



Department
for Education

Consultation Response Form

Consultation closing date: 22 May 2014
Your comments must reach us by that date

Child Poverty Strategy 2014-17: Consultation

If you would prefer to respond online to this consultation please use the following link:
<https://www.education.gov.uk/consultations>

Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure in accordance with the access to information regimes, primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998.

If you want all, or any part, of your response to be treated as confidential, please explain why you consider it to be confidential.

If a request for disclosure of the information you have provided is received, your explanation about why you consider it to be confidential will be taken into account, but no assurance can be given that confidentiality can be maintained. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Department.

The Department will process your personal data (name and address and any other identifying material) in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, and in the majority of circumstances, this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.

Please tick if you want us to keep your response confidential.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reason for confidentiality:	

Name: Beverley Parker	
Please tick if you are responding on behalf of your organisation.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Name of Organisation (if applicable): Financial Action and Advice Derbyshire	
Address: c/o Rural Action Derbyshire, Church Street, Wirksworth, Derbyshire, DE4 4EY	

If your enquiry is related to the DfE e-consultation website or the consultation process in general, you can contact the Ministerial and Public Communications Division by e-mail: consultation.unit@education.gsi.gov.uk or by telephone: 0370 000 2288 or via the Department's ['Contact Us'](#) page.

Please mark the category which best describes you as a respondent.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Voluntary and community sector	<input type="checkbox"/> Local authority	<input type="checkbox"/> Practitioner working with children/families
<input type="checkbox"/> Central government	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent/Carer	<input type="checkbox"/> Child/Young person
<input type="checkbox"/> Research body/academic	<input type="checkbox"/> Public bodies and named partners in the Child Poverty Act	<input type="checkbox"/> Organisation representing families and children
<input type="checkbox"/> Social enterprise	<input type="checkbox"/> Other	

Please Specify:

We would like everyone's views on how we can work together to end child poverty. Only by working together can we transform the lives of the poorest children.

Our approach

1 To what extent do you agree that the draft strategy achieves a good balance between tackling poverty now and tackling the drivers of inter-generational poverty?

<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree	

Comments:

We feel that the strategy focuses too much on tackling worklessness as the root cause of child poverty. Evidence suggests that it is not just getting adults into work that will reduce child poverty but looking at the wider picture of reducing the cost of living, the cost of essential items, improving insecure, low paid and low skilled jobs and improving the quality of child care. Mitigating the effects of poverty on the child's health and education are critical, as is raising aspirations. To tackle the drivers of intergenerational poverty requires addressing financial exclusion as well as providing jobs and improving skills/educational attainment. Being poor costs more. Without a bank account it costs more to cash a cheque, pay a bill or pay for goods and services, especially high cost items such as gas and electricity. Credit availability is limited and expensive hence the rise in high interest "payday" lenders. Providing access to basic financial products will help families rise out of poverty. We support the focus on reducing costs, particularly support to address fuel poverty. However we feel the report doesn't go far enough to address housing issues, particularly the high cost and availability of suitable rented accommodation, and poor quality housing in the private rented sector.

Children living in poverty are four times more likely to be poor as adults primarily due to the impact that poverty has on educational achievement. We therefore support the strategy's focus on education. However we would stress that training and education also needs to include personal finance education for children as well as adults so that informed choices can be made in the future. Behaviours and attitudes towards budgeting, saving and debt must be changed over time to prevent the current cycle of poverty.

Our approach

2 Considering the current fiscal climate, what is your view of the actions set out in the draft strategy?

Comments:

We welcome the broad thrust of the strategy, but feel that it does not go far enough to tackle the complexity of child poverty. Getting adults into work is only part of the story – jobs need to be better paid and sufficient hours to make any difference. And many families will require intensive support to enable them to maintain a job and improve family life. We know that the minimum wage is not sufficient to live on – in Derbyshire we are promoting the Living Wage as a more realistic alternative. It is good for employers too by reducing absenteeism by 25% and turnover of contractors falling from 4% to 1%.

We also feel that some of the actions within the strategy such as introducing Universal Credit and increased use of sanctions by Job Centre Plus have increased the numbers of families living in poverty. We know this in Derbyshire by the increased take up of food banks. More families are finding that they do not have enough money for food and are resorting to food banks to put food on the table. The stress and worry that this causes impacts on the whole family and poor nutrition has a negative impact on children from early years to teens. The unintended consequences of the bedroom tax have forced families into rent arrears, or faced with moving and finding alternative employment and the associated family upheaval this entails. The availability of certain types of housing stock in Derbyshire, is limited – particularly one and two bedroom properties.

However, we welcome the intention to expand credit unions and protect consumers by cracking down on high interest lending.

Gathering ideas

3 At a local level, what works well in tackling child poverty now?

Comments:

Effective early years support to children in poverty in Derbyshire takes many forms. Breastfeeding support for mothers can improve the health of babies and have financial benefits. Teenage parents are more likely to be living in poverty. The Family Nurse Partnership in Derbyshire is an intensive support programme to help teenage parents through the antenatal period up to the child's 2nd birthday. Outcomes include increased breastfeeding rates, higher employment rates, lower safeguarding incidents and fewer consecutive pregnancies.

Derbyshire Children's Centres particularly work with families of younger children and are based predominantly in areas of deprivation. Children's centres can signpost parents for support with housing, benefit entitlement, debt issues and work with parents to maximise their income by offering training to improve their job opportunities and volunteering opportunities to update their skills. Parents are encouraged to take up alcohol and substance misuse support so that income is directed at supporting the children instead. Credit unions are promoted and affordable warmth schemes are promoted. For families in crisis Childrens Centres offer support or assistance to access foodbanks, crisis funds, discretionary funds, food vouchers, white goods, furniture re-use schemes, childcare and toy libraries.

Financial Action and Advice Derbyshire provide financial inclusion awareness training for support workers to enable them to help parents access debt advice, budgeting tools and affordable credit solutions.

4 At a local level, what works well for preventing poor children becoming poor adults?

Comments:

A breakfast club pilot across Derbyshire has offered children a nutritious breakfast alongside informative fun activities. Schools with the highest percentage of free school meals were targeted to ensure that the initiative focused on need. The breakfast clubs improved attainment, attendance, punctuality, concentration and behaviour. This can all help improve educational achievement.

The Raising Aspirations programme works specifically to look at combating the perception that working life will inevitably be a low wage in an unskilled role at best. It provides initiatives for children, young people and their families to discover more about the world of work and the opportunities available to them.

Financial Action and Advice Derbyshire promote Personal Finance education in primary schools by providing lesson plans, resources and free training for teachers. Financial capability training is provided for vulnerable groups such as care leavers, offenders and adults with learning difficulties.

Young people in care in Derbyshire have excellent transition support when they leave care through a commissioned service provided by Barnados which supports them through college and university up to age 25 potentially. "Uni-fi" seeks to radically transform life chances for care leavers by providing

an endowment to support the young person to be able to access control, choices and opportunities to achieve their potential and realise their ambitions. This has helped to improve the number of care leavers successfully graduating by supporting their living and tuition costs whilst at university.

Tea Time for Boys was set up for young men living in homes affected by poverty. After looking at school attendance, anti-social behaviour and health needs, a Friday evening group was set up aiming to spend a significant amount of time with boys aged 12 to 13 years. The boys would take part in an activity, decided what they would like to eat, shop for ingredients, cook and then sit down to eat. The project builds skills including responsibility, team working, cooking, healthy eating, budgeting and self-worth.

5 What more can central government do to help employers, local agencies and the voluntary and community sector work together to end child poverty?

Comments:

Increase the minimum wage to Living Wage levels.

Take action to tackle abuses of zero hours contracts and allow more flexibility for applying sanctions when workers are on such contracts and find themselves without work.

Help employers support parents in work through flexible working,

Support local agencies and the VCS to focus on early intervention rather than waiting until families are at crisis point before services are provided.

Fund children's centres to provide a focal point for support and advice for families.

Recognise that poverty is a multi-faceted issue that requires a multi-agency approach that is often highly individualised and localised.

6 Please use this space for any other comments you wish to make.

Comments:

7 Please let us have your views on responding to this consultation (e.g. the number and type of questions, whether it was easy to find, understand, complete etc.).

Comments:

Thank you for taking the time to let us have your views. We do not intend to acknowledge individual responses unless you place an 'X' in the box below.

Please acknowledge this reply.

x

E-mail address for acknowledgement:

Here at the Department for Education we carry out our research on many different topics and consultations. As your views are valuable to us, please confirm below if you would be willing to be contacted again from time to time either for research or to send through consultation documents?

Yes

No

All DfE public consultations are required to meet the Cabinet Office [Principles on Consultation](#)

The key Consultation Principles are:

- departments will follow a range of timescales rather than defaulting to a 12-week period, particularly where extensive engagement has occurred before
- departments will need to give more thought to how they engage with and use real discussion with affected parties and experts as well as the expertise of civil service learning to make well informed decisions
- departments should explain what responses they have received and how these have been used in formulating policy
- consultation should be 'digital by default', but other forms should be used where these are needed to reach the groups affected by a policy
- the principles of the Compact between government and the voluntary and community sector will continue to be respected.

However, if you have any comments on how DfE consultations are conducted, please contact Aileen Shaw, DfE Consultation Coordinator, tel: 0370 000 2288 / email: aileen.shaw@education.gsi.gov.uk

Thank you for taking time to respond to this consultation.

Completed responses should be sent to the address shown below by 22 May 2014

Send by post to: Child Poverty Strategy 2014-17 Consultation, Child Poverty Unit, Department for Education, 1st Floor, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3BT.

Send by e-mail to: strategy.consultation@childpovertyunit.gsi.gov.uk