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| Title of meeting: | Health and Wellbeing Board |
| Subject: | Tackling poverty in Portsmouth |
| Date of meeting: | 21 st September 2022 |
| Report by: | Helen Atkinson, Director of Public Health |
| Report Author: | Mark Sage, Tackling Poverty Coordinator |
| Wards affected: | All |

1. Requested by Director of Public Health

2. Purpose

2.1. To provide an update to the Board on the tackling poverty priority area of the strategy.

2.2. To outline areas where Board member organisations can contribute to this priority, as key local anchor institutions.

3. Information Requested

3.1. The Health and Wellbeing Strategy outlines why tackling poverty underpins health improvement outcomes, building on the work of the Marmot Review¹ to identify the wider determinants of health.

3.2. Social inequality is considered the fundamental underlying cause of poor health outcomes and therefore tackling poverty is central to addressing health inequalities.

¹ <https://www.instituteofhealthequity.org/resources-reports/fair-society-healthy-lives-the-marmot-review>

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- 3.3. The Strategy includes a shared commitment across the services represented by the Board to take action to help local residents to escape poverty, and to reduce the impact of poverty for those affected.
- 3.4. This report provides an update on the work of Portsmouth's tackling poverty steering group, a multi-agency partnership that informs and oversees action to tackle poverty.
- 3.5. This report also highlights the significant role for Board member organisations working collectively to take action to tackle poverty.

4. Poverty in Portsmouth

- 4.1. On the English Indices of Deprivation 2019², Portsmouth is ranked 59th most deprived of the 326 local authority districts across the aggregated domains of deprivation. This puts Portsmouth into the fifth most deprived areas in the country.
- 4.2. 13.4% of the local population is income deprived under this index, and Portsmouth also shows a high level of internal disparity, the difference in the proportion of people who are income deprived between the least and most deprived small areas in the city.
- 4.3. Portsmouth is in the highest 5% of local authority districts for clustering of deprivation, indicating a high level of inequality between neighbourhoods and clear pockets of deprivation.
- 4.4. Between 2015 and 2021, the proportion of children living in relative low income families (below 60% of median household income) steadily increased from 15.7% to 21.4%³. There continues to be wide variation between wards, from 10.3% of children living in Drayton and Farlington, to 33.7% in Charles Dickens ward.
- 4.5. Of children in Portsmouth aged under 16 living in relative low income families in 2021, 77.6% were living in families in work, and 22.4% were in out of work families⁴.
- 4.6. Data from the Department of Work and Pensions shows that almost half of the families with children claiming Universal Credit in Portsmouth were earning less than £935 per month (net earnings), the threshold for free prescriptions⁵.
- 4.7. Although Portsmouth has longstanding inequalities, these have been exacerbated by recent economic and social shocks, firstly the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and now the cost of living crisis.

5. Cost of living

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2019>

³ Source: Stat-Xplore

⁴ Source: Stat-Xplore

⁵ Source: DWP monthly data share with Portsmouth City Council to support Local Welfare Provision May 2022

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- 5.1. The cost of living crisis is driven by a rapid rise in inflation far outstripping any increase in incomes (primarily earnings, pensions and welfare benefit entitlements).
- 5.2. Key drivers of inflation have been increases in the costs of energy, food and household essentials, housing costs and transport⁶, particularly for lower income households who spend a higher proportion of their income on essential expenditure.
- 5.3. The household energy price cap rose from £1,042 per year for the average household in April 2020 to £1,971 in April 2022⁷, and was due to rise to over £3,500 from October.
- 5.4. A government announcement on 8 September indicates that action will be taken to limit the cap to £2,500 for two years, but this remains almost double the cost that households were paying last winter, continuing historically high prices for household energy. The NICE guidance on Excess winter deaths and illness and health risks associated with cold homes⁸ highlights the impacts on health (and on other issues including workplace and school absence) of fuel poverty in a 'normal' winter. Work is being undertaken by Health and Care Portsmouth to ensure a joined up approach within the health and care system that is linked to the broader tackling poverty and cost of living agenda. Portsmouth's Energy and Water at Home Strategy 2020-2025⁹ outlines the council's approach to tackling fuel poverty, with services delivered to residents in partnership under the Switched On Portsmouth brand.
- 5.5. The annual CPI inflation rate for all foods and non-alcoholic beverages was 0.3% in August 2021, but has since increased every month to 12.6% in July 2022¹⁰. However, price inflation was not even across food categories, ranging from 7.0% for sugar, jam and confectionery, to 19.4% for milk, cheese and eggs, and 23.4% for oils and fats¹¹. This variation is likely to impact on purchasing decisions and nutritional intake for low income households.

6. Action to tackle poverty

- 6.1. The Health and Wellbeing Strategy highlights the need for good quality employment for Portsmouth residents that can enable everyone to fulfil their employment potential and increase their earning power. A development session for Board members is planned for 12th October to explore how the organisations represented on the HWB are already doing this and what further opportunities there are to do more. This could include partnership with Portsmouth City

⁶ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/articles/priceseconomicanalysisquarterly/march2022>

⁷ <https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/energy-policy-and-regulation/policy-and-regulatory-programmes/default-tariff-cap>

⁸ <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng6>

⁹ <https://switchedonportsmouth.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/10.477-Energy-and-water-at-home-strategy-accessible.pdf>

¹⁰ <https://foodfoundation.org.uk/news/food-prices-tracking-july-update>

¹¹ <https://foodfoundation.org.uk/news/food-prices-tracking-august-update>

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Council's unemployment programmes which currently support over 1,200 adults in and around Portsmouth.

- 6.2. The Strategy also outlines three areas for key activity in the short term: providing immediate support to people in financial hardship; helping people access the right employability support at the right time; and supporting a community-level response to local needs.
- 6.3. These three areas form the basis of the tackling poverty action plan overseen by the tackling poverty steering group (TPSG) (appendix 1).
- 6.4. The action plan cannot capture all of the work taking place in the city that can help to tackle poverty. Instead, the purpose is to focus on key areas of activity where TPSG members can add value through working in partnership, to understand needs and where there are gaps, and to understand the impact of action to tackle poverty.
- 6.5. By sharing information, the TPSG can identify trends in need; at the September meeting one organisation noted an increase in approaches from families worried about children's mental health and bullying. The TPSG provides a forum to understand whether trends are more widespread, consider how the system currently responds to those needs, and how organisations can respond in partnership, recognising the impact these issues will have on other priorities and outcomes.
- 6.6. The Director of Public Health's Annual Report for 2022/23, which will be presented at the Health and Wellbeing Board in September 2023, will focus on poverty and the cost of living crisis. It will provide a broad needs assessment to underpin further work on this issue, drawing together evidence about the impact on Portsmouth residents, the support that is in place, and the opportunities and evidence for further action.
- 6.7. Portsmouth City Council is urgently developing its response to look at how it can support residents affected by the cost of living crisis, building on existing services and communication channels. This response recognises that more people will be impacted by this crisis, with people who are already experiencing poverty being greatly impacted.

7. The role of the Health and Wellbeing Board in tackling poverty

- 7.1. Board member organisations are anchor institutions in the city; large organisations rooted in the local area with significant assets that can contribute to health and wellbeing outcomes¹².
- 7.2. Collectively, Board member organisations have significant impact in the local economy, and can help to tackle in-work poverty so that every employee:
 - 7.2.1. Receives a real living wage;
 - 7.2.2. Has the security of sufficient working hours to meet their needs;

¹² <https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/publications/anchor-institutions-and-peoples-health>

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7.2.3. Can work flexibly, to ensure those with additional needs or caring responsibilities can maintain employment;

7.2.4. Can progress into and through work, with training and support, to fulfil their potential and increase their earning power.

7.3. Board member organisations should consider what action they are already taking in these areas, and how they can work in partnership with other organisations and communities to increase their positive contribution to tackling poverty.

7.4. Alongside their role as employers, Board member organisations have potential through their procurement and contract management processes to create added social value through employment, training and skills, and support for communities.

7.5. Board members provide a wide range of services to residents, and through this activity have the opportunity to identify those at risk of poverty and how they are affected, and intervene to provide support and mitigate those risks.

8. The challenge

8.1. Portsmouth has longstanding economic and health inequalities, and the current economic outlook is expected to increase the breadth and depth of poverty in the city.

8.2. Board member organisations are asked to consider what action they are taking currently, and how they can respond accordingly to the scale of the cost of living crisis and the likely impact on residents. From the action plan at appendix 1, Board members may wish to consider how these activities could be further promoted within their organisations:

- Building on the October development session to ensure that training, development and employment opportunities maximise the organisation's contribution to tackling poverty in Portsmouth.
- Ensuring relevant front-line staff have access to the 'Cost of Living Checklist' and suitable training and support to assist service users who present with issues related to the current crisis.
- Using communications teams to promote income maximisation campaigns developed by Portsmouth City Council and partners.
- Supporting interventions to tackle fuel poverty including identification of residents at risk and promotion of the freephone Switched On Portsmouth helpline and online resources.
- Identifying opportunities to contribute to the development and delivery of the warm rooms / welcome places scheme.
- Promoting the 'With Thankful Hearts' campaign encouraging residents and organisations to support local food support services.

8.3. Working collectively, the Board can share best practice, gain maximum value from our efforts by working in partnership, and strengthen communities to respond to

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long-standing inequalities in the city and the urgent crisis arising from the current economic conditions.

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Signed by Helen Atkinson FFPH, Director of Public Health

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Tackling poverty action plan

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

| Title of document | Location |
|---|---|
| Health and wellbeing strategy 2022-2030 | https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/health-and-wellbeing-strategy-january-2022-accessible.pdf |
| Energy and water at home strategy 2020-2025 | https://switchedonportsmouth.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/10.477-Energy-and-water-at-home-strategy-accessible.pdf |