

Redbridge Child Poverty Strategy

2011-2014

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1. Introduction

Addressing child poverty in Redbridge is everyone's business. The Borough signed the London Child Poverty Pledge in May 2009, committing Redbridge to a number of high-level activities to improve outcomes for low income families. This Strategy adds to the Borough's efforts to reduce, and mitigate the effects of, child poverty in our communities.

In August 2008, there were nearly 19,000 children living in poverty in Redbridge,¹ according to the official definition of child poverty². When other measures are considered, the number is significantly higher. Though no more recent statistics on child poverty are available, evidence suggests that rates have continued to increase.

Growing up in poverty can impact on a child's educational attainment, life chances, health, and safety. In Redbridge there is a large achievement gap between low-income pupils and their peers. Underachievement in school presents challenges as young people move into adulthood - often perpetuating the cycle of poverty. In a recent Independent Review of Poverty and Life Chances³, MP Frank Fields suggests that the key to tackling child poverty is to focus on early childhood development ("the first five years of life"). He argues that "later interventions to help poorly performing children can be effective but, in general, the most effective and cost-effective way to help and support young families is in the earliest years of a child's life."⁴ Fields suggests that "the things that matter most are a healthy pregnancy; good maternal mental health; secure bonding with the child; love and responsiveness of parents along with clear boundaries, as well as opportunities for a child's cognitive, language and social and emotional development."⁵

However, breaking the cycle of child poverty is not only about improving future opportunities for children, but also addressing current family circumstances. In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of workless adults in Redbridge. Low skills levels of residents and a mismatch between vacancies and jobs sought after by jobseekers make it difficult for many residents to find and maintain work⁶. Especially for lone parents, balancing work and childcare often presents large challenges. For many, a basic salary is not enough to cover the costs of childcare, housing, and other basic needs. A question asked within interviews with Job Centre Plus customers highlighted cost as the number one barrier to accessing childcare⁷. Supporting parents to get back to work and improve their financial situation is a critical element to reducing child poverty in the Borough.

In addition, 'in-work' poverty has been increasing in the UK. Nationally, it was estimated that 61% of poor children lived in working households in 2008/09⁸. The figure is estimated to be lower in London and Redbridge. However, evidence suggests that in the Borough there are many children growing up in poverty in low-income working families. Some of these families' incomes are above

¹ HMR&C, National Indicator 116 (2008)

² Defined as the number of children who live in families in receipt of out-of-work benefits or in working families with income less than 60% of the median national income (taking account of differences in household size and composition).

³ The Foundation Years: preventing poor children from becoming poor adults. Independent Review on Poverty and Life Chances, Frank Field's, December 2010

⁴ Frank Field's Independent Review, page 5

⁵ Frank Field's Independent Review, page 5

⁶ Redbridge Draft Employment, Skills and Enterprise Plan 2010/1

⁷ JCP External Digest June 2010

⁸ In-Work Poverty in the Recession, Institute for Public Policy Research, September 2010; London's Poverty Profile: Reporting on the recession, New Policy Institute, 2010

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the national poverty line, but, when the high housing and childcare costs in London are taken into account, are likely to be facing the consequences of poverty. Therefore work not only needs to support families to get back into work, but also ensure that low-income working families have the resources they need to support their families.

Redbridge is a rapidly growing and changing Borough. While it remains a fairly prosperous Outer London borough, pockets of severe poverty and deprivation exist. The continued demographic changes that the Borough is projected to experience, combined with the impacts of the financial recession and the Government changes to the welfare system make addressing child poverty in Redbridge more important than ever. The key to successfully reducing, and lessening the effects of, child poverty in Redbridge will be a joined-up approach across the Council and its partners that maximises support to children and families.

The Child Poverty Needs Assessment and Strategy have been developed by the Child Poverty Working Group, which includes representatives from:

- LBR Strategic Services
- LBR Children's Services
- Job Centre Plus
- NHS Redbridge
- Redbridge Safer Communities Partnership
- Redbridge Community and Voluntary Services (RCVS)
- LBR Payments and Benefits
- LBR Culture, Sport and Community Learning Service
- LBR Housing Services
- LBR Planning and Regeneration
- LBR Highways and Engineering
- LBR Adult Social Services
- LBR Human Resources

2. An Overview of Child Poverty

2.1. Defining Child Poverty

Families in Relative Poverty: Officially, child poverty is defined as the percent of children who live in families in receipt of out-of-work benefits *or* in working families with income less than 60% of the median national income (taking account of differences in household size and composition). This is the indicator that will be used to measure progress against the national targets for poverty eradication.

The threshold is calculated based on taxable incomes plus tax credits and child benefit⁹. It considers gross income, meaning income before taxes are taken out. In 2008, the poverty threshold (60% below the median national income) was:

- £210 a week for a couple with no children
- £294 a week for a couple with two children under the age of 14
- £225 a week for a lone parent with two children under the age of 14

The calculations are done *before housing costs* (BHC) so do not take into account the impact of higher housing costs in London. In London there are likely to be many families above the 60% median income threshold that are struggling to make ends meet. According to this indicator, 30.8% of children in London were living in poverty in 2008. However, this rises to 39% when housing costs are taken into consideration¹⁰.

Workless Families: The number of children living in workless families is calculated by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC)¹¹ on an annual basis using Child Tax Credit (CTC) data as well as data from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) on families receiving key out-of-work benefits. A family is defined as being workless if no parent in the household works for more than 16 hours per week. Therefore some families will be counted as "workless" that are working part-time, but they will have very low income levels.

Low Income Families: Low income families are defined as working households (where at least one adult works more than 16 hours per week) that are receiving both CTC and Working Tax Credit (WTC). The WTC is a means-tested tax credit for families on low income.¹² Many of these families will be above the 60% income threshold used above, but the Government considers their income to be low enough to qualify for additional support. However, it is important to note that not all families who are eligible for WTC and CTC are receiving the tax credits, and some families may be pushed out of a "low income" situation by having their income supplemented by the tax credits.

⁹ This does not include non-taxable benefits administered by local authorities such as Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit.

¹⁰ GLA Intelligence Update – Poverty Figures for London: 2008/09, DMAG Social Exclusion Team, May 2010

¹¹ HMR&C Child and Tax Credit Statistics

¹² Families receive the maximum amounts of CTC and WTC if their annual income is below £6,420. If the income is above this threshold, the maximum amount is reduced by 39p for every pound over the threshold. First, WTC is reduced, and then the child element of CTC, followed by the family element of CTC. Families receiving both CTC and WTC are estimated to have an income below £15,000-£20,000 depending on what elements of the WTC they claim.

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Deprivation: The above measures only take a lack of financial resources into consideration. However, other factors beyond income can also contribute to poverty among children. Deprivation is more broadly defined as a lack of resources of all kinds, not just financial.

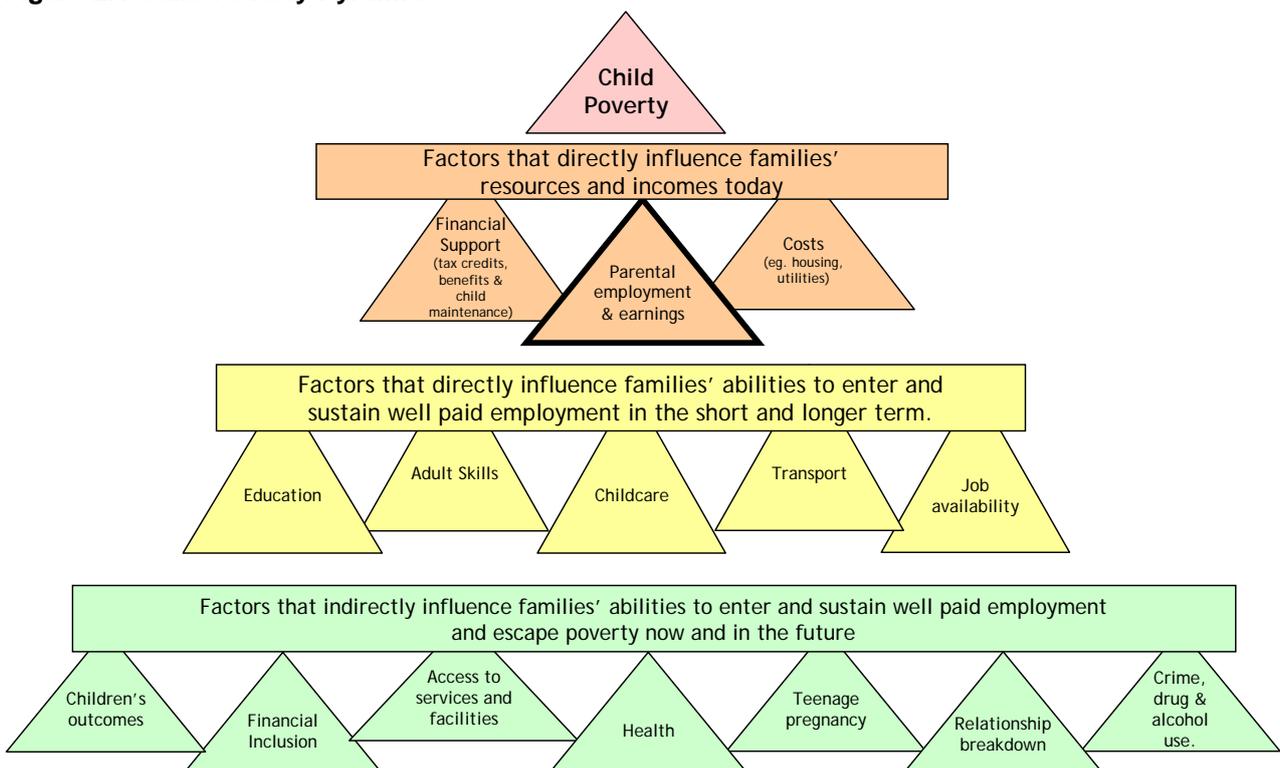
2.2. Understanding Child Poverty

At a basic level, child poverty is very simple – the family does not have enough money to provide children with a decent standard of living and an enjoyable childhood. However, the drivers and impacts of poverty are much more complex and inter-connected. Drivers of child poverty exist at both the individual and community level. At the individual level, parents may have difficulty gaining and sustaining employment due to a number of factors such as low skills, a lack of suitable opportunities, job insecurity, poor health or disability, and caring responsibilities. Drivers of poverty also exist at community level. Limited access to services, poor quality housing and high crime rates can all affect quality of life and life chances.

Child poverty impacts on individuals, families, communities and wider society. It affects children's education and attainment, the quality of their childhood and their life chances, which, in turn, affect their own children. There is a wider impact on the community caused by a higher demand on services. More widely, significant levels of low educational attainment, low aspirations and poor health limit the UK's productivity and its competitiveness in the global economy.

The Child Poverty Unit has developed a 'Child Poverty Pyramid' to represent causes of child poverty (Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1 Child Poverty Pyramid



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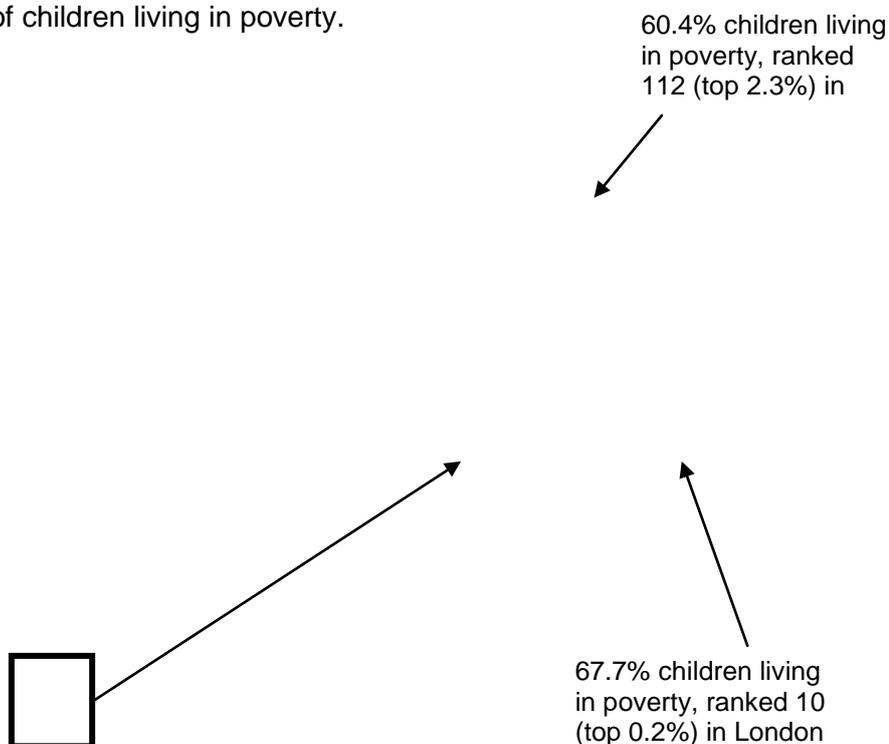
Source: Child Poverty Unit

2.3. Child Poverty in Redbridge

The most recent official figures on child poverty provide a 'snapshot' of child poverty on August 31, 2008. These show that on this date:

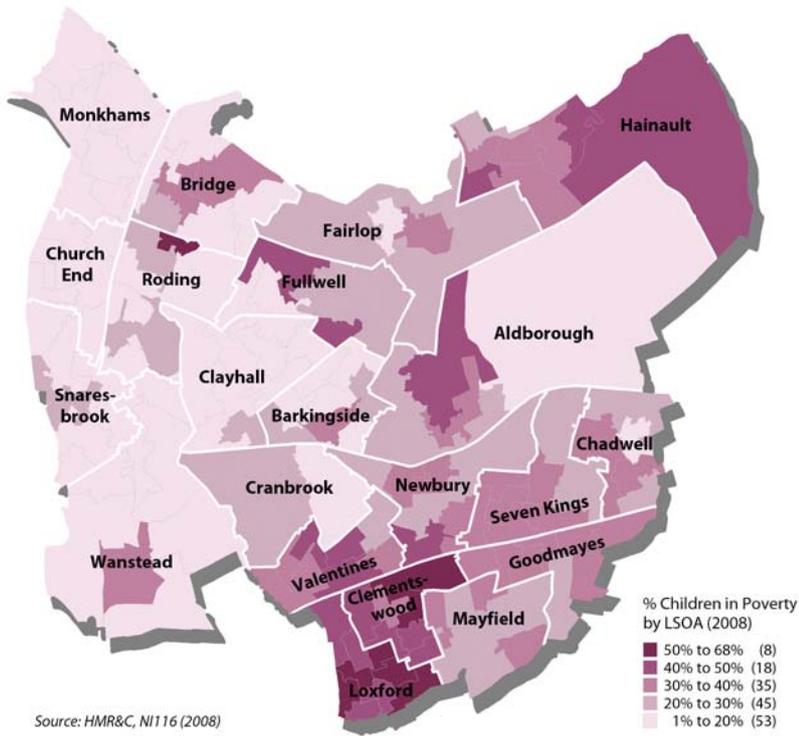
- There were 18,705 children living in poverty - 28.6% of children in the Borough;
- Of those children living in poverty, 27.6% were under the age of 5, and 50.7% lived in families whose youngest child was under the age of 5;
- Most parents of children living in poverty (73%) were on income support (IS) or Job Seekers Allowance (JSA), with the remaining 27% living in families with income below 60% the median income who were claiming the Working Tax Credit (WTC) and/or Child Tax Credit (CTC);
- The majority of families whose children were living in poverty were lone parents (63%), although this was lower than the London average of 70%;
- Redbridge had a higher proportion of lone parents on IS/JSA benefit (89%) than England (84%) and London (88%);
- More than half (54%) of children living in poverty in Redbridge live in families with three or more children. This is higher than the proportion in families with three or more children in London (49%) and England (46%);

A focus on the distribution of child poverty in Redbridge shows large variations across the Borough. Data also allows us to examine child poverty by Lower Super Output Area (LSOA),¹³ highlighting some pockets of high child poverty levels in areas, such as Wanstead and Snaresbrook, that are generally considered to be more affluent. Two LSOA's in Redbridge (both in Loxford) register some of the highest levels of child poverty in London. One is ranked 10th (out of 4765 LSOAs in London), while the other is ranked 112th. They are among only 118 LSOAs in London with 60% or more of children living in poverty.



¹³ LSOAs are small areas containing around 1,500 people. There are 159 LSOAs in Redbridge. A few LSOAs (such as in Hainault and Aldborough) are very large because there are very few people living in these areas. Their large size does not mean that there is relatively more or less child poverty in these areas.

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3. The National and Regional Context

Addressing child poverty not only requires a commitment from local government and local communities. There is also an important role for central government and London-wide governing bodies to play. The government has asserted that ending child poverty is 'everyone's business' and has set a national target to eradicate child poverty by 2020. The Child Poverty Act 2010 places duties on central and local government to work towards achieving this commitment. The Child Poverty Unit is a cross-departmental unit which is directing the government's national strategy. They provide support and resources to local efforts to address child poverty.

The National Child Poverty Strategy

The national child poverty strategy, 'A New Approach to Child Poverty: Tackling the Causes of Disadvantage and Transforming Families' Lives' was published on 5th April 2011. The strategy places a focus on non-income-based dimensions that can act as predictors or causes of poverty in addition to the previous government's emphasis on income as the key indicator of poverty. As a result the indicators that will be used to measure the success of the strategy have been broadened to reflect this approach.

The national strategy focuses on social mobility and improving life chances and draws on the recommendations of the Frank Field review. There is a clear emphasis on early intervention and taking whole-family and whole-life-course approaches.

The national approach to tackling the causes of intergenerational poverty falls under three main headings:

- Supporting families to achieve financial independence;
- Supporting family life and children's life chances;
- The role of place and transforming lives

The Regional Context

In London, the London Child Poverty Commission was launched in 2006 to identify ways to reduce and eliminate child poverty in London. This is particularly important because London has the highest rates of child poverty of any region in the UK. After accounting for housing costs, it is estimated that 39% of children in London are living in poverty, compared to 31% in the UK as a whole¹⁴. The London Child Poverty Commission has identified a number of reasons for the higher child poverty rates in London including¹⁵:

- deeper poverty traps – high housing, transport and childcare costs;
- wages are worth less to low income families – with high costs and low skilled jobs that do not pay a London weighting;
- fewer part-time job opportunities – ¼ of jobs in London are part-time compared to a third nationally;
- particular difficulties facing migrant families – 60% of non-employed fathers and 40% of non-employed mothers have English as a second language.

¹⁴ Based on a three year average (2006/07-2008/09) from the GLA Intelligence Update – Poverty Figures for London: 2008/09, DMAG Social Exclusion Team, May 2010

¹⁵ These factors are taken from the London Child Poverty Commission- Legacy Report March 2010

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The London Child Poverty Pledge, signed by Redbridge in May 2009, pledges to “do more to help London’s poor families to raise their incomes, and to improve outcomes for poor children and their families.” It identifies nine actions to help ensure London boroughs meet this pledge:

- As an employer, our policies and practices enable London’s parents to find and progress in suitable and fulfilling jobs; to balance work and family life; and to earn a decent wage.
- Parents and their families receive continuous and comprehensive support as they enter, stay and progress in work.
- Children, parents and families do not experience difficulties or delays in accessing support due to avoidable bureaucracy or boundaries between services.
- The needs of all poor families are understood and reflected in our strategic plans and priorities.
- The impact and effectiveness of services is maximised, and outcomes for poor children and families are improved, as a result of strong partnership working with local, regional and national partners.
- Child poverty remains a priority across all relevant areas of our work, promoted by a ‘child poverty champion’ on our senior leadership team.
- All families – including the most disadvantaged - experience a high quality service from skilled and responsive staff, who understand the contribution that their work makes to ending child poverty, and can identify which customers are parents and tailor their support accordingly.
- The views and experiences of children, young people and parents, including those from disadvantaged groups, shape the services we develop, commission, fund or deliver.
- Services are continuously improved on the basis of robust evidence about what works in tackling child poverty.

4. The Evidence Base in Redbridge

The Child Poverty Working Group has developed a *Child Poverty Needs Assessment* to give a comprehensive picture of child poverty in Redbridge. This document is available here: http://www.redbridge.gov.uk/cms/the_council/about_the_council/about_redbridge/research_and_statistics/research_reports.aspx

The needs assessment provides in-depth analysis of the extent, risk factors, drivers and impacts of child poverty in the Borough. An overview of the findings is provided below.

4.1. Summary of the risk factors related to child poverty in Redbridge

Children without good home learning environments: Research presented in MP Frank Fields Independent Review of Life Chances shows that the home learning environment is the single most important behavioural factor influencing children's outcomes at ages three and five.¹⁶ The home learning environment refers to activities in the home such as talking and reading to children, singing songs and nursery rhymes, and learning through simple activities and play. *While no local data is available to measure the quality of the home learning environment, evidence suggests this is likely a driver of poor outcomes for children in Redbridge. For example, 49% of children living in the most deprived areas of the Borough¹⁷ achieved a "good level of development" at Early Years Foundation Stage as compared to 59% from other areas.¹⁸*

Unemployed parents: Children in workless families are at high risk of living in poverty. Children in couple families where one adult works part-time also have a high risk of living in poverty. *In Redbridge there are an estimated 16,200 children living in out-of-work families. Unemployment in the Borough is highest among Pakistani and Bangladeshi females, many of whom choose not to work, and is concentrated mainly in the east of the Borough.*

Low income parents: The number of children in "in-work" poverty is growing in England. Nationally, it is estimated that 61% of poor children lived in working households in 2008/09. The figure is estimated to be lower in London. *In Redbridge, there are an estimated 15,389 children living in low-income working families. The highest concentrations of children living in low-income working families are in the south of the Borough.*

Lone parents: Children of lone parents are at greater risk of living in poverty than children in couple families. *In Redbridge 63% of children in poverty live in a lone-parent household. This is lower than the average for London (70%) and England (69%).*

Teenage parents: Children with teenage parents are at high risk of growing up in poverty. Nationally, children of teenage mothers have a 63% increased risk of being born into poverty compared to babies born to mothers in their twenties. *In Redbridge, the highest under-18 conception rates are in Chadwell Valentines, Hainault, Loxford, and Fairlop. The under-18*

¹⁶ Frank Field's Independent Review, 42

¹⁷ Defined as the percentage of children in each Local Authority who reside in the 30% most disadvantaged Super Output areas in England based on the 2007 Index of Multiple Deprivation.

¹⁸ DfE: Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Results in England, 2009/2010 Table D

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conception rate in Redbridge is lower than England and London. Whilst a downward trend has been established since 2005, in the last 10 years the rate has increased in Redbridge while rates in London and England have decreased.

Children with disabled parents: Children with one or more disabled parent face a significantly higher risk of living in poverty than those of non-disabled parents. The main reason for this is that disabled parents are much less likely to be in paid work, and also suffer the impact of additional disability-related costs which sap family budgets. *In Redbridge the employment rate of people with a disability is quite high at 50% compared with 45% for London in 2008/09. Hainault has the highest numbers of Incapacity Benefit and Severe Disablement Allowance claimants, with pockets in the centre and south of the Borough as well.*

Children with disabilities: Disabled children are more likely than their non-disabled peers to live in poverty as a result of lower incomes (because parents need to look after disabled children and so cannot work) and the impact of disability-related additional costs (an impact which is not captured by official figures). *In Redbridge 18.7% of pupils had a special need. Most pupils with special needs live in the south of the Borough. This was slightly higher than the national average of 18.2%.*

Children in large families: Children in large families are at far greater risk of poverty than children from small families. *In Redbridge the average household size was 2.56 people at the time of the 2001 Census, ranking it as the 6th largest average family size in England and Wales. Among children living in poverty in the Borough, 53% lived in families with three or more children in 2008.*

Children in and leaving care: Young people leaving care are likely to face multiple disadvantages including poverty. Those entering care are also much more likely to have experienced poverty. This is a consequence of their pre-care, in-care, leaving care and after-care 'life course' experiences. *In 2009/10 there were 225 looked after children in Redbridge. The main reason for entering care was abuse or neglect.*

Children growing up in social housing: Children living in households living in social housing (either local authority or housing associations) face a high risk of being poor. *In Redbridge there were 8,430 housing benefit recipients living in social housing in July 2010. Around half of these were living in Council housing, with the remaining residing with registered social landlords.*

Black and minority ethnic children: Children living in households headed by someone from an ethnic minority are more likely to be living in a poor household. In the UK more than a third of all ethnic minority families live in poverty. Nationally, the highest rates of child poverty are among children of Pakistani or Bangladeshi origin; well over half the children from these ethnic groups are living in poverty. *In Redbridge, it is estimated that 48.1% of the Redbridge population was from black and minority ethnic groups in 2009. Among children attending school in Redbridge maintained schools, 76.5% were from ethnic minorities (i.e. non-White British). These pupils are mainly concentrated in the south and east of the Borough.*

Traveller and gypsy children: Traveller and gypsy communities experience significant levels of deprivation and are also one of the most marginalised groups within the UK. Many members of these communities are not receiving their full entitlement to welfare benefits, disability support and

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care packages. *In Redbridge there are only 15 pupils enrolled in maintained schools that identified their ethnic background as White Irish Traveller (2010 School Census). This is the only available information on these groups in the Borough.*

Roma Children: The Roma community have been identified as one of the most vulnerable and deprived ethnic groups in Europe. Research has shown that in the UK, Roma are often unable to access basic in-work benefits. In addition, restrictions on A8 migrants' claims to welfare make it difficult for Roma families to receive housing and income support. *In Redbridge, there is little information available about the size of the Roma community. However anecdotal evidence suggests that there are very high levels of poverty and deprivation among Roma children in the Borough.*

Refugees: *In Redbridge, 2.6% of pupils attending Redbridge maintained schools identified themselves as refugees in 2010. However, not all schools asked about refugee status, and due to sensitivity, some parents may not have disclosed this information. Therefore this figure likely underestimates the number of refugees in Redbridge schools.*

4.2. The drivers and impacts of child poverty in Redbridge

Economic Barriers: Barriers to employment include low skill levels, access to childcare services, and a mismatch between vacancies and skills of job seekers. Longer-term unemployment is increasing in Redbridge. Nearly 70% of out-of-work benefit claimants with dependent children had been claiming benefits for over one year. For those in employment, low-paid jobs present economic challenges. Income is lower in the south of the Borough, where the mean equivalised household income was around £28,000 per year.

Achievement: While Redbridge has overall high levels of academic achievement, there is a 26% gap in GCSE achievement between students eligible for Free School Meals (FSM), and their non-eligible peers. This gap is smaller than the gap in England (28%) but larger than the gap in London (21%). There are also large achievement gaps among some minority ethnic groups; there is a 20% gap in GCSE achievement among 'Any Other Black students', a 17% gap for pupils of 'Mixed White/Black Caribbean' ethnicity, a 9.1% gap for 'Black Caribbean' pupils and a 9.0% gap for 'Black African and Mixed White/Black African'. However, despite the large achievement gaps, most of these ethnic groups record higher levels of achievement than in London and England.

Health Outcomes: Poor health outcomes are often associated with higher levels of poverty and deprivation. Life expectancy, an indicator of overall population health, is lower in the south of the Borough. There is a 10.3 year gap for men and 6.1 year gap for women between the wards with the highest and lowest life expectancy. In addition, Redbridge has the 10th highest infant mortality rate (IMR) in London.

Housing Conditions: Affordable housing has been highlighted as a challenge in Redbridge for both home ownership and renting. Many homes in the Borough are not suitable for the families that are living in them. Around 30% of homes in Redbridge are classified as non-decent, and there are issues of overcrowding, especially in more deprived areas of the Borough.

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Community Safety: Research has shown that at a national level, communities with the highest crime rates also have a higher concentration of poor young families. In Redbridge, the highest crime rates are concentrated around the Ilford area. It is important to note that some areas which register high levels of child poverty do not register high levels of crime. Young people in Redbridge feel less safe around the Borough, on public transport, and going to and from school than young people nationally. However young people's perceptions of safety are improving.

5. Recommendations from the Research

Based on the findings from the Child Poverty Needs Assessments, a series of key recommendations for the Child Poverty Strategy were made:

- Over the past ten years the national trend has shown an overall decrease in child poverty levels. This is also true of London as a region. However, in Redbridge levels have decreased more slowly. This is likely to have been driven by the rapidly changing demographics in the Borough over the past decade. Given recent population projections and the economic situation, this trend is likely to continue. Therefore, the strategy must work to reverse these trends.
- The majority of data predates the recession indicating that actual levels of child poverty may well be higher than reported in the needs assessment.
- There are pockets of very severe child poverty in the Borough. Of particular note is the LSOA in Loxford ranked as having the 10th highest proportion of children living in poverty in London, at 67.7%. This is in the top 0.2% of LSOAs in the region. The strategy must ensure that these pockets are effectively targeted.
- The child poverty measure used does not reflect the full picture as a large number of in work but low income families are not captured. Children in families that are over the 60% median income threshold used are still at great risk of living in poverty. The strategy should recognise the different needs of families in poverty that are out of work and those in work but on low incomes.
- The strategy should consider actions that might address the achievement gap between ethnic minority children and their peers, and children from more deprived backgrounds (based on Free School Meal eligibility) and their peers to help reducing the cycle of poverty.
- The strategy should consider actions to address the particular needs of priority groups identified, for example, large families living in poverty. This will better target the resources available to deliver the strategy.
- The strategy should put emphasis on improving children's outcomes during their early years (0-4) as this has been shown to be both a more effective and cost-effective way to tackle child poverty.¹⁹
- Interventions should not only focus on lone parents but should recognise the high numbers of dual parent families living in poverty, especially in the south of the Borough.
- The availability of affordable housing and housing that is suitable for families is a serious issue. Demand for social housing is already extremely high and is likely to continue to exceed supply. It is acknowledged that the strategy will be extremely limited in the actions that can be taken to address this.
- The strategy must be developed to address priority areas with no additional resources. Therefore, targeting interventions to give the greatest impact should involve a mapping

¹⁹ Frank Field's Independent Review, 5

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exercise of services and provision that would help to reduce inefficiencies and duplication and improve joined up working.

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6. Vision

The vision of this strategy is to work in partnership to reduce, and lessen the effects of, child poverty in the Borough.

The vision is in line with the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Council's aim to make Redbridge a better place to live.

7. Priorities

We have identified six key priorities aimed at achieving the vision. The priorities were developed using the evidence base and recommendations from the Child Poverty Needs Assessment and through consultation with the Child Poverty Working Group and other partners. The six key priorities are to:

1. Join up working to better address child poverty
2. Support parents to move into work
3. Reduce burdens for low-income working parents
4. Address social inequalities
5. Improve educational outcomes and reduce attainment gaps
6. Mitigate future challenges

These priority areas must be addressed with no additional resources. Given reductions in public spending, we must find smarter ways of working with our existing resources in order to reach our vision.

Cross-cutting issues:

In addressing all of these priorities, the following cross-cutting issues will be considered:

- Targeting efforts to help those most in need (both geographically, and in specific communities)
- Linking into existing efforts, plans, and strategies to maximise the impact given the limited availability of resources
- Continue preventative measures such as the strategies to minimise teenage conceptions and to support young people into employment, training, and education

The next section will look at each priority, explaining why it is important, providing the evidence base behind it, and outlining how it will be addressed.

An action plan for the first year of the Strategy is included in section 9. Given the breadth of the child poverty agenda, much is already happening across the partnership in the borough that will contribute to reducing or mitigating the effects of child poverty. **The strategy action plan**

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therefore brings together actions from other partnership strategies and plans that address the priorities.

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1. Join up working to better address child poverty

Why is this important?

Because the drivers and impacts of child poverty are complex and inter-connected, responses must join up efforts across different service areas and organizations. Given that no additional resources will be made available to implement this strategy, it will rely on improving the coordination and efficiency of existing efforts.

What does the evidence show?

The Child Poverty Needs Assessment identified knowledge of existing services as a gap. While some information was collected about what community groups and the Council are already doing to address child poverty, the picture was by no means complete. The assessment also showed the complexity of child poverty; with the risk factors, drivers and impacts cutting across a range of areas. This shows that an effective approach to addressing child poverty must, therefore, join together efforts across these areas.

What will we do?

We will bring together existing mapping exercises (including those from Families Information Direct (FiND), Redbridge Community and Voluntary Services (RCVS), the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP), and the Employment, Skills, and Enterprise Plan, and the workREDBRIDGE network) to try to paint a complete picture of the services that exist to support children living in poverty and their families. We will also work with partners to look at best practices to improve joined up working, such as better utilising schools and Children's Centres as 'hubs' for service provision.

2. Support parents to move into work

Why is this important?

Children in workless families are at high risk of living in poverty, as are children in couple families where one adult works part-time. Nationally, children in workless households have a 59% change of living in relative poverty.²⁰ Adults with children in London find it more difficult to enter the labour market than elsewhere because there are fewer opportunities for work that can be fitted around caring responsibilities in the capital²¹.

What does the evidence show?

In Redbridge, child poverty is concentrated in out-of-work households (73%); even more so for lone parents (89%). The Borough has high rates of economic inactivity. In 2009, 27.2% of the working age population was economically inactive. The highest economic inactivity rates were for Pakistani and Bangladeshi women; 61% of women from these ethnic groups were economically inactive²². In addition, many children are growing up in households facing long-term unemployment. Among out-of-work benefit claimants with known dependent children, nearly 70% had been on benefits for more than a year, with 36% claiming benefits for 5 or more years²³.

What will we do?

We will support parents to move into work through continuing existing support that is offered through the Job Centre Plus, and through promoting actions outlined in the Employment, Skills,

²⁰ Households Below Average Income 2008/09

²¹ London Child Poverty Commission Report (2008)

²² ONS Annual Population Survey 2009

²³ DWP Benefit Claimants Data (from Nomis) February 2010

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and Enterprise Plan. We will also seek to improve the uptake of benefits that already exist to support these families. The results of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment will inform activities to ensure parents have access to affordable child care while they are working.

3. Reduce burdens for low-income working parents

Why is this important?

The number of children in “in-work” poverty is growing in England. Nationally, it is estimated that 61% of poor children lived in working households in 2008/09. The figure is estimated to be around 50% in London.²⁴ In London, in-work poverty is more strongly associated with couple rather than lone parent households. However, the risk of in-work poverty is similar for both types of households.²⁵

What does the evidence show?

It is estimated that there are 15,389 children living in low-income working families in Redbridge.²⁶ While not all of these children appear in the official measure of child poverty, evidence suggests that they are facing many of the same consequences as children officially growing up in poverty. The average pay in Redbridge is lower than for Outer London and London as a whole.²⁷ When pay is compared to the cost of childcare and housing in the Borough, it is evident that a family with a low household income will likely struggle to make ends meet.

What will we do?

We will support low-income working parents by promoting actions outlined in the Employment, Skills, and Enterprise Plan. We will also seek to improve the uptake of benefits that already exist to support these families. The results of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment will inform activities to ensure parents have access to affordable child care while they are working.

4. Address social inequalities

Why is this important?

MP Frank Field’s Independent Review of Life Chances shows that child poverty is not just about income, but rather about larger issues rooted in social inequalities. Ensuring that all children have access to the same opportunities in life is critical to breaking the cycle of poverty. Addressing social inequalities requires tackling issues related to parenting, health, housing, education, and community safety.

What does the evidence show?

Evidence from the Frank Field Review shows that nationally, the social class of a child’s parents is strongly associated with their year two reading level.²⁸ In Redbridge, Free School Meal (FSM) eligibility is highest for Black African pupils. This suggests that pupils from this background face greater disadvantage than pupils from other backgrounds. In addition, evidence shows that child immunisation uptake, critical to healthy childhood, is lowest in the most deprived areas of the

²⁴ In-Work Poverty in the Recession, Institute for Public Policy Research, September 2010; London’s Poverty Profile: Reporting on the recession, New Policy Institute, 2010

²⁵ London’s Poverty Profile: Child Poverty and Work, Households Below Average Income (HBAI) Survey, DWP, average for 2006/07 to 2008/09

²⁶ HMR&C Child and Tax Credit Statistics, April 2010

²⁷ ONS 2009 Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings

²⁸ Frank Field’s Independent Review, 21

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Borough. Teenage mothers, whose children have a 63% increased risk of being born into poverty compared to babies born to mothers in their twenties, are also concentrated in the most deprived areas of the Borough.²⁹

What will we do?

We will address social and health inequalities through continuing existing efforts by public service providers and community organisations. In particular, we will link to actions outlined in the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy, the Affordable Housing Strategy, the Children and Young People's Plan, and the Equalities Strategy.

5. Improve educational outcomes and reduce attainment gaps

Why is this important?

Education is one of the key factors that can break the cycle of child poverty. If children are given a strong educational foundation, they will have the skills they need to move out of poverty as adults. Improving educational outcomes starts early, and goes beyond the classroom and into the family. According to research presented in the Frank Field Review, a child's development in their early years (0-4) not only heavily influences their educational performance, but also determines whether their potential is realised in adult life.

What does the evidence show?

Nationally, research has found that parental attitudes and behaviours explained 20% of the gap in attainment between the poorest and the richest children at age 11 (not taking prior ability into account) and that the mothers' hopes for university had the single biggest impact.³⁰ In Redbridge, whilst pupils have generally high levels of achievement, some significant achievement gaps exist. The Early Years Achievement Gap in Redbridge in 2008/9 was 35.2; higher than the England achievement gap of 33.9.³¹ This same year, there was a 26% gap in GCSE achievement between students eligible for Free School Meals (FSM), and their non-eligible peers. This gap is smaller than the gap in England (28%) but larger than the gap in London (21%). There are also large achievement gaps among some minority ethnic groups; there is a 20% gap in GCSE achievement among 'Any Other Black' students, a 17% gap for pupils of 'Mixed White/Black Caribbean' ethnicity, a 9.1% gap for 'Black Caribbean' pupils and a 9.0% gap for 'Black African and Mixed White/Black African'³². However, despite the large achievement gaps, most of these ethnic groups record higher levels of achievement in Redbridge than in London and England.

What will we do?

We will continue to improve educational outcomes and reduce attainment gaps through the work that is already being done in our schools and Children's Centres. We will also explore ways of strengthening early intervention programmes that ensure children get off to a strong start from conception until age five.

²⁹ Mayhew E and Bradshaw J (2005) '*Mothers, babies and the risks of poverty*' Poverty, No.121 p13-16, and DCSF Under 18 Conceptions 1998-2008 (Provisional)

³⁰ Gregg, P. and Goodman, A. (2010) *Children's Educational Outcomes: the role of attitudes and behaviours, from early childhood to late adolescence*, CMPO, University of Bristol and Institute for Fiscal Studies. As cited in Frank Field's Independent Review, 47

³¹ NI192: the gap between the median Early Years Foundation Stage Profile score of all children locally and the mean score of the lowest achieving 20% of children locally, as a percentage of the median score of all children locally.

³² DCSF *Attainment by Pupil Characteristics 2008/9*

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6. Mitigate future challenges

Why is this important?

Most of the data we have on child poverty pre-dates the economic recession, and evidence shows that levels of child poverty have likely increased during the recession. In addition, as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review, the government has announced a series of changes to the welfare system that may present new challenges to families living in poverty in the Borough. It is important that we proactively address these challenges to keep the situation in Redbridge from worsening.

What does the evidence show?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals in Redbridge increased from 15.8% in 2008 to 17.6% in 2010, suggesting a potential increase in child poverty in the Borough. In addition, it is projected that the number of children in Redbridge will grow rapidly in the coming years, especially in the south of the Borough. This means that there is the potential for the number of children living in poverty to increase quite rapidly as well. Initial analysis of the changes to the welfare system suggests that many children already living in poverty in the Borough may be impacted, and that there is the possibility of an influx of new low-income families in search of more affordable accommodation.

What will we do?

It will be important for us to continue to research and monitor the impact of these changes so that we can appropriately plan to address them. With the changes to the welfare system, we will need to work through existing channels (benefits advice, housing advice, Children's Centres, Job Centre Plus) to ensure residents understand the changes and are claiming the correct benefits. We will promote actions outlined in the Employment, Skills, and Enterprise Plan and the Affordable Housing Strategy.

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8. Monitoring Progress

In order to ensure that we are working towards achieving our vision, it is important that we monitor our progress towards the six priorities outlined above. We will monitor our progress on important indicators including:

- The proportion of children living in poverty
- The numbers and proportions of children living in out-of-work and low-income working families, provided by the HMR&C
- Achievement gaps at Foundation Year, Key Stage 2, and Key Stage 4
- Provision of support to vulnerable families in Temporary Accommodation

The national child poverty strategy identifies indicators and measures to be used to monitor progress of the national approach. These include indicators relating to family resources, family circumstances and children's life chances. In addition, further work will be carried out to develop additional 'life chances indicators' as recommended by Frank Field in his review of poverty and life chances.

In addition to this, the actions contained within related plans and strategies that link to addressing child poverty will be monitored and reported on annually. The review of the 2011/12 Action Plan will be carried out in the spring of 2012 and will be aligned to the review of the Children and Young People's Plan to prevent duplication.

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9. Year One Action Plan

N.B. This action plan brings together actions from other partnership strategies and plans that address the priorities. Many of the plans and strategies that inform this action plan are still being agreed and more details will be added to the action plan as these documents are finalised.

Action	What and Why	Lead Service Area/Organization	Links to Strategies/Plans
1. Join up working to better address child poverty			
Conduct Mapping Exercise	To identify existing services that support children and families living in poverty. This will promote more collaboration and can be used to strengthen referrals.	Led by the Corporate Policy and Performance Team, in partnership with the Child Poverty Working Group	Redbridge Children and Young People's Workforce Strategy 2011-2013; Employment, Skills, and Enterprise Plan; WorkREDBRIDGE network mapping and online portal
Explore ways to better use existing services	Work will be done to look at how the Borough can better use Children's Centres and schools to more effectively link and provide services	Led by the Corporate Policy and Performance Team, in partnership with the Child Poverty Working Group	Children and Young People's Plan 2011-14; Early Year's Business Plan 2011-15
Improve referrals and signposting	Based on the results of the mapping exercise, work will be done to ensure that providers are able to direct parents and families to the support that they need	Through collaboration with Children's Centres, Schools, Job Centre Plus, the voluntary sector, workREDBRIDGE network	Children and Young People's Plan 0911-14; Early Year's Business Plan 2011-15; Employment, Skills, and Enterprise Plan

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Action	What and Why	Lead Service Area/Organization	Links to Strategies/Plans
Raise awareness of child poverty among the Children and Young People's Workforce	It is important for those working with children and young people to have an understanding of the drivers and impacts of child poverty, and be able to provide support to those they work with.	Children's Services	Redbridge Children and Young People's Workforce Strategy 2011-2013; Children's Services Learning and Development Programme 2010 – 2011
2. Support parents to move into work			
Implement actions to support parents to move into work as outlined in the Employment, Skills, and Enterprise Plan	Actions will focus on improving parents access to services and programmes aimed at moving parents into work. This will be done through improved referrals, and provision of a holistic programme of support in Children's Centres.	Through collaboration with Children's Centres, Schools, Job Centre Plus, the voluntary sector, workREDBRIDGE network	Employment, Skills, and Enterprise Plan
Improve access to affordable and high quality child care	Child care is important both to provide children with a strong foundation of early education, and also to allow parents to participate in the labour market.	Children's Services, Children's Trust	Childcare Sufficiency Assessment; Children and Young People's Plan 2011-2014
Provide advice and skills to out of work parents	Supporting parents to move into work is an important step in reducing child poverty.	Job Centre Plus	Employment, Skills, and Enterprise Plan
3. Reduce burdens for low-income working parents			
Implement actions to reduce burdens for low-income working parents as outlined in the Employment, Skills, and	Actions will help ensure sustainable employment, career progression, and in-work training are more readily available to low-income working parents	DWP Work Programme WorkREDBRIDGE network	Employment, Skills, and Enterprise Plan

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Action	What and Why	Lead Service Area/Organization	Links to Strategies/Plans
Enterprise Plan			
Promote uptake of benefits available to working parents: Working Tax Credit (in the interim) and the Universal Credit (in the future)	Ensure that working parents are aware of, and receiving the support and benefits to which they are entitled.	Jobcentre Plus, Payments and Benefits, and Children's Centres	Employment, Skills, and Enterprise Plan
Improve access to affordable and high quality childcare	Child care is important both to provide children with a strong foundation of early education, and also to allow parents to participate in the labour market.	Children's Services, Children's Trust	Childcare Sufficiency Assessment; Children and Young People's Plan 2011-2014
Promote financial inclusion to Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit customers	Reducing debt, improving money management and promoting financial inclusion to support people struggling with debt, including families on low wages, will contribute to tackling child poverty.	Payments and Benefits	Payments and Benefits Service Plan
4. Address Social Inequalities			
Deliver training to young people, parents, and the staff who work with teenage parents.	Targeted at teenage pregnancy 'hotspots' and vulnerable groups, this training will help ensure that teenage parents and their children have the support that they need.	Children's Trust; Teenage Pregnancy Strategy	Teenage Pregnancy Strategy
Ensure access to sexual health services in teenage pregnancy 'hotspot' areas	To ensure that young people have access to services to prevent unplanned pregnancies.	Children's Trust; Teenage Pregnancy Strategy	Teenage Pregnancy Strategy
Develop and maintain the 'You're Welcome' principles via	To increase the capacity for opportunistic sexual health activities in mainstream services and	Children's Trust; Teenage Pregnancy Strategy	Teenage Pregnancy Strategy

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Action	What and Why	Lead Service Area/Organization	Links to Strategies/Plans
the Young People Friendly Scheme	voluntary sector providers.		
Develop responsive and supportive services for young parents within Children's Centres	To ensure that young parents and their children are accessing services.	Children's Trust; Teenage Pregnancy Strategy	Teenage Pregnancy Strategy
Conduct Housing Impact Assessments	All planning applications submitted for affordable housing will require a housing impact assessment to ensure sufficient infrastructure is considered.	Housing Development; Local Development Framework	Affordable Housing Strategy
Provision of Affordable housing and Intermediate accommodation	A delivery programme of homes to meet the needs of the Borough's residents	Planning and Regeneration	Affordable Housing Strategy
Further review of the Housing Allocation Policy	To ensure the Borough has a consistent , equitable, and workable policy with regard to Overcrowding and Hardship	Housing Development	Overcrowding Action Plan
Revision of Mobility Schemes	Review schemes through which Social Housing tenants can swap homes with tenants. Regional and national schemes are currently under consultation that will allow tenants more flexibility to take up employment and training opportunities outside of the area they currently live.	Housing Advice; Housing Strategy	Overcrowding Action Plan
Implement actions to address social and health inequalities as outlined in Children and Young	Many of the priorities of the Children and Young People's Plan will help tackle some of the social inequalities related to child poverty. This includes a focus on supporting vulnerable children, improving	Children's Services; Children's Trust	Children and Young People's Plan 2011-2014

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Action	What and Why	Lead Service Area/Organization	Links to Strategies/Plans
People's Plan	the safety of children, and improving health outcomes.		
Aim to reduce infant mortality rates by raising awareness among community groups	Infant mortality reflects general population health, standards of living, and service provision. Actions will be taken to raise awareness of the risk of poor health outcomes and early infant deaths among populations most at risk.	NHS, LSCB	Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) Work plan; Children and Young People's Plan 2011-14
Meet the public health needs of hard to reach families	Provide evidence for service development aimed at improving the uptake of services among hard to reach groups (including families living in temporary accommodation, Roma families, travelling families). Increase the provision of community based healthcare, and allow for a range of service provision to be accessed at one point of contact.	NHRS, Children's Trust	Breastfeeding Strategy; Children and Young People's Plan 2011-14
5. Improve educational outcomes and reduce achievement gaps			
Provide support to children and families through Children's Centres	Ensure that Children's Centres are working to improve the overall health and wellbeing of children and families in the community. This is an important step in breaking the cycle of poverty.	Children's Services	Children and Young People's Plan 2011-14; Early Year's Business Plan 2011-2015
Implement actions to improve educational outcomes and reduce attainment gaps as outlined in the Children and Young People's Plan	Providing a good education is an important part breaking the cycle of poverty. Supporting children to increase their educational achievement, starting from early years and continuing through to secondary school, will increase their chances of	Children's Trust; Children's Services	Children and Young Peoples Plan 2011-14

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Action	What and Why	Lead Service Area/Organization	Links to Strategies/Plans
	securing employment as adults.		
Continue measures to support the transition from NEET (not in education, employment or training) to EET (education, employment or training) for young parents and support the reintegration and retainment of young people in education	To promote awareness of Information, Advice, and Guidance services for young parents, such as Care to Learn funding. And to extend the number of 'Drop-in' sessions in secondary schools to provide pregnancy testing, Chlamydia screening, condom distribution, emergency hormonal contraception and sexual health advice.	Teenage Pregnancy Strategy; Connexions, Children's Centres	Teenage Pregnancy Strategy; Children and Young People's Plan 2011-2014
6. Mitigate future challenges			
Research and monitor the impacts of the changes to the welfare system and the economic situation	To ensure that we have accurate knowledge of how the changes are impacting our residents, in order to be able to better plan for how to continue to meet their needs	Corporate Policy and Performance Team, and Research Officers in Housing and Payments and Benefits	
Provision of benefits advice and improve uptake of benefits	To ensure that residents understand how the changes will impact them, and that they are claiming the correct benefits.	Jobcentre Plus, Payments and Benefits, and Children's Centres	
Promotion of revised Under Occupation Scheme	Offer assistance and re-housing support to tenants living in properties that are too big for their needs. This will help provide access to larger family properties for overcrowded households.	Housing Advice and Redbridge Homes	Overcrowding Strategy
Explore a private-sector Under	Explore the feasibility of leasing properties of older owner-occupiers whose properties are too large for	Housing Strategy	Overcrowding Strategy

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Action	What and Why	Lead Service Area/Organization	Links to Strategies/Plans
Occupation Scheme	them to maintain. These properties could then be used as affordable housing for families.		
Encourage extensions to create larger family homes	Conduct a feasibility assessment to determine the viability of enlarging council properties via extensions or loft conversions. This will help make properties more suitable for larger families.	Housing Development	Affordable Housing Strategy
Promote better use of existing housing stock	Enable all social landlords in the Borough to provide more family accommodation.	Housing Development	Affordable Housing Strategy
Rent Deposit and Bond Scheme	To help provide accommodation to severely overcrowded households, and assist families to move into the Private Rented Sector.	Housing Advice	Overcrowding Strategy