

**Scrutiny Review Narrowing the Gap of Educational Attainment – Appreciative Inquiry Recommendations Action Plan**

**Recommendation Lead: Haleem Ghafoor**


**Recommendation 17: Review cost of living responses to diminish impact**

**Accountability: CYP Committee Meeting dates**

**Impact Review dates: CYP Select Committee 16 April 2025**

<p>Council Plan objectives being supported:</p> <p>Creating A Fairer Stockton-on-Tees and reducing inequality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Priority one - The best start in life to achieve big ambitions</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Priority two - Healthy and resilient communities</a></li> </ul>
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Strategy			
Proposed Actions / Progress	Success Measures	Responsibility	Date
<p>1. Review Cost of Living responses to diminish its impact, with specific reference to period poverty, food poverty and school uniform:</p>	<p><b>STRATEGY A – ANTI-POVERTY</b></p> <p>The Anti-Poverty Strategy and Action Plan were approved by Cabinet in July 2024 and are a key component of the Council’s Powering Our Futures Communities Mission, which supports the Cost of Living responses.</p> <p>The Strategy 2024 to 2027 can be accessed here:  <a href="https://www.stockton.gov.uk/article/15890/Foreword">https://www.stockton.gov.uk/article/15890/Foreword</a></p> <p>The Action Plan can be accessed here:  <a href="https://moderngov.stockton.gov.uk/documents/s8168/Action%20Plan.pdf">https://moderngov.stockton.gov.uk/documents/s8168/Action%20Plan.pdf</a></p> <p>A two-page ‘easy read’ version of the strategy has also been developed.</p>	<p>HG</p>	<p>Sept 2025</p>

	 <p>A list of measurements outlining what will be achieved can be seen in the action plan.</p> <p>A cost of living <a href="#">booklet</a> has also been updated and over 15k copies distributed. The online <a href="#">hub</a> is also regularly updated.</p> <p><b>STRATEGY B – FOOD &amp; HYGIENE/ COST OF LIVING EXAMPLES OF APPROACHES</b></p> <p><b>Food &amp; Hygiene Winter Fund 2024/25</b> The Food &amp; Hygiene Winter Fund 2024/25 is a Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council grant that offers financial help to projects that provide food, household and personal hygiene products to Stockton-on-Tees residents, and whose on the ground work or activities are based in our local authority area. This includes foodbanks, food clubs, food pantries, community cafés, VCSE organisations and churches for example. <a href="http://www.stockton.gov.uk/food-aid-fund">www.stockton.gov.uk/food-aid-fund</a></p> <p>To date nearly 50 applications will an allocation of funding.</p> <p>TBBT- The Bread-and-Butter Thing offers high-quality, low-cost food to residents in Stockton-on-Tees. For £8.50, you can pick up 3 bags of food worth roughly £35 including fresh fruit and veg, chilled food for the fridge, and cupboard staples like cereal. You can also pay just £5 for an individual bag or £17 for a six bag 'family' deal.</p>	HG	March 2025
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	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Hub Location</th> <th>Day</th> <th>Collection Time</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Teesside Vineyard Church, Acklam Road <b>Thornaby</b></td> <td>Monday</td> <td>2 p.m.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>The Salvation Army, Palmerston Street <b>Stockton</b></td> <td>Tuesday</td> <td>1.30 p.m.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>New Life Family Resource Centre, Low Grange <b>Billingham</b></td> <td>Wednesday</td> <td>1 p.m.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Redhill Family Hub, Redhill Road <b>Roseworth</b></td> <td>Thursday</td> <td>1 p.m.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Newtown Community Resource Centre <b>Newtown</b></td> <td>Friday</td> <td>1 p.m.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>A Scrutiny review has also taken place on the Cost of Living approach.</p> <p>All SFPN <a href="#">leaflets</a> have also been shared with the Education &amp; Inclusion Team to share with schools to help support them with food and hygiene products and the COL booklet.</p> <p>A new cost of living of living <a href="#">booklet</a> has been developed and circulated. This year a further 10k copies have been distributed. The online cost of living <a href="#">hub</a> also continues to be updated and developed.</p> <p>As a result we have seen a reduction in foodbank usage.</p>	Hub Location	Day	Collection Time	Teesside Vineyard Church, Acklam Road <b>Thornaby</b>	Monday	2 p.m.	The Salvation Army, Palmerston Street <b>Stockton</b>	Tuesday	1.30 p.m.	New Life Family Resource Centre, Low Grange <b>Billingham</b>	Wednesday	1 p.m.	Redhill Family Hub, Redhill Road <b>Roseworth</b>	Thursday	1 p.m.	Newtown Community Resource Centre <b>Newtown</b>	Friday	1 p.m.		
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<p>2. Work with Child Poverty Network.</p>	<p><b>STRATEGY C - CHILD POVERTY</b></p> <p>The Fairer Stockton-on-Tees &amp; Community Engagement (FSOT &amp; CE) team continue to attend a range of events, webinars and training relating to poverty and the cost of living.</p> <p>The FSOT Team coordinate the Stockton Child Poverty Network, which brings together key Council Officer and external partners to address the main issues affecting the borough’s children and families. Quarterly network events are held in person and guest speakers have included Zarach, bed charity, the North East Child Poverty Commission and the Junction Multibank.</p>	<p>HG</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>																		

	<p>In addition, a member of the FSOT Team is also the Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council representative on the North East Child Poverty Commission and sits on the Executive Group. This has provided an opportunity to feed into regional and national discussions on child poverty issues, including the development of a national child poverty strategy.</p> <p>The FSOT &amp; CE Team continue to work with other Local Authorities and relevant external partners on projects. Most recently, there has been ongoing consultation with other Local Authorities, Policy in Practice and the North East Child Poverty Commission throughout the Free School Meals Auto-enrolment project. This will be rolled out early 2025. (Over 300 new children will be benefiting from FSM as a result and schools across the borough will benefit from an annual increase in pupil premium of over £400,000). This also means that more children can access the Holidays are Fun (HAF) programme. Information and updates have been provided to school staff and governors throughout the pilot project and this will continue as the project moves into the next phase.</p> <p>As part of the Christmas Gift nearly 700 parcels were given to families in need. Alongside donating the majority of the gift boxes to the SFPN, requests also came in from a number of organisations who had heard about the project, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• St Patricks Primary School – identified a family who were going to be spending Christmas in a hostel. We were able to provide this family (and many of the other families identified through schools) with a huge range of toys which we had donated from Dunelm Mill.</li><li>• Moses Project</li><li>• Looked After Children</li></ul>		
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Care leavers</li> <li>• 40 boxes provided to the Homeless event</li> <li>• 15 boxes provided to the Dementia hub</li> <li>• A number of Families identified via schools across the borough</li> </ul> <p>We are also supporting the work of the <a href="#">Multibank</a> which allows professionals to access free goods for families who they may need to support.</p> <p><b>Kit out Campaign</b> – an initiative with Multibank, Children’s Services and FSOT/CET. Aim is to provide donated, new sports equipment and clothing to help families take part in sporting activities together. Multibank are providing the equipment which will be distributed to families via local primaries, again identifying families in need who would not otherwise be able to afford these items and who are missing out on enriching activities that can benefit the family unit and also their physical and mental health.</p> <p><b>Poverty Proofing Prom</b> – a project set up in partnership with the Positive Living Forum, FSOT, BMBF, Children’s Services, Catalyst and local businesses to provide a preloved prom clothing shop, fashion show event, pamper packs, hair demos and vouchers to help young people cover the cost of e.g. getting their hair done for their prom. This is aimed at reducing clothing waste, but also preventing young people from being excluded from their proms because they can’t afford the costs. We are working with schools to identify families who would benefit from such as hair vouchers, so that the support reaches the right people.</p>		
<p>3. Work with schools to better promote/communicate Cost of Living interventions.</p>	<p><b>STRATEGY D – WORKING WITH SCHOOLS</b></p> <p>The Cost of Living <a href="#">booklet</a> has been shared with all schools through the Education &amp; Inclusion team.</p>	<p>HG</p>	<p>Sept 25</p>

	<p>A school uniform <a href="#">action plan</a> has also been drawn up and is being delivered.</p> <p>An update has also been provided to quarterly governors briefing</p>		
4. Encourage all schools to 'Poverty Proof the School Day'.	All schools have also been written to request that recommendations from the review and encouraged to re-evaluate school uniform policies to increase affordability.	HG	April 25
<b>Communication</b>			
Proposed Actions / Progress	Success Measures	Responsibility	Date
	Added value - Regular Cost of Living quarterly newsletters are shared with the Education & Inclusion team to be shared with schools.	HG	Ongoing
<b>Events</b>			
Proposed Actions / Progress	Success Measures	Responsibility	Date
	<p><b>STRATEGY E – EXAMPLES OF EVENTS HELD WITH COMMUNITIES</b></p> <p><b>Going for Gold – July 2024</b>                      Around 1500 residents attended this event on the High Street, accessing support from over 30 agencies. Around 300 items of preloved school uniform distributed, plus 150 brand new items, 500 hygiene products, 500 children's books. Community Transport brought in 25+ residents from the Clarences.</p> <p><b>Stockton on Tees Health and Wellbeing Festival – Nov 2024</b>                      The festival enabled visitors to gather information on health support, volunteering opportunities, creative activities, wellbeing services, social groups and opportunities to stay active. Over 70 organisations attended the festival to provide valuable advice to the public on a large variety of topics.</p>	HG	MARCH 25

Something New For You

Another Here to Help event will take place focusing on Mental Health & Wellbeing in Billingham in Jan 2025.

We will continue to review / evaluate and put on new events according to need. The next Summer event will be held in the High Street on the 19 July 2025, targeting children and young people through arrange of stalls, arts and creative activities etc.

Ongoing work to help bring communities together through activity such the Community Spaces and Warm Welcomes (as below) where services support our communities, as well as addressing Social Isolation and Loneliness.



Area	When	Where
Roseworth	Mondays 1pm-3pm	Hope Church Centre Ragwort Lane, Roseworth, TS19 9AT
Thornaby	Tuesdays 10am-12pm	Thornaby Pavilion Wrightson House, Thornaby, TS17 9EW
Billingham	Tuesdays 10:30am-12:30pm	Billingham Forum The Causeway, Town Centre, TS23 2LU
Stockton	Wednesdays 10:30am-12pm	<b>NEW LOCATION STARTING 30<sup>TH</sup> APRIL - 5 WELLINGTON STREET, WELLINGTON SQUARE, TS18 1JX</b>
Hartburn	Wednesday 10am-12pm	Hartburn: All Saints Hartburn Village, Stockton-on-Tees, TS18 9EB
Thornaby	Thursdays 1pm-3pm	Thornaby Pavilion Wrightson House, Thornaby, TS17 9EW
Newtown	Fridays 10am-1pm	Newtown Community Resource Centre 123, Durham Road, Stockton-on-Tees, TS18 6DE
Salters Lane	Fridays 10am-12pm	Salters Lane Community Centre Hunwick Walk, Stockton on Tees, TS18 8AF