

“Giving Every Child an Equal Chance”

**Sunderland Child & Family Poverty Strategy
Phase 2 (2011-13)**



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Forward

We have a history in Sunderland of pushing the boundaries of our services to support our most needy families. We were one of the first authorities to make nursery education available for all children and one of the first to have all of our Sure Start Children's Centres up and running in the city, providing family centred services.

However, 25.4% - that's over 15,000 of our children and young people are living in poverty. 64% of these children are in lone parent families. An even greater number, over 30,000 (51%) are living in low income families, finding it hard to manage day to day family life and unable take part in many of the opportunities and experience that many of us take for granted. These are disappointing figures and the situation cannot remain unaddressed. We have taken up the challenge and we are working hard to break the cycle of poverty in Sunderland through a strong lead from the Sunderland Partnership. In Sunderland when we address Child Poverty, we are addressing Child and Family Poverty.

Before the Child Poverty agenda gained momentum and the Child Poverty Act received Royal Assent in March this year, lots of work was already going on in the city to support families in poverty. The first phase of the Sunderland Partnership's approach was to establish a picture of what was currently taking place in each of our organisations to tackle child poverty; to put child poverty into a context locally; and to identify the major challenges ahead. This groundwork gave us the opportunity to gain the fundamental 'buy-in' from each of our key partners. If we were going to do this, we needed a strong commitment from everyone. Sunderland City Council and Local Partners including the Teaching Primary Care Trust, Gentoo (the local housing group) and Jobcentre Plus to name but a few, came together to establish a shared vision in order to meet joint outcomes associated with reducing child poverty.

Our agreed **Vision** is 'To ensure that all City Council services and local partners are working collectively to do everything possible to reduce child poverty and mitigate its effects to ensure that today's children don't become parents of poor children in 2025'.

The pace of change from the new Coalition Government is unprecedented with significant policy changes being announced on a daily basis. The Government's Comprehensive Spending Review has taken place and a lot of new evidence is available from recent reports from Michael Marmot, Alan Milburn and Frank Field. It is times like these when we must stop to consider those whose lives will be affected the most and how we can best mitigate the impact of poverty. So, this leads us into Phase 2 of our journey...

We're now taking the time to reflect and re-focus our strategy and the subsequent actions to ensure that our work to tackle child and family poverty in Sunderland really does support the poorest and most needy families. We have carried out a detailed Needs Assessment, which will underpin our future work. We brought our partners together in a Child Poverty Development Workshop in November 2010 to review our position in the light of this Needs Assessment and the recent policy changes to help us to develop a transformation agenda for tackling child and family poverty for the whole City.

You will see some of the products and outcomes that Phase 1 of our joint approach has achieved. However, as the challenges ahead become harder, this is not the time to lose pace or become complacent, we must become transformational in our approach if we are to break the devastating cycle of poverty in Sunderland, so that our poor children don't miss out on a whole range of opportunities and subsequently grow up to be poor parents of poor children.

The commitment from the Sunderland Partnership to taking this agenda forward will, we trust, continue to provide a strong foundation for creative and innovative ways for Partners to work together to reduce Child Poverty.

Reducing Child Poverty is everybody's business in Sunderland and we want every child to have an equal chance. We hope you and your organisation will join us in our journey.

Cllr Florence Anderson
Deputy Leader
Child Poverty Champion

Cllr Pat Smith
Children & Learning city Portfolio holder
Chair of the Sunderland Child Poverty Board

Canon Stephen Taylor MBE
Chair of the Sunderland Partnership

Introduction

The purpose of the Sunderland Child and Family Poverty Strategy is to:

- Provide a framework within which partners can work together with a shared vision to meet joint outcomes associated with reducing child poverty.
- Enable a wide range of partners to carry out their statutory and moral duties to reduce child poverty in Sunderland.
- Ensure that the views of families and children are taken into consideration in the shaping of plans to reduce child poverty.

This Strategy has been subject to extensive consultation with Statutory Partners, the Community and Voluntary Sector and Council Directorates. The Strategy also reflects new duties under the Child Poverty Act 2010, the Child Poverty Needs Assessment and the Coalition Programme for Government.

The Child Poverty Strategy supports a range of other City Strategies including:

Sunderland Strategy

<https://remoteaccess2.sunderland.gov.uk/projects/key-docs/files/sunderland-strategy-08-25-final.pdf>

Children & Young People's Plan

<https://remoteaccess2.sunderland.gov.uk/directorates/childrens-services/documents/cypp-2009-10.pdf>

Working Neighbourhoods Strategy

<http://www.sunderland.gov.uk/Public/Editables/Themes/CityCouncil/corporate/seds/wns.asp>

Economic Masterplan

<http://www.sunderland.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=4687>

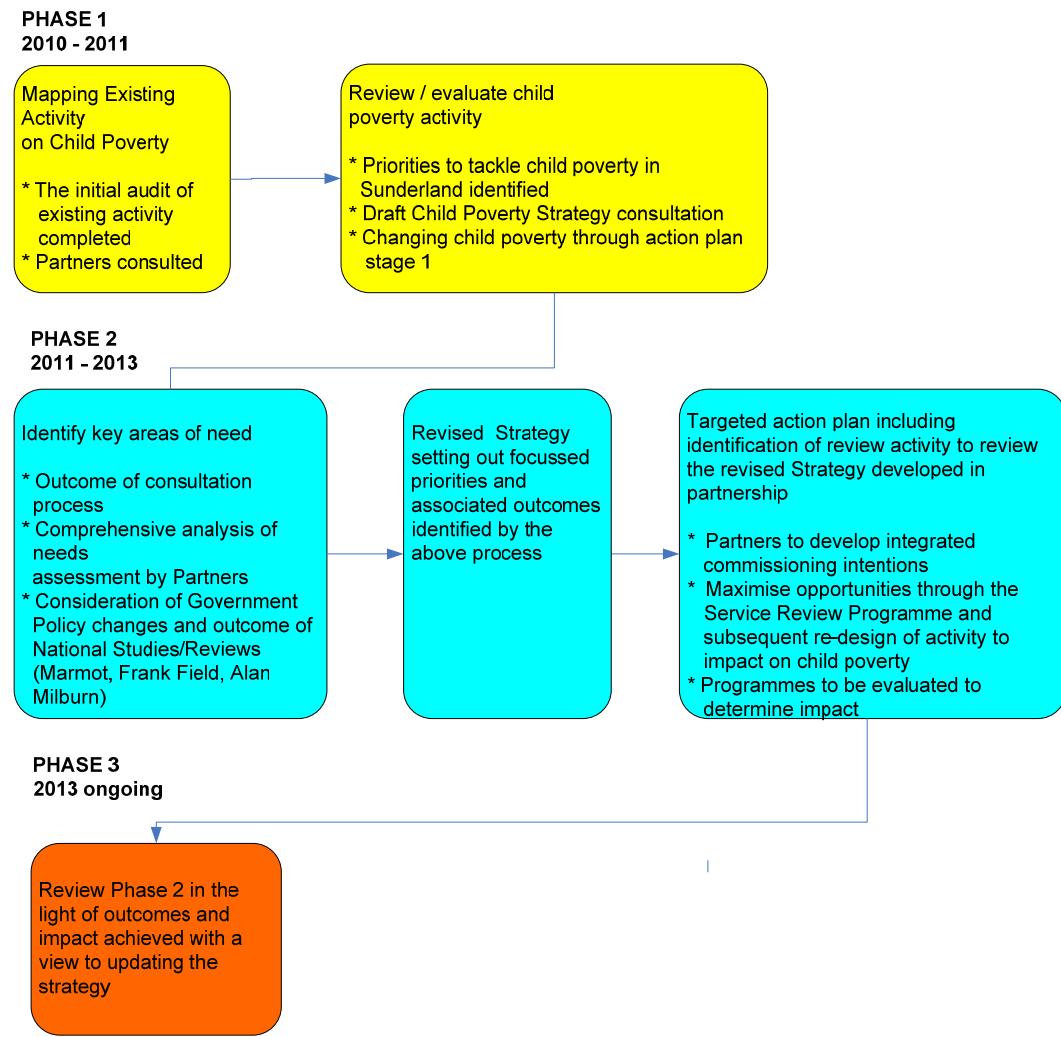
This Strategy will also develop alongside the Financial Inclusion Strategy and Affordable Warmth Strategy, both of which are currently being developed. It should also be noted that Sunderland's designation as a Healthy City by the World Health Organisation represents a major commitment to reduce health inequalities and this will also compliment the drive to reduce child and family poverty.

The Sunderland Model

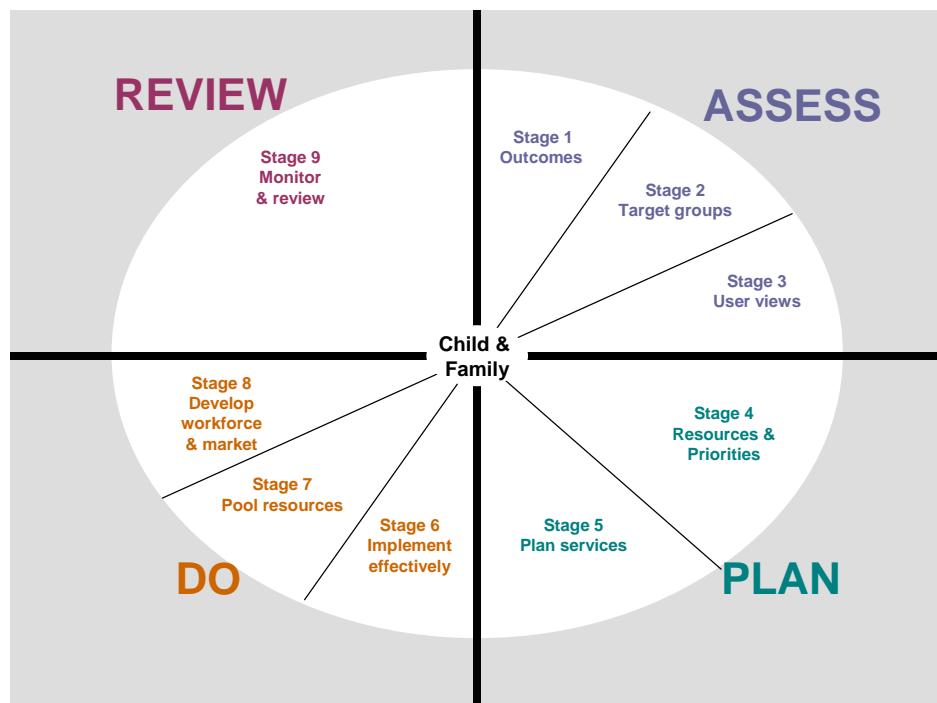
The Sunderland approach recognises the need to plan strategically for the long term to 2025, and also the unlikelihood of additional resources being made available to take this complex agenda forward. The Sunderland approach therefore represents a strong commitment to reduce the levels of child and family poverty through a smarter way of working, a better understanding of children and families in need, and improved effectiveness in achieving better outcomes.

The Sunderland Model, set out below, comprises a three phased approach and Phase 1 was completed with a Draft Strategy which went out to consultation during the Summer of 2010.

The Sunderland Model for Tackling Child and Family Poverty



The process in the Sunderland model outlined above is consistent with the following Outcomes Based Commissioning model:



Progress of Phase 1 of the Sunderland Strategy

The first phase (2010-11) of Sunderland's strategic approach to reducing child poverty has produced the following products:

- A Governance structure in place with the LSP as lead supported by the Child Poverty Board.
- A committed 'buy-in' from all strategic partners
- A greater level of understanding of child poverty issues in Sunderland
- A Child Poverty Strategy that was developed in partnership, with a wide range of partners actively engaged and then consulted
- Engagement of young people in the planning process (with an exceptional piece of work in producing a DVD)
- A comprehensive Action Plan which covers the scope of the actions which have been committed to across the partnership to tackle child poverty
- A high level of political support
- Senior Management support from Council Officers and Partners
- A Child Poverty Needs Assessment completed
- A regional profile on an innovative and progressive approach
- A national profile with the CPU visit and health task team reports
- A Performance Framework in place with Partners signed up

As we move to Phase 2 of the Sunderland Model, it is also worthy to note some of the broader key outcomes achieved during Phase 1 as identified through the Needs Assessment;

- Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) results have improved significantly over the last three years with a 13% increase in results for those living in areas with a high percentage of children living in poverty.
- Sunderland's 5+ A*-C including English and maths has a 7% point improvement this year and an 18% point improvement over five years.
- An increase of 17.6% in attainment for those eligible for Free School Meals at KS4.
- Reduction in under 18 conceptions rate in Sunderland (15.5% from the 1998 baseline). The actual number of under 18 conceptions has reduced from 327 in 2007 to 290 in 2008.
- In Housing, 99% of Social Housing meets the decent homes standard
- A substantial reduction in the number of 16 to 18 year olds not in education, employment or training (NEET) in Sunderland, from 13.2% to 9.4%

In noting the developments in Phase 1, it is important to acknowledge that a lot more work needs to be done to reduce child and family poverty in Sunderland.

Outcomes of Consultation Process – Phase 1

In order to ensure that as wide a group of stakeholders as possible were consulted on Phase 1 of the Strategy, a variety of methods of consultation were carried out, which are detailed in Section 13 of the report and included:

- Online consultation via www.sunderland.gov.uk/childpoverty
- Attendance at:
 - Area Committees
 - Children, Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee
 - Local Strategic Partnership
 - Sunderland Learning Partnership
 - Children's Trust
 - Economic Prosperity Delivery Partnership
- City-wide Parenting Group Consultation, Summer 2009
- Child and Family Poverty Development Workshop, 10 November 2011

The Strategy has been positively received and comments from the consultation have been used to inform both the Needs Assessment and the development of Phase 2 of the Strategy. However, a number of comments were made in relation to the importance of tackling child and family poverty in Sunderland, particularly in the current economic climate, and that it was important to concentrate on those areas that will have the most impact. It was noted that some priorities would be picked up as part of the Council's and partners' mainstream activity. Another particular issue highlighted was the little emphasis given to crime and disorder or making areas safer.

Moving to Phase 2 of the Sunderland Child and Family Poverty Strategy 2011-13

The previous sections of this Strategy have identified that considerable progress has been made in establishing child and family poverty as a priority, putting in place a robust governance structure and a greater understanding that 'Reducing Child and Family Poverty in Sunderland is Everybody's Business'. This completes Phase 1 of the Sunderland model.

However, it should be noted that the position has fundamentally changed since the City's Strategy was first drafted 12 months ago. It is now time to revise our Strategy to reflect the outcome of the consultation, the findings of the Child and Family Poverty Needs Assessment, the change in policies from the Coalition Government and the impact of the Comprehensive Spending Review.

Our Vision

Our vision remains, 'To ensure that all City Council services and local partners are working collectively to do everything possible to reduce child and family poverty in Sunderland, mitigate its effects in the city, and therefore ensure that today's children don't become the parents of poor children in 2025'.

Child Poverty in Sunderland – An Overview

The Child Poverty Act 2010 defines the following levels of poverty:

- a) Relative low income poverty
- b) Combined low income and material deprivation
- c) Absolute low income poverty
- d) Persistent poverty

HMRC have defined children living in poverty (NI 116) as the number of children in families in receipt of either out of work benefits, or in receipt of tax credits where their reported income is less than 60% median income.

The evidence base for Sunderland using the latest available data from HMRC (2007) shows that 25.4% of our children and young people, aged 0-19, are in poverty.

Government Office Region	Children in families in receipt of CTC (<60% median income) or IS / JSA		% of Children in "Poverty"	
	Under 16	All Children	Under 16	All Children
England	2,141,690	2,397,645	22.4%	21.6%
North East	117,125	131,235	25.3%	24.3%
Sunderland	13,460	15,140	26.5%	25.4%

Presenting the Child Poverty dataset at LSOA shows that the levels of Child Poverty, for those aged 0-19, across Sunderland, varies from 1.9% to 73.8%.

LSOAs in Copt Hill, Hendon, Hetton, Millfield, Pallion, Silksworth, Southwick, St Anne's, St Michael's and Washington East have the highest proportions of Children in Poverty which equates to 20% of those in poverty across Sunderland.

LSOA Name	Locality	Ward	% of All Children in "Poverty"
Sunderland 013B	East	Millfield	73.8%
Sunderland 004B	North	Southwick	72.2%
Sunderland 012D	West	Pallion	68.8%
Sunderland 016C	East	Hendon	66.7%
Sunderland 016F	East	St Michael's	59.0%
Sunderland 021B	West	St Anne's	58.3%
Sunderland 005E	North	Southwick	57.3%
Sunderland 016A	East	Hendon	56.0%
Sunderland 023F	West	Silksworth	50.7%
Sunderland 034A	Coalfields	Copt Hill	50.0%
Sunderland 005B	North	Southwick	48.9%
Sunderland 017B	Washington	Washington East	48.8%
Sunderland 012E	West	St Anne's	48.5%
Sunderland 036D	Coalfields	Hetton	48.4%
Sunderland 036A	Coalfields	Hetton	48.0%

64% of the Children living in Poverty are in a Lone Parent family compared to 36% living in a couple family. 75% of the families have more than one child in the household. 60% of the children in Poverty are under the age of 10.

Of the 188 LSOAs in Sunderland: 2 (1%) LSOAs have more than 75% of children in poverty (under 16 year olds), 12 (6%) LSOAs have more than 50% of children in poverty (under 16 years old), and 91 (48%) LSOAs have more than 25% of children in poverty (under 16 years old).

Four of the LSOAs within Sunderland are within the 1% highest for child poverty (under 16 years old) nationally. They are situated in Hendon, Millfield, Pallion and Southwick. An area of Southwick has the third highest level of child poverty (84%) for any LSOA in England.

Ranking all LSOAs in England according to percentage child poverty (under 16 years old) shows: Sunderland has 24 (13%) LSOAs within the top 10%, Sunderland has 60 (32%) LSOAs in the top 20%, Sunderland has 86 (46%) LSOAs in the top 30% of LSOAs nationally.

Children in Low Income Families in Sunderland – An Overview

When considering child and family poverty in Sunderland, it is important to remember the low income / in-work poverty.

Using information available from HRMC it can be shown that the number of Children in Sunderland living in low income families is increasing on a yearly basis by 3%. With this in mind it can be predicted the proportion of children living in poverty may also have increased.

51% of children in Sunderland are in low income families compared with 49% across the North East and 42% across England as a whole. This means that 30,735 children in Sunderland are living in low income families compared to 15,140 children living in Poverty (25.4%).

Wards where the proportion of children living in poverty and children in low income families is highest in Castle, Hendon, Pallion, Redhill, Sandhill, Southwick, and St Anne's. These areas are concentrated in Sunderland East, Sunderland North and Sunderland West Area Regeneration Framework (ARF) areas. There are also small communities in Hetton and Washington where the proportion of children living in poverty and low income families is high.

Number of children in families claiming Child Benefit	Children in Families out of Work	Children in IS/JSA families	Children in families receiving WTC and CTC		Children in families receiving CTC only		Children in Low Income Families	Children in families in receipt of CTC (<60% median income) or IS/JSA Children in "Poverty"
				income <60% median income		income <60% median income		
59,465	13,910	11,285	16,825	1,990	13,835	1,865	30,735	15,140
	23%	19%	28%	3%	N/A	3%	51.7%	25.4%

Sunderland Child and Family Poverty - Policy Context

The change of government has had a significant impact on the policy, operational and economic environment and this will continue apace into the future. There are many policy developments that will fundamentally change the environment within which families and support services operate, in particular changes in the social welfare system will impact on the circumstances of many families that are living in poverty.

The change of government is also impacting on how the Council and its partners operate in the future. The emergence of policy drivers such as the localism agenda and the Big Society, amongst others, provide the basis on which local services can be developed to provide an increasingly focused approach to service delivery. The move towards personalised service delivery that is responsive to an informed understanding of need is at the core of the service review activities that are emerging through the Sunderland Way of Working (SWOW). This approach should provide the basis on which the factors that contribute to child poverty can be mitigated. Of course we also need to ensure that the service developments that are emerging from the review process do not disadvantage those in our communities who are already subject to inequalities. National developments are also significant in shaping the Sunderland Strategy to reduce child poverty.

The Child Poverty Act 2010 sets out the goal to end child poverty by 2020, and the associated national and local actions required. The commitment to end child poverty has been maintained by the new administration, as outlined in the **Coalition programme for government**. This includes intentions in respect of the tax credit system, free early education for disadvantaged 2 year olds, a re-focusing of Sure Start on the neediest families and a re-focusing of Sure Start funding for outreach services to increase the number of Sure Start Health Visitors. There is also an intention to investigate a new approach to helping families with multiple problems.

Advisory guidance was published by the Child Poverty Unit in September 2010 to support Local Authorities in carrying out their duties. This covers the key areas of the duty to co-operate, to understand local needs, and to develop and deliver a strategy.

The Comprehensive Spending Review in October outlined three principles of Growth, Fairness, and Reform in the vision for a fairer Britain. The CSR aims to reduce the deficit while protecting the most vulnerable and sets out a programme of reform that will ensure those who need it most continue to receive support, but with a greater focus on services that offer opportunities for social mobility.

Plans agreed in the Spending Review to build a fairer society include:

- Protecting schools spending, and introducing a new fairness premium worth £7.2 billion in total over the Spending Review period which will support the poorest in the early years and at every stage of their education.

- Ensuring the welfare state is sustainable by ensuring that the amount a household can receive from welfare is no more than an average family gets by going out to work, and withdrawing Child Benefit from higher-rate tax payers.
- Making social housing more responsible, flexible and fair so that more people can access social housing in ways that better reflects their needs; meeting the Government's pledge in the Coalition Agreement by making in the region of £1.5 billion available for the Equitable Life Payments Scheme.
- An extension to 15 hours per week of free early education and care to all disadvantaged two year old children, as the cornerstone of a new focus on the foundation years before school, and protecting funding for Sure Start services in cash terms, including new investment in Sure Start health visitors

Independent Review – Poverty and Life Chances – Frank Field

In June this year the Government appointed Frank Field MP to lead an independent review into poverty and life chances. The main aims of the Review are to:

- Explore how a child's home environment affects their chances of being ready to take full advantage of their schooling
- Generate a broader debate about the nature and extent of poverty in the UK
- Recommend potential action by government and other institutions to reduce poverty and enhance life chances for the least advantaged, consistent with the Government's fiscal strategy
- Examine the case for reforms to the poverty measures, in particular for the inclusion of non-financial elements

The Review is due to report its findings to the Prime Minister at the end of the year. Indications are that the report will have a strong focus on the importance of early years and a good start in life.

Research shows the diverging abilities of children under five years and how these gaps remain throughout the school years. On average children from poorer homes achieve lower levels of attainment when compared to their richer peers. It is around this research that the Review has built up proposals for an index of life chances which will seek to monitor the improvements in children's skills at age 5 setting national benchmarks to be reached over time.

Identifying the key drivers which lead to poor attainment in the early years is the first step and should be followed by interventions to improve children's life chances, and particularly those of the 30% poorest children, so that the attainments of five year olds become more equal across the income distribution.

Evidence of what works in the UK is becoming clearer as evaluations proceed and results are published. For example the National Evaluation of Sure Start has shown that Sure Start has had a positive impact for children across the income gradient; the Oxford University EPPE study shows that quality pre-school provision reduces the impact of normal social disadvantage; and, there is good early evidence from the Family Intervention Project, the Incredible Years and the Triple P parenting programme.

The Review is likely to recommend that the Government commits itself to a radical overhaul of a whole sweep of early years policies and moves beyond the traditional anti poverty strategy of putting too great an emphasis on transferring income to poorer families. **Making early years a priority, investing in services for the first five or so years of life, and implementing a new measurement that centres on future life chances and opportunities** – a new index of life opportunities are the likely key Review recommendations.

Unleashing aspiration – The Panel on Fair Access to the Professions, chaired by Alan Milburn

Starting from the premise that our professions are world leaders and central to the UK's future, the independent cross-party panel was charged with reporting on how to make a professional career open to as wide a pool of talent as possible. Reporting in July 2009, the Panel addressed the barriers to opportunity in accessing high status careers.

The Panel found that a huge post-war growth in new professional opportunities brought about the first great wave of social mobility, but that this has since slowed, with professions becoming more socially exclusive. The growing importance of the professions combined with the decline in demand for unskilled labour makes the case for taking action to accelerate social mobility by finding flexible routes in the professions.

Social mobility is seen as each new generation benefiting from more and better opportunities to get on in life – better jobs and fair chances to access them and reach their potential. Unless child poverty is tackled and holistic approaches to tackling disadvantage are adopted, social mobility will be thwarted.

In order to address social mobility, evidence points to the importance of investing in high quality early years provision, valuing and supporting the family, parenting and community and encouraging their aspirations and expectations for their children, and high quality, well-rounded education.

Social mobility is founded on the aspiration that people have to succeed; this is often set at an early age but without good quality support and information, and access to social networks even those with the greatest talents may lose out.

The Panel make a number of detailed recommendations for action, including in relation to raising educational attainment and closing the attainment gap, reformed routes into Higher Education and new and flexible opportunities to get on to the professional career ladder.

In a recent **speech to the Schools North East Summit** (October 2010), Alan Milburn expanded on the importance of education as a force for economic and social progress, and argued that realising individual talent is the best way of overcoming social disadvantage. He sees schools as the motors of social mobility and identifies five priorities for action:

- Enshrining the raising of educational standards and the narrowing of educational inequalities as the objectives of education policy
- Social mobility programmes should be enshrined in every school
- Move the focus of schools from targets to outcomes
- Empower schools with more freedom
- Empowering all parents to choose good schools

The Marmot Review – Fair Society, Healthy Lives

The Marmot Review into health inequalities (February 2010) proposes an evidence based strategy to address the social determinants of health and the conditions in which people live and work, which can lead to health inequalities. It argues that, to improve health for all and reduce unfair and unjust inequalities in health, action is needed across the social gradient. The review asserts that it is not sufficient to focus on the bottom 10% because there are poorer outcomes all the way down from the best off in society; universal action is needed to reduce the steepness of the social gradient of health inequalities, with a scale and intensity that is proportionate to the level of disadvantage (proportionate universalism).

The Review found:

- People living in the poorest neighbourhoods in England will on average die seven years earlier than people living in the richest neighbourhoods
- People living in poorer areas not only die sooner, but spend more of their lives with disability – an average total difference of 17 years
- The Review highlights the social gradient of health inequalities - put simply, the lower one's social and economic status, the poorer one's health is likely to be

- Health inequalities arise from a complex interaction of many factors – housing, income, education, social isolation, disability – all of which are strongly affected by one's economic and social status
- Health inequalities are largely preventable. Not only is there a strong social justice case for addressing health inequalities, there is also a pressing economic case. It is estimated that the annual cost of health inequalities is between £36 billion to £40 billion through lost taxes, welfare payments and costs to the NHS
- Action on health inequalities requires action across all the social determinants of health, including education, occupation, income, home and community

Marmot's approach to health inequalities is to create the conditions for people to take control of their own lives, reinforcing the need for action spanning the NHS, national and local government, and the voluntary and private sectors, with local government seen as a pivotal partner. Action taken to reduce health inequalities will benefit society in many ways, including economic benefits. It looks beyond economic costs and benefits towards a goal of environmental sustainability. The review contends that creating a sustainable future is entirely compatible with action to reduce health inequalities through promoting sustainable local communities, active transport, sustainable food production, and zero carbon houses, all of which have health benefits.

The review sets out a **framework for action** under two policy goals: to create an enabling society that maximizes individual and community potential; and to ensure social justice, health and sustainability are at the heart of all policies.

Central to the review is the recognition that disadvantage starts before birth and accumulates throughout life. This is reflected in the 6 policy objectives and to the highest priority being given to the first objective:

1. Giving every child the best start in life
2. Enabling all children, young people and adults to maximize their capabilities and have control over their lives
3. Creating fair employment and good work for all
4. Ensuring a healthy standard of living for all
5. Creating and developing sustainable places and communities
6. Strengthening the role and impact of ill-health prevention

The report sets out policy recommendations for each of these objectives.

Leon Feinstein

Leon Feinstein from the Institute of Education has undertaken research on predicting educational achievement, examining the links between pre-school tests, social class and final academic levels.

The inter-generational links between income inequality and educational attainment are well known. There is evidence that the effects of class difference are already apparent in pre-school children and, although not set in stone, are harder to break later. This is the motivation for investment in local programmes such as Sure Start, although any gains in pre-school attainment need to be sustained throughout primary and secondary education.

Feinstein's research describes the diverging abilities of children under five years and how these gaps remain throughout the school years. On average children from poorer homes achieve lower levels of attainment when compared to their richer peers – children are already stratified by social class in standard tests of intellectual and personal development at 22 months; this stratification becomes more extreme by age 10 by the standard tests for academic development. There is no evidence that entry into schooling overcomes the polarisation of children's educational achievement linked to the effects of parental background.

Test scores at 22 months and 42 months are found to be strong predictors of subsequent performance. Children in the bottom quartile are significantly less likely to get any qualifications than those in the top quartile. So even before children enter school, signals predicting future

educational progress are contained in the standard development tests of child development. There is evidence that early interventions can mitigate against the features of early development and the impact of social inequalities, however programmes such as Sure Start require significant investment to be effective.

Graham Allen MP, Early Intervention Commission

Graham Allen MP, Chair of the Early Intervention Commission, is expected to submit his first report in January 2011. The report will clearly make strong recommendations emphasising the importance of early intervention. In November 2010 he was quoted as saying, "We have to be very clear about what early intervention is. It's very easy to confuse it with prevention. There is no doubt that prevention should have a better profile and more money, but better than prevention is early intervention because we are tackling problems at the source. So drug rehabilitation, for example, even if it's started early on, is prevention. Early intervention is about ensuring the addiction doesn't happen in the first place."

"Early intervention is about creating that social and emotional bedrock in babies, children and young people that means they grow up not wanting to offend, not wanting to take drugs, keen to get a job and capable of being good parents to their own children."

"We're talking about the family nurse partnerships, we're talking about Sure Start children's centres, we're talking about social emotional aspects of learning, life skills for children in schools."

Common themes which emerge from these reports:

- Prioritising early years is key to addressing child and family poverty, reducing health and social inequalities
- Holistic and integrated approaches and co-operative work across sectors are vital
- Empowering communities lies at the heart of the changes needed
- Early intervention is key to turning around intergenerational problems

Needs Assessment

The completion of the Child Poverty Needs Assessment is a requirement of the Child Poverty Act 2010. Following the Child Poverty Boards approval to a Needs Assessment specification, a project brief was issued to all Directorates and Partners to carry out this assessment. The objective of the task was to ensure that Sunderland Child Poverty Strategy and Action Plan is rooted in sound, 'up to date' analysis of the needs and characterisations of children and families living, or at risk of living, in poverty in Sunderland.

The Needs Assessment has been completed and has been the subject of detailed consultation and discussion with Partners. A development event on 10th November 2010 was held to engage Partners in refining and agreeing the Needs Assessment. The Needs Assessment is attached as **Appendix 1** together with a highlight report summarising the key points for the Council's consideration and approval.

The following are some of the key facts coming from this Needs Assessment:

- The evidence base for Sunderland using the latest available data from HMRC (2007) shows that 25.4% of our children and young people, aged 0- 19, are in poverty.
- Presenting the Child Poverty dataset at LSOA shows that the levels of Child Poverty, for those aged 0-19, across Sunderland, varies from 1.9% to 73.8% with LSOA 013B in the Millfield Ward having the highest percentage.
- 64% of the Children living in Poverty are in a Lone Parent family compared to 36% living in a couple family.
- 60% of the Children in Poverty are under the age of 10.
- Four of the LSOAs within Sunderland are within the 1% highest for child poverty (under 16 years old) nationally; they are situated in Hendon, Millfield, Pallion and Southwick. An area of Southwick has the third highest level of child poverty (84%) for any LSOA in England.

- 51% of children in Sunderland are in low income families compared with 49% across the North East and 42% across England as a whole. This means that 30,735 children in Sunderland are living in low income families compared to 15,140 children living in Poverty (25.4%).
- Using information available from HMRC, it can be shown that the number of children in Sunderland living in low income families is increasing on a yearly basis by 3%.
- Recent data shows that the gap in life expectancy across natural neighbourhoods is almost 20 years (Witherwack and Fatfield and Mount Pleasant or Seaburn and South Dents)
- Breastfeeding has increased within 48 hours of delivery from 38.9% in 2006/07 to 40.3% in 2007/08. Sunderland still lags behind the North East (52.4%) and England (70%).
- About 13,000 children and young people will need some additional support during their 0 - 19 journey from the educational, health or caring professions.
- Studies and information over time have indicated a trend toward correlation between levels of deprivation in an area and the numbers of road fatalities, in particular the number of road traffic accidents (RTAs) involving children and young people.
- Children from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to begin primary school with lower personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy skills than their peers.
- Performance across the city for Key Stage 2 (Level 4 or higher in both English and Maths) in LSOAs with high child poverty (top 10% child poverty nationally) has not improved over the last three years (62% to 58% to 57%, 2007 – 2009), and the gap between those pupils and the rest has also widened over the period, from 10% in 2007 to 15% in 2009.
- The performance of young people from low income backgrounds progressing into higher education is reducing.
- Economically vulnerable households are over-represented in poor condition dwellings. 9,308 economically vulnerable households live in non-Decent dwellings representing 47.7% of all households in non decent dwellings

Participation, Consultation and Engagement

A key feature in developing the Sunderland Child Poverty Strategy has been the participation of children, young people and families and the engagement of Partners in its development. The following is a brief summary of key events which have assisted in the production of the Strategy:

- 'Lets Start a Conversation About Poverty' – Sunderland Voluntary Youth Sector Workshop, August 2008
- 'Learning is Fun' Conference – Stadium of Light, June 2009
- 'Turning the Curve' Development Event with Partners, June 2009
- Citywide Parenting Group Consultation on Child Poverty, Summer 2009
- Developing a Locality Model – Child Poverty Deep Dive, Southwick March 2010
- European Launch of the Year of Poverty – Workshop with young people, November 2010

In June 2010 the draft Sunderland Child Poverty Strategy document was formally shared with key partners for consultation. Partners were given the opportunity to feedback on the strategy between June and September 2010, either by post or email. A particular issue highlighted was the little emphasis given to crime and disorder or making areas safer. It was recognised that improving safety and feelings of safety will help families in poverty socialise more within their community and avail themselves of local services which will help support them and meet their needs. Partners were generally satisfied with the content of the strategy and this is largely due to wide engagement in the strategy development process. In addition, suggestions and key intelligence which was highlighted as result of various presentations to LSP Delivery Partnerships, Area Committees, the Scrutiny Working Group and one to one meetings are also included in the revised strategy.

Sunderland's Independent Advisory Groups (IAGs), groups established to represent disability, race, gender, faith, older people, younger people and lesbian, gay and bisexual people will be invited to share their views on child poverty and influence the actions that form the Child Poverty

Action Plan. The process of requesting the involvement of the IAGs has commenced, in line with the agreed protocol.

A development workshop was held on 10th November 2010 to engage Partners in considering the findings of the Needs Assessment and to assist in determining priorities which will allow them to develop innovative approaches in reducing child poverty and lead to integrated commissioning intentions. The outcomes from this event are set out later in the Strategy.

Regional Developments

The North East Child Poverty Regional Advisory Group has recently set up a North East Declaration on Child Poverty to coincide with the European Year of Poverty. In 2010-11 the Group's central aim is to **widen public understanding** of the problem and encourage more positive action by individuals and organisations of every type. The launch of the Declaration was attended by a group of young people from Sunderland and the Deputy Leader, Councillor Florence Anderson as the City's Child Poverty Champion.

The Declaration is hosted by Barnardo's Website and can be found at
http://www.barnardos.org.uk/northeastpovertydeclaration/poverty_pledge_support.htm

Organisations and individuals are required to do three things in the Declaration:

1. Find out what child poverty means.
2. Be inspired - learn how other people, businesses and organisations are already making a difference.
3. Show your commitment.

All individuals and Partners organisations are asked to visit the website and consider supporting the Regional Declaration.

Child and Family Poverty Strategy: Development Workshop and Way Forward

A Child Poverty Development Workshop was held on 10th November 2010 to consider the Needs Assessment and the priorities necessary to take the agenda forward. The Partners present acknowledged the need for more consistency in partnership working across the City and that doing more of the same won't work. There was also acceptance that funding constraints mean that not everything that might be done was affordable and targeted activity was required. A universal core offer with additional targeting (proportionate universalism) was necessary.

It was acknowledged that addressing child poverty is a complicated business with no straightforward answers. It was the view of partners that, at this point in time, given the financial climate and the changing nature of public services, a complex set of priorities was unlikely to deliver the progress which Sunderland aspires to. The following existing priorities were considered:

- **Employment:** focussing on the long-term unemployed, training opportunities and engaging local businesses in the agenda
- **Children's Services and Education:** focussing on access to childcare and Children's Centres by our most poor families, narrowing the attainment gap and reducing the number of NEETS
- **Health and Quality of Life:** with a focus on reducing teenage conceptions, child obesity, mental health, drug and alcohol abuse, smoking related disease, and improved lifestyles through physical activity
- **Housing:** with a focus on supporting the socially excluded, the provision for homeless families, improvements to unfit housing and tackling fuel poverty
- **Financial Inclusion:** focussing on increasing financial capability, improved advice, reducing indebtedness and supporting Credit Union

Evidence tells us that action in all of these areas will make a difference on child poverty levels; however it is questionable whether additional activity focussing on all these issues over and above the core level of service is realistic.

At the development workshop there was a real appetite amongst practitioners to do things differently, to work in real partnership and to make a difference. From the discussion at the development day, a two pronged approach emerged:

Firstly, embedding action on the existing child poverty priorities in the day to day practice and the service plans and strategies of those organisations which form the Sunderland Partnership. **The overarching priority** for the child poverty strategy in Sunderland would therefore be to:

Make child and family poverty everybody's business through adopting an approach to 'child and family poverty proof' Strategic Plans of all Partners as routine practice.

This will be achieved by:

- Requiring all Services and Partners to apply a poverty impact assessment to all strategic plans and actions
- Providing support to Partners in carrying out the Assessment through guidance and a Joint Impact Assessment Tool and
- Requesting the Partnership Delivery Boards and the Child Poverty Board to manage performance against this assessment.

The Children and Young Peoples Learning Scrutiny Committee at its meeting in November 2010 also recommended this as a priority.

Secondly, a focus on a more defined service area which could engage the contributions of a range of partners and agencies, may be more likely to make a real impact.

An examination of the existing research and policy context (Frank Field Review, Leon Feinstein research, Alan Milburn report, Marmot review, Graham Allen review) tells us that doing more of the same won't work, and that addressing the inequalities in early years delivers the best prospect of long term social mobility. There is compelling evidence that investment in the early years can deliver short and long term outcomes. For this investment to be effective, the evidence base for service delivery needs to be clear and applicable to the community being served.

As the key plank of the child poverty action plan, a review of early years provision and early intervention across services in Sunderland could be undertaken, with short term outcomes of increased attainment and wellbeing and long term outcomes of child poverty levels at the heart. A service model which has a universal core offer with additional targeting (proportionate universalism) based on evidence from the Needs Analysis could be drawn up.

The second priority would therefore be to **develop integrated neighbourhood models of service to re-target and deliver Early Years and Early Intervention.**

This will be achieved by:

- Delivering **locality based/integrated** services;
- Doing more to help and support families and children at **an earlier stage (early intervention/prevention)**;
- Ensuring Children's Centres **deliver a more targeted approach** to those in need;
- Exploring **different, more effective models of working with families**, such as "Think Family"
- Considering how **schools can be at the centre** of the delivery model; and
- Testing model in a pilot area of the city.

This priority will be complemented by a review of services to vulnerable families. The Council and its partners have successfully piloted the "Think Family" approach. The "Think Family" targets early prevention and interventions at the most vulnerable families in our communities. The review will seek to identify and incorporate the key lessons from the pilots into a range of Council and partner service delivery.

A portfolio of models could be trialled – pilots could target either neighbourhoods which are child poverty hotspots, or where there is embryonic or existing work to build on, or where there is scope to review partnership work focussed on early years. Any neighbourhood Hub model based on an integrated/ team approach should identify the natural local hub i.e. the facility people already use –which could be a children's centre, school, community centre, library, voluntary organisation building etc. This hub model could deliver savings on other buildings, back office services and avoid duplication of delivery. There would need to be an agreed set of outcomes to underpin any model to be piloted and models should be bottom up, based on inclusivity, communicating with and incentivising local families to engage. Challenges, such as information sharing between agencies, would also need to be addressed.

This approach should combine some quick wins through early pilots based on the needs assessment and existing activity, with a long term vision for change. This would require a high level of commitment from all parties. The research is telling us that delivering effective services in the early years will make the biggest long term difference to outcomes but, if an enhanced focus on maternity and early years were agreed, there would be consequences and fall out for other activity which would have to cease or be scaled down. An understanding that we need to move away from traditional forms of service delivery and radically change what we do and don't do in local communities will be essential if we are to realise meaningful improvement.

Partners are committed to the approach outlined and have expressed an intention to dedicate resource to the development of a new way of working at a neighbourhood level. The first step of this Strategy is to identify a pilot area within the City so that we can understand what can and should change and how remodelled services can be developed and delivered.

Action Plan

The Action Plan for the Strategy and the two Priorities established therein, will be developed with Partners in the Winter of 2011. The Action Plan will reflect the outcome of considerations by all Partners to the Comprehensive Spending Review and the Policy Framework highlighted in this Strategy.

'Reducing Child and Family Poverty in Sunderland is Everybody's Business'