

# **Tackling Child and Family Poverty in Rutland.**

*Draft strategy produced by C4EO May 2012 updated November 2012*

# Contents

Heading No		Page
<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	
	• Rutland's vision	3
	• What is child poverty	3
	• The importance of tackling child poverty in Rutland	4
<b>2</b>	<b>Development of Child Poverty Strategy</b>	
	• Background	4
	• Current context	5
<b>3</b>	<b>Priorities for tackling Child Poverty in Rutland</b>	
	• Background	6
	• National Context	6
	• Local context	7
	• Recommendations	8
<b>4</b>	<b>Next Steps</b>	<b>9</b>

## 1. Introduction

### Vision

Rutland County Council and its partners in the Children's Trust have a vision for tackling child poverty in Rutland: All partners signed up to this vision in 2010:

*To engage, inform and deliver to improve the life chances of every, child, young person and their family living in poverty in Rutland.*

(NB See p4 for list of partners )

### What is child poverty.

Children are considered to be living in poverty when their circumstances (family or environment) mean they lack the resources to have the living conditions and amenities and take part in the activities that are considered "ordinary" or "normal". In other words they are excluded or marginalized from the life of the community they live in as a result of their poverty.

Government have a national commitment to reduce child poverty to 10% or less by 2020 and use the definition of "relative poverty" to measure progress towards this goal. The proportion on children in relative poverty is calculated as:

$$\frac{\text{Number of children in families in receipt of either out of work benefits or tax credits where their reported income is less than 60\% median income}}{\text{Total number of children in the area}}$$

The national target is used nationally and locally to measure whether the poorest families are keeping up with any growth in incomes in the economy as a whole. Low income is the most commonly used measure of poverty as it provides an indicator of living standards and includes families living in poverty whilst in employment. Rutland has agreed to use this definition of poverty.

However, income alone does not reflect other significant factors which contribute to child poverty and the Independent Reviews of Child Poverty and Life Chances and Early Intervention conducted by Frank Field and Graham Allen respectively have contributed to a broadening of the scope of work to tackle child poverty to include social mobility and a focus on intervening early to break the cycle of disadvantage while children are in their early years

## **The importance of tackling child poverty in Rutland.**

Poverty has a profound effect on the life chances of children. It can deepen and reinforce social exclusion, contributing to problems in education, employment, physical and mental health and social interaction. Tackling poverty will improve the life chances of children and their families now and into the future. Children do not exist in isolation from their families and communities, and tackling child poverty benefits the community as a whole as well as the children and families affected.

While children in out of work families are more likely to be in relative poverty than those where at least one parent is in employment, nationally approximately half of children in relative poverty are in families with a parent in employment. Tackling poverty is therefore about supporting working families as well as those in receipt of benefits.

The latest available data for Rutland shows a slight reduction in the overall rate of child poverty in Rutland; **down slightly** from 8.3% in 2007 to **7.7% in 2010**. This means levels of child poverty in Rutland are significantly below the national (20.6%) and regional (18.7%) estimates. Rutland is the third least deprived local authority area on this measure. Over the same period the **number of children** under 16 in poverty **reduced by around 7%** from approximately 505 to approximately 470. This means that overall, Rutland already meets the Government target of reducing the proportion of children living in relative poverty to below 10% by 2020 but this belies the relative concentration of poverty in some parts of the county.

Across wards in Rutland there are significant variations in the percentages of children living in poverty from 12.4% in Oakham North West to 3.5% in Lyddington in 2010.

## **2. Development of the Strategy**

### **Background**

The purpose of this Strategy is to set out the priorities for tackling child poverty in Rutland which will then inform action by the partners involved. The development of the strategy began at the Children's Trust conference in October 2010, with the active involvement of the following partners:

Rutland County Council	Leicestershire Constabulary
Leicestershire County and Rutland PCT	CAMHS
Student Force	Peterborough Diocese
Voluntary Action Rutland	Leicestershire Youth Offending Service
Local Safeguarding Children Board	Child Protection Unit

Schools  
NHS East Midlands  
Homestart  
Voluntary Action Leicester

Rutland Citizens Advice Bureau  
HMP Ashwell  
JobCentre Plus  
C4EO

The foundation for the Strategy was the Child Poverty Needs Assessment which was developed as part of the overall Children and Young People's Needs Assessment. The Needs Assessment pulls together all the available information on child poverty locally as well as any relevant national information.

The resulting strategy, which was distributed in early 2011, set out the priorities for tackling child poverty in Rutland and informed Rutland's vision for tackling Child Poverty. Underpinning the vision, the strategy contained the following general principles, agreed by the partners within which child poverty would be tackled in Rutland :

- To address both the causes and effects of child poverty but concentrate efforts on tackling the causes.
- To address child poverty within the context of equalities and diversity.
- To lead by example as a major employer, fully considering the implications of wage rates, conditions of employment and equal opportunities.
- Rutland County Council will work with its partners to overcome the barriers in combating child poverty.
- As key stakeholders, children, young people and their families will be engaged in developing and delivering the Child Poverty Strategy.
- Rutland County Council and its partners will target resources differentially to ensure place based or people based approach as necessary

## **Current context**

In March 2012 Rutland County Council commissioned a review of both the Child Poverty Needs Assessment and the Child Poverty Strategy to be undertaken with support from Centre for Excellence and Outcomes (C4EO). The review provides an opportunity to bring the strategy in line with the National Child Poverty Strategy and ensure that the approach to child poverty in Rutland reflects the current situation for children and families in the county viewed through the four "Building Blocks of Child Poverty" identified in the National Child Poverty Strategy:

- **Place and delivery:** Focuses on housing, transport, crime and communities, supporting a localism approach and encouraging services to establish a clearer picture of their role and the impact of their area based activities in decreasing child poverty.
- **Employment and skills:** Covers unemployment, promotes parental employment by addressing barriers to work, lack of skills and labour market

experience, lack of suitable childcare and flexible working arrangements. Also covers poverty in work.

- **Family and life chances:** Aims to remove the significant barriers which exist for some children and young people to achieving positive health, educational and future employment outcomes. The aim is to remove these barriers through interventions at key stages and help reduce intergenerational poverty. This includes an evidence based approach to reviewing which policies demonstrate positive impacts on children living in poverty and then identifying what further action is needed to improve the outcomes.
- **Financial support:** Explores the potential for positive impacts on child poverty of increasing benefit take up by vulnerable groups and improving work incentives for unemployed households. This block also explores financial inclusion, money advice and help to enable some of the most vulnerable groups to engage with the benefit system and other forms of support in partnership with community and voluntary sector organisations

### **3. Priorities for tackling child poverty in Rutland**

#### **Background**

The Rutland Child and Family Poverty Strategy is being developed during a period of national and local financial challenge. In the light of growth in the cost of living and a climate of austerity it is likely that levels of child poverty will increase over the next few years before the trend is reversed. The Institute for Fiscal Studies has predicted that by 2013 both relative and absolute low income poverty will have started rising again. It is essential, therefore that Rutland's poorest children and families are targeted so that we can tackle the effects of poverty and mitigate against them, intervene earlier to prevent outcomes from worsening and build capacity and resilience across families and communities. All families identified as living in relative poverty or below in Rutland will be targeted.

#### **National Context**

The Government has reaffirmed the commitment to eradicating child poverty by 2020. The National Child Poverty Strategy contains a set of indicators to measure progress, including a target of less than 10% of children living in households in relative poverty (income less than 60% of median household income for the financial year) by 2020. Local authorities and their named partners are required to:

- **Co-operate:** Put in place arrangements to work with partner authorities to reduce, and mitigate the effects of, child poverty in their local area.

- Understand needs: prepare and publish a local child poverty needs assessment.
- Develop and deliver a strategy: prepare a joint child poverty strategy for their local area.

The National Child Poverty Strategy has been informed by the reports of the Independent Review of Poverty and Life Chances conducted by Frank Field ( final report published December 2010) and the Independent Review of Early Intervention conducted by Graham Allen ( report published January 2011) resulting in a focus on breaking the cycle of poverty and disadvantage as early as possible in children’s lives and increasing social mobility to improve life chances in addition to tackling low incomes. The Government has established a Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission which will monitor progress, by Government and others in society, against the objectives of improving social mobility and reducing child poverty.

## Local Context

Locally, the Rutland Sustainable Community Strategy (2010-2012) is clear about the local responsibility to tackle child poverty and its action plan contains clear evidence of how this work should be started.

This Child Poverty Strategy will have strong links to both the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Children and Young People’s Plan. The evidence is clear that tackling child poverty cannot be done in isolation. Actions need to be joined with wider work on family poverty, family support and early intervention as well as work to narrow achievement and health inequalities.

The following priority themes for tackling child and family poverty were identified in the original development of the Child Poverty Strategy and are shown here mapped against the four building blocks of the national strategy:

National Strategy Building Block	Rutland Priority Theme(s)
Place and delivery	<p><b>Access to Services:</b> physical access and planning services so that they are accessible.</p> <p><b>Geographic Focus:</b> whilst this is difficult in Rutland, there are some wards which seem to appear in all poverty related geographic analysis which perhaps warrant further attention (notably Uppingham and the two Oakham wards)</p>

<b>Employment and skills</b>	<b>Employment Opportunities:</b> expand the employment, training and apprenticeship opportunities available to both young people and their families.
<b>Family and life chances</b>	<b>Role of Children's Centres:</b> early intervention is a growing focus and Children's Centres are also being asked to re-focus on their core client group.

## **Recommendations to tackle child and family poverty in Rutland**

The following recommendations for Rutland's approach to tackling child poverty are based on the existing priority themes and a review of priorities for action from other Child Poverty Strategies.

### **Rutland County Council and its partners will:**

- Act to keep the proportion of children in Rutland living in relative poverty below 10% across the county as a whole and reduce the proportion in wards exceeding 10% on current data to 10% or below by 2014.
- Target both those wards where the percentage of children living in poverty exceeds 10% and those with the highest absolute numbers of children living in poverty to ensure outcomes in these areas are improved and children and families can thrive in safe, cohesive communities and neighbourhoods from which they can access the services and facilities they need.
- Support families to acquire the skills and knowledge to access responsive financial support services, money management and debt crisis support.
- Raise aspirations and improve the life chances for children and families so that poverty in childhood does not lead to poor experiences and outcomes.
- Support families with complex problems compounded by poverty and disadvantage.

### **We will achieve this by:**

- Embedding child poverty activity into core delivery of services by Rutland County Council and its partners
- Taking a whole family approach to working with families, assessing needs and ensuring children and families receive appropriate services and support to lift themselves out of poverty.



- Take a targeted approach to working with the children, families and communities in most need, engaging effectively with the most disaffected and hard to reach families.
- Use early intervention approaches and maximize the role of children's centres and other early years settings to break the cycle of disadvantage and improve outcomes for children and families.
- Increase achievement of 78 points across EYFS and ensure that levels of educational attainment across the county are maintained and the gap in achievement and attainment is narrowed between results for the county as a whole and the wards and communities in which child poverty is most prevalent.
- Engage partners in the voluntary, community and private sectors in plans to tackle child poverty.
- Adopt an outcomes and evidence based approach to developing interventions and services to impact on child poverty, including robust performance management and evaluation to measure impact and share learning.

#### **4. Next steps**

Partners in the Rutland Child Poverty Strategy will be asked to approve the priority themes and recommendations and sign an organizational pledge that all will contribute to the shared aim to tackle child poverty and improve outcomes and life chances for the poorest in Rutland's communities.

An action plan will be developed for 2012-14 covering the priority themes with clear indicators, timescales and responsibilities for delivery.

Once approved, the Child Poverty Strategy will be refreshed annually by the relevant reference group with representation from all partners. The Child Poverty Needs Assessment will be refreshed alongside the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment with input from the relevant reference group. In addition, the strategy and needs assessment may be revised in response to significant changes to communities as and when they occur, for example, new forces families arriving at Kendrew Barracks.

Child and family poverty will be included in Rutland's Sustainable Communities Strategy to ensure work to tackle poverty is embedded in plans for continued economic prosperity for Rutland.

We will engage with children, young people and families experiencing poverty in order to evaluate progress and ensure the Strategy meets their needs.