

# Anti Child Poverty Strategy 2011-20

Part One 2011-14: Improving the life chances  
of our 1 in 10.

DRAFT



West Berkshire Children  
& Young People's Trust



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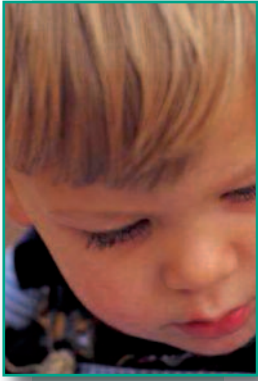
## Acknowledgements

Prevention and Early Intervention Strategy Group of the West Berkshire Children and Young People's Trust  
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## Key messages

- Child Poverty is low in West Berkshire at 10.3% compared with the national average of 21.6%.
- There is still more we can do to reduce child poverty, particularly for those families who experience inter-generational deprivation and worklessness
- Effective targeting will help to ensure actions reach those families who most need support and intervention
- Everybody has a part to play in reducing child poverty
- All partners can contribute to key actions to support change, in particular relating to:
  - Improving the life chances of our most vulnerable children
  - Helping young people and parents get into, and stay in, work
  - Finding solutions to fit the different needs of differently disadvantaged communities
  - Ensuring all families who need financial and other relevant information are able to access when and how they need it





"9% in 9 years"

## Our vision

A life in poverty means risks to health, to life expectancy, to choices and opportunities. We want all our children in West Berkshire to have the chance to live a life without social and economic deprivation. To make this happen everyone must recognise it is their business to act to provide this opportunity, not a single agency or group of agencies.

At present 10.3% (this means 3696 children, based on 2001 Census data or 4198, based on population growth estimates) of our children age 0 -18 years in West Berkshire live in relatively low income households. Whilst this means we are close to the related 2020 target set by the Government for the eradication of child poverty in England we should not be complacent about our position.

This strategy sets out an area-wide set of strategic aims and actions for West Berkshire to reduce child poverty.

## Our aims

- **To break the cycle of inter-generational poverty affecting some families and their children**
- **To stop families getting into poverty and to keep them out of poverty**
- **For only 9% of West Berkshire children to live in relative poverty by 2020.**

## National Context

The Coalition Government's commitment to child poverty builds on the previous Labour Government's work, which concluded with the Child Poverty Act 2010.

This act places a number of duties on local authorities and named partners, including the Local Strategic Partnership to:

**Cooperate:** to put in place arrangements to work with partner authorities named in the Act. These partner authorities are expected to cooperate with the local authority in these arrangements;

**Conduct a local child poverty needs assessment:** to understand the characteristics of poor families in their area, and the key drivers of poverty that must be addressed;

**Develop and deliver a strategy:** to create a joint local strategy for reducing child poverty, which must set out the contribution that each partner authority will make and must address the issues raised in the needs assessment.

Two key reviews have informed further government thinking about child poverty and approaches to eradicate it. These include Frank Field's Independent Review on Poverty and Life Chances (2010) and Graham Allen's Review of Early Intervention (2011). The Government Consultation on child poverty (2010) recognises the importance of income deprivation to life chances but argues a broader domain of factors to be taken into consideration for tackling poverty, drawing upon the findings of the Field and Allen reviews. These include a healthy diet, a warm home, clothing, the toys and other resources they need to develop and be happy, and the opportunity to take part in the leisure activities, including days out, school trips, and visits to local attractions that so many of us take for granted (DfE, 2010, online <sup>1</sup>).



Emphasis is placed on:

- Early years support – birth and school readiness
- Provision of high quality and well monitored early intervention services
- Developing quality of parenting
- Working with families with entrenched issues
- Improving health intervention, particularly in the early years
- Providing pathways into work and making work pay
- Tackling attainment gaps for children in school from poor backgrounds
- Streamlining of the benefits system
- Improving social mobility
- Devolving power to local communities to support self-determination

<sup>1</sup> Department for Education (2010) Tackling Child Poverty and Improving Life Chances: Consulting on a New Approach. London: DfE



| Poverty level  | Target            |
|--|-------------------|
| <b>Relative low income</b><br>whether the incomes of the poorest families are keeping pace with the growth of incomes in the economy as a whole <sup>2</sup> | < 10%             |
| <b>Combined low income and material deprivation</b><br>a wider measure of people's living standards  | < 5%              |
| <b>Absolute low income</b><br>whether the poorest families are seeing their income rise in real terms)   | < 5%              |
| <b>Persistent poverty</b><br>length of time in poverty   | to be set in 2015 |

*'My partner is on remand and it's very difficult bringing up the twins without him. Everyone who comes to the house seems to criticise me as a parent and I don't go out to play groups because I'm scared my babies will cry and everyone will think I'm a bad mother. We would both like to go back to college so that we can have a chance of getting jobs in the future but I've been told I shouldn't do anything like that until the twins are at least five years old.'*

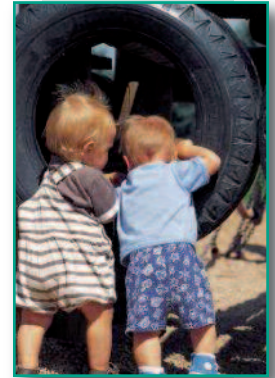
*(parent at Children's Centre)*

<sup>2</sup> families with income below 60 per cent of the median (figure cited includes housing benefit but figure without housing benefit is also used commonly, and argued as more indicative of genuine poverty levels)

## Risks and poverty

The following children are at greatest risk of being poor:

- Children of lone-parent families
- Children in large families (more than three children)
- Children growing up in households where there is no one in full-time employment
- Children from families of some minority ethnic groups
- Children in households with a disabled child or adult



Growing up in poverty is associated with poor outcomes<sup>3</sup>. Poorer children are:

- More likely to be born early and have a lower birth weight
- Fifteen times more likely to die in a fire at home
- Five times more likely to die in an accident
- Three times more likely to be hit by a car
- Ten times more likely to become a teenage mother
- More likely to have higher levels of obesity
- Less likely to stay on at school
- More likely to have fewer qualifications especially children looked after by Local Authorities

<sup>3</sup> Tackling Child Poverty, End Child Poverty Network Cymru and Children in Wales, 2006:6

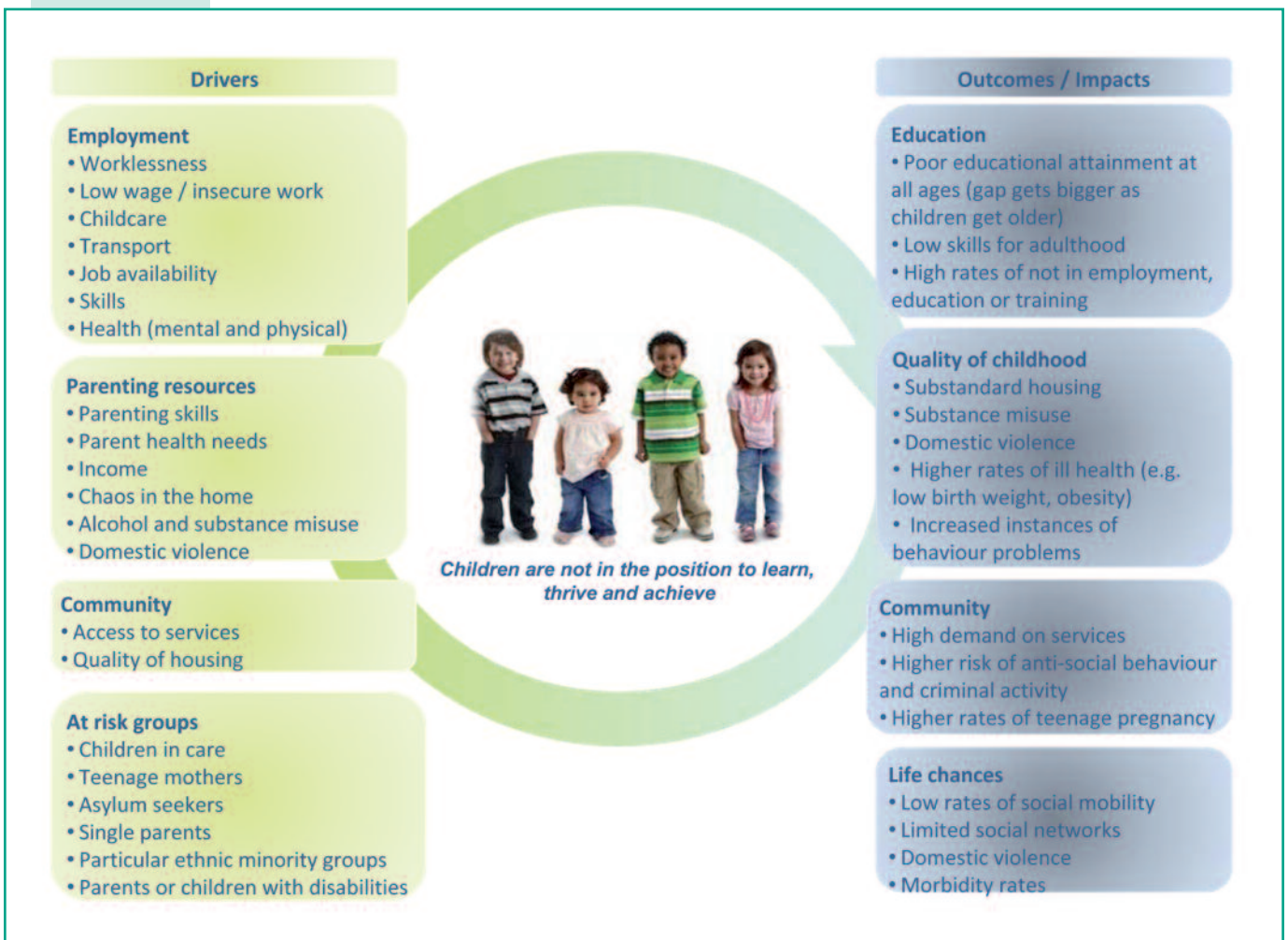


These factors show a clear link between being poor in childhood and health risks in the short term. The evidence for predictive long term health implications is also strong, for example related to

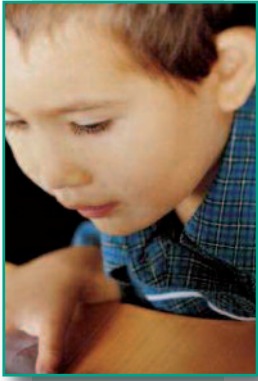
- Cardio-vascular disease
- Impaired respiratory function
- Certain forms of cancer
- Presence of limiting lifelong illness
- Adult mental ill health

These may be compounded by multiple-risk factors being present, for example poverty, obesity and poor housing conditions<sup>4</sup>.

The following diagram conveys the drivers and effects of child poverty (IDeA, 2010).



<sup>4</sup> Child Poverty and Adult Health, End Child Poverty, 2008



## The cost of child poverty<sup>5</sup>

Failing to prevent children growing up in poor families is expensive for all of us. Children from low-income families are less likely to do well in school, and more likely to suffer ill-health. They are likely to face pressures that help to explain higher rates of anti-social behaviours and criminality.

Child poverty is expensive both in terms of direct costs to services during and after childhood and in costs to the economy when children grow up. Some estimates putting the costs at £25 billion a year.

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation found that:

- public spending to deal with the fallout of child poverty is about £12 billion a year, about 60 per cent of which goes on personal social services, school education and police and criminal justice.
- the annual cost of below-average employment rates and earnings levels among adults who grew up in poverty is about £13 billion, of which £5 billion represents extra benefit payments and lower tax revenues; the remaining £8 billion is lost earnings to individuals, affecting gross domestic product (GDP).
- more than two-thirds of those living below the poverty threshold at any one time have been in poverty for at least three of the last four years. Not only is this damaging to individuals but can have serious implications for local service provision. Those who have been in poverty for extended periods of time can take more input from services and agencies to move them out of poverty.

Growing up in poverty is not just about the financial cost, however. There are significant costs in terms of life chances, both while young and once reaching adulthood.

These all make it very clear that reducing poverty and minimising its impact is everyone's responsibility. All partners need to play a role to truly reduce the prevalence and impacts of inequality: children's services can only mitigate against some of the negative effects on children.

<sup>5</sup> Tackling Child Poverty, online at <http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelId=22105231>

## Priority needs in West Berkshire

Our Child Poverty Needs Assessment has been completed and informs the identification of priority needs and actions for 2011-14. The Needs Assessment is available online at <http://www.westberks.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=20787>.

The needs assessment concluded that in relation to tackling child poverty West Berkshire does well in relation to:

- Low levels of poverty generally
- High employment levels
- Relatively low benefits dependency
- Commitment to inter-agency working
- Teenage pregnancy levels

Areas for concern and action are:

- Isolated and hidden rural poverty
- Public transport issues
- Some child health issues such as obesity and sexual health screening
- Attainment gaps between children from poorer backgrounds and their better off peers
- The link between disability and poverty
- Debt issues and access to appropriate financial support
- Families with complex, often inter-generational problems
- Community access to and signposting to services
- Fuel poverty
- Wider multi-agency working, for example to involve GPs
- Some complacency by some organisations and individuals who can make a difference – a ‘we don’t have a problem here’ attitude.

*'I'm claiming all the benefits I can but we're still living from hand to mouth. I need to keep the house warm because my dad is 84 and bedridden and I'm having chemo. I changed [energy provider] on the doorstep but it's even more expensive now.'*  
(housing association tenant)



*'I know I ought to sign on and look for work but after I've settled the kids and paid the bus fares into Newbury, what's the point? It's cheaper to stay here.'*  
(housing association tenant, Lambourn)



## Priority local area objectives linked to the four building blocks for tackling child poverty

### 1.EMPLOYMENT & SKILLS

To reduce barriers to employment, increase the take up and impact of schemes that support young people and parents to find jobs and sustain employment and reduce benefits dependency.

### 3.FAMILY & LIFE CHANCES

To raise aspirations and improve life chances of the most vulnerable children and young people

### 2.FINANCIAL SUPPORT

To ensure all families at risk of or living in poverty can access information and advice at the times and in ways that they need it most.

### 4.PLACE & DELIVERY

To recognise differences in the way poverty affects people's lives in rural and urban areas and deliver solutions to fit these differences.

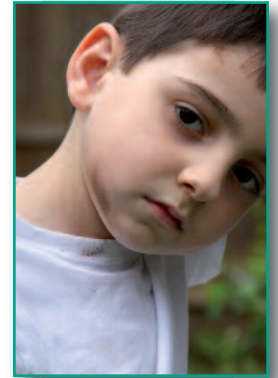
*"We live in rented accommodation. My son's bedroom has damp patches and there is mould growing in the downstairs toilet room. Both my son and my baby have lots of colds and I'm very worried about their health. I've tried talking to the landlord but they don't do anything. I don't know who to go to for help."  
(parent from Children's Centre)*

## The key actions that will make a difference

Tackling child poverty is not about primarily moving people above an arbitrary income line; it is about ensuring that people have the support, incentives and skills they need to create a better life for themselves. It means tackling the causes of poverty and enabling people to progress in work. (DfE, 2011)



## Strategic area-wide work that we can build on, including the examples shown below



### 1.EMPLOYMENT & SKILLS

Connexions success in reducing numbers of young people not in education, employment and training

The work of the Life Chances Team in enabling good transitions for young disabled people into adulthood

JobCentre Plus with Children's Centres

High levels of volunteering in West Berkshire

Duke of Edinburgh Award take up

### 3.FAMILY & LIFE CHANCES

Family Intervention Project

The quality of our fostering and adoption services, with looked after children supported through high quality placements

Early intervention work related to Locality Networks for children with additional needs

Developing work in Children's Centres

The high quality Youth Offending Team diverting young people from crime

### 2.FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Family Information Service (Family Resource Centre UK)

Citizens Advice Bureau

Outreach work of JobCentre Plus with partners

Housing services

### 4.PLACE & DELIVERY

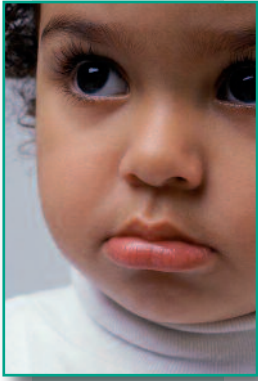
Greater Greenham Project

Lambourn Partnership

Neighbourhood Warden schemes

The work of the safer Communities Team and Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements

Parish Planning process



Area-wide plan to which all partners may contribute

**Reduce barriers to employment, increase the take up and impact of schemes that support young people and parents to find jobs, to sustain employment, and reduce benefits dependency.**

**Targets**

For all children to be provided with the necessary opportunities to achieve their educational potential

For all children to be ready to learn in school

West Berkshire Partnership members to commit as employers to eradicating in-work poverty of their employees and to extend employment opportunities for vulnerable young people and adults

**Measured and reported annually through**

Children and Young People's Plan

Children and Young People's Plan

West Berkshire Partnership's Sustainable Communities Strategy

**Ensure all families at risk of or living in poverty can access information and advice at the times and in ways that they need it most..**

**Targets**

Extend partnership and outreach work between key providers in all sectors to target and ensure information and advice reaches those parents and young people who may have difficulties in accessing information, for example due to rural isolation, digital exclusion, literacy or communication issues

**Measured and reported through**

JobCentre Plus

**Raise aspirations and improve life chances of the most vulnerable children and young people, with an emphasis on education and employment and supporting good parenting.**

**Targets**

Provide effective early targeted intervention and work intensively with our families with complex needs

Implement or develop a life chances quantitative indicator broader than NII 16 and

Identify a baseline cohort currently aged 2, 11 and 16 to provide a sample to measure change in 2014, 2017, 2020 by the life chances indicator

To raise awareness of the links between poverty, deprivation and poor outcomes amongst those working with vulnerable families

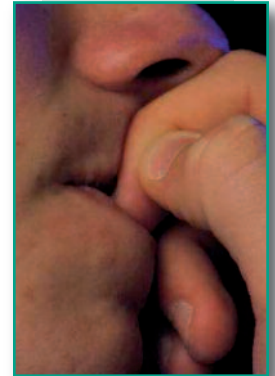
**Measured and reported through**

Children and Young People's Plan

West Berkshire Council to be monitored by Children and Young People's Trust

Training and promotional resources to be produced by PEI Group in 2011

## Recognise differences in the way poverty affects people's lives in rural and urban areas and deliver solutions to fit these differences.



| <b>Targets</b>   | <b>Measured and reported annually through</b> |
|--|---|
| Equality Impact Assessments include a poverty dimension  | All   |
| Creative delivery solutions to needs are implemented, making most of different sector strengths and opportunities                    | All   |
| To influence public transport providers to extend concessionary fares and maintain bus routes that will enable people to access jobs | Transport Services                            |
| Community led solutions to issues of social and economic deprivation are promoted and supported                                      | All   |

## Governance and timelines

The West Berkshire Children and Young People's Trust Quality and Monitoring Group will be responsible for annual monitoring of the implementation of this strategy.

Part One of the Strategy will be in place for three years, as part one of three phases of a nine-year strategy.

These correspond with timescales of the West Berkshire Children and Young People's Plan.

### West Berkshire Child Poverty Strategy 2011-20

**Part 1**      **2011-2014**

**Part 2**      **2014-2017**

**Part 3**      **2017-2020**

## Contributors

Many local organisations and individuals have contributed to the development of the needs assessment and strategy. Development work has been undertaken by the Prevention and Early Intervention Group of the Children and Young People's Trust.

### Lead officer contact details

Julia Waldman [jwaldman@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:jwaldman@westberks.gov.uk) 01635 519810