



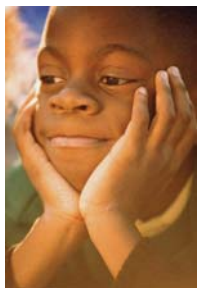
# Child poverty

Directors' summary 1 September 2009

Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services

*It would be hard to overstate how significant the quality of leadership is in narrowing the gap for children and young people within a context of improving outcomes for all ...*

## Narrowing the Gap – Final Year Guidance 2



The Child Poverty Bill 2009 aims to end child poverty by 2020. It sets out the duties of local authorities and their partners: to produce joint local child poverty strategies and to undertake joint needs assessment.

There is also an expectation that these will be referenced in your local Sustainable Communities Strategies. This summary presents the key research findings from C4EO's research review on establishing and delivering whole-area child poverty strategies. Please go to [www.c4eo.org.uk](http://www.c4eo.org.uk) to download the full and in-depth research review.

## What do we know?

### Creating a whole-area child poverty strategy

#### Create a vision which:

- is based on agreed principles
- encompasses all partners within the local area
- involves families
- is clear and easy to understand.

### Facilitators and barriers

#### Facilitators

- clearly agreed, understood and shared terminology and definitions
- strong and supportive political leadership at both national and local levels
- an appropriate degree of area-level autonomy to design and deliver strategies to meet local needs

### Assessing and monitoring the strategy

- Agree with your partners and clients what the outcomes, targets and performance indicators should be.
- Use qualitative as well as quantitative measures.
- Ensure the outcomes measured are focused on families and children.

## Creating a whole-area child poverty strategy

### Create an outcomes-based action plan which:

- maximises family income by creating the conditions for people to take up job opportunities, ensuring that local authorities and other agencies act as 'model' employers
- provides back-to-work 'tasters' and other stepping stones, and boosts take-up of working tax allowances and credits
- includes economic regeneration and social inclusion by improving local transport and wrap-around childcare
- provides training based on local needs and including 'soft skills'
- links employment advice with other advice services and the private sector
- includes clear partner roles and responsibilities, and multi-agency thresholds
- encourages the participation of families, children and young people living in poverty.

## Facilitators and barriers

- a risk-taking ethos to challenge existing practice
- open channels of communication and trust
- accessible and informative data
- community action and citizen-led participation
- involvement of the full range of services and organisations in the delivery of the strategy.

### Barriers

- lack of joined-up priorities and direction
- perceiving community action as a possible hindrance
- consultation fatigue, and tokenistic representation
- child poverty champions becoming isolated
- assuming that projects, which **can** address poverty issues, can't do so
- lack of robust and high-quality data to support decision-making
- lack of long-term development time and resource allocation.

## Assessing and monitoring the strategy

- create strong links between assessment, planning and action
- design monitoring so that it can be used to assess if and **how** the intervention has worked
- revise following monitoring and assessment
- work with partners to plan and improve data collection.

## What do you want to do next?

It is important to ensure that the relationship between economic wellbeing and children's wellbeing is understood in your partnerships. The following are based on the seven Outcomes-Based Accountability (OBA) questions and are designed to be a catalyst for partnership action:



## Q1 What is your vision for children living in poverty in your locality? What outcomes (quality of life conditions) do you want?

For example, families have increased economic wellbeing, because they can maximise their income by working, and claiming benefits to which they are entitled. They can afford to keep their homes warm, to buy healthy food and basic necessities and equipment, such as school uniforms, and to enjoy leisure, cultural and social activities. Local child care is available.

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## Q2 What would the outcomes look like if you could see or experience them?

*(Experience is the bridge between outcomes and indicators)*

For example, the numbers of children in poverty in your area are falling, or have the potential to do so, because more adults with children are in work, more adults are attending skills training, more working adults are taking up tax credits and benefits, more adults are in 'stepping stone' schemes back to employment, more workless adults are taking up welfare benefits and/or are attending training. There is more take-up of pre-school and extended school care by working adults and adults attending training, and more children who are at risk of developmental delay are attending high-quality child care.

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## Q3 And how can you measure them? *(quality and quantitative measures are needed)*

The indicators for measuring outcomes emerge from descriptions of the experience. You might like to select appropriate indicators from the National Indicators Set, for example:

- NIs: 82, 102, 112, 116, linked to the proportion of children in poverty
- NIs: 151, 152, 153, 166, linked to parental employment
- NIs: 72, 88, 109, 118, linked to take-up of child care
- NIs: 181, 187, linked to take-up of financial support
- NIs: 13, 161, 162, 163, 164, 174, linked to increased skills levels

[www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/nationalindicator](http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/nationalindicator)

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## Q4 Where are you now? How are you currently doing on the most important measures?

The web-based C4EO Progress Mapping Tool provides relevant data on the indicators; you may also be able to use your own local data to create data curves/charts in order to analyse and compare performance with other authorities.

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## Q5 Who are the partners for improvement? Who from the Local Strategic Partnership should be at the table?

A very broad range of partners have a role to play in reducing child poverty (see 'Who has the information you need?' overleaf)

You may choose to undertake a 'turning the curve' exercise on the measures where improvement is needed. This is an exercise from the OBA toolkit which facilitates partnership working. [www.c4eo.org.uk/obatoolkit/default.aspx](http://www.c4eo.org.uk/obatoolkit/default.aspx) This will enable you to identify which partners/agencies should be involved. C4EO sector specialists are also available from C4EO to support this work on request.

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## Q6 What really works to improve the outcomes you want?

C4EO's in-depth research review provides some evidence for what works. This evidence can be used to support the achievement of the outcomes you have identified.

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## Q7 What do you propose to do next?

Create your vision, strategy and action plan, and monitor progress on selected indicators. A report card format can be used which is clear and simple for you and your partners and provides a framework for monitoring progress against your outcomes. (This is available in the OBA toolkit on the C4EO website.)

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# Who has the information you need?

It is important to include both statutory and non-statutory organisations:

- families and carers, children and young people
- managers working at a strategic level, delivering services that include recreation, child care, youth services, healthcare, education and training, housing, environment and regeneration
- job centres
- Sure Start programme managers, child care and extended school providers
- local transport providers
- local employers
- community groups and third sector organisations
- local colleges and educational institutions
- faith groups.

## Directors' summaries

This summary is a concise and accessible overview of C4EO's current work in this theme for directors of children's services.

Please go to [www.c4eo.org.uk](http://www.c4eo.org.uk) to download full and in-depth versions.

## How can C4EO support your vision?

C4EO offers wide-ranging support, including:

- validated local practice
- knowledge and progression workshops
- sector specialists and tailored support
- knowledge and research reviews including key messages from research.

Please go to [www.c4eo.org.uk](http://www.c4eo.org.uk) to access full information.