

Brighton and Hove Child Poverty Strategy 2012-2015 Report

Appendix 4

Portfolio of Good Practice

1. The Child Poverty Strategy focuses on the outcomes and actions that will best both alleviate the effects of poverty on children and young people and, ultimately help to reduce the numbers of families living in poverty.

This indicative portfolio shows some of the excellent work already happening in the City. This is work that has evidence to show it is effective. Most of these services and projects are working towards more specific outcomes than the reduction in the number of families living in poverty, but all of them are contributing positively to this complex overarching outcome.

- 1.2 This is by no means an exhaustive list and inevitably there will be omissions. What the portfolio is intended to do is offer a window into effective services operating within the three tiers of the child poverty pyramid. The three layers of which are;
 1. Services supporting families struggling with day to day pressures around debt, benefits and financial inclusion
 2. Services supporting parents, carers and young people around skills, training and employment over the medium term
 3. Services supporting families over the long term and in crisis that are contributing to improve the long term life chances of children and young people

The following service and project descriptions are ordered similarly across the three layers.

2. Day to day pressures

Brighton & Hove Advice Partnership

Comprising a wide range of organisations from the national, Citizens Advice Bureau to local organisations such as Brighton Housing Trust and the Money Advice Service 'MACS'. The collective work of the Advice Partnership is wide ranging covering advice legal, housing and homelessness, money and debt, benefit take up and employment rights. It also comprises specialist advice such as support for families with disabilities. In 2010 it was estimated that 17,000 enquiries were made to 15 organisations in the city providing social welfare law advice. More should be done to evidence the impact of receiving high quality advice and information; however there is no doubt that such services are required to an even greater degree during periods of economic downturn and low employment.

Welfare Rights Group – Brighton Unemployed Centre Families Project

Helps over 500 families per year to access benefits, deal with debt or housing problems, to access health and healthy living opportunities and services. The Welfare Rights service helps families to maximise their income by take up of appropriate benefits as well as helping them to prioritise and negotiate repayment of debts. The Centre services provide emotional and practical support as well as providing volunteering opportunities. Families can access a range of much needed services including, childcare, cheap laundry facilities, advice and advocacy, access to computers and phones. They also supply free good quality clothing, bedding and nursery equipment. Families using the centre regularly report finding the services excellent and it provides critical financial and emotional respite for families suffering great hardships.

E-benefits and financial health check for new tenants on housing benefits - Brighton & Hove City Council

Enables housing benefit claims to be processed within two days of receipt of information. It offers advice around credit union, bank accounts, utilities, budgeting, and low cost furniture and goods.

This service minimises rent arrears at the start of a new tenancy.

All the information needed is provided at the e-benefits interview so it saves double handling by Housing staff and Housing Benefit staff as all the evidence and information is entered onto the system once only.

Under-Occupations Team - Brighton & Hove City Council

This role has increased the number of family sized homes available in the city by supporting and incentivising tenants to move from a property that is larger than their needs. In 2008/9 this work released more than 80 family sized homes.

Disability Living Allowance (DLA) project - Amaze

The Amaze DLA project provides volunteers to support the City's most vulnerable families complete the difficult Disability Living Allowance claim form. The project costs £59,000 and in 2009/10 generated £2million of DLA benefit and £1million of other passported benefits, so for every £1 spent it generates £51 for households with disabled children. An average of £8-12 thousand pounds of extra disposable income per family helps lift these children out of poverty and the family out of fuel poverty.

3. Medium term issues of skills, training and employment

Whitehawk Inn

A community led organisation providing information and advice about learning and work, and a range of support activities for adults. For those who are looking to go back to work the service offer careers advice, employment support and a range of tailored resources. The service works with approximately 700 people a year and is accessible and rooted in the local community. In recent years, the service has increased its focus on supporting those who have experienced long term unemployment, providing additional support beyond statutory provision. Between 2007 and 2010, it supported 200 people back to work. (See Case Studies)

The Bridge Community Education Centre

Provides a centre of learning and support that offers individuals and their community. The centre offers a programme of adult education and a gateway team of advisors who offer support to local residents to gain confidence, skills and training and volunteering and paid work. At a time when funding for adult education is dwindling and the funding focus is on apprenticeships this community based facility with a drop in café and dedicated support services provides an essential first step towards learning and work for those most likely to be living in poverty.

Extratime

This organisations runs after school clubs and holiday schemes to 500 children and young people. Two thirds of children and young people attending have disabilities and special needs and significant numbers have complex needs and very challenging behaviour. By providing childcare to a group of children and young people who would not be able to access it anywhere else, Extratime is helping those families take up training and/or work which in turn helps raise their families income and standard of living. These families are financially already some of the most disadvantaged because of the additional costs of raising a disabled child or young person.

Extratime has meant the difference between a disabled child being able to stay in the family home as opposed to full time residential care - for one child with complex needs this can equate to £200,000 p.a. for a residential place.

HaKIT – Hangleton and Knoll Project

The project supports residents to improve their skills, increase their qualifications and enables them to access the internet free. The Hangleton and Knoll project support two fully equipped Community IT rooms. One is located at St Richards Community Centre and the other at Hangleton Community Centre. The Hangleton and Knoll project delivers free IT and Adult education courses from these rooms.

The project also runs three drop-ins a week one at Hangleton Library and two at St Richards. These allow people to get the help they need to use technology and residents often turn up with phones and laptops and the tutor and volunteers help them get started.

Healthwalks Training and Volunteer Programme - Brighton and Hove City Council

Healthwalks Volunteer Walk Leader training provides the knowledge and skills to lead the 14 weekly healthwalks and to encourage and support other local people to walk more. The one day training is free and 50 local people are trained each year. This programme increases volunteer opportunities for residents in the city and provides opportunities for residents to gain experience that will support their future employability.

4. Long term life chances for children and young people

Early Years Foundation Stage Programme – Brighton & Hove City Council and Early Years Education Providers

The Early Years Foundation Stage profile describes a child's development and learning achievements at the end of the academic year in which they reach the age of five. It is based on ongoing observation and assessment in six areas of learning. The pupils in Brighton and Hove continue to achieve much higher than the national outcomes for all pupils. This is a result of the high quality of provision across the city as evidenced in the outcomes from the Ofsted reports.

Targeted support is offered to schools and individual children who are at a risk of underachieving. There are specialist services for children with additional needs and English as an Additional Language. Crucially for pupils living in the 20% most deprived areas the gap between their attainment and that of all pupils is reducing markedly.

Family Learning Programme - Brighton & Hove City Council

Parents are supported to both improve their children's learning and to engage in adult training for their own progression. This externally evaluated programme supports a number of key outcomes for reducing child poverty. It has both a focus on early intervention to support children's learning and a focus on developing adult skills for parents.

Families and Schools Together (FAST) - Brighton & Hove City Council & Schools

This is one of the few programmes that show an impact across a wide range of outcomes both in terms of engaging parents with their children's education and raising attainment and improving behaviour in school. Targeted families are supported to engage more confidently with school and their children's learning and to create an informal support network between parents. In the local pilot of the FAST programme based at Fairlight Primary school the improvements in attainment of children whose families engaged in FAST were marked.

Functional Family Therapy (FFT) - Brighton & Hove City Council

An assertive outreach model that works with difficult to engage families, where there are high levels of conflict/distress and a young person is likely to be involved in offending or at risk of becoming looked after. Providing FFT to 100 children and young people as a successful alternative to foster care costs £200,000 annually against an estimated saving of £3.5 million in looked after costs.

On average the programme is estimated to have a benefit to cost ratio of 7.5:1 to 13:1

Triple P Programme - Brighton & Hove Council

Triple P is a system of easy to implement, proven parenting solutions that helps solve current parenting problems and prevents future problems before they arise. It has been delivered extensively in Brighton with well evidenced results. Evaluation of the Triple in Australia shows that Triple P has the potential to avert at least 26% of cases of conduct disorder with one case of conduct disorder estimated to cost from £75,000 to £225,000 in large lifetime costs.

The Compass Card – Amaze and participating partner services

The Compass Card provides over 30 offers of free and discounted access to local leisure and cultural opportunities and sports facilities and activities. It is available to children and young people registered on the Amaze disabled children's database and is highly valued by 1,400 families using it. This is due in part to the significant financial savings it provides and also because they know that the organisations which accept the card will provide a safe and inclusive welcome to their children.

The Active for Life Project - Brighton & Hove City Council

The project develops and delivers affordable sport and physical activity opportunities within communities to increase participation levels and improve the health and well being. Community need is reflected and specific programmes are tailored accordingly. This programme includes:

Fit and Fun Families Sessions - providing low cost physical activity opportunities to local families, giving the parents the skills & confidence to play games with their children and to encourage young people between the ages of 5-11 to take part in an after school physical activity with their parents.

Football Fun - For 3 – 5 year olds and their parents.

Soup & Stomp - Free half term holiday health walks for parents with their children, which also includes making a healthy soup before the walk with the food partnership.

Holiday referral places – subsidised places for children on holiday courses

Safe and Sorted - Sussex Central YMCA

A youth advice drop-in for 10-25yr olds based in Moulsecoomb

The service works with young people requiring support on a range of issues including; health, education and employment, sexual health, substance misuse and housing. In 2010 the service worked with 243 young people requiring intensive support and had 1880 contacts with young people.

Detailed evidence shows this service is effective in supporting young people to stay safe, improve their health and improve their opportunities to progress in life. (See Case Studies)

Youth Offending Service - Brighton and Hove City Council

The service works with young people and their families from the prevention end through to custody in order to reduce offending behaviour and all the problems associated with that. At least 90% of the young people the service works with have experienced some form of loss in their lives, including: death of a parent, parents emotionally unavailable, domestic violence, drug and alcohol abuse, being taken into care, exclusion from school etc. Often what is underpinning these factors is poverty – both material and emotional. Where parents are involved we work with them on their parenting and help them develop strategies to cope.

The shorter term outcome from the service is less young people coming into the Criminal Justice system: first time entrants have reduced from 611 in 2006 – 7 to 171 in 2010 – 11. This is a tribute to the strong partnership work between the police and the YOS.

Family Link - Safety Net

A personalised support package for approximately 80 families a year delivered through the early intervention home visiting service working in partnership with primary schools across east Brighton. Identifying a family's needs and developing an action plan to address these. Needs include finance debt and supporting families in accessing specialist dept management, benefits advice as well as a range of other issues impacting on family life. Alongside this intensive support the service also supports approximately 500 families a year with disabilities to resolve problems related to benefit, housing and education via a telephone service.

In a 2011 external evaluation the project interviewed 26 families. 73 % said they felt better off 50% said they had taken up volunteering, 26% had taken up training, and 25% entered work

RISE

An independent, registered charity providing services for women, children and young people affected by domestic abuse. Every year RISE supports over 800 women and their families through a range of services offering crisis support, community and therapeutic support and specific services for children and young people. Parents and children experiencing domestic violence can face severe poverty issues with major disruptions to housing, work and family. Providing support to both enable a parent and their children to survive the violence and rebuild their lives, saves lives, reduces poverty in the short and medium term and supports the long term life chances of children and young people. (See case studies)