

Why is this issue important?

The impact of poverty on children's health and educational outcomes is well documented. Lifetime earnings for children raised in poverty are significantly lower, as are their prospects for employment. Therefore children brought up in poverty are more likely to raise their own children in poverty.¹

Despite efforts to reduce child poverty, the proportion of the UK population living in poverty remains higher than the European Union average.¹

Tackling child poverty requires actions across a range of policy areas and across the determinants of health, including: early years' provision; education, skills and employment; parenting support; housing; and benefits and tax credits.

Child poverty is defined as the percentage of all dependent children under 20 in relative poverty (living in households where income is less than 60 per cent of median household income before housing costs).²

Key outcomes

- **Children in poverty (Public Health Outcomes Framework)**
- **Reduction in the proportion of children living in poverty (Child Poverty Act 2010 is now superseded by the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016)³**

Impact in Brighton & Hove

The latest national data for 2013 shows that 17% of children in Brighton & Hove, or approximately one in every six (8,481 children) live in poverty. This is a drop of 5% from 2009. The level of child poverty in the city is below England (18% in 2013) and is also below the levels of child poverty in some other nearby cities. However, we perform less well in comparison to the South East (13%).⁴

¹ Marmot M. Fair Society, Healthy Lives: The Marmot Review. 2010. Available at https://www.instituteofhealthequity.org/Content/FileManager/pdf/fairsociety/healthy_lives.pdf [Accessed 10/08/2016]

² Public Health England. Public Health Outcomes Framework data tool. Available at: <http://www.phoutcomes.info> [Accessed 10/10/2016]

³ Welfare Reform & Work Act 2016 available at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2016/7/enacted>

⁴ HMRC Child Poverty Snapshot 2013 available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/personal-tax-credits-children-in-low-income-families-local-measure-2013-snapshot-as-at-31-august-2013>

Nationally the 60% median family income level rose slightly between 2012 and 2013 from £245 to £262 per week – thereby reducing the number of children measured as living in poverty without there necessarily being an improving in their standard of living.⁵

Higher than average numbers of adults, children and young people in Brighton & Hove are affected by health conditions and lifestyles that can both cause and contribute to families living in poverty. The most affected groups are:

- Parents and carers with mental health problems
- Children and young people with mental health problems
- Children and young people misusing drugs and/or alcohol
- Parents and carers who misuse drug and/or alcohol
- Families experiencing domestic violence.
- Children and families with disabilities.

A key concern identified in the city's recent Fairness Commission is the cost of private rented accommodation.⁶ For families on low incomes and out of work benefits in receipt of housing benefit the gap between market rates and the Local Housing Allowance is very wide (Table 1).⁷

The impact of Welfare Reform, involving cuts to benefit income for many vulnerable families in the city, is having a substantial effect on the ability of families on low incomes to afford to live in the city.

A series of additional reforms are due to commence in Autumn 2016 through to April 2017 which will further reduce the incomes of some families.

In terms of longer term life chances, in Brighton & Hove children and young people receiving free school meals do significantly less well at school than their peers from more affluent families (see section 6.1.4 for more on this). Poor educational

⁵ Households below average income statistics DWP June 28th 2016 available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/households-below-average-income-199495-to-201415>

⁶ Brighton & Hove Fairness Commission Report 2016. Available at <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/council-and-democracy/fairness-commission>

⁷ Brighton & Hove City Council Welfare Reform Team 2016

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achievement increases the chances of those children and young people living in poverty as adults.

The Council's Welfare Reform Team has an effective programme that supports parents in families affected by the benefit cap to gain work.

Where we are doing well

Table 1: June 2016 average advertised rent and Local Housing Allowance levels, Brighton & Hove

Bedrooms	1		2		3		4	
	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W
Average advertised rent per month (M) / week (W)	£935	£216	£1,284	£296	£1,569	£362	£1,846	£426
Local Housing Allowance* per month (M) / week (W)	£663	£153	£834	£192	£998	£230	£1,471	£339

Source: Brighton & Hove City Council Welfare Reform Team 2016

The Council led and delivered the development of the City's Financial Inclusion Strategy. Part of the aim of this was to develop a 'Community Banking Partnership Service' - Moneyworks - which integrates access to services that promote financial wellbeing including advice, basic banking, affordable credit, savings, financial education and support around fuel and food poverty.

Commissioned in 2013, this service has worked with over 2,000 clients to date to develop their skills and resolve their problems so that they could make money, save money and manage their money more effectively. An analysis of the in depth casework cases from 1st March 2015 to 31st August 2016 show that 70% of people using this service are unemployed (n=139) and 37% have health conditions and disabilities (n =111) which focuses on prevention for longer term resilience as well as helping people in financial crisis.

Local inequalities

National evidence shows that families without a parent in employment are most at risk of experiencing child poverty. Other families who experience a significantly increased risk include those from Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Black and Black British families; lone parent families; families with a disabled child; adults not in receipt of disability benefits; and families with three or more children.

Within Brighton & Hove the level of child poverty varies widely between communities. Since 2008

there has been reduction in child poverty in all wards in the city, with the greatest reductions in those wards with the highest rates (Figure 1).⁸

Predicted future need

The financial situation of some families is likely to worsen, with a particular vulnerability for families living in private sector rented accommodation where costs continue to rise. The cumulative impact of a number of reductions in welfare benefits combined with a freeze on benefits will make it extremely difficult for low income families without access to social housing to live in the city.

What we don't know

Currently we do not have a clear picture of how child poverty affects different ethnic groups in the city. This is also the case for other protected characteristics.

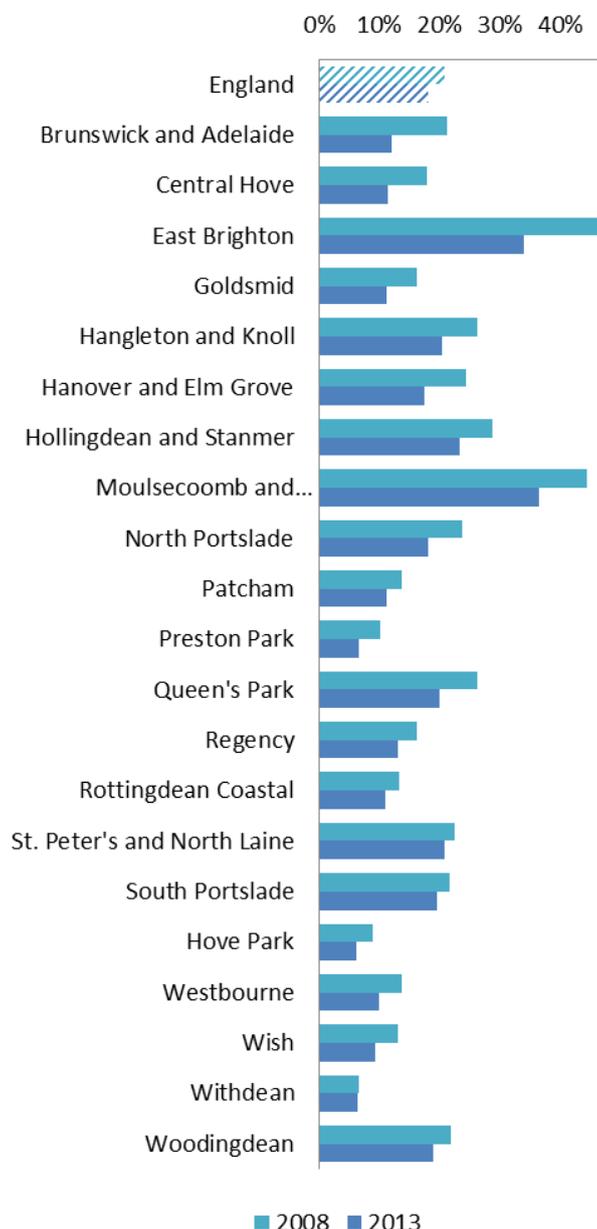
Routine data does not identify the circumstances of individual families, so we cannot know how long on average they may remain in poverty or to what degree incomes within the city may be below the 60% average. Given the known risks, we can expect that as a city it is those neighbourhoods where families are predominantly on out-of-work benefits that experience the greatest poverty.

⁸ Brighton & Hove City Council. Child Poverty Needs Assessment. 2011. Available at <http://www.bhconnected.org.uk/content/local-intelligence> [Accessed 10/08/2016]

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It is difficult to evidence the extent to which parental mental health is a driver of poverty.

Figure 1: Percentage of all children under 20 years living in poverty by ward, Brighton & Hove and England, 2008 and 2013



Source: HMRC Child Poverty Snapshots 2008-2013

Key evidence and policy

Welfare Reform & Work Act 2016
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2016/7/enacted>

Brighton & Hove Child Poverty Needs Assessment
<http://www.bhconnected.org.uk/content/needs-assessments> and Commissioning Strategy

Brighton & Hove Fairness Commission 2016
<https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/council-and-democracy/fairness-commission>

Recommended future local priorities

Brighton & Hove Child Poverty Commissioning Strategy recommends a focus on:

- Lone parents, because this is the major family type living in poverty
- Children and families with disabilities because they have a high risk of living in poverty and a greater risk of reduced income as a result of recent welfare reforms
- Families with a complex range of problems because the impact on children's life chances is great as is the cost of intervening to support those families
- Investigating further the extent to which Black and Minority Ethnic families are living in disadvantage.

Brighton & Hove Fairness Commission recommendations that relate to the issues identified here include:

- Building community resilience
- Establishing an ethical lettings agency for private rented housing
- Significant investment in welfare benefits and financial advice.

Key links to other sections

- Employment and unemployment

Further information

Child poverty needs assessment & Child Poverty Strategy

<http://www.bhconnected.org.uk/content/local-intelligence>

Brighton & Hove Fairness Commission
<https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/council-and-democracy/fairness-commission>

HMRC Child Poverty Snapshot 2013
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/personal-tax-credits-children-in-low-income-families-local-measure-2013-snapshot-as-at-31-august-2013>

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