



Blackburn with Darwen
Our Strategy to Reduce the Impact of Child Poverty
2024 - 2028



Foreword

Whilst the government accurately tells us that child poverty has decreased since the 1990s, it is also true that the biggest reduction in child poverty rates was during the first decade of the 21st century when, according to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 'Child poverty fell by around one-seventh under the previous Labour Government'¹.


The UK has seen an increase in child poverty from 3.6 million children in 2010-2011 to 4.2 million children in 2021-22² and it is estimated to increase to 5.2 million in 2023-24³.

The national context of child poverty has many causes and includes factors that have been the result of the Coalition's austerity programme as well as decisions taken by subsequent governments. For example, changes to the welfare system, including the introduction of Universal Credit, the two-child limit for Universal Credit and Child Tax credit and cuts to local government funding, often for councils with the higher rates of in-work poverty. We know that 70% of those children who are living in relative poverty live in households with at least one working adult⁴ so real terms cuts to salaries, as well as underemployment through Zero-Hours contracts have also contributed to the recent increases in child poverty rates.


These structural factors that contribute to levels of child poverty in the UK, and can in some cases appear insurmountable, are not going to be resolved at any local level; that takes central government will and determination. However, we are clear that the council will use every means in our gift to lever resources into the borough, and by working with our partners across the community to wrap our skills, knowledge and experience around children and young people we will help them to thrive and succeed despite the impacts of poverty on their lives.

This is the national context in which Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council has devised the Child Poverty Strategy; whose aim it is to help support families, children and young people to navigate some of the structural barriers that poverty can present, helping us to achieve our missions to create a more prosperous borough where no one is left behind and where every child and young person will have the opportunity to fulfil their potential.




Julie Gunn
Executive Member for Children,
Young People and Education




Damian Talbot
Executive Member for Public
Health, Prevention & Wellbeing

Introduction

A core mission of this Council is making sure every child, no matter who they are, has opportunities to fulfill their potential. No child should be left behind because of who they are or what their background is. Our strategy to reduce the impact of child poverty is focused on directly alleviating the impacts of poverty on our children, young people and families within our gift. By leveraging our available resources, we aim to implement targeted initiatives that provide immediate relief to those affected by poverty.

It is true we are a growing borough, and we should all be proud of that. Prosperity is a necessary condition of a successful, healthy and thriving place. It is also true we have some of the worst deprivation in the country and unacceptable levels of child poverty. Our focus on building a more prosperous borough will help alleviate some of the structural inequalities we have here. It is also our moral obligation to make firm commitments to use all the levers available to mitigate the very real impact of poverty on children and young people.

In this co-produced strategy, we set out our approach to tackling child poverty in the borough. It sets out our priorities, goals and ambitions for children, young people and families in our borough to flourish, regardless of their financial background. Incorporating youth voice is crucial in co-producing effective policies and strategies.

By including the perspectives and experiences of children, young people and families, we ensure that the solutions resonate with the challenges they face daily. This approach not only empowers young people by valuing their insights, but also enriches the approach with an understanding of the diverse issues that are uniquely experienced by them. Ultimately, involving our children and young people in this strategy's development makes certain that it is well-informed and reflective of the needs and aspirations of the younger generation.

While our approach may not directly tackle the structural causes of poverty, which have only been amplified by the cost-of-living crisis, austerity and the aftereffects of the COVID pandemic, it emphasises pragmatic solutions to improve the health and wellbeing of our residents. Children are most vulnerable to austerity measures, and these adversely impact child health by limiting access to healthcare services, decreasing educational resources and increasing material deprivation. These impacts have long-term consequences and can create health disparities in more deprived communities which children can take forward into adulthood⁵.

Our strategy stands as a beacon of hope and commitment to pave the way for a future where every child and young person has the opportunity to thrive in our borough. This comprehensive approach, rooted in empathy and evidence, is a testament to our collective responsibility to safeguard the well-being of the youngest members of our community. Through our coordinated youth services and partnership approach with our VCFS sector, we will strive to uplift our children and young people facing economic challenges and create a more resilient and supportive environment locally.

This strategy is designed to make a tangible and timely difference in the lives of those experiencing poverty whilst acknowledging the larger societal issues that require systematic and societal change. We hope that this strategy inspires meaningful change and contributes to no child being left behind in Blackburn with Darwen.

We thank all involved in developing this strategy, especially our children, young people and families for sharing their voice.



Abdul Razaq
Abdul Razaq
Director of Public Health



Jo Siddle
Jo Siddle
Strategic Director Children's
Services and Education

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all our children, young people, families and stakeholders who have made an invaluable contribution to the development of Blackburn with Darwen's Child Poverty Strategy. Your insight and dedication to making a difference to those who face the impact of poverty has played a crucial role in shaping our path forward.

 <p>CANW Child Action Northwest</p>	 <p>BLACKBURN ROVERS FC ARTE ET LABORE COMMUNITY TRUST</p>	 <p>BLACKBURN with DARWEN BOROUGH COUNCIL</p>	 <p>Blackburn with Darwen Parents in Partnership</p>
 <p>HealthyLiving Healthy Choices for Healthy Communities</p>	 <p>POSITIVE ABOUT YOUNG PEOPLE UCO ACCRINGTON ROAD & LITTLE HARWOOD COMMUNITY CENTRES UNITING COMMUNITIES ORG</p>	 <p>newground together</p>	 <p>imo inspire motivate overcome</p>
 <p>ups Young People's Services</p>	 <p>social sense</p>	 <p>BLACKBURN with DARWEN FOOD ALLIANCE</p>	 <p>NHS Lancashire & South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust</p>
 <p>Nightsafe</p>	 <p>BLACKBURN YOUTHZONE</p>	 <p>healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen</p>	 <p>RUMMAGE RESCUERS SHOP • DONATE • VOLUNTEER</p>

Our Aim, Vision and Key Themes

Our Aim

Our strategy will reduce and mitigate the impact of child poverty and reduce inequalities for children and families. The collective partnership agrees to mitigate the impacts of child poverty, either via the services they provide or services they commission.

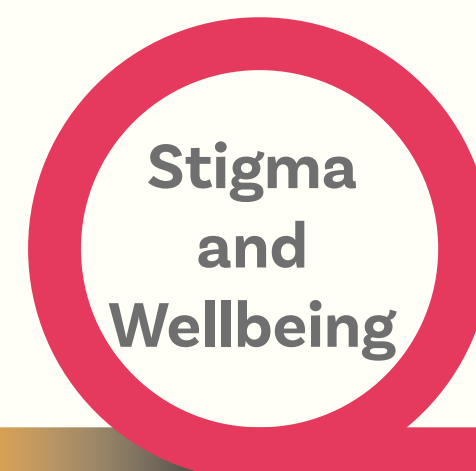
Our Vision

We will break down barriers and make everyday life accessible to children and young people regardless of their financial background. We will work together to ensure that every child & young person who experiences poverty can thrive.



Our Key Themes

Blackburn with Darwen's Strategy to Reduce the Impact of Child Poverty is focused on providing targeted support and combining local resources and partnerships to address key factors contributing to child poverty. By fostering collaboration between stakeholders, implementing interventions based on our six key themes, and ensuring wrap around support for families, this strategy seeks to provide the foundations where every child can thrive, irrespective of financial circumstances.



How our key themes reflect the core council missions



A more prosperous borough where no-one is left behind

Every child and young person to have the opportunities to fulfil their potential

Deliver our climate emergency action plan

Build healthier, happier and safer communities

School day

School day

Transport

Food

Stigma and Wellbeing

Food

Transport

Early Years

Early Years

Stigma and Wellbeing

Housing

Trust

We believe in and can rely on each other

Respect

We embrace diversity and value our differences

Ambition

We have the courage to try new things and strive to be better

Collaboration

We achieve more by working together

Kindness

We are self aware and considerate in all that we do



BLACKBURN
with
DARWEN
BOROUGH COUNCIL

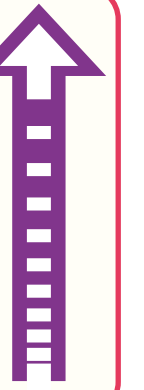
census 2021

From the 2021 Census, there are 35,226 under 16s in Blackburn with Darwen.

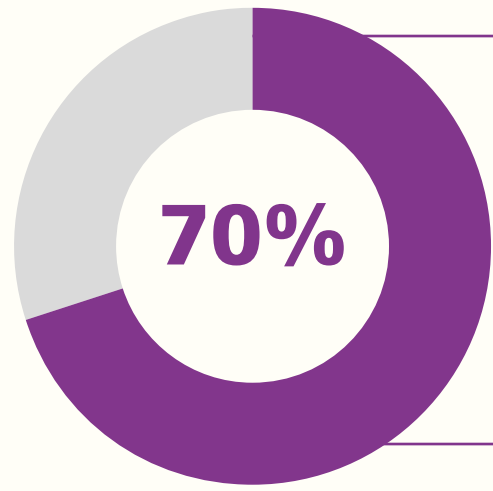
Our Strategy to Reduce the Impact of Child Poverty

We will break down barriers and make everyday life accessible to children and young people regardless of their financial background. We will work together to ensure that every child & young person who experiences poverty can thrive.

In the UK, 4.2 million children in poverty in 2021/22 Increasing to 5.2 million in 2023/24

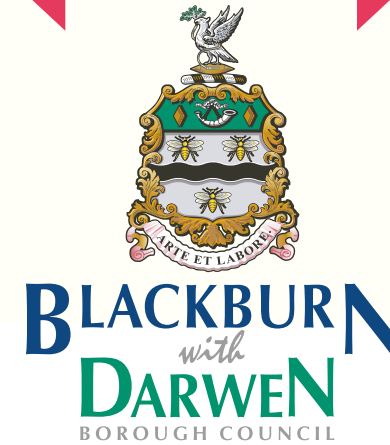


WHERE ARE WE NOW



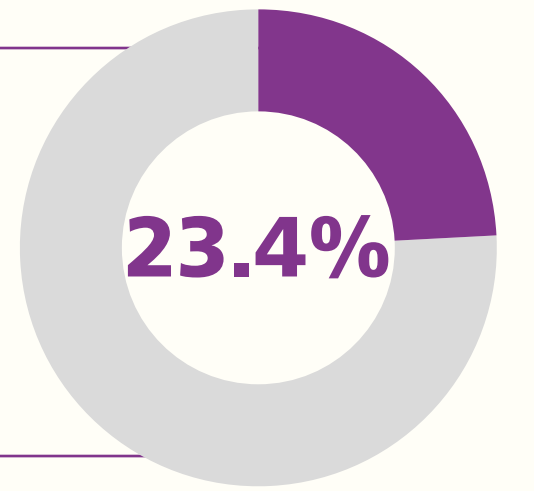
70% of children in poverty in BwD are from working families.

In 2021/22, 36.5% of under 16s in Blackburn with Darwen were in relative poverty.



Our relative child poverty rate is 36.5%. This is equivalent to 12,858 children.

23.4% of Year 6 pupils said they sometimes or never eat breakfast



WHAT IS CHILD POVERTY

Children and young people (up to the age of 18) are considered to be living in poverty when their circumstances mean they lack the resources to meet their needs and are unable to take part in the activities that are considered "ordinary" or "normal".

Tackling poverty in Blackburn with Darwen will improve the life chances of children and their families now and into the future.

OUR STRENGTHS

Our borough is young and diverse and BwD contributes £3.16 billion to the UK economy. Our VCFS sector is strong and provides support through all our wards along with our Family Hub network. We have two of the top performing secondary schools in the country and have high levels of apprenticeship uptake.

We know the needs of our residents, have strong partnership working and are eager to change and improve.

OUR KEY THEMES AND PRIORITIES

The School Day



- Happier, healthier and more confident children
- Affordable, inclusive uniform
- Access to nutritious food
- Ready to learn

Food



- Sustained and supported breast feeding
- No child going hungry
- Improved food education

Transport



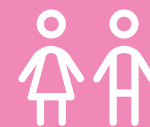
- Encourage and support active travel
- Inclusion of youth voice
- Safe and affordable transport

Stigma and Wellbeing+



- Poverty proofing our services
- All our services are promoted appropriately and are accessible
- Improving mental health

Early Years



- All children reach their developmental milestones
- Families are supported within their communities
- Children have access to healthcare services
- Access to quality childcare

Housing



- Homes are safe for our families
- Homes are warm for our families
- Children have a safe place to sleep

What is child poverty?

Poverty can be hard to define and there are many ways that it can be measured. According to the Child Poverty Action Group, children and young people (up to the age of 18) are considered to be living in poverty when their circumstances mean they lack the resources to meet their needs and are unable to take part in the activities that are considered “ordinary” or “normal”. This can mean that children and young people in poverty are excluded from and are unable to participate in the community they live in⁶.

We asked young people what they thought poverty meant and what they would feel:



Poverty has a great effect on the life chances of children and young people. It can deepen and reinforce social exclusion, which can cause problems with education, employment, physical and mental health and social interaction.

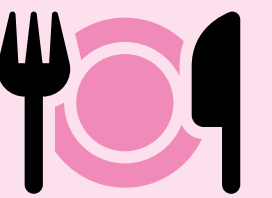
Anyone can be at risk of being in poverty at any time in their life.

In Blackburn with Darwen, the most at-risk children for being in poverty are from lone-parent households.

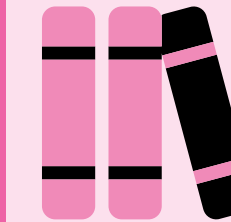
Tackling poverty in Blackburn with Darwen will improve the life chances of children and their families now and into the future. Children do not exist in isolation from their families and communities, and tackling child poverty benefits the community as a whole as well as the children and families affected.

We asked our young people what they thought people in poverty would experience

Going to school may be the only chance I get to have a hot meal



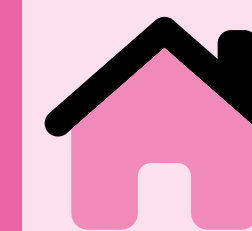
Sometimes I feel hopeless and that education isn't for me



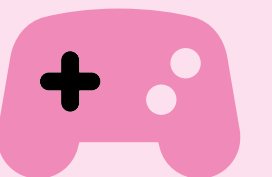
I get into arguments about money and feel angry at my parents for not being able to give me what they want or need



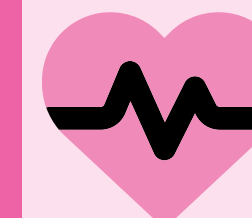
Living in poor households can make me feel unequal to others



I'm scared I won't have the same things and opportunities as others and I would miss out on lots of stuff



It could affect me in the long run and have impacts on my health



Quotes gained from SYA forum and Healthwatch school consultation, 2023

Impacts of child poverty

In the UK, too many children are growing up in families facing poverty and destitution. The Cost-of-Living Crisis and aftermath of the COVID pandemic has pushed more families into poverty. Poverty is a driver of health inequalities and has long-term societal, mental and health impacts on a child. The circumstances in which a child grows and develops can greatly impact their future and without essentials such as food, clothing and adequate housing, children are unable to achieve their full potential.

Nationally, children living in the 10% most deprived areas are more likely to have low birth weight and die in infancy than the children living in the 10% least deprived areas. Children living in poverty are more likely to be obese, develop long-term illnesses, experience tooth decay and develop mental health disorders⁷.

Environmentally, air pollution is significantly higher in deprived areas which can have considerable impacts on a child's health and their development. In deprived areas, families may also experience fuel poverty and live in housing that is susceptible to damp and mould and be poorly ventilated. This increases the chance of a child developing a chronic lung condition or cardiovascular disease later in life⁴.

Around 70% of children who are in poverty have at least one parent who works within the household. Financially, families in poverty may experience food insecurity and lack access to healthy, nutritious food, driving further poor physical outcomes, such as obesity. Low-income families may not be able to access medical care for their child due to the cost of transport, parking and loss of earnings⁴.

During the school day, children in poverty are more likely to experience social exclusion due to the inability to afford school trips, uniform or social events. This can result in bullying, isolation, academic underachievement, poor mental health and future employment difficulties.



The National Picture

In 2021/22 there were 4.2 million children in the UK living in poverty. The most at risk were children from lone parent families, from Black and minority ethnic groups or in large families. Around 71% of children in poverty are from families where at least one person works². These figures are projected to increase to 5.2 million children by 2023/24³.

Poverty Measures

The data used in this strategy is the most up to date validated data that is available to us and linking to the Public Health Outcomes Framework, however it is recognised that the COVID pandemic and the Cost-of-Living Crisis have greatly impacted child poverty rates. Most of the measures used are calculated before housing costs and the figures would rise if calculated after housing costs. This strategy will use the terms relative low-income/poverty and absolute low-income/poverty as defined by the Department for Work and Pensions:⁸

'Relative low income is defined by as a family in low income Before Housing Costs in the reference year. A family must have claimed Child Benefit and at least one other household benefit (Universal Credit, tax credits, or Housing Benefit) at any point in the year to be classed as low income in these statistics.'

'Absolute low income is defined as a family in low income Before Housing Costs in the reference year in comparison with incomes in financial year ending 2011. A family must have claimed Child Benefit and at least one other household benefit (Universal Credit, tax credits, or Housing Benefit) at any point in the year to be classed as low income in these statistics.'

The Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 has replaced the Child Poverty Act 2010 and requires the Secretary of State to publish the data of children living in poverty, educational achievement and the number of children living in households where no-one is in employment.

Where are we nationally?

In 2021/22, Blackburn with Darwen had a child poverty rate for relative low-income of 36.5%⁹. From the 2021 Census, there are 35,226 under 16s in Blackburn with Darwen. As 36.5% of this population live in relative low income, it is equivalent to 12,858 children¹⁰.

Number of children in relative low-income families in Blackburn with Darwen

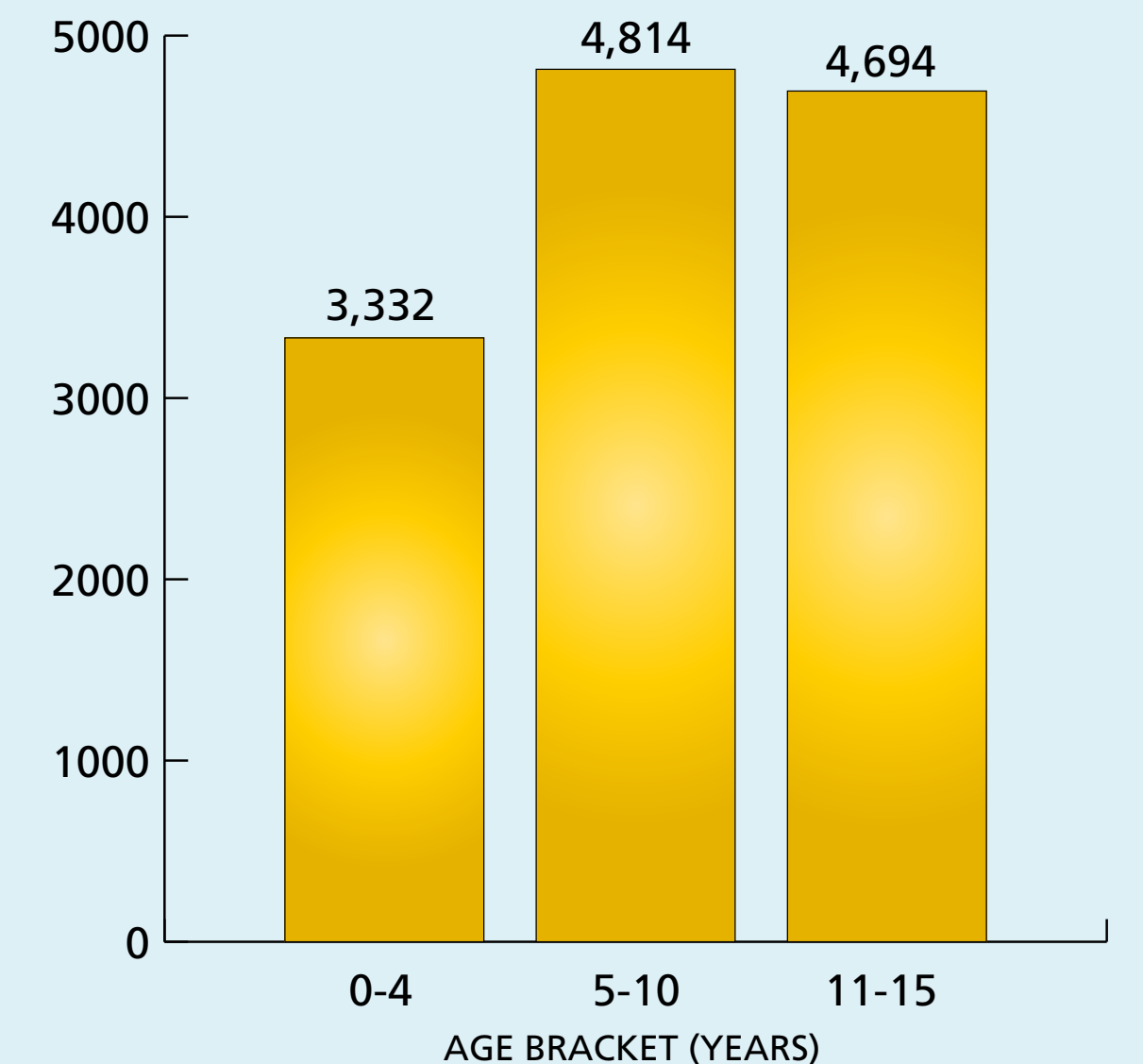


Figure 1: Department for Work and Pensions, 2023¹¹

England - 19.9 (2,087,494)

Blackburn with Darwen - 36.5 (12,840)

Figure 2 proportion of children in relative poverty, Fingertips, 2023⁹

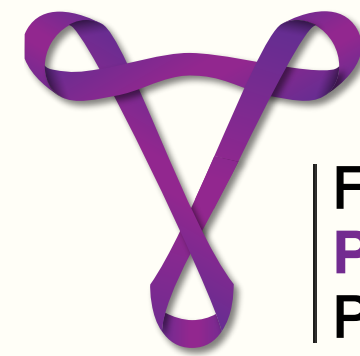
National Initiatives

Nationally, the UK government has multiple schemes available to help families and children in poverty. Free school meals, educational grants and Family Hubs contribute to addressing the needs of families and create a supportive environment for children to thrive. Financially, Child benefit is available for families who are responsible for bringing up children under the age of 16 or under 20 if they stay in approved training or education.



Free School Meals

Free School Meals are universal for children in Reception, **Year 1 and Year 2 and in nurseries** if children attend full days. After this, children are eligible if their parent or carer is in receipt of certain benefits.



FREE
PERIOD
PRODUCTS

Period Product Scheme

Period Product Scheme is available in state maintained secondary schools and **post-16 organisations** and primary schools who have pupils above aged 10 years. Within this scheme, anyone who has a period should be able to access period products for free during term time.



30 free hours of childcare

All 3 and 4-year-olds can access **15 hours free childcare**, regardless of parental employment. If parents are in employment and earn at least the national living wage and other criteria, children can access **30 hours free childcare** for 38 weeks of the year after their child turns 3. Children from low-income families can also currently access free childcare from age 2. This offer is being extended in 2024.



Healthy Start vouchers

Healthy Start vouchers available after 10 weeks of pregnancy and if people have a **child under 4**, these vouchers can help families buy healthy food and vitamins. These vouchers are only available if you are on certain benefits or under the age of 18.

Our Challenges

Our Challenges

The child poverty profile of BwD shows the deprivation across the borough as we face the cost of living crisis and continue to recover from the COVID pandemic.

Blackburn with Darwen was ranked 10th most deprived local authorities in England based on the income deprivation in 2021¹².

Child poverty is not spread evenly across the wards in Blackburn with Darwen and we have the 9th largest deprivation gap in England between the most and least deprived.

The Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) measures the number & proportion of all children aged 0 to 15 living in income deprived families. The England average is 17.1%, in Blackburn with Darwen the average across all wards is 22.8%¹³.

Our Strengths

Our borough is young and diverse and BwD contributes £3.16 billion to the UK economy¹⁴. Our voluntary, community and faith sector is strong and provides support through all our wards and communities. BwD has two of the top performing secondary schools in the country and we have high levels of apprenticeship uptake.

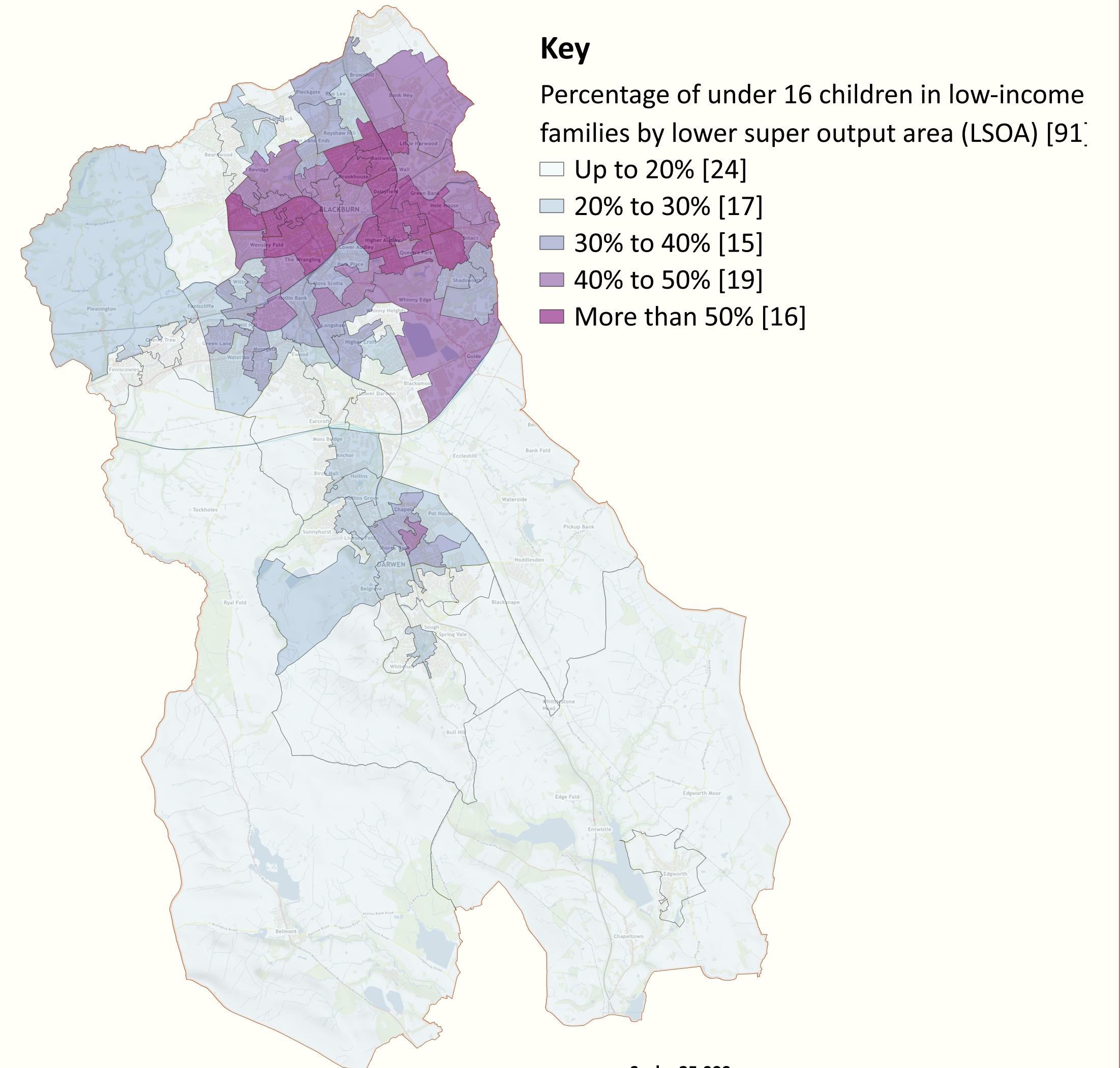


Figure 3: Department for Work and Pensions, 2023 11

In numbers: Child poverty in Blackburn with Darwen

36.5%

In 2021/22, Blackburn with Darwen had a child poverty rate for relative low-income of 36.5%⁹.

12,858

36.5% of under 16's live in relative poverty. This is equivalent to 12,858 children¹⁰.

1/4

Over a quarter of households with dependent children are lone parent households in BwD¹⁵.

23.4%

23.4% of Year 6 pupils responded that they sometimes or never eat breakfast in the School Health Needs Assessment (SHNA)¹⁶.

54%

Over 54% of households with children are deprived in either housing, employment, education or health and disability¹⁵.

50.1%

50.1% of children who are in relative low-income families are female, meaning they are over-represented compared to the known proportions¹¹.

48%

Households with children make up just over 48% of overall households on Universal Credit¹⁷.

7,012

The number of pupils eligible for free school meals has increased from 4,114 in 2015/16 to 7,012 in 2022/23¹⁸.

70%

70% of children in poverty in Blackburn were in working families in 2021/22 equalling 9,844 children¹⁹.

24.4%

24.4% of children living in the most deprived areas of BwD are obese in Year 6 compared to 17.6% in the least deprived areas²⁰.

190

190 households with dependent children have no central heating in their home¹⁵.

73.6%

67 out of 91 (73.6%) lower super output have a higher proportion of children in relative low-income families than the national figure (19.9%)¹¹.

Recent partnership working

All of us have a part to play in tackling child poverty. We must aim to reduce and mitigate the effects of child poverty on our residents. Blackburn with Darwen Public Health links with many initiatives and services to help our children, young people and families who are living in poverty.

The work highlighted is only the start of what we aim to do in Blackburn with Darwen. We will take our young people and families on a journey with us and hope to mitigate the impact poverty has on those facing its harsh reality.

Related Strategies Plans and Policies

- BwD Corporate Plan
- Public Health Annual Report
- Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
- Eat Well, Move More Strategy
- Oral Health Improvement Strategy
- Mental Wellbeing, Mental Health, Self-harm and Suicide Prevention Strategy
- Healthy Weight Declaration

Linking Boards and Groups

- Health and Wellbeing Board
- Children's Partnership Board
- Child Poverty Strategy Group
- BwD Food Alliance

Public Health's partnership working to tackle poverty

Holiday Activity Fund

All children who are eligible for FSM can attend and access a range of fun activities and a hot meal during the school holidays

Family Hubs

Our four Family Hubs provide support for our families from conception to 19 or 25 with SEND. Support includes infant feeding, speech and language and mental health services

Period Poverty Network

Set up to identify where free products are available across our borough for those who need them, especially for pupils outside of term time

School Uniform Exchange

Pop-up shops were available in summer across both towns for people to pick up pre-loved uniform for free before the start of the school year

School Food Grant

Schools in BwD had the opportunity to bid for funding to improve food security for families, improve health and wellbeing for our pupils and support those in the most deprived wards.

Foodbank support

The food bank help our most vulnerable families by providing them with a three day nutritionally balanced emergency food parcel when referred in crisis.

Household Support Fund

The fund can help our families get support with things like the cost of gas and electric and household appliances. The fourth round of funding is available until March 2024

Cot Bed Referral

Our most vulnerable families are able to receive a cot from a Health Visitor referral so their baby has a safe place to sleep.

Consultation and Key Themes



After consultation with young people in our borough and key stakeholders, six key themes were identified and help to protect those in poverty and prevent more children, young people and families falling into poverty.

These themes were identified with the help of:

- Healthwatch who gathered responses from 780 pupils through questionnaires and focus groups
- Two workshops with the Strategic Youth Alliance Forum (now Young BwD Foundation) to hear their thoughts and make sure we have the right themes
- The Family Hubs Parent Panel who shared their ideas through a survey
- A stakeholder engagement session with attendees from across the local authority, VCFS and education
- Ongoing engagement with our Child Poverty Strategy Group

What's working well?

- ✓ Knowing our population and needs of our residents
- ✓ Eagerness to change and improve
- ✓ Strong partnership working with local authority, youth services and VCFS
- ✓ Four Family Hubs across BwD

By supporting children and young people in poverty, their health and ability to get a good education can be improved exponentially. This can mean that as adults, they have better employment opportunities and can live longer lives.

Theme 1 - The School Day

"We need to be asked what we want to eat"

What our Young People said:

How a young person performs in school will impact them in later life and if they are in poverty, they may not be able to have the same opportunities as those who are not in poverty. Pupils in poverty could be stressed, tired and worried about their financial situation which would make it difficult to learn.

Food

The quality of school food was discussed and if this is the only hot meal they are eating, pupils should get a say in what the meals are. Young people wanted free school meals to be universal so no one is singled out which can lead to embarrassment if you are seen to be different.

Uniform

Bullying was mentioned frequently with uniform especially if it is dirty, old or unbranded which can make you look different to others. Young people believed that schools should all have recycle schemes and pop-up shops in the summer to help those who can't buy uniform and also for sustainability.

Our priorities

HAPPIER, HEALTHIER AND MORE CONFIDENT CHILDREN

Children and young people will have their emotional, mental and physical wellbeing supported to help them to become resilient, independent and confident adults. Good and supportive pastoral care will ensure pupils concerns are heard and referrals into services can be made.

AFFORDABLE, INCLUSIVE UNIFORM

All pupils should be able to access quality uniform at an affordable price. By reducing the number of branded items and improving recycling or pre-loved provision, students will not be singled out for looking 'different'.

ACCESS TO NUTRITIOUS FOOD

All children should have access to a warm and nutritious meal during the school day. All food provided during school time should be in line with the school food standards and take in to account the voice of their pupils.

READY TO LEARN

All pupils should arrive at their first lesson ready to learn. By providing a safe environment, our children and young people can flourish at school and achieve their best.

Key Measures

Improved attendance



Improved behaviour



Positive pupil voice recorded



Theme 2 - Food

"A young person might not be able to be fed at home if they are in poverty"

What our Young People said:

Everyone should have access to healthy, affordable and nutritious food. From our feedback from young people, food was described as a basic necessity and something that people in poverty may lack.

For Young People

Our young people would like to see student discount on food and in supermarkets to make nutritious food more accessible. They also mentioned wanting to learn to cook healthy meals and other life skills as money management.

For Families

Families have said that one of their concerns is being able to access nutritious food for their children. Families also mentioned that there are children who just miss out on free school meals and where they could get food if they were not eligible for support.

Our priorities

SUSTAINED AND SUPPORTED BREASTFEEDING

Breastfeeding is cost-effective and provides all the essential nutrients and boosts development in our infants. Breastfeeding can positively impact long term health outcomes and provide the best start in life for our children.

NO CHILD GOING HUNGRY

Advocating for policies that address the root cause of food insecurity will help to ensure that all children in BwD are well nourished and thriving. No family should have to rely on one meal a day and the emotional impact that this has.

IMPROVED FOOD EDUCATION

Children, young people and families should have access to the education to help them make healthy, nutritious meals and understand how food impacts our health. By improving education in and out of school, our residents can be empowered to make healthier choices in their homes and communities.

Key Measures

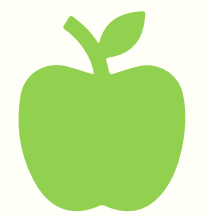
Improved NCMP data



Improved oral health



Increased number of businesses signed up to Recipe 4 Health



Theme 3 - Transport

"Traveling on public transport is too expensive"

What our Young People said:

People in poverty may find it difficult to get around if they don't have access to a car and if public transport is expensive. Young people have mentioned the need for a student travel scheme and discounted ticket prices. If people are unable to get transport, they may not feel safe walking and would find attending appointments or accessing services hard. Driving is also expensive and would put people off learning.

Our priorities

ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT ACTIVE TRAVEL

Active travel provides both physical and mental benefits. Our walking and cycling routes connect our borough and should be used by our children and young people to increase their physical activity and help to reduce the impact transport can have on the environment.

INCLUSION OF YOUTH VOICE

To ensure that the services we provide are appropriate, youth voice must be included in any decision making process across all our services. We will gain feedback from young people to ensure that we continuously improve what we offer.

SAFE AND AFFORDABLE TRANSPORT

All of our young people should be able to access transport at an affordable price. Our public transport should connect to other towns and cities giving young people equitable access to opportunities outside of the borough. Our streets should be a safe place to walk, cycling and drive at any time of the year. For our children and young people with SEND, we need to ensure that all transport is accessible and inclusive for them to lead independent lives.

Key Measures

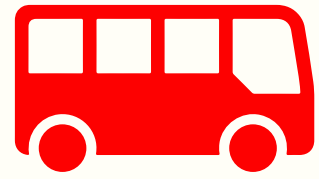
Improved road safety data e.g reduced collisions



More CYP walking or cycling



More CYP using public transport



Theme 4 - Stigma and Wellbeing

"Being bullied because you're poor people would definitely know if you were"

What our Young People said:

Stigma

Our young people highlighted the stigma of poverty as the main reason that people could know that people in poverty are different and may experience bullying. This would have a huge impact on their mental health and their relationships with their friends, family and peers. Children in poverty may not want to invite friends round to their house or miss out on social activities such as school trips. Overall, our young people wanted equal opportunities for all and spoke a lot about poverty proofing the school day and extracurricular activities.

Wellbeing

People in poverty may not have the same opportunities to improve their mental health and wellbeing as their friends. Young people said that outdoors gyms, free activities outside and access to green spaces for everyone would help with socialising and improving health without targeting activities at poverty.

Our priorities

POVERTY PROOFING OUR SERVICES

By addressing the challenges faced specifically by our children and young people in poverty, we can build a compassionate BwD and reduce further stigma. All our services should be inclusive to help with children and young people 'standing out' if they are unable to afford services. Equal opportunities should be available both in and out of school.

ALL OUR SERVICES ARE PROMOTED APPROPRIATELY AND ACCESSIBLY

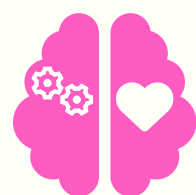
Our children, young people and families should know when and where to get help. By promoting our services appropriately and raising awareness of what help is available, the impacts that they have will be maximised. Our services should be accessed without any barriers, regardless of language, disabilities and financial background.

IMPROVING MENTAL HEALTH

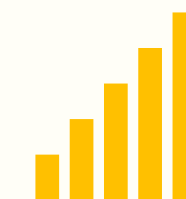
By reducing stigma and encouraging our young people to reach out for help when needed, the emotional stress or burden that poverty has could be mitigated. If opportunities in Blackburn with Darwen are equal and equitable, no child or young person should feel like they are isolated or missing out.

Key Measures

Decrease in CAMHS referrals from our most deprived wards



Improved SHNA self-reported wellbeing



Positive service user feedback from CYP



Theme 5 - Early Years (0-5)

"Childcare needs to be cheaper for working families"

What our families said:

Our families believe the main issues facing those in poverty are rent and bills, childcare costs and food poverty. Early years should be cheaper for families, especially childcare and activities for children (0-5 years).

Our families mentioned that some just miss out on being able to attend the holiday activity fund programme during summer holidays.

Our priorities

ALL CHILDREN REACH THEIR DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES

By supporting our children's development and providing equal access to services, such as speech and language, all children will be ready for school, have the foundations for learning and having a good quality of life. Children with SEND will be able to learn and achieve to their full potential

CHILDREN HAVE ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE SERVICES

All children in Blackburn with Darwen should have access to the healthcare they need. There should be no barriers to accessing these services and families should understand what is available for them.

FAMILIES ARE SUPPORTED WITHIN THEIR COMMUNITIES

Access to social activities and advice and wrap around support should be available where our families need it most; directly in their community. By working with our partners, Family Hubs and making every contact count, our families will have the environment to thrive.

ACCESS TO QUALITY CHILDCARE

Activities and childcare are wonderful opportunities for children to learn and grow. Keeping these services affordable is key in supporting our families.

Key Measures

Increased vaccine uptake



Developmental milestone met and children are ready for school



Increased attendance at Family Hubs



Theme 6 - Housing

"You can develop an illness if you live in a cold home"

What our families said:

Our families highlighted that along with the cost of childcare, rent and bills were putting families under pressure. The quality of housing that families are in can have a huge impact on their health and wellbeing.

What our young people said:

Our young people mentioned that people in poverty could be embarrassed to have their friends round as it would show that they were 'unequal' if they didn't have things that others did. They knew that living in a cold and damp house can have negative impacts on health and can cause stress which can affect school life.

Our priorities

HOMES ARE SAFE FOR OUR FAMILIES

Our homes should be a safe environment for our children. By providing advice, help and support on what families can do to reduce the chance of accidents and injuries at home, our children and families will have a secure space to explore develop and learn.

CHILDREN HAVE A SAFE PLACE TO SLEEP

When children and young people are well rested, they will be ready to start the school day and achieve their full potential. For our families who have children under the age of two and expectant mothers, we will ensure they have the support and resources need to follow safer sleep practices.

HOMES ARE WARM FOR OUR FAMILIES

We must ensure that we help our families, where possible, to keep their homes warm. With the cost of fuel and bills, especially during the winter months, some of our families have to make the choice between heating and eating. Going home to a cold house has negative impacts on your health.

Key Measures

Increased referrals into the Healthy Homes service



Fewer homes experiencing damp and mould



Decreased A&E admissions from accidents in the home and asthma



Effective governance is crucial for the success of our Child Poverty strategy. Clear roles, responsibilities and communication channels will enable stakeholders to work collaboratively, fostering a coordinated effort towards achieving our aims and objectives. We will build on the work already taking place on each of our six key themes by ensuring effective cooperation between our linking strategies, groups and boards.

Accountability

The Child Poverty Strategy Group will formulate the action plan with key stakeholders and provide the operational function to ensure that our objectives are addressed appropriately. This group will directly report to the Children's Partnership Board with progress on the action plan that will sit under this strategy. This board will feedback to the Health and Wellbeing Board as part of the Start Well agenda. Throughout the term of this strategy, regular updates will be given to our children and young people through the Young BwD Foundation. This will ensure that we are held accountable in delivering the work to mitigate the impacts poverty has on our children and young people

Our Reporting Structure

Regular feedback to the Young BwD Foundation

Health and Wellbeing Board

- Oversight function
- Annual Update

Children's Partnership Board

- Strategic function
- Quarterly reporting

Child Poverty Strategy Group

- Operational function

Next Steps

An action plan is being developed with key stakeholders to sit underneath this strategy. The action plan will incorporate actions that have initially been identified in consultation with our children, young people and families. This plan will be an adaptable and flexible resource to address the key themes set out in this strategy and new themes and objectives that emerge as the work develops.

An initial set of key performance indicators has been created against each key theme, and these will help to gauge our achievements. Regularly tracking and analysing these metrics will help to identify areas of improvement and ensure alignment to our vision. Continuous monitoring and adjustment based on these measures will help to contribute to an environment where all children, young people and families can flourish in Blackburn with Darwen.

Our Key Performance Indicators

The School Day

- Improved attendance
- Improved behaviour
- Positive pupil voice recorded

Food

- Improved NCMP data
- Improved oral health
- Increased number of business signed up to Recipe 4 Health around schools

Transport

- Improved road safety data
- More children and young people walking or cycling to school
- More children and young people using public transport

Stigma and Wellbeing

- Decrease in CAMHS referrals from our most deprived wards
- Improved SHNA self-reported wellbeing
- Positive service user feedback from children and young people

Early Years

- Increased vaccine uptake
- Developmental milestones are met and children are ready for school
- Increased attendance at Family Hubs

Housing

- Increased referrals into Healthy Homes service
- Fewer homes experiencing damp and mould
- Decrease in A&E admissions from accidents in the home and asthma

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