

# Sheffield's Child and Household Poverty Strategy

## *"Making a difference together"*

This year, we need to develop a new Sheffield strategy to replace the current one that runs to the end of 2014 and to meet the growing need in our city in the context of continuing difficult economic circumstances and reducing resources within the public sector.

We need your help to do this because we know that the things we need to do cannot be done by the Council alone. We'd like you to help us to talk to other people to get their views too. We want to know how you'd like to be involved and what you think all partners in the city should be focusing on.

The Child Poverty Act 2010 places a statutory duty on local authorities and named partners to co-operate to assess need and formulate strategies in response to this need. Our work to tackle child poverty will be an important focus within a broader strategy to tackle poverty in Sheffield. We have long been committed to working to address poverty and inequality for all the people of Sheffield and we know that we cannot tackle poverty for children without supporting the households and communities within which they live.

We have put together a 'pack' that we hope will be useful to people. This includes:

- This document, which explains what we are doing, why and what we'd like other people to do
- A consultation response form (called 'Tell us what you think')
- A summary of the data (Needs Assessment) we have gathered so far
- A summary of what we think the evidence is telling us ('How do we know what works')
- A table-based summary (Anti-Poverty Plan summary) showing what is already being done, along with space to add what could be done in future (with some ideas included)
- A self-assessment of the previous strategy
- A link to the previous needs assessment and strategy <https://www.sheffield0to19.org.uk/professionals/strategy/Sheffield-s-Child-and-Household-Poverty-Strategy.html>
- A link to the Fairness Commission recommendations <https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/your-city-council/policy--performance/fairness-commission.html>

## **Please get involved**

As we have said above, we will be developing the new strategy with partners because we know that no single organisation can meet this challenge alone. Furthermore, the Child Poverty Act 2010 requires the Council to work with partners to publish a local child needs assessment, and develop and deliver a strategy addressing these needs and setting out the contributions partners will make.

Work is already taking place but we recognise that there is much more that needs to be done, and in some cases we may need to think again about where best to focus our efforts. Things have changed substantially in Sheffield since we wrote our last action plan and strategy. There have been significant budget cuts already for many public sector organisations and there are more to come. This has made it more difficult for those organisations (and organisations dependant on public sector funding, such as the voluntary and community sector) to provide support to the most vulnerable people in the city. There have also been significant cuts to benefits as part of the wider welfare reform agenda affecting around one in seven people in the city. Both of these things, coupled with the impact of the recession, mean that the scale of the challenge we all face in trying to tackle poverty and mitigate its worst effects will require extraordinary efforts. We are determined to do what we can to meet this challenge.

We expect the refreshed strategy to carry on focusing on tackling child poverty in the city. However, in the light of the increasing concerns over widening poverty in the city and the evidence set out by last year's Fairness Commission, we want to broaden this out to address the needs of households without children. We also know that many actions that would be chosen to reduce child poverty will involve working with adults and approaches will be relevant regardless of age of those affected.

As a starting point we are looking shape the strategy around three general themes:

1. Tackling poverty today and mitigating its worst effect through action to improve living standards and reduce extreme hardship
2. Tackling some of the root causes of poverty through supporting people into work and increase earnings, as well as ensuring those who are not in work, and their families, are protected from poverty
3. Breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty to give children the best start in life and support lifelong learning for all.

We expect the strategy to run to 2017 but we recognise that things might change over those years. So the plan will need to be reviewed and actions may need to be altered to address those changes before the end of the Strategy.

To help build a plan up to 2017, we want to plan collaboratively, with statutory agencies, and the voluntary and private sectors. We have built up evidence through the Child Poverty Needs assessment and the Fairness Commission process and now want to concentrate on understanding which might be the best solutions and how we develop these further. We need to work with partners who have the expertise to contribute to a plan based on the best evidence about what will work.

We also want to make sure that people living and working in the city and relevant organisations are part of the plan and committed to making changes happen. We are inviting partners to take part in developing and putting in place the new strategy and have put together this pack of information to help people think about where they can contribute.

### **Who do we need to talk and listen to and how**

Hearing what partners and communities have to say about this important issue is vital for us.

Initially we would like partners to help us talk to people living and/or working in the city who have experienced poverty, witnessed the impact, and can potentially do something about it. We want to talk with partners in the city or whose work affects people in Sheffield or have the expertise to contribute. And we want to make sure we talk to people who are representative of the population affected to reduce the possibility that we miss an important perspective. We believe this means using a range of different approaches to reach different people. Engaging the right people, in the right way can be resource intensive and whilst we have some capacity to do this, we would like to know whether other organisations who have an interest in this area could help us.

Possible methods that we are considering include:

- Public drop-in sessions where people can have group or one to one discussions
- One to one discussions – offered through existing networks and services and also by contacting people who might not normally access services
- Focus groups – meeting groups, especially those run by communities, and including front-line workers

- Public hearing whereby people who have been engaged through the methods above come together with policy makers and decision makers to develop joint priorities and solutions

Please have a look at the information pack and get back to us if you think you can contribute to the development of the strategy and help develop and improve the things we do, and the ways we do them to help people who are struggling for money in Sheffield. We are extremely keen to know if you are willing to help make sure we have the right evidence base, are talking to the right people, and come up with the solutions likely to have the most impact.

We are very aware of the pressures on groups and organisations and want to avoid time consuming and overly bureaucratic approaches. We are considering drawing together a working group to help us shape the development of the strategy and would be keen to know how you best feel you can engage with the process. We are also planning to hold a workshop on 16<sup>th</sup> October to bring people together to consider the information that has been gathered and what this means in terms of priorities for the action plan.

### Next steps

Please let us know quickly:

1. *If you would be able to contribute, for example by helping to promote the engagement work or putting us in touch with people we should talk to, or indeed helping organise activity?*
2. *If there are other approaches that you think could work and can help us with?*
3. *How you would like to be involved?*

By the end of September, please:

1. *Get back to us about the Needs Assessment*
2. *Give us your input to the summary of the evidence*
3. *Talk to us about approaches that you think ought to go into the new action plan*

On the morning of 16<sup>th</sup> October, please:

*Come along to the workshop where we will consider together what everyone has found out and what that means for the Strategy and Action Plan.*

If you require further information please get in contact with: Anna Brook, Project Co-ordinator, Lifelong Learning, Skills and Communities, Sheffield City Council, Email: [Anna.Brook@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:Anna.Brook@sheffield.gov.uk) Telephone: 0114 2736017 (please note that answerphone messages cannot be left on this number, if you cannot get through, please contact [lifelonglearningandskills@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:lifelonglearningandskills@sheffield.gov.uk) or 0114 2667503 to leave a message)

Kind Regards,



Councillor Jackie Drayton, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families



Councillor Mazher Iqbal, Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Health

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