly within
Continue to provide direct financial support for things like Council Tax and people in short-term acute need and to prepare for and respond to the welfare reforms, in particular planning for and preparing people for the introduction of Universal Credit.	Sheffield City Council	Maintaining hardship funds Examining how our council tax support integrates with other benefits such as Universal Credit Conducting an analysis of the impact of our enforcement activity on groups in need of support and identifying any improvements that could be made to reduce negative impacts on individuals (e.g. pathways, packages of support)	Directly within
Protect and sustain access to high quality advice services including money advice targeted at life events and debt advice	Sheffield Citizens Advice	Maintain the number of clients helped Maintain the diverse characteristics of these clients	Directly within

<b>What we will do</b>	<b>Who will contribute to this</b>	<b>How will we measure success?</b>	<b>Relationship to Strategy*</b>
Ensure that advice services are designed and delivered as effectively as possible including developing a Sheffield Advice Network to ensure that all advice services are well coordinated and have clear inter-service referral pathways	Sheffield Citizens Advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of Advice Services strategy</li> <li>• Network formally established</li> <li>• Agreed referral pathways operational</li> <li>• All relevant agencies and professionals informed about and aware of referral pathways</li> </ul>	Directly within
Respond to welfare reforms – including consideration of benefit take-up	Welfare reform implementation group (this includes Sheffield City Council, JobcentrePlus and Sheffield Citizens Advice)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete analysis of current take up and identify whether more targeted work is needed by December 2015 and on an ongoing basis as required</li> </ul>	Directly within

### Reducing the costs of everyday essentials

<b>What we will do</b>	<b>Who will contribute to this</b>	<b>How will we measure success?</b>	<b>Relationship to Strategy*</b>
<p>Implement the food poverty strand in Food Strategy as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertaking community engagement and development in 4 neighbourhoods with a focus on food</li> <li>• Improving health through diet – activity within the strategy covers all ages but there is also a specific focus on early years. All food and obesity related contracts target areas of deprivation and vulnerable groups, this is specified in contracts and closely monitored</li> <li>• Maximising entitlements by facilitating links between support services and food banks</li> <li>• Improving environments through supporting community food growing projects</li> </ul>	Sheffield Food Executive	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. By April 2015, we will have piloted approaches to reducing food poverty and improving diet via community engagement in 4 neighbourhoods. If we identify successful practice, we will explore options for roll-out by Apr 2017</li> <li>2. All commissioned activity will target groups and/ areas with greatest health needs as measured through routine health data and IMD.</li> <li>3. By March 2016 we will have supported people presenting at of food banks to access advice leading to increases in income and reduction in debt. Specific targets to be confirmed.</li> </ol>	Directly within

What we will do	Who will contribute to this	How will we measure success?	Relationship to Strategy*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Including opportunities for volunteering and skills development through projects and contracts wherever possible</li> </ul>		4. 'Reduce number of vacant allotment plots'	
Ensure full postcode coverage across Sheffield as well as improving access to foodbanks on as many days as possible to address food poverty in our communities. Some of the foodbanks also offer Cook and Eat courses where people can attend to learn how to cook healthy, nutritious meals on a low budget and to increase food confidence.	Sheffield Foodbank network	We will aim to have full postcode coverage across Sheffield for any referrer wishing to refer a client for a food parcel and aim to have access to a foodbank in the city on as many days as possible to address food poverty in our communities <i>until this is no longer needed</i> . Empowering people to cook more healthily, build confidence in using a range of foods and adopting a healthy eating lifestyle on a manageable, low budget.	Directly within
Continue work to tackle Fuel poverty including developing a Fuel Poverty Strategy and developing a programme of work activity to reduce the cost of heating the home in terms of fuel and providing heat	Sheffield City Council and partners	Fuel Poverty Strategy developed and implemented Increase in measured domestic energy efficiency and decrease in measured fuel poverty rates	Joint approach
Aims to encourage transport providers to consider poverty when making decisions regarding provision of transport ticket options.	South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (SYPTe) and Sheffield City Council (bus partnership)	Annual report on progress	Directly within
Opportunities for development of bus network to serve areas of employment, and for access to essential services. To encourage the commercial bus network, and to consider poverty when making decisions regarding provision of subsidised transport services, including local bus, Door2Door Community Transport & shopper bus services.	SYPTe	Currently provided, will continue subject to continued funding and prioritisation of Transport Committee objectives.	Joint approach
Increase access to affordable credit for Sheffield citizens through developing Sheffield Money as well as the expansion of Sheffield	Sheffield Money Sheffield Credit Union	Up to 5,000 people will be supported to take out an ethical, affordable loan, rather than having to rely on high-cost payday and	Directly within

What we will do	Who will contribute to this	How will we measure success?	Relationship to Strategy*
Credit Union This will mean that families are able to use ethical, affordable loans, rather than having to rely on high-cost payday and doorstep providers		doorstep providers. Sheffield Money will charge less than half the interest of high-cost credit providers. Sheffield Credit Union will aim for a 10% year on year increase in new membership, and a 7.5% year on year increase in loans granted through to 2018. This is from a baseline of 1815 new members joining and 2501 loans made in 2013-2014.	

### Reducing crime including domestic abuse, sexual exploitation, substance misuse

What we will do	Who will contribute to this	How will we measure success?	Relationship to Strategy*
Agree and implement the Domestic Abuse and include within it demonstrable contribution to Tackling Poverty	Sheffield City Council, Police, YJS, DACT, Probation	Domestic Abuse Strategy published by April 2015 Then on an ongoing basis by strategy targets	Interdependence
Ensuring tackling poverty is central to commissioning decisions and projects for substance misuse	Sheffield City Council, Police, Youth Justice Service, Sheffield Drug and Alcohol / Domestic Abuse Coordination Team (DACT), Probation	In all contracts and commissioning and initiatives there is explicit reference to tackling poverty – reported by service	Interdependence

## 3. What we will do now to tackle some of the root causes of poverty and give our children the best chance of a poverty-free future

### Skills and employability support

What we will do	Who will contribute to this	How will we measure success?	Relationship to Strategy*
Continue to provide lifelong adult and community learning	Sheffield City Council, others	We will reduce the proportion of working age population without qualifications to 6.6% by 2018 We will increase the proportion of working age population qualified to at least Level 2 to 85%, those qualified to at least Level 3 to	Directly within

What we will do	Who will contribute to this	How will we measure success?	Relationship to Strategy*
		59.4% and to at least level 4 to 38.9% by 2018.	
Deliver 'Progress to work' (and other programmes that help people prepare for, access, retain and progress within work including traineeships, pre-apprenticeships and apprenticeships)	Sheffield City region Local Enterprise Partnership, Council, Voluntary & Community sector contracted delivery	<p>Reduce Youth unemployment to 24% in 2014-15, 22% in 2015-16 20% in 2016-17 and 18% in 2017-18</p> <p>By March 2016 we will have ended the rise in the number of working age people who are unemployed and by March 2017 have reduced the total by 6% to below 30,000</p> <p>We will sustain and drive forward the reduction in the number of people claiming Out-of-Work benefits in Sheffield , reducing the total by at least 3,500 (to below 40,000 people) by March 2018.</p> <p>We will support double the number of young people leaving our care who progress to work or further learning and help 2,000 18-24 year olds to find a job.</p> <p>We will have supported 7,000 people into sustained employment.</p>	Directly within
Provide a specific employability support programme for adults with learning difficulties and disabilities and mental health conditions to prepare for, access, retain and progress within work. We will explore options for scaling up this approach if demonstrably successful.	Sheffield City Council, specific GP practices and JobcentrePlus	By 2018, we will support double the number of disabled people and those with health conditions moving into employment.	Directly within

### Quality jobs with fair terms and conditions

What we will do	Who will contribute to this	How will we measure success?	Relationship to Strategy*
Pay directly employed staff a living wage	Sheffield City Council, University of Sheffield		
Develop Fair Employer code	Sheffield City Council, Chamber of Commerce	Fair Employer code developed	Directly within

What we will do	Who will contribute to this	How will we measure success?	Relationship to Strategy*
	– via Fairness commission		
We would like to work with key partners in the business sector to showcase the positive benefits they have recognised from paying the living wage and broader commitments to fair employment practises. We would like to see an increased number of living wage jobs in Sheffield with Fair Employer code	All partners	Approaches to measurement being discussed	Directly within
Use commissioning and contracting to encourage Fair Employer code where possible	Sheffield City Council, Clinical Commissioning Group	Target tbc	Directly within
We have an ambition to develop an inclusive economic growth strategy, we want to work with partners across Sheffield City Region to build a shared plan to achieve this.	Sheffield City Council	Progress towards this ambition will be reported	Directly within

### Improve childcare affordability, quality, availability, flexibility and access – where and when people need it

What we will do	Who will contribute to this	How will we measure success?	Relationship to Strategy*
Explore options to reframe the financial subsidy for childcare so that more of the money is targeted at those on the lowest incomes	Sheffield City Council	Options appraisal conducted by 2016. Influencing position developed, if appropriate, by 2017.	Directly within
Explore more innovative approaches including flexible childcare through the expansion of the 2 yr Free Entitlement to Learning (FEL)  We want to explore the possibility of developing and supporting the development of Child-minder co-operatives in most deprived areas of the city, particularly where there are few or no child-minders	Sheffield City Council, Early Years Providers, JobcentrePlus, Parents	The success will in part be indicated by increased take-up. 2014-15, 70% 2015-16, 80% 2016-17 80% 2017-18 80%	Joint approach

### Maximising entitlements for those who cannot work

What we will do	Who will contribute to this	How will we measure success?	Relationship to Strategy*
We will protect and sustain access to high quality advice services including money advice targeted at life events and debt advice.	Sheffield Citizens Advice	Maintain the number of clients helped Maintain the diverse characteristics of these clients	Directly within

### Giving children the education and enriching experiences and raising expectations to improve achievement and future life chances

What we will do	Who will contribute to this	How will we measure success?	Relationship to Strategy*
<p>We will build the Best Start principles into the City's A Great Start in Life Early Years Strategy which will be disseminated across the city.</p> <p>We want to continue to seek out further funding to develop the work we wanted to undertake as part of the Best Start lottery bid to enable a great start in life for all children across Sheffield.</p>	Best Start Delivery Board / Sheffield City Council / Clinical Commissioning Group / Early Years Providers / Local Learning Partnerships / Local Early Years Community Partnership forums	<p>Re-design early years strategy in line with Best Start by March 2015</p> <p>We will report on the success of exploration for external funding.</p> <p>Narrowing gap in Early Years Foundation Stage Profile –between children living in poverty and the rest specific target being discussed</p> <p>Systematic approach to parental engagement and increase the proportion of eligible children from each background taking up free childcare</p>	Joint approach
<p>Continue to focus on parental engagement including parenting programmes, family learning, parental engagement in learning</p> <p>Ensure effective use of pupil premium, reading strategies, improve attendance and reduce exclusions</p>	Sheffield City Council, schools	<p>Narrow the gap in attainment at Key Stage 4 – specific target being discussed</p> <p>We want to explore ways of understanding how many parents and carers move into learning and employment</p>	Joint approach
Increase proportion of children on FSM who go to a good or outstanding school or nursery	Sheffield City Council / schools / Early Years providers	Target for schools being discussed	Directly within

What we will do	Who will contribute to this	How will we measure success?	Relationship to Strategy*
		Increase the proportion of 3&4 year olds benefitting from funded early education in a Good/Outstanding setting – specific target being discussed	

### Reduce health inequalities and improve health and access to health

What we will do	Who will contribute to this	How will we measure success?	Relationship to Strategy*
Deliver the Health & Wellbeing Strategy	Constituent members of the Health & Wellbeing board	Key indicators of success (these are not measures): Slope Index of Inequality for Healthy Life Expectancy at Birth: Male and Female (separate indicator for each gender) Slope Index of Inequality for Life Expectancy at Birth: Male and Female (separate indicator for each gender) Also for children: Slope Index of Inequality for Infant Mortality Under-18 conception rate	Interdependence
Deliver the key work-streams led by the Children's Health & Wellbeing Board. These include Emotional Health & Wellbeing, Children with complex needs, A Great Start in Life and Engagement and Participation.	Children's Health & Wellbeing Board	Measures to be agreed.	Interdependence
Tackle health inequalities for children in care and leaving care	Corporate Parenting Board	Measures to be agreed	Interdependence
Deliver the health inequalities plan	Constituent members of the Health & Wellbeing board	Measures to be agreed	Interdependence
We would like to develop a top tips for GPs leaflet (to include Living wage and fair employer code, Healthy start vitamins,	GPs	Measures to be agreed	Interdependence

<b>What we will do</b>	<b>Who will contribute to this</b>	<b>How will we measure success?</b>	<b>Relationship to Strategy*</b>
Targeting groups most at risk)			
<p>Through the Community Wellbeing Programme (CWP) develop partnership working to address financial inclusion, including fuel poverty and food poverty.</p> <p>Commission for Health Trainers to increase access to and uptake of appropriate primary care services including self-care and management of long term conditions, healthier lifestyle choices. Provide a social prescribing and signposting service to community and social support, training and employment opportunities.</p>	Sheffield City Council and partners	<p>Activity that addresses financial inclusion in 14 programme areas.</p> <p>Targets to be set for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of volunteers recruited and accessing training.</li> <li>Number of people involved learning opportunities</li> <li>Number of people achieved accredited training</li> <li>Number of volunteers in paid employment</li> <li>Increase in management of long term conditions by patient</li> <li>Increase in levels of physical activity</li> <li>Improvement in diet and intake of fruit and vegetables</li> <li>Increased in levels of community activity</li> </ul>	Interdependence

### **Programmes to build resilience and community - tackling loneliness and isolation**

<b>What we will do</b>	<b>Who will contribute to this</b>	<b>How will we measure success?</b>	<b>Relationship to Strategy*</b>
Use the £1m Transformation Challenge Award funding to expand the Community Support Worker programme for 2015/16	Sheffield City Council and partners	Targets being discussed	Joint approach
Commission to build resilience and community. Build community assets in communities with the highest deprivation and with vulnerable groups. To achieve this through commissioning the Community Wellbeing Programme, working closely with the Housing Plus, Libraries and Sheffield City	Sheffield City Council (public health) and voluntary and community organisations	<p>Improvements in capacity, resilience and wellbeing improvement at individual, organisation, and community level.</p> <p>Increase the number of beneficiaries and points of contact using 14/15 data as a base line.</p>	Joint approach

What we will do	Who will contribute to this	How will we measure success?	Relationship to Strategy*
Council staff working in Localities		Increase in numbers engaged in communities.	

### Reducing barriers for those with multiple and complex needs

What we will do	Who will contribute to this	How will we measure success?	Relationship to Strategy*
Prevent first time offending	Youth Justice Service	Maintain a rate of 447 first time entrants to the criminal justice system per annum to 2016. Beyond this, targets will be set by the Youth Justice Board – if the target is not equal or lower, this will be consultation with tackling poverty strategy	Interdependence
Reduce reoffending and continue to develop pathways for offenders focused on Education, Training and Employment and Finance and Benefits	Reducing Reoffending Theme Group (this includes Integrated Offender Management, Police, Probation, Council, Youth Justice Service and Providers)	Maintain the rate of reoffending by young people. Structured pathways in place re Education Training and Employment and Finance & Benefits	Interdependence
Early intervention and safeguarding – including Building Successful Families and continued links to employment, advice and tackling poverty, also build on this to consider how can use lessons within early years	Sheffield City Council and partners, including Voluntary sector providers and JobcentrePlus	To support at least 10% of families worked with in 2015-16 to reduce poverty (either through increased income or reduced outgoings or both) if the programme extends, the proportion should be increased	Joint approach
Work to reduce proportion of young people <i>not</i> in education, employment or training and to increase the proportion of vulnerable groups who <i>are</i> in education, employment or training	Sheffield City Council, Sheffield Futures, JobcentrePlus	Reduce to 6.5% in 2014-15, 6.2% in 2015-16 is 6.2%, 5.9% in 2016-17 and 5.6% in 2017-18  Proportion of group in education, employment or training: Those with learning difficulties or disabilities: (14-15) 67 (15-16) 69 Teen mothers (14-15) 40.5 (15-16) 42 Young offenders (14-15) 79.5 (15-16) 80.5 Care leavers (14-15) 67 (15-16) 69	Joint approach

### Increasing access to jobs, services, leisure, participation

What we will do	Who will contribute to this	How will we measure success?	Relationship to Strategy*
We'll focus our physical activity outreach work in the areas of greatest health needs	Sheffield City Council and partners	Targets being discussed	Interdependence
We will work to ensure that our standards of play and parks provision in disadvantaged areas are at least equal to the city average	Sheffield City Council and partners	Targets being discussed	Interdependence
Transport infrastructure	SYPTE	Being discussed	Interdependence
Promote the Wheels to Work service.	SYPTE and others	Increased use of wheels to work. Subject to continued provision of the DfT's Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF).	Interdependence

### Increasing the supply of affordable decent homes

What we will do	Who will contribute to this	How will we measure success?	Relationship to Strategy*
Increase the supply of affordable housing	Sheffield City Council	Maximise the use of Housing Revenue Account (HRA) to increase housing stock levels in the city - to deliver 1,000+ 'new' Council homes by 2020	Joint approach
Continuing to improve conditions in housing in the city include private rented and social housing, via targeted work in specific areas	Sheffield City Council	By 2018 we will work with partners to improve the quality of around 1,000 private homes that would otherwise damage the health of those living there.	Joint approach
Continue to work on homelessness prevention programmes	Sheffield City Council and partners	Increase homelessness preventions to 8.2 per 1000 households	Joint approach