

**Draft Child Poverty Strategy**

# **Breaking the Cycle 2**

**— a strategy for tackling child and family poverty and economic disadvantage in Cambridgeshire**

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## Summary

This is the second Child Poverty Strategy produced by Cambridgeshire's Children's Trust. The Strategy proposes the following four objectives for our partnership activity over the next three years:

### **Objective 1: Building Communities**

*Families in poverty can access a range of help from within their local community – linking with other families, voluntary organisations and public services.*

### **Objective 2: Building Futures**

*Adults and young people have the skills and opportunities to access employment and become financially secure.*

### **Objective 3: Supporting the most vulnerable**

*For the most vulnerable families and where there is a risk of crisis, organisations step in quickly, coherently and decisively to find solutions.*

### **Objective 4: Communication, information and advice**

*Organisations understand the issues facing people in poverty and the impact this can have, and make information, advice and support as easy to access as possible.*

## Introduction

We want Cambridgeshire to be a place where life chances are not determined by the poverty in which children grow up. Through this strategy, we aim to do all that we can to mitigate the effects of living in poverty, and to work together to lift children, young people and families out of poverty.

The County Council has a statutory responsibility to produce a Child Poverty Needs Assessment, and to work with our Partners to develop a Child Poverty Strategy. Our work needs to ensure that we can work together to combat child poverty in our local area, and mitigate its effects.

In 2011, Cambridgeshire's Children's Trust published its first partnership strategy to tackle child poverty. The strategy brought together for the first time all of the evidence about the drivers of poverty in Cambridgeshire, and the real issues facing children growing up in poverty. "Breaking the Cycle" built upon the good partnership working already established within the Children's Trust, and drove partnership activity at both County and local levels.

Using nationally available data, we know that against many measures outcomes for children in Cambridgeshire have been improving since the publication of our first strategy. For example, rates of teenage pregnancies have been decreasing, and fewer young people are not in education employment or training. However, this is against a national backdrop of economic recession which has seen big rises in the numbers of families falling into rent arrears, and rising numbers of people having to turn to food banks in order to feed themselves and their families.

We also know that children growing up in poverty do less well at school than their peers. This is particularly true in Cambridgeshire. Children in poverty here begin to fall behind from a very young

age - less than a third of children growing up in poverty in Cambridgeshire achieve a good level of development in the Early Years. And by the time they leave school, only 30% of young people who have experienced poverty here achieve five good GCSEs.

If our children growing up in poverty don't do well at school, we can never succeed in truly breaking the cycle of poverty in Cambridgeshire. Our refreshed strategy, therefore, needs to continue to drive partnership activity to improve educational outcomes for children.

### **The evidence base**

In refreshing our Child Poverty Needs Assessment this year, we wanted to improve our understanding of the life experiences of people living in poverty in Cambridgeshire. We know that national data sets, although useful, can quickly become out of date and may not always clearly reflect the real issues encountered by families. So our Needs Assessment has looked at both quantitative evidence (data) and qualitative evidence (feedback from talking to young people, families and frontline staff).

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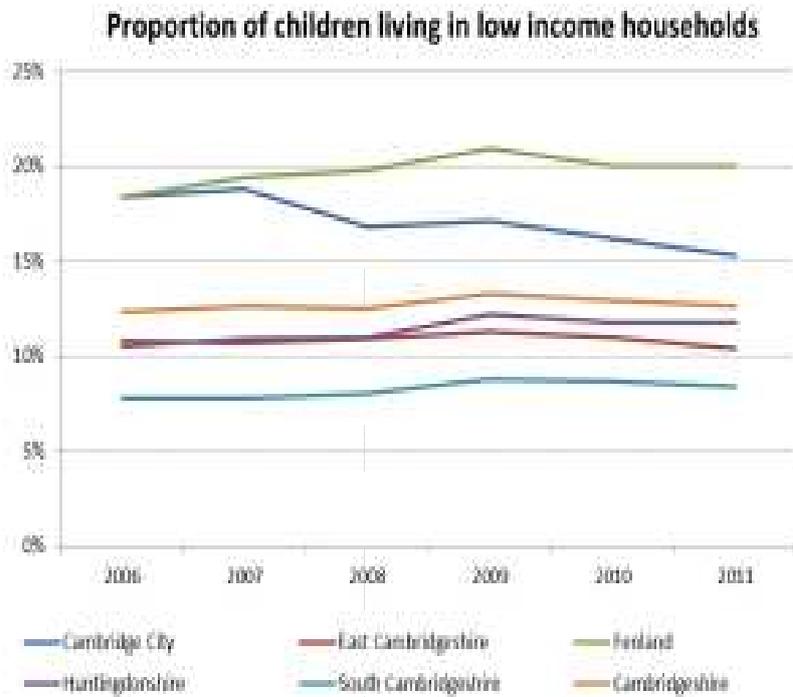
**What the data tells us**

The key measure of child poverty used within the Child Poverty Act 2010 is “the proportion of children (those aged 0-16 or 16-19 who are dependent upon their families) who are either receiving means-tested benefits or tax credits, where **the family has an income of less than 60% of median income.**”

In 2011, 1 in 8 children in Cambridgeshire were living in poverty – that’s 15,845 children living in families who have less than £13 a day per person for all expenditure except rent. Child poverty is highest in Fenland, and between 2009-11 has decreased most significantly in CambridgeCity.

There remain pockets of high deprivation in Cambridgeshire. For example:

- 31.8% of children in WisbechWaterlees are living in poverty
- 610 children in Huntingdon North ward are growing up in poverty.



Data to 2011 shows significant decreases in the numbers of children in poverty in the more deprived wards in CambridgeCity, which may be due in part to the rising cost of housing pushing those reliant on housing benefit to move further afield. Child poverty has particularly risen in commuter villages, and many areas where child poverty has increased have been areas with significant new housing development.

Almost 80% of children in poverty in Cambridgeshire live in our less deprived areas. This percentage is steadily increasing. This means that for very many families, their poverty is compounded by:

- Transport availability and transport costs

- Lack of access to community resources, including support services
- Lack of access to resources such as shops with an affordable range of food and products
- Increased isolation and vulnerability

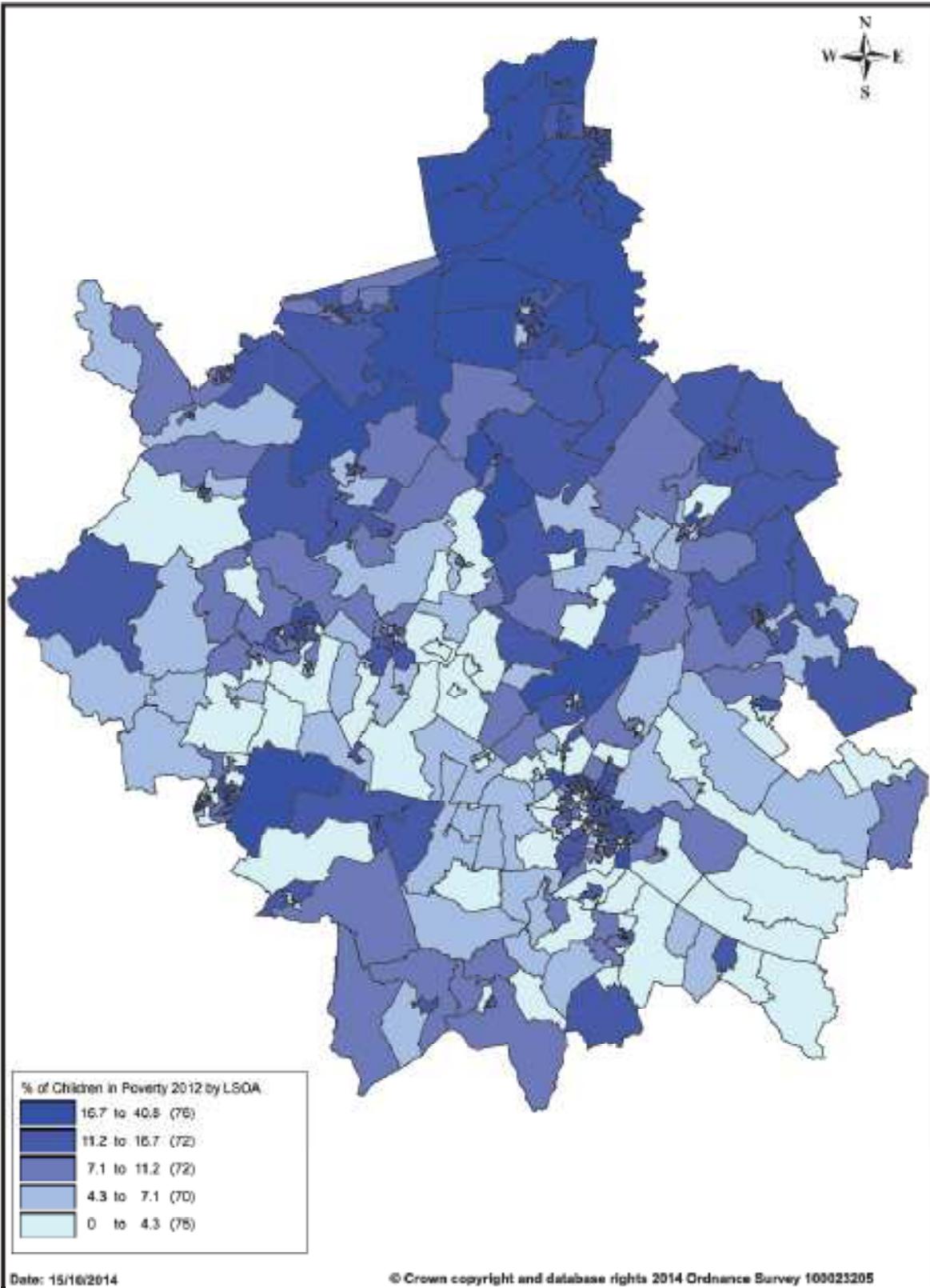
**We will work together to address the barriers to education, work and support that living in rural areas can bring.**

Nationally, we know that despite little recent change in the percentage of children in poverty in the UK, severe need is increasing. The Trussell Trust (the UK's biggest network of food banks) reports that the numbers of food parcels issues increased from 61,468 in 2010/11 to 913,138 in 2013/14. In Cambridgeshire:

- 53% of food bank clients in both Ely and Cambridge are referred because of changes or delays to their benefits
- 17% of clients of the Ely food bank and 22% of clients of the Cambridge food bank reported low wages as their reason for seeking food assistance

**This strategy will drive an improvement in the preventative work we undertake with food banks to prevent the crisis of food poverty occurring again in the future.**

# Child Poverty 2012 by LSOA



## Child Poverty and the Economy

Cambridgeshire's economy is doing well. Between 2011- 2013, over 22,000 jobs were added to the labour market. Numbers of people claiming job seekers allowance have decreased by over 2,000. This is especially the case in Huntingdonshire and in South Cambridgeshire, where there has been a 15.3% reduction in people with dependent children claiming out of work benefits.

However:

High skills occupations dominate (70% of the jobs in CambridgeCity in 2013)

There has been a big rise in elementary occupations (where no qualifications are needed) – 15,000 more of these across Cambridgeshire between 2011- 2013.

There are far fewer middle level jobs available here, and this increases the risk of in-work poverty, where people without degrees, or young people leaving school or college, find no alternative but low skill low pay employment.

Some groups fare worse than others:

1 in 3 lone parents in Cambridgeshire are not in employment. This rises to over half in 6 wards: Elm and Christchurch 57.4% Huntingdon North 54% Parson Drove and Wisbech St Mary 53.6% Clarkson 52.4% Abbey 51.4% Peckover 50%	1 in 5 households with dependent children in parts of Wisbech and Huntingdon have no adult in employment.
	13.5% of Cambridgeshire households with dependent children have at least one person with a disability or long-term health problem that affects their ability to work. In parts of Fenland this is noticeably higher.

Helping people into work makes sense. It makes sense for Cambridgeshire's economy and for future generations. We need to break the intergenerational cycle of worklessness which is particularly prevalent in Cambridgeshire.

We know that work is the best route out of poverty, and that this work needs to provide opportunities for progression so that young people and families do not end up becoming stuck in a cycle of low-income work. **Therefore we will continue to build partnerships between businesses, statutory agencies and the voluntary sector so that our young people, and adults who have low qualifications, are provided with the right skills and employment support to continue to progress in their work.**

The strength of the economy in Cambridgeshire means that in many parts of the county, work is relatively easy to find for those who are work-ready. This means that very often in some parts of Cambridgeshire people who have been unemployed for an extended period are likely to be far from work-ready. **In these areas we will therefore focus particularly on addressing these very early barriers to work, such as mental health, substance misuse, confidence and pre-employment skills.**

## Recession, Austerity and the Costs of Poverty

Cambridgeshire's resilient economy means that the recession has had less impact than in many other areas of the country. However, we know that levels of need are increasing. There are two key reasons for this:

- The impact of welfare reforms on families and young people in receipt of in-work or out-of-work benefits - *for a single person on out-or-work benefits, the benefit received now covers only 39% of the Minimum Income Standard, and for a couple with 2 children, their out-or-work benefit covers only 57% of what is needed<sup>1</sup>*
- The increase in the cost of living compared to wages – *since 2008, median income has decreased by 3.8%, whilst food prices increased by 26%, and energy prices by 45%.*

For families in low income with little money to spare, the costs of food, heating, clothing and other essentials are increasingly unaffordable.

Alongside the impact of the recession on worklessness, the resulting Austerity programme from central Government has meant decreasing resources available to local authorities and their Partners to provide the support services needed to prevent people from slipping further into crisis. For example, Cambridgeshire County Council has needed to make savings of over £150 million since 2011, and all indications are that these year-on-year reductions will need to continue. ***Our refreshed Child Poverty Strategy therefore drives an improvement in the way that Partners work together to prevent crises occurring.***

Our first Child Poverty Strategy built upon national research to estimate the costs of child poverty in Cambridgeshire. At the time, the estimated cost to the UK economy was about £25 billion per year. Using this formula, the cost to Cambridgeshire's Children's Services (including schools) was estimated at around £96,000,000 per year.

Updated national research now puts the cost of child poverty nationally to be £29 billion per year:

- £15 billion spent on services to deal with the consequences of child poverty, such as an increase in health and education costs;
- £3.5 billion lost in tax receipts from people earning less as a result of having grown up in poverty;
- £2 billion spent on benefits for people spending more time out of work as a result of having grown up in poverty;
- £8.5 billion lost to individuals in net earnings.

***For Cambridgeshire, the cost of child poverty equates to £183 million a year.***

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<sup>1</sup><http://www.jrf.org.uk/publications/minimum-income-standard-2014>

**What can our frontline practitioners tell us?**

Frontline practitioners from across the Children’s Trust work with families in poverty every day. Our practitioners tell us about the importance and impacts of the following for the families they work with:

<p><b>Isolation:</b>                  Joining in                  Affording the same things                  Travel                  Getting started ( a new home, work, training)</p>	<p><b>Benefits:</b>                  Changes                  Complexity                  Response times</p>	<p><b>Food and fuel:</b>                  Feeding the family                  Eating healthily                  Heating                  Hot water                  Getting started in a new home</p>
<p><b>Skills:</b>                  Budgeting                  Managing on a low income                  Digital exclusion                  Access to education</p>	<p><b>Willingness:</b>                  Too proud to seek help                  Confusion                  Understanding                  Lack of confidence in agencies</p>	<p><b>Hope and stress:</b>                  Fear                  Can’t see a way out                  Depression                  Low aspiration</p>

Our practitioners tell us that the following aspects work best in supporting families affected by poverty:

- Identifying the risks early
- Creating “space” for families
- Practical advice
- Quick fixes
- Agencies working together - consistency
- Keeping promises
- Access to grants and financial support
- Bulk buying schemes
- School projects on budgeting
- Local campaigns – eating well on a budget, healthy living, discount schemes, low cost/free activities

Specific suggestions include:

<p><b>Information and communication:</b></p> <p><i>Run campaigns to challenge our perceptions of people living in poverty</i></p> <p><i>Facilitate poverty forums in local areas</i></p> <p><i>Support and coordinate cross-agency initiatives – e.g. budgeting tools, eating well on a budget, practical information to help people over specifics</i></p> <p><i>Advertise schemes which help people on a low income (e.g. low water tariffs, Warmer Home discount scheme)</i></p> <p><i>Support the development of on-line referrals and better integrated working through Advicehub</i></p>	<p><b>Housing and homelessness:</b></p> <p><i>Lead work with landlords to enable early notification when tenants fall into arrears</i></p> <p><i>Develop cross-partner working between district/county councils to agree a way forward for potentially homeless families with children</i></p> <p><i>Establish bulk buying schemes (e.g. oil club)</i></p>
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<p><i>Invite CAB advisers into Council departments to talk to frontline practitioners, so that they know how and where to refer for support</i></p>	
<p><b>Work with and through schools:</b>  <i>Source and publicise bursaries/grants for young people, schools and parents</i>  <i>Information for parents on free/low cost activities</i>  <i>Establish a project with schools which helps young people to learn how to budget and run a household</i></p>	<p><b>Other:</b>  <i>Promote the living wage, and ensure all employees are paid a living wage</i>  <i>Develop a digital inclusion strategy</i>  <i>Local drop-in/advice available at supermarkets</i>  <i>Help families to understand what being on a low income means and support them to have achievable aspirations and hopes.</i></p>

***Our refreshed Child Poverty Strategy commits to listen, learn and act upon the knowledge of all of our frontline practitioners. We will make sure that our practitioners are fully supported to work better together to provide the interventions that they know work best.***

#### **Workforce Development across Partners**

Our Children’s Trust Workforce Development Strategy will be explicit about the workforce development needed across Partners to support our joint Child Poverty Strategy. This will include:

- Opportunities to build closer working relationships between Job Centre Plus staff and practitioners from other agencies working with vulnerable families and young people
- Training provided from CAB Advisers for frontline practitioners to improve understanding of how and where to refer for support
- Opportunities for frontline practitioners and managers to hear about our second Child Poverty Strategy and to discuss implications.

## Peer research with parents and young people living in poverty

For our Child Poverty Needs Assessment, we commissioned a small team of peer researchers to interview their peers about their experiences of living in poverty. If this Child Poverty Strategy is to be effective, we need to understand the issues and the barriers from the perspective of those who live in poverty.

The researchers were young people and parents who had experience of living in poverty themselves. They talked to young people and to parents across the county who are currently living in poverty.

**Over 90% of people interviewed tell us that dealing with a financial crisis can be biggest issue for them**, generally triggered by an unexpected bill or a fault with an essential appliance. They struggle with budget planning and have no contingencies to deal with sudden emergencies. All too often people turn to pay day loan companies, which leads to even greater debt. The majority of parents interviewed said they'd had to use a food bank at least once when faced with a financial crisis.

*I had an unexpected bill go out of the bank and it left us with nothing – I had to use the food bank...it made me feel really embarrassed...*

*I once used a loan shark called "Quid Finder" but even just to sign up to the website they charged me £69. This put me in more financial debt...*

*I had to use the food bank – the bank paid a bill I wasn't expecting and took all my money... I had nothing to feed my children... How can the bank take money that's not there and charge me...? My children had no breakfast that morning...*

**This Child Poverty Strategy will improve the way that Partners work together to help to prevent financial crises, for example, by supporting access to affordable credit, and by extending help with budget planning and money management.**

All interviewees admitted that they couldn't afford to buy new clothes, shoes, fresh vegetables, holidays or trips out. Parents told us that very often they can't afford to buy school uniforms as they have to buy them from schools and this can be more expensive than from supermarkets.

*I can afford the basic food – Simple Value things and pot noodles. But I can't afford to buy good healthy food...*

*There's nothing worse than not being able to buy your daughter an ice cream...*

*The lack of fresh food and veg makes me feel grim and [then] I don't feel like cooking...*

**Over 60% of parents and 90% of young people said they didn't know what services are available, nor how to find information.** Most struggled with the benefit system and with Job Centre services, and many did not find the right support available from Job Centre Plus to get into work. One had the following to say about the experiences of being homeless:

*"Our landlord decided to sell the house we were renting so we told the Council but they wouldn't do anything until we were literally on the streets, even though we told them what was happening. They put us in a Travel Lodge, then a hostel – it wasn't a nice experience and my child was out of school for 6 months. When you have*

*three children under 9 it takes forever. We wouldn't have got our new home if the Social Services hadn't helped us."*

**Our Child Poverty Strategy should lead to improved understanding across all agencies about the perceptions of people living in poverty, and of how to challenge or change these perceptions.** For example, we need to get better at helping people to find information and advice within their local communities, and improve their understanding of the flexibility of job-seeking support.

**Parents and young people all told us that their local community-led services were useful and helpful,** for example, their Community Shop, the Snack Shack, the Rosmini Centre and other local voluntary sector organisations. Others said their GP, midwife and Mental Health team had been helpful. Children's centres were praised as sources of support.

*The children's centre has been brilliant and has been very supportive through some difficult times, and they provide courses to help with bringing up children...*

*The Snack Shack is brilliant – it provides free activities for the family once every half term and in the summer holidays – it's something I look forward to and it gets us out of the house...*

**Parents with older children find it much less easy to access activities for the family that are free or affordable.** They often feel excluded from local activities because of the cost, and many suggested they would like to see local safe, free activities for families with children aged 5 – 11. Equally, parents with older children who want to go back to college say that they have no childcare to be able to do this:

*Our children are lucky enough to have a FREE breakfast club at school...*

*Xx Fun Zone is £5 per child. I would love a safe play area that is free...*

*The amount of people who have had kids and want to go back to college but they can't cos they've got no one to look after their kids...and then they get to the point when they're my age and they've got no qualifications and they can't do anything...*

Suggestions from parents included:

- Free activities for families with older children
- Better support for parents to get back to work
- Support and childcare for parents to gain better qualifications

And from young people:

- Help with managing money/budgeting
- More support with getting a job (and getting work-ready)

*I believe there should be more help out there in terms of learning how to budget. Most young people here and probably across the country just have to learn from their mistakes. But it's hard on a low income to make mistakes – you don't have the income to fall back on. So I think we should be taught budgeting in school or have more support on how to handle money.*

Finally, **many interviewees told us about the impact on the health, both physical and mental health, of living in poverty.** In planning for the Child Poverty Strategy, we need to recognise that living on a low income is very stressful:

*It's very difficult – the stress of money and debt gets you down. Between you and me, it's got me to the point of suicide before. When you're on your own and you have debt coming through the door, it's very scary...*

## Combatting Child Poverty and Worklessness – our strategic priorities

Cambridgeshire’s Child Poverty Champions Group has worked with wider Partners to define our strategic priorities for the next three years. These priorities build upon the learning from our 2014 Child Poverty Needs Assessment, including the data analysis and the work with practitioners and peer researchers.

Each organisation, plus others across Cambridgeshire, is developing a series of pledges to take forward within their own organisation. These pledges will help us to take forward our strategic priorities together.

Some pledges are included here now; others will be added as agreements are reached within each organisation.

### **Objective 1: Building communities**

***Families in poverty can access a range of help from within their community – linking with other families, voluntary organisations and public services.***

We know that the most valued services are those provided in the local community, often by the community itself. This strategy therefore commits Partners to facilitating this local support, identifying and addressing gaps in local provision and helping to join up provision so that it is more easily accessible for local people.

#### **Future Partnership work within this priority will include:**

- Extending our knowledge of what works in local communities
- Supporting affordable and accessible activities for families with older children
- Joining up and supporting local services (e.g. food banks, community shops, money advice)
- Addressing the specific needs around poverty in rural, affluent areas

#### **Pledges:**

We will refocus our grants and support to the voluntary sector supporting families in need. <i>Cambridge City Council</i>	We will support the development of credit unions in Huntingdon. <i>Huntingdonshire District Council</i>
We will seek to provide additional space in community centres for local pre-school childcare. <i>Cambridge City Council</i>	We will collect donations for food banks at our offices. <i>CHS Group</i>
We will build relationships with food banks to better understand their issues and how we might add value. <i>CHS Group</i>	We will promote local free or affordable activities for families, for example through newsletters to social housing tenants. <i>Cambridge City Council</i>

<p>We will support the role of volunteers at Huntingdonshire food banks. <i>Huntingdonshire Area Partnership</i></p>	<p>Support the establishment of local credit unions, and offer jam jar accounts and help with budgeting. <i>Rainbow Savers Credit Union</i></p>
<p>Through our Making Money Count project, we will target social tenants in Fenland, including taking financial inclusion services to rural communities. <i>Circle Housing Roddons</i></p>	<p>We will work with Making Money Count partners to help build the financial capacity of all Fenland residents. <i>Fenland District Council</i></p>
<p>We will develop wider partnerships working to reduce health inequalities. <i>Public Health Cambridgeshire</i></p>	<p>We will improve the affordability of our swimming pools by promoting free swimming opportunities for all children, and free swimming lessons and reductions for those referred or on benefits. <i>Cambridge City Council</i></p>
<p>We will organise free street games activities in disadvantaged areas. <i>Cambridge City Council</i></p>	<p>We will contact local schools to offer help in setting up Junior Saver accounts. <i>Rainbow Savers Credit Union</i></p>
<p>We will promote free activities and opportunities in our libraries, prioritising areas of most need. <i>Cambridgeshire County Council</i></p>	<p>We will develop the wider use of libraries as venues for community and partner activities, e.g. Citizens Advice Bureau, work clubs, credit unions, or community learning. <i>Cambridgeshire County Council</i></p>
<p>We will support the development of a community-led group in Wisbech to submit a Community Led Local Development bid for social inclusion activity in Wisbech. <i>Fenland District Council</i></p>	<p>We will extend Time Credits to all our customers across Cambridgeshire, enabling families to access leisure services that they may not otherwise afford. <i>CHS Group</i></p>
<p>We will ensure a good transition of the commissioning of the Family Nurse Partnership, and develop opportunities to ensure linkages with other services for families with children aged 0-5 years. <i>Cambridgeshire County Council</i></p>	

**Objective 2: Building futures**

***Adults and young people have the skills and opportunities to access employment and become financially secure.***

We know that work is the best route out of poverty, and that this work needs to provide opportunities for progression so that young people and families do not become stuck in a cycle of low-income work. We also know that the recent rises in elementary occupations means that low-skill low-paid work is often the only option for people with few qualifications, or qualifications insufficiently matched to the local labour market. Equipping our workforce with the right skills for today's labour market continues to be a key priority for our Child Poverty Strategy.

**Future Partnership work within this priority will include:**

- Continue to support businesses to play a role in the education of their future workforce
- Partnership work with schools to develop multi agency projects outside of the school environment to improve the support, learning and development of children in receipt of free school meals
- Targeted employability support for children growing up in poverty
- Developing apprenticeships
- Continuing to work together to promote the uptake of free school meals

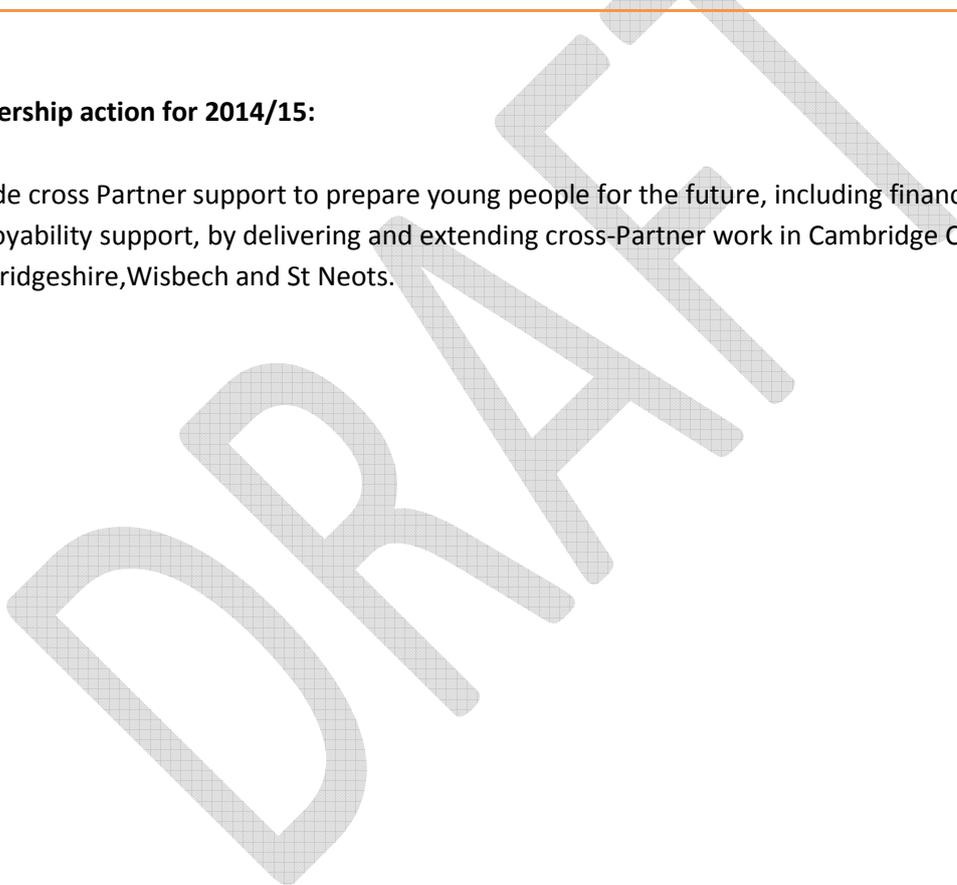
**Pledges:**

<p>We will use Job Centre Plus funding to support those affected by rural transport problems. <i>Job Centre Plus</i></p>	<p>We will facilitate a referral system to widen access to our IAG staff. <i>Huntingdon Regional College</i></p>
<p>We will create a working group with local primary schools to target careers advice and training to parents wanting to return to work once their children are in full-time education. <i>Huntingdon Regional College</i></p>	<p>We will promote free school meal/pupil premium eligibility with early years providers. <i>Cambridgeshire County Council</i></p>
<p>We will promote to the voluntary sector and to families themselves the value of the Pupil Premium. <i>Kings Hedges Family Support Project</i></p>	<p>We will provide information to schools and to young people about local employment and career opportunities. <i>Cambridgeshire County Council</i></p>
<p>We will invest in heating and energy efficiency improvements and help to ensure residents are on the lowest energy tariffs to help families manage household bills. <i>Cambridge City Council</i></p>	<p>We will explore using FSM as an indicator to provide better targeted support to help young people access work that pays. <i>Area Partnerships</i></p>
<p>Through our Accelerating Achievement Strategy, we will lead cross-cutting work to rapidly improve the achievement of our children growing up in poverty.</p>	<p>We will develop more opportunities to encourage and support language and literacy development for adults and children in local libraries.</p>

<p><i>Cambridgeshire County Council</i></p> <p>We will link new applications for benefits to the Free School Meals process so that the County Council Free School Meals team are aware of all families newly eligible, and we will support other local authorities to extend the uptake of free school meals.</p> <p><i>Fenland and East Cambridgeshire District Councils</i></p>	<p><i>Cambridgeshire County Council</i></p> <p>We will lead work with the LEP and with Partners to support the development and distribution of the European Social Fund funding.</p> <p><i>Cambridgeshire County Council</i></p>
<p>We will work with The Skills Service to develop better links between educational attainment and the skills that businesses need in Fenland.</p> <p><i>Fenland District Council</i></p>	<p>We will engage social housing tenants with low confidence and low qualifications in Fenland by providing a digital inclusion package, and seek to expand this across the county.</p> <p><i>CHS Group</i></p>

**Partnership action for 2014/15:**

Provide cross Partner support to prepare young people for the future, including financial skills and employability support, by delivering and extending cross-Partner work in Cambridge City, East Cambridgeshire, Wisbech and St Neots.



**Objective 3: Supporting the most vulnerable**

***For the most vulnerable families and where there is a risk of crisis, organisations step in quickly, coherently and decisively to find solutions.***

We have seen that people in poverty are not so resilient. When problems arise, be it financial, social, housing-related or health-related, they often have nowhere to turn. Crises therefore quickly escalate. Our strategy therefore seeks to improve the way we work together to help people to manage these problems before they escalate, including statutory services such as Job Centre Plus, Housing and Social Care.

**Future Partnership work within this priority will include:**

- Addressing the incidence of benefit sanctions and mitigating the impact of sanctions and delays
- Proposing a functional alternative to the Local Welfare Assistance Scheme if required
- Working together to identify and support families at risk of homelessness

**Pledges:**

<p>We will work with parents to reduce drug and alcohol use. <i>Cambridgeshire County Council</i></p>	<p>We will support parents and their children who are victims of domestic violence to stay safely in their own homes. <i>Cambridgeshire County Council</i></p>
<p>We will work with Partners to explore alternative means of crisis support in the event of Government withdrawal of the funding for CLAS. <i>Cambridgeshire County Council, CHS Group</i></p>	<p>We will invest in the provision of Emergency Accommodation in Cambridge in order to keep homeless children at the same school and their parents in employment. <i>Cambridge City Council</i></p>
<p>We will promote the uptake of funding for adults on training courses. <i>Huntingdon Regional College</i></p>	<p>We will promote our offer of financial services to excluded people, e/g/ people with a bad credit history, people with a criminal record. <i>Rainbow Savers Credit Union</i></p>
<p>We will identify further opportunities to engage in homelessness prevention through the Homelessness Prevention Project. <i>Cambridge and district CAB</i></p>	<p>We will undertake a Big Energy Saving Week campaign this winter to help people understand how to save energy, reduce bills and understanding billing. <i>Cambridge and district CAB</i></p>

**Partnership action for 2014/15:**

Address the incidence and impact of benefit sanctions on vulnerable families.

Develop a cross-Partner system to identify and support families at risk of homelessness.

**Objective 4: Communication, information and advice**

***Organisations understand the issues facing people in poverty and the impact this can have, and they make information, advice and support as easy to access as possible.***

Our frontline practitioners told us we can get better at providing practical and accessible information and advice to people in poverty, and have made useful suggestions on how to do this. Our strategy commits us to taking forward these practical suggestions. We also need to learn from the peer research commissioned for this Strategy, by extending understanding across all of our organisations about the issues and impacts of poverty in local areas, and of sources of support for practitioners.

**Future Partnership work within this priority will include:**

- Communicating the issues raised in the peer research to service providers
- Improving access to information and advice, especially for young people
- Extending support for budgeting skills and other aspects of financial inclusion
- Digital inclusion

**Pledges:**

<p>We will invest further staff and resource in partnership working at a strategic level.</p> <p><i>Job Centre Plus</i></p>	<p>We will facilitate job shadowing between Job Centre Plus, local authorities and the voluntary sector in order to build better working relationships.</p> <p><i>Job Centre Plus</i></p>
<p>We will research, publish and promote case studies of embedded community organisations who have helped break the cycle of poverty for families.</p> <p><i>Cambridgeshire County Council</i></p>	<p>We will support, advise and challenge schools about working with families with eligible funded two year olds, including raising awareness of the effects of poverty.</p> <p><i>Cambridgeshire County Council</i></p>
<p>We will promote free community use hours for community groups.</p> <p><i>Cambridge City Council</i></p>	<p>We will train more frontline workers across agencies so that they can identify, support and signpost people needing support early on so that problems do not escalate.</p> <p><i>Cambridge and district CAB</i></p>
<p>We will fully publicise our refreshed Child Poverty Strategy to raise awareness amongst internal staff and Partners.</p> <p><i>Cambridgeshire County Council</i></p>	<p>We will develop training for early years staff and early years practitioners about poverty in Cambridgeshire, and what they can do to make a difference.</p> <p><i>Cambridgeshire County Council</i></p>
<p>We will invest in the Employment Support Service to help families get off benefits and into work.</p> <p><i>Cambridge City Council</i></p>	<p>We will ensure that Cambridge City Council’s developing Anti-poverty Strategy links to and helps support the objectives of the Child Poverty Strategy.</p> <p><i>Cambridge City Council</i></p>

<p>We will share the learning from our tablet loan scheme for excluded learners. <i>Making Money Count Project</i></p>	<p>We will continue to provide funding support to Citizens Advice Bureaux so that debt advice can be provided. <i>Cambridge City Council</i></p>
<p>We will raise awareness with strategic decision makers at Job Centre Plus about the levels of poverty in Cambridgeshire. <i>Job Centre Plus</i></p>	<p>We will ensure that we retain the capacity to provide advice needed when Universal Credit is introduced. <i>Cambridge and District Citizens Advice Bureau</i></p>
<p>We will provide training to frontline practitioners in Fenland - as “problem noticers” to increase early intervention, and on improving confidence and motivating changes in behaviour. <i>Making Money Count Project</i></p>	<p>Together with Job Centre Plus, we will provide regular training opportunities for frontline practitioners across all Partners on welfare benefits and back to work support. <i>Cambridgeshire County Council</i></p>
<p>We will host and coordinate the Cambridgeshire Financial Capability Forum to maximise partnership working. <i>CHS Group</i></p>	<p>We will develop and extend the Community Hub model for libraries, so that all partners work together to deliver information and advice, and library spaces are used fully for information, learning and training opportunities. <i>Cambridgeshire County Council</i></p>
<p>We will train all library staff in the Universal Information Offer, and provide computer buddies to help with basic access to computers and to promote the free use of library computers. <i>Cambridgeshire County Council</i></p>	<p>We will ask our Youth District Council how they can support the Child Poverty objectives. <i>Fenland District Council</i></p>

### **The Child Poverty Champions Group Partners**

In Cambridgeshire, the work to combat child poverty is led by the Child Poverty Champions Group. This group brings together representatives (Champions) from Partners across the Children's Trust, including:

Cambridgeshire County Council  
Fenland District Council  
East Cambridgeshire District Council  
Job Centre Plus  
CHS Group  
Voluntary Sector representatives

South Cambridgeshire District Council  
Huntingdonshire District Council  
Cambridge City Council  
Citizens Advice Bureau  
Cambridgeshire Police

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Child Poverty Champions Group will continue to oversee the production of an annual report on Child Poverty in Cambridgeshire. The Group will use the findings from these reports to amend pledges and activity where needed. Cambridgeshire's Children's Trust will receive a copy of this report.

Ongoing monitoring and evaluation will take place of the Partnership activity that is initiated by the Champions Group. This will be monitored by the Champions Group.