

Title of Report:	Briefing paper: A rapid situational analysis on child and family poverty in Cheshire and Merseyside
Date of meeting:	19 November 2024
Written by:	Dr Susan Roberts
Contact details:	susan.roberts@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Health & Wellbeing Board Lead:	Theresa Leavy

Executive Summary

Is this report for:	Information <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Discussion <input type="checkbox"/>	Decision
Why is the report being brought to the board?	The brief the Board regarding a rent Cheshire and Merseyside level rapid situational analysis.		
Please detail which, if any, of the Health & Wellbeing Strategy priorities this report relates to?	Creating a place that supports health and wellbeing for everyone living in Cheshire East <input type="checkbox"/> Improving the mental health and wellbeing of people living and working in Cheshire East <input type="checkbox"/> Enable more people to live well for longer <input type="checkbox"/> All of the above <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Please detail which, if any, of the Health & Wellbeing Principles this report relates to?	Equality and Fairness <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accessibility <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Integration <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Quality <input type="checkbox"/> Sustainability <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Safeguarding <input type="checkbox"/> All of the above <input type="checkbox"/>		
Key Actions for the Health & Wellbeing Board to address. Please state recommendations for action.	The Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note the findings and recommendations within the recently published rapid situational analysis paper. Consider the role of, and implications for, the Board of the recommendations provided. 		
Has the report been considered at any other committee meeting of the Council/meeting of the CCG board/stakeholders?	This report has been considered by the Cheshire East Public Health Senior Management Team, it has also been shared specifically with the Director of Public Health and the Executive Director for Adults, Health and Integration.		
Has public, service user, patient feedback/consultation informed the recommendations of this report?	n/a		

<p>If recommendations are adopted, how will residents benefit? Detail benefits and reasons why they will benefit.</p>	<p>Adopting the paper recommendations aims to help to reduce inequalities and enhance existing work to improve overall health and wellbeing in Cheshire East.</p>
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1. Report Summary

1.1. The purpose of this report is to update the Health and Wellbeing Board of a recent analysis of child poverty across Cheshire and Merseyside undertaken on behalf of the CHAMPs Public Health Collaborative and [published in August 2024](#) (Appendix 1).

1.2. Key findings from the report include:

- At a sub-regional level there is an absence of a clearly articulated mission on family poverty that brings stakeholders together to maximise synergies and impact, although there is much activity at local and sub-regional levels that contributes to poverty relief and prevention.
- The Cheshire and Merseyside Health Care Partnership's (HCP) recent commitment on poverty presents a significant opportunity to address this alongside other programmes, as does the commissioning of this report by Cheshire and Merseyside's Directors of Public Health and Population Health.
- In 2024/25 the C&M ICB will be allocating additional investment on prevention to the nine local authorities as well as investment at a C&M level, which provides an opportunity for targeted work on child poverty as a prevention to poor health.
- Opportunities to maximise the impact on poverty by inter-related interventions/programmes/policies may be missed by not having a strategic and coordinating approach.
- All areas are engaged directly with families in poverty, seeking their views on access to services, identifying needs and supporting advocacy with the VCS
- The sharing of research and evidence, best practice, innovation and knowledge mobilisation is not done systematically and therefore opportunities to effect change at scale may be missed.
- Any anti-poverty work should support families who are on the edge of poverty, often described as just about managing.
- There are differences in what data is being used as well as gaps in what data is available. Some of this can be addressed through development of a dashboard, as well as working with government departments on data gap.

1.3. Across Cheshire East, work on supporting residents with poverty has been guided by the [Poverty JSNA](#) and engagement with residents such as the [People's Panel](#). This work has fallen into the following areas:

- An urgent response with support from local Voluntary Community Faith and Social Enterprise Sector organisations via bids for national funding

[Community Grants \(cheshireeast.gov.uk\)](https://cheshireeast.gov.uk). However, this sector is increasingly challenge by the ongoing wider financial climate.

- Utilising available national funds such as the [Household Support Fund \(cheshireeast.gov.uk\)](https://cheshireeast.gov.uk).
- Awareness raising through communication channels on resources available to residents locally and nationally [Cost of living support \(cheshireeast.gov.uk\)](https://cheshireeast.gov.uk).
- Longer term strategic developments to address inequality including: [the Living Well in Crewe](#) strategy; [Family hubs](#); the [Crewe Youth Zone](#); Cheshire and Merseyside [All Together Fairer work](#); [Core20PLUS5](#) developments and promotion of a universally proportionate approach to allocation of resources through tools such as the JSNA and [Combined Intelligence for Population Health Action \(CIPHA\)](#).

1.4 There is a recognition that reducing inequalities and improving the experience of our residents experiencing poverty will take sustained focus, advocacy and resource over many years.

2. Recommendations

2.1. The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to:

- Note the findings and recommendations within the recently published rapid situational analysis paper.
- Consider the role of, and implications for, the Board of the recommendations provided.

Reasons for Recommendations

2.2. Many of the findings and recommendations in this Cheshire and Merseyside report align well with the [poverty JSNA findings](#), findings within other JSNA reviews and ongoing urgent action to support residents experiencing poverty. However, it highlights the need for sustained attention regarding this key issue for Cheshire East in the coming months and years, as well as a need to work together with partners across Cheshire and Merseyside.

3. Impact on Health and Wellbeing Strategy Priorities

3.1. The recommendations from this report align well with the four outcomes from the Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023-28, and mark another call to action:

- Cheshire East is a place that supports good health and wellbeing for everyone.
- Our children and young people experience good physical and emotional health and wellbeing.

- The mental health and wellbeing of people living and working in Cheshire East is improved.
- That more people live and age well, remaining independent; and that their lives end with peace and dignity in their chosen place.

4. Background and Options

- 4.1. Child poverty is a core focus both locally and nationally¹.
- 4.2. Cheshire and Merseyside's Directors of Public Health and Population Health, who work together as the CHAMPS Public Health Collaborative, commissioned a report into child and family poverty in the subregion. The report was steered via a lead Director of Public Health, a Director of Children's Services, an analyst, a representative from the voluntary and community sector, two leading academics, the director of the CHAMPS Support Team, an NHSE management trainee and the author of the report, Eustace de Sousa, a Public Health Honorary Fellow of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health.
- 4.3. The report was [published in August 2024](#) and represented a rapid situational analysis rather than a detailed examination of child and family poverty. It found that child poverty levels in England, and across Cheshire and Merseyside, are a serious issue of social injustice. It also acknowledged that child and family poverty were not inevitable. Key findings included:
 - At a sub-regional level there is an absence of a clearly articulated mission on family poverty that brings stakeholders together to maximise synergies and impact, although there is much activity at local and sub-regional levels that contributes to poverty relief and prevention.
 - The Cheshire and Merseyside Health Care Partnership's (HCP) recent commitment on poverty presents a significant opportunity to address this alongside other programmes, as does the commissioning of this report by Cheshire and Merseyside's Directors of Public Health and Population Health.
 - In 2024/25 the C&M ICB will be allocating additional investment on prevention to the nine local authorities as well as investment at a C&M level, which provides an opportunity for targeted work on child poverty as a prevention to poor health.
 - Opportunities to maximise the impact on poverty by inter-related interventions/programmes/policies may be missed by not having a strategic and coordinating approach.
 - All areas are engaged directly with families in poverty, seeking their views on access to services, identifying needs and supporting advocacy with the VCS

¹ Cabinet Office (2024) Tackling Child Poverty: Developing Our Strategy. 23 October 2024. Available: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tackling-child-poverty-developing-our-strategy/tackling-child-poverty-developing-our-strategy-html#focus-and-approach-to-the-child-poverty-strategy> (Accessed 5 November 2024).

- The sharing of research and evidence, best practice, innovation and knowledge mobilisation is not done systematically and therefore opportunities to effect change at scale may be missed.
- Any anti-poverty work should support families who are on the edge of poverty, often described as just about managing.
- There are differences in what data is being used as well as gaps in what data is available. Some of this can be addressed through development of a dashboard, as well as working with government departments on data gap.

4.4. Key recommendations included:

- Set an ambition on child poverty and articulate this widely.
- Agree a governance and oversight system.
- Set a plan and have the capacity to implement it.
- Adopt a Framework to set, monitor and drive action.

4.5. A Cheshire East specific version of the report highlighted:

- 10,476 (14.7%) of children (under 16s) were in relative low income families in 2022/23.
- Of these children, 6,959 (66.4%) were in working families.
- There has been a significant trend upwards in the percentage of children in relative low income families since 2018/19 (when the rate was 12.3%).
- 16 (6.8%) of lower super output areas (LSOAs) are among the most deprived 20% in England according to the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) 2019.

4.6. The report asks Local authority Directors of Public Health to consider:

- Is there a clear articulation of the local state of child and family poverty, including general rates, trends, groups and local areas experiencing higher rates (data sources include Fingertips, Stat-Xplore and the Income Domain Affecting Children Index)?
- How are the lived experiences of children and families shaping anti-poverty work?
- Is there local agreement across stakeholders of an ambition and a plan, who leads on what, is this covered in for example the Health and Wellbeing Strategy?
- How can your area use the Framework's proposed local actions across the following priority themes?: Leadership and advocacy; maximising household income; supporting children, young people and families from pre-conception through to adulthood; and building inclusive places.

- 4.7. Another useful tool in understanding child poverty in Cheshire East is the Social Mobility Commission's *Conditions of Childhood* tool². This outlines variation in local authority conditions of childhood from least favourable to most favourable. According to the data within this tool, Cheshire East is in the middle of the five groups for: conditions of childhood (based on Households below average income (HBAI) statistics and Labour Force Survey statistics) and labour opportunities for young people. Cheshire East is in the second most favourable of the five groups in terms of innovation and growth (based on broadband speed, business spending on research and development and postgraduate education). The tool also highlights that Cheshire (as a whole) has higher proportions of parents with higher education qualifications and in higher professional occupations than the England average. Cheshire also has lower than average rates of unemployment in people aged 16 to 24 years old than the national average.
- 4.8. The findings from the *Conditions of Childhood* tool¹ need to be balanced against further insights relating to pupils experiencing disadvantage across Cheshire East. These data clearly demonstrate substantially lower rates of educational attainment in our more disadvantaged pupils³. Cheshire East has some of the lowest rates of attainment in the entire country with regards to school readiness and the proportion of disadvantaged pupils obtaining a grade 5-9 in both English and Maths (see table below).

	Pupils with free school meals (%)	Pupils without free school meals (%)	National rank for attainment in pupils with free school meals (1 best to 152 worst)
Achieving a good level of development at the end of reception	46	72	132
Achieving the expected (or better) standard of phonics in year 1	64	84	98
	Disadvantaged (%)	Not disadvantaged (%)	National rank out of 152 local authorities for attainment in disadvantaged pupils
Achieving expected standards of reading, writing and maths at the end of Key Stage 2.	42	68	95
Achieving 9-5 grades in English and Maths at the end of Key Stage 4	16	52	149

² Social Mobility Commission (2024) Conditions of childhood. Published: 11 September 2024. Available from: https://social-mobility.data.gov.uk/drivers_of_social_mobility/composite_indices/conditions_of_childhood/latest (Accessed 25 October 2024).

³ Education dashboard version 2 (2024) based on Department for Education statistical releases and The Local Authority Interactive Tool (LAIT) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-authority-interactive-tool-lait>

4.9. The report recommendations also align well with the findings and recommendations of the wider [Poverty Joint Strategic Needs Assessment \(JSNA\)](#). Across Cheshire East, work on supporting residents with poverty has been guided by this JSNA review, as well as other [JSNA reviews](#) that articulate variation in aspects by deprivation. Locally, responses have also been guided by engagement with residents such as via the [People's Panel](#). Work has fallen into the following areas:

- An urgent response with support from local Voluntary Community Faith and Social Enterprise Sector organisations via bids for national funding [Community Grants \(cheshireeast.gov.uk\)](#). However, this sector is increasingly challenge by the ongoing wider financial climate.
- Utilising available national funds such as the [Household Support Fund \(cheshireeast.gov.uk\)](#).
- Awareness raising through communication channels on resources available to residents locally and nationally [Cost of living support \(cheshireeast.gov.uk\)](#).
- Longer term strategic developments to address inequality including: [the Living Well in Crewe](#) strategy; [Family hubs](#); the [Crewe Youth Zone](#); Cheshire and Merseyside [All Together Fairer work](#); [Core20PLUS5](#) developments and promotion of a universally proportionate approach to allocation of resources through tools such as the JSNA and [Combined Intelligence for Population Health Action](#). The challenge of overcoming stigma associated with the experience of poverty and reaching help has also been highlighted.

There is also an acknowledgement that improvements to support people experiencing poverty will require sustained focus, advocacy and resource over many years. Ongoing monitoring of the issue has been recognised to be key. Currently, this is facilitated to a certain extent through the [Joint Outcomes Framework](#). However, there is potential to build upon this initial monitoring as part of Phase Two of the Joint Outcomes Framework development, and also through changes to monitoring frameworks within the Council as part of transformation activity. A key consideration will be to articulate variation in child and family poverty by geographical area given that the Poverty JSNA highlights the extent of variation across the local area.

Access to Information

4.10. The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

Name: Dr Susan Roberts

Designation: Consultant in Public Health

Email: phit@cheshireeast.gov.uk