



## Liverpool City Region

# Child Poverty and Life Chances Commission

Liverpool City Region Child Poverty and Life Chances Commission was re-launched in January 2016 to deliver the refreshed Liverpool City Region Child Poverty and Life Chances Strategy (2015-18).

### What does it aim to do?

- Boost profile of 'Child Poverty & Life Chances'
- Encourage sharing and implementing best practice
- Hold organisations to account for their role in reducing child poverty
- Establish robust evidence to help lobby central government

### Current Position

The levels of child poverty across the Liverpool City Region according to most recent data (2014) are:

**84,785 children** in the Liverpool City Region live in relative poverty (26.5% of all children)

Child poverty levels in the Liverpool City Region are higher than England as a whole (**19.9%**), and highest compared to other northern City Regions



Child poverty in the Liverpool City Region had been falling since 2008, but has **risen again** in the most recent year (Between 2013 and 2014)

The increase has been driven by an additional **8,475** children in poverty who are in working families compared to a fall of **3,550** children in poverty who are in out of work families

Three out of four children in poverty live in a single parent family (**73%**)



A third of children in poverty (**26,635**) are aged under 5

Source: HMRC: Children in low-income families local measure (2014)

Child poverty continues to be an extremely important issue and official figures show that child poverty is rising nationally – **200,000** more children lived in poverty in 2015/16 compared to the previous year. The Institute for Fiscal Studies project that the proportion of children in absolute poverty (after housing costs) is set to rise sharply over the next five years from **27.5%** in 2014-15 to **30.3%** in 2021-22.

This increase is based on the expected impact of tax and benefit reforms over this parliament, with cuts to Universal Credit work allowances explaining around a third of the increase in the absolute poverty rate for children in working households.

### Our work plan for 2017/18



Support a dedicated campaign to encourage adoption of **Living Wage**

Monitor extension of free childcare to **30 hours** per week for 3-4 year olds



Put the City Region forward to the Government as a pilot area for the **BESSI** school readiness indicators

Investigate how the changing schools system ensures that children from the most disadvantaged areas are able to access high quality education



Roll out the **smoke-free** in pregnancy pilot across the City Region

Publish final report and recommendations on Early Years Pupil Premium research

Encourage wider levels of holiday play & food provision across the City Region during school holidays

Work with local authorities to conduct cumulative impact assessments of **welfare reform** across the City Region

Work with the University of Liverpool to deliver dedicated **child poverty research**

Work with schools to use **Pupil Premium** to increase travel options for disadvantaged pupils



Work with Merseytravel to use the powers in the **'Buses Bill'** to improve transport options of the most disadvantaged families



# What we did in 2016/17

Strategy Recommendation	Activity	Impact and/or outcome	Status
<b>Priority theme 1: Fair employment</b>			
Join the Living Wage Network and spread best practice for implementing a Living Wage amongst City Region employers.	Investigated how far the higher Living Wage is paid and zero hours contracts used among major employers in the City Region. A summary report covering all the findings so far is due to be produced in 2017/18.	The work has directly contributed to some local major employers and 'anchor institutions' being accredited as Living Wage employers.	⋯ Ongoing
Develop an online guide to help parents determine the most suitable type of financial support for childcare.	The Commission requested the Government to produce a comprehensive childcare support guide and calculator for parents.	The Government has launched the 'Childcare Choices' website.	✓ Completed
<b>Priority theme 2: Birth and school readiness</b>			
Research how early years settings in the City Region are using Early Years Pupil Premium funding and share best practice.	A City Region-wide survey of early years providers was conducted to explore how the Early Years Pupil Premium is being used to improve school readiness.	The final report is due in early 2017/18 with recommendations.	⋯ Ongoing
Consider how childcare markets can be supported so eligible 3-4 year olds are able to access their 30 hours per week of free childcare from 2017.	The Commission submitted a response to the national consultation on the extended 30 hour offer, developed in collaboration with all of the City Region local authorities.	The Government's response was broadly supportive of a number of concerns expressed.	✓ Completed
<b>Priority theme 3: School interventions, Pupil Premium and NEETs</b>			
Commission an independent review of 16-25 skills provision across the City Region.	An Area Based Review of post-16 skills provision was agreed under the City Region devolution deal. The Commission input into the process, with a focus put forward on the importance of transport and accessibility to skills provision.	The Commission's recommendations were taken into account and the final review was published in February 2017. The Area Review Strategic Planning and Oversight Group is now implementing the recommendations.	✓ Completed
Recommend that central Government begin costing the extension of free school meal provision during school holidays.	This recommendation was put forward in the All Party Parliamentary Group on hunger and food poverty's 'Feeding Britain' report.	The Government rejected the recommendation but the Commission is developing an evidence base for wider roll-out of school holiday play and food provision.	✓ Completed
<b>Priority theme 4: Health inequalities and lifestyle choices</b>			
Continue to develop a City Region smokefree pilot for pregnant women.	The Cheshire and Merseyside Public Health Collaborative (Champs) were commissioned to pilot a smokefree programme in Halton and Knowsley to reduce smoking during pregnancy using 'Quit Buddy' and 'Stress relief' approaches.	The scheme has contributed to a significant decline in smoking prevalence at the time of babies' delivery; by 2.2% in Halton and 4% in Knowsley.	⋯ Ongoing
Other related activities	The Commission has worked with Champs to develop a City Region approach to alcohol licensing.	The approach is agreed by Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Leads and a Licensing Group is now progressing action.	✓ Completed
<b>Priority theme 5: Transport and accessibility</b>			
Work with Merseytravel to promote the 'My Ticket' scheme for young people.	The Commission worked with Merseytravel to extend the scheme to under-19s. The Commission will help to publicise the extended scheme and spread best practice to other poverty commissions.	There has been an estimated 9% increase in bus patronage, which is mostly attributed to young people.	⋯ Ongoing
Work with schools to develop approaches for using Pupil Premium to increase transport options for disadvantaged pupils.	Merseytravel officers are working with the Directors of Children's Services to discuss future options for the Young Persons Affordability Project.	A series of further meetings is to be established to discuss in detail how the project can be taken forward in the future.	⋯ Ongoing
<b>Other actions completed</b>			
	The Commission revisited research to provide an updated picture of impact of the under occupation deduction ("Bedroom Tax") among housing association residents in the Liverpool City Region.	The report was issued to the Secretary of State in December 2017 and the findings were widely publicised in the national media.	✓ Completed
	Gathered evidence on the numbers of homeless children in the Liverpool City Region.	Findings were submitted to the Communities and Local Government Select Committee's call for evidence for their homelessness inquiry.	✓ Completed
	Investigated methods employed by Knowsley, Sefton and Croydon Councils to mitigate the worst effects of the autumn 2016 benefit cap reduction.	Best practice has been shared with all of the City Region local authorities.	✓ Completed
	The Commission received evidence from Liverpool City Council on problems experienced with the roll out of Universal Credit, in particular periods between making a claim and receiving the benefit.	The findings were submitted to the Government and circulated through a press release which received national coverage.	✓ Completed
	Representations made to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions calling for sharing of Universal Credit claimant housing cost data with local authorities.	The Secretary of State acknowledged the problem, and indicated that measures would be developed as Universal Credit is rolled out.	✓ Completed

For more information about the Liverpool City Region Child Poverty and Life Chances Commission Email: [lcr.child&familypoverty@knowsley.gov.uk](mailto:lcr.child&familypoverty@knowsley.gov.uk)  
Telephone: 0151 443 2692