

**REPORT FOR: HEALTH AND SOCIAL
CARE SCRUTINY SUB-
COMMITTEE**

Date of Meeting:	15 December 2016
Subject:	Annual Report of the Director of Public Health 2016
Responsible Officer:	Dr Andrew Howe Director of Public Health
Scrutiny Lead Member area:	Councillor Richard Almond, Policy Lead Member, Children & Families Councillor Janet Mote, Performance Lead Member, Children & Families
Exempt:	No
Wards affected:	All
Enclosures:	Appendix 1 - A Hand Up, Not A Hand Out: Annual Report Of The Director Of Public Health 2016 Appendix 2 - Child Poverty And Health Inequality Needs Assessment

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report is the Annual Report of the Director of Public Health for 2016. The topic of the report is child poverty. The report considers the factors affecting child poverty, looks at what this means for us in Harrow and suggests a way forward.

Recommendations:

The HOSC is asked to note the report.

Section 2 – Report

Each year, the Director of Public Health must publish an independent report on health in the borough. The annual report is the Director of Public Health's professional statement about the health of local communities, based on sound epidemiological evidence, and interpreted objectively. The report should be publicly accessible.

The annual report is an important vehicle by which Directors of Public Health can identify key issues, flag up problems, report progress and, thereby, serve their local populations. It will also be a key resource to inform local inter-agency action.

Director of Public Health annual reports should:

- Contribute to improving the health and well-being of local populations
- Reduce health inequalities
- Promote action for better health, through measuring progress towards health targets
- Assist with the planning and monitoring of local programmes and services that impact on health over time

This report sets out to raise the issue of Child Poverty in Harrow. It is based on a health needs assessment on child poverty undertaken by my team earlier this year.

Child poverty is defined by the experience of material deprivation and lack of financial resources which can be driven by factors such as low pay, changes to in-work benefits, problem debt and worklessness. Growing up in poverty can seriously impact a child's emotional wellbeing, physical health and educational attainment with long lasting effects into adulthood.

Children who grow up in poverty are four times as likely to become poor adults, becoming the parents of the next generation of children living in poverty. Harrow's housing, transport and childcare costs make it harder for low income families and many low skilled workers to survive on their incomes. Tackling child poverty needs to be a priority because of its short and long term consequences for children and for local areas. Tackling poverty is a key strategy to achieving successes in areas such as better health, education and economic development. Research estimates that poverty costs the UK £25 billion every year in reduced educational opportunities, lower taxes and higher service costs¹

There are persistent pockets of deprivation and child poverty in Harrow. We know from our services that work with vulnerable children and young people across Harrow, and our research and policy work, that it is often a

¹ Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Estimating the Cost of Child Poverty (2008)

combination of factors combined that have cause child poverty resulting in detrimental effects on a child's long term outcomes and life chances. Poor housing, unemployment, language barriers, debt and rent arrears, are all associated with poverty in Harrow.

As well as highlighting this issue, I have proposed developing a child poverty strategy and action plan for Harrow; one that all partners buy into so that together we agree what we need do to mitigate child poverty and ensure that every child in Harrow has the best opportunity to meet and fulfil their full potential.

Following on from this report, my team will undertake further research and gather case studies to illustrate what child poverty means for Harrow. A workshop on 9th November brought together local partners in the statutory and the voluntary / community sector to begin to develop the priorities and actions that we need to take over the next 5 years.

Legal Implications/Comments

Under Section 73B(5) of the National Health Service Act 2006 The director of public health for a local authority must prepare an annual report on the health of the people in the area of the local authority.

Financial Implications

Whilst this report does not have any specific recommendations with financial implications, it highlights the need for further partnership work to address child poverty. It does recognise the unprecedented financial challenges faced by the council and partner organisations and the need to work differently and sustainably within available resources.

Performance Issues

Performance indicators will be agreed as part of the development of the strategy.

Environmental Impact

Not applicable

Risk Management Implications

Risk included on Directorate risk register? No

Separate risk register in place? No

Equalities implications

Was an Equality Impact Assessment carried out? No

The 2010 Equality Act outlines the provisions of the Public Sector Equalities Duty which requires Public Bodies to have due regard to the need to:

eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010 advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups foster good relations between people from different groups

The broad purpose of this duty is to integrate considerations of equality into day business and keep them under review in decision making, the design of policies and the delivery of services

The report considers the impact of poverty on children and an accompanying needs assessment document covers the aspects of equalities legislation that affect or are affected by poverty.

Council Priorities

The Council's vision:

Working Together to Make a Difference for Harrow

The report incorporates the following of the administration's priorities.

- Making a difference for the vulnerable
- Making a difference for communities
- Making a difference for families

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Not required

Ward Councillors notified:	NO
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Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Carole Furlong, Consultant in Public Health, 020 8420 9508 (ext 5508)

Background Papers: Health Needs Assessment on child poverty.