

Education, Children and Families Committee

10.00, Tuesday, 11 October 2016

Further Developing Child Poverty Work in Edinburgh

Item number 7.4
Report number
Executive/routine
Wards

Executive Summary

The Education, Children and Families Committee meeting on 24 May 2016 considered a report on the first phase of the 1 in 5: Raising Awareness of Child Poverty in Edinburgh project. This detailed the work of the project to date. Committee decided:

- To approve the wider 'roll out' of the 1 in 5: Raising Awareness of Child Poverty in Edinburgh project;
- That a further report be submitted to the Committee on the resources required to take the project forward.

This report is to update Committee on the recent progress of the project (since May 2016) and to outline the resources required to further develop and take forward child poverty work, including the 1 in 5 project.

Links

Coalition Pledges [P1, P5, P7](#)
Council Priorities [CO1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6](#)
Single Outcome Agreement [SO3](#)

Further Developing Child Poverty Work in Edinburgh

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 To note the progress of the 1 in 5 Project and the proposed further developments.
- 1.2 To approve that the remit of this work is factored into the organisational review currently underway in Lifelong Learning in order to enable the work to be sustained and developed.

2. Background

- 2.1 Just over 20% of children in Edinburgh live in poverty. This is in line with the national average for Scotland, and a figure which is projected to increase significantly by 2020 (IFS, 2015). The report to Committee in May provided some statistical background about the impact of poverty on outcomes for children. Recently released data reinforces this. For example, the lowest decile households have seen a £1,900 drop in income over the past eight years whilst the top decile households show a £15,000 increase over the same period (CACI Paycheck). Boys born in the poorest areas of Edinburgh have a life expectancy 8.5 years shorter than those born in more affluent areas. This is a larger gap than in any other Scottish city.
- 2.2 The 1 in 5 Project began as a response to growing concern over the impact of poverty on outcomes for children and young people. Its aim is to raise awareness of child poverty; challenge poverty-related stigma; and look at ways of reducing the cost of the school day. Six schools took part in the pilot phase: five primary schools (Hillwood, Royal High, Gracemount, Dalry and Sciennes) and one high school (Broughton). The pilot took place between August 2015 and March 2016.
- 2.3 This work was taken forward by a team of four people who included it within their existing remits. Competing demands make this increasingly difficult to sustain. A small budget (£10k) to support the work was secured from the Social Justice Fund.
- 2.4 All the schools which took part in the pilot report a significant impact on both policy and practice. This includes, for example, policies on charging, school uniform, school trips and events such as school proms. Changes to school practice include making stationery and other resources freely available and

having more effective communication with parents about what resources schools can provide so parents do not feel compelled to buy items (e.g. pencil cases, homework resources). In addition, school staff, parents and pupils who have been involved are now more aware of the causes and impact of poverty, with some schools reporting a greater degree of empathy amongst pupils. Appendix 1, testimonies from three head teachers from pilot schools, gives more detail about the kinds of impact the work has had.

- 2.5 Since May 2016, work to develop 1 in 5 has continued. The team leading the project has developed a pack of training materials and run a 'Train The Trainers' session attended by staff from 17 schools and representatives from the youth work sector. These staff will deliver in their schools the staff awareness-raising training and conduct the focus groups with staff, pupils and parents and carers to develop individual school poverty proofing action plans. Schools in Liberton, Tynecastle and Craigmount are adopting 1 in 5 as a cluster approach and will be taking forward some of the recommendations in the original 1 in 5 report as 'small tests of change'. The 'Top Tips' leaflet, providing suggestions for ways that schools can reduce school-related costs (and which was appended to the previous report to Committee), was distributed to all teachers in all schools, and has been very well received.
- 2.6 In addition, the project team has delivered sessions about 1 in 5 to other sectors (including the Third Sector Network and Early Years). Staff are also working with NHS Scotland to develop and deliver 'Facing up to Child Poverty in schools: what can be done to reduce the cost barriers of schools?', a national learning and dissemination event for all Scottish local authorities in Glasgow in November, a further sign of the national recognition the 1 in 5 work is gaining. Also with NHS Scotland, a member of the project team has contributed significantly to developing a new eLearning module about child poverty aimed principally at education and health professionals and to be available nationally.

3. Main report

- 3.1 To date, the 1 in 5 Project has proved to be a successful and innovative piece of work that is well regarded and welcomed by schools. At a time of increasing focus on addressing the attainment gap, 1 in 5 is in demand as a means of improving understanding and awareness of child poverty and its impact, and for providing a solid foundation from which to initiate this work creatively and compassionately. Making an impact on child poverty should, in turn, improve educational outcomes for those children affected. The link to attainment will be at the core of child poverty work in Edinburgh.
- 3.2 In order to develop the project further and capitalise on the opportunities it presents, dedicated staff time is required. Ideally this would be one full time equivalent post and a small revenue budget. This resource would enable the

project to sustain and support the work outlined above; support new schools to take up the approach; and extend the work with Early Years providers, which is seen as a critical sector to work with.

- 3.3 Effective coordination to take forward the 28 recommendations in the project report, as approved at Committee in May, also requires dedicated staff time. Some of these, such as investigating the feasibility of using existing Council trust funds (and any subsequent implementation) to create a central inclusion fund to support parents with a range of school-related activities, will be substantial pieces of work.
- 3.4 In addition, the project team proposes to develop longitudinal/qualitative research in order to gather local data to provide a clearer picture of the impact of the project, and learning that could be disseminated widely.
- 3.5 Plans are at an early stage to develop further CPD materials and courses (e.g. inequality, welfare rights/benefits entitlements).
- 3.6 A crucial part of this role, in developing effective work to mitigate the impact of child poverty, will be to build strong strategic links with colleagues in the third sector, advice services, housing and NHS. Welfare rights and income maximisation, affordable childcare and housing are three key priority areas relating to child poverty that will require a partnership approach.
- 3.7 There is also an opportunity, and identified need, to begin work focused on the cost of school holidays and, for some children, holiday hunger.
- 3.8 The 1 in 5 project, as approved at Committee in May, has committed to developing an Equity Framework for schools. This will require widespread and detailed consultation with schools, parents and other interested parties.
- 3.9 Work will also be undertaken with Economic Development to look at what contribution Corporate Social Responsibility can make to mitigating child poverty.
- 3.10 A further important factor to take into consideration is that the Scottish Government proposes to introduce a Child Poverty Bill in early 2017. Consultation about this closed on 30 September. Its key purpose will be to enshrine in legislation a Government ambition to eradicate child poverty by 2030, underpinned by statutory income targets. The four proposed targets, which would be set on an After Housing Costs basis, are: Fewer than 10% of children are in relative poverty; Fewer than 5% of children are in absolute poverty; Fewer than 5% of children are in combined low income and material deprivation; and, Fewer than 5% of children are in persistent poverty. Tackling child poverty will be a central, cross-cutting priority and will involve working closely with local authorities to strengthen the relationship between national policy and local action. A measurement framework is being developed, and there will be a duty to report progress towards the targets.

- 3.11 These are some of the proposed developments identified to date. Others will emerge. All will require to be led. As the focus on child poverty and its profound impact on attainment, health and wellbeing outcomes and future life chances for affected children grows, both locally and nationally, the necessity of a coordinated strategic response, with dedicated staff resource, becomes increasingly important.

4. Measures of success

- 4.1 Outcomes for children in poverty improve against a range of indicators.
- 4.2 There is ongoing 'roll out' of the 1 in 5 project.
- 4.3 The 28 recommendations in the 1 in 5 report are implemented.
- 4.4 Evaluations of the work are positive.

5. Financial impact

- 5.1 Approved savings of £6.4M have been identified for Lifelong Learning over 2016-17 and 2017-18. £3.6M of the saving will be delivered through an organisational review which will reduce the budget available for staff from £12.26M to £8.66M putting the current service under increased pressure. The service is committed to identifying the necessary resources to allow this work to be carried out. The estimated total cost of this work would be no more than £64k.

6. Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

- 6.1 There are no adverse impacts arising from this report.

7. Equalities impact

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

8. Sustainability impact

- 8.1 Improved outcomes for children living in poverty contributes to a range of sustainability indicators.

9. Consultation and engagement

- 9.1 The 1 in 5 Project is the result of extensive and in-depth consultation and engagement with school staff, pupils and parents.

10. Background reading/external references

- 10.1 [1 in 5: Raising Awareness of Child Poverty in Edinburgh – Education, Children and Families report - 24 May 2016](#)
- 10.2 [EIS Child Poverty Advice Guide 2015](#)

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11. Links

Coalition Pledges	P1 Increase support for vulnerable children, including help for families so that fewer go into care P5 Seek to ensure the smooth introduction of the Curriculum for Excellence and that management structures within our schools support the new curriculum P7 Further develop the Edinburgh Guarantee to improve work prospects for school leavers
Council Priorities	CO1 Our children have the best start in life, are able to make and sustain relationships and are ready to succeed CO2 Our children and young people are successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens making a positive contribution to their communities CO3 Our children and young people at risk, or with a disability, have improved life chances CO4 Our children and young people are physically and emotionally healthy CO5 Our children and young people are safe from harm or fear of harm, and do not harm others within their communities CO6 Our children's and young people's outcomes are not undermined by poverty and inequality
Single Outcome Agreement	SO3 Edinburgh's children and young people enjoy their childhood and fulfil their potential
Appendix	Further Developing Child Poverty Work in Edinburgh

Further Developing Child Poverty Work in Edinburgh

The testimonies below from some of the head teachers of the pilot schools give an indication of the impact of the project:

'The project has had a significant impact on the life of our school and the decisions we make. The children and families in our school community face real challenges. It is our job to equip them with the skills and aspirations to overcome these. More than that though, as a school we have social responsibility to ensure opportunities are for all and they are inclusive. A good example of the impact of this project is when we planned for our whole school community outing at Christmas. We spoke about the way we charged for it in the past and this year we have a price structure that means bigger families pay less. It is these small things that make a difference. Small changes in our approaches make for big changes in our children's lives.' Grant Gillies, Head Teacher, Dalry PS.

Staff have shown a great willingness to contribute to the project. They see the effects of poverty on young people every day and want to do something through their work to help. Schools sometimes inadvertently make things worse for children in poverty, and there are ways that we can easily improve the situation. Supporting young people to reach their potential is why we became teachers and this project is a practical way to help to make that happen. Pupils at Broughton have recognised that the effects of childhood poverty are all around them. This is not something that is happening 'somewhere else'. They want to make their community fairer and have come forward in numbers to play their part in making that happen. It makes me feel even more proud of them.' John Wilson, Head Teacher, Broughton High School

'The impact of the project at Hillwood has been huge. It has highlighted all the things that we already do to keep the cost of the school day to a minimum but has also given us plenty of food for thought. Staff, pupils and parents have changed the way they think about poverty. The work was acknowledged in our recent inspection report (Education Scotland, 2016). The full reference to this is stated below.

"Participation in the 1 in 5 Poverty Project proved extremely powerful for children, staff and parents and has already lead to change in a number of areas in relation to the cost of the school day. Children made a number of recommendations which show great empathy and understanding of the needs of others. They are highly motivated by their involvement in Hungry for Books and visiting a local foodbank and many have committed to continue their involvement as they move into secondary school."

We have made lots of changes this year but this is a work in progress and we are committed to taking any further measures that we can take to reduce the cost of the school day for all our families as we become aware of these. We are delighted to have been part of such an innovative project.' Lucy Henderson, Head Teacher, Hillwood PS