



Hackney's Child Poverty and Family Wellbeing Plan 2016-18

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Section 1 – An overview of Child Poverty

In Hackney 28% of children live in poverty according to the most recent official statistics.¹ This means that 28% of children lived in families whose income was less than £13,728 a year or £264 a week, before housing costs had been deducted from their income. This is the fourth highest rate of child poverty in London, alongside Camden and after Tower Hamlets (36%) and Islington (33%), Westminster (30%). When Hackney's relatively high housing costs have been deducted from household income, the proportion of children living in poverty is 41%. This is the second highest rate in the country and in London after Tower Hamlets (49%) and on a level with Newham (also 41%).²

Children living in low income families will often go on to do worse than their peers in different areas of life including education, employment and training as well as experiencing more health problems. Children in low income families are also more likely to become victims or perpetrators of crime. Having a low income places stresses and strains on families. Compounding issues often associated with poverty such as unemployment, debt, parental mental health issues and unsatisfactory housing can affect children's education and health and wellbeing.

This plan sets out our approach to tackling child poverty in Hackney. It builds on a plan first adopted in 2012 which takes a dual approach to child poverty, both aiming to maximise income and tackle complex needs. Having reviewed progress and needs last year³, and spoken to children, young people and statutory and community services, this new plan maintains the priorities from 2012 but proposes a sharpening of focus in three areas:

- Parental employment
- Childcare
- Working with families with complex dependencies.

The plan also identifies priority groups who are most at risk of living in poverty and urges all services to consider how they might focus on the needs of these groups when delivering actions to tackle child poverty.

Our approach to tackling child poverty

The 2012 Hackney Child Poverty and Family Wellbeing action plan has six thematic priorities which seek to maximise income whilst also tackling complex needs:

¹ The most recent official statistic relates to 2013/14 and was released in July 2015. The official definition of child poverty is: the percentage of children living in families in receipt of out of work benefits or tax credits, (including housing benefit) where reported income is below 60% of the national median income before housing costs.

² For more in depth discussion of the scale of child poverty in Hackney see Section 5 below.

³ <http://www.hackney.gov.uk/cyps-needs-assessment.htm>

Hackney's cross-cutting principles which underpin our approach to addressing child poverty and promoting family wellbeing

1. Excellent universal services committed to working with families to build aspirations and improve outcomes for all children.
2. Services can demonstrate that they are enabling families to build aspirations and improve outcomes for children living in low-income families and most at risk of poor outcomes.
3. Services are accessible to all children and families.
4. Services work effectively in partnership to ensure a co-ordinated whole family approach.
5. Opportunities are maximised to target support early and at the points in children's lives when it can have most impact.
6. Enabling families to maximise their household incomes

The recent needs assessment and engagement activity reaffirm the relevance of these cross-cutting priorities as principles for the new plan which will help us lift children and young people out of poverty. The actions in this new plan therefore still fall under these six priorities that collectively aim to maximise income and tackle complex needs. Maximising household income requires partnership work to support parents into work, help parents respond to national welfare reform and provide money and debt advice so they are better able to manage budgets and avoid problem debt. To tackle complex needs we need to break inter-generational cycles of poverty and promote life chances, building aspirations for children and young people by improving educational outcomes and tackling health inequalities. We also need to address the complex problems which we may find in the wider family unit including unemployment, parental mental health issues and domestic abuse. These problems can stack up to impact on life chances of children.

The actions in this plan need to focus on lifting households with children out of poverty by improving the actual material position of households with children, not their relative position. Central Government has acknowledged that in the past the child poverty rate has decreased because average incomes have reduced and fewer households fall below the national median income. The fall in rate does not therefore translate into any material difference for the households that are no longer classed as households in poverty.

Tackling child poverty in a changing borough

Hackney is a borough that is changing and growing rapidly. On the one hand we have seen an increase in the numbers of well qualified working people in the borough including among the younger age group (25-35). On the other there are high levels of need and deprivation, entrenched health inequalities and long-term unemployment alongside an acknowledged London-wide crisis in affordable housing. The challenge is how the Council can work in partnership with residents and other agencies to harness economic growth in a way that benefits all local residents. If we ignore the situation and do nothing the borough will become more polarised. In adopting this position we are informed by the findings in the Spirit Level which demonstrates how inequality affects the whole of society.⁴ The actions in this new plan are intended to help us to respond to this challenge. The plan sets out how we will address this growing economic and social disparity in some households with children. There is a strong argument that this will benefit the whole community and not just the children and young people and their families who are living in poverty.

⁴ Wilkinson, R, Pickett, K (2010) *The Spirit Level, Why Equality is Better for Everyone* London: Penguin

Hackney's approach to child poverty is a key strand that helps us to respond to growth and change in Hackney. It fits into a wider strategic response articulated in "Hackney a Place for Everyone" which is the Council's corporate plan for 2015-18. It is supported by a series of events throughout 2015 with local residents about how we can address inequality in this changing borough.

This plan also aligns with the long-term work we are doing to address disproportionate outcomes for young black men in all areas of their lives including education, employment and training, health and emotional wellbeing, and youth justice. This is described in relevant sections of this plan and more details can be found here: [Improving outcomes for young black men](#)

The Peabody Children's Community project on the Pembury Estate is part of the plan, acting as a test bed for our approach - teasing out issues, such as the barriers for parents seeking to move into work, and trying out solutions, for example ways of providing flexible and affordable childcare and improving out-of-school childcare and holiday play schemes. The approach is described more fully in the section about Families (See Section 2).

The groups most at risk of poverty

We have identified the following groups in Hackney as being most at risk of poverty and these are groups that we need to ensure services and agencies in Hackney reach.

- Workless families.
- Lone parent families and families with two young children (0-10) where the youngest is aged under 4.
- Families that claim benefits affected by Welfare Reform.
- Black and minority ethnic groups: African; Caribbean; and Turkish/Kurdish/Cypriot groups (who are all more likely to be eligible for free school meals than the wider population).
- Disabled parents and disabled children.
- New arrivals/emerging communities, including children in families with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF).

More detail of our analysis is provided in Appendix 1

The scale of child poverty in Hackney

Children living in relative poverty before housing costs

Despite demographic changes Hackney has high rates of relative child poverty according to the official measure although there has been a reduction in recent years.^[2] In 2013 the rate in Hackney was 28% leaving Hackney with the fourth highest rate of child poverty in London, alongside Camden and below Tower Hamlets (36%) and Islington (33%) and, Westminster (30%). This was above the London rate (22%) and the England rate (18%).

Since 2007 Hackney's relative child poverty has been falling. We have seen a reduction of 21 percentage points from 49% to 28% between 2007 and 2013. Hackney has had the second highest reduction out of all of our statistical neighbours – behind Newham where child poverty has fallen from 47% to 25% (a reduction of 22 percentage points). There are many possible reasons for this reduction. Work carried out to investigate the reasons suggests that much of the reduction locally can be attributed to falling median income levels which pushed the child poverty line down together with increases to benefits and tax credits during this period rather than increased employment.

^[2] HMRC Official measure: *The percentage of children living in families in receipt of out of work benefits or tax credits where reported incomes is below 60% of the national median income (before housing costs).*

Under the 2010-2015 government policies the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) has predicted that relative child poverty will rise to 24% nationally in 2020 – a steady year on year increase from 19.3% in 2010, to 22% in 2015, and to 24% by 2020.⁵

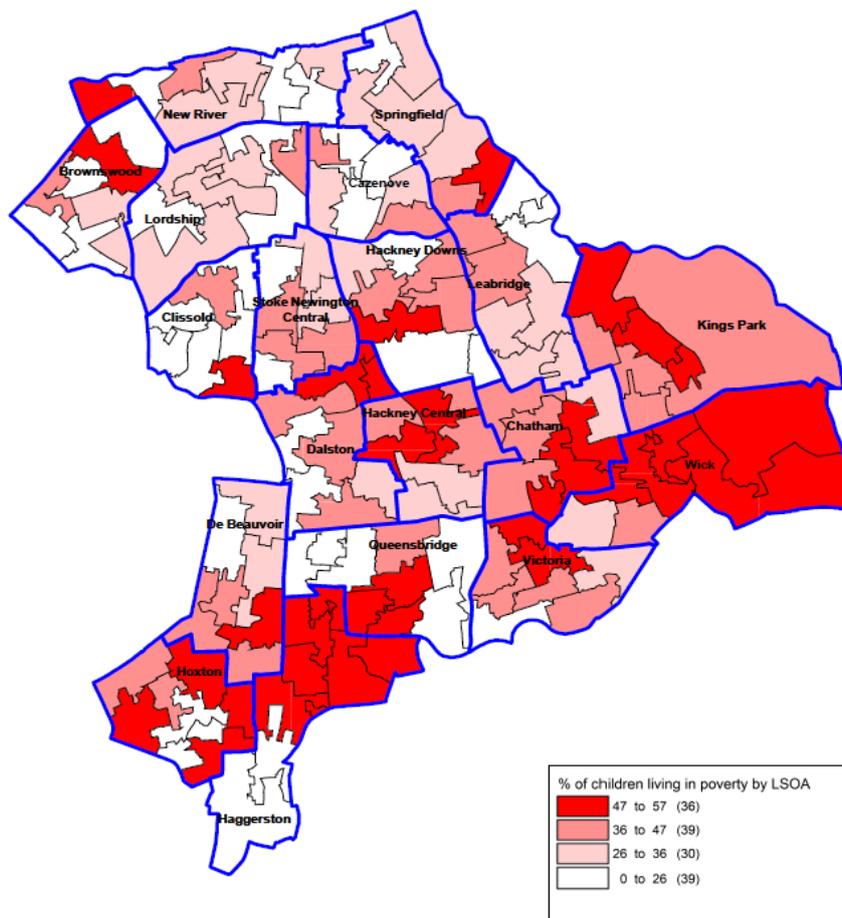
Children living in relative poverty after housing costs

The official definition of child poverty is based on a measure **before** housing costs have been deducted. Commentators point out that the official definition lowers child poverty rates in areas like London. This is due to the high cost of accommodation and the resultant high level of housing benefit received, which artificially boosts income.

The End Child Poverty Campaign uses a measure for estimating child poverty based on disposable income **after** housing costs have been deducted. The Hackney rate for children living in poverty stood at 41% in 2013. This is the second highest rate in the country and in London after Tower Hamlets (49%) and on a level with Newham (also 41%).⁶

Where is child poverty concentrated in Hackney?

Figure 1 Geography of children living in poverty



Source: HMRC 2011

⁵ The Institute for Fiscal Studies, Child and working age poverty from 2010 to 2020, October 2011

⁶ End Child Poverty Campaign, Child Poverty Map of the UK, October 2014

Figure 1 above, shows the highest concentrations of child poverty to be in families in the south and east of the borough, with significant pockets of poverty in central Hackney too. (Note the analysis is based on ward in Hackney before recent boundary changes, due to the time lag in data released from HMRC).

Wick, Kings Park, Queensbridge, Haggerston, Hoxton and Chatham are home to multiple Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs)⁷ where over 50% of the under-18 population live in families in poverty. Haggerston provides a geographically polarised picture of child poverty; the northern half shows extremely high rates of poverty, whereas the southern-most LSOAs show extremely low rates; however, this is most likely due to the fact that, only a small proportion of children live in the southern most LSOAs. Hoxton demonstrates a similar pattern to Haggerston and for the same most likely reason.

The national context

The work to refresh the plan has taken place against a backdrop of a range of government policy measures, many of which are affecting families in poverty. The most significant challenge is the spending reductions demanded of local authorities and partner agencies by government, which means we are looking at ways to do things in a more integrated, joined-up way to ensure that the focus on families and other residents most in need is maintained. Hackney Council has saved £100 million over four financial years but there are still huge savings that will be demanded of us over the next few years.

Delivering on the priorities and actions in this plan in a climate of severe financial constraint will not be easy and we need to assess what we are able to deliver during what will be a severely constrained time for local government and other public services. The actions which have been identified by services reflect what can be delivered in 2016/17, but this will have to be reviewed for 2017/18. Responsibility for monitoring progress and for setting priorities for future years will largely sit within the relevant services.

Government social policy measures include:

- A programme of welfare reform based on a premise of getting more people into work and which is likely to affect more families over time, especially as the new measures announced by the government, elected in May 2015, start to take effect.
- Reforms to social housing and housing benefit, including the use of short-term social housing tenancies, and caps on the levels of rent eligible for Housing Benefit in the private sector (LHAs). New announcements by the government include extending the right to buy to social housing tenants and requiring local authorities to dispose of high value housing stock to help fund right-to-buy extension discounts. These reforms combined with the welfare cap, freezing of benefits and the withdrawal of automatic housing support to 18-21 year-olds have the potential to lead to more rent arrears, more homelessness, and pressures on temporary accommodation.
- The expansion of the school academies programme and the introduction of free schools, moving more schools outside of local authority control, and greater devolution of funding.

⁷ Units of geographic boundary developed by the Office for National Statistics. LSOAs are built from groups of Output Areas and have been automatically generated to be as consistent in population size as possible, and typically contain from four to six Output Areas. The Minimum population is 1000 and the mean is 1500. There is a Lower Layer Super Output Area for each postcode in England and Wales.

- The introduction and expansion from 2015 of the government Troubled Families programme designed to support families with complex needs to give them a better chance in life and reduce the cost to the Exchequer.
- A government Child Poverty Strategy 2014-17 which sets out actions for the government to tackle child poverty. These include supporting families to achieve financial independence through work; supporting the living standards for low income families; and preventing children living in low income families from becoming low income adults through raising educational attainment.
- Measures in the Welfare Bill 2015 to amend the Child Poverty Act 2010 to become the Life Chances Act, removing income related targets and replacing them with new measures to improve the life chances of children.

The Government has also announced its intention to remove the requirement on local authorities to co-operate to produce a child poverty strategy. In Hackney we recognise that child poverty is an issue for a significant group of our residents. Income inequalities are likely to grow as we witness the impact of government welfare reform and housing policies, with the associated impact on outcomes and life chances for some children in low income families.

We therefore set our overall approach in this plan, which focuses both on mitigating the impact of income poverty by supporting families to maximise their incomes and on narrowing inequalities in life chances.

Section 2 – Priority Areas for the Hackney Child Poverty and Family Wellbeing Plan 2016-18

Maximising household income through employment, money management and financial inclusion

Introduction

The most prolific type of poverty in Hackney, and across London and England, exists in households that do not work and work is therefore the most sustainable route out of poverty for most households. Research has shown that income (regardless of source and including benefits) has a direct impact on children's well-being and development, independently of other household and parental characteristics and studies examining increases in income as a result of benefit changes have found positive effects on a range of children's outcomes.

However, as benefits are reducing, helping parents into work remains the only realistic solution to help life households out of poverty. This case is reinforced by evidence that children's long term prospects are improved if they grow up in households with at least one parent working. Longitudinal research has found that children who grow up in workless households have poorer educational outcomes when this is compounded by other factors typically found in workless households (low parental qualifications, ill health and poverty).⁸

⁸ Barnes, M., Brown, V., Parsons, S., Ross, A., Schoon, I. and Vignoles, A. (2012) Intergenerational transmission of worklessness: Evidence from the Millennium Cohort Study and the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England. Research Report DFE-RR234. London: Department for Education.

This section looks at support to build financial resilience and address the barriers to employment. Additional support for families is addressed in the working with families section.

The Hackney picture

Work readiness

In Hackney we are working to provide employability, training, engagement and specialist support through Ways into Work, Young Hackney, the Adult Learning Service, the Hackney Learning Trust, Children's Centres, employment advisers attached to the Troubled Families programme and welfare advisers. External partners include registered housing providers, JCP (Job Centre Plus), charities and third sector organisations.

Creating more flexible and better paid employment opportunities

We aim to make entry level positions available for local people and are promoting flexible and part time working and the London Living Wage. We do this through employer engagement, maximising opportunities for flexible working in the Council and asking our suppliers and local businesses to sign up to paying London Living Wage. Of the total number of children in poverty in Hackney, 81% live in workless households (2013 figure). This is a slight decrease from the 2012 figure of 85%. However the number of children in working families in poverty has increased slightly, although the percentage has remained stable due to an increase in the total number of children in the borough. This is in line with national trends. There has also been a slight increase of children living in poverty where the working status of the family is unknown⁹. The changes could be a result of changes in family employment as well as the changing demographic in Hackney. This does not affect the prediction that changes to benefits and tax credits are likely to increase child poverty across all categories in the coming years.

Barriers to work

Families can face a number of barriers to employment and a key challenge is engaging parents who are least likely to be in employment into adult learning and employment. Lone parents in poverty are almost four times as likely to be out of work as parents in a couple. Just 52% of lone parents are in employment in Hackney; women fare worse, with 92% of female lone parents making up this figure. There is no specific service offer and female parents are not accessing Job Centre plus (JCP). In Hackney, out of the total number of children in poverty in lone parent households, 88% are in workless households. There is a need to tackle the multiple barriers to work faced by parents, especially those least likely to be in employment, by linking early intervention, family support, employment and skills advice and training and access to quality childcare together.

Childcare

The two main ways that we currently subsidise childcare is within Children's Centres and through providing some subsidy for low income families and vulnerable children in voluntary and independent provision. We are seeking to maximise the take up of free entitlements for 2, 3 and 4 year-olds and subsidising childcare where we can, for example through a scheme across private and voluntary sector provisions targeted at low-income parents and a top up for 3-4 year-olds in schools (40% of places in schools). The government intends to increase the free childcare entitlement for 3 and 4 year-olds from 15 hours to 30 hours a week for parents who are working. However there are real

⁹ Families migrating from receiving their child allowance through Child Tax Credit instead of Income Support may have moved from one category to the other

concerns about the government's ability to deliver this commitment without adequate government funding to back the plans.

Despite the work done to increase and subsidise childcare it remains a barrier for lone parents (and other low income parents) in Hackney moving into employment, including the flexibility of the current offer, whether that is childcare, or the out-of-hours and holiday offer for school-age children. We are endeavouring to make sure that there is high quality flexible childcare available as part of our high quality offer for children 0-5 and their families. Our parents and employment work found that childcare for school age children as well as access to employment support for their parents, who might be missing out on the Children's Centre offer, is an area that needs greater focus. There is also a need to influence employers to offer flexible ways of working to fit available childcare. National research shows that lone parents rely less on informal childcare and, with the absence of a partner to rely on, formal childcare is the only option available to them. If it is perceived as too costly or inflexible, then childcare becomes a barrier to employment.

Response to welfare reform

Over 7,000 children are affected by welfare reforms introduced under the Coalition Government. In particular the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) reforms and the benefit cap, but also the non-dependant deductions from housing benefit are having most impact on families with children.

All those affected by the benefit cap have been offered interviews and support by the Benefit Cap task force, including money advice and employment support. By March 2015, 343 referrals (31% of all households capped) had been made to Ways into Work and 227 (21%) households have become exempt by moving into work. In January and February 83 people were seen by Ways into Work, 15 were offered a job interview and 6 secured a job as a result of Ways into Work support. Other households have become exempt by having a change in income or household make up, moving to cheaper accommodation or being awarded an exempting benefit.

When Universal Credit is rolled out in Hackney, we plan to support families in the transition to Universal Credit, providing in-claim support for those unable to manage with the additional responsibilities placed upon them. Areas for support will include on-line applications and managing budgets. This will be provided through the offer developed locally under and agreed with Department of Work and Pensions (Universal Services Delivered Locally).

The announcement of a reduction in the benefits cap to £23,000 from April 2016 is expected to affect up to an additional 1,200 households in Hackney on top of the 400 households already capped. National commentators¹⁰ have observed that 2.6 million working families across the country would be worse off by 2020 because of changes due under the new universal credit system. This and other welfare reform measures introduced by the Government, elected in May 2015, only reinforce the need for actions in this plan to help residents to respond to benefit changes.

Advice and financial resilience

Welfare reform is a key driver of demand for advice services and the Council and partners have identified the need to maximise financial and other support available for affected claimants and manage risks associated with welfare reform. In Hackney, take up of debt advice is low compared to the number of people who have debt problems and we are concerned that households with children seek help when they get into debt and also with managing their budgets in the future. The Benefits

¹⁰ Institute for Fiscal Studies and Resolution Foundation

and Housing Needs service have identified a gap in in-depth advice; money management is more readily available. Advice providers in the borough state that customers are presenting with complex debt situations that are often linked to employment and housing and welfare reforms including Employment and Support Allowance, mandatory reconsiderations and Job Centre Plus sanctions.

We have developed a coordinated approach to financial inclusion which covers the following priority areas:

- Building financial skills, confidence and motivation and debt and money advice.
- Develop a funding model for Advice Services from 2016 onwards, which is holistic and preventative.
- Promoting digital inclusion to assist customers to access services online, claim Universal credit, access financial products and internet only rates and the move into employment.
- Developing access to financially inclusive products.
- Co-ordinating and sharing information and linkages between different initiatives- both preventative and emergency support.
- Improving communication about support that is available.

Welfare reform drives up demand on both money, housing and welfare advice (including benefits appeals and mandatory reconsiderations) and are significantly affecting households with children. Further pressures are expected from reductions in Discretionary Housing Payments (financial assistance to top Housing Benefits), the transition from Disability Living Allowance to Personal Independence Payments and the roll out of Universal Credit. As welfare reform leaves low income families struggling to balance their budgets or remain in control of choices about their finances, they may agree to credit products with extremely high interest rates (pay day loans) or use loan sharks, struggle to pay utility and food bills and ultimately face eviction.

Additional need – families with disabled children

It is likely that the biggest impact of reducing incomes will be on those families who have a disabled child. It has been calculated that it costs, on average, an additional £99.15 a week to bring up a disabled child¹¹. Research found that families supporting a disabled child were 2.5 times more likely than other families to have no parent working for more than sixteen hours per week¹² and Carers UK found that 86% of those caring for disabled children under the age of 18 reported that their earnings had been affected¹³. Just 16% of mothers with disabled children work, compared with 61% of mothers with non-disabled children¹⁴.

There are additional barriers to employment, such as the lack of specialist childcare providers and the volume of inflexible daytime appointments and meetings they have to attend. As well as addressing barriers to employment, support is needed for parents of disabled children who actively make the choice to stay at home (the economic value of carers' unpaid services totalled £119bn in 2011, more than the annual cost of all aspects of the NHS¹⁵). This includes links to support networks and advice and the availability of financial support.

¹¹ http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/barriers_and_unfair_treatment_final.pdf

¹² 22 Emerson, E. & Hatton, C. (2005), *The Socio-Economic Circumstances of Families Supporting a Child at Risk of Disability in Britain in 2002*, Lancaster: Lancaster University

¹³ 23 Carers UK (2007), *Real change, not short change – time to deliver for carers*, London: Carers UK

¹⁴ Langerman, C. & Worrall, E. (2005), *Ordinary Lives – Disabled children and their families*, London: New Philanthropy Capital

¹⁵ <http://circle.leeds.ac.uk/files/2012/08/110512-circle-carers-uk-valuing-carers.pdf>

What have children and young people, parents, the community and voluntary sector told us?

Being better off in work

Childcare is expensive which means families are not necessarily better off. It also needs to be as flexible as possible. Those without local family and friends find it very difficult. This is compounded by a lack of positions with flexible working hours/job shares, especially during the summer holidays.

Families with three children or more would need to have a very well paid job to make work pay, and often do not have the qualifications or experience needed.

Parents feel that poverty gets worse when parents are working because child care, rent and bills all have to come out of wages. Children of working parents compare themselves to children of people on benefits and complain that they are worse off.

Benefit changes

However those affected by the benefit cap (the cap that sets a limit on the total amount in benefits that most working age people can claim) stated that parents had to use the money meant for children (child tax credit) for rent.

Debt

The community and voluntary sector identified specific issues around the way different communities respond to debt issues, for example a particular escalation in the use of loan sharks within some of the African communities and white working class residents.

Helping parents into employment

Parents commented on the importance of children's centres to offer employment support activities and volunteering for parents and help build confidence.

Parents expressed some concerns about the number of accredited courses available, and the flexibility of some of these. In some cases the provision of childcare and training courses alone is not enough to help parents enter work as they face more complex barriers. Parents find it difficult to access trainee positions. They need references to get voluntary work to secure work experience.

Proposed actions - in addition to what is outlined above:

- 1. Tackle the barriers to work so that more parents especially lone parents, are able to maximise opportunities to secure employment.** This will include learning from the Pembury Children's Community project and sharing with other housing providers if successful.
- 2. Continue to address the affordability and flexibility of childcare, including for school-age parents. An action plan will be developed focused on:**
 - Collaborative partnerships with children's centres and statutory and voluntary agencies supporting parents into training and employment to maximise opportunities to provide childcare and promote take up of support with childcare costs.
 - Increasing flexible childcare for atypical hours.
 - Promotion of the free two-year-old offer.
 - The quality of provision within the independent school sector.This builds on Hackney's assessment of childcare needs.
- 3. Improve the rate of parental employment,** by identifying and supporting schools willing to enter into partnerships with the Council and training and employment support providers. This builds on the existing approach that involves Children's Centres in partnerships that promote employment support.
- 4. Seek to improve flexible working opportunities in the borough, both as a flexible employer ourselves, but also influencing other organisations** through the goods and

services we buy and by working with businesses and the voluntary sector locally to share and promote best practice in flexible working. This builds on the Council's successful accreditation by the Time wise Foundation as a flexible employer.

- 5. Financial advice and support in schools** that will offer all young people in year 7 a Credit union account with £20 credit. Schools are also being asked to identify opportunities for the credit union to run sessions on financial literacy.

What we expect to achieve:

A greater proportion of parents, especially lone parents, supported into work.

Affordable housing for families

Poor housing, housing instability, homelessness and fuel poverty impact on many areas of a child's life and future prospects including on their health, educational outcomes and employment prospects. The multiple welfare reforms are having a compounding impact on household incomes of low-income families and their housing and despite good levels of local support many families are facing difficult decisions.

The Hackney Picture

New housing

There has been good progress in delivering estate regeneration programmes, which are delivering new council homes and the Council is on track to deliver one of the largest affordable homes programmes in London during the 2011 – 2015 period. In addition the continued provision of sufficient social rented homes, particularly for families, remains a high priority in Hackney.

Addressing housing need

The plan for tackling overcrowding focuses on encouraging and enabling social housing tenants to move to smaller homes, making available larger homes for overcrowded families. The Council has facilitated 217 under occupation moves from 3, 4 and 5 bedroom properties between April 2012 and August 2014 and has become a founding member of the Housing moves scheme, which enables Hackney tenants to move throughout London.

The Council also prioritises larger homes in the programme of new affordable homes in the borough - our Family Offer includes increasing the number of new social rented homes and intermediate homes that have three or more bedrooms. Hackney Priority Homes, the Council's social lettings agency acquires properties from private landlords for people in housing need at an affordable rent.

Affordability in the Affordable Rent market

The Council has worked with partners to develop expectations about affordability thresholds for Affordable Rent levels of significantly less than 80% of local market rents for at least 50% of their new provision for the 2015-18 programme. Through partnership work with Registered providers, a process has been agreed with Housing Needs whereby they will assess and either approve or reject a request to convert a property from Social Rent to Affordable Rent.

Those in greatest need

The lettings policy has been changed to ensure that it gives greater priority to those in need, giving the Council the flexibility to make sure that local residents with the greatest needs obtain social housing. To enable people to stay in their homes and minimise evictions a joint protocol with

registered providers and Hackney Homes puts in place support for children and families at risk of eviction and aims to prevent evictions taking place where possible, including ensuring that people who are eligible for Discretionary Housing payments are supported to claim.

The private rented sector

The Council is using legal powers and other measures available to help ensure good conditions and high standards of management in the private rented sector, for example by providing information and training to landlords through participation in the London Landlord Accreditation Scheme and ensuring that temporary accommodation acquired from the private rented sector meets the Council's minimum standards for renting. In Hackney's private rented housing¹⁶, lone parent households, couples with children and the white other, black African and Asian ethnicities are more likely to live in non-decent accommodation than the average household.

Safeguarding practice

The Hackney Better Homes Partnership and Family Mosaic have developed a children's safeguarding best practice checklist for Registered Providers, with the aim that all housing staff, contractors and operatives know how to recognise a safeguarding issue and know how to respond and make referrals to Children's Services where appropriate.

Pressures on housing supply and affordability

The upward pressure on the private rented sector rents, particularly as more sharers move into the borough, and the government's LHA caps, means that the private rented sector is becoming less and less affordable for low-income families. 46% of the new Housing Benefit claims made from April to September 2014 from customers entitled to 2, 3 or 4+ bedroom had a shortfall between rent charged and LHA amount, 31% were living in a property with fewer bedrooms than their need according to the size of their household.

In Hackney households with children under 16, lone parent households and households with 4+ children are over-represented on the Housing Waiting List and therefore likely to be living in unsuitable or temporary accommodation. As we seek to move families affected by LHA restrictions into social rented housing this is leading to a squeeze on supply in what is already the most overcrowded sector - despite Hackney exceeding its targets for building affordable homes... Families with dependent children, lone parents and BME residents are more likely to live in this tenure than average. The new government's announcement of extending the right to buy to tenants in the social rented sector has potential to limit the supply of social rental homes for families.

With Universal Credit on the horizon and the payment of Housing Benefit direct to families there is an increased risk of rent arrears and potentially evictions. The number of households in temporary

What have children and young people, parents, the community and voluntary sector have told us?

Parents feel that rents are very high in the borough.

Council tax is based on size of property, not income or ability to pay, and with localisation of Council Tax Benefit, parents can struggle to make this payment.

People who have to move out of the borough to source cheaper housing may lose the support networks which they have locally in Hackney.

¹⁶ Private Sector Stock Condition Survey 2009

accommodation has increased from just over 1,200 in 2010/11 to just under 1,800 in 2013/14 (cumulative to December 2014). It has become more difficult to obtain leased temporary accommodation for homeless families. Landlords have left the market because of the low returns local authorities have to offer¹⁷.

Proposed actions - In addition to what is outlined above, we propose to seek to influence actions with housing partners to:

- Increase the number of empty homes returned to use and to increase the use of temporary properties on Council estates undergoing regeneration.
- Identify further ways to address affordability and respond to the growth of the private rented sector.
- Target households with children from groups which are not taking up shared ownership where these opportunities arise.

These actions are being further developed and tested during 2015 and 2016 through the drafting of Hackney's new vision for housing and a new Housing Strategy.

Education, aspiration and opportunity

A good level of attainment at school is essential for later progression in life. In Hackney we want children young people and families to have high aspirations leading to greater independence and resilience to be able to make the most of quality opportunities both within and outside of school. We want to see good education, training and employment outcomes for all children and young people regardless of their circumstances.

National evidence shows a link between socio-economic status and attainment with a developmental gap apparent for very young children - as early as 22 months.¹⁸ This means that when children start school there is already a gap in attainment nationally between children from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds and children overall and this gap grows as children progress through school to GCSE. In Hackney there is a strong focus on and investment in early years learning and development in recognition of the national evidence. We want to make sure that all children start school ready to learn.

The Hackney picture

Children's Centres

Children's Centres provide a variety of services for families which aid child development through, for example, health clinics, provision for social and educational opportunities, childcare, parenting classes and wider family support including advice on employment and training for parents through links with Jobcentre Plus.

Children's Centres in six cluster areas work with partners to maximise the number of families accessing and engaged with early years' services, particularly amongst low income families and those living in the most deprived areas of the borough. Cluster outreach plans are in place and 8,731 children from workless households accessed Children's Centres in 2013/14, an increase of 31% from

¹⁷ The subsidy LAs can claim on Housing Benefit paid in temporary accommodation has not increased since 2011

¹⁸ L Feinstein, 'Inequality in Early Cognitive Development of British Children in the 1970 Cohort', *Economica* 70, Issue 277, P 73-97

2011/12. Children's centres are now reaching 82% of children in the most disadvantaged super output areas.

Early learning

Take-up of the free early learning entitlement for 3 and 4 year-olds increased to 96% in 2013/14 and the take-up of the new eligible 2 year-old entitlement was at 75% in June 2014. Changes in the eligibility criteria for the two-year-old early learning entitlement to include Working Tax Credit in September 2014 present new challenges with the number of eligible children increasing significantly.

We are meeting the challenge of increasing the number of free two-year-old early years' places under the expanded eligibility rules, by exploring the potential of using available premises in the borough for this purpose. We aim to increase take-up of places, promoting the offer to parents of eligible children at the points where they come into contact with services. Under the new government's policy we will also aim to increase the free entitlement for three and four-year-olds to 30 hours a week for parents who are working, although this will present further challenges, due to the current inadequate levels of government funding.

In 2014 65% of Hackney's 5 year-olds were assessed as having achieved or exceeded a good level of development compared to 60% nationally and 62% in London. Over 80% of early years settings are judged to be good or outstanding by Ofsted (July 2014). In 2013, the attainment gap between FSM and non-FSM children at the early years reaching at least the expected in all ELGs was 9% points. This increased slightly to 12% in 2014, although the percentage of children who are entitled to free school meals reaching this level also increased from 53% to 59%.

Gaps in attainment are starting to close in the early years of primary schools for Pupil Premium pupils (the new measure of living in a low income family) as well as for Caribbean and Turkish/Kurdish/Cypriot pupils. The reasons for this are not clear but it coincides with our strong focus on the early years, which could be one contributory factor.

Educational attainment at primary and secondary school

In Hackney we draw on research which shows that the most effective approach to narrowing gaps in attainment at school is to strive for excellent schools. In practice we support and challenge schools to improve, taking a partnership approach, for example by recommending tried and tested interventions to schools to close attainment gaps. We also encourage the use of the Pupil Premium and other targeted funding to support pupils who are falling behind.

There has been a sustained improvement in the overall effectiveness across all Hackney schools as judged by Ofsted. In addition 93% of pupils now attend a good or outstanding school.¹⁹ There has been steady improvement in the attainment of pupils at the end of primary school and at GCSE. Both primary and secondary pupils at schools in Hackney are performing above the national average. This improvement has been seen for all primary school pupils with the gap between pupils who are eligible for free school meals (FSM pupils) and non-FSM pupils remaining constant between 2011 and 2014 at about 10%. At GCSE the FSM gap in attainment was 17% in 2013 compared with 18% for London

¹⁹ Figure based on the January 2014 School Census.

and 27% for England. In 2014 this fell to 12% compared with 19% for London and 27% for England. The fall was largely attributable to non FSM pupils performing less well in this year

Despite these improvements our assessment shows that some pupils are not achieving in line with our ambitions for all children. In 2014 at GCSE, attainment was lowest overall for Turkish/Kurdish groups and was also lower for pupils from both African and Caribbean backgrounds. The English/Scottish/Welsh group had the largest gap in attainment between the FSM and non-FSM groups and the FSM group was the lowest attaining group overall.

Exclusions and persistent absence from school are both known to be associated with poverty. We support the reduction of exclusions for all pupils offering a menu of interventions to schools, ideally to reach a point where schools should not need to consider exclusion. The re-engagement unit (REU) works in partnership with 33 primary schools in the borough to support them in their goal of reducing permanent exclusions, supporting children in school and in the home. In 2013/14 77 pupils were referred to the REU – of these 57 (74%) were not fixed-term or permanently excluded again. Analysis for our young black men project shows that exclusions are disproportionately high for Caribbean, African and mixed heritage boys, (as well as for English/Scottish/Welsh boys) during the secondary phase of schooling.

Young Hackney complements school learning, offering universal access to high quality structured youth activities for all children and young people aged 8-19. These include basic life skills, homework support, sport, music and media and creative arts. Young Hackney also works with children, young people and families in the youth hubs; schools and other community settings to support engagement with school. At any one time, Young Hackney provide support to approximately 460 young people aged 6-25. This support varies from universal plus (short-term interventions) to targeted support involving an intense intervention with a focus on areas of need in the young person's life. Areas of support that Young Hackney cover include health and wellbeing, feeling safe and secure, relationships, education, employment and training (EET) and youth participation and citizenship. Young Hackney also deliver universal provision through the borough's Youth Hubs and commissioning and partnership arrangements with VCS providers. 9,173 universal activities were delivered in 2014/15, attracting 142,937 attendances by children and young people.

In 2014/15 the largest number of named individuals came from King's Park with 16% and 707 young people attending. The 2014 Hackney Child Poverty Needs Assessment reported large differences in rates of child poverty between wards with King's Park showing child poverty rates of around 41% (higher than the borough average of 36.8%). Hackney Wick and Haggerston hold the highest child poverty rates within the borough of around 44% and 373 and 303 named young people from these respective areas attended universal provision in 2014/15. There is therefore a Young Hackney presence and support being offered in areas of deprivation.

Young people seeking education employment and training

In Hackney we support all young people to remain engaged in education, employment or training improving progression opportunities and their ability to become economically active adults, especially those living in low income families and/or at risk of poor outcomes. We want to make sure that we secure the apprenticeships and employment opportunities that regeneration in the borough offers for

all our young people. The new government's promise of 3 million new apprenticeships nationally by 2020 offers the opportunity to use our leverage to secure more local opportunities.

The Hackney approach includes a focus on preventing young people becoming NEET, co-ordination of careers advice in schools and promoting apprenticeships. We are seeking to increase the number of young people living on the Pembury estate accessing apprenticeships, offering Inspire-led long-term work-experience placements for Year 11 students at the Mossbourne Academy. Ways into Work is also working with employers and young people to maximise opportunities and take-up of good apprenticeships. The Hackney 100 scheme offers paid work experience to young people, at the London Living Wage, while they are still at school.

Similar patterns to those for attainment at school and exclusion from school are found amongst young people seeking education, employment and training. Young people from mixed ethnic backgrounds, White British and Caribbean backgrounds are more likely than other young people to be not in education, employment or training (NEET) when they leave school. Other groups most at risk of being NEET include teenage parents and young carers between the ages of 16 and 19.

Outcomes and opportunities for young black men

In Section 1 we identified black and ethnic minority groups as being more at risk of poverty. A separate but parallel analysis to inform our young black men project shows that outcomes for young black men tend to be disproportionately worse in a range of areas. Our long-term aim is that outcomes and opportunities are the same for black boys and young black men as the wider population. This means that we no longer see the persistent over-representation in the criminal justice system, and mental health along-side worse outcomes in education, health and wellbeing and employment.

Work to address this engages statutory and community sector partners, young black men and their families and the wider community to identify and deliver solutions that address the complex underlying issues that contribute to the disproportionality. The aim is to develop community-led solutions to inform the changes needed in the way we deliver services.

We are exploring how to:

- Engage schools with the agenda and buying into the changes they need to make. There is a pilot taking place in secondary schools, the Progression Programme, which works with Caribbean heritage boys.
- Shift cultures in the community and challenging stereotypes, so that services and agencies, like schools, mental health services and the police are able to identify actions they need to take to shift cultures in their institutions.
- Co-ordinate services, including for 18-25 year-olds in relation to employment, housing, probation, mental health and voluntary sector support.
- Engage business and young people about employment.
- Create pathways for young black people into enterprise and employment, including funding secured by the community and voluntary sector to develop ways to support young black men into work.
- Increase the number of apprenticeship opportunities at the council and co-ordinate support to enable apprentices to succeed. We will work with different service areas across the organisation to identify vacancies in new areas and offer apprenticeships at a range of levels – 2, 3, 4 and beyond.

Disabled children and young people

The introduction of joint health, education and care plans by the government for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) means a focus on improving health, care, education and progression to adulthood outcomes for a group of children and young people known to be at greater risk of poverty.

In response to the requirement for a single birth to 25 assessment process, statements of Special Educational Needs have been replaced with joint education, health and care plans. Building on the progress made in providing joint education, health and care plans for SEND we are developing a strategy to support the commissioning process. Integrated provision for disabled children and young people is available at Forest Road Youth hub and joint working between Young Hackney and Hackney Ark has made support available for young people with a range of learning difficulties and disabilities.

There is support for young people with Disabilities and Learning Difficulties to access work opportunities, for example through the Young Hackney partnership with Stormont School.

What have children and young people, parents, the community and voluntary sector have told us?

Achievement

Young people say that the risk of being bullied; not being able to focus because of “bad” thoughts; and not having the money to get the things they need can affect the chances of doing well at school for children in a low-income family.

Young people point out that some have to work to contribute to household finances which can affect their chances of doing well at school.

Support for children and families

Organisations that work with children and parents reinforce the need to intervene early in schools, for example to support children’s behaviour and/or mental health issues. Organisations working with children and young people suggest that peer-led mentoring projects provide role models in relation to education, work and life more generally.

Involving parents

Parents feel that parental engagement with education is very important enabling their children to make the most of opportunities. Turkish/Kurdish parents identify language barriers as being a difficulty for some parents when engaging with schools.

Prospects beyond school

All parents and young people we spoke to agreed that a good education means a better chance of a good job and better pay. Some young people feel that even with a good education it can be hard to get a job. Less than half of the young people asked feel that there are good opportunities in Hackney to stay in education, find a job or access information about how to get onto a training course. Front-line workers suggest that more could be done to connect young people through work experience and social experiences with the industries to which they aspire. They also identify the need to promote alternative non-mainstream careers as respected options for young people.

Proposed actions - In addition to what is outlined above, we are proposing to:

- 1. Narrow the gaps in early years’ development and learning to support all children to start school ready to learn through:**

- Sustained and repeat engagement with early years' services, especially by low income families, extending our children's centre outreach work with health visitors, midwives and the community and voluntary sector.
- Identifying young children who are eligible for the extended pupil premium and promoting the benefits to their parents and sharing best practice with early years' settings and schools.

This strengthens our focus on early years, by all services and agencies in Hackney because we recognise the critical part the early years of children's life play in later life chances.

2. Tackle inequalities which persist at school age by continuing our partnership approach:

- Recommending tried and tested interventions to schools to help close attainment gaps.
- Reducing exclusions by offering a menu of effective measures to schools to prevent exclusions where possible.
- Testing targeted programmes, like the Pupil Progression Programme and rolling these out where successful.
- Working through Young Hackney with individual young people who need targeted support.

This builds on our existing approach to early intervention and prevention.

3. Encourage all young people to have the aspiration, confidence and skills to be able to make the most of education, employment, and training opportunities by:

- Identifying young people at risk of disengaging from education, making sure they are given the support they need to remain engaged and continue after they are 16 years old.

4. Harness economic growth in the borough in a way that benefits all young people, including those from low income families, by:

- Seeking to secure high level apprenticeships and other employment and training opportunities, exerting influence through partnerships. This expands on existing work with employers.
- Increasing the number of apprenticeship opportunities at the council and co-ordinate support to enable apprentices to succeed. We will work with different service areas across the organisation to identify vacancies in new areas and offer apprenticeships at a range of levels 2, 3, 4 and beyond.

What we expect to achieve:

- Improving repeat/sustained engagement with early years' services by low income families.
- An increase in Hackney's five year olds, eligible for the pupil premium, being assessed as having reached a good level of development.
- Improvements in the educational attainment of FSM pupils at the end of primary school and GCSE.
- All young people have a high quality education, training or employment opportunity when leaving school.
- Uptake of the work-based learning opportunities in the borough by young people from low income families.

Narrowing health inequalities

Introduction

The Independent Marmot review into health inequalities prioritises a 'whole child approach' to address the wider social determinants of health, including education, housing and parental employment to decrease the gap in health between children from deprived backgrounds and their peers.²⁰ This priority area should therefore be read alongside the other priority areas in this plan.

It is now widely accepted that the first five years of a child's life are some of the most crucial, starting before birth during pregnancy. There is overwhelming evidence that children's life chances are most heavily predicated on their development in the first five years of life. The Marmott review also concludes that reducing health inequalities requires further action to 'give every child the best start in life because "a child's physical, social and cognitive development during the early years strongly influences their school readiness and educational attainment, economic participation and health".

Children growing up in poverty are more likely to be exposed to inadequate housing, poor diet, parental smoking, poor access to services including late booking for antenatal care, poor maternal mental health, low parental education and parenting skills and poor environmental conditions. They are more likely to experience prolonged periods of food insecurity. Persistent food insecurity in children represents a significant public health issues for children as there is evidence showing how this is associated with poorer health outcomes.

The Hackney picture

Working with pregnant mothers and children in the first five years of life is a priority for the Health and Wellbeing Board in Hackney. Health visitors and midwives work closely with Children's Centres. Antenatal appointments are provided in children's centres for vulnerable mothers and teenage parents to ease the transition to services after the birth of their children. All early years settings have a linked team of health professionals to ensure a swift response to identified needs for individual children. The take-up of the development check across the borough has improved dramatically and stood at 85% in December 2014 compared to 81% nationally.

The Family Nurse Partnership

The Family Nurse Partnership provides support to young vulnerable families needing most support, from before birth until their child turns two. Specialist nurses work with families on areas such as preparing for the birth of their child, looking after the baby, their health, relationships and early education.

Healthy Child Programme

The delivery of the Healthy Child Programme (HCP) - the early intervention and prevention public health programme issued by the Department of Health that lies at the heart of the universal service for children and families - is led by health visitors for children aged 0-5. Focusing on families in need of additional support and children at risk of poor outcomes, the programme starts in early pregnancy. Joint work between health visitors and school nurses prepare children for school entry, after which school nurses lead the programme to children aged 5-19. This includes developmental screening and immunisation programmes as well as targeted support.

Health support for vulnerable children

²⁰ Marmot, M, *Fair Society Healthy Lives: A Strategic Review of Health Inequalities in England Post - 2010*, 2010

Targeted support available through the School Nursing Service, includes a new service for young people with Safeguarding vulnerabilities, aligned to Children's Social Care. Two other new school health services, whilst strengthening the universal school health offer, focus our offer for disabled children and for those with additional needs. A Looked-After Children's Health service is co-located with our Virtual School for Looked-After Children.

Early years health commissioning

The commissioning of health services and the Family Nurse Partnership transferred to local authorities from October 2011/15. The aim of the transfer is to enable local authorities to tailor services to the needs of local children and families, integrate services in the local area, deliver joined-up services for children 0-19 years of age and offer locally sensitive commissioning in conjunction with clinical commissioning groups..

For the first 18 months the Department of Health plans to mandate local authorities to provide the following universal checks:

- The antenatal health promotion review.
- A new baby review, which is the first check after birth.
- The 6-8 week assessment.
- The 1 year assessment.
- The 2 year-old development review, which is now fully integrated and embedded in Hackney.

Infant mortality and low birth weight

Health at birth can be measured using two indicators: low birth weight and infant mortality. In Hackney there is a clear correlation between low birth weight – the most important determinant of a child's chances of survival and healthy growth – and the Lower Super Output areas (LSOAs) with the highest percentage of children living in poverty. There is also strong evidence of the association between infant mortality and socio-economic deprivation. Hackney's Infant Mortality Rate (number of deaths per 1000 live births for under one year olds) has shown a decreasing trend in recent years but remains above that for London. Locally there is a high rate of infant mortality among babies of Black Caribbean and Black African women

Obesity

Deprivation has a considerable impact on overweight and obesity. The effects of child poverty on childhood obesity can be seen as early as pre-school years but the strength of the association increases with age. Addressing childhood obesity is a further priority for the Health and Wellbeing Board in Hackney. The childhood obesity rate starting to reduce as a result of a stronger focus on prevention of obesity and promotion of healthy weight. In year 6 there has been a reduction of children who were obese from 27% in 11/12 to 25% in 2012/13, as measured by the National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP).

We are seeking to prevent and reduce obesity by maintaining excellent rates of participation in the NCMP and inviting independent schools to participate to build a more representative picture of the scale of the overweight/obesity burden. We are taking a preventative approach to reduce obesity prevalence where children are at high risk of obesity - those who live in the most deprived areas of the borough, and children from Black ethnic groups. We will analyse obesity rates in areas over time to gauge which areas have persistently high rates of obesity and whether past interventions have had an impact in reducing prevalence rates

In City & Hackney, the obesity prevalence in the least deprived areas is significantly lower than all other areas. The four most deprived quintiles have statistically similar levels of obesity. Within City & Hackney a statistically significant difference is observed in obesity rates between year reception Black children and year reception White, Mixed and Asian children. In Year 6, a statistically significant difference is observed between Black children and White and Asian children. With black children having higher rates of obesity.

Children and young people's mental health

Mental health is inextricably linked with poverty. The new government has promised to increase access to and improve waiting times for mental health services. There is a need to target resources at families living in poverty to reduce the harmful impact on the mental health of children and young people and associated poor outcomes. Support in Hackney is offered on a tiered model. Schools, GPs and school nurses are amongst the professionals who have a general role in meeting the mental health needs of children and young people. There are also targeted services provided for children young people and the families who have mild to moderate mental health needs. Specialist services are aimed and young people with complex mental health problems.

A wide variety of factors affect the mental health of children - social disadvantage, low self-esteem, stress discrimination and racism as well as individual and parental educational attainment According to research evidence, those from Black-Caribbean or Pakistani groups are more likely to suffer from severe mental illness than other ethnic groups.

Children's oral health

Oral health is an important indicator of the health of a population and early childhood caries (ECC) is an indicator of the health of children. There is evidence from industrialised and non-industrialised countries of a positive association between ECC and social deprivation.²¹ There has been a rise in the percentage of three and five year-olds in Hackney experiencing dental decay. In 2010 the percentage of three year old children experiencing tooth decay was 24% compared to 16% in 2007. The percentage of five year old children experiencing decay increased from 29.7% in 2008 to 31.4% in 2012²². Although ethnicity data is not available in the national NHS Dental Epidemiology Programme for England, a locally commissioned dental health equity audit undertook in 2011 found significant differences in the prevalence of tooth decay in children by ethnic origin; 44% of Eastern European children surveyed had experienced tooth decay compared to 14% of Black African and 18% of White British children.²³

Sexual health

Young people are a target group in the borough's Sexual Health Strategy. Our screening programme has been successful in diagnosing cases of Chlamydia infection. The screening programme is integrated with sexual and reproductive services and with the condom distribution scheme for young people so that consistent messages about the importance of safer sex are made at every opportunity.

There has been a substantial reduction in the number of teenage conceptions in Hackney and the City. Although young people can be competent parents, the evidence suggests that the mother's age, disadvantaged socio-economic background and limited uptake of antenatal care come together

²¹ Costa LR, Daher A, Queiroz MG. Early childhood caries and body mass index in young children from low income families. *Int J Environ Res Public Health*. 2013 Mar 5;10(3):867-878.

²² Public Health England (2013). National Dental Epidemiology Programme for England: oral health survey of five-year old children in 2012

²³ Wright D., Health equity audit of oral health and dental services in inner north east London, 2011 (unpublished).

to contribute to poor outcomes overall. Teenage pregnancy and poverty follow linked inter-generational cycles with children born into poverty at increased risk of becoming teenage parents, especially young women living in workless households when aged 11-15. Young mothers are more likely to be lone parents living in poor quality and /or temporary housing. In Hackney and City early parenthood is most common amongst black women – over 55% of young mothers who gave birth at the Homerton in 2010 were black.

Disabilities

Children with disabilities require extra support to ensure that they stay healthy, prosper and have equal access to local resources. The Hackney Ark is an advice, support and development and assessment centre for families and children and young people with disabilities and Special Educational Needs. There are just over 1,000 children aged less than 20 on our disabilities register. The most prevalent disabilities are learning disability, language difficulties and emotional and behavioural problems.

What have children and young people, parents and the community and voluntary sector told us?

Healthy lifestyles

Vegetables and healthy food options were seen as expensive, although parents made sacrifices to make sure the children ate well. Parents felt they have did not have food choices - organic food is too expensive and they are limited to which fruit and vegetables they can buy (can't buy a variety due to cost).

Access to services

Children in low income families did not have access to play schemes or organised events, especially younger children who did not have access to the hubs.

Mental health

More focus is needed on mental health. Organisations working with children observe that some young people are put in care because of their behaviour. "They should not be held responsible for this, it is an expression of the environment they are living in. There is a need to address the problems of the parent. Mental health issues are identified too late."

Parents feel that suicides and depression prevalent in young Turkish people are caused by joblessness, homelessness, and relationship problems. Very long waiting list for housing mean that by the time it comes around your mental health is lost.

Proposed actions - in addition to what is outlined above:

- 1. Improve access to services for low income families and outcomes for their children by:**
 - maximising the opportunity that the transfer of early years commissioning to public health presents, making sure that health visiting services are focused on low income families in need of extra support and continue to prioritise investment in services for the most vulnerable families *ie.* Family Nurse Partnership. (See also recommendations for a sustained focus on the on early years of children's lives under Early Years Learning and Development)

- 2. Improve emotional wellbeing in children young people and families, working in partnership with the CCG, focusing on low income families at those at risk of poor outcomes by:**
 - Continuing to ensure solid mental health services for children and young people across the borough.

- Aiming to build emotional resilience in families, increasing accessibility in schools and other settings of mental health services, which have a family emphasis, for school-age children and young people experiencing emotional or mental-health related difficulties.
- Drawing on the recommendations of our new mental health needs assessment which identifies gaps in services and issues with access to services.

What we expect to achieve:

- All children will have access to services and interventions which improve and promote health education and aspiration, in particular through children's centres, especially those from low income families and from higher risk groups.
- A narrowing of the gap in health and associated outcomes for children living in low income families and at risk of poor outcomes.
- Reduced prevalence of mental health issues in children, especially those in low income families and at risk of poor outcomes.
- Reduced long-term mental health conditions and the number of children requiring specialist mental health support.
- Reduced dependency on mental health services and the number of children transitioning to adult mental health services.

Reducing youth crime and keeping young people safe

Introduction

Evidence shows an association between child poverty and behaviour. It is during the earlier years when poverty creates the greatest risk of becoming involved in violence and crime later on.

The Hackney picture

Youth Offending

We are reducing offending, paying particular attention to re-offending which is more complex to tackle. Our approach is focused on employment, training and education. The involvement of the Virtual School with young offenders during 2014/15 brought about a sustained improvement with 80% of young people engaged in ETE by March 2015. There is a multi-agency focus on working with families to prepare them for the release of young people from custody. The aim is to reduce re-offending by a sustained approach to employment, education and training particularly for those who re-offend in the early period following sentencing.

The Integrated Gangs Unit (IGU) is focusing on the top 150 (approximately) most violent gang offenders, mostly aged between 19 and 24 years, although gang flagged crime suggests that the prime age range is a bit younger (15 to 19 years), and in some cases youths as young as 10 are now getting involved in gang related activities.

In Hackney there has been a fall in the number of first-time entrants to the youth justice system, re-offending rates have fallen and more young offenders are engaging with education, employment and training.

- There was a 43% reduction in Hackney first-time entrants to the youth justice system between 2012 and 2015.
- The number of young people re-offending in Hackney has reduced from 157 at the end of March 2013 to 54 at the same point in 2015, representing a 66% reduction.

- The percentage of Hackney young offenders engaging in education, training and employment (ETE) increased from 70% in 2014 to 73% in 2015.

Despite the progress reducing youth crime in the borough, there is a group of young people who are involved in and are victims of crime. Violent crime often gang-related remains a significant priority for the borough.

Opportunities and outcomes for young black men

Identifying critical intervention points when something does go wrong for the first time for a child or young person is an important aspect of how we tackle the disproportionate representation of young black men in the criminal justice system. This approach considers how services could help a young person to turn things round for the better. Examples of critical intervention points include when a young man becomes a father and when an older sibling becomes involved in crime. Young Hackney are taking forward a Youth at Risk programme - a diversionary programme targeted at young people who have often been excluded from school, are disengaged with support services and at risk of falling into crime and gang activity. In the first year the intention is to work with a group of young people aged 17-25 years.

We are also seeking to raise young people's confidence in the police and criminal justice system, as part of the task to shift cultures and challenge stereotypes. Groups more likely to become offenders include young people from black and minority ethnic communities. Analysis for the young black men project identified a disproportionate number of young black men in Hackney in the youth justice system. The same analysis also identified Hackney gang membership and gang-related violence as being associated predominately with young black men and Turkish/Kurdish groups

Domestic violence and abuse

Tackling domestic abuse is an important issue to keep children and young people safe. Our review of domestic violence and abuse in Hackney aims to move towards a more integrated approach working with the whole family and with a focus on perpetrators as well as victims. The identification of families experiencing domestic abuse will be supported by insight work from the community, particularly about the issues for people at risk of domestic violence in engaging with statutory services. There is a London-wide increase in domestic crime rates and Hackney has experienced similar rises to other similar London boroughs, but has the third highest rate per 1000 population in London. There has been a growth in reporting of domestic abuse cases to the police and some of the rise may be attributable to this. Despite increased rates of reporting national research shows that 53% of domestic abuse victims have never had contact with the police and this group is of concern. A significant number of child protection cases involve domestic abuse. There remains a challenge to build on partnerships to further integrate our approach to domestic abuse and improve the identification of potential victims.

Child sexual exploitation

Tackling child exploitation is a priority in Hackney. Our approach is set out in the Child Sexual Exploitation strategy and action plan. We continue to strengthen our understanding of the extent and nature of child sexual exploitation and to consider our response to the needs of young people who demonstrate harmful sexual behaviour. Where children and young people are identified as being at risk of sexual exploitation appropriate support is put in place and monitored. Operation Makesafe raises awareness of child sexual exploitation within the business community, including hotels, taxi companies and licensed premises.

Safety in and around schools

The Safer Schools initiative has a dedicated police officer in every secondary school in the borough which aims to create a safer environment in and around schools. The approach is being extended to primary schools, through the Local Policing Model, establishing relationships with head teachers. Children and young people identify safety when out and about in Hackney as a key issue, although the 2014 Young Hackney youth survey found that 54% of young people felt safe living in Hackney compared with 49% in 2013 – a 5% improvement. Nevertheless perceptions about safety remains an important issue amongst young people in the borough.

What have children and young people, parents and the community and voluntary sector told us?

Young people report not feeling safe when walking around especially in the dark, although the Young Hackney youth survey shows perceptions about safety improved between 2013 and 2014 (see above).

Young people and parents identify Dalston, Shoreditch and Homerton as areas where they feel less safe, although they feel that safety issues apply across Hackney.

Young people feel that that peer pressure; a challenging home life with little guidance from parents; and bullying at school all contribute to young people becoming involved in crime.

When asked who was more likely to become involved in crime one young person commented: “people who see things as a kid they are not meant to see, so you grow up with a different state of mind – things that don’t help”.

Proposed areas for action - in addition to what is outlined above:

- 1. Reduce the number of children and young people who become involved in gangs in the first place developing a preventative approach:**
 - Working with children and young people who are identified as being at risk of future gang involvement, and their families offering individually tailored support to make positive life choices.
- 2. Reduce youth crime, working in partnership to target risks in the community for children and young people:**
 - Focusing on young victims of crime as well as perpetrators, taking a restorative justice approach.
 - Promoting crime awareness and safety messages in schools, colleges and other settings and offering support to young people at risk of crime.
 - Ensuring a stronger health focus on young offenders (with a speech and language therapist and forensic psychologist co-located within the Youth Offending Team) and building stronger links between school nursing and young offender services.
- 3. Enable young people to feel safer when moving around the borough, addressing their concerns about safety by:**
 - Working in partnership with the community to address all young people’s perceptions about safety. This will draw on the engagement work we have done as part of our work to improve opportunities and outcomes for young black men.

What we expect to achieve:

- A reduction in the number of children and young people who are involved in gangs.
- A reduction in crime at educational facilities, particularly theft, robbery and violence.

- Children and young people perceive the environment in Hackney to be safer.

Working with families

Introduction

National research highlights the importance of parenting in building resilience in children and young people and raising aspirations. Our approach recognises the critical role that parents play in supporting their children's early learning and educational attainment and healthy lifestyles. Our own assessment highlights the importance of parenting as a protective factor to build resilience in children and young people and raise aspirations. We recommend taking a whole family approach, which means supporting the family to promote the best outcomes for children and young people and co-ordinating the support they receive from all services working with the family.

There is a strong body of evidence to support the link between deprivation and outcomes. However the impact of income poverty on health, housing and educational achievement can in part be explained by compounding issues, which are more prevalent amongst low income families. These include parental issues like depression; physical disability; substance and alcohol misuse; domestic abuse; financial stress; teenage parenthood; lack of basic skills as well as overcrowded housing.²⁴ These compounding issues can stack up to impact on social mobility and life chances of children and young people.

The Hackney picture

In Hackney we consider all work with children to be family work and we want to empower families to support their children to make the most of the opportunities available. We already do innovative work with families joining up services to address their needs in the most effective way, aligning our responses to families from the first point of contact and seeking to prevent problems from arising.

Universal services

Children's Centres in Hackney offer a range of extended services. These include support for parenting, aspiration and self-esteem, parenting skills and supporting parents into training and towards employment. The Adult Learning Service works with schools and children centres across the borough to provide adult and family-based learning courses within the community. Informal engagement programmes are also run as a strategy to involve parents in their child's learning (Learning Together) and annual events (such as the Family Learning Festival and Adult Learners Week) are held to increase engagement in adult learning.

Early intervention and prevention

Multi Agency Team (MAT) meetings and the Children and Young People's Partnership Panel (CYPPP) put in place individualised packages of support for families who need extra help at an early stage. Evaluation shows that the majority of cases referred to MAT (families with children aged 0-5) and CYPPP (for children and young people over 5) show improved outcomes for individual children after intervention. Examples of our preventative approach with families with more complex needs include the new Family Learning Intervention programme aimed at creating responsive interventions for children and young people on the edge of care; and the expanded Troubled Families programme.

²⁴ These multiple risk factors are set out in Ricardo Sabates and Shirley Dex, "Multiple Risk Factors in young children's development, CLS Cohort Studies, Working Paper, IOE, February 2012

The Troubled Families programme

The Troubled Families programme supports the identification of and work with families with multiple issues meeting a set number of criteria (multiple risk factors). These may be preventing each member of the family from realising their full potential and resulting in costly interventions. The programme attaches a dedicated worker to each family giving practical “hands-on” support and adopting an assertive challenging approach to support each family member to enjoy success. Families with such a high and complex level of need can make multiple and repeated demands on public services. The Troubled Families programme is designed to work with families to support and enable them to take up opportunities.

Modelling by London Councils shows that demand on children’s social care will continue to rise up until 2020, at the same time as continued pressure to make substantial savings. The same report shows that one of the significant savings that is evidenced from the Troubled Families way of working so far is around the support it can provide to help prevent children needing to be looked after, or by work which results in the child no longer needing a Child Protection Plan. Other examples of identified savings, by reducing the need for reactive services, are in police call outs; housing evictions; and court cases. London Councils anticipate that the integrated nature of delivering the troubled families programme can create further cost savings. By services working well together, costs can be lowered as services are not duplicated.²⁵

The Pembury Estate Children’s Community

The Children’s Community on the Pembury Estate involves a partnership between the Peabody Housing Trust and the Council amongst others and is teasing out issues and testing solutions to support actions in this plan, for example in relation to flexible affordable childcare. The community aims to support parents to improve their confidence and skills, access training and employment, with one-to-one pre-employment support offered to parents. Adult education classes on the estate are being co-ordinated with subsidised childcare, and further outreach is being conducted to identify barriers to work and engage more parents with employment support. A comprehensive after-school childcare offer and holiday provision is being developed for Pembury children, so that parents can more easily access employment and training opportunities.

There is a focus on the early years of children’s lives, enabling parents to support their children to start school ready to learn. The partnership is training parents and volunteers enabling them to support literacy development in children; working with the local primary school to share information to support school readiness and further improving engagement with children’s centres services by families on the estate. The community takes a family approach facilitating the development of informal networks of parents; delivering the Strengthening Families programme; developing an approach to “troubled families” on the estate which picks up those who need sustained support but no longer meet the troubled families criteria; and developing programmes such as family literacy, homework clubs, and programmes that bring parents and schools together.

Opportunities and outcomes for young black men and their families

There is a focus on the role of parents supporting their children and building resilience in our approach to improving opportunities and outcomes for young black men. The approach to specific family-related issues includes:

²⁵ London Councils, Troubled Families Programme: lessons for future public service reform, November 2014

- Exploring where parents currently go for advice and support when they encounter difficulties and problems through community-based peer-led research. The aim is to identify community-led solutions so that parents are better able to access objective advice and support when they encounter difficulties and problems.
- Early support and preventative work across schools; early years; mental health support; Young Hackney units; and substance misuse. Partners are identifying improvements or changing their approaches and partnerships to ensure that this support reaches young black men and their families.
- Developing “Coach” - a new preventative strand of the Integrated Gangs Unit which works with families to reduce the number of young people who might join a gang in the future.
- A community-based response to gang-related violence, “No Change”, which aims to support parents.

Recent engagement highlighted the need to look at the way services are joining up to support early intervention and bridge support between school, families and the community including the role of the voluntary and community sector.

Young Carers

Our child poverty needs assessment identified the needs of young carers who are juggling their caring responsibilities, for example for a disabled parent, with school work and opportunities outside of school. Young carers are children and young people under the age of 18, with caring responsibilities for a family member with a chronic illness, physical disability, mental health or substance misuse difficulties. They are identified through a number of different sources and an assessment of their needs will determine the level of support they receive from Children’s Social Care, Young Hackney, the Young Carers project or other community-based resources that will support their wellbeing. The Hackney Young Carers Project developed by Action for Children (who are commissioned by Hackney’s Children and Young People’s Services) aims to support young carers in their caring roles and improve life chances and quality of life, including opportunities to enjoy their childhood. Hackney Young Carers Project works with approximately 163 young carers providing a variety of support services including group work, homework clubs and one-to-one support.

Parent carers

The Disabled Children’s service provides a specialist social work service based in the Hackney Ark and is co-located with the special educational needs teams. The service:

- Provides social care support to disabled children and young people and their families.
- Provides support early on before a situation has time to develop and have serious consequences for the disabled child, or young person, and their family

The Children and Families Act 2014 introduces a number of requirements that will provide access and engagement in reducing inequality by up skilling universal services to better identify and deliver services that meets the needs of all children especially disabled children to give them the same aspirations and life chances as their non-disabled peers. Hackney is developing its Local Offer website which sets out information about services available for children and young people with SEN and disabilities aged 0 to 25, including education, health, leisure and social care.

Families with no recourse to public funds

An additional unit has been formed to assess the needs of overstaying families – there is now a single front door for families with No Recourse to Public Funds in Hackney. The service is responding to increased demand and is ensuring that families in need are supported by the Council. In 2012/13 the

Hackney Overstaying Families Intervention Team (OFIT) was supporting 190 people (61 principle applicants with 42 dependent adults and 87 dependent children). In 2013/14 this figure almost tripled with the team assessing 614 people (165 principal applicants with 154 dependent adults and 295 dependent children). In 2014/15 OFIT assessed 183 families with 347 dependent children.

New arrivals, especially families whose immigration status has not been resolved, have been identified as a group at risk of poverty and the associated compounding issues. This group is likely to grow with the government's expected restrictions on benefits for EU migrants. Insight gathered for our assessment shows that we need to better understand the needs of the children of newly arriving families in the borough.

What have children and young people, parents, the community and voluntary sector and front-line workers told us?

Organisations working with children and parents feel that parents need educational support to enable them to then help their children.

They also highlight the need to support parents in poverty who are dealing with multiple issues such as debt, benefits and the search for work so that they are able to support their children.

Front-line workers say that the formation of a young person's character starts from what they experience in the family.

Proposed actions - in addition to what is outlined above:

- 1. Enable families with complex needs to become more independent and experience improved opportunities and success**, developing our approach to families who place multiple and repeated demands on public services. We will do this through a cross-cutting programme about Families. Seek to better understand the needs of newly arriving families in the borough.

What we expect to achieve:

- Families with complex needs become more independent and improve their opportunities
- Avoidable, costly demands on public services are prevented
- The impact of families with complex needs on local communities is reduced.

Hackney Community and Voluntary sector – supporting the child poverty and family wellbeing plan

Introduction

The voluntary and community sector (VCS) plays an important and vibrant role in Hackney in tackling child poverty and promoting family wellbeing. The aim is to respond to residents' multiple level of needs adopting a user-led, preventative approach to achieve better outcomes for families living in poverty and/or at risk of poor outcomes. The Compact agreement between the Council and the VCS commits organisations within the partnership to a set of shared principles aimed at getting the best out of partnership working for the benefit of local people. This is all the more important in a climate of diminishing resources.

The Hackney Picture

Working collaboratively Hackney community and voluntary sector (HCVS), the Council and other partners are seeking to jointly address disproportionate outcomes for young black men. This includes engaging with the community - with young black men, parents and businesses. We want to improve

understanding of the issues for those not engaging with statutory services through Community Insight work, for example in the areas of domestic abuse and sexual exploitation and confidence in the police. HCVS also delivers a range of projects in Hackney which contribute to tackling child poverty. In particular the sector identifies the following four key areas where community and voluntary sector organisations support the child poverty and family wellbeing work in the borough.

The projects listed give a flavour of the work going on, but there are many more examples of contributing organisations.

Pre-school education and play supporting development in young children, for example:

- Hackney Play bus takes mobile early years services into the community engaging families with children under five who are not accessing services and linking them into Children's Centres and appropriate support and provision.
- Family Action delivers a perinatal support project in Hackney. Selected and trained volunteer befrienders work to provide mothers and their families with social, emotional and practical support through regular home visits. The service is available throughout pregnancy to the child's first birthday.

Supporting unemployed parents into work, for example:

- The Finsbury Park 'Homeless Families Project', an employment support project for homeless and other vulnerable families, provides in-depth support to enable families to move into work.
- The Gateway to a Good Livelihood is a partnership between Interlink, Hackney Adult Learning and the Community College which works to support Charedi men into work.
- The Time wise Foundation is supporting 60 mothers in low-income households to build confidence and develop employability skills – helping workless mothers to progress towards sustainable employment and those on low pay work into better quality jobs to help lift their families out of poverty.

Providing parenting programmes and reaching out to support families under pressure, for example:

- Families first, involves the African Community School, Day Mar, Claudia Jones and Inspire, and works with families with primary-age children who need additional support, providing support both within and outside of schools.
- Derma provides support to victims of domestic violence, forced marriage and honour based violence with in the Turkish/Kurdish and Turkish Cypriot communities in Hackney.

Offering debt and advice services for families, for example:

- The Hackney Community Law Centre provides free legal advice about housing and homelessness, benefits problems, debt matters, immigration and asylum, employment and discrimination.

Proposed new actions – in addition to what is outlined above:

1. Work in partnership to address child poverty and family wellbeing in line with the partnership principles set out in the Compact and strategic cross-cutting priorities.

How we will monitor the plan

The majority of actions in this plan are mainstreamed and services and agencies are responsible for taking them forward and monitoring them. The cross-cutting areas, which would get lost without a plan, for example parental employment will be monitored centrally, by our corporate policy team. There will also be a three yearly mapping exercise of Hackney's assessments and plans and where areas for development are identified will advise and/or undertake specific pieces of work.

The following success criteria have been identified:

- Parental employment and the barriers to work are consistently addressed in all relevant work delivered by the Council and partners
- Child poverty is a focus of the childcare provision action plan by aiming to increase childcare accessible to low income families who need it
- Tackling child poverty and addressing complex needs are reflected in all Hackney assessments and plans with the aim of narrowing gaps in outcomes for children in low income families.

Appendix 1 Groups most at risk of poverty in Hackney

Group	Numbers and characteristics in Hackney
Workless families	<p>Hackney has a relatively high proportion of households with children who are workless – 31% of households with children are workless; more than double the national rate of 14%.</p> <p>The vast majority of children in poverty live in workless households. Of the total number of children in poverty in Hackney, 78% live in workless households, 11% live in working households and for the remaining 11% the work status of their family is unknown.</p> <p>Despite having a higher rate of child poverty than London and England as a whole, the working and workless aspects of child poverty in Hackney are reflective of regional and national patterns. (See Appendix 1).</p> <p>Child poverty where at least one parent is working is concentrated in the north of the borough whereas workless child poverty is more concentrated in eastern and southern wards.</p>
Lone parents and families with two young children (0-10) where the youngest is aged between 0-4.	<p>The risk of poverty for children in lone-parent families is high - of all the children in poverty in Hackney the majority (70%) are from lone parent families.</p> <p>Lone parents in Hackney make up 11% of families with dependent children compared with 7% nationally and in London.</p> <p>Two child families with children aged 10 and younger, where the youngest is aged between 0-4 are more likely to experience poverty than any other family make-up - around 30% of all children in poverty in Hackney live in two child families.</p>
Families that claim benefits affected by Welfare Reform	<p>The government welfare reforms are significantly affecting households with children. Many families are having their benefits reduced with most of the reforms impacting significantly on families with children. Data estimates during the Coalition Government 2010-15 estimated that over 7,000 children in Hackney are affected by the welfare reforms. New announcements by the Government, elected in May 2015, including the lowering of the Benefit Cap to £23,000 in London from Autumn 2016, and the freezing of the majority of working-age benefits for 4 years from April 2016, are amongst the measures that are expected to impact on a larger number of families that claim benefits.</p>
Black and minority ethnic groups	<p>Children from ethnic minority backgrounds in England are almost twice as likely to be in poverty as children from white backgrounds.²⁶</p> <p>In Hackney children from ethnic minority backgrounds, with the exception those from an Indian background, are more likely to be eligible for free school meals (a proxy for child poverty) than their share of the school population would suggest. This is especially the case for children from African, Caribbean and Turkish/Kurdish/Cypriot backgrounds, but also for children from Bangladeshi backgrounds and those of mixed heritage.</p> <p>Hackney has a highly diverse population. Although the largest group is White British (36%), a large proportion is White Other (15%), Black African (11%), Black Caribbean (8%) and Mixed (6%)²⁷. Hackney also has a large Turkish</p>

²⁶ <http://www.wlga.gov.uk/equalities-publications/dwp-research-report-ethnicity-and-child-poverty>

²⁷ Census 2011

	<p>population and one of the largest Charedi Jewish populations in Western Europe. Official statistics put Hackney's Jewish population at around 6%, however the actual population is thought to be much higher.</p> <p>Similar patterns are seen in the ethnic breakdown of Hackney's population under the age of 18 but with a lower number of those who are White British (29%). Black African heritage children and young people make up 15% of the under 18s population; White Other 12%; Mixed 10% and Black Caribbean 7%. The areas where high ethnic diversity overlaps with high levels of child poverty are in Wick, Kings Park and the South of Hackney, although the match is not precise.</p>
Disabled parents	<p>In Hackney, nearly a quarter of households with a disabled family member also include dependent children.</p> <p>Disabled parents are likely to be a key driver of child poverty in Hackney, for reasons relating to worklessness, increased cost of living and the impact of caring responsibilities on children.</p> <p>Hackney has a higher proportion of young carers (1.21% of the 0-15 population) than London (1.07%) or England (1.1%).</p> <p>Nearly a quarter of households with a disabled family member also include dependent children. This is higher than the proportion in London (22%) and England (18.0%).</p> <p>The proportion of those with a limiting long-term health problem or disability is significantly higher in some of Hackneys estates than in the rest of Hackney.</p>
Disabled children	<p>Hackney has a similar proportion of disabled children to London and England and for all ethnicities.</p> <p>Childhood disability often leads to additional living costs, the increased risk of family breakdown and poverty.</p>
New arrivals/emerging communities	<p>New arrivals/emerging communities are a group identified as being at risk of poverty during the engagement exercise.</p> <p>This is a group we need to know more about but the potential poverty risks have been highlighted.</p> <p>One related group of children whose circumstances of their poverty potentially exposes them to multiple risk factors are children in families with no recourse to public funds (NRPF). Families with NRPF are ineligible to claim mainstream benefits, access social housing and are not permitted to work. This affects the ability of parents to care for their children, for example by not being able to provide a stable, predictable environment.</p> <p>It is very difficult to estimate the number of NRPF families in Hackney as many families remain unregistered and do not appear in any local statistics.</p> <p>Data from 2007/2008²⁸ based on information from 48 local authorities released by the NRPF network shows that the minimum number of NRPF individuals being supported during this period was 3,910, this includes 1,415 families with children. However this only covers families who have had contact with social services.²⁹ This is out of 204 LAs and represents only roughly 30% of LAs with social services responsibilities in England, Wales and Scotland.</p>

²⁸ NRPF: Financial Implications for Local Authorities-2008

²⁹ For those families who do approach social services they may be entitled to assistance, which may include accommodation where the families include "children in need".

