

PROGRESS UPDATE: Review of Child Poverty

SCRUTINY MONITORING – PROGRESS UPDATE	
Review:	Scrutiny Review of Child Poverty
Link Officer/s:	Haleem Ghafoor
Action Plan Agreed:	July 2022

Updates on the progress of actions in relation to agreed recommendations from previous scrutiny reviews are required approximately 12 months after the relevant Select Committee has agreed the Action Plan. Progress updates must be detailed, evidencing what has taken place regarding each recommendation – a grade assessing progress should then be given (see end of document for grading explanation). Any evidence on the impact of the actions undertaken should also be recorded for each recommendation.

Recommendation 1:	That a family poverty profile is compiled and updated annually from available data and input from those with lived experience and is used to identify a key priority for targeted action each year; an initial focus being take up of Free School Meals for those eligible and in need.
Responsibility:	Fairer Stockton-on-Tees (FSOT) – lead for the family poverty profile Public Health (PH) Strategy Systems and Improvement (SSI) Children Services (CS) Little Sprouts
Date:	March 2023
Agreed Action:	<p>Defining who we are talking about and analysing on annual basis (i.e. lone parents, disabled sibling or parent, BAME, having a young child in household, Having young parents under 25, Armed Forces etc.)</p> <p>Develop a theme as part of the FSOT work around Child Poverty</p> <p>Link in with targeted work through the FSOT framework and roll out across other areas as the work develops.</p> <p>Family poverty profile - Compile a profile from available data to monitor measure every year</p> <p>Develop and agree a process for ongoing input from those with lived experience around Child Poverty through dialogue with schools, Thrive, Community Partnerships, Members</p>

PROGRESS UPDATE: Review of Child Poverty

	<p>Annual focus on priorities Targeted action – doing one thing well Initial focus on: FSM – take up for those eligible and Those in need but not on FSM</p> <p>Go through annual process to define one key area to make progress on take up of FSM</p> <p>Map breakfast provisions across our schools in the borough to identify any gaps</p>
<p>Agreed Measure: Success</p>	<p>Key strand included as part of the FSOT work</p> <p>Annual family profile completion</p> <p>An increase in those eligible for FSM take up</p> <p>Overall increased take up of HAF provision and FSM on the FSOT areas.</p>
<p>Evidence of Progress (February 2023):</p>	<p>As part of the Fairer Stockton-on-Tees work (FSOT) (the Councils strategic framework for tackling inequality across the borough) a series of key measures will be tracked to enable the Council (and its partners) identify progress against its ambition to tackle child poverty. Examples of these key measures include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of children in absolute low-income families (broken down by age of child, gender of child, family type and work status) - Number of children in Relative low-income families (broken down by age of child, gender of child, family type and work status) - Net household income threshold before housing costs - Net household income threshold after housing costs - FSM eligibility of children - Income Deprivation effecting children index (IDACI) - Number of households claiming Universal Credit - Average weekly earnings - Children in Income Support households (2001, Source: DWP) - Children in Income Based job Seekers Allowance households - Children in Working Families Tax Credit households - Children in Disabled Person’s Tax Credit households whose equivalised income (excluding housing benefits) is below 60% of median before housing costs - National Asylum Support Service (NASS) supported asylum seekers in England in receipt of subsistence only and accommodation support <p><i>In addition, the following actions have been undertaken/are ongoing:</i></p>

PROGRESS UPDATE: Review of Child Poverty

	<p>Holidays activities Fund (HAF) Programme – eligible children are those with benefit-related Free School Meals (FSM) eligibility or those suffering financial hardship. This is assessed on an individual basis but can award 15% of the programme's places on this basis. Currently we are unable to record all bookings on a single system, but this will be resolved when EYES is live. In addition, as due to scheme criteria we are working with schools and the SBC Communication Team to encourage parents to check if families are eligible for free school meals through a quick to use checker.</p> <p>Supporting Families criteria has changed from 6 outcomes to 10 enabling practitioners to look at areas in more detail, this includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Financial Stability - Secure Housing <p>Education Improvement Service (EIS) led pilot on increasing FSM take up Northfield/ Billingham South schools, in collaboration with SBC Information and Intelligence and SBC Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB) has commenced. Pilot evaluated positively. New SLA offer to schools via SBC Information and Intelligence as a result.</p> <p>Effective practice take-up case study to be shared at EIS Closing the Gap event 20.10.22 via Fairfield Primary School Headteacher (almost doubled FSM take up and increased Pupil Premium budget by over £40K).</p> <p>Ongoing administrative support in ordering and delivering food vouchers to schools (over 9,000).</p> <p>Breakfast initiatives trialled across Family Hubs throughout the summer (Not HAF Funded). Introduction of breakfast and play sessions, which seen a footfall of 275 parents and children attend to have breakfast and part-take in activities. One session was held in the local park. Children of all ages attended.</p> <p>Thrive has held an event which SBC Officers attended and presented our approach around the Cost of Living Crisis and Fairer Stockton-on-Tees. Workshops were held with those with 'Lived Experience' around poverty and further discussion are planned with Thrive to discuss how we take forward the issues presented.</p>
<p>Assessment of Progress (February 2023): (include explanation if required)</p>	<p>2. On track</p>
<p>Evidence of Impact (February 2023):</p>	<p>Details of impact currently being collated.</p>

PROGRESS UPDATE: Review of Child Poverty

<p>Evidence of Progress (November 2023):</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update of places on the HAF program has increased and information is being shared with home educated children. • The Supporting Families Program is continuing. • Free school meal take up across the Borough has increased. We had more individual children attend last summer, but this summer we increased our secondary, SEND and non-FSM percentages. Furthermore the % of non FSM has also gone up significantly since Summer 22, which means we are reaching more of our families who are on low income but over the threshold for FSM. • FSM auto-enrolment project group was set up and is exploring the feasibility of bringing in auto-enrolment of eligible pupils onto free school meals in collaboration with members from the Northeast Child Poverty Commission group. • Intelligence gathered through the HAF program has been used to identify and target those families most in need, using a multi-agency process. • Mapping completed of schools across the region who offer breakfast clubs. Discussions with Public Health and members of the Child Poverty project group ongoing, to identify how we take this forward and support families who don't have access to this provision. • Anti-Poverty Strategy group has been set up and monthly meetings are held to establish what 'Poverty means for people living in Stockton-on-Tees' gathering the views of this with lived experience. This will result in an Anti-Poverty Strategy and action plan co-produced with internal/external partners and those with a lived experience. This plan will incorporate actions to mitigate, prevent and address poverty with our borough. We anticipate that Child Poverty will be a key theme a part of this work. • This work will also be picked up as part of the wider Cost of Living Scrutiny review taking place at present.
<p>Assessment of Progress (November 2023): (include explanation if required)</p>	<p>1- Fully Achieved</p>
<p>Evidence of Impact (November 2023):</p>	<p>Data on increase in take up of FSM available if needed.</p>

PROGRESS UPDATE: Review of Child Poverty

Recommendation 2:	<p>That support offered to families in poverty is enhanced through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) A more integrated and visible offer for families experiencing poverty focusing on information, advice, financial and other support b) Roll out of Poverty Proofing the School Day across all Stockton Schools c) Establishing a mutual aid/ giving scheme, in partnership with Catalyst, to facilitate community giving d) Ensuring an enhanced support offer is available for communities and areas targeted through the Fairer Stockton-on-Tees Framework
Responsibility:	<p>Family Hubs EIS Little Sprouts PH/FSOT CS Catalyst</p>
Date:	<p>March 23</p>
Agreed Action:	<p>Access to help, delivery and support:</p> <p>Review our support offer, make it accessible, work with families experiencing poverty and building better links with employment and welfare / benefits service teams to target those most needing help for example:</p> <p>Welfare advice drop ins</p> <p>Outreach employment support in neighbourhoods</p> <p>Pension Credit campaigns</p> <p>Improve families benefits take up through communications campaign, promoting awareness of the available benefits and other financial support that people can access</p> <p>Poverty proofing all schools:</p> <p>Revisit and review current stage of poverty proofing for all our schools</p> <p>Explore the development of a Benevolent Fund / recycling scheme for school related items</p> <p>Community/ Partnership giving:</p> <p>Build on COVID-19 mutual support to sustain mutual aid / giving scheme</p>

PROGRESS UPDATE: Review of Child Poverty

	<p>Explore the establishment of a Child Poverty Partnership and Fund (with contributions from across all sectors i.e. Housing groups etc.) for those most in crisis to access to enable families</p> <p>Develop extended support offer as part of FSOT</p>
<p>Agreed Measure:</p> <p>Success</p>	<p>Increased provision for those families affected by Child Poverty</p> <p>Increased number of schools delivering Healthy Schools programme initiatives</p> <p>An increase with the number of our schools undertaken Poverty proofed activity</p> <p>Continued funding targeting and supporting families affected by Child Poverty</p> <p>Successfully secured funds</p> <p>Establishment of a partnership</p> <p>Establishment of specific offer / additional support</p> <p>Impact on FSOT outcomes</p>
<p>Evidence of Progress (February 2023):</p>	<p>a) A more integrated and visible offer for families experiencing poverty focusing on information, advice, financial and other support</p> <p>Engaged support from Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) to deliver Cost of Living School Information event to front line workers in SBC primary and secondary schools. Very well attended and positively evaluated. Termly event to sustain this offer now in place. Attendance is strengthening.</p> <p>Areas covered included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welfare benefits - an overview of benefits relevant to households with school-age children • Energy - how households can reduce energy costs • Grants - what grants are available, and how to access them • Emergency support - how to access crisis support, including energy vouchers and data vouchers • Saving money - information on schemes to reduce expenditure on essentials such as water and telephone • Practical support - where are local food banks, community pantries and providers of other practical assistance, Who can help - what organisations are there locally who can help, and how to access them <p>Family Hubs: Provide a range of services inclusive of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food bank vouchers. • Low cost cafes/affordable meals. • Citizens Advice Bureau drop in sessions.

PROGRESS UPDATE: Review of Child Poverty

- Household health checks – run at hubs.

Overall check of household spend, to support with how families can reduce bills.

- Drop-in sessions – families can access to discuss any areas of need and support.
- Food Pantry - (via Stockton Food Power Network)
- Job Clubs.

SMART Team house DWP benefits advisors who can provide advice and support around benefits/applications. They also support getting parents/carers into employment.

Opportunities Team have a dedicated ESF project (Pathways) which can engage 16–29-year-old people who are currently unemployed to engage in the programme, with additional funding available to enable work readiness.

A Child Poverty task and finish group has also been established as a part of the Cost of Living work to respond to any emerging trends and issues.

Ongoing Cost of Living Hub on SBC website and development of information for staff to ensure they have up-to-date and relevant information to support families on a range of cost-of-living issues.

Whilst Warm Spaces are generally Mon-Fri (daytime), FSOT Team are exploring options to develop services for weekends/families, and ongoing throughout the Summer months, with a view to continue the Warm Spaces programme into Winter 2023/24.

b) Roll out of Poverty Proofing the School Day across all Stockton Schools

Strategies which support schools to Poverty Proof routinely flagged at termly Closing the Gap (CTG) EIS event

Routinely engage with Children North East to promote their research, resources and new initiatives at CTG events.

Cost of Living Crisis and support an ongoing agenda item at Education Matters and Governor Briefings.

EIS have liaised with Catalyst Stockton to scope out School Uniform support spreadsheet - support sourced from both schools and VCSE. The spreadsheet is included on the on SBC COL Hub website and promoted to all schools.

A National Lottery bid has been secured for £450k. The project funding will give financial support commitment over the next 3

PROGRESS UPDATE: Review of Child Poverty

	<p>years to address inequalities by identifying gaps in the area, working with VCSE and statutory services to address these gaps and through volunteer support to individuals not currently accessing services in deprived communities.</p> <p>Outcomes will include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More people experiencing healthy living - eating healthier food, taking more exercise • Increased good mental health • Increased income and reduced poverty in the disadvantaged parts of the Borough • Increased partnership and collaboration between partner organisations • Increased commissioning from statutory bodies of VCSE services • More volunteering in Stockton-on-Tees supporting the FSOT framework. <p>Strategies which support schools to Poverty Proof routinely flagged at termly Closing the Gap (CTG) EIS events.</p> <p>Regular engagement with Children North East takes place to promote their research, resources and new initiatives at CTG events.</p> <p>c) Establishing a mutual aid/ giving scheme, in partnership with Catalyst, to facilitate community giving</p> <p>Work will take place through the Child Poverty task and finish to give this some consideration in how we take this forward.</p> <p>d) Ensuring an enhanced support offer is available for communities and areas targeted through the Fairer Stockton-on-Tees Framework</p> <p>Grants between £50-£500 have been provided to the VCSE to support families through providing Warm Spaces.</p> <p>A FSOT Co-Ordinator has been employed through Catalyst to ensure that we extend the FSOT support through the VCSE</p>
<p>Assessment of Progress (February 2023): (include explanation if required)</p>	<p>2. On Track</p>
<p>Evidence of Impact (February 2023):</p>	<p>Details of impact currently being collated.</p>
<p>Evidence of Progress (November 2023):</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizens Advice Bureau staff are providing outreach support in schools, offering bespoke guidance for families in areas such as benefit advice and maximising income.

PROGRESS UPDATE: Review of Child Poverty

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>The Bread and Butter Thing</u> (TBBT) is now available in 3 locations across the Borough, providing families with a cost effective, healthy food options. • FSOT team, together with Catalyst attended Adult Wellbeing week, to provide Front Line Adult Social Care staff with information of support available to families, provided by VCSE sector, Moneywise Tees Credit Union and CAB. • 60 <u>Community Spaces</u> (previously Warm Spaces) will continue to operate throughout Winter 2023, due to £60,000 funding received from Public Health. Each venue will receive £500 and can apply for an extra £1000, with evidence of providing extra support to residents across the Borough, over the next two years. • Here to help printed <u>booklet</u> created to ensure that it reflects emerging issues and priorities for families. • Outreach Here to Help <u>events</u> arranged to provide communities with a range of support, referrals and advice. These are being held across the seven Community Partnership areas between Sept 23 – March 24. Details can heard on BBC Tees Here to help event coverage, which can be heard here at 2:17 https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p0qb6cf8 • A Cost of Living (COL) <u>e-newsletter</u> developed and issued quarterly. The e-newsletter has been created to help support employees and people we work with, manage through these difficult times using the help and support that is available from the Council and our partner organisations. • EIS have actioned/ continue to action all relevant recommendation in the Scrutiny Review of the Cost of School Uniform report and ongoing promotion of <u>School Uniform support</u> continues to be developed further. • Progress on school uniform activity is to be reported into the Cost of Living Scrutiny review, with ongoing work with schools and governing bodies. • A proposal to develop a Child Poverty Fund is also being given some consideration, through working with our Welfare Support team. • This work will also be picked up as part of the wider Cost of Living Scrutiny review taking place at present.
<p>Assessment of Progress</p>	<p>1 - Fully Achieved</p>

PROGRESS UPDATE: Review of Child Poverty

(November 2023): (include explanation if required)	
Evidence of Impact (November 2023):	Evidence provided through the links, as above.

Recommendation 4:	That, subject to funding, a direct payments scheme is developed for those identified as in need, building on the examples of vouchers during the pandemic.
Responsibility:	CS
Date:	March 23
Agreed Action:	<p>Making sure better access to existing support (e.g. benefits, FSM, access to employment)</p> <p>Cost out options for a direct payment scheme as part of wider work on benefits access and take up</p>
Agreed Success Measure:	<p>An increase in those eligible for FSM take up</p> <p>Increased take up of those non eligible to FSM meals</p> <p>Overall increased take up of HAF provision and FSM on the FSOT areas.</p>
Evidence of Progress (February 2023):	<p>Currently working to develop this recommendation. To inform this action work has been ongoing with schools to identify children who take up HAF places throughout the year, ensuring that families take into consideration the that they maybe eligibility for the scheme and to undertake a simple check.</p> <p>Supporting Families Co-Ordinator has been working with all teams across Children’s Services to educate workers on the criteria of HAF including the 15% discretion for children outside of the free school meal eligibility.</p> <p>Public Health funding allows for HAF to take place in the 3 x half-terms across the school year. These places are focussed within the FSOT areas, which are in line with our targeted audience for the longer holiday periods.</p>
Assessment of Progress (February 2023): (include explanation if required)	On track
Evidence of Impact (February 2023):	Details of impact currently being collated.
Evidence of Progress (November 2023):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Currently exploring FSM auto enrolment options for free school meals, with the support of members from Northeast Child Poverty Commission

PROGRESS UPDATE: Review of Child Poverty

Assessment of Progress (November 2023): (include explanation if required)	1 - Fully Achieved
Evidence of Impact (November 2023):	Notes from FSM auto-enrolment project group

Recommendation 5:	That all subsidy policies are reviewed and revised as appropriate to provide streamlined and enhanced support for families.
Responsibility:	CS FSOT Welfare rights lead
Date:	June 23
Agreed Action:	Map out what current subsidies are available Explore whether these can be better targeted, streamlined, extended etc. as part of wider support offer
Agreed Success Measure:	Increased take up of subsidies
Evidence of Progress (February 2023):	Care experienced common (local) offer work is underway across the region, so we have a consistent offer across the North East. This work will also be picked up as part of the wider Cost of Living Scrutiny review taking place at present.
Assessment of Progress (February 2023): (include explanation if required)	On track
Evidence of Impact (February 2023):	Details of impact currently being collated.
Evidence of Progress (November 2023):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working in line with Powering our Future and the ABCD approach, to support communities and gather information through those with lived experience. Information gathered will feed through the Anti-Poverty Strategy action group and shared with the Child Poverty project group.
Assessment of Progress (November 2023): (include explanation if required)	1 - Fully Achieved

PROGRESS UPDATE: Review of Child Poverty

Evidence of Impact
(November 2023):

Notes from Anti-Poverty Stakeholder Project group

**Assessment of
Progress Gradings:**

1
Fully Achieved

2
On-Track

3
Slipped

4
Not Achieved