

Sheffield Tackling Poverty Framework – 2020-2030

Our Framework

Our existing Tackling Poverty Strategy was launched in 2015 and five years on, we have now seen over a decade of austerity, bringing significant budget cuts and demand pressures across the public sector.

We remain committed to that strategy and we are continuing to work towards the goals set out, and to draw on the detailed evidence base which underpins it. Since 2015, we have provided strong city leadership with our partners and invested in critical projects to mitigate and address poverty in Sheffield where possible.

However, the social and economic reality is that the scale, depth and complexity of poverty and inequality in the UK and in Sheffield has increased and we fully recognise the significant changes and impacts in our communities in recent years.

With this in mind, we are launching this Framework to restate our strong commitment to a poverty-free city. We want to set out a clear vision and define our priorities in a way that will fit with how we work and the scale of the problem. We also want to use this opportunity to reflect on what we have done so far to mitigate the worst impacts of poverty for Sheffield people and to use this to inform our next steps.

We will then work with people across the city to identify those next steps and generate a shared Tackling Poverty Action Plan, which will ultimately replace the existing strategy in due course. So, we have developed this framework to be:

- a) Flexible – to facilitate further work and respond to the emerging challenges we will face in the coming decade
- b) Overarching – something which is meaningful and impactful across all policy areas and partnerships

Our Vision

In 2020, poverty is the day-to-day reality for many people in Sheffield and it affects all of us in the city.

Our vision is for a Sheffield without poverty.

Sheffield in 2030 would be a city where we have confronted that everyday reality of poverty, and worked to make it a thing of the past.

No-one in the city would be living in poverty and everyone would have access to:

- A great start in life
- A secure income, food and necessities

- A warm and safe home and local environment
- The best possible health and wellbeing
- Opportunities to achieve their full potential
- Access to good education, employment and training throughout life

This would mean:

- no-one struggling to meet their basic needs due to poorly paid, unreliable employment or due to an ineffective benefits system
- no child growing-up in poverty
- no-one going hungry or relying on foodbanks
- no-one living in a home which damages their health
- no-one suffering greater hardship or insecurity because they are financially excluded
- no-one prevented from achieving their potential because they lack access to opportunities, networks or training/qualifications

We recognise that to solve poverty in Sheffield by 2030, we will need to solve poverty in the UK within a generation.¹ And that involves working across boundaries to build consensus and tackle poverty at all levels. Clearly, we will need action from Government as well as collective action at the national and international levels.

However, we also recognise that what we do together in Sheffield to influence that national goal, as well as what we do to tackle poverty locally in the meantime, will have significant impact on the lives of everyone in our city.

So, between now and 2030, we are focusing on the elements within our local control which will move us all towards that vision of a poverty-free city.

¹ We are linking this work closely to the vision and recommendations set out in the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2016) strategy titled *We Can Solve Poverty in the UK*, <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/we-can-solve-poverty-uk>

What do we mean by Poverty?

In Sheffield, we have adopted the Joseph Rowntree Foundation definition of poverty as 'when a person's resources are well below their minimum needs, including the need to take part in society'.

However, we also recognise the stark inequalities we face within Sheffield, as across the UK, and the profoundly negative impact which this has on all Sheffielders and all aspects of city life. The recent publication of the *Marmot Review: 10 Years On*, reminds us that poverty and inequality are inextricably linked and that over the last decade inequalities have widened overall. As part of the next steps which follow on from this framework, we will be focussed on deepening our understanding of the relationship between poverty and inequality at a local level and identifying how we can further respond to Marmot's latest recommendations within our Action Plan.

Context

Since 2010, we have seen poverty increase in Sheffield and deprivation has become more polarised. In addition to long-standing challenges faced by some people and communities in our city, there are a number of critical trends that are impacting on poverty and inequality²:

- **Poverty is increasing and expected to continue to do so:** this is particularly striking among lone parents in work, particularly in full-time work, and among couples where parents work but where there is not at least one full-time and one part-time worker.
- **Child poverty is increasing:** the Resolution Foundation found that child poverty in the UK is projected to rise by a further 6 percentage points by 2023-24. This and the proportion of parents living in poverty are forecast to hit record highs³. Across Sheffield as a whole, in 2019, there were over 36,000 (26.5%) children living in poverty. Within some local communities the proportion of children living in poverty is much higher, for example, there are significant challenges in Burngreave (53%), Central (48%) and Manor Castle (47%) wards⁴.
- **Deprivation in Sheffield has become more polarised since 2010:** the proportion of Sheffield that is within the least deprived areas of the country has gone up, but so has the proportion of the city that is in the most

² Sheffield City Council (2019) <http://democracy.sheffield.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=18383>

³ Resolution Foundation (2019) *Living Standards Outlook 2019*, <https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/publications/the-living-standards-outlook-2019/>

⁴ <http://www.endchildpoverty.org.uk/poverty-in-your-area-2019/>

deprived. Nearly a quarter of Sheffield's communities are now in the 10% most deprived in the country⁵.

- **Austerity has exacerbated existing inequalities and created new ones:** Both the UN⁶ and the Equality and Human Rights Commission have found that policy decisions made since 2010 have impacted on the most vulnerable, and women have lost more than men at every income level, on average losing double the amount lost by men⁷.
- **Government's ongoing tax and welfare changes are adding to the problem:** the richest fifth of households are expected to be around £390 a year better off by 2023-24, and the poorest fifth of households are projected to be £400 a year worse off⁸. In every income group women lose more than men and BAME women will lose the greatest proportion of their individual income.
- **Work alone is not the answer:** increasing numbers of people are in part-time work and more precarious, lower skilled, lower paid occupations. Research by the JRF has shown that over 4 million workers in the UK are living in poverty, an increase of 500,000 in the last five years. In-work poverty has been rising even faster than employment, driven almost entirely by increasing poverty among working parents.
- **Sheffield's average pay has increased but this masks significant inequality between the city's neighbourhoods:** research by the Resolution Foundation suggests that there is a pay gap of around £160 a week in average household income between the most and least deprived areas of Sheffield⁹.

Our [Tackling Poverty Strategy \(2015-18\)](#) sets out a more detailed evidence base about the everyday realities for the people living in poverty in Sheffield, but we know that the impacts go well beyond this, with national and international research demonstrating that inequality has negative implications for everyone in society.^{10 11}

⁵ Sheffield Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

<https://sheffieldcc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Cascade/index.html?appid=d3358b124a964624ae2457535a1a60b4>

⁶ UN (2018) *Statement on Visit to the United Kingdom*, by Professor Philip Alston, *United Nations Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights*, https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Poverty/EOM_GB_16Nov2018.pdf

⁷ EHRC (2017) *Impact of tax and welfare reforms between 2010 and 2017: interim report*, <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/impact-tax-and-welfare-reforms-between-2010-and-2017-interim-report>

⁸ Resolution Foundation (2018) *How we spend it*, <https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/app/uploads/2018/10/How-to-spend-it-RF-Report.pdf>

⁹ Resolution Foundation (2017) *Forging ahead or falling behind*, <https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/app/uploads/2017/01/Forging-ahead-or-falling-behind.pdf>

¹⁰ *The Marmot Review* (2008) assessed the evidence for how best to tackle health inequalities in England. Marmot argued that health inequalities could only be tackled through universal actions but with scale and intensity that is 'proportionate to the level of disadvantage'. Marmot also argued that tackling health inequalities would bring benefits to society as a whole through better quality of life, higher productivity and reduced welfare expenditure <http://www.instituteofhealthequity.org/resources-reports/fair-society-healthy-lives-the-marmot-review/fair-society-healthy-lives-full-report-pdf.pdf>. See also, the *Marmot Review: 10 Years On* (2020), <https://www.health.org.uk/publications/reports/the-marmot-review-10-years-on>

¹¹ *The Spirit Level* (2009) argues that the effects of inequality has a negative impact on society overall, 'eroding trust, increasing anxiety and illness, (and) encouraging excessive consumption'. Across 11 health/societal challenges, the research demonstrates that issues such as drug abuse, education, obesity, physical/mental health are worse in more unequal countries. <https://www.equalitytrust.org.uk/resources/the-spirit-level>

Moreover, with poverty at a record high, it is clear that the economic growth which the UK has been experiencing in recent years does not necessarily bring people out of poverty or enable them to participate more equitably in our economy and society. ¹²

For some years now, all of the bodies represented on the Sheffield City Partnership Board (SCPB), including Sheffield City Council, have been focusing on this issue at the city level and this is reflected in the SCPB's [Framework for an Inclusive & Sustainable Economy](#)¹³, which builds on the premise that when people in our city experience poverty and inequality, then our economy and city will be less successful for everyone as a result.

How have we been working to tackle poverty in Sheffield?

Our focus in Sheffield has been to combine addressing the *causes* and *impacts* of poverty and inequality in the city:

- **Causes** – delivering long-term impact on the root causes of poverty and inequality in the city through our core services, targeted investment on communities with the worse outcomes and working to prevent poverty and inequality developing/increasing over a lifetime. This includes the majority of our services including early years, housing, education, Building Successful Families, Public Health, health and social care, skills and employment support etc.
- **Impacts** – recognising the scale of existing poverty and inequality in the city, we (with partners) deliver specific projects and interventions to tackle particular issues which communities experience.

We also work in partnership to ensure a strategic city-wide approach to tackling poverty through the following groups:

- **Fairness, Tackling Poverty and Social Exclusion Partnership Group** – a smaller, more focused partnership has been established and taken on the role of the city lead strategic group for combined Poverty and Fairness work.
- **'Making Sheffield Fairer'** – a campaign group which originally came out of the Fairness Commission 2012/13 and that focuses on promoting fairness and tackling poverty, and raising awareness at the local and national level.

Linked to our priorities as set out in the vision, over the last year, the council and its partners have been driving a number of key projects and strategies to tackle specific poverty issues in Sheffield including:

- *A great start in life* – for example, Leaving Poverty at the School Gates Conference; launch of the Food and Wellbeing Strategy and Baby Safe Champions; our emerging Great Start in Life Strategy.

¹² This is discussed in the SCPB Framework for an Inclusive & Sustainable Economy. See also for example, RSA (2017) *Inclusive Growth Commission*, <https://www.thersa.org/discover/publications-and-articles/reports/final-report-of-the-inclusive-growth-commission>; Resolution Foundation (2018) *The Living Standards Audit 2018*, <https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/publications/the-living-standards-audit-2018/>; IPPR *Economic Justice Commission*, <https://www.ippr.org/cej/about-cej/>.

¹³ <https://www.sheffieldcitypartnership.org/inclusive-economy>

- *A secure income, food and necessities* – for example, a series of workshops on Food Security; the Holiday Hunger work and bid to the Department for Education in February 2019; the Universal Credit Partnership which co-ordinated a city-wide response to mitigate the worst effects. [Appendix 2](#) includes more detail on Holiday Hunger and the Universal Credit Partnership.
- *A warm and safe home and local environment* – for example, there has been a free insulation scheme aimed at households in fuel poverty and our [Homelessness Prevention Strategy](#) sets out a vision to minimise homelessness in Sheffield by focussing on early prevention to help people keep their home or move in a planned way to a new settled home. Other strategic examples include the commitment to mitigating the unequal impact of climate change, recognising that it is a social justice issue which will adversely affect our less well-off residents, as set out in the [Green City Strategy](#).
- *The best possible health and wellbeing* – for example, the [Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2019-2024](#) is explicitly focused on inequality and has the central goal that ‘we will close the gap in healthy life expectancy in Sheffield by improving the health and wellbeing of the poorest and most vulnerable the fastest’.
- *Opportunities to achieve your potential* - launch of the Fairer Sheffield Guide; ongoing work by Making Sheffield Fairer including a refresh of the Fair Employer Charter¹⁴; the [Financial Inclusion Strategy](#).
- *Access to good education, employment and training throughout life* – for example, Sheffield City Council apprenticeships have risen from 41 new starts in 2016 to 127 in 2019, with a very substantial number of our apprentices going on to secure longer-term employment with us. We have won a Diversity and Inclusion Award in recognition for our work in developing skills across all demographic areas of the city, and we are working towards making apprenticeships more accessible to people on low incomes.¹⁵ [Appendix 2](#) contains a detailed example of this.

Furthermore, linked to the Framework for an Inclusive Economy, the council and partners continue to drive policy approaches which aim to create a more inclusive city. This has included:

- Sheffield City Council Living Wage Foundation accreditation and partner work towards becoming a Living Wage City. [Appendix 2](#) includes a case study of the council’s work on the Real Living Wage.
- Ethical Procurement Policy and work with anchor institutions (through the SCPB) on progressive procurement
- Fair employment practices and the TUC’s Great Jobs Agenda¹⁶

¹⁴ The current version, an outcome of Fairness Commission, was driven by Gripple and Sheffield Chamber of Commerce.

¹⁵ Of all apprenticeships arranged by the employment and skills service either for external employers or the Council, 35% were from postcodes within the top 20% most deprived areas in the Country and 23% from the top 10% most deprived as defined by the Index of multiple deprivation.

¹⁶ <https://www.tuc.org.uk/campaigns/charter-make-every-job-great-job>

- SCPB led State of Sheffield engagement work – aimed at including more diverse voices and lived experience in the conversations around how we re-shape our economy to benefit more people.

Clearly there is a wide range of activity happening across the council and the city which focuses on both the root causes and impacts of poverty. Whilst [Appendix 2](#) provides some more detailed examples, it only serves as a snapshot.

As part of our next steps, we will further review this work, reflecting with our partners on where we can build on and share good practice, and where we need to redouble our efforts. In the meantime we continue to work towards the actions set out in our existing Tackling Poverty Strategy, as well as the commitments stated here in this Framework, with a view to developing a new Action Plan for the period 2020 – 2030 which will ultimately replace the existing strategy with a refreshed set of actions for the upcoming decade.

Our Commitments 2020 - 2030

We have set out a clear vision of a Sheffield without poverty. This builds on our existing commitments, our ongoing activity in this area and the country-wide vision set out in Joseph Rowntree Foundation's Strategy for solving poverty in the UK. Many of the recommendations set out in this vision apply to the national level, but there are also many levers at the local level.

In summary, poverty can be solved, but it cannot be solved at one level, or by one organisation. We will therefore continue to campaign nationally and to work in partnership with others in the city to maintain momentum and identify our next steps locally.

This ongoing collaboration with our partners and residents will shape our actions more fully, as they emerge over the next 10 years. However, drawing on our vision, we can set out the following commitments for the decade ahead. We will focus on:

A. Influence

- ✓ Work at the highest levels nationally and internationally to influence policies towards tackling poverty and make the argument that poverty impacts negatively on us all – including campaign work with partners through the Making Sheffield Fairer Campaign Group.
- ✓ Work locally at a strategic level to shape policy and strategy development in a way that will draw out the implications for tackling poverty – for example, by developing a set of partner priorities on tackling poverty that are shared by the Sheffield City Partnership Board.
- ✓ Work to add impact and impetus to existing strategies, making identifying opportunities for tackling poverty central to what we do. For example, as part of the Joint Health & Wellbeing strategy, work with partners in the city to ensure that services that impact on the wider social determinants of health, including poverty, are properly resourced.

B. Voice

- ✓ Challenge stigma and negative narratives about people living in poverty and continue to open up conversations about how we – as Sheffielders – can make ours a city that works for everyone, where no-one should struggle to eat properly, or heat their home, or participate in society because they don't have enough money.
- ✓ Have an ongoing conversation with partners and communities to make sure that we are gathering intelligence, hearing the voices of people who are experiencing poverty, and ensuring that we use this to inform the next steps and actions which sit underneath this framework.
- ✓ Work with partners to find new and effective ways to make sure that lived experience of poverty informs other areas of policy, strategy and service delivery.

C. Flexible Responses

We will commit to working together with our partners and communities to provide a timely and joined-up response to important issues and impacts as they arise over the next 10 years.

This will include, but not be limited to the following:

- ✓ Work with the Tackling Poverty, Social Exclusion & Fairness Partnership to develop a city-owned and flexible Tackling Poverty Action Plan to take forward this Framework, setting out our next steps for the short, medium and longer-term.
- ✓ Working in partnership with schools and early years professionals to identify and support families who are living in poverty, linking with the emerging Great Start in Life Strategy and commitments to deliver good quality services in the early years of a child's life which meet the needs and expectations of all Sheffield families.
- ✓ Continue to identify shared citywide solutions to support people who are impacted by the huge changes to the benefits system. We will do this through the Universal Credit Partnership, the Combined Welfare Reform Group and forming new groups as necessary.
- ✓ Supporting a joined-up and strategic approach to food poverty whilst mitigating the worst effects, for example, through our holiday hunger programmes and linking to the Food & Wellbeing Strategy.
- ✓ Work with those who are commissioning and delivering services across the city, to ensure that the impacts of poverty and the experiences of people who are living in poverty are accounted for in service design and delivery.