

Child and Family Poverty in Devon - A Hidden Issue?

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An Interim Strategy for Reducing Child and Family Poverty in Devon

Devon Strategic Partnership

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Local Duties of the Child Poverty Act¹:

The Child Poverty Act received Royal Assent on 25th March 2010. Part 2 of the Act provides a framework to ensure that local partners are empowered to work together to tackle child poverty in their area, fully understand what needs to be done to tackle child poverty, and bring together their activities into a coherent and comprehensive strategy that responds to local needs. Part 2 of the Act gave the Government the power to issue statutory guidance and lay regulations about the needs assessments. However, the Government have decided not to issue formal statutory guidance and prescriptive regulations in relation to Part 2.

The requirements under Part 2 of the Child Poverty Act place duties on the local partners. These came into force on 25th May (two months after Royal Assent). Local authorities and their partners are required to:

- Cooperate to tackle child poverty in their area;
- Prepare and publish a local child poverty needs assessment;
- Prepare a joint local child poverty strategy; and
- Take child poverty into account when preparing or revising their Sustainable Communities Strategy.

Full wording from the Act can be found in the [Appendices](#)

For further information, or to pass on comments and suggestions, please contact Dr Gemma Hobson, Strategic Commissioning Team, Devon County Council on (01392) 382079 or gemma.hobson@devon.gov.uk

¹ Child Poverty Act 2010 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/9/contents>

1 Executive Summary

Aims and Objectives:

Our overall aim, in line with government policy, is to eradicate Child and Family Poverty in Devon by 2020. In order to achieve this, we have set the following objectives:

1. On a year by year basis, and in line with government targets, to reduce Child and Family Poverty and ameliorate its effects where it exists.
2. To take measures to reduce the effects of poverty now, and put into place changes of policy and practice which will reduce the likelihood of future poverty by improving the life chances of children and families in Devon.
3. To ensure that the reduction of Child and Family Poverty is recognised as part of everybody's business, and is developed and delivered in partnership.
4. To develop local leadership that ensures that partners and communities have a good understanding of Child and Family Poverty in Devon, through the annual publication, promotion and communication of a Needs Assessment and Strategy review.
5. To enable strategic partners to target services that will promote and support families' desires to improve their quality of life and mitigate the effects of economic recession.
6. To raise the aspirations and achievements and support the resilience of families, children and young people in Devon.

Values:

- 'Child' poverty is essentially 'family' poverty and we aim to focus our efforts on improving income levels and broader expectations across the whole family. In many cases, intergenerational poverty is a feature as it becomes difficult to break a cycle of low income, low expectations, and low educational or economic achievements.
- Devon is a relatively low average income area, despite the comfortable images usually associated with the county. Child and Family poverty can be hidden in rural areas and urban localities alike. Recognising the rural nature of so much of Devon, we will work to understand better the pattern of family poverty across the county, and find ways of bringing hidden poverty into the light.
- Because of the lower income levels (average incomes in Devon are 78% of the national average), Child and Family poverty in Devon often includes families where at least one adult is in work but on a low wage. We therefore recognise the need to address 'working poverty' as well as those who are currently workless.
- 'Poverty' is a value laden phrase and we will not use it to stigmatise families.
- Working with whole families will require partnership activity across many organisational boundaries – services for adult and children together, as well as Health and Economic/Employment organisations. In order to achieve this, clear and robust links will be required with a range of other local strategies, including the Devon Sustainable Communities Strategy, Children and Young People's Plan, and local economic strategies.
- We will make best use of the tools and capacities that we already have. This will require imaginative research and redesign of services across the spectrum, as well as finding new ways of enabling communities to improve things for themselves.

Recommendations:

Communications:

1. Rename 'Child Poverty' as 'Child and Family Poverty' in recognition that poverty is a family wide issue.
2. Collate and promote a map of good practice in Devon, together with the evidence base.
3. Develop a communications strategy in order to raise awareness of the negative impact of child and family poverty. This information will be delivered with format and content relevant to the audience. Key groups such as GP consortia and schools will be targeted.

4. Ensure that Child and Family Poverty is part of internal, partner and community strategies.
5. Work together with the advice sector through DAN (The Devon Advice Network) with the aim of integrating and developing child poverty advice and guidance services into the network's core strategy.

Commissioning:

5. Reframe commissioning strategies to ensure that child and family poverty reduction is part of the core service specification of all services commissioned by DCC and its partners.
6. Produce a minimum standard workforce specification for staff (both in house and for commissioned services) which ensures that front line staff are capable of delivering services. Performance management will be integrated into the service specification which includes a check that staff are making use of their training and skills in the delivery of their post.
7. Recognise that commissioning needs to address health, educational and social outcomes as well as economic outcomes.
8. Retain and build on successful early intervention provision where possible – the strategy recognises the importance of good models of early intervention in the reduction of child and family poverty and will seek to retain them where there is a sufficiently strong business case.

Family-focused activity:

8. Undertake detailed case studies with families in order to find out what 'poverty' looks and feels like across Devon, to understand more about hidden rural poverty, and to establish what interventions and support make a positive difference.
9. De-stigmatise Anti-Poverty Measures – for example, encouraging schools to develop ways of claiming free school meals which do not highlight claimants to their peers.
10. Recognise that although Child and Family Poverty can occur anywhere in a county as large and varied as Devon, there are particular concentrations of poverty and disadvantage where the greatest support and activity needs to be focused.
11. Develop and implement a CAF-linked Financial Health checklist, to enable individual families' economic situation to be quickly and effectively assessed for further advice and support through Devon Welfare Rights Unit.
12. Maintain and if possible build on the existing Quids for Kids scheme to provide additional support to families with multiple vulnerabilities – for example, where families have children with special educational needs, or have additional parenting pressures such as substance misuse.
13. Scope and implement a project to build Communication Skills and Confidence in families where intergenerational poverty is an issue.

Economic activity:

14. Support families to increase their income through employment, benefits, skills and opportunities
15. Build on the work of the Devon Worklessness Forum, Productive Skills Group and the four Local Employment and Skills Boards to improve pathways to employment
16. Within a climate of economic change, support families to make better economic decisions by promoting appropriate debt and financial advice with the support of local Credit Unions and South West Pound.
17. Narrow the digital divide by supporting children and families to access the internet and acquire the skills to use it productively.

2 Introduction

Childhood experience lays the foundations for later life. Growing up in poverty can damage physical, cognitive, social and emotional development. The impact of child poverty is increasingly well researched with evidence pointing to increased child mortality, low birth weights, child accidental deaths, teenage pregnancy, poor housing conditions, lower educational attendance and attainment and youth suicide. Almost all of these can be determinants of outcomes in adult life. For example children in the lowest income category are five times more likely to die in an accident, are more likely to be born small/or too early and to die early as adults². While some children who grow up in low income households will go on to achieve their full potential, many others will not.

Tackling child poverty will help to improve children's lives today, and it will also enhance their life chances: enabling them to make the most of their talents, achieve their full potential in life and pass on the benefits to their own children³.

"The case for action to eradicate child poverty is clear: poverty wastes talent and opportunity and limits life chances. Children who grow up in low income families can lack the experiences and opportunities that their peers enjoy: for example, going on an extended school trip, proper diets, space to play or do homework, holidays or winter coats. Children who fall far behind their peers, particularly for prolonged periods of time, are at risk of social exclusion and limited aspirations." (Ending Child Poverty: Making it happen. DCSF 2009)

This was the thinking behind the Child Poverty Act 2010, which gave legislative expression to the target originally set out by then Prime Minister Tony Blair in 1999, of eradicating Child Poverty by 2020. This has been confirmed by the Coalition Government in 2010 and continues to enjoy cross-party parliamentary support. A Child Poverty Commission chaired by Frank Field MP will advise on the production of a National Strategy by March 2011.

Between the late 1970s and mid 1990s child poverty doubled, resulting in the UK having one of the highest child poverty rates in the industrialised world. After the initial pledge in 1999, rates fell at first but then fluctuated and are not expected to reach the target of halving by 2010/11 as originally envisaged. In 2008 (the latest period for which figures are available), 20.9% of children in England were regarded as being in poverty, rising to 21.6% if only children under 16 are being considered. However, both statistics are reductions on the previous year – 21.6% and 22.4% respectively and the recent trend has been downward.

The impact of poverty is now also recognised within a number of the new performance indicators for Local Government, and in NI 116: Proportion of Children In Poverty. The definition of the indicator is 'the number of children who live in households whose equivalised income is below 60% of the contemporary national median'. The current indicator was only produced at a local level in March 2010 further analysis will be forthcoming soon. The fact that the number of children in poverty is now subject to individual analysis and measurement, reflecting the Governments continued commitment to halve child poverty by 2010 and eradicate it by 2020.

The Outcomes Report from the Child Poverty Peer Review in Devon referred to "a context of great uncertainty for all concerned in the social policy agendas."⁴ Some of the most notable items appearing on the child poverty agenda have included:

- *The Foundation Years: preventing poor children becoming poor adults.* Frank Field, HMG, 03 December, 2010⁵
- *Tackling Child Poverty and Improving Life Chances: consulting on a new approach.* HMG consultation, 21 December – 15 February, 2011
- *Early Intervention: the Next Steps.* Graham Allen, HMG, 19 January, 2011⁶
- *Welfare Reform Bill 2011,* HMG, 16 February 2011⁷

At a European level, poverty and economic disadvantage have also been recognised as significant areas of concern: in its 'Europe 2020 strategy for jobs and growth' published in July 2010, the European Union included the following economic aims:

- increasing labour market participation and reducing structural unemployment;
- developing a skilled workforce responding to labour market needs, promoting job quality and lifelong learning;
- improving the performance of education and training systems at all levels and increasing participation in tertiary education;

² National Children's Bureau on Child Poverty

³ Ending Child Poverty: Everybody's business

⁴ Addressing Child Poverty in Devon, p5, www.communities.idea.gov.uk and follow links to Child Poverty.

⁵ <http://povertyreview.independent.gov.uk>

⁶ <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/early-intervention-next-steps.pdf>

⁷ <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/policy/welfare-reform>

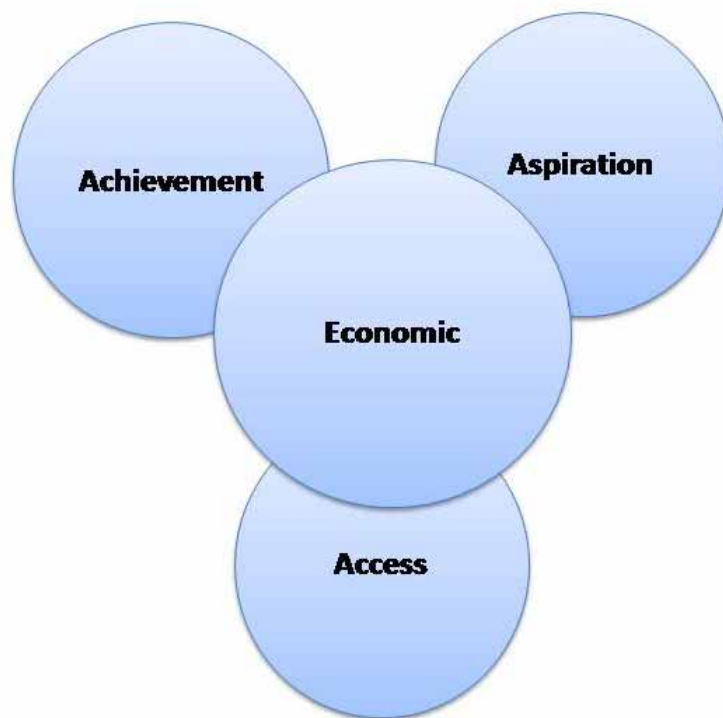
- promoting social inclusion and combating poverty.

In early government guidance, five principles for the development of a National Strategy were laid out:

- Work is the best route out of poverty
- Families and family life should be supported
- Early intervention is necessary to have a sustainable impact
- Excellence in delivery (ie statutory and 3rd sector partnership)
- Cost-effectiveness and affordability

The Devon strategy will be grounded in these principles whilst incorporating our own sense of what needs to be done in a large and diverse county where poverty of all sorts is often hidden within smaller communities. It will build on the recognised tradition of good work on financial inclusion that local partners have developed over recent years.

In developing our strategy we will work on four interdependent areas of focus – achievement, aspiration, access and economy. Their relationship can be shown in diagrammatic form as follows:



3 Local Context

Devon is the third largest county in England. The distance from Ilfracombe in north Devon to Dartmouth in the south is around 80 miles, and from Tavistock in the west to Axminster in the east it is 69 miles.

Devon is the twelfth highest populated county with around 750,000 residents, but is the seventh most sparsely populated county. With two coasts and two moors, Devon is rich in environmental assets including the Jurassic Coastline, 200 sites of Special Scientific Interest and five areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Dartmoor National Park covers 368 square miles and is the largest open space in southern England. Exmoor National Park covers 267.5 square miles. The population is mainly centred around the 28 market and coastal towns and the city of Exeter. The natural environment provides people numerous outdoor recreational opportunities and makes Devon a popular tourist destination.

The County Council's overall annual net revenue budget for 2010/11 was **£540 million** or **£700 per person**. This is used to provide key services such as education, social care, libraries, consumer protection, road safety, paths and roads. For Devon, there is a greater cost to providing services to rural communities (such as transport). We receive a dedicated schools grant to fund all schools and related services. Outside of schools, we will spend most of our budget on providing care and support to older and vulnerable people.

Local authorities are facing tough times ahead, following the announcement of the Comprehensive Spending Review in October 2010. Our challenge will be to reduce spending whilst protecting vulnerable and disadvantaged communities and ensuring fairness and equality of outcomes across the protected characteristics and in relation to other indicators of vulnerability such as Children in Care and people on low incomes

Child Poverty is not necessarily an issue associated with Devon; however 18,645 children between the ages of 0-15 are currently living in poverty, which is 15.2% of the total population of children of this age. In addition to this, in certain areas of the county the issue is far more severe. This is only highlighted when the situation is analysed at a lower super output area level, showing that in four areas over 40% of children are in poverty situation, when the national average is only 21.6%.

Devon has two aspects to its demography that impact on poverty in the County. Firstly the rural nature of the County creates an isolation that can magnify the impact of poverty beyond its immediate effect. Secondly, a relative low wage economy exists, and that will mean that even for families that are in work they may remain within the poverty thresholds. The analysis of this situation is yet to be finalised but the national figures show that the same number of children exist in low wage poverty as do in benefit dependent families.

This first collation of data on indicators of child poverty in Devon is a start on developing our understanding. It remains partial and limited and is intended to act as a stimulus.

Various factors affect its interpretation:

- Sparsity / density factors can give disproportionate significance to graphic representation. Small numbers can be hidden.
- We are reasonably familiar with where poverty and/or deprivation are an issue. This becomes more meaningful when broken down into small urban areas. The difficulty in the rural areas is that deprivation is less obvious and harder to address because of the lack of economies of scale and the distances involved.
- Boundaries blur information and access issues (Torbay, Plymouth, Cornwall etc.)
- Variation in interpretation and priorities gathering the views of local people such as those attending the local school or by those who live in the local area.
- In Devon the majority of family poverty is found in families who are in work, rather than benefit dependent households. This is characteristic of areas with high levels of seasonal working and low paid occupations.

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4 Needs Assessment – Data Overview

Poor children's life chances are dependent upon a complex combination of low household income, a lack of equal opportunities and social exclusion. While some children who grow up in low-income households will go on to achieve their full potential, many others will not. Poverty places strains on family life and excludes children from the everyday activities of their peers. Many children experiencing poverty have limited opportunities to play safely and often live in overcrowded and inadequate housing, eat less nutritious food, suffer more accidents and ill health and have more problems with school work leading to low educational attainment as these children become adults they are more likely to be in poorly paid employment or economically inactive continuing the poverty cycle.

In response to the Child Poverty Act 2010⁸ and the government's commitment to end Child Poverty this report outlines the poverty related needs of children and families in Devon.

- 17,850 (14.6%) dependent children under 16 in Devon are living in [poverty \(NI 116\)](#) (2008)
- Devon has been successful in reducing child and family poverty. The percentage of children aged under 16 living in poverty has fallen more in Devon than Nationally over the last three years (-0.6% in Devon compared to -0.2% Nationally)
- For dependent children aged under 20 child poverty has actually risen slightly over the last three years both at a National and Regional level (based on NI 116). In contrast to this child poverty has been successfully reduced across Devon both in absolute terms (a fall of 370 children) and in percentage terms (-0.4%), the only exception to this being an additional 80 children (0.2%) in Teignbridge living in poverty.
- 21 Devon LSOA's are in the 20% most deprived areas in England according to the [Index of Multiple Deprivation](#)
- 19,891 children under 16 in Devon are living in Income Deprivation according to the [IDACI](#) Index
- Devon has high levels of poor housing, ranking 102 out of 149 authorities under the housing domain of the [Child Wellbeing Index](#)
- [Average house prices](#) in Devon (£220,351 Q2 2009) are around 7 times mean average [household income](#) (£31,442 in 2009)
- In the South West around 12% of children live in households [dependent on workless benefits](#)
- 10,334 (10.8%) of pupils were eligible for [Free School Meals](#) in January 2010 an increase of 0.8% from January 2009. The highest eligibility is in the Central and Chestnut Learning Community with 19.4% of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals in contrast to only 4.0% of pupils in the Ottery St Mary Learning Community.
- An estimated 18,917 (6.33%) Devon households are experiencing [fuel poverty](#)
- There is a large poverty related attainment gap evident within schools in Devon and across England. Children and young people who are eligible for free school meals on average perform substantially worse in both [key stage 2](#) and [GCSE](#) assessments. In Devon only 23% of those eligible for FSM achieve 5 A*-C including English and Maths in 2009 compared to 54% of those not eligible for FSM.
- In 2008/09 young people eligible for free school meals were more likely to be [excluded from school](#) and to be [persistently absent](#) from school than those not eligible for FSM.
- In Devon it appears that [ethnicity](#) is not as strongly related to poverty as it is in the rest of England. Devon has a low proportion of its population from BME groups and proportionately they are more likely to live in a wealthier neighbourhood than a deprived neighbourhood.
- Poverty shortens lives. At ward level there is a difference of approximately 13 years between the lowest [life expectancy at birth](#) in the Ilfracombe Central Ward (74.4 years) area and the highest life expectancy in West Devon Chagford Ward (87.9).
- In Devon there were approximately 600 births to [teenage mothers](#) in the last 3 years. Of these most were born to women living in deprived neighbourhoods.
- There are many negative health links attributed to deprivation. Children in Devon were found to be more likely to be [overweight or obese](#) if they lived in the most deprived neighbourhoods.

⁸ Child Poverty Act 2010 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/9/contents>

Table 1: Outcomes for Children and Young People (20 Highest Scoring wards 2009)

Ward Name	District	Child Poverty Age <16	Eligible for Free School Meals	>5 A*-C GCSE Inc English & Maths	Persistent Absence (54+ Sessions Missed)	School Exclusions	SEN (Statement & SA+)	NEET	YOT FTE Rate	Life Expectancy at Birth (Years)	% Children Overweight or Obese	Teen Conception Rate (top 20)	CIC Rate (entering care) top 20	Child Protection Plan Rate Top 20	Domestic Violence Incidents (Rate 1,000)	No. of outcomes worse than the DCC Ave.	No. of outcomes in 20 worst wards in DCC	Top 20 (by No. in top 20 score the Devon ave)
Priority	Exeter	30.7%	28.2%	78%	3.3%	7.2%	16.5%	13.3%	24.3	78.9	32%	2	3	6	36.7	14	13	1
Forches and Whiddon Valley	North Devon	30.8%	20.3%	70%	3.4%	4.1%	15.7%	9.7%	20.3	81.4	36%		5	4	42.9	13	11	2
St David's	Exeter	31.6%	20.7%	77%	4.6%	2.3%	11.1%	22.5%	40.2	77.7	25%	11	1	12	38.8	13	11	2
Ilfacombe Central	North Devon	31.0%	24.7%	63%	4.2%	4.3%	13.9%	7.6%	22.3	74.4	25%	1	1	1	28.8	13	10	4
Teignmouth West	Teignbridge	29.3%	20.1%	63%	2.7%	5.4%	12.3%	9.1%	20.6	82.1	34%	3	20	10	29.3	13	9	5
Central Town	North Devon	26.0%	17.0%	65%	4.4%	4.0%	11.8%	11.3%	16.0	77.8	21%	13			49.4	12	9	5
Exwick	Exeter	23.1%	19.2%	68%	3.6%	2.8%	13.5%	7.4%	13.8	80.6	36%	6	14		24.1	14	8	7
Cowick	Exeter	21.4%	17.1%	53%	3.1%	2.6%	16.0%	11.1%	18.4	80.2	41%	16	18		21.2	14	7	8
Yeo Valley	North Devon	26.8%	21.2%	60%	5.5%	6.2%	13.2%	9.8%	14.7	79.5	37%				28.3	13	6	9
Exmouth Littleham	East Devon	22.6%	17.2%	58%	3.7%	4.7%	11.3%	6.0%	13.1	80.1	28%	8	17		19.1	13	6	9
Bideford East	Torridge	25.5%	23.2%	73%	3.8%	3.4%	13.4%	11.0%	16.6	80.7	33%				18.6	13	6	9
Whipton & Barton	Exeter	21.3%	14.5%	64%	1.8%	1.5%	14.7%	8.8%	16.9	80.7	38%		9		27.1	11	6	12
Lowman	Mid Devon	21.6%	18.3%	69%	3.3%	2.2%	10.7%	6.7%	19.5	81.9	26%			13	24.5	10	6	13
Dartmouth Townstal	South Hams	26.9%	18.0%	74%	3.4%	2.9%	14.6%	3.0%	8.2	77.9	31%				17.3	10	6	13
Mincinglake	Exeter	27.1%	21.2%	66%	2.1%	2.9%	12.5%	6.0%	16.6	80.4	32%			14	32.6	13	5	15
Buckland and Milber	Teignbridge	22.2%	21.2%	59%	2.7%	2.2%	13.6%	8.2%	11.7	80.8	39%	18			19.1	11	5	16
Ilfacombe West	North Devon	21.3%	18.1%	57%	3.6%	3.9%	11.7%	9.0%	6.3	81.4	25%				22.2	9	5	17
Bushell	Teignbridge	20.5%	20.5%	64%	3.2%	1.9%	10.4%	4.5%	9.8	80.2	33%	7			34.6	11	4	18
Bideford North	Torridge	18.7%	11.8%	47%	3.0%	1.5%	10.2%	7.3%	8.2	79.0	33%			2	26.2	11	4	18
Okehampton East	West Devon	15.6%	14.8%	50%	1.2%	1.5%	10.0%	9.1%	5.7	81.0	34%	15	6	15	16.5	9	4	20

7 Children living in Poverty (NI 116)

All Local Authorities are required to address Child Poverty and are being measured via national Indicator N116: Proportion of Children in Poverty. The percentage of Children in Poverty (NI116) is calculated by the number of children living in families in receipt of CTC whose reported income is less than 60 per cent of the median income or in receipt of IS or (Income-Based) JSA, divided by the total number of children in the area (determined by Child Benefit data).

Table 2: Children living in Poverty NI 116 (2008)

Area	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
East Devon	2,355	2,715	11.6%	11.3%
Exeter	3,185	3,540	17.7%	17.0%
Mid Devon	1,810	2,010	12.8%	12.2%
North Devon	2,710	3,080	16.4%	15.8%
South Hams	1,785	2,075	13.2%	12.7%
Teignbridge	3,075	3,505	14.6%	14.1%
Torrige	1,775	2,015	16.7%	16.1%
West Devon	1,155	1,295	13.3%	12.6%
Devon	17,850	20,235	14.6%	14.0%
South West	148,325	166,845	16.5%	15.8%
England	2,068,970	2,341,975	21.6%	20.9%

Source: NI116 Proportion of Children in Poverty, DWP 2010

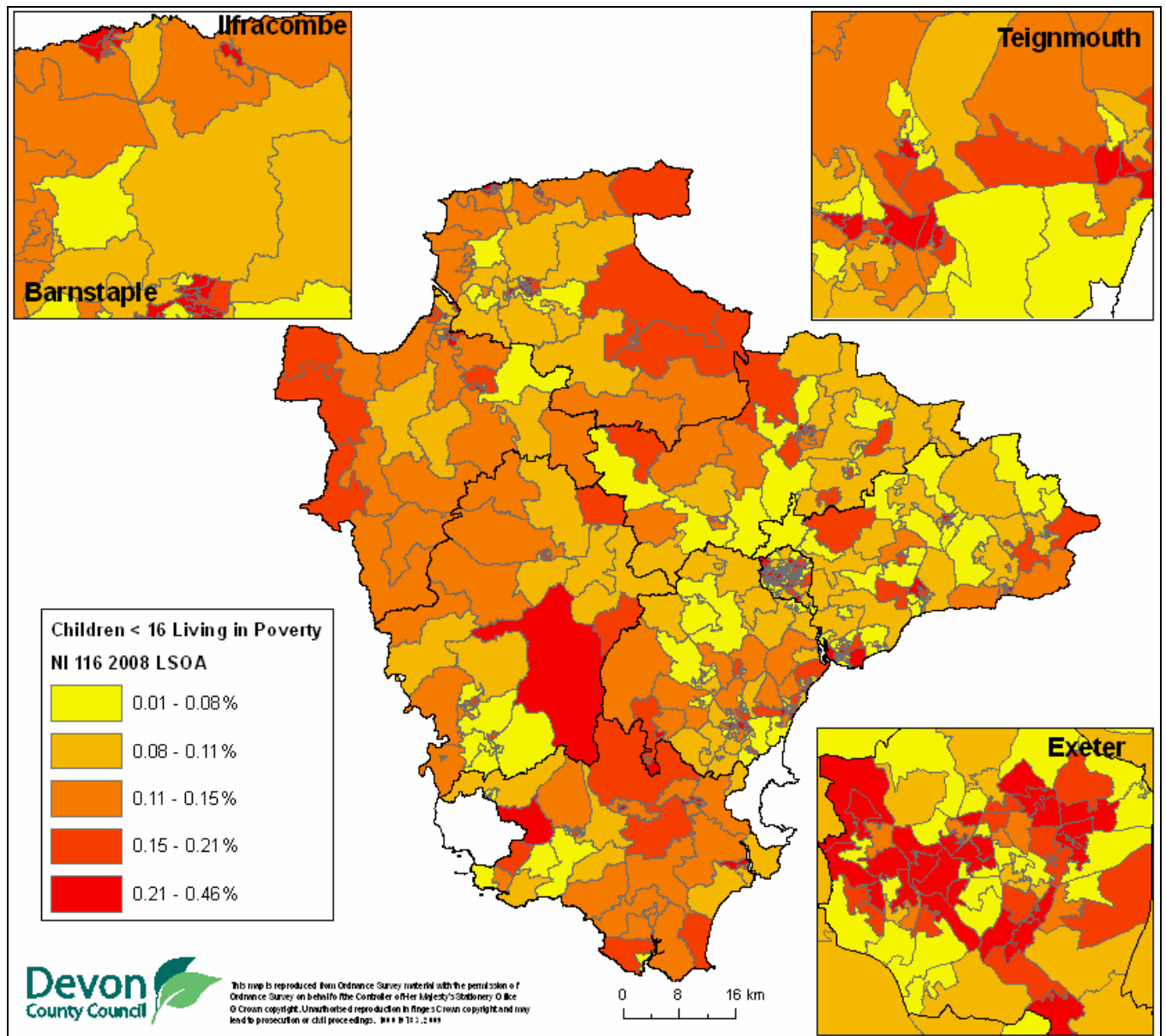
Table 3: Percentage of Children living in poverty by Ward - highest 20 based on under 16s (2008)

Ward	District	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
St David's	Exeter	170	175	33.1%	30.9%
Ilfracombe Central	North Devon	275	300	31.9%	30.5%
Lydford	West Devon	80	95	30.4%	28.7%
Priory	Exeter	590	655	28.5%	27.7%
Forches and Whiddon Valley	North Devon	340	375	28.9%	27.7%
Teignmouth West	Teignbridge	305	345	27.5%	26.6%
Yeo Valley	North Devon	240	275	26.4%	25.3%
Dartmouth Townstal	South Hams	145	160	26.6%	25.3%
Bideford East	Torrige	265	300	24.9%	23.7%
Totnes Bridgetown	South Hams	155	190	23.5%	23.3%
Mincinglake	Exeter	280	305	24.1%	23.1%
Central Town	North Devon	185	205	24.4%	22.9%
Bideford South	Torrige	250	290	22.2%	22.2%
South Brent	South Hams	115	130	22.7%	21.5%
Exmouth Littleham	East Devon	200	235	21.6%	21.4%
Axminster Rural	East Devon	95	110	21.0%	20.9%
St James	Exeter	100	105	23.1%	20.6%
Exwick	Exeter	400	445	21.0%	20.5%
Whipton & Barton	Exeter	320	365	20.9%	20.4%
Ashburton and Buckfastleigh	Teignbridge	295	340	20.9%	20.3%

Source: NI116 Proportion of Children in Poverty, DWP 2010

In 2008 a total of 118 LSOA's in Devon had a higher percentage of children living in poverty than the South West average (16.5%) with 67 of these higher than the England average (21.6%). At a ward level the highest percentages of children under 16 living in poverty are in St Davids Exeter (33.1%) and Ilfracombe Central (31.9%) with the lowest in the West Devon wards of Buckland Monachorum and Burrator (both only 4.5%).

Figure 2: Percentage of Children living in poverty by LSOA (2008)



Source: Department for Work and Pensions, 2010⁹ Snapshot data as of 31/08/2008 (NI 116 Proportion of children in poverty) (© Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Devon County Council. 100019783 2009)

⁹ NI116 Proportion of Children in Poverty, DWP 2010 http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/personal-tax-credits/child_poverty.htm

Table 4: Children living in Poverty NI 116 (2006-2008)

Area	2006						2007						2008						Change 2006 - 2008							
	Children in families in receipt of CTC (<60% median income) or IS/JSA			% of Children in "Poverty"			Children in families in receipt of CTC (<60% median income) or IS/JSA			% of Children in "Poverty"			Children in families in receipt of CTC (<60% median income) or IS/JSA			% of Children in "Poverty"			Children in families in receipt of CTC (<60% median income) or IS/JSA			% of Children in "Poverty"				
	Under 16	All Children	All Children	Under 16	All Children	All Children	Under 16	All Children	All Children	Under 16	All Children	All Children	Under 16	All Children	All Children	Under 16	All Children	All Children	Under 16	All Children	All Children	Under 16	All Children	All Children	Under 16	All Children
East Devon	2,505	2,805	2,830	12.4%	11.9%	11.9%	2,510	2,830	2,830	12.3%	11.9%	11.9%	2,355	2,715	2,715	11.6%	11.3%	11.3%	-150	-90	-90	-0.8%	-0.6%	-0.6%	-0.8%	-0.6%
Exeter	3,250	3,540	3,650	18.3%	17.3%	17.8%	3,305	3,650	3,650	18.6%	17.8%	17.8%	3,185	3,540	3,540	17.7%	17.0%	17.0%	-65	0	0	-0.6%	-0.3%	-0.3%	-0.6%	-0.3%
Mid Devon	1,880	2,085	2,155	13.7%	13.1%	13.2%	1,915	2,155	2,155	13.6%	13.2%	13.2%	1,810	2,010	2,010	12.8%	12.2%	12.2%	-70	-75	-75	-0.9%	-0.9%	-0.9%	-0.9%	-0.9%
North Devon	2,950	3,255	3,210	17.9%	16.9%	16.5%	2,865	3,210	3,210	17.3%	16.5%	16.5%	2,710	3,080	3,080	16.4%	15.8%	15.8%	-240	-175	-175	-1.5%	-1.1%	-1.1%	-1.5%	-1.1%
South Hams	1,885	2,150	2,240	13.6%	13.0%	13.5%	1,935	2,240	2,240	14.0%	13.5%	13.5%	1,785	2,075	2,075	13.2%	12.7%	12.7%	-100	-75	-75	-0.4%	-0.3%	-0.3%	-0.4%	-0.3%
Teignbridge	3,075	3,425	3,520	14.6%	13.9%	14.2%	3,120	3,520	3,520	14.7%	14.2%	14.2%	3,075	3,505	3,505	14.6%	14.1%	14.1%	0	80	80	0.0%	0.2%	0.2%	0.0%	0.2%
Torrige	1,840	2,075	2,120	17.7%	17.0%	16.9%	1,865	2,120	2,120	17.5%	16.9%	16.9%	1,775	2,015	2,015	16.7%	16.1%	16.1%	-65	-60	-60	-1.0%	-0.9%	-0.9%	-1.0%	-0.9%
West Devon	1,140	1,270	1,280	13.5%	12.8%	12.5%	1,140	1,280	1,280	13.2%	12.5%	12.5%	1,155	1,295	1,295	13.3%	12.6%	12.6%	15	25	25	-0.2%	-0.2%	-0.2%	-0.2%	-0.2%
Devon	18,530	20,605	21,005	15.2%	14.4%	14.5%	18,645	21,005	21,005	15.2%	14.5%	14.5%	17,850	20,235	20,235	14.6%	14.0%	14.0%	-680	-370	-370	-0.6%	-0.4%	-0.4%	-0.6%	-0.4%
South West	148,875	163,515	169,460	16.6%	15.7%	16.1%	151,785	169,460	169,460	16.9%	16.1%	16.1%	148,325	166,845	166,845	16.5%	15.8%	15.8%	-550	3,330	3,330	-0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	-0.1%	0.1%
England	2,089,585	2,298,385	2,397,645	21.8%	20.8%	20.8%	2,141,690	2,397,645	2,397,645	22.4%	21.6%	21.6%	2,068,970	2,341,975	2,341,975	21.6%	20.9%	20.9%	-20,615	43,590	43,590	-0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	-0.2%	0.1%

8 Communications Strategy

8.1 National Context

In 1999, the Government made an historic commitment to eradicate child poverty within a generation. This has been confirmed by the Coalition Government in 2010 and continues to enjoy cross-party parliamentary support. The Child Poverty Act in 2010 enshrines in legislation the commitment to eradicate child poverty by 2020. It defines success in eradicating child poverty and establishes an accountability framework to drive progress towards the 2020 goal at national and local level. A Child Poverty Commission chaired by Frank Field MP will advise on the production of a National Strategy by March 2011.

Between the late 1970s and mid 1990s child poverty doubled, resulting in the UK having one of the highest child poverty rates in the industrialised world. After the initial pledge in 1999, rates fell at first but then fluctuated and are not expected to reach the target of halving by 2010/11 as originally envisaged. In 2008 (the latest period for which figures are available), 20.9% of children in England were regarded as being in poverty, rising to 21.6% if only children under 16 are being considered. However, both statistics are reductions on the previous year – 21.6% and 22.4% respectively and the recent trend has been downward.

8.2 Local Context

- There is a lower incidence of child poverty in Devon than Nationally. However, it is clear that this is subject to substantial local variation with over 30% of children in some wards living in poverty.
- Over 21,000 (14.5%) of children are living in families that are in receipt of out of work benefits or tax credits with less than 60% median income¹⁰.
- The majority of Devon's children in poverty do not live in workless households and that therefore reducing worklessness is not the only solution to poverty.
- It can be seen that there is a complex picture of the nature and causes of child poverty in Devon.
- Child and family poverty is more complex than income. Poverty is also related to opportunity, access and aspirations. The interaction of these three themes can form a complex picture.
- Inequalities not only have an impact on educational attainment. Well-being, health and health behaviours are also affected, with a key factor in childhood obesity being disadvantage and mental and physical health having significant links to child poverty.
- Research by the Child Poverty Action Group has shown that there is a low level of empathy for those living in poverty and a perception that poverty does not exist in the western world. This attitude must be changed in order to reduce social exclusion and ensure all children and young people in Devon have the same life chances.

8.3 Overview

In order to raise awareness of child poverty in Devon, the communication strategy outlines the planned activity that will support initial awareness raising. Part of this planned activity is to establish a communications working group, with representatives from a cross section of agencies. It is intended that the group will steer future communication activity and in doing this will ensure that we communicate the child poverty message/s effectively and consistently, and also in the context that is appropriate to each audience.

The communications strategy and the Child and Family Poverty Strategy are intended to be live strategies and are expected to be subject to review and change as the child poverty agenda gains momentum. This may result in the addition of further communication channels and activity.

Effective communication will help to improve commitment, motivation and performance, as well as increasing understanding of child poverty. This in turn will help Devon achieve its strategic objectives linked to reducing child poverty and therefore improve outcomes for children, young people and their families.

¹⁰ Dependent children aged under 20 (2007)

8.4 Key Messages

1. 17,850 (14.6%) dependent children under 16 in Devon are living in poverty¹¹. We will support the government's intention to eradicate child poverty by 2020.
2. Poverty shortens lives and reduces life chances. By tackling child poverty we can help to improve children's lives today, and enhance their life chances: enabling them to make the most of their talents, achieve their full potential in life and pass on the benefits to their own children, thus breaking the cycle of poverty
3. Local services can play a vital role in preventing families and children from falling into poverty and in overcoming the barriers that keep them in poverty

8.5 What are we trying to achieve?

Through the Devon Child and Family Poverty Strategy and implementation of actions to address key priorities it is hoped that the following can be achieved:

- Raised awareness of child poverty nationally and in Devon.
- Raised awareness of the ***Devon Child Poverty Strategy***.
- Raised awareness of, and increased use of, local and national organisations, services and projects which can support families living in poverty and can help them to move out of poverty.
- Reduction of child poverty in Devon through:
 - increased take-up of free school meals
 - another thing?
 - another thing?
- Increase skills
- Increase the take up of Working Tax Credits
- Increase parental employment
- Improve earnings from employment
- Improve multi-agency team working for vulnerable and 'at risk' families
- Reduce NEET (those Not in Education, Employment or Training)
- Reduce teenage pregnancy
- Provide improved support for lone parents
- Provide improved support for disadvantaged groups
- Improve services to meet the needs of parents and their children
- Improve financial capability and inclusion
- Narrow the gap in the foundation Stage
- Narrow the attainment gap at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4
- Offer improved educational support and training for parents
- Engage more children, young people and their families in positive activities
- Improve community cohesion
- Improve health and well-being
- Counteract the opinion of those who believe child poverty does not exist in Devon or in the western world
- Increase safety and reduce crime.

All of these above need an outcomes monitoring framework if they are to be included

8.6 How will the communications strategy support the intentions?

The communications strategy will:

- draw together our key messages with our stakeholders and our available communications channels to enable partners to deliver key messages using the most appropriate tools for their audience
- contain an adaptable toolkit which can be used by partners to deliver a clear and consistent message across Devon, including a leaflet, a press release, a newsletter article and images, case studies, a child poverty factsheet and a PowerPoint presentation
- give us a clear timescale for events and promotional and marketing activity over the next 12 months

others?

- Rename 'Child Poverty' as 'Child and Family Poverty' in recognition that poverty is a family wide issue.

¹¹ Children living in Poverty (NI 116) (2008).

- Raise the public profile of child and family poverty in Devon
- Counteract the opinion that poverty does not exist in Devon
- Communicate the key messages relating to child and family poverty
 - the number living in child poverty
 - the impact of poverty on health, wellbeing and life chances
- Help to achieve better outcomes for Devon's children and young people
- Strengthen relationships between stakeholder and partner organisations
- Make stakeholders aware of the action required in order to reduce child and family poverty and the work that is already being undertaken.
- Collate and promote a map of good practice in Devon, together with the evidence base.

8.7 Stakeholders

Who are our core stakeholders?

- School staff including governors, teachers and support staff.
- Social care staff.
- Health care staff working specifically with children and families such as midwives, health visitors, obstetrics and gynaecology staff and paediatric staff.
- Children's centre staff.
- Childcarers including nursery staff, childminders and nannies.
- Parents and carers of children under the age of 16.

Who are our wider stakeholders?

-
-

The following services and organisations all have a key role to play through considering child poverty in terms of their own service delivery:

Stakeholder	Interest area	Communications Plan?	Lead?
Devon Strategic Partnership			
Devon County Council			
NHS Devon			
Devon and Cornwall Police			
Devon's Children's Centres			
Devon Schools			
Voluntary and community groups			
Jobcentre Plus			
Credit providers and debt advice agencies			
DAN (Devon Advice Network)			
etc			

8.8 What are our available communications channels?

Devon County Council	Insider –	All DCC staff
	EYCS newsletter	EY&C settings
	Fostering newsletter	Foster carers
	DISCplus newsletter	Parents and carers of CwAN
	DCC website	Public
NHS		

Make it real and relevant to the target audience. Use of case studies; Quotes from families; Images; multi media material;

We need to motivate people to take appropriate action. For example informing people that if they signpost someone for a benefit check it might prevent them from losing their home.

There will be different levels of awareness and therefore different levels of communication needed for different stakeholders.

1. Zero Cost

School Governors newsletter with two page spread. Page 1 to indicate key issues and page 2 with advice and guidance about what they can do to make a difference. Targeted messages.

Children's Centre Newsletter

Tie in with the information campaign about changes to the benefits system

The Insider – inward facing communications message about what people can do internally to DCC to tackle child and family poverty

2. Low Cost

Getting leaflets printed with the 5 key messages and some simple signposting advice

etc

8.9 Communication Plan

Date of last revision: 22/02/2011

Rag Rating: White: Not Started; Green: Completed; Amber: Ongoing; Red: Stopped/ High Risk

Communication Plan: Phase 1 - Initial awareness raising					
An introduction to child poverty in Devon to all stakeholder groups: giving an overview of the national context and the local picture in Devon, the scale of the problem and what needs to be done					
	Action	Progress Monitoring	Impact	Resources	Status (RAG)
1.1	Establish a child poverty action group with membership from a wide range of stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite membership • Agree membership, terms of reference, meeting arrangements and reporting methods • On-going reporting and monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ownership and buy-in from partners • Development of Child Poverty Needs Assessment and Child Poverty Strategy (inc Comms Strategy) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Partner time •Project support time •Possible communications funding? 	Ongoing
1.2	Consultation with young people to establish their understanding and views on child poverty in Devon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group of young people established • Consultation format agreed • Consultation results collated and distributed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An insight into how young people view child poverty, which will be used to inform future work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting space • Youth engagement worker time. 	Green (consultation completed February 2011)

Communication Plan: Phase 2 - Engaging partners to support active involvement in reducing child poverty					
'Reducing child poverty in Devon is everybody's business'. Engaging partners to highlight their role in this process.					
	Action	Progress Monitoring	Impact	Resources	Status (RAG)
1.1	Development of a communications working group to steer the communications activity of child poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite membership • Agree membership, terms of reference, meeting arrangements and reporting methods • On-going reporting and monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ownership and buy-in from partners • Developments and Implementation of the communications strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Partner time •Project support time •Possible communications funding? 	Ongoing
1.2					

Further activity will be steered by the communications working group.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Extract from the Child Poverty Act 2010

Child Poverty Act 2010 Part 2: Duties of local authorities and other bodies in England¹²

Section 21: Co-operation to reduce child poverty in local area

- (1) Each responsible local authority must make arrangements to promote co-operation between—
- (a) the authority;
 - (b) each of its partner authorities; and
 - (c) such other persons or bodies as the authority thinks fit.
- (2) The arrangements are to be made with a view to reducing, and mitigating the effects of, child poverty in the responsible local authority's area.
- (3) Each partner authority must co-operate with the responsible local authority in the making of arrangements under this section.
- (4) The responsible local authority and each partner authority must, in exercising their functions under this section, have regard to any guidance given to them for the purpose by the Secretary of State.
- (5) A responsible local authority and any partner authority may for the purposes of arrangements under this section—
- (a) provide staff, goods, services, accommodation or other resources;
 - (b) establish and maintain a pooled fund.
- (6) A pooled fund is a fund—
- (a) which is made up of contributions by the responsible local authority and the partner authority or authorities concerned, and
 - (b) out of which payments may be made towards expenditure incurred in the discharge of functions of the responsible local authority and functions of the partner authority or authorities.

Section 22: Local child poverty needs assessment

- (1) The arrangements made by a responsible local authority under section 21 must include arrangements to prepare and publish an assessment of the needs of children living in poverty in its area ("a local child poverty needs assessment").
- (2) The Secretary of State may by regulations make provision about local child poverty needs assessments.
- (3) Those regulations may in particular include provision as to—
- (a) matters that must be considered in a local child poverty needs assessment;
 - (b) when and how an assessment must be published;
 - (c) keeping an assessment under review;
 - (d) when and how an assessment must be revised;
 - (e) consultation to be carried out during the preparation or revision of an assessment;
 - (f) other steps required or permitted to be taken in connection with the preparation or revision of an assessment.
- (4) The responsible local authority and each partner authority must, in exercising their functions under this section, have regard to any guidance given to them for the purpose by the Secretary of State.

Section 23: Joint child poverty strategy for local area

- (1) The arrangements made by a responsible local authority under section 21 must include arrangements to prepare a joint child poverty strategy in relation to its area and to modify it in accordance with this section.
- (2) The joint child poverty strategy must set out the measures that the responsible local authority and each partner authority propose to take for the purpose of reducing, and mitigating the effects of, child poverty in the responsible local authority's area.
- (3) Those measures—
- (a) must include measures relating to matters identified in a local child poverty needs assessment;
 - (b) may include measures relating to other matters identified by the responsible local authority or a partner authority in connection with child poverty in the responsible local authority's area.
- (4) The responsible local authority may at any time modify the joint child poverty strategy.
- (5) When a responsible local authority revises a local child poverty needs assessment it must consider whether any modification of the joint child poverty strategy is required.
- (6) In preparing or modifying the joint child poverty strategy, the responsible local authority—
- (a) must consult such children, and organisations working with or representing children, as the authority thinks fit,
 - (b) must consult such parents, and organisations working with or representing parents, as the authority thinks fit, and
 - (c) may consult such other persons or bodies as the authority thinks fit.

¹² Child Poverty Act 2010 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/9/contents>

(7)The responsible local authority and each partner authority must, in exercising their functions under this section, have regard to any guidance given to them for the purpose by the Secretary of State.

(8)The responsible local authority and each partner authority must have regard to the joint child poverty strategy in exercising their functions.

(9)References in this section to a local child poverty needs assessment are to a local child poverty needs assessment prepared by the responsible local authority under section 22.

Section 24: Sustainable community strategy

In section 4 of the Local Government Act 2000 (strategies for promoting well-being), in subsection (3)—

(a)omit the word “and” immediately after sub-paragraph (ii) of paragraph (a), and

(b)after paragraph (a) insert—

“(aa)must, if it is a local authority in England, have regard to the following, so far as they relate to the authority's area—

(i)any arrangements made under section 21 of the Child Poverty Act 2010 (co-operation to reduce child poverty in local area);

(ii)any local child poverty needs assessment prepared under section 22 of that Act (local child poverty needs assessment);

(iii)any joint child poverty strategy prepared under section 23 of that Act (joint child poverty strategy for local area), and”.