



Darlington Putting Children First: Child Poverty Strategy

October 2011

**Darlington
Partnership**

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GIVING CHILDREN BACK THEIR FUTURE

The North East Child Poverty Declaration Support the Declaration

The North East Child Poverty Declaration aims to raise awareness and widen public understanding of child poverty and to encourage positive action by individuals and organisations of every type.

We believe

- All children in the North East should have equal opportunities to be happy and healthy, achieve their potential and contribute to society
- Children in poverty is everyone's business
- We can make a difference to children's lives

We welcome

1. The Child Poverty Act
2. Plans and actions by partnerships to reduce poverty

We commit to

- Find out more about child poverty
- Change our policies and the way we work to support families
- Record actions I have taken in support of this Declaration
- Support local action to reduce child poverty

**You can show your support for by
signing the Child Poverty Declaration at:**

http://www.barnardos.org.uk/northeastpovertydeclaration/poverty_pledge_support.htm

1. Executive Summary:

Introduction:

The Child Poverty Act (Part 2, Section 23) requires each Local Authority to prepare a joint Child Poverty Strategy in relation to its area. The Strategy is supported by the Child Poverty Needs Assessment.

Darlington Putting Children First: Child Poverty Needs Assessment:

Analysis of data and information from the draft Needs Assessment shows that need is concentrated within the following 10 wards:

- i. Bank Top;
- ii. Central;
- iii. Cockerton West;
- iv. Eastbourne;
- v. Haughton East;
- vi. Lascelles;
- vii. Lingfield;
- viii. Northgate;
- ix. North Road, and
- x. Park East.

The following groups were found to be most vulnerable to child poverty and its associated negative effects:

Children/Young People:

- i. Looked After Children;
- ii. First time entrants to the youth justice system;
- iii. Pupils who have been excluded from school;
- iv. NEETs;
- v. Children receiving free school meals;
- vi. Children with three or more siblings, and
- vii. Children with a disability.

Parents/Carers:

- i. Long term unemployed and those who are benefit dependent;
- ii. Those who may be drug or alcohol dependent;
- iii. Parents/carers with mental health issues;
- iv. Lone parents;
- v. Teenage parents;
- vi. Parents/carers with low level or no qualifications, and
- vii. Parents/carers in low paid work.

Our Priorities:

From the preceding analysis, the following key priorities were identified:

- 1. Economy and Skills:** To develop the economy; create the conditions for job creation, and provide opportunities for vulnerable groups to improve their skills and gain sustainable employment;
- 2. Financial Inclusion:** To provide the community with quality and timely information, advice and guidance that enables them to maximise their income and life opportunities and to mitigate the impacts of forthcoming welfare reforms;

3. **Early Years and Health:** To decrease the health inequalities between the most deprived and the most affluent communities within Darlington;
4. **Early Intervention and Prevention:** To ensure that assessments are effective and undertaken in a timely manner and that interventions are put in place at the earliest stage possible, and
5. **Housing and Sustainable Communities:** To create cohesive and inclusive communities where residents take pride in their area and housing is suitable and of a high quality.

Governance:

Darlington Children's Trust will take on the governance role and monitor the progress of the Child Poverty Strategy as an extension of its role with regard to the CYPP.

We will:

- Report on progress of actions;
- Identify any barriers that may be preventing progress, and
- Adjust the action plans where needed to help overcome any problems with delivery of the outcomes.

The key priorities will be refreshed as appropriate. The action plans will be updated in the light of any new national requirements.

We will refresh the Child Poverty Needs Analysis once every six months, and the Child Poverty Strategy once every two years.

Part 1: Strategy

2. Introduction:

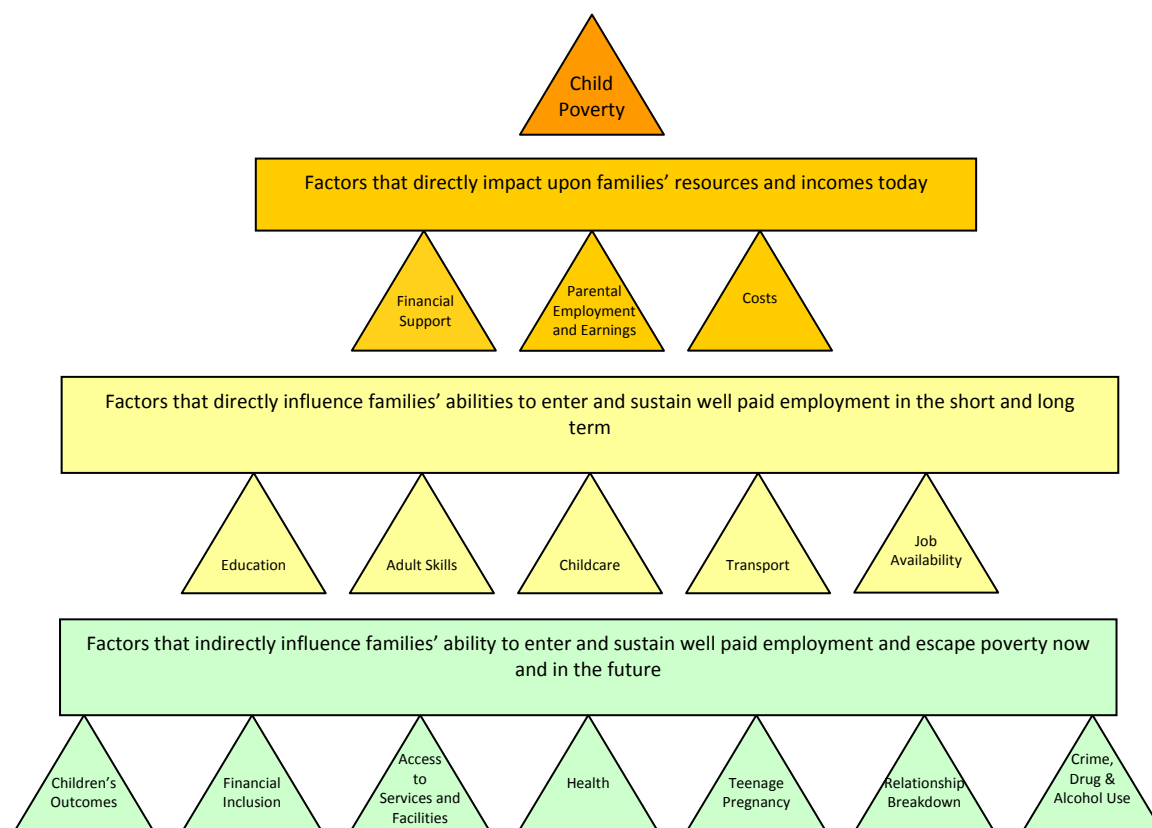
Preventing and tackling child poverty in Darlington is everyone's business and through a concerted partnership approach we have already made considerable progress in recent years and have made some progress in reducing levels of child poverty; however, we realise we still have a long way to go.

Too many of our children still live in poverty and we know that growing up with such deprivation can have a serious impact on a child's experience and life chances, and lead to intergenerational cycles of deprivation.

Research has shown that children who grow up in poverty are:

- Less likely to succeed at school;
- More likely to suffer from poor health;
- Less likely to secure a good job as an adult;
- More likely to offend;
- Less likely to access a range of cultural and leisure activities;
- More likely to be taken into care, and
- More likely to have children who grow up in poverty creating a cycle of poverty.

The causes of child poverty are multi faceted. Research conducted by the Child Poverty Unit has shown the multitude of factors that impact either directly or indirectly upon children poverty. These factors are displayed below in the "Child Poverty Pyramid".



3. Defining Child Poverty:

Defining and then measuring child poverty is a very complicated process. The Child Poverty Act 2010 identifies 4 types of poverty, setting differing targets for each type of poverty:

1. To reduce the proportion of children who live in **relative low income** to less than 10%: This is the main indicator used when discussing poverty in the UK. It is defined as families with an income below 60% of the contemporary median equivalised household income. This measure indicates whether the poorest families are keeping pace with the growth of incomes in the economy as a whole;
2. To reduce the proportion of children who live in **material deprivation** and have a **low income** to less than 5%: This is defined as children living in households with incomes below 70% of the current national median and who are experiencing material deprivation, namely that there are goods and services which they are less likely to be able to afford for their children. Material deprivation is currently measured by asking families whether they have a set of 21 items such as: having friends round for tea once a fortnight; going on a school trip at least once a term; home contents insurance; one weeks family holiday per year, and two pairs of all-weather shoes for each adult;
3. To reduce the proportion of children that experience **long periods of relative poverty**, with the specific target to be set at a later date: Persistent poverty is defined as a household which is living in relative poverty for at least three consecutive years;
4. To reduce the proportion of children who live in **absolute low income** to less than 5%: This indicator measures whether the poorest families are seeing their income rise in real terms. The level is fixed as equal to the relative low-income threshold for the baseline year of 1998-99 expressed in today's prices.

The Coalition Government's Child Poverty Strategy, '*A New Approach to Child Poverty*', proposed a fifth indicator: **Severe poverty** is the proportion of children who experience material deprivation and live in households where income is less than 50% of the median household income for the financial year.

4. Everybody's Business: Working in Partnership:

Darlington has a duty to work with a range of partners on a number of different strategies.

Child Poverty is a complex, multi-faceted issue which 'requires the integration of services, driven by close partnership working'. The Child Poverty Act 2010 requires the Council to prepare this Child Poverty Strategy, setting out measures that it, together with its partners will take to reduce and mitigate the effects of poverty. Partners with whom the council has a duty to co-operate in this area include the police, the youth offending and probation service, as well as health authorities, and Job Centre Plus, but includes many other Partners with whom the local authority feels it needs to engage in this area of work, for example in Darlington this will include the voluntary and community sector.

Child Poverty will be tackled most effectively by co-ordinating action across a range of local services and initiatives. The Darlington Partnership (which oversees the Sustainable Community Strategy) and the partners which include the local authority, police, fire and health services as well as the Business community and the Third sector are also expected to ensure that

eradicating child poverty is part of their wider vision for the area. The key issues identified within the Child Poverty Needs Analysis were aligned with the priorities outlined in the Sustainable Community Strategy to ensure that this Child Poverty Strategy is complementary to the Sustainable Community Strategy (see Appendix 1).

The role of partners is crucial in the delivery of an effective Child Poverty Strategy. In Darlington partnership working is a real strength and we already have a number of existing plans and strategies that focus on the effects of child poverty. The table below highlights how these strategies impact upon the priorities identified within the Child Poverty Strategy. In effect this strategy is very much a consolidation of existing activity.

Child Poverty Strategy Priorities	Economy and Skills	Financial Inclusion	Early Years and Health	Early Intervention and Prevention	Housing and Sustainable Communities
Existing Strategies and Plans					
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed					
Children and Young People's Plan					
Workforce Development Plan					
Housing Strategy					
Darlington 14-19 Strategy					
Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy					
Teenage Pregnancy Strategy					
SEN Strategy					
Parenting Strategy					
NEET Strategy					
Financial Inclusion Strategy					
Childcare Sufficiency Audit					
Youth Offending Service Strategy					
Obesity and Physical Activity Strategy					
Children and Young People's Participation Strategy					
CAMHS Strategy					
Substance Misuse Plan					
Oral Health Strategy					
Safeguarding Strategy					

5. National Policy Context:

In 1997, the incumbent Labour Government made a pledge to end child poverty within a generation.

At the time, the UK had one of the highest child poverty rates in the industrialised world, as measured by the proportion of children living in families with a household income below 60 per cent of median income. By this measure, child poverty had more than doubled between the late 1970s and mid 1990s.

Evidence suggests that a combination of factors led to this position including: rising unemployment and long-term detachment from the labour market; stagnation in wage levels at the bottom and middle of the labour market (as compared to the top); regressive changes to the tax and benefit system, and demographic changes.

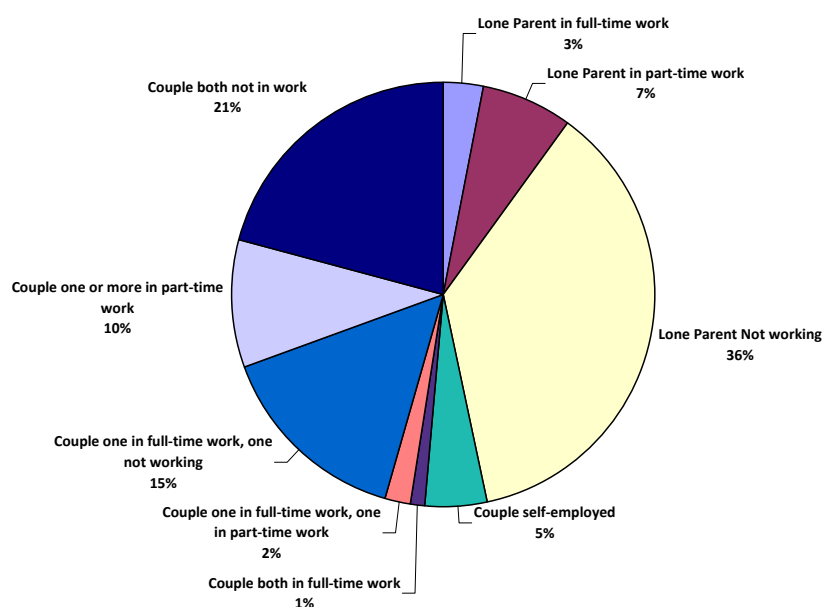
Significant progress has been made over the last decade, with 832,000 children across the UK being lifted out of relative poverty between 1999/2000 and 2009/10.

In 2008, the Labour Government set out its vision for eradicating child poverty by 2020 in *Ending Child Poverty: Making it Happen*. This was based upon four aspirations:

- More parents in work that pays;
- Financial support that is responsive to families' situations;
- Improvements in children's life chances so that poverty in childhood does not translate into poor outcomes, and
- Safe, cohesive communities that support children to thrive.

Despite work being one of the most effective routes out of poverty 43% of children who are in low income material deprivation live in households where at least one parent is employed. The figure below shows that a large proportion of children who live in low income material deprivation live in workless lone parent households. The challenge in terms of service provision is to ensure that the support services (including good quality affordable childcare) are in place to support working parents and their children.

Figure 1: *Child poverty by Family Type and Economic Status. Source: DWP, Households Below Average Income 2009/2010*



The Child Poverty Act 2010

Having received Royal Assent in March 2010, the *Child Poverty Act 2010* was passed with cross party support. The Act:

- Places a duty upon the Secretary of State to meet four child poverty targets by 2020/21 (as mentioned above);
- Requires the UK Government to publish a UK child poverty strategy which must be revised every 3 years, setting out policies to meet targets;
- Establishes a Child Poverty Commission to provide advice on strategies;
- Requires The UK Government to publish annual progress reports, and
- Places duties on Local Authorities and other 'delivery partners' in England to work together to tackle child poverty, conduct a local needs assessment, produce a child poverty strategy, and take child poverty into account in the production and revision of their Sustainable Community Strategy.

The Foundation Years: An Independent Review on Child Poverty:

As part of its commitment to reduce the number of children living in poverty the Coalition Government, shortly after coming to power, tasked Frank Field MP to lead an independent review on the government's poverty reduction strategy.

Published in December 2010 The Review concluded that the UK needs to address the issue of child poverty in a fundamentally different way if it is to make a real change to children's life chances as adults. It found overwhelming evidence that children's life chances are most heavily predicated on their development in the first five years of life with family background; parental education; good parenting, and the opportunities for learning and development in those crucial years having a greater impact upon children's life chances than money. Good services also have a part to play, including: health services, Children's Centres and high quality childcare.

The Foundation Years made two overarching recommendations:

- To prevent poor children from becoming poor adults the Review proposes establishing a set of Life Chances Indicators that measure how successful we are as a country in making more equal life's outcomes for all children.
- To drive this policy the Review proposed establishing the 'Foundation Years' covering the period from the womb to five. The Foundation Years should become the first pillar of a new tripartite education system: the Foundation Years leading to school years leading to further, higher and continuing education.

Early Intervention: The Next Steps:

As well as the Frank Field led review into Child Poverty, the Coalition Government commissioned an independent review of early intervention projects, to be led by Labour MP Graham Allen.

The initial report published in January 2011 highlighted the impact that early intervention and prevention schemes have had upon the life chances of children and young people and the financial savings associated with intervening early.

Some of the key recommendations highlighted within *Early Interventions: the Next Steps* included:

- A focus upon antenatal education/preparation for parenthood, and social and emotional development for children under the age of 3 should be a key theme within the reorganisation of the National Health Service;

- All children should have regular assessment of their development from birth up to, and including, 5, focussing upon social and emotional development;
- The creation of a new National Parenting Campaign which should sit as the 'Crown Jewel' of the Big Society Project, and
- The Department of Health and Education working together to produce a seamless Foundation Years Plan from pregnancy to age 5.

A second report from the Graham Allen review into early intervention is due in summer 2011 which will explore the use of "new private sector financial instruments" to fund the recommended roll out of proven programmes.

The Early Years: Foundations for life, health and learning:

An independent review of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) was promised at the launch of EYFS in 2008. The review was chaired by Dame Clare Tickell and was published in March 2011.

Like the Field review into child poverty and the Allen review into early intervention and prevention, this review outlined the importance of the early years in a child's life and the impact that the early years could have upon a child's life chances.

The Early Years makes a number of recommendations with regard to the future of the EYFS. These include:

- Parents and carers should play a greater role as partners in their children's learning. They should be provided with a brief, simple explanation of what the EYFS is and what they can expect;
- Personal, social and emotional development; communication and language, and physical development should be identified as prime areas of learning in the EYFS;
- There should be a report to parents and carers on their child's communication and language; personal, social and emotional, and physical development between 24 and 36 months;
- Literacy; mathematics; understanding of the world, and expressive arts and design are recommended as the specific areas of learning in which the prime skills are applied;
- The EYFS profile should be simplified, and reduced in size from 117 to 20 pieces of information that capture a child's level of development. There should be clearer links to the National Curriculum, and
- Assessment should be based primarily on the observation of daily activities that illustrate children's embedded learning. The requirement relating to 'delivery through play' should be clarified, to emphasise that this does not preclude adult direction or teaching

The recommendations from these three independent reviews are recognised and incorporated into Darlington's Child Poverty strategy and are reflected in its action plans.

A New Approach to Child Poverty: Tackling the Causes of Disadvantage and Transforming Families' Lives: National Child Poverty Strategy:

In line with the duties identified in the *Child Poverty Act 2010* (see above) the Coalition Government outlined their National strategy to tackle child poverty in April 2011. The strategy established a new Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission to replace the Child Poverty Commission as mentioned in the *Child Poverty Act 2010*.

The strategy outlines the Coalition Government's reforms and other strategies that will impact upon child poverty; including:

- **Welfare Reforms:** The introduction of the new Universal Credit, to replace all other benefits, provides in work and out of work support, with benefit payments reducing upon someone obtaining employment and decreasing on a set scale as a person's wage increases.
- **Increasing Financial Capability:** The Coalition Government are looking to provide investment for Credit Unions; provide a free national money advice service provided through the Money Advice Service, and invest in a project to deal with loan sharks and other illegal lenders.
- **Reforming Funding Structures:** Including the introduction of the "Fairness Premium", targeted at disadvantaged children at key points in their development (at age 2; during school years, and when moving into Higher Education); the Early Intervention Grant, a pot of funding allocated to Local Authorities, bringing together funding for early intervention and preventative services, and the Health Premium, intended to incentivise Local Governments to reduce health inequalities.
- **Supporting "Positive Home Environments":** Including increasing the amount spent on relationship support for couples over the years 2011-15; expanding the Family Nurse Partnership Scheme by 2015; reforming the child maintenance system, and introducing a new "Families Working Everywhere" campaign aimed at supporting families with multiple problems. As well as this, the Government are currently awaiting the final report of the Family Justice Review, which is looking at the whole family justice system.
- **Supporting Children's Early Years:** Mirroring the emphasis of both the Frank Field review into child poverty and the Graham Allen review into early intervention and prevention the Government have pledged to extend the offer of 15 hours a week of free early education for the most disadvantaged 2 year olds from 20,000 to 130,000 children; to maintain the universal offer of 15 hours per week of free early education for all 3 and 4 year olds; to maintain the funding for Sure Start centres, and to publish a "new vision" for the early years following the publication of Dame Tickell's report into the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- **Improving Transitions to Adulthood:** The strategy re-iterates the Government's intention to raise the age of participation in education or training to 17 years by 2013 and 18 years by 2015, and to introduce a new 16-19 Bursary Fund to replace the Education Maintenance Allowance. The Government will also continue the National Scholarship Scheme to increase participation in Higher Education.
- **Reducing Mental and Physical Health Inequalities:** The strategy outlines the Government's health reforms that will mitigate against mental and physical health inequalities, including an additional 4,200 health visitors to extend coverage of the Healthy Child Programme, and the inclusion of the "Targeted Mental Health in Schools" funding in the Early Intervention Grant.
- **Supporting Local Areas to Address and Assess Child Poverty:** The strategy: highlights the need to share and disseminate knowledge and insight gained from innovation in local areas, in particular from the Child Poverty Pilots that have run for the past 3 years; commits the

Government to publishing the evaluations of individual pilot projects; re-iterates the intention to establish Community Budgets with a focus on families with multiple problems, and states that 'Mentor' areas with a track record of successfully supporting families be given support to act as "dissemination hubs" and share their knowledge.

As well as adopting the 4 measures of poverty outlined in the *Child Poverty Act 2010*, the National Child Poverty Strategy also sets out a number of other indicators relating to life chances, including:

- The proportion of children living in workless households;
- The proportion of children growing up in families where at least one person works but are still in relative poverty;
- The proportion of 18-24 year olds participating in part-time or full-time education or training;
- The proportion of 18-24 year olds who are NEET;
- The gaps in school readiness for children aged up to 5 between children from different social backgrounds;
- Conception rates per 1,000 for women aged 15-17 years;
- The number of young people aged 10-17 years receiving their first reprimand, warning or conviction, and
- The proportion of children living in relative poverty by family type.

The National Child Poverty Strategy was published alongside the Government's Social Mobility Strategy, highlighting the link between the two.

The Government published a response to the Graham Allen and Frank Field Reviews entitled *Supporting Families in the Foundation Years* which proposed a series of interventions and support services to be aimed at children under the age of 5.

6. Impacts of National Welfare Reform in Darlington:

There are 3,870 people affected by the Welfare Reforms in Darlington. The government's own estimates are that 50% (1,935 for Darlington) will move on to jobseeker's allowance, 20% (774) will move on to another benefit and 30% (1,161) will move off benefits altogether. People with learning difficulties and mental health problems often find it difficult to articulate the support that they need when they attend work-focussed interviews or comply with the jobseeker's agreement and consequently fall between the two benefits or face sanctions.

From April 2012 contributory Employability Support Allowance will be payable for a maximum of 12 months for people not placed in the support group. This is applicable to existing claimants, therefore from April 2012; a significant number of people will lose entitlement to benefit by, on average, £36 per week. It is expected that 48% of people aged 50 or over who have been entitled to ESA are not going to be eligible for other benefits.

Therefore significant numbers of people in Darlington facing a reduction in their benefit income could cause an increase in the request for support by the local authority and a possible decrease in the contribution for services payable.

Changes to the Local Housing Allowance

In Darlington 2,568 tenants are affected by the changes to the Local Housing Allowance, the result is a reduction in income of over £860,000 per year. In addition a further 259 tenants will

be affected by the change in the rules for people aged 35 or under, restricting the available rent to the shared accommodation rate.

Changes to benefits for families

High levels of in-work poverty and barriers to employment remain a problem for many families. Children are present in large numbers of low-income households. The current economic crisis has caused many more families to experience financial strain and many are now 'struggling to get by'. Yet one in four families in poverty are working families¹ so simply finding a job does not cause these financial pressures to disappear.

A study by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation found that people in low-paid and part-time jobs had additional expenses and had to juggle their caring commitments after starting work that exacerbated these financial pressures². Children from the poorest families are twice as likely to die at birth or in infancy and are more likely to become disabled than those from families with higher incomes³.

Changes announced to tax credits include:

- i. from April 2011 the baby element removed from child tax credit;
- ii. from April 2011 the level of in-year income that will be disregarded from calculations will decrease from £25,000 to £10,000 and , from April 2013, further reduced to £5,000;
- iii. from April 2011 a 10% reduction, from 80% to 70%, in childcare costs, and
- iv. from April 2012, the period for which a tax credit claim and certain changes of circumstances can be backdated will be reduced from three months to one month.

The above changes are likely to

- i. lead to low-income families losing up to £1,500 per year, affecting lone parents in particular;
- ii. put additional pressure on local authorities who are supporting vulnerable families, and
- iii. increase the numbers of people who find that they have to pay back Tax Credits overpayments at the end of the financial year.

Introduction of Universal Credit

Universal Credit is intended to make work pay and to lift thousands of children out of poverty which is welcomed. However, elements such as moving the administration of housing benefit from local authorities to the DWP, is a cause for concern.

It is not yet clear how clients with unsettled lifestyles will be better supported through Universal Credit than the current system. By removing housing benefit from local authorities vulnerable people, such as those with disabilities or drug and alcohol issues, are at a greater risk of losing their tenancy or not securing a tenancy in the first place. Homelessness or threat of homelessness can lead to deterioration in health and diminishes the chances of securing or sustaining employment. The relationships built up between private landlords and local benefit departments need to be strengthened not reduced in what it still a very difficult economic climate.

¹ Department of Work and Pensions, *Households Below Average Income: an analysis of the income distribution 1994/95-2006/07*. National Statistics (2008)

² Ray, K et al (2010) *Work, Poverty and Benefit Cycling*. Joseph Rowntree Foundation

³ Hirsch, D and Spencer, N, *Unhealthy lives: inter-generational links between poverty and poor health in the UK*, End Child Poverty (2008)

The localisation of council tax benefit, including a 10% funding reduction poses a financial risk to local authorities. Collection rates are likely to be further reduced unless there is a system allowing local authorities to be 'credited' for those clients who would, under the current system, be entitled to full benefit.

Introduction of Personal Independence Payment

The replacement of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) with Personal Independence Payment (PIP) needs to be considered in the context of the radical reform of benefits and tax credits, which together are likely to have the greatest impact on disabled people.

It is expected that PIP will reduce the numbers of DLA claimants by 20%, in Darlington there are 3,810 people aged 18-64 claiming DLA. The estimated loss to Darlington is £2,118,495.

Current information regarding PIP seems to suggest that aids and adaptations may be used to reduce the financial support available via PIP. Disabled people are already at a greater risk of poverty because of their reduced earnings potential added to higher living expenses. Reducing financial support because of access to physical aids and adaptations which may reduce social isolation and improve the health of carers seems to be harsh and unfair.

Localisation of the Social Fund

Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans provide valuable support to those families facing exceptional pressures and in dire need. The proposal to abolish Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans does offer the chance to improve decision making at a local level. Currently Social Workers are often able to provide supporting information for a client who is making an application and may welcome the ability to offer a grant or loan to those meeting the Fairer Access to Care Services criteria.

However, the current demand by local authority area is not yet known. A freedom of information request submitted by the Local Government Association has found that the DWP are unable to provide information on current levels of Grants and Loans. It is safe to assume the level of demand is high and likely to increase, particularly with significant numbers of people affected by the reductions in the Local Housing Allowance and the increase in numbers of people losing entitlement to sickness benefits and frequently waiting up to a year to have their appeal heard.

The introduction of Universal Credit could further increase the number of people requiring emergency help if there is an issue with payment, for any reason either administrative or due to the application of sanctions.

Local authorities are going to be responsible for the localisation of the social fund which currently involves the DWP administering recoverable loans achieved through the benefits that they administer. What mechanisms are local authorities going to be able to use? In the case of families with children, Section 17 of the Children's Act prevents local authorities making loans so legislative change will be needed.

The Social Fund can provide much needed assistance to families. The alternative is that they run the risk of approaching high interest rate lenders or loan sharks, in Darlington there a number of lenders who target people who have a poor credit history and have APR's of over 1000%. The threat of this type of debt spiralling out of control is very real, which can then lead to arrears of rent or council tax becoming more likely.

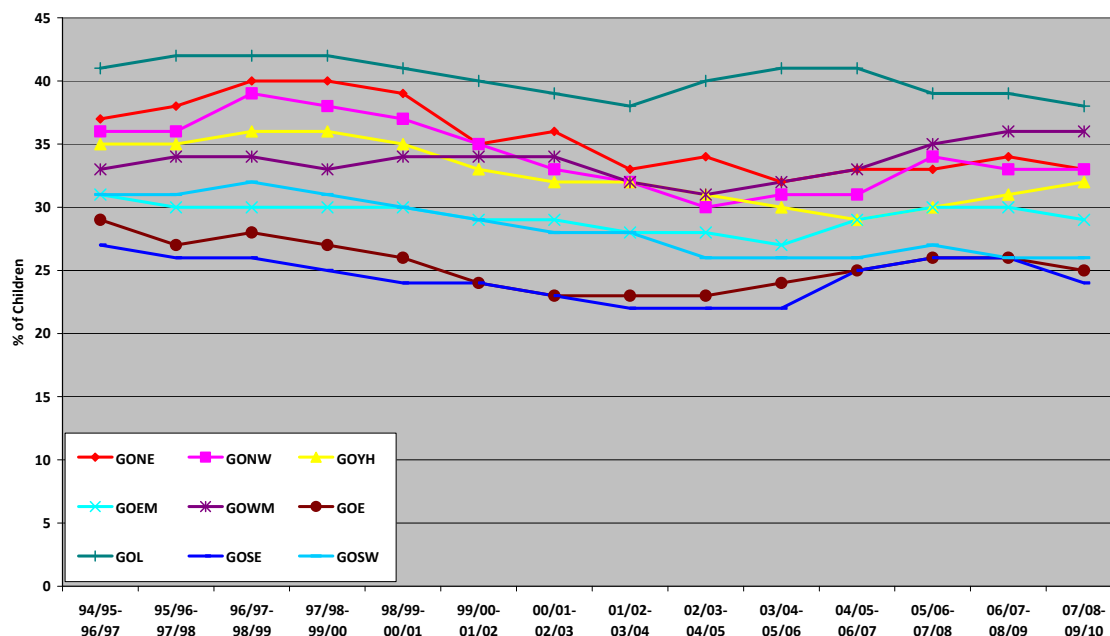
In October 2008 Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) was introduced to change one benefit. This has resulted in a 128% increase in the number of ESA appeals being dealt with by the Tribunals Service in the first quarter of 2011-11 compared to 2009-10, creating waiting times of 9-12 months posing significant difficulties for claimants and their families. Further pressures are likely because of the significant changes and this will have a direct impact on the local authority and social care in particular.

7. Regional context:

The North East Region stretches from the English border with Scotland to the North and to the North Yorkshire Moors National Park in the South and runs from the Pennines in the West to the North Sea coastline in the East. The region has an area of approximately 3,317 square miles. The region is divided into 4 sub regions: County Durham; Northumberland; Tees Valley, and Tyne and Wear.

When measuring Children at risk of living in households with less than 60 per cent contemporary (relative) median household income (after housing costs), considerable progress has been made at both a national and regional level. In 2009/10, in the North East, the proportion of children at risk of living in a household 60 per cent below contemporary median in 2005/06 - 2007/08 was 33 per cent (165,000) after housing costs (AHC) are taken into account. This represents no change from the previous year but shows the rate of progress has slowed down and may have reversed. Latest figures are beginning to show the impact of the recession. The North East, customarily lying behind London after housing costs are taken into consideration, is now behind the North West and the West Midlands as well as London (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Risk of Being in Poverty by Government Office Region (Below 60% of Median Equivalised Disposable Household Income). Source: DWP, Households Below Average Income, May 2009



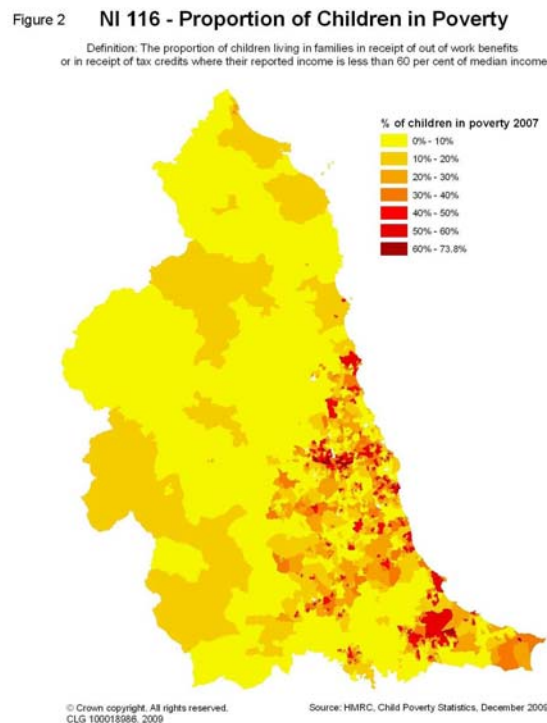
Within the North East there are clear differences in the levels and concentration of child poverty, meaning that within certain areas a more targeted approach may be needed, whereas in other areas a more widespread approach may be preferred. Table 3 highlights how Local Authorities within the North East can be split into four categories: high and low levels of child poverty, and child poverty concentrated or dispersed within the area. The relatively

concentrated level of child poverty in Darlington would indicate that a targeted strategy is required.

Table 3: Classification of Areas by Level and Dispersion of Child Poverty. Source: *The Prevalence, Characteristics and Distribution of Child Poverty in the North East Region, University of York, March 2009*

	Relatively concentrated	Relatively dispersed
High (top third for England)	Newcastle upon Tyne Hartlepool Wear Valley Redcar and Cleveland Gateshead Stockton-on-Tees Blyth Valley Darlington North Tyneside	Easington Middlesbrough South Tyneside Wansbeck Sunderland Sedgefield Derwentside
Low (bottom two thirds for England)	Durham Chester-le-Street Alnwick Castle Morpeth Tynedale	Berwick-upon-Tweed Teesdale

Looking at the proportion of children living in poverty, it is important, however, to note the distribution of these households throughout the region. The map, figure 2, showing the distribution of the worst affected areas with high levels of children living in poverty, shows a clear pattern around the conurbations and the old mining and manufacturing areas.



Until the onset of the recession, the trend had been to see improvements across the majority of areas, but it is clear that there are considerable differences in performance across the region. This is one of the reasons that it is essential to use small area geographies.

An area of concern for the North East is the level of employment. Although it has been improving since the 1990s, the region still lags behind the rest of the country and is nearly 10 percentage points behind the two best performing regions. See figure 4.

Figure 4: Overall Employment Rate by Region Q1 2010 – Q1 2011

	2010 Q1	2010 Q2	2010 Q3	2010 Q4	2011 Q1
North East	68.5 %	69.4 %	68.3 %	66.8 %	65.8 %
North West	70.3 %	70.6 %	69.3 %	69.2 %	69.5 %
Yorkshire and Humber	70.9 %	70.9 %	69.3 %	68.2 %	68.2 %
East Midlands	74.1 %	73.1 %	71.4 %	70.8 %	71.1 %
West Midlands	70.3 %	70.7 %	69.6 %	69.0 %	67.7 %
East of England	76.1 %	75.4 %	73.6 %	73.8 %	74.1 %
London	68.6 %	68.7 %	68.1 %	68.4 %	68.3 %
South East	76.7 %	76.5 %	74.7 %	75.0 %	75.0 %
South West	75.3 %	75.2 %	74.2 %	74.9 %	74.0 %
England	72.5 %	72.4 %	71.1 %	71.0 %	70.8 %

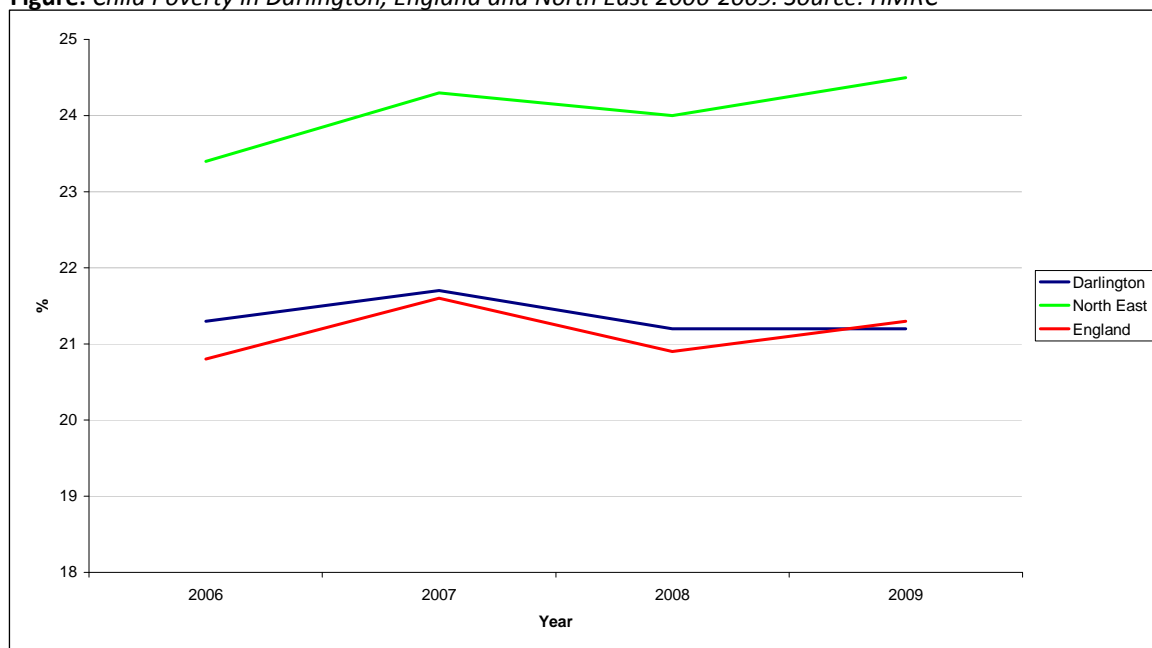
Source ONS Regional labour market Summary

8. Local Context

Evidence from *Darlington Putting Children First: Child Poverty Needs Analysis 2010*⁴:

The most recent figures available show that Darlington’s child poverty rate has stayed at 21.2%; this is in contrast to the rates within both England and the North East which have both risen. The Institute for Local Governance at Durham University is currently looking to conduct a piece of research into the reasons for Darlington’s stable child poverty rate.

Figure: Child Poverty in Darlington, England and North East 2006-2009. Source: HMRC



The Needs Analysis identified 10 wards in Darlington with higher than average levels of child poverty when measured both within the borough and nationally (see Figure 10), these wards were:

Bank Top; Central; Cockerton West; Eastbourne; Haughton East; Lascelles; Lingfield; Northgate; North Road, and Park East.

⁴ <http://www.darlington.gov.uk/Children/childrenstrust/Child+Poverty+Needs+Analysis.htm>

These wards (along with Cockerton East) had previously been identified by the council as being priority wards based upon the 2009 Indices of Multiple Deprivation.

Figure 10: Percentage of Children in Poverty by Ward, Darlington 2009. Source: HMRC

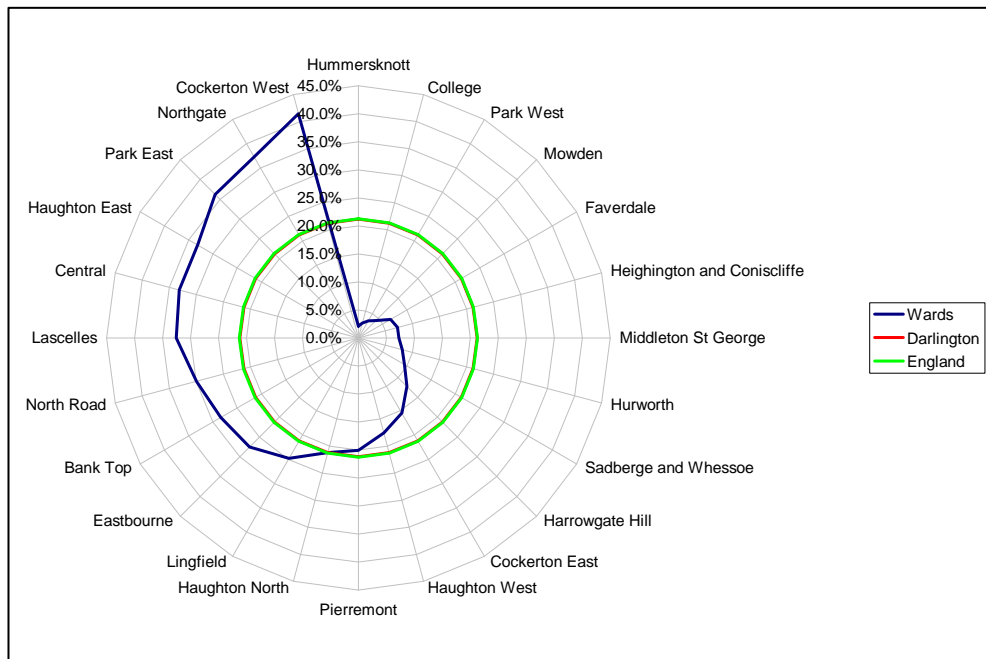
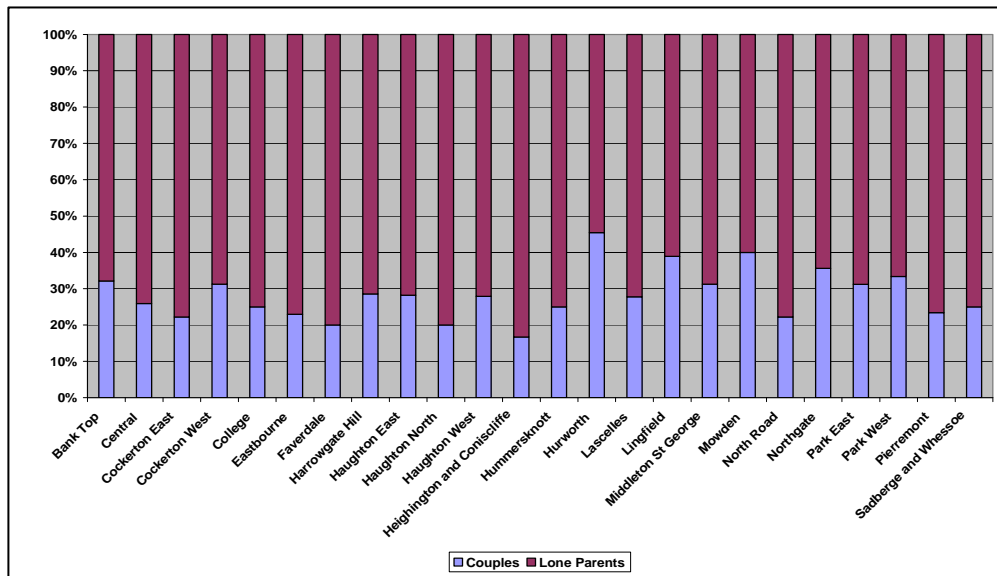


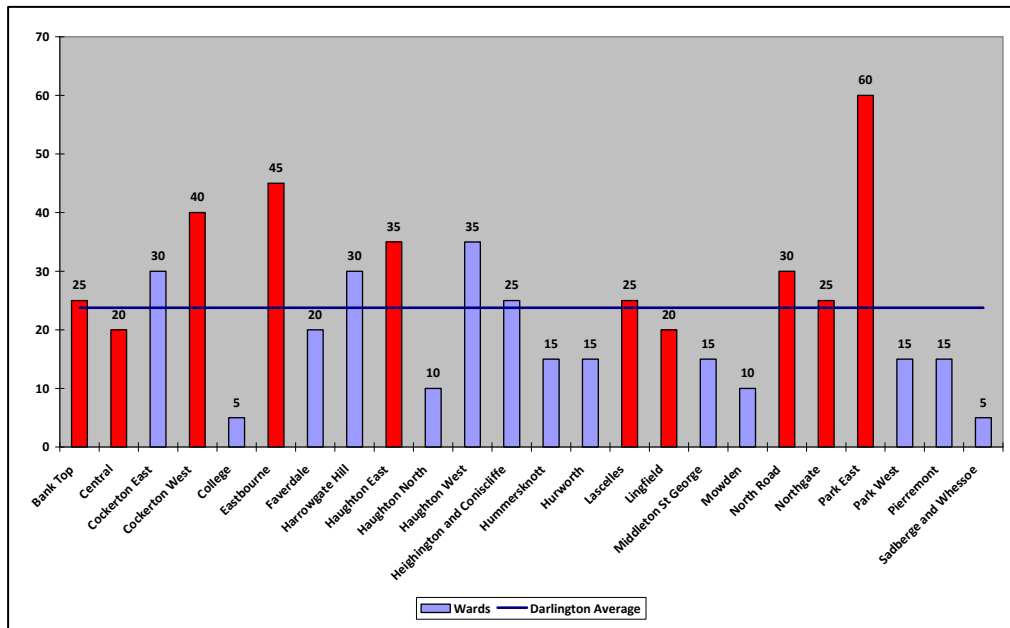
Figure 11 illustrates that the majority of children living in poverty in Darlington are living in lone parent families.

Figure 11: Children Living in Poverty by Family Type and by Ward, Darlington 2007. Source: HMRC



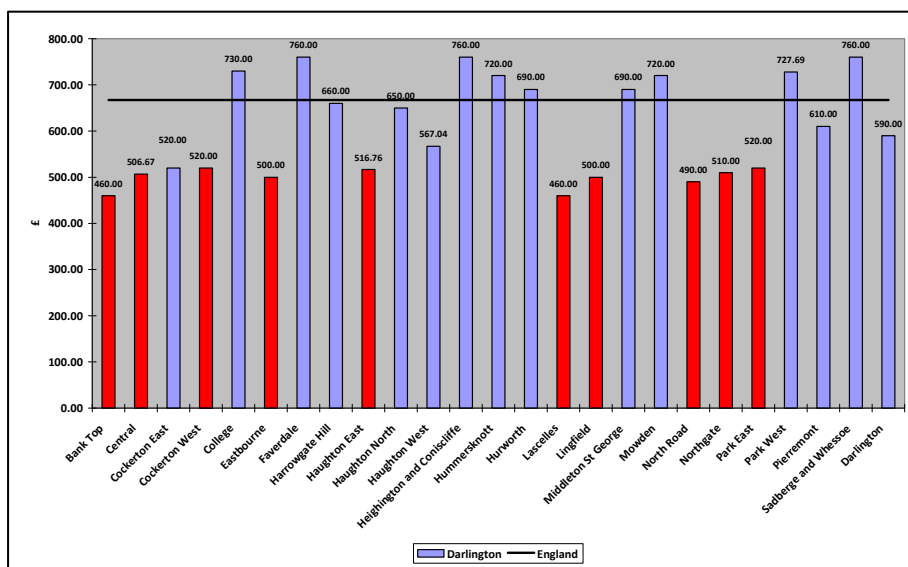
8 of the 10 previously identified wards have higher than average levels of under 16s claiming Disability Living Allowance (with 4 other wards also having higher than average levels). Research has shown that parents with disabled children are more likely to be unemployed or have lower incomes. There are also increased costs which may be associated with having a disabled child, including: transport costs; clothing and footwear; food; damages and breakages, and special toys and equipment. This means that children with a disability may be more likely to live in poverty.

Figure 15: Number of Under 16s Claiming Disability Living Allowance by Ward, 2010. Source: DWP Benefit Claimants for Small Areas, Nomis.



The average weekly household income in Darlington is substantially lower than the national level. In terms of wards, 9 wards have high levels of weekly household income, whereas the 10 previously identified wards, along with Cockerton East, have the lowest levels of weekly household income.

Figure 16: Estimated Weekly Household Income by Ward, 2007-08. Source: Tees Valley Unlimited.

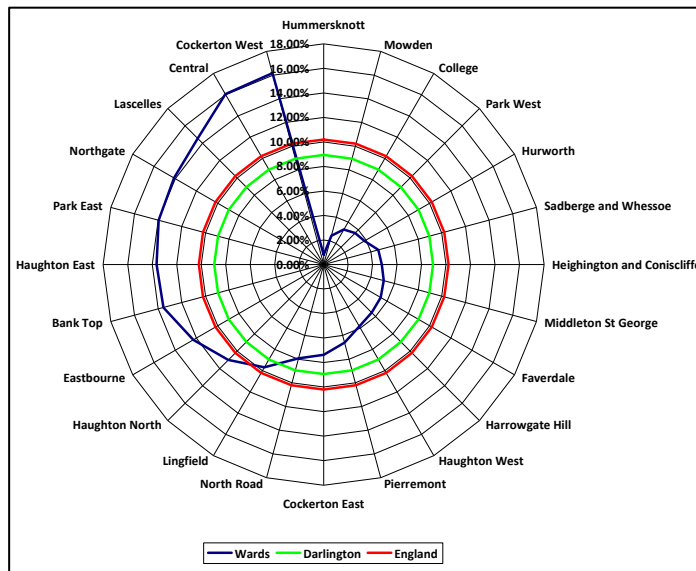


Within the Child Poverty Needs Assessment there was a recognition that child poverty is not a single issue; it affects and is affected by a number of other factors such as education, health, and crime.

Education:

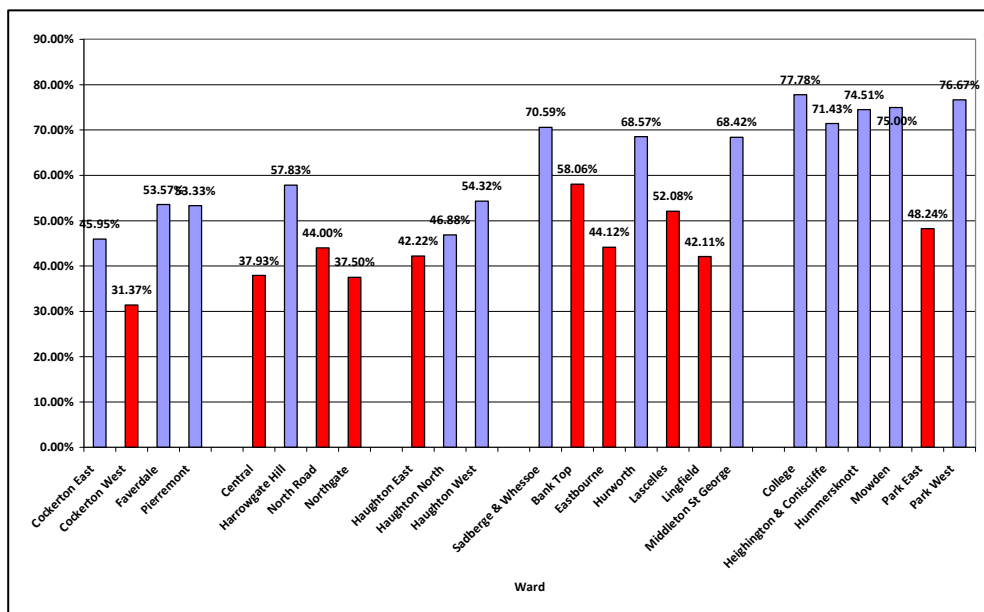
Darlington has a lower level of NEETs compared to the National figure; however there are 10 wards with higher than average levels of 16-18 year olds not in education, employment or training (NEET), 9 of these wards have been previously identified as being priority wards. Although being identified as a priority ward, North Road has a lower level of NEETs than the Borough as a whole.

Figure 22: Percentage of young people Not in Education, Employment and Training by ward, Darlington, September 2010. Source: Connexions



There are 10 wards in Darlington where over 50% of children failed to achieve 5+ A*-C GCSEs (including Maths and English) in 2010. Of these 10 wards 8 have been previously identified as being priority wards. Despite being identified as being priority wards, Bank Top and Lascelles have over 50% of their cohort achieving 5+ A*-C GCSEs (including Maths and English).

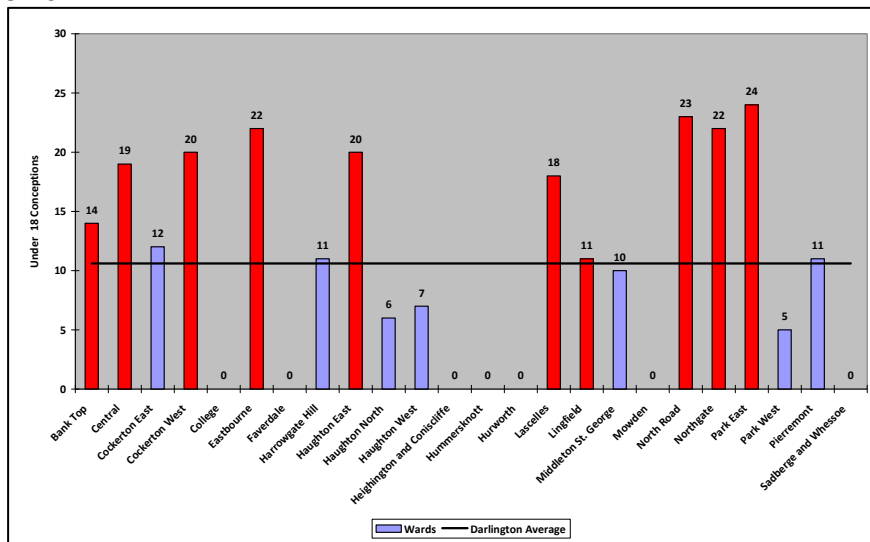
Figure 25: Percentage of Pupils Achieving at least 5 A*-C GCSEs Including English and Maths by Ward, 2010. Source:



Health:

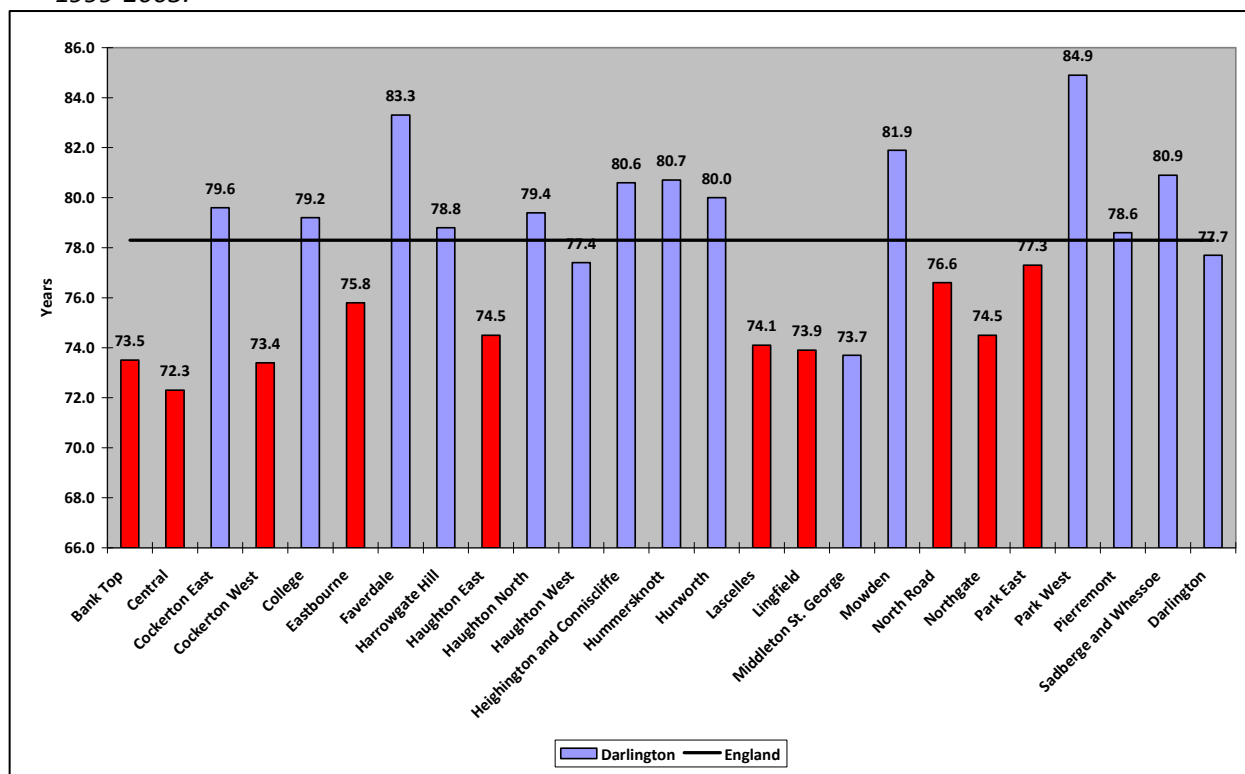
Within Darlington there are 13 wards with higher than average levels of under 18 conceptions, all 10 of the previously identified wards have higher than average levels of under 18 conceptions along with Cockerton East, Harrowgate Hill, and Pierremont. Any figure less than 5 is recorded as 0 to preserve the confidentiality of those involved; this may distort the Darlington average.

Figure 29: Number of Under 18 Conceptions by Ward, 2003-05. Source: Darlington Locality Profiles 2009-10.



Life expectancy in the priority wards in Darlington is considerably less than in the non priority wards and falls significantly below the Darlington average.

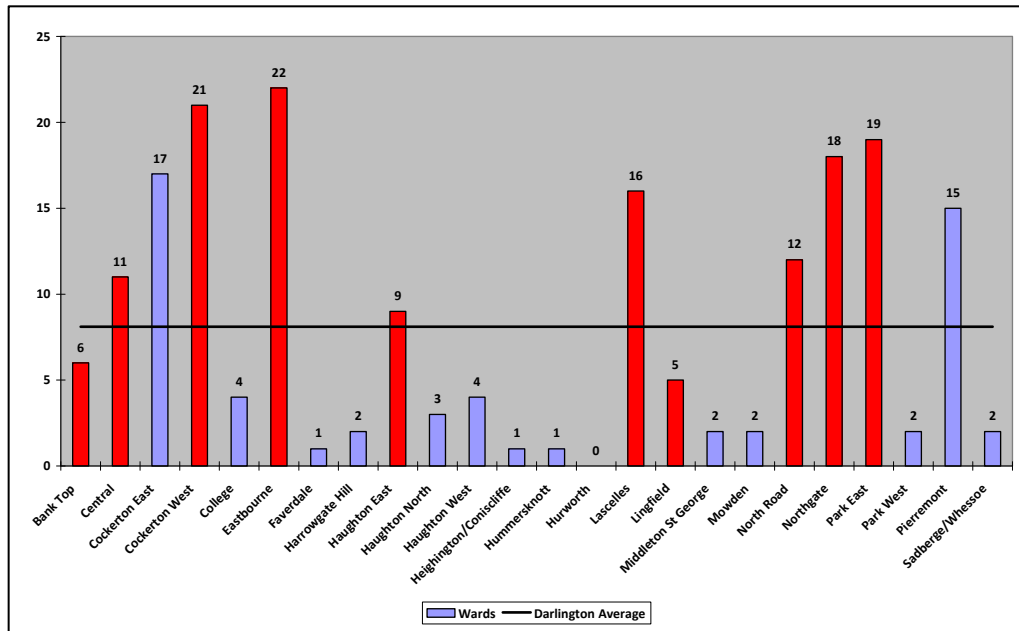
Figure 33: Life Expectancy at Birth by Ward, Darlington. Source: ONS Experimental Statistics 1999-2003.



Crime:

8 of the previously identified 10 wards have high numbers of first time entrants to the Youth Justice System.

Figure 40: First Time Entrants to Youth Justice System by Ward, 2009/10. Source: Youth Offending Team.



Darlington has a relatively high level of child poverty, standing at 21.2%, concentrated in a small number of wards. There are a number of groups in Darlington who are vulnerable to child poverty and the negative outcomes associated with it. Consequently, the resultant Child Poverty Strategy must have a targeted emphasis.

What are the key messages and the way forward?

Key conclusions and issues identified from the Needs Assessment are as follows:

Analysis of data and information from the draft Needs Assessment shows that need is concentrated within the following 10 wards:

- xi. Bank Top
- xii. Central
- xiii. Cockerton West
- xiv. Eastbourne
- xv. Houghton East
- xvi. Lascelles
- xvii. Lingfield
- xviii. Northgate
- xix. North Road
- xx. Park East

The following groups were found to be most vulnerable to child poverty and its associated negative effects:

Children/Young People:

- viii. Looked After Children
- ix. First time entrants to the youth justice system
- x. Pupils who have been excluded from school
- xi. NEETs
- xii. Children receiving free school meals
- xiii. Children with three or more siblings, and
- xiv. Children with a disability

Parents/Carers:

- viii. Long term unemployed and those who are benefit dependent
- ix. Those who may be drug or alcohol dependent
- x. Parents/carers with mental health issues
- xi. Lone parents
- xii. Teenage parents
- xiii. Parents/carers with low level or no qualifications and
- xiv. Parents/carers in low paid work

9. Outcome from Consultation:

Consultation on the Needs Assessment was launched at the Child Poverty Conference in November 2010 and has been supplemented by a number of complementary consultation exercises.

Consultation with parents included a recently conducted Child Care Sufficiency Audit. Lack of suitable childcare was cited as a major reason for not being able to find suitable employment.

A survey of 277 families was recently carried out at Children’s Centres within Darlington. The top three things needed by all families whether in work or out of work were:

- a) money to pay household bills;
- b) money for the weekly food shop, and
- c) money to buy new clothes for the family.

For respondents who were out of work the biggest barriers to employment were:

- a) not enough support with childcare,
- b) lack of family friendly working practices.

For respondents in work the two main barriers were the same as those for respondents out of work, but limited range of employment opportunities and lack of information about benefits were also significant barriers to employment.

10. Future Consultation:

To ensure that the priorities and actions identified within the Strategy are correct it is our intention to consult with a variety of groups and organisations. These groups will include Youth MPs, representatives of the Third Sector, and groups representing the views and interests of children and young people.

Additionally, a number of children and young people are currently involved in the Children North East Child Poverty Photography Project. The aim of the project is to involve children and young

people from all 12 Local Authorities within the North East region, and gather photographs of what poverty means to them. These photographs will be collected and displayed at an exhibition at the Sage in Gateshead in November 2011. This will be followed up with consultation with the children who took part in the project; this consultation will feed into the Child Poverty Strategy.

11. Key Conclusions:

A number of key issues to mitigate against and opportunities to maximise were identified:

Table 9: Issues to be Mitigated and Maximised

Issues to Mitigate	Issues to Maximise
Poor Health, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower Life Expectancy; • Low Levels of Breastfeeding; • Higher Incidence of Childhood Obesity, and • Higher Incidence of Teenage Conceptions. 	Early Intervention and Prevention to assist target families and groups
High Number of Families on Benefits	Employment Opportunities
High Levels of Debt	Access to Debt Advice
Poor Family Friendly Working Practices	Benefit Take Up
Low Levels of Skills	Childcare Opportunities
Households in Fuel Poverty	Training Opportunities
Poor Housing Condition	Household Income
The Number of First Time Entrants to the Youth Justice System	Narrowing the Gap Between the Attainment of Vulnerable Groups

12. Priorities and Actions:

Priority 1 Economy and Skills: To develop the economy; create the conditions for job creation, and provide opportunities for vulnerable groups to improve their skills and gain sustainable employment

Action 1: Identify gaps in employment support service provision and develop and formalise an employability framework with clear progression routes between services

Action 2: Plan that childcare provision is affordable and accessible across the Borough;

Action 3: Enhance people's skills in relation to the job market and align business need to education

Priority 2 Financial Inclusion: To provide the community with quality and timely information, that enables them to maximise their income and life opportunities and to mitigate the impacts of forthcoming welfare reforms

Action 1: To plan for and mitigate the effects of welfare reform by establishing a core group of relevant organisations to identify impacts of welfare reforms on residents and appropriate organisational responses

Priority 3 Early Years and Health: To decrease the health inequalities between the most deprived and the most affluent communities within Darlington

Action 1: Promote healthy settings for children and young people

Action 2: Tackle health inequalities including alcohol misuse, drug use, obesity, teenage pregnancy, and smoking

Priority 4 Early Intervention and Prevention: To ensure that interventions are put in place at the earliest stage possible

Action 1: Ensure that early intervention and prevention work is embedded across all partner services

Action 2: Investigate the feasibility of establishing a Families at Risk Team

Action 3: Greater use of risk factors to identify families in need and assessments are effective

Priority 5 Housing and Sustainable Communities: To create cohesive and inclusive communities where residents take pride in their area and housing is suitable and of a high quality

Action 1: To mitigate the effects of fuel poverty

13. Governance Structure and Performance Monitoring Arrangements:

As with any strategy, there is a need for clear and strong governance to monitor performance and progress. The Child Poverty Strategy and Child Poverty Action Plan will be monitored through the processes already in place to performance manage Darlington's Children and Young People Plan 2011-2014. The Children and Young People's Plan is reviewed on an annual basis as part of our performance management framework and is also monitored on a six monthly basis by the Children's Trust to ensure that progress is being made towards priorities.

Through this approach Darlington Children's Trust will take on the governance role and monitor the progress of the Child Poverty Strategy as an extension of its role with regard to the CYPP.

Please note there is a review of the Local Strategic Partnership currently underway and following the review of this partnership, this section of the plan will be refreshed to reflect any changes in governance arrangements.

We will:

- Report on progress of key actions and indicators of performance;
- Identify any barriers that may be preventing progress, and
- Adjust key actions where needed to help overcome any problems with delivery of the outcomes.

The key priorities will be refreshed as appropriate and priority actions updated in the light of any new national requirements.

We will refresh the Child Poverty Needs Analysis once every six months, and the Child Poverty Strategy once every three years.

14. Performance Measures:

The December meeting of the Children's Trust Provider Forum considered the findings of the Child Poverty Needs Assessment and undertook a task of aligning the issues identified within the Needs Analysis to Sustainable Community Strategy outcomes and to identifying a suite of performance measures through which the impact of Action Plans would be monitored. The completed alignment exercise and proposed suite of performance measures is enclosed at **Appendix 1**. There is currently a review of National Indicators and Performance Measures, a number of the performance measures suggested for inclusion within the Child Poverty Strategy are currently being reviewed, and will continue to be included until this review has concluded.

Appendix 1: Aligning Child Poverty Outcomes to SCS Outcomes

Sustainable Community Strategy Outcome	One Darlington: People in Darlington are healthy and supported to live full and active lives. They are well-educated, skilled and financially secure. Individuals are not disadvantaged by their family circumstances at birth, nor where they reside. People live in cohesive and resilient communities		
What does this priority look like?	Child Poverty Needs Assessment Issues	SCS Key Outcome Measures	Proposed Child Poverty Strategy Measures
<p>1. People in Darlington are healthy and supported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Children have the best possible start in life as the foundation for their future health and well-being; ii. They go on to make lifestyle choices that enable them to avoid and continue to live free from preventable disease; iii. People are empowered to make choices about their quality of life, health and care; iv. Effective early intervention and preventative services support vulnerable individuals, families and communities to secure good outcomes. 	<p>Poor Health:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Lower life expectancy within deprived wards; ii. Low levels of breastfeeding iii. Higher incidence of childhood obesity, and iv. Higher incidence of teenage conceptions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. NI 123: Four week quit rates; ii. Number of alcohol related hospital admissions by 1000 population; iii. Years of life lost by cause; iv. NI 127: Self reported experience of social care users; v. No. of referrals of Children in Need per 1000 population under 18. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. NI 126: Early access for women to maternity services; ii. NI 112: Under 18 conception rates; iii. NI 55i: Obesity in primary school age children in Reception as shown in the NCMP; iv. NI 56i: Obesity in primary school age children in Year 6 as shown in the NCMP; v. Social Norms Survey: % children and young people consuming alcohol in the last week; vi. Social Norms Survey: % children and young people reporting any drug use in the last year; vii. Number of planned exits from treatment; viii. Number of under 18 year old alcohol specific admissions ix. NI 53: Prevalence of breastfeeding at 6-8 wks from birth x. % of uptake of mothers breastfeeding at initiation. Baseline data to be collected 2011/12 xi. % of uptake of mothers breastfeeding at day 1. Baseline data to be collected 2011/12 xii. % of uptake of mothers breastfeeding at 6-8 weeks. Baseline data to be collected 2011/12

			<p>xiii. % of women breastfeeding and those requesting support contacted within 24 hours of discharge from hospital or 48 hours of birth. Baseline data to be collected 2001/12</p>
<p>2. People in Darlington are educated and skilled:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Children in Darlington have the best possible educational start in life; ii. Children, young people and adults are able to fulfil their potential; iii. Children and young people are engaged, they enjoy learning and want to continue learning and developing throughout adult life; iv. People are equipped and empowered to make positive life choices; v. People have the skills to enable them to work, succeed and be financially secure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Low level of skills; ii. Narrowing the gap in attainment between vulnerable groups and their peers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. NI 75: Achievement of 5 or more A*-C grades at GCSE or equivalent including English and Maths; ii. NI 163: Working age population qualified to at least Level 2; iii. NI 165: Proportion of population aged 19-64 (male) and 19-59 (female) qualified to at least level 4 or higher; iv. NI 117: Numbers of 16-18 year olds who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. NI 75: % 5 A*-C GCSEs; ii. NI 163: Proportion of population aged 19-64 (male) and 19-59 (female) qualified to at least level 2; iii. NI 117: Numbers of 16-18 year olds who are not in employment, education or training (NEET); iv. NI 82: Inequality gap in the achievement of a Level 2 qualification by the age of 19; v. NI 102: Achievement gap between pupils eligible for free school meals and their peers achieving the expected level at Key Stages 2 and 4; vi. NI 105: The Special Educational Needs (SEN)/non SEN gap-achieving 5 A*-C GCSE inc. maths and English vii. NI 151: The proportion of the working age population in employment; viii. NI 116: Proportion of children in poverty ix. NI 92: Narrowing the gap between the lowest achieving 20% in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and the rest x. NI 81: Inequality gap in the achievement of a Level 3 qualification by the age of 19
<p>3. People in Darlington are financially secure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Children and families do not live in poverty; ii. At least one person in each family is in well-paid employment; iii. People are financially literate, with the skills to manage their finances; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. High number of families receiving welfare benefits; ii. High levels of debt; iii. Poor family friendly working practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. NI 116: Proportion of children living in poverty; ii. NI 166: Median earnings of employees in the area; iii. NI 153: Working age people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. NI 151: Overall employment rate; ii. NI 116: Proportion of children living in poverty; iii. NI 118: Take up of formal

<p>iv. Financial support and advice is available to people throughout their lives.</p>		<p>claiming out of work benefits in the worst performing neighbourhoods; iv. NI 151: Overall employment rate of working age people; v. Percentage of pension recipients receiving pension credits.</p>	<p>childcare by low income families; iv. Level of debt enquiries-Data development required. v. NI 153: Working age people claiming out of work benefits in the worst performing</p>
<p>4. Individuals are not disadvantaged by their family circumstances at birth, nor where they reside. People live in cohesive and resilient communities: i. Gaps in outcomes have narrowed; ii. People treat each other with respect; iii. People live together in inclusive neighbourly communities; iv. People feel safe; v. People are involved and active in making their communities cohesive and resilient; vi. Diversity is valued as an asset to the borough.</p>	<p>i. The effects of community cohesion of child poverty and vice-versa</p>	<p>i. NI 01: People from different background getting on well together; ii. Levels of reported hate crimes-Data development required;</p>	<p>No specific indicators identified. These issues identified will be picked up within other themes.</p>

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Sustainable Community Strategy Outcomes	Perfectly Placed: Darlington offers a range of distinctive, safe and sustainable neighbourhoods, free from crime. It provides a choice of good quality, affordable housing, and access to services, facilities and leisure opportunities. The local economy is thriving, and businesses have access to the infrastructure, skills, markets and investment capital necessary to create wealth.		
What does this priority look like?	Child Poverty Needs Assessment Issues	SCS Key Outcome Measures	Proposed Child Poverty Strategy Measures
<p>5. People in Darlington live in sustainable neighbourhoods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Darlington’s leisure offer gives people access to appropriate sports, arts and leisure choices throughout their lives; ii. Darlington is a place that values its distinctive cultural identity; iii. Darlington offers a range of housing to meet the needs of all residents; iv. Good transport provision both within the borough and to other places give people high levels of accessibility to jobs and services; v. Services and facilities are of a high quality; vi. People are consulted and involved in shaping the future of their communities, and the management of development is sensitive to community views; vii. Darlington is a low carbon community adapting progressively to climate change; viii. Darlington is a place that values and nurtures bio-diversity & geo-diversity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. A high proportion of households in fuel poverty; ii. A high proportion of non decent private sector housing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Ni 57: Children and young people’s participation in sporting opportunities; ii. NI 110: Young people’s participation in positive activities; iii. NI 011: The percentage of the adult population in a local area that have engaged in the arts at least three times in the past twelve months; iv. NI 186: Per capita reduction in CO2 emissions in the Local Authority area; v. NI 175: Access to facilities and services by public transport, walking and cycling; vi. NI 005: Overall/general satisfaction with the local area; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. NI 187: Tackling fuel poverty; ii. Rate of non decent housing.
<p>6. Our communities are safe and free of crime:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Darlington has low crime rates and low incidence of anti-social behaviour; ii. People are safe from crime at any time of day or night and are not at increased risk of becoming a victim of crime; iii. People have access to services that are aimed at reducing crime, and are supported to maintain and strengthen community cohesion; iv. Drug and alcohol related crime is low, and people are supported to reduce drug and alcohol use; v. Darlington is a place with low rates of accidents and fire casualty; vi. Education programmes target those at risk of offending or re-offending; vii. Darlington is well-prepared and able to respond effectively to emergencies and to protect the environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The needs of first time entrants to the Youth Justice System 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. NI 30: Re-offending rate of prolific and priority offenders; ii. Total crimes committed by 1000 population; iii. ASB incidents by 1000 population; iv. NI 21: Dealing with local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime issues by local council and the police. 	<p>No specific indicators identified:</p> <p>The issues identified will be picked up within other themes.</p>
<p>7. Darlington is an ambitious, entrepreneurial place in which businesses thrive and create wealth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Land and premises are available in readiness for investment; ii. Skills are available to meet the needs of local businesses and enable people to access high quality employment; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Low level of skills; ii. Access to childcare 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. NI 171: New business registration rate; ii. VAT de-registrations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. NI 118: Take up of formal childcare by low income families; ii. NI 163: Working age population qualified to at

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> iii. Darlington is innovative and entrepreneurial, and businesses have access to the capital and ideas to enable them to grow; iv. The local economy is supported by strong networks of training providers, local supply chains, access to markets, and support across the business community; v. The local economy is built across a broad range of sectors, with strong local ownership, to ensure overall resilience; vi. Darlington has high levels of employment and well paid jobs. 			<p>least Level 2;</p>
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