

Education, Children and Families Committee

10am, Tuesday, 6 October 2015

Child Poverty

Item number	7.3
Report number	
Executive/routine	
Wards	

Executive summary

Just over 21% of children in Edinburgh live in poverty. This is forecast to increase significantly by 2020. Children and Families is working with a range of service areas and providers to implement a series of actions intended to mitigate the impact of poverty on outcomes for children.

Links

Coalition pledges	P1, P5-P7
Council outcomes	CO1-CO6
Single Outcome Agreement	SO2-SO4

Child Poverty

Recommendations

- 1.1 Note the progress made with work to mitigate the impact of child poverty and request a further update in October 2016.
- 1.2 Request a further report in 6 months with a performance dashboard indicating measures /indicators used to record progress.

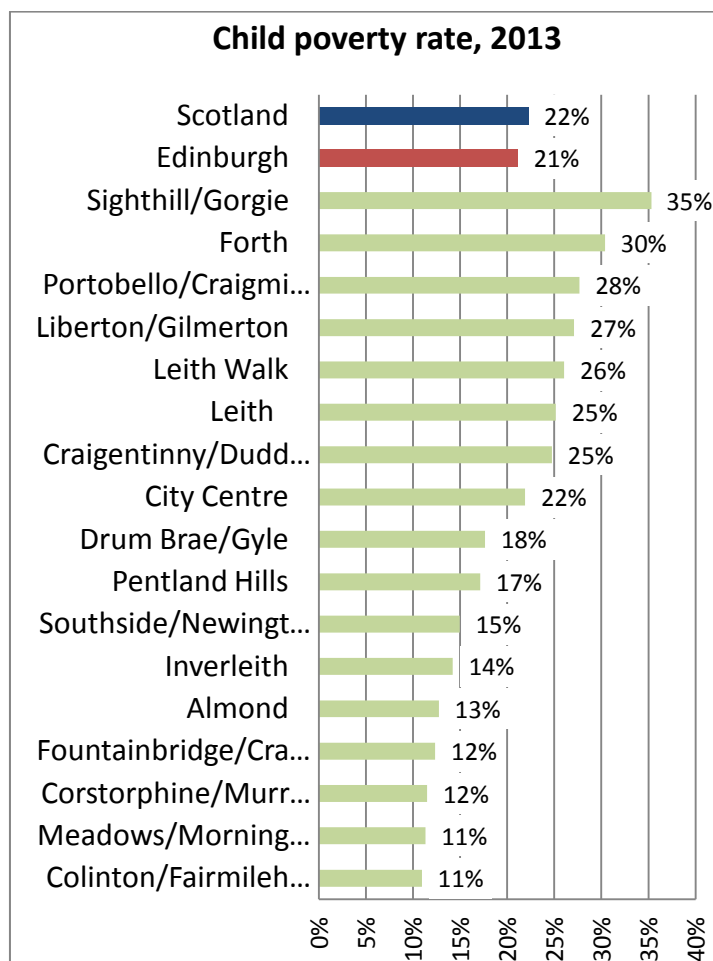
Background

- 2.1 More than one in five (210,000) children in Scotland live in poverty. The Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) forecasts that this will increase by 100,000 to over one in four children by 2020.
- 2.2 Children are considered as living in poverty if they live in households with less than 60% of median household income. This is the key measure used by the UK and Scottish governments and the EU. This means that a lone parent with two children is in poverty if they are living on less than £326 per week before housing costs have been deducted. A couple with two children is in poverty if they have less than £416 per week before housing costs (Scottish Government, June 2015). The UK government is currently reviewing this definition of child poverty.
- 2.3 The impact of poverty on children's lives is pervasive. The gap in outcomes remains wide in terms of standard of living, quality of life, health, opportunities and educational attainment. By 22 months, children from low income families have already fallen behind their more affluent peers. At age 5, there is a gap of 10 months in problem-solving development and of 13 months in vocabulary between children from higher income and lower income households (CPAG, 2015). By the end of primary school, according to Department of Education statistics, children receiving free school meals are estimated to be three terms behind their more affluent peers (CPAG, 2015). A childhood in poverty has an impact on lifetime outcomes.
- 2.4 Two thirds of poor children live in a household where at least one adult works (IFS, 2015). Most children in poverty are aged under 11 (half the total number are under 5). Childcare and housing are two of the costs that take the biggest toll on families' budgets.
- 2.5 Child poverty is a complex, cross-cutting issue that exists in all local authority areas across Scotland. It impacts on children's lives in many ways and across a

wide range of council services. There is strong evidence that income inequality impacts directly on all aspects of a child’s wellbeing. Child poverty is not, therefore, a single issue but one that requires a coherent response across different services and agencies.

Main report

- 3.1 In Edinburgh, the child poverty rate in 2013 was 21.12%, which is consistent with the Scottish average of 22%. Every ward in the city is affected, with all registering child poverty rates of over 10% after housing costs:



- 3.2 The cost of delivering additional public services to address the impact of child poverty in Edinburgh is estimated to be £156m per annum.
- 3.3 The Child Poverty Strategy for Scotland (2014-2017) sets out the approach to challenging child poverty under three outcomes:
- 3.3.1 Maximising household resources (Pockets) – *our aim is to reduce income poverty and material deprivation by maximising financial entitlements and reducing pressure on household budgets among low income families, as well as by maximising the potential for parents to*

increase family incomes through good quality, sustained employment and promoting greater financial inclusion and capability;

- 3.3.2 Improving children's wellbeing and life chances (Prospects) – *Our aim is to break inter-generational cycles of poverty, inequality and deprivation. This requires a focus on tackling the underlying social and economic determinants of poverty and improving the circumstances in which children grow up – recognising the particular importance of improving children's outcomes in the early years;*
- 3.3.3 Children from low income households live in well-designed, sustainable places (Places) – *Our aim is to address area-based factors which currently exacerbate the effects of individual poverty for many families by continuing to improve the physical, social and economic environments in local areas, particularly in those areas of multiple deprivation in which child poverty is more prevalent.*
- 3.4 The strategy emphasises three principles underpinning this long-term approach:
 - 3.4.1 Early intervention and prevention;
 - 3.4.2 Building on the assets of individuals and communities;
 - 3.4.3 Ensuring that children's and families' needs and abilities are at the centre of service design and delivery.
- 3.5 Strategic Outcome 6 of the Integrated Plan for Children and Young People (our children's and young people's outcomes are not undermined by poverty) adopts these three outcomes and outlines a series of local actions under each. These will be reported to the Children's Partnership. The actions were created following consultation with colleagues in Children and Families, Services for Communities, NHS Lothian, Edinburgh Voluntary Organisation Council, Save the Children, One Parent Family Scotland and Child Poverty Action Group.
- 3.6 The headline actions are to:
 - 3.6.1 Develop more flexible and affordable good quality childcare to meet the needs of families on low incomes (Pockets);
 - 3.6.2 Improve attendance at school and early years establishments, and attainment and achievement of young people (Prospects);
 - 3.6.3 Reduce the attainment gap between the lowest achieving pupils and their peers across the city (Prospects);
 - 3.6.4 Identify and develop more safe places to play (Places).
- 3.7 The complete list of actions for SO6 is included in the link to the Integrated Plan referenced on page 7 of this report. These include:
 - 3.7.1 **The '1 in 5: Raising Awareness of Child Poverty in Edinburgh' project.** This will engage with staff, parents and children and young people in 6 schools. These are made up of five primary schools which

have over 50 pupils (or over 30%) of children eligible for free school meals (Sciennes, Hillwood, Gracemount, Dalry and Royal High) and 1 secondary school that has over 175 pupils eligible for free school meals (Broughton). The schools have been deliberately chosen to represent a wide social mix; no positive action schools are included. The project began in August 2015 and is centred on a programme of work to raise awareness and understanding of how poverty affects everyday living, including exploring the cost of the school day and the impact of poverty-related stigma. Families on low incomes often struggle to meet costs associated with school. These costs can include, for example, buying uniforms and other essential equipment (e.g. stationery), paying for school trips and one-off events like school proms, or affording subject choices that have material costs.

3.7.1.1 The project wants to identify and understand the range of costs and make recommendations about how they might be reduced or removed. It will involve training sessions and focus groups with staff, parents and carers and children and young people, who will also take part in awards and creative arts projects around the theme of poverty and inequality. The aim is to generate practical ideas, resources and change that will help raise attainment and make a real difference to children's lives. The findings of the work will be developed into guidelines for all our schools and facilitate further training in this area;

3.7.1.2 A launch event is to be held in March, which will include presentations by the schools which have taken part. The event will be attended by leaders in education in Edinburgh and parent representatives. Naomi Eisenstadt, Scotland's Independent Poverty Adviser, has agreed to speak at and attend the event. Officers are currently investigating with the schools the possibility of a linked Christmas initiative/campaign called 'Hungry for Books.'

3.7.2 **Further developing family engagement**, including strong home-school partnerships and particularly for 'hardly reached' parents. The focus of this will be on helping parents on low incomes to use appropriate strategies to support their children's learning at home. Evidence points to this being the area of parental involvement that can buck the trend for children experiencing poverty and help close the attainment gap. Action to take this forward will include continuing to offer Save the Children's Families and Schools Together (FAST) programme in selected primary schools; working with the Scottish Parent and Teacher Council's new Partnership Schools Programme, which is currently under development and being piloted in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Angus; and piloting a Supporting the Home Learning Environment Project in identified primary

schools to develop effective strategies to support children's learning at home.

- 3.7.3 **Developing more breakfast club provision** to ensure access for all children living in poverty. It is the aspiration of the Children and Families Department to deliver a breakfast club in every primary school across the City of Edinburgh Council. Of the 88 primary schools, 55 currently have access to Breakfast Club provision. These breakfast clubs are delivered by a mix of private providers and sponsored and council funded clubs.

Breakfast clubs provide a healthy start to the day, enabling readiness to learn. Breakfast Clubs also have the added benefit of providing opportunities for social interaction, whilst helping address issues of attendance and punctuality at the start of the school day. The relationship between breakfast club staff and children can be fundamental in the identification of issues that manifest themselves early in the day. Although breakfast clubs were historically developed to provide a healthy breakfast for vulnerable children, they have developed over the years to support larger proportions of children whose parents/carers use clubs to support their work or training;

City of Edinburgh Council funded Breakfast Clubs and externally sponsored clubs are offered at low or no cost to children from low income families.

- 3.7.4 **Working in partnership with food banks** to better understand the reasons why families in poverty are using their services. As the use of food banks grows, it is important to understand why families end up having to use their services. The purpose of this research is to establish these reasons in order to identify where and how interventions can be made earlier to prevent the need to resort to food banks. It will also help to establish how many children in the city are reliant on food banks.
- 3.8 Additionally, work will also be taken forward with Welfare Rights Advisors and Economic Development to provide an integrated package of support for parents, including employability support, measures to encourage maximum take-up of benefits, and support and information about conditionality and sanctioning of benefits.
- 3.9 Eight Edinburgh primary schools are included in the second tranche of the Scottish Government's Attainment Challenge: Clovenstone, Sighthill, Craigmoynton, Niddrie Mill, Canal View, St. Francis. St. Catherine and Castlevue. Primary schools are selected on the basis of having 70% of all their pupils living in the 20% most deprived areas (SIMD). The Attainment Challenge focuses on improving literacy, numeracy and wellbeing, with the clear objective being to give all primary-school age pupils – regardless of background – the best start in life. An attainment advisor will be appointed and an enhanced package of

universal support prepared to raise attainment and tackle inequality. The total funding for Scotland is £100m over 4 years. The City of Edinburgh Council's Officers have met with officers of the Scottish Government and intent to make a submission for funding to raise attainment in these eight schools.

A report on the outcome of this work will be presented to a future committee meeting.

Measures of success

4.1 Outcomes for children living in poverty improve against a range of indicators

Financial impact

5.1 All work will be met from existing resources.

Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

6.1 There are no adverse impacts arising from this report

Equalities impact

7.1 Improved outcomes for, and inclusion of, children living in poverty

Sustainability impact

8.1 Improved outcomes for children in poverty contributes to community sustainability

Consultation and engagement

9.1 A number of actions contained within the plan require ongoing consultation and engagement with staff, parents, children and other agencies.

Background reading/external references

[Integrated Plan for Children and Young People, 2015-2018](#)

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Links

Coalition pledges	<p>P1 - Increase support for vulnerable children, including help for families so that fewer go into care</p> <p>P5 - Seek to ensure the smooth introduction of the Curriculum for Excellence and that management structures within our schools support the new curriculum</p> <p>P6 - Establish city-wide co-operatives for affordable childcare for working parents</p> <p>P7 - Further develop the Edinburgh Guarantee to improve work prospects for school leavers</p>
Council outcomes	<p>CO1 - Our children have the best start in life, are able to make and sustain relationships and are ready to succeed</p> <p>CO2 - Our children and young people are successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens making a positive contribution to their communities</p> <p>CO3 - Our children and young people at risk, or with a disability, have improved life chances</p> <p>CO4 - Our children and young people are physically and emotionally healthy</p> <p>CO5 - Our children and young people are safe from harm or fear of harm, and do not harm others within their communities</p> <p>CO6 - Our children's and young people's outcomes are not undermined by poverty and inequality</p> <p>CO10 - Improved health and reduced inequalities</p> <p>CO23 - Well engaged and well informed – Communities and individuals are empowered and supported to improve local outcomes and foster a sense of community</p>
Single Outcome Agreement	<p>SO2 - Edinburgh's Economy Delivers increased investment, jobs and opportunities for all</p> <p>SO3 - Edinburgh's children and young people enjoy their childhood and fulfil their potential</p> <p>SO4 - Edinburgh's communities are safer and have improved physical and social fabric</p>
Appendix	