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# **SUNDERLAND CHILD AND FAMILY POVERTY NEEDS ASSESSMENT REFRESHED JANUARY 2015**

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## SUNDERLAND CHILD & FAMILY POVERTY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

(Refreshed January 2015)

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Poverty blights the life chances of children from low income families, putting them at higher risk of a range of poor outcomes when compared to their more affluent peers. (Frank Field, 2010)
- Poverty is the single greatest threat to the wellbeing of children and families. It can affect every area of a child's development - social, educational and personal. (Barnardos, [http://www.barnardos.org.uk/what\\_we\\_do/our\\_work/child\\_poverty.htm](http://www.barnardos.org.uk/what_we_do/our_work/child_poverty.htm))

Poverty devastates the lives of children and families. Around a quarter of children (23.4%) in Sunderland live in poverty, and this figure is set to rise by 2020.

Sunderland is committed to breaking the cycle of poverty experienced by children and families who live here. Children are one of the greatest assets in this city. They are the future of Sunderland – the future workers and the future parents – and to help this city thrive we must protect our children from poverty and disadvantage and the negative effects this brings.

However, we recognise that we can never end poverty for children without changing circumstances for their parents. It is parents who must provide their children with the best start in life and parents who provide the greatest role model for children throughout their lives. There are many risk factors that cause people to live in poverty, most of which are significant issues in Sunderland, including:

- High unemployment
- Low adult skills and qualifications
- High numbers of low paid jobs
- Poor health and wellbeing, particularly poor mental health
- Extremely high numbers of lone parents claiming out of work benefits
- A significant attainment gap, particularly at Key Stage 4, between pupils living in poverty and those who do not.

This needs assessment seeks to understand the depth of poverty in the city by exploring employment and skills levels, household income, characteristics of those living in poverty, the cost of living and outcomes for children and young people. It sets out actions to improve families' circumstances and mitigate the impacts of poverty for families. These are structured around the Strategic Priorities for the city: People, Place and Economy.

It is now well known that children born into poverty start their lives from a position of disadvantage and their experiences in early childhood can shape their whole future. Sunderland is worse than the national average in all but one of the indicators linked to providing children with the best start in life. This must change. We must do everything we can to support parents to provide their children with the best start in life, so that by age 5 they are ready for school.

Once at school, we need to ensure that children are not failed by the school system. All children and young people should be able to access good schools where they are engaged and able to learn. Yet too many children from low income families in this city underachieve compared to their peers, particularly at Key Stage 4. The impacts of this go way beyond school. Young people who do not achieve well at GCSE:

- are less likely to enter into further and higher education
- are at a greater risk of struggling with a low skills base going in to adulthood, meaning their potential for secure and high income jobs is decreased

- are at greater risk of long term worklessness.

This is telling in Sunderland, with high levels of young people age 16-18 who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (8%) and high Youth Unemployment (7.2% of all JSA claimants are age 18-24).

We must also improve the economy in the city to support parents into work and into well paid jobs – 17% of children in Sunderland live in households where no-one works and the average wage in the city is more than £70 a week less than the national average.

Sunderland has many economic challenges, but it also has ambitious plans to meet these challenges, including:

- The development of an International Advanced Manufacturing Park (IAMP), bringing 5,200 new jobs into the city by 2026/27
- Major redevelopment of the city centre to attract new businesses to grow the economy, increase footfall and maximise spending
- Creation of a Strategic Transport Corridor, with improved links between Nissan and the IAMP, the city centre and the Port.

In Sunderland we are seeking to ensure that as many families as possible in the city benefit from these new opportunities. This means addressing the issues set out earlier, with a particular focus on increasing the levels of adult skills and qualifications in the city and ensuring those skills meet the demands of these new businesses. It will also be important to understand the barriers to work for some very vulnerable groups, notably those suffering with mental ill health and lone parents.

Addressing poverty across the city is everyone's business and it will take a concerted effort from all agencies to support those most in need to overcome the challenges they face. The actions suggested in this needs assessment will provide a platform for partners to address poverty in the city.

In terms of the city's **Economy**, Sunderland will:

- grow its economy
- be an Employee Friendly City
- aspire to become a Living Wage City.

To support **People** in the city, Sunderland will:

- be a city with high levels of skills, educational attainment and participation
- be a healthy city
- support families to be resilient
- be an equitable city.

To improve the environment (**Place**) in which we live, Sunderland will:

- be an attractive modern city where people choose to invest, live, work and spend their leisure time.

## DRIVERS OF POVERTY

### Child and Family Poverty Indicators

Indicator	Sunderland	National	Better ↑ Worse ↓ % point gap*
Children in low income families	23.4%	18.6%	4.8 ↓
Lone parent families in low income	67.5%	69.5%	2.0 ↑
Couple families in low income	32.5%	30.5%	2.0 ↓
Children in workless households	19%	14%	5.0 ↓
Children in working households	43%	53%	10.0 ↓
Average gross weekly income	£450.60	£520.70	£70.10 ↓
Working age population with no qualifications	29.1%	22.5%	6.6 ↓
Youth people aged 18-24 claiming JSA	7.2%	3.7%	3.5 ↓
Long term sick rate	33.1%	21.4%	11.7 ↓

\* unless otherwise stated

### Best Start in Life Indicators

Indicator	Sunderland	National	Better ↑ Worse ↓ % point gap
Life expectancy (age in years)	77	79.2	2.2 ↓
Infant mortality per 1000 live births	3.1	4.3	1.2 ↓
Low birth weight	8.7%	7.3%	1.4 ↓
Smoking during pregnancy	18.5%	12.7%	5.8 ↓
Breastfeeding – initiation rate	60.3%	73.9%	13.6 ↓
Breastfeeding at 6-8 weeks	27.8%	47.2%	19.4 ↓
Immunisation rates:			
• MMR Vaccination age 2	94.9%	92.3%	2.6 ↑
• Dtap / IPV / Hib vaccination (2 years)	98.2%	96.3%	1.9 ↑
Children aged 5 with one or more decayed, missing or filled tooth	36.9%	27.9%	9.0 ↓
Prevalence of obese children in Reception	11%	9%	2.0 ↓
Prevalence of obese children in Year 6	21%	19%	2.0 ↓
A&E Attendances (0-4 years) per 1000 of the population	1,282.1	510.8	771.3 ↓
Mothers aged 18 or less as a percentage of all deliveries	2.7%	1.2%	1.5 ↓

### Education and Skills Indicators

Indicator	Sunderland	National	Better ↑ Worse ↓ % point gap
EYFS Good level of development	53%	52%	1.0 ↑
FSM Attainment gap KS2 (% points)	20	19	1.0 ↑
FSM Attainment gap KS4 (% points)	35	27	8.0 ↓
FSM progression to higher education	12%	21%	9.0 ↓
Gap in progression to higher education – FSM/non-FSM (percentage points)	24	18	6.0 ↓
Not in Employment, Education or Training	8%	-	n/a

## PURPOSE OF THIS NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The purpose of this needs assessment is not only to meet our statutory obligations as set out in the Child Poverty Act 2010, but it is to update our understanding of poverty in Sunderland, who is affected by it and in what ways. It considers common factors from child and family poverty publications and research and builds up a local picture. It looks at what we already have in place in the city to combat poverty and makes some recommendations of how we can continue to mitigate the impacts of poverty for children and families and reduce poverty in the longer term.

## WHAT IS CHILD AND FAMILY POVERTY?

In simple terms, children in poverty live in families that do not have enough income to pay for the basic necessities of everyday life. There are many reasons why children and families live in poverty, and the common factors include:

- i. low parental qualifications and skills
- ii. worklessness, income from benefits, underemployment and low paid jobs
- iii. poor health (be that poor physical or mental health, including drug and alcohol addiction, or those who have a disability)
- iv. lone parent families
- v. minority ethnic backgrounds
- vi. caring responsibilities
- vii. good quality, affordable housing
- viii. having the best start in life
- ix. young people's educational achievements and skills
- x. cost of living.

It is often difficult to ascertain whether these risk factors are the cause of poverty for families or the consequence of it. This answer of course will be different for all individuals and families, and in many cases families' circumstances will be complex and multi-faceted.

Poverty is not necessarily a permanent state; families move in and out of poverty as their circumstances change, for example through loss of work, illness or the breakdown of a relationship, but to name a few. The nature of poverty itself is also changing: in-work poverty is on the increase and around two thirds of the population of children who live in poverty, come from families where at least one adult works. More families are also experiencing material deprivation because of the rising cost of living and stagnating wages, which impacts upon families' ability to purchase goods and services (Source: HBAI, 2012/13).

Whatever the reasons families find themselves in poverty, one thing is very clear: poverty has devastating effects on the lives of children. It permeates every aspect of their lives, and can have a damaging impact on their development.

This is particularly true for children who are *born* in to poverty. Research shows that children's experiences in their early years have a lasting effect on them throughout the whole of their lives, and as well as starting from a position of disadvantage compared to their peers, the inequality gaps widen throughout their lives (Marmot (2010), Field (2010), Allen (2011), Munro (2010, 2011)). It is essential therefore that public services focus their resources on supporting disadvantaged families with very young children as early as possible to provide them with the **best start in life** and break the cycle of poverty.

Reducing child poverty must be driven at a national level as many of the factors that influence a family's ability to control their own prosperity is linked to government policy, i.e. welfare reform. All political parties are committed to the goal of ending child poverty by 2020, however, given the current economic situation, difficult labour market conditions and the approach to reform of the

welfare system this will be a virtually impossible target to meet. It is predicted, in fact, that child poverty will rise between 2010 and 2020. The Institute of Fiscal Studies forecasts an increase in the number of children in relative poverty from 2.6 million in 2009/10 to 2.9 million in 2015/16 and 3.3 million by 2020/21 (measuring income before housing costs) *Child and Working Age Poverty 2010 to 2020, Institute of Fiscal Studies, 2011.*

There is still much that can and must be done at a local level to address some of the root causes of poverty and mitigate its impact. Despite the best efforts of this Council and its partners to do just that, too many children and their families in Sunderland continue to live in poverty, and child poverty levels in the city remain significantly higher than the national average – 23.4% compared to 18.6% in England. The Child Poverty Action Group carried out a study in 2012, which estimated the cost of poverty for each individual local authority, and reports that Sunderland spends an extra £187 million per annum on the effects of child poverty.

This cannot continue. We must halt this level of spending and ensure that the predicted rises in poverty are minimised. Poverty is everyone's business and it will take the efforts of all partners to realise change in the city.

## **HOW IS CHILD AND FAMILY POVERTY BEING ADDRESSED NATIONALLY?**

### **Child Poverty Act 2010**

At a national level all political parties are committed to achieving the goal of ending child poverty by 2020. This commitment is given credibility through the Child Poverty Act 2010, by giving it its place in law. The Act makes child poverty everybody's business by placing a duty on local authorities and other delivery partners to work together to tackle child poverty.

### **National Child Poverty Strategy 2014-17**

In 2014, the Government published its second Child Poverty Strategy which focuses not only on poverty, but also on breaking the cycle of deprivation to reduce future poverty levels. It sets out its actions to tackle child poverty and meet the targets set in the Child Poverty Act, around three priorities:

- Supporting families into work and increasing their earnings
- Improving living standards
- Preventing poor children becoming poor adults through raising their educational attainment.

## **MEASURING CHILD POVERTY**

Child poverty is currently measured using the definitions in the Child Poverty Act 2010. They are:

- **Relative low income:** The proportion of children living in households where income is less than 60 per cent of median household income.
- **Absolute low income:** The proportion of children living in households where income is less than 60 per cent of median household income in 2010/11 uprated by RPI inflation.
- **Combined low income and material deprivation:** The proportion of children who are in material deprivation (i.e. the family lacks the ability to purchase key goods or services) and live in households where income is less than 70 per cent of median household income.
- **Persistent poverty:** The proportion of children living in households where income is less than 60 per cent of median household income before housing costs (BHC), for at least three out of the last four years (this target is the subject of a consultation).

This needs assessment concentrates on the **relative poverty indicator** when discussing the local picture. There is very little data, if any, available at a local level for the other measures. However, they are important definitions when looking at the effects of poverty and low income on the lives of children and families.

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## CHILD AND FAMILY POVERTY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

### Prevalence of Child and Family Poverty in Sunderland

This section provides a snapshot of child and family poverty at a citywide and local level, based on HMRC data from 2012, and describes who lives in poverty across the city.

- Almost one in four children in Sunderland (23.4%) are living in poverty. This is slightly higher than the North East average (22.6%) but considerably higher than the national average (18.6%).
- Poverty is more extreme in some areas of the city than others, with Hendon and Southwick wards having the highest levels of poverty at 39.5% and Fulwell the lowest with only 3.2%.
- The West Area of Sunderland has the highest levels of poverty and Washington the lowest (see Fig. 1).
- Figure 2 demonstrates the depth of the city's poverty levels, depicting pockets of deprivation at Lower Super Output Area level. It shows swathes of poverty in the areas of the city which are densely populated. The areas shaded in orange, red or brown indicate those areas with levels of poverty above the Sunderland average.
- Eleven out of the 25 wards in the city have a greater proportion of children living in poverty than the city average.
- The majority of children living in poverty in Sunderland are below the age of 10, with a little over half of these aged 4 or under (see Fig 3). This is in line with the UK, Great Britain and England averages. It is also interesting to note that over the last five years, poverty levels in the 0-4 age group has risen steadily (see Fig 4). Together these figures reiterate the need to support families with very young children, to provide them with the best start in life and to lift themselves out of poverty.
- 17% of children in the city live in workless households (where no parent works) compared to 15% nationally.
- 47% live in working households (where all parents work) compared to 51% nationally.
- A very high proportion of children in poverty live in households claiming either Income Support (IS) or Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) (87%) and the remainder in families claiming Working Tax Credit and/or Child Tax Credit.
- More than two-thirds of children in poverty (67.4%) are from lone parent families.
- Of those lone parent families living in poverty, an extremely high proportion are claiming JSA/IS (90%), which is consistent with the national average (88%). In 2012, there was a jump of 3 percentage points compared to 2011; this increase was also reflected nationally.
- Most children in poverty (32%) live in families with two children (further information regarding sibling groups is provided in Figure 5).
- There are around 40,000 Housing and/or Council Tax Benefit claimants in the city at any one time. A snapshot using local data from September 2014 shows that 10,413 households with children were in receipt of one or both of these benefits (see Figure 6 for more information). This can be broken down as:
  - 3,225 couple households, with a total of 5843 children, and

- 7188 lone parent households, with a total of 11,885 children.

Based on sheer numbers, these figures support the theory that children in lone parent families are at a greater risk of being in poverty than those in couple families.

**Figure 1 – Child Poverty data at Ward and Locality Level**

**SUNDERLAND WEST**

Wards	% of Children aged 0-19 in low income families
Barnes	16.4%
Pallion	35.8%
St Anne's	31.5%
St Chad's	20.7%
Sandhill	30.3%
Silksworth	23.5%
<b>Child Poverty rate for West Locality</b>	<b>26.8%</b>

**SUNDERLAND NORTH**

Wards	% of Children aged 0-19 in low income families
Castle	27.6%
Redhill	33.8%
Southwick	39.5%
Fulwell	3.2%
St Peter's	13.4%
<b>Child Poverty rate for North Locality</b>	<b>25.2%</b>

**SUNDERLAND EAST**

Millfield	27.2%
Hendon	39.5%
St Michael's	10.7%
Ryhope	20.3%
Doxford	10.0%
<b>Child Poverty rate for East Locality</b>	<b>23.0%</b>

**WASHINGTON**

Washington Central	17.3%
Washington East	17.1%
Washington North	27.5%
Washington South	13.7%
Washington West	19.0%
<b>Child Poverty rate for Washington</b>	<b>19.4%</b>

**COALFIELDS**

Copt Hill	23.3%
Hetton	27.3%
Houghton	20.1%
Shiney Row	17.9%
<b>Child Poverty rate for Coalfields</b>	<b>21.8%</b>

Figure 2 – Child Poverty data at Lower Super Output Area level

Percentage of children in low income families  
– all children

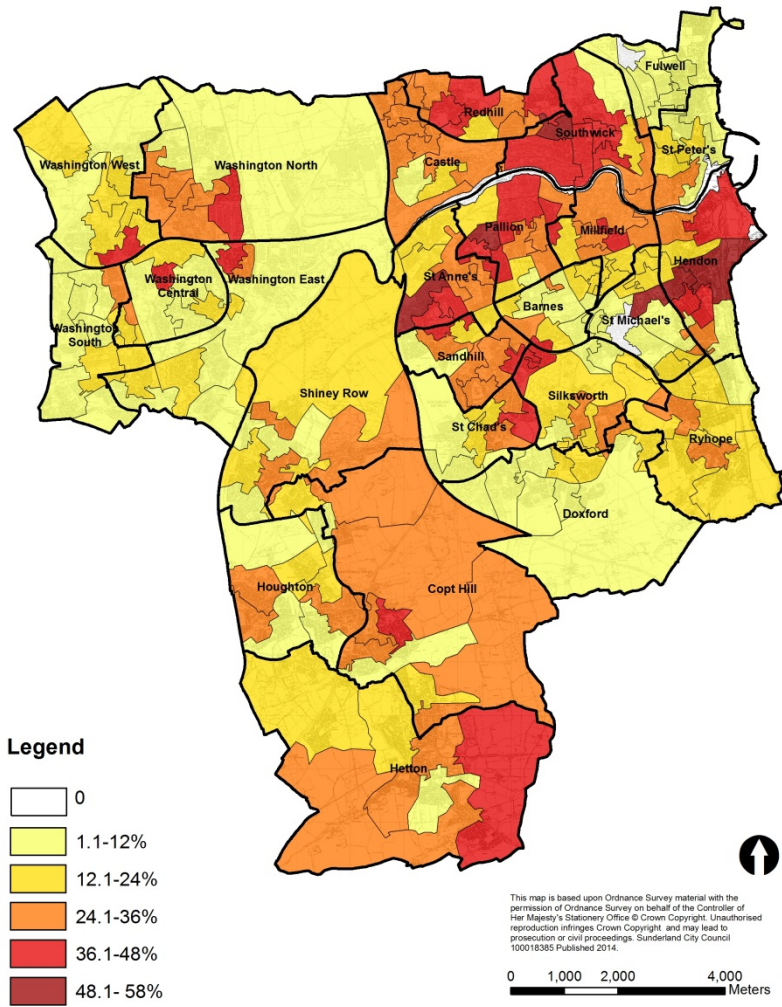


Figure 3 – children living in poverty in Sunderland, by age (2012)

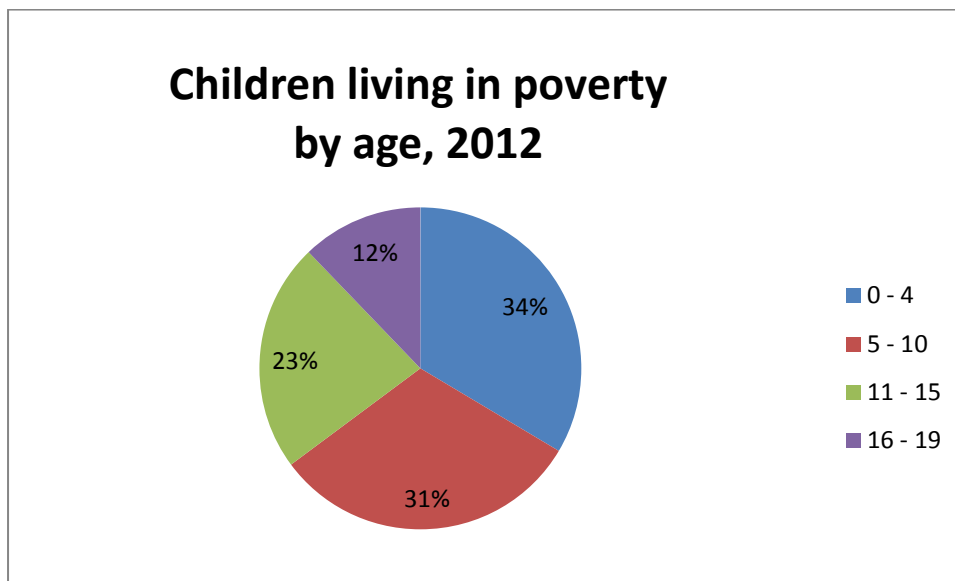
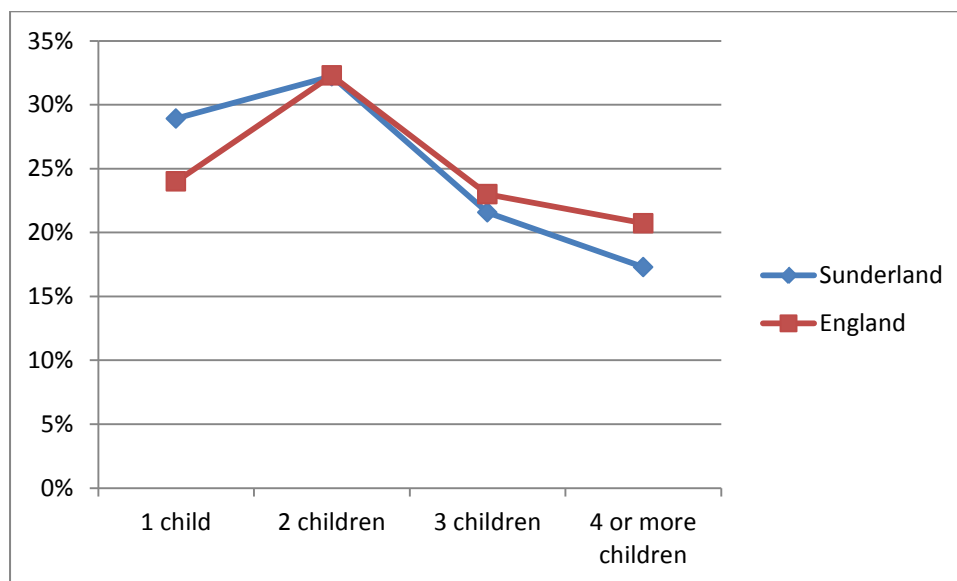


Figure 4 – children living in poverty in Sunderland, by age (2008-2012)



**Figure 5 – Families in poverty by number of children**



**Figure 6 - Housing and Council Tax Benefit Claimants, by family type (Snapshot as at 18 September 2014)**

Couples	Number of dependants									Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
16-24	157	78	24	2	0	0	0	0	0	261
25-34	254	423	286	103	35	9	4	2	1	1,117
35-44	286	330	240	130	51	15	4	1	1	1,058
45+	437	213	88	30	13	6	1	1	0	789
<b>Couples total</b>	<b>1,134</b>	<b>1,044</b>	<b>638</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3,225</b>

Lone parents	Number of dependants									Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
16-24	837	224	34	4	1	0	0	0	0	1,100
25-34	935	994	423	112	27	4	1	0	0	2,496
35-44	1,248	696	278	101	29	4	0	1	0	2,357
45+	928	248	50	6	1	1	1	0	0	1,235
<b>Lone parents total</b>	<b>3,948</b>	<b>2,162</b>	<b>785</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7,188</b>

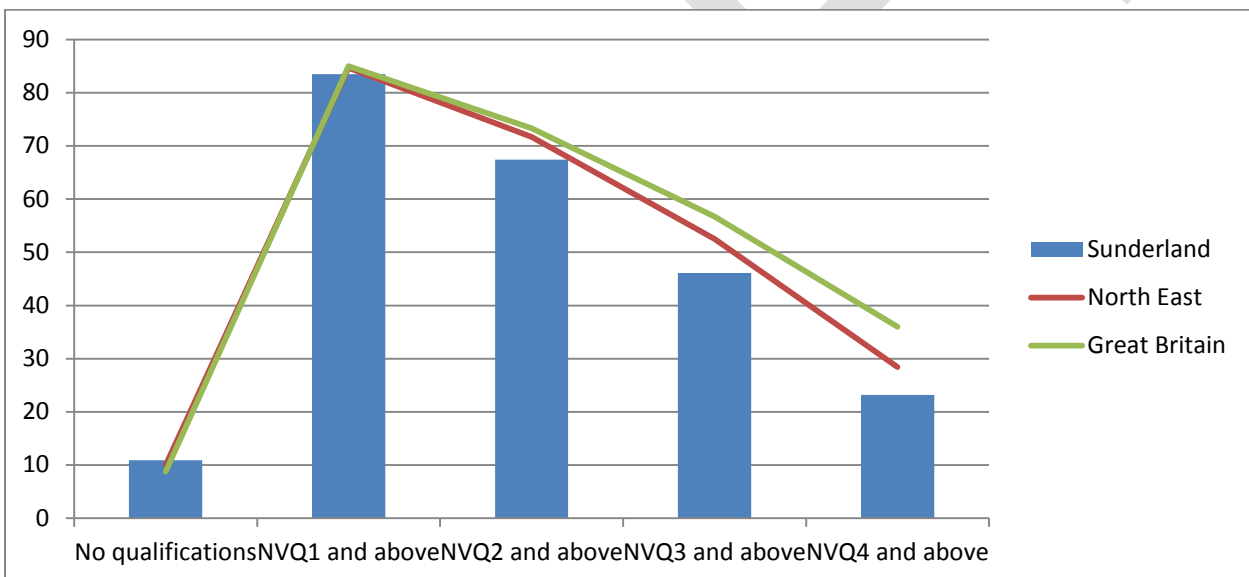
## RISK FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH POVERTY

### i. Parental qualifications and skills

Education and skills are essential for a successful and sustainable economy – a strong education and skills base, though not sufficient on its own, makes an important contribution to increasing economic and social inclusion and social mobility. Better educated and skilled people are generally more able to fulfil their potential, earn more and use their skills and expertise for the benefit of their families and wider communities. The Poverty Site ([www.poverty.org.uk](http://www.poverty.org.uk)) states that the lower a young adult's qualifications, the more likely they are to be:

- lacking but wanting paid work: around a quarter of all people aged 25 to 29 with no GCSEs at grade C or above lacked but wanted paid work in 2010 compared to one in fifteen of those with degrees or equivalent
- in low-paid work: around half of all employees aged 25 to 29 with no GCSEs at grade C or above were paid less than £7 per hour in 2010 compared to one in ten of those with degrees or equivalent.

Data from NOMIS (January-December 2014) shows that 10.8% of the Sunderland population have no qualifications, compared to 10.0% regionally and 8.8% nationally. Sunderland residents also have fewer qualifications than their regional and national peers.



Employers also have a part to play in developing skills. Responsible employers will recognise the benefits of investing in the workforce to increase skills and support employees to progress in their careers. Benefits, include increased morale, productivity and staff retention. The RSA Report *“Human Capitals: Driving UK Metro Growth through workforce investment”* in July 2014 states: *“Skills ... are a key factor in the overall potential for greater economic output of a firm or nation. Developing the nation’s human capital should be the concern of employers and managers as much as it is the responsibility of government and policymakers.”*

Poor parental education and skills are detrimental to children’s development outcomes. The home learning environment is particularly important for cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and motor development. When inadequate stimulation is provided because parents lack basic literacy and/or numeracy skills, this can lead to early disparities in development outcomes that may persist into adolescence and adulthood without effective intervention (*refer to ‘best start in life’ - section ix*).

## ii. Worklessness, income from benefits, underemployment and low paid work

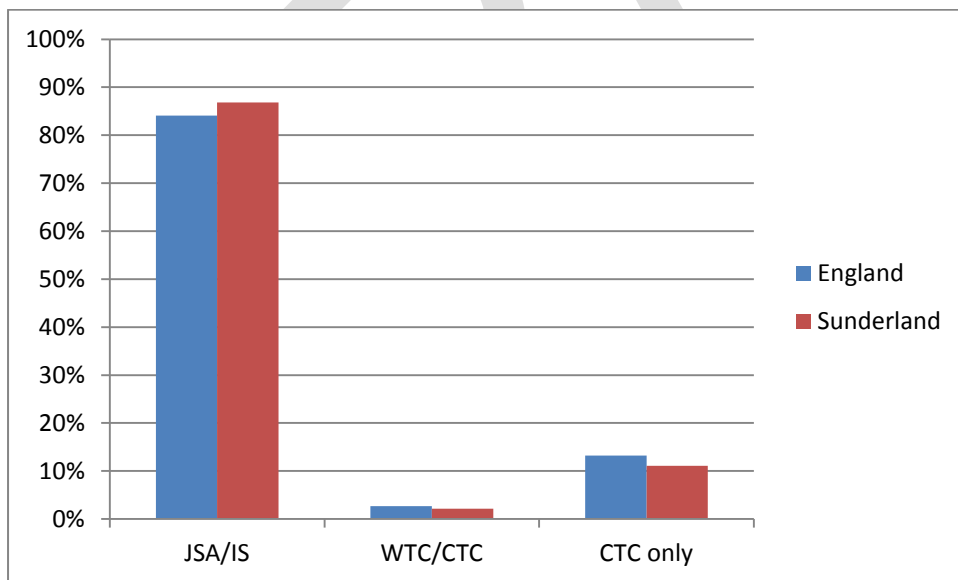
Children who live in families where no-one works are at a greater risk of living in poverty than those whose families work. It is, therefore, widely accepted that employment is the best means to provide a route out of poverty. However it must be acknowledged it holds no guarantees, and the phrase “working poor” is becoming more commonly used. The HBAI survey of 2012/13 reports that of the population of children living in poverty, around two-thirds (63%) live in households where at least one adult is in work. This can, by and large, be attributed to:

- Underemployment
- Too many low paid, low skilled jobs
- Too few opportunities for progressions
- The tax and benefit system, including the withdrawal of benefits and tax credits as earnings rise, and a reduction of tax credits as a result of welfare reform.

### - Worklessness

In 2012/13 in the UK, 38% of children in workless families were in relative poverty, compared to just 13% with at least one adult in work (HBAI). In Sunderland, 19% of children live in workless households, compared to 14% nationally (HMRC, Basket of Indicators). The impact of living in a workless household is significant, particularly where this is long term. The ONS claims that children who lived in a workless household at age 14 are around one and a half times as likely to be in poverty (as adults) compared with those where one adult was working (*ONS: Intergenerational transmission of disadvantage in the UK & EU, 2014*). In addition, children with an unemployed parent are two to three times more likely to develop emotional/conduct disorder in childhood than children with both parents in work and children in families with lower income levels are three times more likely to develop mental health problems (Field, 2010).

The graph below shows that a massive 87% of children living in poverty in Sunderland are in families claiming JSA/IS, which are key out of work benefits.



Source: HMRC

One difficulty with this data is that whilst JSA/IS are classed as key out of work benefits, parents in receipt of Income Support may be working, but this would clearly be low paid work and under 16 hours per week. It is not possible to disaggregate these figures into JSA claimants and IS claimants and so we cannot be absolutely accurate in calculating the proportion of children living in working and workless families.

In September 2014, 6,480 people were claiming Job Seekers Allowance (JSA). Whilst these figures are not exclusively related to parents, they do provide a useful indicator of citywide economic inactivity and it has to be assumed that parents will make up some of these numbers. The data also shows that youth unemployment in the city is high, with 7.2% of the 18-24 population claiming JSA. This is by far the greatest proportion of the key age groups and higher than regional and national figures (as highlighted in the chart below). Given that this age group may have young infants already or the majority will most certainly be parents in the future, it is essential that these young people are supported in to work to halt future intergenerational poverty.

### JSA claimants by age (September 2014)

	Sunderland (level)	Sunderland (%)	North East (%)	Great Britain (%)
All ages	6,480	3.6	3.4	2.2
Aged 18 to 24	1,975	7.2	6.1	3.7
Aged 25 to 49	3,305	3.7	3.6	2.3
Aged 50 to 64	1,200	2.2	2.0	1.5

Source: ONS claimant count - age duration with proportions

Note: % is number of persons claiming JSA as a proportion of resident population of the same age

### - Income from benefits

As at May 2014, key out of work benefit claimants in the city stood at 15.3%, compared to 13.6% regionally and 10.2% nationally. Most notable is the number and rate of people claiming ESA and Incapacity benefits in the city. At 9.3% this is more than twice the rate of any other benefit claimed and is considerably higher than the north east region and national rates. This demonstrates a need to understand the barriers to employment for vulnerable groups and adopt an approach to remove these barriers that is holistic and tailored to the needs and capabilities of the individual.

### Working-age client group - key benefit claimants (May 2014)

	Sunderland (numbers)	Sunderland (%)	North East (%)	Great Britain (%)
Total claimants	33,970	19.1	17.1	12.9
<b>By statistical group</b>				
Job seekers	6,900	3.9	3.6	2.4
ESA and incapacity benefits	16,580	9.3	8.0	6.2
Lone parents	2,910	1.6	1.5	1.2
Carers	3,950	2.2	2.0	1.4
Others on income related benefits	920	0.5	0.5	0.3
Disabled	2,350	1.3	1.3	1.2
Bereaved	360	0.2	0.2	0.2
Key out-of-work benefits <sup>†</sup>	27,310	15.3	13.6	10.2

Source: DWP benefit claimants - working age client group

<sup>†</sup> Key out-of-work benefits includes the groups: job seekers, ESA and incapacity benefits, lone parents and others on income related benefits.

Note: % is a proportion of resident population of area aged 16-64

The Coalition Government has undertaken an extensive review of the welfare system since 2010 including:

- Changes to Housing Benefit
- Overall Benefit cap
- Removal of the spare room subsidy ('bedroom tax')
- Disability Living Allowance changed to Personal Independence Payments
- Changes to Council Tax Benefits to localised schemes.

In addition to this, Universal Credit will be rolled out in 2015, which will replace the following benefits with one single payment:

- Jobseeker's Allowance
- Housing Benefit
- Working Tax Credit
- Child Tax Credit
- Employment and Support Allowance
- Income Support.

When Universal Credit is fully rolled out, there will be a number of implications for families including frequency of payments changing from weekly to monthly, couples who usually receive separate benefits will now receive one combined payment for the household and families now being responsible for paying rent to landlords in full, leading to concerns that families who are struggling to make ends meet, might choose to use this money to buy food and/or fuel, leaving them at risk of rental arrears, or even facing eviction.

More detailed information about benefits and support available to families in this area is dealt with in the JSNA around Financial Resilience and Welfare Reform. In addition, at Annex A of this needs assessment there are two case studies which set out the experiences of families affected by the Benefits Cap.

#### - **Underemployment**

In April to June 2014, 9.9%, or 3.0 million, of those employed in the UK were underemployed (i.e. those people who are in employment but want to work more hours), according to the Office of National Statistics. Whilst local data is not available for comparison purposes, the ONS does report that the North East region had the highest percentage of underemployed workers in 2013 at 11.5%. In addition, 21.1% of people who worked in elementary occupations were underemployed, making this the occupation group with the highest percentage of underemployed workers. This occupation group is commonly associated with low skill and low paid work.

#### - **Low pay**

The "*Low Pay Britain 2014*" report (Resolution Foundation) calculates low pay as £7.69 or less. This is equal to two-thirds or below of gross median rate of pay (i.e. the relative poverty measure). They report that 22%, or 5.2m workers in Britain earned less than this threshold, which is not surprising given that National Minimum Wage currently stands at £6.50 per hour (as at 1 October 2014).

In Sunderland, using Housing and Council Tax Benefit data, we can provide a local picture of income sources of those who have low incomes. It is interesting to note that almost 3,000 lone parents and more than 1,500 couple parents are in receipt of non-passported housing benefit. This essentially means that their earnings are at a level which entitles them to some benefit, but not full Housing and/or Council Tax benefit. A significant majority of those on non-passported benefits have earnings either from employers or self-employment, but this is clearly low paid work.

<b>Income Sources – Lone Parents</b>	<b>Number</b>
Employment and Support Allowance (Income Related)	944
Income Support	2,593
Jobseekers Allowance (income based)	666
Guarantee Pension Credit	39
Non passported	2,946
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,188</b>

<b>Income Sources – Couple parents</b>	<b>Number</b>
Employment and Support Allowance (Income Related)	758
Income Support	365
Jobseekers Allowance (income based)	481
Guarantee Pension Credit	60
Non passported	1,561
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,225</b>

*Sunderland City Council data, Housing and Council Tax Benefit, 18 September 2014*

What these figures do demonstrate is a real need to support parents, not only into employment, but also into 'good' employment – that provides adequate hours and pay levels that allow families to see real financial benefits from work and provides opportunities for in-work progression.

For those in Sunderland who do work, they earn considerably less than their national counterparts and the majority earn less than the north east average.

	<b>Sunderland</b>	<b>North East</b>	<b>England</b>
Average weekly earnings of employees	£450.60	£472.30	£520.70

*Source: Gov.uk., Child Poverty Basket of local indicators*

In addition, women earn much less than men, potentially explained by the fact a lot of women tend to be in part-time employment. The grid below shows these figures for Sunderland broken down by constituency and compared to the north east and UK.

<b>Area</b>	<b>Average gross weekly pay (median)</b>	
	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>
United Kingdom	£508.00	£327.50
North East	£465.70	£298.40
Houghton and Sunderland South	£443.90	£327.80
Sunderland Central	£428.00	£313.00
Washington and Sunderland West	£433.20	£265.40

*Source: ONS, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, 2013 Provisional Results*

Furthermore, Sunderland residents have a lower median income than Sunderland workers. What this essentially means is that the higher paid jobs in the city are, by and large, taken by those who live outside of Sunderland.

### **The Living Wage**

The Living Wage is an hourly rate of income calculated according to a basic cost of living in the UK and defined as the minimum amount of money needed to enjoy a basic, but socially acceptable standard of living. In 2014 the UK Living Wage rate stands at £7.85 per hour, and the London Living Wage is set at a higher rate of £9.15 per hour to take account of the comparatively higher cost of living in the capital.

In October 2014, 1008 employers in the UK were accredited by the Living Wage Foundation as having adopted the Living Wage, with only 37 of these being from the North East of England<sup>1</sup>. In its report of June 2014, “*Work That Pays*”, the Living Wage Commission estimated that 45,500 employees had benefitted from the scheme to date, however, another 5.2 million employees still earn below the Living Wage.

The report states that the benefits of paying the living wage are multiple:

- employees report massive life changes, such as being able to pay bills on time, provide decent food for their families and being able to work fewer and more acceptable hours enabling them to spend more time with their families
- employers report benefits such as increased staff morale, lower sickness rates and in some cases increased productivity
- public policy – the Commission reports potential savings to the Exchequer of up to £4.2 billion in increased tax revenue and a reduction in in-work benefits.

The Living Wage Commission makes nine recommendations in its report, including:

- The UK government should make it an explicit goal to increase the take-up of the voluntary Living Wage to benefit at least 1 million more employees by 2020
- The UK and devolved governments should ensure that all directly employed public sector employees are paid a Living Wage
- Central and local government should support the Living Wage by championing it to employers across the UK.

Further information regarding the Living Wage Foundation and the Living Wage Commission can be found at: <http://www.livingwage.org.uk>

Sunderland City Council will, in late 2014, consider proposals to implement the Living wage from April 2015.

In summary, employment is still regarded as essential to improve the living standards of low income families. However it is recognised that to significantly reduce poverty levels requires ‘good’ jobs, with decent pay and sufficient hours to be able to earn a wage to support a family. Employment should also be flexible for parents of very young children, and a good infrastructure to support parents into work is essential, e.g. affordable childcare.

The charity, Save the Children, recommends that the Government:

- Sees that unemployed parents get all the help they need to get a job – help with getting high-quality childcare, training, the guarantee that work will pay more than benefits, and, crucially, making sure decent, flexible jobs are available to apply for
- Ensure that those in work are not being paid below the poverty line, by backing the Living Wage and increasing the minimum wage.

### **iii. Poor health**

The links between health and poverty are unmistakable and the importance of reducing health inequalities is convincingly set out by Michael Marmot in his review of Health Inequalities, “Fair Society, Healthy Lives”. Marmot raises the concept of a social gradient in health meaning that the lower a person’s social position, the worse their health. Marmot reports that “*health inequalities result from social inequalities*” and that action to reduce health inequalities would benefit society in

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.livingwage.org.uk/who-accredited>

many ways, and indeed is vital for the economy. It would reduce losses from illness, increase productivity, increase tax revenue, reduce welfare payments and treatment costs. Marmot provides six policy objectives to reduce health inequalities:

- Give every child the best start in life
- Enable all children, young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives
- Create fair employment and good work for all
- Ensure healthy standard of living for all
- Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities
- Strengthen the role and impact of ill health prevention.

Marmot promotes “Give every child the best start in life” the highest prominence, saying that, “action to reduce health inequalities must start before birth and be followed through the life of the child. Only then can the close links between early disadvantage and poor outcomes throughout life be broken.”

In September 2014, “Due North”, the Inquiry on Healthy Equity for the North of England, was published. It reinforces the healthy inequalities between those living in the North of England and those in the south, and highlights that the *“burden of local authority cuts and welfare reform has fallen more heavily on the North than the South; on the disadvantaged than the affluent areas; and on the more vulnerable groups in society, such as children.”* The report describes the negative impact of unemployment on health as *“well-established”* and sets out four recommendations each with a number of actions at a local and national level. They are:

1. Tackle poverty and economic inequality within the North and between the North and the rest of England
2. Promote health development in early childhood
3. Share power over resources and increase the influence that the public has on how resources are used to improve the determinants of health
4. Strengthen the role of the health sector in promoting health equity.

In addition to these high level reviews, it is commonly understood that those with disabilities or life-limiting illnesses, and particularly those suffering with mental ill health, and those who suffer with drug and alcohol addiction, are at an increased risk of being in poverty due to worklessness or their ability to remain in work. Where parents suffer with any of these issues, the risk is ultimately transferred to children.

#### - **Disability and life limiting illnesses**

Disability is strongly connected to poverty. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation reports that disabled adults are less likely to be in work than non-disabled adults and when in work, are more likely to be in low paid work, even with the same qualifications as non-disabled adults. The impact of adult disability on children is reported in the HBAI 2012/13: 21% of children in families with a disabled member lived in poverty.

It is also true that families with disabled children are at risk of being in poverty. Many parents of disabled children are unable to work because of care responsibilities and the lack, or cost, of appropriate childcare. Families with disabled children also face considerable additional expenditure on heating, housing, clothing, specialist equipment and other items compared with other families. It costs three times as much to bring up a disabled child as it does a non-disabled child (Every Disabled Child Matters campaign). The HBAI Survey 2013/14 reports that 24% of children with a disability live in families in the bottom quintile of household income distribution and 54% live in the bottom two quintiles.

In April 2014, the independent taskforce on poverty and disability, commissioned to provide recommendations for Labour's Policy Review, reported on its findings. Among a number of measures proposed is the need for work to provide a far more effective route out of poverty for disabled people.

In Sunderland, as at May 2014, 9.3% of all claimants claimed ESA and Incapacity Benefit, meaning they have a disability or are have a long term condition meaning they cannot work. A further 1.3% claim disabled benefits. This equates to a total of 18,930 people and both benefits are higher than the England average, ESA benefits significantly so. It is not known how many children are affected by this, however Disability Living Allowance statistics show that in May 2014, there were almost 2,000 claims for Disability Living Allowance in Sunderland for children and young people (aged 0-16). Working on the premise that other poverty related indicators in Sunderland, such as employment, income and health are worse than the national average, it stands to reason that a higher proportion of disabled young people in this city live in low income families compared to other areas and that these families require additional support.

#### - **Mental health**

For people with poor mental health, not only is it more difficult for them to find employment, it is often more difficult for them to remain in work. Attendance at work may be unpredictable or long term absences may be necessary if intense treatment is required. Many employees may feel unsupported at work, mostly because of lack of understanding rather than lack of sympathy. At Westminster Health Forum's seminar in April 2014, Dr Geraldine Strathdee, National Clinical Director for Mental Health set out how NHS England and its partners are tackling employment issues for patients, including a new outcome indicator for CCGs to measure the percentage of people using specialist mental health services who are in employment. NHS England reports that fewer than one in ten patients using mental health services were in work. Many more would like to try out work yet far too often are discouraged from seeking employment. This new measure will hopefully provide accurate information about the depth of unemployment for those with poor mental health and identify the types of support services required to help them move into work and maintain employment.

In Sunderland the latest figures on the NOMIS website from May 2014 show that there were 16,580 claimants of ESA and Incapacity Benefits. That is 9.3% of claimants, compared to 6.2% nationally. Of those, 6450 (39%) were claiming for mental or behavioural disorders, demonstrating that mental ill health in Sunderland is a significant issue (*Source: Adults Partnership Board, Mental Health Trailblazer Report, October 2014*).

#### - **Substance misuse**

Substance misuse is often perceived to be a problem for those living in poverty. While it may be assumed that those who do misuse drugs and alcohol are at greater risk of worklessness or may find it difficult to remain in steady employment, official statistics from DWP show that in 2013 there were 2.2% of benefit claimants for Employment and Support Allowance, Incapacity Benefit and Severe Disablement Allowance where the primary disabling condition was for **alcohol use** and 1.4% for **drug use**. The direct links to poverty are, therefore, tenuous.

Nevertheless, Sunderland faces significant challenges in relation to alcohol use in the city. The 2012 Local Authority Alcohol Profiles (LAPE) for England show that Sunderland is significantly worse than the England average for 16 out of the 20 measures it uses. It is not possible to determine from this how many families with children are affected. However, we do know that there were 1738 people presenting to substance misuse services in Sunderland in the year to 31 July 2014, and 18% (306) of these had a child or children living with them.

#### **iv. Lone parent families**

There were almost 1.9 million single parent households in the UK in 2013. Children living in lone parent families are twice as likely to live in relative poverty as children in couple families. They are

also more likely to experience inequalities than couple families. Gingerbread (October 2014) reports:

- 43% of children in single parent families are poor, compared to 22% of children in couple families
- Over half of single parents are in work (59.2%), up 14.5 percentage points since 1997. In the same period, the employment rate of mothers in couples has risen three percentage points to 71%
- Paid work is not a guaranteed route out of poverty; the poverty rate for children in single parent families where the parent works part-time is 30% and 22% where the parent works full-time
- Where single parents are not working, this is often because there are health issues that make work difficult: 33% of unemployed single parents have a disability or longstanding illness and 34% have a child with a disability.
- Single parents rely heavily on informal childcare. Working single parents paying for childcare are much more likely than working couples paying for childcare to find it difficult to meet childcare costs (32% compared to 22% of couples where one partner is in work, and 20% of couples where both work).

In addition Brown and Moran, University of London, report that single parents, particularly single mothers, are more likely to suffer from depression than their counterparts who are in a relationship. This will make their ability to find and remain in employment much harder.

The think tank *Policy Exchange*, has found that almost a quarter of all single parents are not in any kind of work, with the average single parent household claiming twice as much in benefit support as the average two parent household. The report, *Parenting Alone: Work and welfare in single parent households (January 2014)*, states that the likelihood of single parents being employed can be attributed to when they had children and to their skills levels. The younger a lone mother had their child(ren) the less likely they are to be in work or looking for work. This also links to qualifications. The report states that “84% of lone parents who have left education and have degrees are in work” however this drops to 54% for those who left education with only GCSE level qualifications and 26% who left with no qualifications.

The report argues that in order to reduce spending on welfare, lone parents – particularly young single mothers – need much more support to gain employment than is currently offered.

In Sunderland, more than two-thirds of children who live in poverty (67.4%) are from lone parent families. Of those, 90% are in households claiming JSA/IS; this is consistent with the national average. In 2012, there was a jump of 3 percentage points compared to 2011; this increase was also reflected nationally.

#### **v. Minority ethnic backgrounds**

People from minority ethnic groups living in the UK are at greater risk of poverty than others. This was particularly the case for households headed by someone of Pakistani or Bangladeshi ethnic origin (HBAI 2012/13).

Whilst all of the common factors of poverty are present in families from ethnic backgrounds as they are for those from non-ethnic backgrounds, i.e. worklessness, low-income, money worries, material deprivation, social isolation, poor health outcomes, low qualifications and skills etc., there are differences in the experiences of poverty depending on the ethnic background. For example, Joseph Rowntree Foundation reports that those from Bangladeshi and Pakistani communities do not appear to be lacking informal social contact, but Black Caribbeans and Black Africans, particularly women, do. Also, Caribbeans experienced the greatest levels of anxiety about finances. The Institute of Race Relations has gathered a variety of data relating to poverty and ethnicity, including the following facts:

- In 2010, nearly three-quarters of 7-year-old Pakistani and Bangladeshi children and just over half of those black children of the same age were living in poverty. This compares to just one in four white 7-year-olds
- In June 2012, 7.3% of White people, 15.5% of Black (African or Caribbean) people and 17.3% of people with mixed ethnicity, of working age (16-64), were unemployed
- In October 2012, 23% of black males aged 16-24 were unemployed, compared to 13% of white males in the same age group
- Health inequalities are linked to unequal access to healthcare. Some BME groups face considerable barriers to healthcare.

Sunderland has far lower BME population than then national picture. Only 4.1% of people living in Sunderland come from a BME background (compared to 14.6% nationally), with Bangladeshi's being the biggest BME group. Sunderland's BME make-up has increased since 2001 by 2.2% with the greatest increase coming in the Asian/Asian British population. [Source: 2011 census].

The BME population in Sunderland tends to be concentrated in pockets of the city. Sunderland East has a significantly higher BME population than any other area in the city at 9.8%, and the child poverty figure in that locality is 23% - in line with the city average (23.4%). Two wards within Sunderland East have the highest concentrations of BME communities in the city and also some of the highest levels of child poverty. Millfield has a BME population of 23%, with child poverty rates of 27.2%. The Hendon ward has a BME population of 11% with one of the highest child poverty rates in the city at 39.5% (HMRC).

This data does indicate that it is likely that support for BME communities to tackle poverty is necessary. It is, however very difficult to draw any accurate conclusions from this, as Sunderland does suffer from high levels of deprivation and there are wards in the city with very high levels of child poverty, yet very low levels of BME populations.

#### **vi. Caring responsibilities**

It is estimated that one in seven people in the workforce have caring responsibilities, so it is important to ensure that they can continue to work as well as undertake their caring role. However many carers feel that they cannot continue to work, or feel disadvantaged in the workplace resulting in 1 in 5 carers giving up work, negatively impacting upon their own financial circumstances. This is estimated to be worth around £750m to £1.5bn per annum in earnings, which has a knock on effect on the economy.

Going out to work, or maintaining education, not only provides financial benefit, but can provide a carer with a sense of wider value and connection with the local community. It provides a break from their caring role and social contact that helps maintain their wellbeing.

This is recognised in the Government's Carers Strategy 2010, "*Recognised, valued and supported: Next steps for the Carers Strategy*", which identifies a range of priorities for carers, including:

- enabling those with caring responsibilities to fulfill their educational and employment potential
- personalised support both for carers and those they support, enabling them to have a family and community life
- supporting carers to remain mentally and physically well.

In Sunderland there are 4,090 people claiming benefits for caring for others (NOMIS, August 2014). It is thought, however, that the overall figure is much higher than this. So there is a need to ensure that carers needs are considered and they are supported to fulfil their own potential.

Young carers often face disadvantage, including inappropriate caring roles, long hours of caring, social isolation and living in poverty as a result of living in a household with a disabled family member. These can all have a detrimental impact on young carers' lives, including their health and

educational achievement, which in turn impacts upon their opportunities in adulthood. So as not to become trapped in a cycle of poverty, young carers should be supported to achieve their potential and to have the same opportunities that other young people enjoy.

To enable this, the identification of young carers is extremely important. However, many young carers remain 'hidden' from health, social care and education services – partly as a result of those services needing to do more to identify them – but also because of family fears that they will be taken into care or because the young people themselves are concerned about the reactions of others and bullying by their peers.

Sunderland has a Multi-Agency Carers Strategy and action plan in place to support carers, the aims of which focus on:

- identifying carers at the earliest stage so that support can be provided if necessary
- ensuring that carers are recognised, and can help to shape the care package for the people they care for
- enabling carers to participate in employment or training if they wish to and supporting them through this
- ensuring carers have a life outside of caring and do the things they want to do
- supporting carers to stay healthy and look after their own wellbeing
- supporting young carers.

#### vii. Affordable, good quality housing

The high cost of housing in the UK has a very real impact on poverty levels, particularly in relation to material deprivation. The current measure for child and family poverty is calculated before housing costs, however once housing costs were applied, the number of children living in relative poverty in 2012/13 rose from 2.3 million to 3.7 million (Source: HBAI). Of those children in households experiencing relative low income After Housing Costs, the majority rented their homes, with 38% living in social rented properties and 33% living in private rented dwellings.

It is to be expected that families living in the social rented sector are at greater risk of living in poverty, as this sector is aimed at those with low incomes. However it is the private rented sector which presents the greatest concern, sending an additional 28% of children into poverty after housing costs, who would not ordinarily find themselves at such a disadvantage.

#### Children in poverty, by tenure, UK

2011/12	Percentage in poverty before housing costs	Percentage in poverty after housing costs	Gap
Social tenant	29%	49%	+20%
Private tenant	18%	46%	+28%
Home owners	14%	15%	+1%

Source: Child Poverty Action Group

Families turn to private rented dwellings for a number of reasons including a shortage of social housing, unaffordable house prices and an inability to raise the deposit required to purchase a home. This has led to an increase in demand for properties in the private rental sector, which is inflating the cost of rents.

High housing costs, in turn, have a major impact on the flexibility of families' budgets, causing pressure on the affordability of other essential services and items such as fuel, food, transport and clothing.

## Sunderland Social Rented Sector

Sunderland latest Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) shows that social housing renters across the city (whole population) had the lowest household income with £175 each week on average. This is compared to owner occupiers with a mortgage (couples) who had the highest of £625 on average.

A total of 27.1% of Sunderland residents live in social rented housing compared to 22.9% in the North East and 17.7% in England. Of these 7.7% are couples with children; 8.4% are lone parents. Of all households living in affordable accommodation, 27.9% (heads of households) are working either full or part time. Evidence from the 2001 census indicates that lone parents are among the groups that are over-represented compared to other tenures.

The cost of renting from a social landlord in Sunderland together with the income required for property to be affordable is detailed below:

Property Size (No of bedrooms)	Weekly rent	Min. income required for rent to be affordable (based on 25% of gross household income)	
		Weekly	Monthly
Bedsit	£59.21	£237	£1026
One	£60.42	£242	£1047
Two	£66.24	£265	£1148
Three	£70.63	£283	£1224
Four	£75.84	£303	£1315
Five	£78.35	£313	£1358

With average incomes in the social rented sector being £175 per week, it is clear that by and large incomes in the city are not at a high enough level for rent to be affordable (without Housing Benefit).

## Sunderland Private Rented Sector

In the private rented sector, 13% are couples with children and 16.1% are lone parents. Of the households who privately rent, 51.3% heads of households are either in full time or part time employment. The cost of renting from a private landlord in Sunderland, together with the income required for the property to be affordable is detailed below:

Property Size (no of bedrooms)	Earnings		Minimum Income required for lower quartile rent to be affordable (based on 25% of gross income)	
	Lower Quartile	Median	Weekly	Monthly
One			£323	£1400
Two	£450	£495	£415	£1800
Three	£484.50	£550	£447	£1938
Four	£495	£660	£457	£1980

As with the social rented sector, earnings of renters in the private sector are too low for rents to be affordable (before Housing Benefit). Average earnings of private renters in unfurnished properties is £225 per week and £325 for furnished properties. Only one bedroom properties appear to be within affordable limits compared to average earning.

Families' circumstances have been made more difficult recently with the implementation of welfare reforms, particularly around the reduction in Housing Benefit, the Benefit Cap and the Removal of the Spare Room Subsidy (also known as the Bedroom Tax). In addition to this, Universal Credit (UC) is now set to be rolled in out in 2015. Through UC, Housing Benefit will be paid directly to the claimant, leaving them responsible for paying their rent to their landlords. Families who do struggle to make ends meet have difficult choices to make every day in how best to use their limited income. Paying housing benefit to them in this way has led to concerns that families might choose to use this money to buy food and/or fuel, leaving them at risk of rental arrears, or even facing eviction.

In Sunderland, as at 8 January 2015, there were 4,574 claims affected by under occupancy with an average reduction in eligible rent of £13.33 per week. A total of 1,285 of these claims were from households with dependants of which 862 are lone parents with an average reduction in their eligible rent of £12.70 per week and 423 are couples with an average reduction in their eligible rent of £13.17 per week.

In addition, there were 74 claims affected by the Benefit Cap, 73 of which were from households with dependants. The average reduction of Housing Benefit for these households was £50.39 per week, though the reductions range between £1.37 to £143.73 per week. Of these, 23 claims currently receive a Discretionary Housing Payment to offset some or all of this reduction.

Of these 73 cases, 35 were lone parents with an average reduction in their Housing Benefit of £50.78 per week. The reductions range from £1.37 to £126.60. Ten of these claims receive a Discretionary Housing Payment to top up this reduction. Thirty-eight (38) claims were from couples with dependants with an average reduction in their Housing Benefit of £50.04 per week. The reduction ranges from £2.34 to £143.73. Of these, 13 claims currently receive a Discretionary Housing Payment to offset some or all of this reduction.

A further cause for concern for those on low incomes is the quality of housing available to them. Poor housing conditions increase the risks of poor health, for example, links between respiratory conditions and damp homes, increased risk of poor mental health and also accidents in the home. In addition, there are links between poor housing, particularly overcrowding, and educational attainment, as young people have limited opportunity to study at home. Furthermore, poor housing is likely to be found in deprived neighbourhoods, which in turn, impacts on social opportunities for young people.

### **Condition of Homes**

Poor housing conditions are compounded by the socio-economic characteristics of private sector households. As such, the economically and socially vulnerable are over represented in housing of poor condition. Sunderland's Private Sector Stock Condition Survey 2013 reports that:

- 14,079 (15.7%) of housing stock fails to meet the Decent Homes Standard
- 2,493 dwellings (2.8%) exhibit Category 1 hazards within the Housing Health and Safety Rating System
- 8,582 dwellings (9.5%) are in disrepair;
- 431 (0.5%) dwellings lack modern facilities and services
- 4,793 occupied dwellings (5.7%) fail to provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort.
- 15,191 households in the private housing sector are categorised as vulnerable. Currently 10,471 vulnerable households (68.9%) live in decent homes. This figure remains below the Government's previous PSA Target 7 guidelines for 2011 (70%) and 2021 (75%).

### **Overcrowding**

The information below shows that in terms of families, it is larger families with 3 or more children that are more likely to be affected by overcrowding.

### Overcrowding by household Type

Tenure	No Overcrowded Households	Total Households	% Overcrowded
Single Adult (under 60)	0	16401	0
Single Adult (60 or over)	0	20392	0
Couple only (both under 60)	0	13227	0
Couple only (one or both over 60)	0	24790	0
Couple with 1 or 2 child(ren)	222	14946	1.5
<b>Couple with 3 or more children</b>	<b>381</b>	<b>2514</b>	<b>15.2</b>
Couple with child(ren) aged 18+	273	9808	2.8
Lone parent 1 or 2 child(ren) under 18	259	6462	4.0
<b>Lone parent with 3 or more children</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>707</b>	<b>24.2</b>
Lone parent with child(ren) aged 18+	155	3706	4.2
Student Household	155	373	41.6
Other type of household	3480	6436	54.1

The Government has plans to improve housing through “*Laying the Foundation: A Housing Strategy for England*”. The Strategy sets puts in place the following interventions and approaches:

- **Social and affordable housing reform** which includes implementing a programme of reform to use social housing more efficient and to support those who need it most. It wants to re-invigorate Right to Buy by introducing higher level of discount, and the proposal of one for one replacement of homes sold.
- **A thriving private rented sector** through supporting investment in homes to rent and marketing new built to rent pilot sites and encourage local authorities to make full use of powers to tackle dangerous and poorly maintained homes.
- **Quality housing experience and support**, through supporting the most vulnerable households to prevent and tackle homelessness and providing a better deal for older people and to give greater choice and support to living independently.

### viii. Domestic Violence

Domestic Violence is a major concern both nationally and locally. In 2012/13, it is reported that 1.2 million women and 700,000 men were victims of domestic abuse ([www.parliament.uk/briefing-papers/sn06337.pdf](http://www.parliament.uk/briefing-papers/sn06337.pdf)). It is thought, however, that domestic violence is one of the most chronically under reported crimes, with up to half of all incidents going unreported. The Sunderland Domestic Violence Health Needs Assessment (2013) identified that whilst there are around 6,000 domestic violence incidents reported to the Police in Sunderland each year, the levels of underreporting puts the estimate at between 11,600-15,600 people. Furthermore, over 53,800 adults living in Sunderland are estimated to have experienced domestic violence at some point in their lives. This figure does not include those children living with domestic abuse.

Though it is commonly thought to be more prevalent in lower socio-economic groups, domestic violence is experienced across all social groups (see Women’s Aid and Advocacy for Victims of Abuse (AVA)). It is possible, however, that victims of abuse living in low income or economic deprivation are more likely to be identified as they potentially have more contact with support services already.

The impact of domestic violence on children and young people is devastating and one which severely affects children’s life chances. Unicef reports that children who are exposed to domestic violence have an increased risk of becoming victims or perpetrators of abuse themselves. Domestic violence also poses a significant risk of harm to children’s physical and mental health, and social

and emotional development including: problems with behaviour and language development; difficulties with school work; depression; feeling socially isolated; feelings of blame / responsibility; and negative impacts on risk-taking behaviour, social development and relationships. CAADA's two national reports '[In plain sight: The evidence from children exposed to domestic abuse](#)' (February 2014) and '[In plain sight: Effective help for children exposed to domestic abuse](#)' (February 2014) provide a comprehensive overview of the impact of domestic violence on children and young people and recommendations for commissioners to address this.

In Sunderland, the latest figures for Q1-Q3 2014/15, show that there were 2,173 referrals made to Children's Safeguarding Service, of which 1,292 related to domestic violence – that is almost 60% of all referrals.

More information about Domestic Violence, the prevalence and impact on children and families, can be found in the Safeguarding Services Joint Strategic Needs Assessment; the Safer Sunderland Partnership Strategic Intelligence Assessment; and the Sunderland Domestic Violence Health Needs Assessment.

#### **viii. Best start in life**

As discussed earlier, children born into poverty start their lives at a distinct disadvantage compared to those who do not. The independent review on poverty and life chances in the UK, carried out by Frank Field in 2010, found that children from households with low incomes or lower socio-economic status are: more likely to suffer infant mortality; more likely to have pre-school conduct and behavioural problems; more likely to experience bullying and take part in risky behaviours as teenagers; less likely to do well at school; less likely to stay on at school after 16; and more likely to grow up to be poor themselves. These associations are stronger where children experience persistent poverty rather than single episodic experiences.

Furthermore, risk factors rarely occur in isolation and where multiple disadvantages exist, that effects are most damaging. A recent study from the Institute of Education, University of London suggests that more than one in four children are growing up in families facing multiple challenges that can have a damaging effect on child development and children in families with not only multiple risk factors but also low income fared worst across most developmental outcomes (see Sabates and Dex, 2012).

It is essential therefore that all children have the **Best Start in Life**. This section highlights key indicators which relate to very young children from pre-birth, through to age 5. These are simply highlights, and there is a comprehensive JSNA relating to providing children with the best start in life. What we can see from this data (ChiMat 2014 unless otherwise stated) is that children in Sunderland fare worse than the rest of the country in all but one outcome area.

- **Life expectancy at birth** for both boys and girls in Sunderland is lower than the North East and England average: 77 years for boys (NE: 77.8, England: 79.2) and 80.7 years for girls (NE: 81.6, England 83)
- **Infant mortality rate** is 3.1 per 1000 live births, which is not significantly different from the England average of 4.3
- **Low birth weight:** Sunderland is ranked within the worst 25% of all local authorities, with 8.7% of all babies born in 2012 weighing less than 2,500 grams compared to an England average of 7.3%
- **Smoking during pregnancy:** Sunderland is ranked within the worst 25% of all local authorities, with an average of 18.5% of mothers smoking at the time of delivery in 2012/13 compared to an England average of 12.7%
- **Teenage mothers:** Sunderland is ranked within the worst 25% of all local authorities, with mothers aged less than 18 years in 2.7% of deliveries in 2012/13 – more than double the England average (1.2%)

- **Breastfeeding:** Sunderland is ranked within the worst 25% of all local authorities for breastfeeding initiation and continuation
  - 60.3% of mothers initiating breastfeeding in 2012/13, significantly lower than England average (73.9%)
  - 27.8% of mothers breastfeeding at 6-8 weeks in 2012/13, significantly lower than England average (47.2%)
- **Immunisation rates** in Sunderland are better than the England average
  - 94.9% children immunised against MMR in 2012/13
  - 98.2% of children immunised against Dtap / IPV / Hib in 2012/13
  - 96.2% of children in care had up-to-date immunisations in 2013
- **Tooth decay:** Sunderland is ranked within the worst 25% of all local authorities, with 36.9% of children aged 5 years having one or more decayed, missing or filled teeth in 2011/12 compared to an England average of 27.9%
- **Prevalence of obesity** in Sunderland at Reception and Year 6 is higher than the England average (*Source: NCMP*)
  - Reception: 24 % of children aged 4-5 were classified as overweight or obese in Sunderland in 2012/13, compared to an England average of 22.2%; and 10.6% of children aged 4-5 were classified as obese compared to an England average of 9.3%. In some areas of the city, the prevalence of obesity at Reception is between 13% and 17%.
  - Year 6: 35.5% of children aged 10-11 were classified as overweight or obese in 2012/13, compared to an England average of 33.3%; and 21.3% of children aged 10-11 were classified as obese, compared to an England average of 18.9%. In some areas of the city, prevalence of obesity at Year 6 is between 26% and 34%.
- **A&E attendances (0-4 years):** Sunderland is ranked within the worst 25% of all local authorities, with a rate of 1,282.1 per 1,000 in 2011/12 – more than double the average rate for England (510.8).

For more information about ensuring children get the Best Start in Life, please see the joint strategic needs assessment on that topic.

#### ix. Young People's Education and skills

Education and skills are essential for a successful and sustainable economy. The children and young people currently in education are our workforce of the future. Educational attainment is one of **the** most important factors in ensuring that the children of today do not become the poor adults of tomorrow. It is however, a continuing trend that young people who are eligible for free schools meals - the majority of whom will live in households with relative low income - do not achieve academically as well as their peers.

In 2013, 60% of children eligible for free school meals achieved Level 4+ at Key Stage 2 (age 11), compared to around 79% of all children. That is a 19 percentage point attainment gap. By age 16 – attainment of 5+ A\*-C Grades at GCSE – that gap stretches to 26.5 percentage points. Just 38.7% of pupils eligible for free school meals achieved these grades, compared to 65.3% of all pupils (Source: DfE, March 2014).

In relation to Level 3 qualifications (post-16), in 2013, 35.2% of young people eligible for FSM at academic age 15 attained Level 3 by age 19, compared to 59.5% of their peers, a gap of 24.3 percentage points. This gap has remained stable for the last five years. (Source: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/295696/SFR\\_10-2014.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/295696/SFR_10-2014.pdf))

Not only do young people eligible for free school meals gain fewer qualifications in compulsory and further education as their peers, but they are less likely to go on to higher education. In 2011/12 young people from low income families were almost half as likely to go on to university as their more affluent peers. Twenty-one percent of young people from low income backgrounds were estimated

to have entered into higher education, compared to 39% from more affluent backgrounds – a gap of 18 percentage points.

The publication *“Widening participation in Higher Education”* (2008) finds that regardless of socio-economic background, students with similar levels of achievement in secondary school are more or less equally likely to participate”. The report states that “the reason why poorer students do not access higher education to the same extent as their more advantaged counterparts is not because of choices being made at age 18, but because disadvantaged students do so poorly in secondary school.”

To address this issue the Government provides ‘pupil premium funding’ to schools to intensively support pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. This is calculated using free school meals eligibility as the main measure. Funding for 2014 to 2015 is set at £1,300 per eligible primary-aged pupil and £935 per eligible secondary-aged pupil.

There are also growing concerns about the skills levels required to drive the future economy, particularly the engineering, technical and digital industries. The Financial Times reported that *“the UK faces a 10-year gap in its skills profile and damage to its future economic performance unless it tackles the problem of youth unemployment.”*

The key to this is widely believed to be better partnerships between businesses, schools and other education settings to ensure that young people are ready for work both in attitude and skills. In its Global Risks 2014 report, the World Economic Forum warns of the creation of a lost generation if professional and academic educations are not better integrated to ensure young people’s skills match requirements for future jobs.

Soft skills, such as communication, team working and other interpersonal skills are also essential and increasingly valued by employers. It is these skills that are most needed on a day to day basis and increase employability.

The issues raised nationally are recognisable in Sunderland, as shown below:

### **EYFS**

- 53% of children achieved the Good Level of Development in 2013 as measured by the EYFSP. This is 1 percentage point higher than national average and the best score in the North East.
- Furthermore, 46% of children living in the 30% most deprived areas of Sunderland achieved the Good Level of Development, which is 2 percentage points higher than the national average. (Source: EYFS 2013)

### **Key Stage 2**

- In Sunderland, in 2013, 61% of pupils eligible for FSMs achieved L4+ at Key Stage 2, compared to 81% of all other pupils.
- The FSM attainment gap in Sunderland is 20 percentage points, compared to 19 percentage points nationally.

### **GCSE**

- In Sunderland, in 2013, 32.6% of pupils eligible for FSMs achieved 5+A\*-C GCSE Grades including English and Maths, compared to 67.1% of all other pupils.
- The attainment gap in Sunderland is 34.5 percentage points, compared to 26.5 percentage points nationally.
- For all pupils – not just those eligible for FSMs - Sunderland performance in GCSE STEM subjects has improved over the last three years, which is an important indicator linked to future skills in the city. However, the reduction in STEM entries over the period has exceeded the reduction in pupil numbers.

## Post-16 learning

### Level 2 and 3 at 19

- In 2011/12, 15% of pupils who were eligible for FSMs at age 15, entered higher education at age 19. This is compared to 35% of all other pupils.
- The gap in progression to higher education FSM/non-FSM in Sunderland is 20 percentage points in Sunderland, compared to 18 nationally.
- There has been a reduction in the number of A-Level STEM entries over the last three years for all pupils but a proportionately greater increase in number of STEM AS Entries in Sunderland. On balance there have been increases in Chemistry, Physics and Design & Technology entries.

### Apprenticeships

- Apprenticeships play a significant role in improving the city's skill base and success rates are good with over 75% of trainees completing their frameworks.
- However, there is a shortage of Apprenticeship opportunities in Sunderland particularly among smaller employers and there is real competition for apprenticeships in the city with 1575 people placing 3548 applications in 2011/12, with only 621 vacancies posted by employers.
- Apprenticeships are offered across three age ranges: 16-18 year olds; 19-24 year olds; and age 25+. Employers are opting to recruit more people from the 19-24 age range because of their perceived readiness for work and greater life skills. This is evidenced in the number of Apprenticeship Starts where overall, across all age groups, the number of Sunderland resident apprentices has decreased by 2.1% between 2010/11 and 2011/12. However there have been significant variations across the apprenticeship age categories. There has been continued significant growth in 19-24 and 25+ age groups but a significant decrease in the 16-18 age group. This decrease mirrors broad trends at national and regional level, however the Sunderland rate of decline for 16-18 year olds is almost twice that of the regional average.
- In addition, there has been a shift over the last couple of years from what have been the traditional apprenticeships in the city (Childcare, Construction, Customer Services, Engineering, Health and Social Care and Sales/Telesales) towards Creative and Digital, Rail Transport and Accountancy.
- There is some work for the council and its partners to raise the profile of apprenticeships with employers and to provide more information to schools to support careers advice and guidance.

### NEETs

- At the end of 2013, 8% of 16-18 years olds in Sunderland were Not in Education Employment or Training. This is in line with the North East average of 7.6% but significantly higher than that national average of 5.25%.
- The North East has the highest level of NEETs of all the English regions.

## x. Cost of Living

In addition to these risk factors, the current cost of living is having a massive impact upon the financial resilience of families. From around 2008, which marked the start of the recession, living costs have been rising at an alarming rate, whilst wages have stagnated and benefits cut, meaning that families have been squeezed financially and standards of living have fallen considerably. As reported by the BBC in June 2013 (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-23083218>), in the 12 months previous, a couple with two children have seen the cost of living rise to 3.7% and lone parents with one child to 3.3%.

It also reports that over the past five years:

- Childcare costs have risen more than twice as fast as inflation at 37%
- Rent in social housing has gone up by 26%

- Food costs have increased by 24%
- Energy costs are 39% more.

Source: *The Joseph Rowntree Foundation*

All of these things impact massively on the amount of disposable income available to families.

Each of these points is explored further:

#### **a. Childcare**

The cost of childcare can be a real burden on families and in fact can be a barrier to families working at all. OECD data (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) shows that the UK has the second highest childcare costs of OECD countries. It reports that on average, 26.6% of average family incomes in the UK are spent on childcare, compared to an OECD average of 11.8%.

The Family and Childcare Trust 2014 annual report, found: *“Even part-time childcare costs outstrip the average mortgage. For a family of two children, the cost for one child in part-time nursery care and one in an after school club is £7,549 a year compared to the average UK mortgage of £7,207.”*

Some of the other points from the report include:

- The cost of sending a child under two to nursery part-time (25 hours) is now £109.89 per week in Britain or £5,710 per year.
- For a family with two children in full-time childcare, the yearly bill is £11,700. This makes childcare costs 62 per cent higher than the cost of the average mortgage for a family home.
- Over the last five years childcare costs have risen 27 per cent – meaning parents pay £1,214 more in 2014 than they did in 2009.
- The average cost of an after-school club is now £48.19 per week in Britain or £1,830 per year.

There are a number of policies in place nationally to support families with young children to access childcare and make it more affordable. They are:

##### **- Disadvantaged 2 year olds**

From April 2013, free nursery education was offered to disadvantaged two year olds. These places were available to children who are entitled to free school meals from the term after the child's second birthday, with three intakes per year in line with school terms.

From April 2014, the criteria widened to include children who were in receipt of Disability Living Allowance, those who are adopted and looked after, and those from families with an annual income of £16,190 or less. Places are available with participating childminders, day-care nurseries, some nursery schools and primary schools with childcare on site.

##### **- Tax credits**

Some working families are eligible for extra tax credits to help with childcare costs. Single parents must work at least 16 hours a week and couples must both work at least 16 hours (subject to some exemptions) to get childcare tax credits. Up to 70% of childcare costs, up to a maximum of £175 a week for one child and £300 a week for 2 or more children, can be claimed.

##### **- Childcare vouchers**

Employers can join childcare voucher schemes which their employees can take advantage of to use towards the cost of qualifying childcare, provided by an appropriately registered childcare provider. The scheme works on a salary sacrifice basis, whereby an employee pays for childcare directly from their salary before tax and national insurance is deducted, and so make a

saving. The current scheme allows each working parent to claim up to £55 per week, or £243 per month. However, the Government has confirmed plans to extend this childcare tax break for all working families to £2,000 per child from Autumn 2015.

The take up of formal childcare by low-income families in Sunderland is 14%, compared to 15% nationally (Child Poverty Unit, October 2014).

The latest local Childcare Sufficiency Review 2012/13, shows that there were sufficient childcare places in all sectors across the city except for day care spaces for 2-3 year old in the Coalfields area, which is just 5 places under sufficiency. However, all childcare providers across the city were under-occupied.

The average weekly costs of the different types of childcare in the city are:

Type of childcare	Average Weekly Cost
Day care	£147.60
Out of school childcare	£31.56
Childminder	£127.66
Holiday childcare	Not available

From 1 April 2013 there were 817 children eligible for a childcare place under the government's scheme to provide places for **disadvantaged 2 year olds**. Data show that there are sufficient places to meet the demand in the first year, with the exception of the north area of the city, where an additional 5 places were required.

Draft data from the census of maintained and PVI settings shows that 707 children took up places in 2013, equivalent to 87%.

The number of places required from 1 April 2014 was 1,634 places.

#### **b. Food poverty and quality**

The rising cost of living combined with low incomes is creating an increase in families using foodbanks. There are a number of nationally recognised foodbanks and many, many more local independent outlets. The Trussell Trust, potentially the most well-known foodbank nationally, reports that:

In 2013-14 foodbanks:

- fed 913,138 people nationwide. Of those helped, 330,205 were children.
- Trussell Trust foodbanks gave 3 days' food to 346,992 people nationwide in 2013-14 financial year, 163% more than the previous year.
- 2 new foodbanks are being launched in the UK every week.

The Trussell Trust also details the findings of a recent survey of Welsh foodbanks as being:

- *100% clients would have skipped meals without the foodbank*
- *69% would have experienced increased depression*
- *38% would have experienced strain on family relationships*
- *15% would have committed a crime [to obtain food]*
- *8% would have used a loan shark or doorstep lender.*

All of these factors are common scenarios for families living in poverty and create barriers to achieving family resilience usually resulting in support from public services.

Sunderland's Faith Network, Sunderland Partnership and Sunderland City Council have launched the One for the Basket project to supply food to families unable to feed themselves. The project is

managed by the Faith Network using a triage system, with Sunderland Minster as the central point and signposting from there to the appropriate area-based food bank. Among the suppliers of food donations are the city council, Sainsburys Fulwell, Tesco Monkwearmouth and Asda Washington.

Data collected by the Salvation Army Southwick Community Project in partnership with One For the Basket is provided below.

#### Food parcels issued to families by age for the period January – June 2014

AGE RANGE	NUMBERS	%
Families with children under 5 years old	43	10%
Families with children between 5 and 16 years	68	16%
Families with children between 16 to 18 years	10	2%
Adults aged 18 – 60	312	72%
Adults aged over 60	1	0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>434</b>	

#### Food parcels issues to families by postcode for the period January – June 2014:

POST CODE	NUMBERS	%
SR1	29	11%
SR2	26	10%
SR3	23	9%
SR4	30	11%
SR5	90	34%
SR6	27	10%
NE37	17	7%
NE38	4	2%
DH4	6	2%
DH5	4	2%
MISC	5	2%

Each food parcel is designed to last 3 days and during the first six months of 2014, 434 food parcels were issued. The Faith Network suggests that a total of 1302 people benefitted from this.

Almost a third of the food parcels issued were to families with children, and the greatest area of need was in the SR5 postcode. This is the North area of the city, which has very high levels of deprivation.

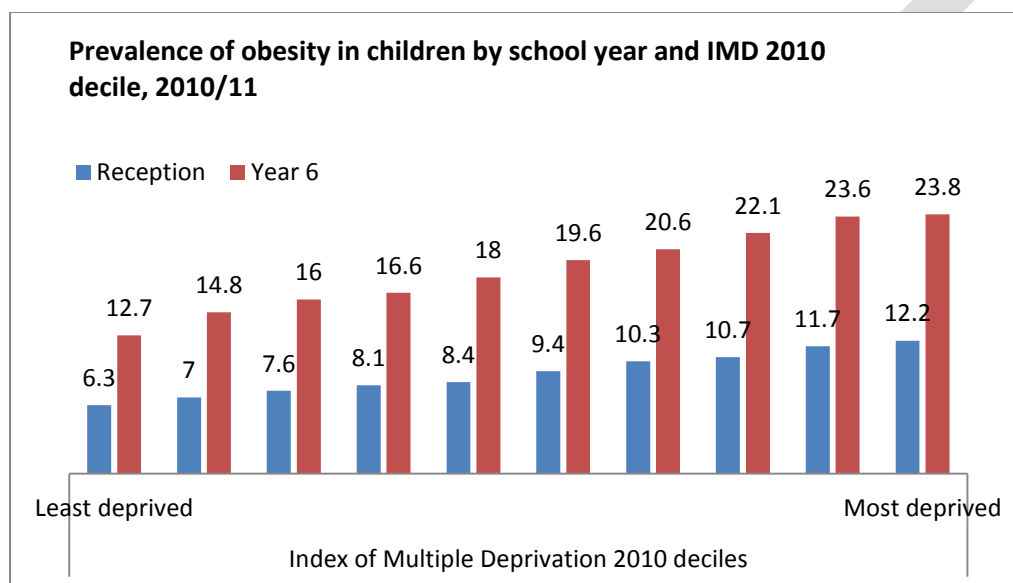
There were a variety of reasons for families requesting food parcels, but the main reasons cited related to benefits, i.e. not in receipt of benefits, changes to benefits, delays in benefits and benefit sanctions.

With concern over food poverty growing nationally, it is highly likely that there are other food banks operating across the city that do not necessarily call upon public service agencies for support. To that end, the data quoted can never be completely accurate, but it certainly provides a good indication as to the level of need across the city.

Linked to the rising cost of food, is the quality of food available to families within their budget. A report by the Institute of Fiscal Studies in November 2013, *Food Expenditure and Nutritional Quality over the Great Recession* found that families were spending more on less healthy processed food and reducing the amount of more healthy fresh fruit and vegetables they buy. The effects of malnutrition or obesity on families' health in these circumstances are a concern.

In September 2014, the Faculty of Public Health reported that “Food poverty has led to the manifestations of a poor diet, such as rickets and malnutrition, becoming more apparent” and that hospital admissions relating to malnutrition had increased by 19% during 2013/14. Dr John Middleton, Vice President for Policy at the Faculty of Public Health recommends a “national healthy food policy with greater emphasis on access, affordability and nutritional value. We also need the living wage for everyone, given the public health benefits it would bring. After all, it cannot be right that people can be in full-time work and still struggle to make ends meet.”

On the flip side of this, the National Obesity Observatory (NOO) found that obesity prevalence is strongly correlated with deprivation and is highest in the most deprived areas, as depicted in the following graph.



Adapted from the NOO Data factsheet, Child Weight, July 2012

In terms of the impact of the quality of food consumed by children in Sunderland, figures released by the Child Poverty Unit in October 2014, show that:

- 0.6% children in Reception were underweight, compared to 0.9% nationally
- 11% of children in Reception were obese, compared to 9% nationally
- 1.1% of children in Year 6 were underweight, compared to 1.3% nationally
- 21% of children in Year 6 were obese, compared to 19% nationally.

Data source: NHS 2012/13

### Holiday Hunger

The issue of Holiday Hunger is gaining momentum in the press and through charities and other organisations who work with disadvantaged families.

During school holidays, the long summer break having the biggest impact, families find it increasingly difficult to provide adequate food for their children, particularly, it is reported, those eligible for free school meals. Not only do families experience real financial pressures, but children in low income households miss out on a variety of enrichment activities compared to others, and food poverty during this time has a massively detrimental impact on young people’s academic achievements.

Reported in The Guardian on 24 October 2014, John Vincent, a businessman who was instrumental in creating the government's School Food Programme, said, "There is enough anecdotal evidence to say that some children come back to school less well nourished and in generally less good shape [than when they left] and they go backwards academically."

The action now is for charities, schools and voluntary organisations to work together to develop food based holiday schemes to alleviate these pressures for families.

### c. Fuel poverty

In 2014, 2.2 million children were living in fuel poverty in England, according to Energy Bill Revolution. This is an 11% rise – or 225,000 more children – compared to 2011. They also report that parents are cutting back on some other essential items, such as school equipment, clothing, or food for the family in order to pay for heating.

There are three major drivers of fuel poverty:

- the energy efficiency of the property
- the cost of energy
- household income.

Fuel poverty can have severe and life-long effects on children. Liddell & Morris (2010) reviewed the health impacts of tackling fuel poverty and found that *"although physical health effects on adults appear to be modest, care givers and children perceive significant impacts on children's respiratory health. There also appears to be significant effects on the physical health of infants, particularly on weight gain and susceptibility to illness. Mental health effects on adults emerge as significant in most studies, as do mental health impacts on adolescents."* (Liddell C & Morris C, School of Psychology, University of Ulster, 2010)

A household is said to be in fuel poverty if:

- they have required fuel costs that are above the national median average for their type of property
- were they to spend that amount, they would be left with a residual income below the official poverty line.

This is known as the **Low Income High Costs (LIHC) framework**.

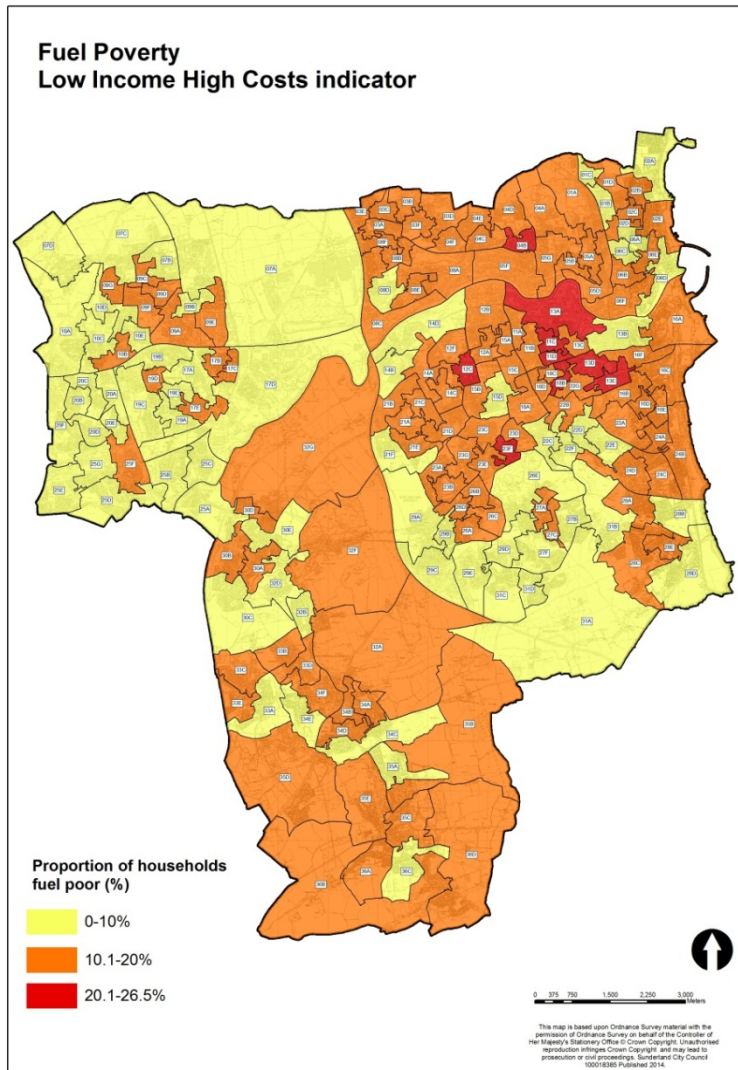
The previous definition of fuel poverty is known as the **10% indicator**. Under this, a household is said to be fuel poor if it needs to spend more than 10% of its income on fuel to maintain a satisfactory heating regime.

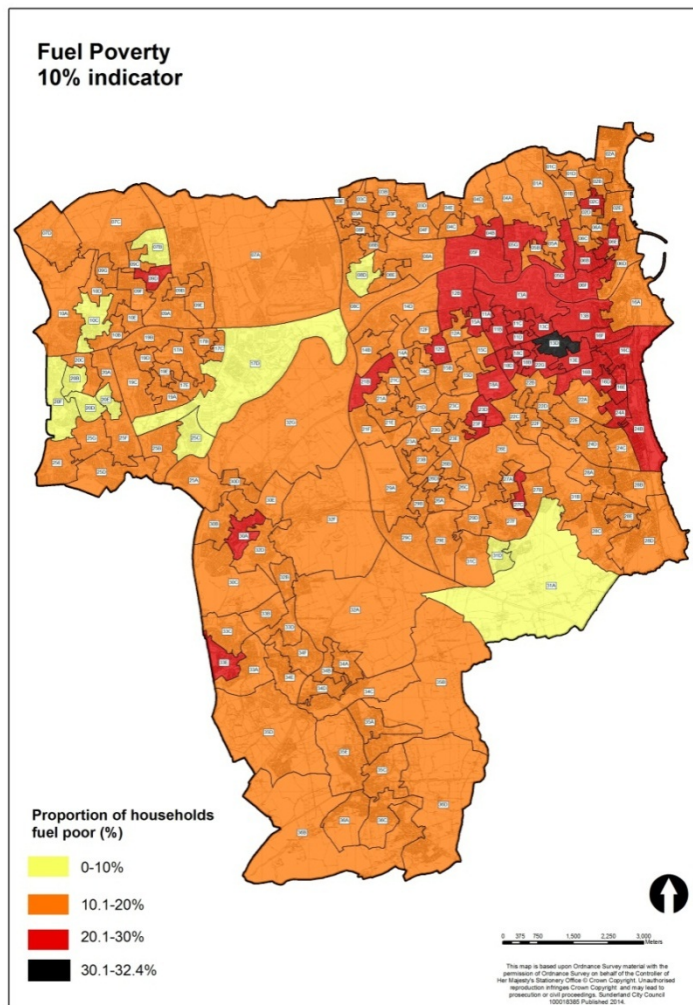
Nationally, under the LIHC indicator, there are 10.4% of households in the country living in fuel poverty. There are also 11% of vulnerable households in fuel poverty (vulnerable groups are classed as those with children, the elderly or someone with a disability/long term illness. Furthermore, 30% of couples with children live in fuel poverty and 15% lone parents (Source: DECC Annual Fuel Poverty Statistics Report, 2014).

There are a high proportion of residents in the city who are recognised as living in fuel poverty. The Sunderland average using the LIHC indicator is in line with fuel poverty in the north east (11.7% Sunderland, 11.6% NE), though is lower than the same average using the 10% indicator (16.7% Sunderland, 17.8% NE).

	Sunderland	North East
<b>LIHC</b>	11.7%	11.6%
<b>10% indicator</b>	16.7%	17.8%

As with child poverty in general, the city average masks the breadth of fuel poverty, as demonstrated by the two maps below, which provide this detail at a Lower Super Output Area for both indicators.





#### **d. Family debt**

The current economic situation – the rising cost of living, stagnating wages, changes to welfare support, etc – has led to an increasing number of reports that families are being forced to borrow money to pay for essential bills.

Recent research “*The Debt Trap: Exposing the impact of problem debt on children*”, from The Children’s Society and debt charity StepChange in May 2014 revealed that problem debt is costing the UK an estimated £8.3bn through the damage it causes to family life, mental and physical health, job productivity and other burdens placed on the state. A breakdown of this figure shows that housing accounts for £3bn, due to people falling behind with rent and mortgage payments, as well as the costs of eviction, housing benefit payments and homelessness prevention. The report estimates that if all 2.9m people in problem debt got effective help, about £3.1bn could be saved in social costs.

The same report found that a third of households in Wearside are forced to borrow money to pay for essential bills. More than 5,200 families in the city – 15 per cent of the total – are failing to keep up with household bills and loan repayments. It means an estimated 7,471 Sunderland children are living in families with problem debt, with each struggling family behind on payments by an average of £1,669. Across the city, families owe a total of £8,716,944 in bills and loans.”

A further report in the Sunderland Echo found that *“Pallion Action Group has seen a surge in requests for debt advice since the welfare reform capped benefits at £26,000, and now helps between 100 and 175 people each month ... the majority of those owe money to utility companies or have rent and council tax arrears.”*

<http://www.sunderlandecho.com/news/business/struggling-sunderland-families-owe-9million-in-unpaid-bills-and-loans-1-6780662>

The council’s commissioned advice providers are also supporting high levels of people with debt issues. In 2013/14, 620 people with debt issues were supported, with a steady increase in the number of cases seen each quarter, rising from 121 cases in Q1 to 178 cases in Q4.

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## LOCAL POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

There are a number of initiatives that are already underway in Sunderland not only to mitigate the impacts of poverty, but also to combat it. Linked to the city's strategic priorities of **People, Place** and **Economy**, these include:

- developments for economic growth in the city
- improving the infrastructure and communities
- supporting people to develop individual, family and community resilience

### i. Developments for Economic Growth

Since the mid 1980's, Sunderland's economic landscape has changed, with new industries coming to the forefront, particularly car manufacturing and customer service centres (largely based in financial, energy and telecommunications sectors). More recently the software sector has added to the industries present in the city.

Up until the start of the recession, Sunderland's economy was growing faster than the UK in general. Whilst the city's economy was initially badly hit by the financial crisis it is now bouncing back, with Nissan (Motor manufacturing) increasing output by around 50% and other sectors now starting to show signs of recovery. In Sunderland:

- Over 15,000 people are employed in Sunderland's automotive sector, with a further 13,000 in supply chain companies across the North East region
- Doxford International Business Park was opened in 1990 and there are ten major employers with a similar number of small companies, that together employ 8,000 people

The role of the Council and its partners, including Sunderland University, Sunderland College, the Business Investment Centre and Sustainable Enterprise Strategies (SES), role is to **create the conditions for growth** so that new, private sector organisations will want to invest in this city. That means getting the hard infrastructure, i.e. sites, premises, transport and digital connectivity in place, and complement this with good practice in terms of the soft infrastructure, i.e. skills and business support. We are doing this in a number of ways:

### Sunderland Economic Masterplan

The Sunderland Economic Masterplan was launched as a strategy for economic growth developed jointly by public and private sector partners in the city. At its core the Economic Masterplan seeks to build on the city's key strengths and existing assets and to demonstrate how the city will earn its living over the next decade and beyond by encouraging inward investment, manufacturing and the development of hi-tech industries. It sets out clear priorities for implementing that strategy. Its vision for Sunderland's economy is that the city will become 'An entrepreneurial city at the heart of a low-carbon regional economy'. The Economic Masterplan was written on the basis of 5 key aims:

Aim 1 'A new kind of university city'

Aim 2 'A national hub of the low-carbon economy'

Aim 3 'A prosperous and well-connected waterfront city centre'

Aim 4 'An inclusive city economy – for all ages'

Aim 5 'A one city approach to economic leadership'

While recession has hit the North of England particularly hard, Sunderland has remained focused on securing its long-term economic future. However, given the very different set of economic circumstances which now exist, the Economic Leadership Board have agreed that it is now appropriate to undertake a review of the Masterplan and align its strategy with the challenges likely to be faced by the city in the period 2014 -2020. Against a backdrop of tough economic times in the

UK, Sunderland has continued to attract investment and create jobs. Nevertheless, a number of challenges remain:

- Setting priorities against a backdrop of limited public resources
- Tackling (continued) deprivation - whilst economic activity is high amongst the working age population there are still pockets of worklessness and other forms of deprivation
- Opportunities for strategic partnering
- New relationships (NELEP)
- Getting the city centre right – making it fit for purpose
- Other spatial priorities
- Sufficiently developing the local skills base to take advantage of new higher paid jobs
- Globalisation – what challenges and opportunities does it bring
- Integrating Business Growth and Skills Development

### **City Deal**

Through City Deal, a new **International Advanced Manufacturing Park (IAMP)** is to be built in Sunderland, to the west of the A19 and across the borders of Sunderland and South Tyneside. The development will house automotive, off-shore and other hi-tech businesses. The park will build on the North East region's track record for manufacturing and exports, and is predicted to attract £295m of private sector investment and create an estimated 5,200 new jobs by 2026/27 – that is 500 new jobs every year from 2018.

Part of the City Deal offer, is that, the council will grow the economy in the city centre via a Local Asset Backed Vehicle (LABV) and Government will contribute to our Strategic Transport Corridor and the initial start-up works relating to the manufacturing park.

The LABV is a private/public partnership to develop strategic sites identified within the city, and particularly within the city centre.

The Strategic Transport Corridor provides new links between Nissan and the city centre via a new bridge across the River Wear, and also giving access to the Port of Sunderland.

All of this will not only provide a boost for the city of Sunderland and North East region, but we are now recognised by government as part of the National Growth Plan.

These newly created jobs will span the employment spectrum from entry-level to executive management posts and so it is essential that Sunderland's other strategies complement this economic growth by ensuring that people in Sunderland have the qualifications and skills to be able to take up these jobs. There also need to be a sufficient housing, retail and cultural offer to attract inward migration, for those personnel who take up jobs from other areas of the country or indeed from the international community.

### **Key Cities**

To support economic growth, both in Sunderland and nationwide, Sunderland is a member of the **Key Cities** group, comprising 22 of England's mid-sized cities. Key Cities aims to promote the agenda for economic growth nationwide and provide cities with more opportunities to boost the economic prosperity of the country. The group has agreed four priorities for development:

- The Future of City Centres
- Devolution Agenda
- Skills and Employment
- Innovative Finance.

### **North East Combined Authority**

Sunderland is a member of the **North East Combined Authority**, together with County Durham, Gateshead, Newcastle, North Tyneside, Northumberland, South Tyneside and Sunderland. The Combined Authority's ambition is to create the best possible conditions for growth in jobs, investment and living standards, making the North East an excellent location for business and enabling residents to develop high-level skills so they can benefit long into the future.

### **FabLab – Enterprise & Innovation Centre**

In July 2014, a new £9m centre to support enterprise and innovation in Sunderland was announced. Sunderland Enterprise and Innovation Hub, being developed by the University of Sunderland, is expected to attract and create over 120 innovative growth businesses over five years, generating around 250 jobs, with a further 400 created over the longer term. The new Centre, at the University's City Centre Campus, builds on the institution's strong track record in support for enterprise and innovation in the city. The Centre has been devised following collaboration with the city's businesses via Sunderland Business Group, the North-East Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), and Sunderland City Council.

Companies will benefit from laboratory space, space to trial new ideas and bring them closer to market, and space for creative businesses. They will also be able to utilise world-leading academic expertise, student and graduate support, as well as access to a network of other professionals. Within the new centre there will be a focus on the University of Sunderland's specialist areas - advanced manufacturing, health, sciences and the creative industries.

Housed within the new centre will be the North-East's first FabLab – an innovative project started by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in the States, which enables people to prototype and try out new product ideas. FabLabs are packed with 3D printers, CAD software, scanners, and CNC machines which allow entrepreneurs, small businesses, students and schools to experiment with new products, with the support and expertise to bring them to market.

### **Sunderland Business Improvement District**

Sunderland's Business Improvement District will benefit from at least £3.4 million investment over the next five years with a remit to make the city centre a cleaner, brighter, safer place with more events, marketing and promotion and a more vibrant evening economy.

### **Sunderland – A Social Enterprise Place**

Sunderland has been recognised as one of the best cities in the country in which to develop a social enterprise (September 2014). After recent research showing that two million people are employed by social enterprises and they make up one in eight of all SMEs, the city has become the largest community yet to win recognition as a Social Enterprise Place (SEP). The city now aims to grow the sector on Wearside to increase employment and provide more opportunities for people to go into business. To achieve it, the city had to prove its commitment to support and grow social enterprise; measure social enterprise activity in the area by conducting a SEP census; and share knowledge and best practice with other SEPs. Sunderland's successful bid was led by SES, a social enterprise development company. The organisation has so far supported the establishment of over 3,500 small business start-ups and 245 social enterprises over three decades. SES also recently won an RBS Award for its commitment to increasing female led enterprise in the North East via its 'Woopie' (Women Out Of Poverty into Enterprise) initiative. The project is working to help 40 disadvantaged women from across Tyne and Wear start their own business.

## **ii. Improving the infrastructure and communities**

### **Community Resilience Plan**

The Community Resilience Plan sets out how partners across the public and voluntary sector in the city will work together to improve the quality of life in our communities and create conditions in which people can thrive. This includes a key objective to "Help households to maximise their income". The

plan points to a number of protective and vulnerability factors that either promote or can inhibit community resilience. Protective factors include good mental and physical health, feelings of autonomy and sense of control over life, financially secure households (sufficient income, savings and assets), high levels of skill and educational attainment, diverse and plentiful employment and business opportunities, high value economy offering high wages etc.

### **A new City Centre Infrastructure**

There are a number of developments in Sunderland that, whilst intrinsically linked to economic growth, will radically change the design of the city centre. The changes include major development of the old Vaux site, along the south-side of the river's edge, where a new boulevard is being laid. This will be a prime location for new investment in the city, and will provide more streamlined pedestrian access to the city centre, through the re-routing of a major road.

In the Park Lane area of the city, a new city centre campus of Sunderland College is being built. As well as providing a further educational option, the new campus will increase the footfall in the city centre. The complex will also include a number of shops.

There is also the Strategic Transport Corridor, i.e. a new bridge over the River Wear providing new links between Nissan and the city centre and also giving access to the Port of Sunderland.

### **DECC Local Authority Fund – Project Brief**

In 2013, the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) approved a Sunderland City Council bid to help reduce fuel poverty and boost energy efficiency. The competition offered funding for local authorities in England to install energy insulation improvements in the homes of vulnerable local residents who are struggling with rising energy bills. The aim of this investment is to help householders cut their energy costs and keep warm. Sunderland was awarded almost £500,000 to fund cavity wall insulation (approx. 250 properties), loft insulation (approx. 250 properties) and external wall insulation (approx. 40 properties). The focus for investment was on the hard to treat / older properties, which have either never benefited from thermal efficiency improvements, or where existing measures fall below current recommended standards. Project performance has been:

#### ***External Wall Insulation:***

Households completed:	33
Estimated CO2 savings (tonnes):	1023
Estimated £ savings:	279,180

#### ***Cavity Wall Insulation:***

Households completed:	116
Estimated CO2 savings (tonnes):	2020
Estimated £ savings:	615,090

#### ***Loft Insulation:***

Households completed:	363
Estimated CO2 savings (tonnes):	3982
Estimated £ savings:	532,140

### **Sustainable Sunderland**

Sunderland is one of only 12 towns and cities in the country to have been awarded £1m from the Big Lottery Fund to tackle fuel poverty and climate change in August 2013. The funding has been used to develop a range of 'test and learn' projects, as part of a 3 year programme, with partner organisations and communities designed to make a real difference to people's lives in Sunderland. Projects are targeted at Hendon, Millfield, Pallion and Southwick: wards which suffer some of the highest levels of fuel costs in relation to income.

Sustainable Sunderland is a local network of nine private, voluntary and community sector organisations working with residents in areas with the highest rates of fuel poverty to help them reduce their energy bills and household costs. The programme starts by looking at climate and weather change by making it relevant to the communities in the four wards. The ultimate aim of the programme is to encourage behaviour change with the end result of saving money. There will be a chance for community members to learn more about the issues of climate and weather change and there will be a focus on how money can be saved for each household by reducing their energy bills. A key feature of the programme is the concept of 'One Planet Living' developed by WWF and Bio Regional.

Through the work of the partners, during the first year of activity, Sustainable Sunderland has:

- Completed 284 one-to-one sessions with customers, reducing energy bills by around £128 a year just by switching provider.
- Supported 65 households and seven businesses to look at their energy efficiency and become more 'green'.
- Assisted 32 people to move into self-employment and start their own business.
- Established Community Buildings Network, a collaboration of over thirty voluntary and community groups.
- Supported the setting up of a collective buying scheme to help participating residents save money on fuel.
- Operated a successful 'grow your own' competition engaging local residents in gardening projects.

### **Sunderland Energy Map**

The Department of Energy & Climate Change (DECC) recently announced the Heat Networks Funding Stream, a funding programme designed to support local authorities to identify and evaluate decentralised heating networks. Developing decentralised energy solutions would support the City's ambitions of becoming a leading low-carbon City. Such schemes would contribute towards the priorities set out in the Climate Change Action Plan by reducing carbon emissions, improving security of energy supply and reducing energy expenditure. Decentralised energy could also deliver a number of local, less tangible benefits such as reducing fuel poverty and demonstrating local leadership on carbon reduction. The outcome of the bid was announced in early October 2014, and the Sunderland proposal was successful, securing £80,000 of DECC grant award. The project will commence in December 2014, and the total contract value will be up to a maximum £120,000.

Proposed activities include:

- Heat mapping & energy master planning (City-wide)
- Site/Location specific feasibility work
- Support to prepare a business case and commercial delivery options
- Financial / technical evaluation

The main outcomes from this research and analysis will be:

- The Sunderland Heat Map will provide a city-wide understanding of the heat demand across the City, providing an evidence base for key stakeholders to develop appropriate solutions for improved energy management.
- The site assessment will explore the business case for the development of a decentralised energy solution, and in particular, assess the different models for public sector intervention, from a fully owned and controlled local authority scenario, to a local authority zero cost solution, where the private sector invests and operates the heating network. This options analysis will enable Sunderland to consider the relative merits and costs of decentralised energy solutions.

### iii. Supporting people to develop individual and family resilience

#### Children and Young People's Plan 2014-17

The Children's Trust refreshed its Children and Young People's Plan in 2014, and in doing so the partnership adopted responsibility for improving Children and Family Poverty across the city.

The Children's Trust agreed four strategic objectives and four priority areas for improvements where the Board felt it could add real value. These are all clearly linked to child and family poverty and the impacts of it.

#### Strategic Objectives

1. Improving the overall Health and Wellbeing of children, young people and families
2. **Reducing the number of families with children living in poverty in the city**
3. Improving educational outcomes and strengthening whole family learning
4. Improving safeguarding outcomes for children, young people and families.

#### Priority Areas for Improvement

- **Child and Family Poverty**
- Best Start in Life
- Child Obesity
- Sexual Health (including teenage pregnancy).

Actions plans are being developed for each of the priority areas and these will be based upon the design principles of the Trust, which include: working in partnership; adopting early intervention and preventative practices; taking a strengthening families approach (supporting families' to build on their strengths and giving them tools they need to lift themselves out of poverty and narrow the gap in outcomes between them and others. This is imperative to achieving our goals and ensuring that this generation of children and young people does not become the next generation of poor adults.

#### Family Focus

Family Focus is the name that has been given to the approach to deliver the national Troubled Families initiative in Sunderland. Nationally the Government's definition of a 'Troubled Family' is one that has multiple and complex problems including households who:

- Are involved in youth crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB)
- Have children not in school
- **Have an adult on out of work benefits**
- Cause high costs to the public purse.

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) estimated that there are 120,000 Troubled Families nationally by using research which identified the proportion of families who suffer from at least five of the following characteristics (all which are linked to child poverty):

- no one in the family is in work;
- living in poor or overcrowded housing;
- no parent has any qualifications;
- mother has mental health problems;
- at least one parent has a longstanding illness, disability or infirmity;
- a low income;
- an inability to afford a number of food, clothing items.

Having just one of these problems does not mean that the family is a troubled one, but having at least five of these problems on top of each other means families tend to struggle and display a range of other problems.

Government estimates that £9 billion is being spent annually on these 120,000 most troubled families nationally (based on government data collected in October and November 2011). That works out at £75,000 per family per year. £8 billion of this is spent on reacting to the issues in these families with just £1 billion being spent trying to turn around their lives in a targeted, positive way.

Using these criteria DCLG estimated that in Sunderland there are 805 such families with an estimated cost to the taxpayer of £60,375,000.

By November 2014, over 1000 families had engaged with the scheme, higher than the DCLG target of 805. However locally partners have agreed that 1200 families should be attached by December 2014 to take account of those who would not engage and other families that have not made the required positive changes to their lives. As at August 2014, Sunderland had 'turned around' 58% of the families it committed to and is in a good position to continue on this trajectory and turn around all 805 families by the end of the programme in March 2015.

### **Strengthening Families**

Building on Family Focus, the Strengthening Families Framework seeks to ensure that families in Sunderland can easily access the right support, at the right time and in the right way to enable them to meet their needs and realise their aspirations. It outlines our commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of those who are vulnerable or potentially vulnerable by working with them at the earliest opportunity and making the best use of all resources available. Integral to this approach is identifying and building on families' strengths, helping them to recognise and fulfil their potential and make a positive contribution to their community. Our emerging approach to strengthening families in Sunderland is:

- **Asset based**, recognising and building on the strengths within each family and their community;
- **Capacity building**, reducing dependence on public services in the longer term;
- **Family-focused**, taking a whole family approach to improving outcomes;
- **Personalised and responsive**, tailoring support to family needs and circumstances, and adapting as these change;
- **Pro-active**, seeking to identify and appropriately address issues at the earliest opportunity;
- **Integrated**, working together across services and organisations to achieve more for families;
- **Locally responsive**, planning and delivering services at a locality level where appropriate.

### **Health and Wellbeing Strategy**

The Health and Wellbeing Strategy identifies giving children the best start in life as one of its six priorities. The strategy acknowledges the direct and indirect influence that families and schools have on the development and life chances of children and young people. These two factors can have a huge impact upon health, education and future employment opportunities of a child or young person.

### **Education and Skills Strategy**

This draft Strategy – due to be published in 2015 - confirms Sunderland's ambition of building on its successes to ensure that all children, young people and adults, wherever they live or work in Sunderland, benefit from the best possible education and training opportunities in a safe and supportive environment that will allow them to thrive. It places Sunderland as a city that values education, nurtures potential, celebrates success and provides opportunity. Responding to key national policy directives, the Strategy identifies three key elements of focus for all age groups in the city, to ensure they are:

- Ready for school
- Ready for work
- Ready for life.

### **Poverty-proofing**

The concept of poverty proofing was introduced to the city in the first Child and Family Poverty Strategy in 2009. It is now integral to the Council's equality impact assessment process, with our Equality Analyses considering poverty in addition to the nine 'protected characteristics'. There is also a named Lead Equality Champion for Poverty in the Council whose role is to act as a leader for diversity and equality and champion positive behaviour and good practice.

### **Intelligence Hub Approach**

The City Council is currently implementing its Intelligence Hub approach which will gather, process and share data and information about its residents, communities and businesses. This is a major step in the council's transformation programme and will aide decision making and focus interventions where they will make a real difference, based on evidence. The hub will operate using comparative performance dashboards, including dashboards for Strengthening Families and Community Resilience, which will provide real insights into family poverty across the city. It is important that the council and its partners, including the Voluntary and Community Sector, use this information to meet the needs of the people of Sunderland.

### **Employment Based Interventions**

#### **Sunderland Workplace Health Alliance**

There are strong mutual benefits between work and health and for many years now, Public Health in Sunderland has commissioned a North East company, Amacus, to work with workplaces in all sectors of the city to improve workplace health. In order to share good practice in relation to workplace health and to provide links between relevant health services and workplaces who wish to support their workforce, a Sunderland Workplace Health Alliance is being formed, co-ordinated by Amacus, to collectively provide support to improve health within the workplace for any Sunderland employer who wishes to be involved and is prepared to sign up to the Sunderland Workplace Health Charter. The Alliance will be launched in late November and it is hoped that the development of this practical approach to improving the health and wellbeing of the workforce will also lead to improved strategic engagement between health and the economy within the city to improve opportunities and outcomes for local people.

#### **Mental Health and Employment Integration Trailblazer**

In June 2014, partners in the north east region – including local authorities, Jobcentre Plus, Increasing Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) leads, Clinical Commissioning Groups, Health and Wellbeing Boards and other public health and employment experts – began the process to develop a bid for funding to improve job outcomes for ESA claimants with mental health conditions. The initial draft business case was approved in September 2014. If the bid – worth £1.7m to the region, which must be matched – is approved, it is anticipated that delivery will begin in March 2015. The programme will support:

- ESA claimants with common mental health conditions
- ESA claimants pre Work Programme
- ESA claimants who are Work Programme completers
- JSA claimants who are ex Incapacity Benefit claimants.

#### **Be Your Own Boss**

Gentoo, in partnership with Sustainable Enterprise Sunderland and FISCUS, has a business start-up and advice service that provides customers with everything they need to set up and succeed in business.

## **School focussed interventions**

### **Poverty Proofing the School Day**

Children North East, the North East Child Poverty Commission and VONNE have developed, in partnership, a toolkit to Poverty Proof the School Day. This works on the basis that all activity in schools should not identify, exclude, treat differently or make assumptions about those children whose household income or resources are lower than others. Poverty Proofing the School Day supports schools to identify and overcome the barriers to learning that children and young people from families with less financial resources face. It enables schools to develop an action plan to reduce the stigma and discrimination pupils' experience. Two schools in Sunderland are currently signed up to the project, which must be promoted more widely as a valuable tool to reduce the impact of every day poverty within the school.

### **Free School Meals**

Sunderland has adopted an 'assumed consent' model for free school meals. This means that when an application for Housing or Council Tax Benefit is awarded, services will ensure that where there are children living in households they will automatically be registered for free school meals and the families and school will be informed. Not only is this a proactive process to encourage maximum take up of a healthy meal for children who are eligible, but it also supports schools to claim their full pupil premium entitlement.

### **Reading in Schools**

Working in around 20 schools from primary to secondary, Gentoo staff volunteers read with children in schools. The impact is measureable by the increase in literacy with children who have benefited from the project.

## **Post-16/Skills based interventions**

### **Work Discovery Sunderland**

The Sunderland Economic Leadership Board recognised the importance and benefit of businesses working with schools and so, through its Business:Schools Task Group, Work Discovery Sunderland was established. Whilst acknowledging that individual schools across the city have established relationships with a number of businesses over the years, the objective of Work Discovery Sunderland is to enhance those existing current engagement activity and develop new relationships, particularly where there are gaps or projected shortages in industry.

Work Discovery Sunderland is in its third year. Activity between schools and businesses does take place throughout the year, with a showcase week-long event taking place in the summer. The week-long event – which has been held in 2013 and 2014 – launches at the Stadium of Light and sees businesses joining students and teachers from across the city to hear inspirational speakers relay their experiences and provide key pointers for today's young people preparing to enter the world of work for the first time. It goes on to provide an interactive day of activities for young people, with business personnel leading careers stalls, workshops and discussion groups on interview preparation and practice, application processes and procedures, problem-solving and communication.

Throughout the week there are opportunities for young people and businesses alike to participate with various business themed activities taking place in both business venues and schools around city. Many businesses host 'Open Days', deliver talks in schools across the city and provide business-to-business workshops on topics such as promoting engagement opportunities.

The week concludes at the Stadium of Light with presentations by the schools' pupils in response to a 'problem-solving challenge' to an audience of business representatives.

The annual showcase week of activities that have already taken place have been hugely successful with approximately 20 schools, 1,000 pupils and 40 businesses taking part.

**Work and Learning** – this Gentoo team offers employer-led, two year programme, beginning in school year 10.

**Gentoo work experience** – a tailor made work experience programmes for young people (1 week-3months)

**Live to Learn Skills for Life Programme** – a further education programme provided by Gentoo supporting young people with the key skills, knowledge and life experience to live independently and enter the world of work.

**Pre-employment Programme** – a 13 week pre-employment programme, provided by Gentoo, that involves a mixture of course work, coaching and work experience aimed at young people aged 14 and over.

**Gentoo Apprenticeships** – Gentoo offers a wide range of apprenticeship across the organisation that give people the opportunity to gain a recognised qualification and develop professional skills, while earning a salary.

## **Resilience-based interventions**

### **Improving Futures**

Implementing a locality based model through **Improving Futures** – a four year initiative funded by the Big Lottery and led by SAFC Foundation of Light. It works with one or two primary schools in each locality and aims to support families with children aged 5–11 who are living in disadvantaged communities and experiencing multiple and complex needs including poverty and financial difficulties. The project adopts a key worker approach, helping families to identify a 'neighbourhood friend' who will receive training and supervision to support and assist the family through an action plan.

### **Money Matters Team**

This is a Gentoo team which has been operational since April 2014 to provide financial guidance for all Gentoo customers. It provides benefit checks, claims and appeal support; debt advice, support and solution; help to complete fuel grant applications; help opening a bank account support in gaining access to Credit Unions; budgeting support, advice and information.

### **Planet Smart**

Through this programme, Gentoo provides help to customers to switch their fuel suppliers to make savings of around £128 per year. Advice around energy saving solutions is also provided as well as the provision – free of charge – of dehumidifiers, draught excluders, etc.

**Be programme** – enables and empowers people to understand they have the opportunity, choices, support and skills to improve their life. Designed to engage individuals on a journey of self-discovery, individual strength, wellbeing, emotional resilience and learning curiosity. The programme aims at having a positive impact on personal behaviours, relationships, motivation and outlook on life. This programme has been delivered throughout schools Primary and secondary plus programmes have been run for various other groups of adults including mothers groups.

**Young Persons Service** – Gentoo provides a tailored support service to people aged 16-25 to enable them to manage a home. The Young Persons Team play a vital role in providing a wide range of vocational, educational and housing-related support services that equip young adults with skills, experience and confidence to maintain a home and become independent. STEP's (Supporting

Tenants Empowering People) service uses a dedicated staff network, working within three core services, to provide much needed support for young people.

**Art of Living Fund** – provides money to people in desperate situations. This is not a loan it is simply a hardship fund. In 18months over £9K has been paid out with the main funds going on heating and lighting.

**Art of Giving** – Gentoo staff donate a wide range of items for a number of good causes including Easter eggs and Christmas presents, food for food banks and clothes to the One for the Wardrobe campaign (children's school uniforms).

DRAFT

## BENEFIT CAP CASE STUDIES

### CASE STUDY 1

This family were capped in November 13. The family consisted of 'A' and 'C' who have eight children between them. They were going to lose all of their housing benefit and the remainder of the Cap would be taken once they were in receipt of Universal Credit. Discretionary Housing Payment was awarded so the shortfall in Housing Benefit could be made up.

To qualify for Working Tax Credit (WTC) they would need 24 hours employment to be able to qualify. This could be made up by one of them working 16 hours and the other working 8 hour, perhaps looking at School Meals and School Crossing Patrol jobs as an option as this might help with any childcare concerns.

An In Work Benefit Calculation was done based on 24 hours at minimum wage to see how much WTC and other In Work Benefits they could claim. It showed they would be £167.17 per week better off.

'A' contacted us 2 weeks later to say that she had found a job as a Waitress/Kitchen Assistant at a Tea Room, that a family friend had opened, and she had been offered 24 hours. She would be working and 'C' would be taking responsibility for the childcare. 'A' contacted us again recently to advise she is very happy with the job and enjoying getting back to work after staying at home looking after her children.

### CASE STUDY 2

L was recently separated, with two sets of twins to care for, whose benefit payment was taking her over the Cap limit by £113 per week. The shortfall was made up and L was given support.

Previously L had worked as a carer, but had no qualifications. L wished to train as a midwife, but Job Centre Plus would not support this. Childcare was arranged, and L was enrolled in Maths and English courses, which she passed. She also completed a food hygiene, first aid and dementia awareness courses.

L applied for, and was appointed to, a voluntary position at Sunderland Hospital which has helped with her Access Course application, which was also successful. By the time her twins have started school, it is anticipated L will be a qualified midwife.