

Deprivation and Child Poverty Single Issue Panel

Children Education and Families
Overview and Scrutiny Committee

June 2011



Deprivation and Child Poverty

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- b) Inclusion Cornwall - presentation
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- a) Minutes of the Single Issue Panel meeting held on the 21 February 2011
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Appendix Five

- a) Minutes of the Single Issue Panel meeting held on the 9 May 2011
- b) Child Poverty – Key messages – Cornwall context
- c) Informal notes of the Child Poverty Needs Assessment presentation

Due to the amount of appendices to this report they have not been attached – however, if you would like copies of the appendices then please contact:

Heather Kirkham: heather.kirkham@cornwall.gov.uk

Membership of Single Issue Panel

Chris Ridgers – Chairman of the Single Issue Panel (until 17 May 2011)

Denise Mutton

John Pollard

Andrew Wallis

Tamsin Williams

Acknowledgements

Thanks go to all Members of the Single Issue Panel, stakeholders, other Members who participated, Officers of the Children, Schools & Families Directorate.

Chairman's Foreword

Children's poverty and deprivation should not exist. The fact that it does, and is so prevalent in Cornwall, should act as a major incentive for all residents and agencies to play their part in its eradication.

There is much good work taking place to address the subject evidence of which, from a variety of organisations, is set out in this report. The commitment of all those individuals, who gave their time to meet with the Panel and provide it with an understanding of their activities, is testimony to the sterling efforts being made to give every child in Cornwall the best chance in life. We are aware that, in the time available, we could only meet a representative sample of organisations.

Despite all the good works in place the abiding view is that there is considerable opportunity to better coordinate activities to optimise the value of what is delivered and to ensure consistency of support, training and encouragement to individuals and families in lifting themselves out of poverty. National government has an important role as does Cornwall Council and its partners. However we believe that the solutions should, as far as possible, be built around assisting, rather than directing, individuals and families to develop their own solutions.

The simple message we believe should be at the core of all considerations about eradicating children's poverty and deprivation is:

Is what is in place good enough for my child?

Chris Ridgers CC
Chairman of the Deprivation and Child Poverty
Single Issue Panel (up to 17 May 2011)

Executive summary

Background

In 1999, the Government set a target to eradicate child poverty within a generation. They also set the target to halve child poverty by 2010. Since that pledge good progress has been made but many children still live in poverty, and this is unacceptable.

- 19% of children under the age of 16 live in poverty in Cornwall, a total of 16,650 children.
- Cornwall has a lower level of child poverty than the England average (19% compared to 22%). However there are geographic variations across Cornwall, ranging from just 2% to over twice the England average at 58% (Camborne Pengegon area).
- There are 8 rural areas highlighted as being above the England average (under 16), most of which don't appear in other related datasets such as the Index of Multiple Deprivation, worklessness areas. Strategies to tackle child poverty should take into account of rural areas, for example access to employment and services for these areas.
- Children in lone parent households are more likely to be in poverty than those in two parent households, accounting for 61% of all child poverty households.

(the above statistics are from the Cornwall Child Poverty Needs Assessment – key messages www.cornwall.gov.uk/childpoverty)

The Children, Education and Families OSC agreed to form a Single Issue Panel to look at deprivation and child poverty in Cornwall to establish what progress has been made in reducing poverty, lessons learnt with the aim of identifying best practise and recommendations for future action.

Context

The Single Issue Panel (SIP) held five meetings; four of which gathered evidence from key stakeholders and officers. The evidence was obtained from witnesses who made presentations, followed by a discussion and questioning session, together with receipt of any relevant documentation.

Due to the immense breadth of this issue it was not possible to speak to all of the relevant organisations/bodies across Cornwall so the Single Issue Panel could only look at a limited number but spoke to those that they felt covered a wide range of issues (*see Chapter Two – Methodology on page 11 for further details*).

Conclusion

The enormity of deprivation and child poverty issue in Cornwall meant that it was not possible to speak to all of the relevant organisations/bodies across Cornwall who are trying to tackle the various elements of deprivation and child poverty. Therefore due to the vastness of this subject together with time limitations, the Single Issue Panel could only receive evidence from a limited number of organisations, however, those that they spoke to did cover a wide range of issues.

Further investigation needs to be undertaken to engage with other organisations/bodies who are also trying to eradicate deprivation and child poverty in Cornwall. As the Chairman stresses in his Foreword to this report, despite all the good works in place the abiding view is that there is considerable opportunity to better coordinate activities to optimise the value of what is delivered and to ensure consistency of support, training and encouragement to individuals and families in lifting themselves out of poverty.

There does not appear to be any strategic direction regarding eradicating child poverty and that there needs to be a strategic lead in driving forward the eradication child poverty agenda.

Other issues highlighted by this report that need to be tackled can be found on page 23 of the report.

Recommendations

The investigations carried out by the Deprivation and Child Poverty Single Issue Panel revealed that there does not appear to be any strategic direction regarding eradicating child poverty and that there needs to be a strategic lead in driving forward the eradication child poverty agenda. Therefore the SIP would like to make the following recommendations:

1. That Cornwall Council recognises that without a Strategic direction, Deprivation and Child poverty will not be reduced or eradicated.
2. It must therefore appoint a suitably qualified individual, within three months, to provide that strategic leadership by working exclusively on this topic, from within current resources.
3. That Cornwall Council identifies suitably resourced organisations or bodies to work in partnership with to tackle the issues highlighted in the report, again within three months.
4. The organisational bodies working in partnership with Cornwall Council be asked to produce an Action Plan to address the issues highlighted in this report and provide quarterly reports to Cornwall Council's Children Education and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Chapter One – Introduction

1.1 Background

In 1999, the Government set a target to eradicate child poverty within a generation. They also set the target to halve child poverty by 2010. Since that pledge good progress has been made and 600,000 children have been taken out of relative poverty, and absolute poverty has fallen by 1.8 million to less than half the level in 1998-99. But many children still live in poverty, and this is unacceptable. Eradicating child poverty is one of the most challenging ambitions set by any Government.

- 19% of children aged under 16 live in poverty in Cornwall, a total of 16,650 children.
- Cornwall has a lower level of child poverty than the England average (19% compared to 22%). However there are geographic variations across Cornwall, ranging from just 2% to over twice the England average at 58% (Camborne Pengegon area).
- The level of child poverty for under 16s has decreased by 3% between 2007 and 2008 in Cornwall; however this is not a countywide trend. Some areas have performed better than others, with some areas having significantly higher levels of child poverty than the England Average. It is important to understand reasons for change in these areas in order to identify best practice and learn what policies have had a negative impact on child poverty levels so that this learning can be applied in future.
- There are 8 rural areas highlighted as being above the England average (under 16), most of which don't appear in other related datasets such as the Index of Multiple Deprivation, worklessness areas. Strategies to tackle child poverty should take into account of rural areas, for example access to employment and services for these areas.
- Children in lone parent households are more likely to be in poverty than those in two parent households, accounting for 61% of all child poverty households. Strategies to tackle child poverty will need to account of this group, for example supporting adequate childcare options and flexibility for those who wish to work.

(the above statistics are from the Cornwall Child Poverty Needs Assessment – key messages www.cornwall.gov.uk/childpoverty)

The Children, Education and Families OSC received a children's poverty presentation at their meeting in June 2010 and agreed to form a Single Issue Panel to look at deprivation and child poverty in Cornwall. The intention being to establish what progress has been made in reducing poverty, and the lessons learnt with the aim of identifying best practise and recommendations for future action.

1.2 Purpose and Key Objectives of the Review

Deprivation & Child Poverty Single Issue Panel	
	Key Objectives
1.	To get an understanding of child and family poverty in Cornwall
2.	Review the impact of work currently being undertaken in relation to eradicating child and family poverty in Cornwall
3.	Identify lessons to be learnt and best practise from the case studies.
4.	To make recommendations for future action.

1.3 Contribution to Corporate Priorities

'Every Child Matters' is a set of principles supported by the Children Act 2004. Its aim is for every child, whatever their background or circumstances, to have the support they need to:

- be healthy
- stay safe
- enjoy and achieve
- make a positive contribution
- achieve economic well-being.

This means that every Local Authority is challenged to work with its partners, through their local Children's Trust partnership, to find out what works best for children and young people in its area and act on it.

The Children's Trust Cornwall produced Cornwall Children & Young People's Plan 2008-2011 has eight cross cutting strategic priorities; priorities three and seven are particularly pertinent to this review.

[Cornwall Children & Young People's Plan 2010 Revision](#)

<u>Strategic Priority One</u>	Make information, support and opportunities available and accessible to children and young people in Cornwall through listening to and acting on their voices.
<u>Strategic Priority Two</u>	Contribute to the development of sustainable communities for children, young people and their families.
<u>Strategic Priority Three</u>	Improve aspiration, learning, enjoyment and achievement for children, young people and families and their communities.
<u>Strategic Priority Four</u>	Promote and improve the health and wellbeing of children, young people and families in Cornwall and reduce inequalities in health.
<u>Strategic Priority Five</u>	Ensure children and young people are protected from harm and neglect and grow up being able to look after themselves.

<u>Strategic Priority Six</u>	Improve the experience of children in care and their life chances.
<u>Strategic Priority Seven</u>	Breaking the cycle of poverty and its impact on children and young people and their families.
<u>Strategic Priority Eight</u>	Improve the experience, outcomes and equality of opportunity for disabled children and young people and those with life-limiting / life-threatening conditions and their families.

The Cornwall Business Plan 2010-2014 states that Cornwall Council's vision is:

"To serve a thriving Cornwall, renowned for enterprise, opportunity and quality of life, where the most vulnerable are supported and local communities have local influence and responsibility. To be a well-respected Council that is the champion of Cornwall and its people".

There are seven priorities identified in the Cornwall Business Plan The main ones that are pertinent to this review are priorities; 1, 3, 5 and 7.

- 1) Bring Cornwall out of recession, focusing on the low carbon economy
- 2) Improve the resilience and self sufficiency of communities
- 3) Improve health through the radical redesign of health and care services
- 4) Minimise waste, increase local generation of sustainable and affordable energy and reduce consumption
- 5) Achieve a balanced housing market that meets local needs
- 6) Deliver improvements in Cornwall Council to meet the challenges of dwindling resources, local conditions and national priorities
- 7) Transform Cornwall's public services through integration and sharing resources.

Alongside the Business Plan is 'Future Cornwall 2010-2030' which expresses Cornwall's community strategy. The strategy encompasses an analysis of information about Cornwall and presents the key messages for Cornwall in one place for the first time at 'Understanding Cornwall 2009 – 2010' in which it is recognised that deprivation is a persistent problem. Long Term objectives include:

- Good Health & Wellbeing for everyone. This aims to make it easier for people to lead healthy, active lifestyles and to get involved in their local community. (There is clear evidence that links healthier lifestyles with reduced levels of illness, fewer people dying early and lower health care costs).

In addition to the above the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Primary Care Trust NHS published in 2008 their 'Health & Well Being Strategy (NHS) for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly 2020' which identifies that:

- Low incomes – especially for those living in poverty – is associated with poor health and well-being
- Infant mortality is defined as the number of deaths under one year of age per 1,000 live births. Deaths rates are higher in people living in poverty

Chapter Two – Methodology

2.1 Approach Taken

The Single Issue Panel (SIP) held five meetings; four of which gathered evidence from key stakeholders and officers. The evidence was obtained from witnesses who made presentations, followed by a discussion and questioning session, together with receipt of any relevant documentation.

2.2 Witnesses and Evidence Gathering

30 September 2010

Inclusion Cornwall
Cornwall Citizens Advice Bureaux
Volunteer Cornwall

25 November 2010

Cornwall Neighbourhoods for Change
Cornish Community Banking
Children's Public Health & Maternity Services (NHS Cornwall and Isles of Scilly)

21 February 2011

Cornwall Independent Poverty forum
Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution (RABI)
National Policy & Local Delivery (via the Child Poverty Officer)

30 March 2011

ESTEEM (Empowering men affected by domestic violence – the effects on children)
Action for Children
Child Poverty Needs Assessment – key messages

9 May 2011

Reviewing all the evidence received and pulling together to produce the Final report of the SIP.

2.3 Key Areas Identified From The Evidence Received

There were several key areas identified when receiving information and evidence and these are: Housing, Finance and Debt, Education, Health, Domestic Violence and Community.

2.3.1 Housing

Work carried out on the **Child Poverty Needs Assessment for Cornwall** identified that:

- Housing, energy, water and transport (four of the most considerable household costs) are significantly higher in the South West compared to other areas.

- When put in the context of Cornwall having one of the lowest earnings levels in the country, it provides part of the explanation of why child poverty is an issue for some households in Cornwall.
- Housing affordability is a key issue in Cornwall, with a limited supply of new housing and high demand, high house prices and comparably low wages. Affordability pressures are also felt in the rented housing market.
- Many homes in Cornwall are expensive to heat - improving energy efficiency and reducing fuel poverty is important across both the owner occupied and private rented sectors. Generally, homes in the rural areas of Cornwall are harder to treat, as they tend to be older and have higher levels of unfitness, disrepair and fuel poverty.
- Social housing forms a comparably small proportion of the housing stock in Cornwall (see; www.cornwall.gov.uk/childpoverty and go to the summary of evidence link on this site) however the need for social housing is high and there is a low turnover in the social housing stock. High proportions of social rented housing are a consistent feature of the most deprived communities and neighbourhoods in Cornwall. Many social housing tenants have an income at least partly derived from pensions and benefits, and are not in regular employment.
- Simply providing a roof will not meet the needs of some of the less advantaged households in Cornwall – in many cases a range of support measures will be required to help people retain and sustain their accommodation.

2.3.2 Finance and Debt

Cornwall Citizens Advice Bureau (CCAB) informed the Single Issue Panel that debt is an increasing problem and that 49% of households in Cornwall were now seriously in debt which is particularly evident with lone parents and couples with young children. (See page 5 of Appendix 1a and pages 12 -16 of Appendix 1d).

Homelessness as a result of debt problems and the associated health and social issues were highlighted in a homelessness study undertaken by the Youth Justice Board in 2007 which revealed that:

- 31% experienced poor physical health
- 66% felt depressed
- 48% felt hungry
- 39% felt lonely
- 21% were frightened of other people
- 100% were still in debt

All of the above issues impacted on the lifestyle of those children affected by homelessness.

- 31% of those in debt hide it from their partner

- 56% of households with weekly income in the range £300-£400 have less than £1,500 savings. That is less than one month's income, just enough till next pay day.
- Many have Non Priority Debts (NPD). Some of these debts are not payable i.e. would take many years to clear.

Priority debts include:

Mortgage / Rent
 Secured loans
 County Court Judgments (CCJs)
 Magistrates' Court fines
 Gas, water, electricity & telephone
 Child maintenance
 Council tax
 Tax
 VAT
 National Insurance
 TV licence
 Essential Hire Purchase goods (e.g. washing-machines, cars)
 Certain overpayments for benefits & Working / Child Tax Credit

All other debts are known as non-priority debts. This category includes:

Credit / store cards
 Overdrafts
 Unsecured loans
 Catalogue debts
 Credit agreements
 Conditional sales agreements
 Non-essential Hire Purchase goods (e.g. TVs, stereos)

An example given by the CCAB was that of a study undertaken of 55 lone parents. 53 had a NPD total of £560,953.85. It would take 42 years, based on estimated rates of repayment, to pay off this debt if no interest was charged.

Education is required on money and debt management and ultimately debt avoidance. This education needs to be in schools for not just the children but also the parents and carers to give them the budgeting skills required which would help assist in breaking the cycle of deprivation.

The main aims of the **Cornish Community Banking** (credit union) are:

- Promote financial inclusion
- Encourage a sensible approach to money management
- Provide a source of credit at reasonable rates
- Support local regeneration as money stays within the area
- Provide members of the credit union with a fair, honest and transparent choice in relation to banking.

A large proportion of Cornwall's households have low incomes and this is a catalyst for doorstep lending especially to those with adverse credit records or who are unable to borrow elsewhere. Exortionately high interest rates are charged by doorstep lenders and many borrowers feel obliged to make repayments to the loan company before paying their priority bills. In addition, loan sharks are operating in Cornwall although it is very difficult to quantify the extent of the problem. Cornwall haemorrhages more money (*see slide 10 of Appendix 2c*) out to doorstep lenders than it receives through initiatives such as Convergence.

The Cornwall Independent Poverty Forum highlighted the issue around the initial delay from someone losing their job to being able to claim benefits and the impact that this had on the family. Many families suffered during the initial delay whilst waiting for benefits to be claimed and paid. During this period they could not afford to buy food.

Food banks are generally registered charities and all food is donated through members of the public, supermarkets and harvest festivals. Professional partners working with the Food Banks in Cornwall include the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), GPs, the Police, Housing Managers, the Clergy and Teachers. They refer any clients they came across to the food bank by giving them a voucher for them to redeem, which would enable the client to a 3 day supply of non perishable food products and hygiene products. Many could drop into the food bank and chat with staff and have a cup of coffee, which also gave the opportunity to signpost them to other services or seek some advice. One voucher would entitle the person to return twice more.

There are at present 80 food banks in the UK and five in Cornwall; Truro, Falmouth/Penryn, St Austell, Bude and Liskeard (these are the five run by the Cornwall Independent Forum – Diocese of Truro) in addition to these there are one or two individual Food Banks in Cornwall. There is not a universal food bank network across Cornwall and in some areas those needing food do not have access to such a facility.

The Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution (RABI) support farmers and farm workers in financial difficulty and are funded solely by public and corporate donations. RABI revealed that research undertaken on rural poverty, published by the Commission for Rural Communities, identified that a quarter of farming families live below the official poverty line. As well as financial help (RABI) offer advice to families about state benefits and help them make a claim or signpost them to other agencies for assistance.

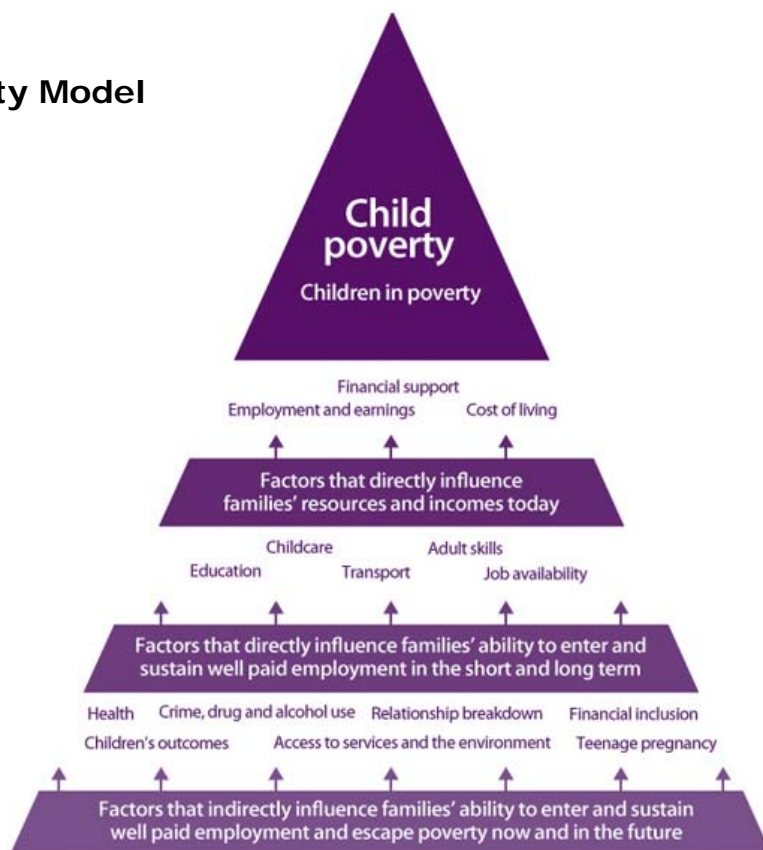
Action for Children a national children's charity that supports and speaks out for the country's most vulnerable and neglected children, young people and families. The Family Intervention Project (FIP), funded by Cornwall Council, attempts to address the root causes of behaviour and establish a whole family model of working from assessment to closure. Several key risk factors have been identified for FIP families which includes deprivation and unemployment. Although the average cost per FIP family was £4,344 the average savings amounted to £81,624 per family (based on the Dept. for Education figures and confirmed through analysis of local case). Regular meetings are held including

all relevant agencies as well as liaising with schools and children’s centres and health groups to provide support to the FIP family.

Again it was stated that Cornwall has low wages and a comparably high cost of living, this together with the fact that many homes in Cornwall are older and have higher levels of unfitness, disrepair and fuel poverty is a real issue. Improvements made so far by the FIP showed that there had been a significant increase in the number seeking work, training or voluntary projects.

Financial inclusion is identified in the key messages from **Cornwall’s Child Poverty Needs Assessment (CPNA)** and states that there is a clear link between high to very high risk and a high percentage of households on low incomes (for the work of the CCPNA this is below £15,000). There is a closer link between low levels of owner occupation and high levels of financial stress than there is with income levels.

Child Poverty Model



There are other possible factors which affect financial stress risk levels for instance lifestyle. It appears that younger families with newer homes may be associated with higher levels of risk, despite relatively higher income levels while conversely; lower levels of risk are found in areas with a high proportion of older residents.

Cornwall has very high levels of bankruptcy compared to other local authorities in England. Out of 109 local authorities (County and Unitary), Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly has been among the 10 authorities with the highest levels since 2000. In 2009 Cornwall was the eighth highest, which puts

it in the top 10% in England and Wales. Full details on the CPNA can be found on: www.cornwall.gov.uk/childpoverty

2.3.3 Education

Cornwall Neighbourhoods for Change (CN4C) advised that poor literacy is a barrier to accessing facilities as usually a certain amount of form filling is required. In the region of 2,000 people in Cornwall have gained a qualification or progressed to mainstream learning with the help of CN4C. Income to a household is vital in terms of reducing poverty and issues such as employment support, skills development, debt advice and family learning are all relevant factors.

Cornish Community Banking (credit union) are considering an initiative concerning raising the awareness of credit unions in schools so as to promote the benefits of saving and money management. In Wales there is a commitment to introduce credit unions in all of their schools by 2013.

The Cornwall Independent Poverty Forum stressed that educating families was imperative to break the poverty cycle, starting with the parents. Many need basic life skills such as cooking with leftovers and food basics.

An update of the **National Policy & Local Delivery** reported that "The Foundation Years" report, had recommended that greater emphasis should be placed on the importance of strong parenting and a good home learning environment and high quality child care.

The key messages from **Cornwall's Child Poverty Needs Assessment** states the Leitch review says skills matter to child poverty:-

"As a result of low skills, the UK risks increasing inequality, deprivation and child poverty, and risks a generation cut off permanently from labour market opportunity. The best form of welfare is to ensure that people can adapt to change. Skills were once a key lever for prosperity and fairness. Skills are now increasingly *the* key lever. A radical step-change is necessary."

A shortage of supply for childcare has been identified for geographical areas (Camborne, Redruth / Newquay, Truro, Perranporth) including some rural pockets throughout the county. Gaps have also been identified for vulnerable groups in particular for disabled children & children with additional needs who face barriers to access. The cost of child care remains a barrier to access & lower income families in Cornwall (below £20k) have a lower use of childcare (in particular formal childcare). The 21st Century of Welfare Reform of in & out of work benefits will have a major impact on affordability. (Increased partnership working with Job Centre +, Promotion of working tax credits etc). Sustainability of childcare provision, services & activities provided in & around school, maintaining a focus upon vulnerable groups & inclusion should be a priority area for action.

2.3.4 Health

Cornwall Neighbourhoods for Change reinforced the impact on children and families living in social housing where there is a concentration of poverty. Many factors such as higher densities of children and young people, fewer

community facilities, benefit dependency – much of which is intergenerational – higher domestic violence and crime, poor health much of which is associated with drugs and alcohol, isolation and general lack of confidence and aspiration resulting in low attainment.

National Health Service (NHS) – Cornwall and Isles of Scilly reported that health and life expectancy are linked to social circumstances and childhood poverty. The overall health of our society has been improving, however, the rate of improvement from deprived backgrounds has been slower – in essence this means that the gap has widened for those from deprived backgrounds.

Outcomes are worse for children living in areas of highest poverty, this includes health, education, employment and social problems which all impact on future life chances. There are various knock on health effects for children in poverty, starting with little food, poor diet, children reaching puberty and then becoming sexually active. From national research it is clear that larger families with six to nine children are inadequately housed, can not afford basic provisions and suffered a range of health issues. Children in poverty are twice as likely to be sick or disabled, have an unhealthy weight and lifestyle. Poverty is also associated with a higher risk of both illness and premature death and conditions such as asthma and certain mental health issues can be associated with poor housing. There are also issues around speech and language delays, and being more likely to have accidents.
(see Appendices 2a and 2d).

The most deprived areas have the highest rates of infant mortality (deaths of babies under one years of age). *See slide 5 of Appendix 2d - In Cornwall between 20 and 30 infants die each year, every year.* Babies born to the under 18's group are potentially more at risk and it is a known fact that there is a link between premature births and child poverty.

It was identified that it is important for midwives and health visitors to continue to act as links to other agencies, in addition to their specified roles, and child protection and safeguarding issues were also a key aspect of a health visitor's remit.

The need for an ongoing priority of partnership working to reduce child poverty is essential and a maintained focus on prevention is key to investment in future health and wellbeing. Universal support must be provided to those in greatest need and parents should know where to go to get help which is accessible to them.

The 'Kennedy Report' which identified that, as most NHS services are used by adults, this tended to focus budgets on adult health provision. However, it reported that consideration needed to be given to shifting the emphasis as prevention of poor health in the early years would make a positive change to the health of the nation in the long term.

One of the key messages identified in the **Cornwall's Child Poverty Needs Assessment** is that open spaces and the environment are key contributors to the quality of life of families in Cornwall.

Open spaces, sport and recreational facilities underpin people's quality of life in Cornwall; access to open space can encourage healthy lifestyles, promote well being and improve mental health. Safe and enjoyable children's play spaces are important in encouraging a more active lifestyle from an early age.

Poverty is a major determinant of ill health such as poor housing, lack of affordable healthy nutrition, lack of choice, greater barriers to healthy choices. Generally, children of parents who have never worked or are long-term workless are 13 times more likely to die from an unintentional injury and 37 times more likely to die as a result of exposure to smoke, fire or flames than children of parents in higher managerial and professional occupations. In Cornwall hospital admission rates for injury of those under 18 are higher than the England average.

11% of children in reception classes in Cornwall and 18% of children in year 6 are classified as obese. Studies show links between poverty social exclusion. If obesity is not addressed it can result in serious medical problems including heart disease, type 2 diabetes (non-insulin dependent), high blood pressure and osteoarthritis.

Hospital admission rates for respiratory tract infections from ages 0-4 in Cornwall are worse than the England average. (See pages 6 & 7 of Appendix 2d). There is an association between homes with visible damp or mould and the prevalence of asthma or respiratory problems among children.

Deliveries to teenage mothers in Cornwall is higher than the England average. (see: page 6 of appendix 2a). The Joseph Rowntree Foundation report "Planned teenage pregnancy": perspectives of young parents from disadvantaged backgrounds' (source: internet – see Bibliography on page 25) found that some teenagers feel that their conscious decision to become a parent is a reasonably rational life choice, given their past and the options available to them. Teenage mothers & their children are more likely to experience multiple barriers to achieving economic wellbeing. Issues include: lower educational attainment / qualifications & the subsequent impact upon gaining employment. Higher rates of teenage conceptions in Cornwall are evident in areas associated with greater levels of deprivation / child poverty; (see page 5 of Appendix 2d and page 6 of Appendix 2a) higher rates are evident in the West of the county.

Healthy life expectancy figures clearly demonstrate the inequalities in Cornwall and Isles of Scilly. For Males there is a 12.7 year gap between the areas with the highest healthy life expectancy and the area with the lowest and 12.6 years for females.

Although domestic abuse cuts across all social groups, national research for the British Crime Survey does show that disadvantaged areas experience higher rates of victimisation. Locally there is a strong correlation between

recorded incidence and deprivation, particularly in relation to health, employment and income deprivation. Recorded incidence rates in the areas identified in the most deprived quintile nationally (Index of Multiple Deprivation 2007) are more than twice the average for Cornwall.

2.3.5 Domestic Violence

Women's Refuge, Truro – explained that many women and children arrived with no possessions when fleeing domestic violence. They were often traumatised and the refuge offered support and a safe place to stay. It is expected to see an increase in demands in the service due to the economic climate and exacerbated by the reduction in other services and increased use of alcohol and drugs in the home.

A further concern is the fact that although there are over 400 organisations with 500 refuges (with 7,500 spaces) in the UK specifically for women, by contrast only 72 bed spaces in refuges or safe houses are available to male victims in the UK run by only 10 organisations.

ESTEEM (Empowering Men affected by Domestic Abuse) reported that 2 in 5 victims of domestic abuse (that is 40%) are male and only 10 to 12 % are reported to the police. (see the link below for further information www.mankind.org.uk/factsmalevictims.html).

Men often feel disadvantaged when seeking residency for their children and a perception existed that agencies such as the Police and Social Care seem to be less supportive to men victims of domestic abuse than they are to women victims. This has direct bearing on the experience of children who are party to the domestic violence. It is also the case that men often struggle to maintain contact with their children and there is a concern that where the man has contacted the police to report domestic abuse, it is the man that is expected to leave the household during the investigation period, potentially leaving the children with the perpetrator.

Esteem has identified key issues to determine the way forward to improve support for men, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual victims of domestic abuse:

- There needs to be a male and a LGBT refuge in Cornwall to gain parity with female victims as ongoing support is essential in respect of children in families experiencing domestic violence
- All services should offer support to men and LGBT individuals
- All victims must be believed and taken seriously
- Health and Social Care could do more in terms of funding services for supporting men
- Housing agencies should not discriminate between men and women when assessing vulnerability
- It should not be assumed children will be safe if left with the perpetrator
- Offer the same support whomever the victim is

2.3.6 Community

Inclusion Cornwall reported that relevant partners and service providers have been identified for various matters such as funding advice and

employment issues for those vulnerable and hard to reach groups. It was also stated that 44% of leavers, from the Cornwall Works organised programmes, move into employment and Cornwall was the best performing Convergence area in the Country. Evidence suggested that those people who stay in employment for at least six months are more likely to progress successfully.

In many instances there is poverty of aspiration rather than in financial terms. A key focus is given to those people who have been unemployed for long periods of time and projects existed to help with:

- (a) back to work;
- (b) progressing towards work; and
- (c) progressing in work

A series of measures including Next Step Advisers to give advice and assistance, an Employers Forum to facilitate with employers and a general sharing of clients with other partners all contribute to the process of working across workless issues and associated child poverty. Unemployment impacts considerably on family life as a whole but, with key stakeholders within Cornwall working together, when a professional identifies an issue within a family group there is a signposting system in place to refer individuals to an appropriate partner who can assist with the identified problem although in many cases an individual might face multiple issues. This in turn helps families to help themselves. Building a capacity of organisations that can help with important issues such as employment and skills, housing, education and health all contribute to raising awareness and inclusion.

The Coalition Government have stated that:

"We will maintain the goal of ending child poverty in the UK by 2020".

Inclusion Cornwall stated that to be able to achieve this, the following needs to happen:

- Tackle worklessness, this is essential for eliminating child poverty by 2020
- Focus on early intervention to support the most disadvantaged and families in greatest need
- Improve outcomes by expanding the role of the Voluntary/Community Sector

Volunteer Cornwall reported that 32% of people in Cornwall volunteer compared to the national average of 26% and it is evident that people in stable employment are more likely to volunteer.

Social participation - statistics show that poverty isolated people, have a reduced ability to engage in social and community life.

It is important to break the child poverty cycle as it is not uncommon for social workers to be accessing grandchildren of previous clients. Working in partnership with other organisations and agencies is important in raising aspirations.

Cornwall Neighbourhoods for Change are one of Cornwall's largest independent voluntary sector organisations which specifically targets their work at the most disadvantaged individuals and communities in Cornwall, particularly working with residents of Cornwall's long-neglected social housing estates where there is often a level of deprivation that is equivalent to that of England's poorest inner city areas.

Cornwall Neighbourhoods for Change strapline is:

"Cornwall Neighbourhoods – doing it for themselves".

Developing forums and community groups is considered instrumental in making a positive contribution to a community generally and it is also suggested that, working with Cornwall Council, Children's Centres could be utilised more as 'enterprise hubs' rather than a formal building with restricted opening hours. This does vary across Cornwall and in some areas centres are already used for other purposes such as youth clubs. Only one in three neighbourhoods in Cornwall has a community facility.

"Make charity history not make poverty history".

The **NHS Cornwall and Isles of Scilly** stress that the need for an ongoing priority of partnership working to reduce child poverty is essential and a maintained focus on prevention is key to investment in future health and wellbeing. Universal support must be provided to those in greatest need and parents should know where to go to get the help which is accessible to them. Support measures for people to keep themselves healthy and manage their own conditions should be developed with knowledgeable staff offering advice on where local support is available.

"Health and life expectancy are linked to social circumstance and child poverty".

Good Health for Everyone, CIOS 2010

"Overall, the health of our society has been improving but the rate of improvement in those from deprived backgrounds has been slower than for those who are better off".

Cornwall has some of the most deprived areas in the country.

A national policy and local delivery update stressed that signposting and joint work with other services is important for front line staff such as midwives and support workers. They often feel frustrated at not being able to give advice to families or point them to the right people, when visiting them as part of their job.

Poverty is not just a problem in urban areas the Commission for Rural Communities' report on rural poverty published in November 2010. The main statistics from the research showed that:

- one-quarter of farming families live below the official poverty line

- Income was often gained from capitalising assets rather than business profits
- within the poorest quarter of farming households, one-third had negative business income in the last three years.
- Two-thirds of all farms had to diversify and earn off-farm income to survive.

Chapter Three – Conclusion and Recommendations

3.1 Conclusion

The enormity of deprivation and child poverty issue in Cornwall meant that it was not possible to speak to all of the relevant organisations/bodies across Cornwall who are trying to tackle the various elements of deprivation and child poverty. Therefore due to the vastness of this subject together with time limitations, the Single Issue Panel could only receive evidence from a limited number of organisations, however, those that they spoke to did cover a wide range of issues.

Further investigation needs to be undertaken to engage with other organisations/bodies who are also trying to eradicate deprivation and child poverty in Cornwall. As the Chairman stresses in his Foreword to this report, despite all the good works in place the abiding view is that there is considerable opportunity to better coordinate activities to optimise the value of what is delivered and to ensure consistency of support, training and encouragement to individuals and families in lifting themselves out of poverty.

There does not appear to be any strategic direction regarding eradicating child poverty and that there needs to be a strategic lead in driving forward the eradication child poverty agenda (see the recommendations on page 25).

The issues highlighted by this report that need to be tackled are shown below, *(see pages 11 to 22 for more information and the relevant appendices as indicated)* however, this list is by no means exhaustive.

Housing

Housing affordability is a key issue in Cornwall, with a limited supply of new housing and high demand, high house prices and comparably low wages. Affordability pressures are also felt in the rented housing market.

Social housing forms a comparably small proportion of the housing stock in Cornwall, however the need for social housing is high and there is a low turnover in the social housing stock.

Finance and Debt

Cornwall Council should write to Central government concerning doorstep lenders.

Bankruptcy avoidance/support - education is required on money and debt management and ultimately debt avoidance. This education needs to be in schools for not just the children but also the parents and carers to give them the budgeting skills required which would help assist in breaking the cycle of deprivation.

There needs to be better promotion of credit unions, possibly in schools together with financial education.

Tackle worklessness - The Leitch review (see key messages from the Child Poverty Needs Assessment – Appendices 4d & 5b) says skills matter to child poverty: -

“As a result of low skills, the UK risks increasing inequality, deprivation and child poverty, and risks a generation cut off permanently from labour market opportunity. The best form of welfare is to ensure that people can adapt to change. Skills were once a key lever for prosperity and fairness. Skills are now increasingly *the* key lever. A radical step-change is necessary.”

(The Community Intelligence Team at Cornwall Council have carried out research into this issue as part of the Child Poverty Needs Assessment – further information can be accessed at:

<http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=22977>)

Education

Financial education should be given a higher profile, this education needs to be in schools for not just the children but also the parents and carers – see Finance and Debt on previous page.

Income to a household is vital in terms of reducing poverty and issues such as employment support, skills development, debt advice and family learning are all relevant factors. Poor literacy is a barrier to accessing facilities as usually a certain amount of form filling is required.

Health

It has been identified that children in poverty (NHS Cornwall & Isles of Scilly – see slide 6 of appendix 2d) are more likely to have; accidents, an unhealthy weight and lifestyle, speech and language delays, parents with long term health conditions, babies whilst teenagers and conditions such as asthma and mental health issues that can be associated with poor housing.

Many factors such as higher densities of children and young people, fewer community facilities, benefit dependency – much of which is intergenerational – higher domestic violence and crime, poor health much of which is associated with drugs and alcohol, isolation and general lack of confidence and aspiration resulting in low attainment.

Domestic Violence

All Cornwall Council services and those of Partners dealing with issues related to or involving children's deprivation and poverty must be challenged to ensure that they are not directly or indirectly failing to achieve equality and diversity requirements

Community

Council property, particularly Children's Centres, should be made more available for use by community groups.

The creation of community hubs in those locations without such facilities should be recognised with Cornwall Council taking the lead in addressing needs.

Maximise influence to attract convergence funding for areas of high levels of poverty.

Focus on early intervention to support the most disadvantaged and families in greatest need.

Responses to child poverty need to be undertaken in the collective context of child, family, home and community; all agencies needed to be smart to reach those families that needed support.

Improve outcomes by expanding the role of the Voluntary/Community Sector – given the current financial climate and the governmental cuts with regards to local authorities, this is something that needs to be considered.

3.2 Recommendations

The investigations carried out by the Deprivation and Child Poverty Single Issue Panel revealed that there does not appear to be any strategic direction regarding eradicating child poverty and that there needs to be a strategic lead in driving forward the eradication child poverty agenda. Therefore the SIP would like to make the following recommendations:

1. That Cornwall Council recognises that without a Strategic direction, Deprivation and Child poverty will not be reduced or eradicated.
2. It must therefore appoint a suitably qualified individual, within three months, to provide that strategic leadership by working exclusively on this topic, from within current resources.
3. That Cornwall Council identifies suitably resourced organisations or bodies to work in partnership with to tackle the issues highlighted in the report, again within three months.
4. The organisational bodies working in partnership with Cornwall Council be asked to produce an Action Plan to address the issues highlighted in this report and provide quarterly reports to Cornwall Council's Children Education and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

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Mankind statistics for male domestic violence victims – (accessed the 16 May 2011) www.mankind.org.uk/factsmalevictims.html

Child Poverty Needs Assessment – Worklessness - further information can be accessed at: <http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=22977>

Prepared by:

Heather Kirkham

Overview & Scrutiny Officer

Legal and Democratic Services

9 June 2011

If you would like this information
in another format or language please contact:

Cornwall Council
County Hall
Treyew Road
Truro TR1 3AY

Telephone: **0300 1234 100**

Email: **enquiries@cornwall.gov.uk**

www.cornwall.gov.uk