

11 November 2021		ITEM: 7
Extraordinary Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee		
Low Income Families and Child Poverty update (2021) for the Children and Young People JSNA product (2017)		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: N/A	
Report of: Beth Capps, Senior Public Health Programme Manager		
Accountable Assistant Director: n/a		
Accountable Director: Jo Broadbent, Director of Public Health		
This report is Public		

Executive Summary

This report provides an update to the ‘Achieving Economic Wellbeing; Low Income Families and Child Poverty’ section of Chapter 6 of the Children and Young People JSNA from 2017.

1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 **The Committee are asked to consider and comment on the content of the updated chapter for the Children’s Joint Strategic Needs Assessment product.**
- 1.2 **The committee are asked to agree that this updated chapter is added to the published document.**

2. Introduction and Background

Every Health and Wellbeing Board has the responsibility to produce a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) for their area, which should give a comprehensive overview of the current and future health and care needs of local populations to inform and guide the planning and commissioning of health, wellbeing and social care services. In Thurrock, the Public Health team produce JSNA documents themed around particular topics.

The children and Young People’s Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Thurrock (JSNA) was first published in 2015, there were refreshed sections for Demography and the National Childhood Measurement Programme published in 2017. This paper is to introduce a refreshed section of chapter 6

‘Achieving Economic Wellbeing; Low Income Families and Child Poverty’ of the document updated for 2021.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 Data has been updated on Low Income Families and Child Poverty (Section 6 of the [JSNA document](#)) to the most recently available, this is mostly 2019/20 data.
- 3.2 The UK government abolished its target for assessing child poverty as a measure of material disadvantage that is based on family income and replaced it with a range of measures to track the life chances of disadvantaged children.
- 3.3 Since the child poverty indicator was abolished, there has been no single agreed measure to replace it, however, absolute low-income families¹ is a common proxy for children living in poverty. The number of children living in low income families has increased slightly nationwide however, in the East of England region and Thurrock it has reduced from 2014/15 levels.
- 3.4 While the proportion of children experiencing *absolute* low income has been reducing, families earning a *relative* low income has been increasing in Thurrock (14.8 in 2014/15 vs. 16.9% in 2019/20).² Relative low income relates to families earning less than 60% of the UK average income (this changes every year); the rising number of families with relatively low incomes indicates a widening inequalities gap where lower incomes are rising at a slower rate than higher incomes. Therefore, while the reduction of children in *absolute* low income families in Thurrock is positive, this does mask growing income inequality between the lowest and highest earners.
- 3.5 An update to the Policy context has been summarised and the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic on deepened disadvantage is also considered.
- 3.6 Progress with the previous [Thurrock Council Child Poverty Plan 2015-2020](#) is summarised within the chapter update highlighting areas of action.
- 3.7 The approach to child poverty in Thurrock is in line with the UK Government’s ‘Levelling Up’ agenda for reducing inequalities, mitigating the impact of disadvantage to offer equality of opportunity and giving all children the best start in life. Local strategies that address the wide impacts of child poverty include:
 - The Brighter Futures Strategy
 - Health and Wellbeing Strategy

¹ Absolute low income is defined as a family in low income Before Housing Costs (BHC) in the reference year in comparison with incomes in 2010/11. Absolute low income takes the 60 per cent of median income threshold from 2010/11 and then fixes this in real terms (i.e. the line moves with inflation). This is designed to assess how low incomes are faring with reference to inflation. It measures the number and proportion of individuals who have incomes below this threshold.

² Fingertips

- Backing Thurrock Strategy for economic recovery, resilience and return to growth

4. Reasons for Recommendation

Due to significant changes to the national policy context in relation to Child poverty and the Levelling up agenda a refresh of this section of the JSNA product was considered important to inform and shape the work in this area. This chapter update will inform the Health and Wellbeing Strategy refresh and brings this section of the report up to date and in line with recommendations and work within the Brighter Futures Strategy (2021-2026) delivery plan.

5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

This refreshed chapter on the Children and Young People's JSNA chapter has included consultation with the Director of Children's Services and their team, included the School Effectiveness Team with amendments made and included as a result. The Public Health Team including the Health Intelligence team and Assistant Director of Public Health have commented and made inclusions to this document.

6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

- 6.1 The chapter contributes towards the 'People' priority – *a borough where people of all ages are proud to work and play, live and stay*, as it links with communities being empowered to make choices and be safer and stronger together.
- 6.2 The chapter also contributes towards the 'Prosperity' priority – *a borough which enables everyone to achieve their aspirations*, as it links with vocational and academic education, skills and job opportunities for all in order to improve economic situations for individuals and therefore communities, reducing inequality and increasing social mobility.
- 6.3 The chapter contributes to the Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2016-2021 **goal 1: opportunity for all** – better educated children and residents who can access employment opportunities.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Mike Jones**
Strategic Lead – Corporate Finance

There are no financial implications currently to this updated chapter with refreshed data and policy context. Future commissioning projects and work as a result of this updated knowledge will need to consider financial implications as part of the governance process.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Gina Clarke**
Corporate Governance Lawyer

There are no specific legal implications arising from the recommendations of the report. However, the legal implications of future commissioning projects and work arising as a result of the updated Children and Young People's JSNA will need to be considered as part of the governance process.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Becky Lee**
Team Manager- Community Development and Equalities

Deprivation levels in Thurrock vary widely between wards, and this is also the case for children living in income deprived households. Child poverty exists everywhere in Thurrock but is most concentrated in the most deprived parts of the borough. There is wide variation from 6.6% to 36.2% of children living in deprivation depending on where they live as measured by Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (**IDACI**).³ This chapter refresh highlights updated data and the implications for those in the most deprived areas of Thurrock. The approach in Thurrock is summarised within the chapter in relation to current strategy documents.

7.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health Inequalities, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder or Impact on Looked After Children

Children who grow up in poverty are often at risk of social exclusion and there are clear links between poverty and lower educational attainment, poorer health outcomes, and intergenerational disadvantage.

8. Background papers used in preparing the report (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- Thurrock Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) Children and Young People, first published in 2015 and updated Demography and National Childhood Measurement Programme sections published in 2017. [Thurrock](#)

³ Department for Communities and Local Government, *Indices of Deprivation 2018*

9. Appendices to the report

- Refreshed Chapter to the Children and Young People's JSNA product: Low Income Families and Child Poverty Update.

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