Child Poverty Needs Assessment

Consultation draft
# Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreword – Director of Public Health</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key headlines</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Summary</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child poverty in South Gloucestershire</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preventing poor children becoming poor adults</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tackling worklessness, low pay and barriers to work</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving families’ living standards</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Next steps</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key areas for further work</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why child poverty matters</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs assessment</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance arrangements</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levels of child poverty in South Gloucestershire</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vulnerable groups</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preventing poor children from becoming poor adults</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why is this important</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do we know about the issues in South Gloucestershire?</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting families before children start school</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational attainment</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The transition from school to higher education or work</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth unemployment</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s health, disability and Special Educational Needs</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the evidence on how to prevent poor children becoming poor adults</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What South Gloucestershire is doing to prevent poor children becoming poor adults</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary of key findings on preventing poor children becoming poor adults and suggestions for next steps</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tackling worklessness, barriers to work and low pay</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why it’s important</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do we know about worklessness, low pay and barriers to work in South Gloucestershire?</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment and unemployment</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low pay</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barriers to work</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key points from the evidence on tackling worklessness and low pay</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What South Gloucestershire is doing to tackle worklessness, barriers to work and low pay ................................................................. 50
  Tackling worklessness and low pay and improving parental qualifications ...... 50
  Tackling parental ill health ................................................................ 51
  Tackling substance misuse .................................................................. 51
Summary of key findings on tackling worklessness and low pay and suggestions for next steps .......................................................... 52
Supporting Families’ Living Standards ........................................................ 54
  Why is this important ....................................................................... 54
What do we know about families’ living standards in South Gloucestershire? ..... 55
  Affordable housing for families/preventing homelessness .................... 55
  Tackling problem debt ....................................................................... 56
  Fuel Poverty ....................................................................................... 57
  Food Poverty ....................................................................................... 59
What is the evidence for initiatives to support families’ living standards and what is South Gloucestershire doing. .................................................. 60
  Raising incomes and tackling problem debt ........................................ 60
  Providing affordable housing and preventing homelessness ............... 60
  Tackling Fuel Poverty ........................................................................ 60
  Tackling Food Poverty ........................................................................ 62
What is South Gloucestershire doing to support low incomes families’ living standards? ........................................................... 63
  Affordable housing and avoiding Homelessness ................................... 63
  Tackling fuel poverty ......................................................................... 63
  Tackling food poverty ......................................................................... 63
  Increasing incomes/avoid debt ............................................................ 63
  Affordable transport ........................................................................... 63
Summary of key findings on supporting families’ living standards and suggestions for next steps .......................................................... 64
References .................................................................................................. 65
Appendix 1– Existing South Gloucestershire strategies relating to preventing poor children becoming poor adults .................................................. 69
Appendix 2 – 2011 census qualification categories .................................... 73
Appendix 3 – Existing South Gloucestershire strategies and workstreams relating to reducing worklessness and low pay ........................................ 74
Appendix 4 – Reports received from South Gloucestershire food banks ......... 77
Appendix 5 – Existing South Gloucestershire strategies and initiatives relating to supporting families’ living standards ........................................... 79
Thank-you for reading the South Gloucestershire Child Poverty Needs Assessment. This is an important piece of work and the first time that a comprehensive needs assessment of this kind has taken place in South Gloucestershire.

So what is the story in South Gloucestershire? Child poverty levels are the 12th lowest in England. This is because South Gloucestershire performs well on many of the wider determinants of health such as employment, homelessness and crime. However, there are still 6000 children living in poverty in South Gloucestershire, two-thirds of whom do not live in our Priority Neighbourhoods.

If you dig beneath the surface you find that we still have much to do. For example, how well you do at school is the single most important factor in determining whether a poor child becomes a poor adult. Despite having fewer children living in poverty in South Gloucestershire the gap in educational achievement between children who receive free schools meals and those who do not is much higher than other parts of the country and gets worse as children get older.

Most poor families have at least one adult in work. Employment rates are higher in South Gloucestershire than most parts of the country but the number of people in low skill, low wage jobs is also higher. Ensuring that young people develop the skills they need to get better paying jobs will also contribute to reducing the number of poor families.

This report is an attempt to describe the ‘as is’ situation in South Gloucestershire, to take an honest and hard look at how we are performing. It is not an end in itself and will only be of significance if it is used as part of a process to improve things locally. No-one wants to see any children being brought up in poverty. I encourage you to be part of the solution.

Professor Mark Pietroni
Director of Public Health for South Gloucestershire
Email: mark.pietroni@southglos.gov.uk
Key headlines

- There are children living in poverty throughout South Gloucestershire. Two-thirds of children living in poverty in South Gloucestershire live outside the priority neighbourhoods (page 17).

- Educational attainment is the most influential factor that increases the risk of a poor child becoming a poor adult. Whilst South Gloucestershire pupils generally do well in the earlier stages of education, performance deteriorates between key stages 2 and 4. The current performance for KS4 (all pupils) places South Gloucestershire in the bottom quartile nationally (page 24).

- The gap in educational attainment between pupils receiving free school meals (an indicator of low income) and other pupils is wider within South Gloucestershire than within other areas of the country and this gap widens as children get older (page 26).

- Children in workless families are three times as likely to be in relative poverty compared to families where at least one parent works. South Gloucestershire has a lower rate of worklessness than the national average. However there is considerable variation in rates across South Gloucestershire. Two-thirds of adults claiming job seekers allowance live outside the priority neighbourhoods (page 40).

- Nationally, around two-thirds of poor children are in families with at least one adult who is working, suggesting that a combination of low hours and low pay plays a key part in determining poverty. In South Gloucestershire, the proportion of residents employed in occupations which usually require a low level of education is higher than the national and sub-regional averages. This suggests that there may be a higher proportion of South Gloucestershire residents in low paid jobs than other areas (page 42).

- South Gloucestershire has a lower proportion of parents with no qualifications than the national average. However, there is great variation within South Gloucestershire, with some areas having lower levels of parental qualifications than the national average including some areas outside the priority neighbourhoods (page 43).
Executive Summary

A child is said to be living in poverty if their household income is less than 60% of average income. Tackling child poverty is a national priority. The Government’s national Child Poverty Strategy 2014 – 2017 sets out plans to tackle child poverty based around the evidence on the key drivers of child poverty.

The national Child Poverty Strategy has three key themes:

- Preventing poor children becoming poor adults
- Tackling worklessness, low pay and barriers to work
- Improving families’ living standards

This needs assessment is based on analysis of the key drivers of child poverty in South Gloucestershire and is structured around the themes of the national Child Poverty Strategy.

The purpose of this needs assessment is to identify need in relation to child poverty in South Gloucestershire, with the aim of identifying actions that are within the remit of the local authority. The needs assessment and recommended areas for further work draw on the key drivers of child poverty as identified in the national Child Poverty Strategy 2014 - 2017.

Child poverty in South Gloucestershire

There are more than 6,000 children living in poverty in South Gloucestershire, a number which has remained fairly constant in recent years. The rates of child poverty vary considerably between wards and between small areas. However, there are children living poverty throughout South Gloucestershire and over two-thirds of children living in poverty in South Gloucestershire live outside the priority neighbourhoods. This suggests that inequalities workstreams that aim to reduce levels of child poverty by tackling its drivers should adopt an approach that targets child poverty across South Gloucestershire as a whole.

Preventing poor children becoming poor adults
Poor children are four times as likely to become poor adults as other children. Educational attainment is the most influential factor that increases the risk of a poor child becoming a poor adult. Pupils who achieve five A*-C grades at GCSE earn around 10% more than those who do not. Children who leave school with few or no qualifications are far more likely to be unemployed in adulthood and, if they are able to find work, are far more likely to be in low-paid and insecure employment.

Whilst South Gloucestershire pupils generally do well in the earlier stages of education, performance deteriorates between key stages 2 and 4. Overall, 54% of all South Gloucestershire pupils achieve 5 or more GCSE grades A* - C (including English and maths) which is lower than the England average of 57% and places South Gloucestershire in the bottom quartile nationally.

Furthermore poor children in South Gloucestershire have lower levels of attainment than other children at all stages of education. The gap between the attainment of poor pupils and other pupils in South Gloucestershire starts at the early years stage where there is a 23 percentage point difference in children achieving a 'good level of development' between pupils in receipt of free school meals (an indicator of low income) and other pupils. This gap persists at all stages and increases as children progress through school. At key stage 4 only 22% of South Gloucestershire pupils on free school meals achieved 5 or more GCSEs grades A*-C (including English and maths) in 2014 compared to 57% of other pupils, a gap of 35 percentage points. At each stage of education, the gap in attainment between poor pupils and other pupils is wider within South Gloucestershire than within the South West and England as a whole.

Tackling this gap in attainment between poor pupils and other pupils in South Gloucestershire will be key in determining how they will do in the future compared to their peers. **Improving the educational attainment of all pupils but particularly those from low incomes families should be a priority for South Gloucestershire.**

Young people not in work, education or training are at greater risk of becoming poor adults. In 2010, children eligible for free school meals in year 11 were almost three times as likely to not be in work or education at age 19 as other children. The percentage of young people aged 16 - 18 in South Gloucestershire who are not in education, employment or training is comparatively low. However, the number of young people aged 16 – 18 participating in learning is 58.5% compared to the England average of 81.9% and the SW average of
79.1%, indicating that a greater proportion of South Gloucestershire pupils enter the workforce directly after school. **Improving the proportion of young people engaging with education or training will improve their earning potential and life prospects.**

**Tackling worklessness, low pay and barriers to work**

Evidence provided in the national Child Poverty Strategy identified that the root causes of families being in poverty are worklessness, and low earnings (due to either not working enough hours or not being paid enough). Children in workless families are three times as likely to be in relative poverty compared to families where at least one parent works. Nationally, around two-thirds of poor children are in families with at least one adult who is working, suggesting that a combination of low hours and low pay plays a key part in determining poverty.

The national Child Poverty Strategy identified a number of key family characteristics which make it harder for some poor families to work their way out of poverty. The five key factors are long-term worklessness, low parental qualifications, being a single parent, having three or more children to care for and parental ill health.

South Gloucestershire has a lower rate of worklessness than the national average. In 2014, 79.8% of South Gloucestershire’s working age population were in employment compared to 72.3% for England as a whole. However there is considerable variation in rates across South Gloucestershire with some pockets of parental worklessness and long-term worklessness that are higher than the national average.

The average earnings of South Gloucestershire residents are consistent with the national average. However, they fell by 0.5% between 2012 and 2013, the first time a decrease has been observed since 2002. In comparison, average earnings for England and the South West increased by 2.0% and by 2.4% respectively. The proportion of South Gloucestershire residents employed in occupations which usually require a low level of education is higher than the national and sub-regional averages. This suggests that there may be a higher proportion of South Gloucestershire residents in low paid jobs than other areas.

Low parental qualifications are relevant to child poverty because of their impact on employment opportunities and wage potential. Analysis shows that although South Gloucestershire has a lower proportion of parents with no qualifications than the national
average, there are wide variations within South Gloucestershire in the proportion of parents with low or no qualifications and there are areas that have a significantly higher proportion of parents with low or no qualifications than national average.

Poor parental health can limit the ability of parents to work and therefore be a contributory factor to low income and child poverty. Adults in South Gloucestershire are generally healthy and have better health than adults nationally. However there are variations across wards. The 2011 census showed that seven wards have significantly higher levels of households with dependent children and a person with a limiting long-term condition than both South Gloucestershire as a whole and England. *Given the evidence that low parental qualifications are a barrier to work and the link between low pay and child poverty, supporting parents to gain better qualifications is a key issue for the Council and its partners to take forward.*

Improving families’ living standards

The impact of low income is that families may have difficulty with basic living costs such as fuel and food and ‘supporting families living standards’ is a key element of the national Child Poverty Strategy. Affording good quality housing is also an issue for many low-income families. The national Child Poverty strategy acknowledges that for the last two decades or more too few homes have been built in the UK.

There is evidence that some residents in South Gloucestershire are having difficulty affording basic living costs. There is a lack of affordable housing within South Gloucestershire and a fifth of families in South Gloucestershire are living in accommodation which is classified as non-decent, particularly in the private rented sector. There are rates of fuel poverty above the national average in some parts of South Gloucestershire.

Many of the issues identified in relation to improving families’ living standards are already covered by existing workstreams within South Gloucestershire and there are many existing projects aimed to support families’ living standards. *Continued priority should be given to supporting families’ living standards by helping low-income families maximise their income and supporting families who are in poor housing, homeless or experiencing fuel or food poverty.*
Next steps

Many of the issues identified in this needs assessment are covered by existing workstreams and strategies within South Gloucestershire. However, tackling the drivers of child poverty is complex and requires coordinated action across South Gloucestershire Council and its partners.

South Gloucestershire’s current child poverty strategy is integrated within the Partnership Strategy for Children and Young People 2012-2016 which is currently being refreshed. This needs assessment will inform further development of the Council’s strategic approach to tackling child poverty.

Key areas for further work

Key areas for further work to reduce levels of child poverty within South Gloucestershire include:

- Tackling the educational attainment gap between children from low-income families and others whilst aiming to raise attainment across the board, particularly at key stage 4
- Increasing the proportion of pupils who remain in education or training post-16
- Identifying actions that can overcome barriers to employment such as a low levels of qualifications amongst parents with dependent children
- Improving the mental and physical health of parents with dependent children in areas where parental ill-health is highest
- Supporting families’ to improve their living standards by helping low-income families maximise their income
- Supporting families who are in poor housing or experiencing fuel or food poverty
Introduction

Why child poverty matters

A child is said to be living in poverty if their household income is less than 60% of average income\(^1\). Today in the UK 2.3 million children (17%) live in poverty\(^2\). A child growing up in poverty has a greater likelihood of experiencing health problems from birth and of accumulating physical and mental health problems throughout life. For many children growing up in poverty can mean a childhood of insecurity and under-achievement at school. Child poverty is a major source of inequalities which can persist throughout life. By age five, children from the poorest fifth of homes in the UK are already on average nearly a year behind when measured by their expected years of development\(^3\). Childhood poverty can lead to premature mortality and poor health outcomes in adulthood\(^4\). 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\(^5\).

Tackling child poverty is a priority both locally and nationally. Locally South Gloucestershire’s Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2013 – 2016 identifies ‘Reducing Childhood Poverty’ as a key issue under its priority area of Tackling Health Inequalities. South Gloucestershire’s current child poverty strategy is part of the council’s Partnership Strategy for Children and Young People 2012 – 2016 which is currently being refreshed. This needs assessment will inform the next South Gloucestershire Child Poverty Strategy.

There is cross party support for tackling child poverty. Child poverty was identified as a priority in the manifestos of the Conservative\(^5\), Labour\(^6\) and Green\(^7\) Parties. The Liberal Democrat manifesto doesn’t specifically refer to child poverty but identifies tackling poverty and fuel poverty (a key driver of child poverty) as priorities\(^8\).

Nationally, the Child Poverty Act 2010 requires the UK Government to publish a regular UK child poverty strategy and places new duties on local authorities and other “delivery partners” in England to work together to tackle child poverty\(^9\). The Act established four separate national child poverty targets to be met by 2020/21. These are:
- Relative poverty – to reduce the proportion of children who live in relative low income households (in families with incomes below 60% of the median, before housing costs) to less than 10%.

- Combined low income and material deprivation – to reduce the proportion of children who live in material deprivation and have a low income (below 70% of the median, before housing costs) to less than 5%.

- Persistent poverty – to reduce the proportion of children that experience long periods of relative poverty; and

- Absolute poverty – to reduce the proportion of children who live below an income threshold fixed in real terms to less than 5%

Data at local level is only available on the proportion of families in relative poverty (the first of these measures).

The first national Child Poverty Strategy was published in 2011. A second national strategy was published in 2014 and sets out what action the government will take from 2014 – 2017 to tackle child poverty through:

- Tackling worklessness, low pay and barriers to work

- Improving families' living standards

- Preventing poor children becoming poor adults

**Needs assessment**

The Child Poverty Act 2010 requires local authorities to produce a child poverty needs assessment.

The purpose of this needs assessment is to identify need in relation to child poverty in South Gloucestershire, with the aim of identifying actions that are within the remit of the local authority. The needs assessment and recommended areas for further work draw on the key drivers of child poverty identified in the national Child Poverty Strategy 2014 - 2017.
South Gloucestershire’s current child poverty strategy is integrated within the Partnership Strategy for Children and Young People 2012-2016 which is currently being refreshed. This needs assessment will inform development of the Council’s strategic approach to tackling child poverty.

The national Child Poverty Strategy 2014 – 2017 was informed by a review of the evidence of the drivers of child poverty. The scope of this South Gloucestershire child poverty needs assessment covers the key drivers of child poverty outlined in the national Child Poverty Strategy and follows the structure of the national strategy:

a) Preventing poor children becoming poor adults:
   - Supporting families before children start school
   - Supporting children in school
   - Supporting the transition from school to work

b) Tackling worklessness, low pay and barriers to work:

c) Supporting families’ living standards and tackling problem debt.

**Governance arrangements**

The governance arrangements for the needs assessment and the development of strategic implementation plan are via the South Gloucestershire Children’s Trust Board reporting to the Health and Wellbeing Board.
Levels of child poverty in South Gloucestershire

Child Poverty is officially defined as “The percentage of dependent children aged under 20 living in households where income is less than 60 per cent of median household income - before housing costs)”\(^{11}\). This indicator is also commonly referred to as the proportion of children in low incomes families.

In July 2015, the Government announced plans to change the current definition of child poverty and to bring forward legislation with new measures of child poverty focused on levels of work within a family and improvements in education attainment\(^{12}\). However, it has not been announced when the new measure will be introduced or local figures published. The current definition of child poverty is still in use and allows comparison of child poverty rates between and within local areas. Local levels of child poverty using the new definition will be monitored once available.

There are more than 6,000 children in South Gloucestershire living in low income families. This figure has remained fairly constant over the last eight years (Table 1). Child poverty levels in South Gloucestershire are the 12\(^{th}\) lowest in England and South Gloucestershire has a lower percentage of children living in low income families (10.5%) than the South West (14.2%) or England (18.0%)\(^{5}\).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>6100</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>6020</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>6100</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>6700</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>6685</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>6565</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>6265</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>6110</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Department for Education - Child Poverty Basket of Local Indicators and HM Revenue & Customs Personal tax credits: Children in low-income families local measure 2013 snapshot as at 31 August 2013\(^{iii}\)

\(^{i}\) A dependent child is defined as an individual aged under 20 years who is not married nor in a Civil Partnership nor living with a partner and is living with parents and in full-time non-advanced education or in unwaged government training

\(^{ii}\) 2013 is the latest year for which comparative figures are published

\(^{iii}\) The Children in Low-Income Families Local Measure is the proportion of children living in families either in receipt of out-of-work benefits or in receipt of tax credits with a reported income which is less than 60 per cent of national median income
Rates of child poverty within South Gloucestershire vary considerably (Figure 1). In the two wards with the highest levels of child poverty (Patchway and Kings Chase) one in five children live in poverty. In the two wards with the lowest levels of child poverty (Downend and Severn), fewer than 1 in 20 children live in poverty. However, there are children living in low-income families in all areas of South Gloucestershire.

*Figure 1 - % of South Gloucestershire children in low incomes families by ward 2013*

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Personal tax credits: Children in low-income families local measure. 2013 snapshot as at 31 August 2013
A table showing the numbers of children in poverty in each ward is contained below.

Table 2 - number of South Gloucestershire children in low incomes families by ward 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ward</th>
<th>Number of children living in low income families</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Almondsbury</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bitton</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boyd Valley</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bradley Stoke Central and Stoke Lodge</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bradley Stoke North</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bradley Stoke South</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charfield</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chipping Sodbury</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotswold Edge</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dodington</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downend</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emersons Green</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filton</td>
<td>295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frampton Cotterell</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frenchay and Stoke Park</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanham</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kings Chase</td>
<td>485</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ladden Brook</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longwell Green</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oldland Common</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parkwall</td>
<td>295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patchway</td>
<td>440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pilning and Severn Beach</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rodway</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severn</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siston</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staple Hill</td>
<td>290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stoke Gifford</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thornbury North</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thornbury South and Alveston</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westerleigh</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winterbourne</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodstock</td>
<td>395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yate Central</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yate North</td>
<td>290</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Personal tax credits: Children in low-income families local measure. 2013 snapshot as at 31 August 2013
Further analysis at small area level shows that the two lower super output areas (LSOAs)\textsuperscript{iv} with the highest rates of child poverty as at August 2013 are South of Coronation Park - Newton Road/Parkwall in Parkwall ward (E01014941) and New Cheltenham Road area (E01014926) in King’s Chase ward with 29.6% and 29.3% respectively.

Analysis of the distribution of low incomes families throughout South Gloucestershire shows that although the concentration of child poverty is higher in the most deprived communities (defined by the six priority neighbourhoods), there are children living in poverty throughout South Gloucestershire (Figure 2). In fact more than two-thirds (70 per cent) of children living in poverty in South Gloucestershire live outside the priority neighbourhoods\textsuperscript{v}.

\textbf{Figure 2 - percentage of children in low-income families 2013 by lower super output area with the priority neighbourhoods mapped}

\textsuperscript{iv} Lower Super Output Area (LSOAs) are small areas designed to be of a similar population size, with an average of approximately 1,500 residents or 650 households. There are currently 165 in South Gloucestershire.

\textsuperscript{v} Source: analysis of HM Revenue &Customs data undertaken by South Gloucestershire Public Health and Wellbeing Division intelligence analyst
In summary, with regard child poverty in South Gloucestershire, analysis of nationally published child poverty statistics shows persistent levels of child poverty in South Gloucestershire and that there are children living in poverty throughout South Gloucestershire, although the rates of child poverty vary between wards and between small areas. Although child poverty levels are higher in South Gloucestershire’s six priority neighbourhoods, over two-thirds of children living in poverty locally live outside the priority neighbourhoods. This suggests that inequalities workstreams that aim to reduce levels of child poverty by tackling its drivers should adopt an approach that targets child poverty across South Gloucestershire as a whole.

Vulnerable groups

The Child Poverty Act 2010 requires the government to consider which groups of children appear to be ‘disproportionately affected by socio-economic disadvantage’ and to consider the likely impact of policies to tackle poverty on children within each of those groups.

It is clear that some vulnerable groups are at greater risk of poverty. They are often small groups not captured in national or local measures that face specific challenges. Particular groups identified in the national Child Poverty Strategy include:

- Looked after children
- Children with a disabled parent;
- Children in one parent families;
- Children in large families (with three or more children)

The scope of this needs assessment was presented at the Children’s Trust Board in February 2015. The Children’s Trust Board suggested that it would be useful to map some of the data from needs assessment data against other relevant indicators for example data on looked after children and child protection interventions in order to provide further insight into the range of factors influencing the lives of children in South Gloucestershire and to identify groups particularly affected by the issues identified.
Data by ward on rates of young people subject to a child protection plan\textsuperscript{vi} or looked after is shown in Figure 3 and Figure 4. This shows that there is some correlation between wards with high levels of child poverty and those with higher rates of children on child protection plans or looked after, for example Patchway and Kings Chase. However, it should be noted that the actual numbers of children with child protection plans or looked after is small (for example the rate of 102 children per 10,000 subject to child protection plans in King’s Chase represents nine children).

\textit{Figure 3 - children/young people subject to a child protection plan at any during 2014/15, rate per 10,000 young people}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure3}
\caption{Children/young people subject to a child protection plan at any during 2014/15, rate per 10,000 young people.}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{vi} When a child protection case conference decides a child or young person is at risk of abuse they are known as a ‘child subject of a child protection plan’.

\textsuperscript{Source:} Performance & Reporting Team, South Gloucestershire Council Department for Children, Adults & Health
Figure 4 - Children/Young People who were Looked After at any time 2014/15 - rate per 10,000 young people\textsuperscript{vii}

Source: Performance & Reporting Team, South Gloucestershire Council Department for Children, Adults & Health

\textsuperscript{vii} Address is analysed on the basis of the child/young person’s normal residential address.
Preventing poor children from becoming poor adults

Why is this important?

Evidence shows that poor children are four times as likely to become poor adults as other children. The UK has the highest association between the incomes of fathers and sons of any OECD country\(^1\).

Across a wide range of developmental areas, children from poorer backgrounds are more at risk of poorer development and the evidence shows that differences by social background emerge early in life\(^1\).

Children’s development in their early years provides the foundation for later life and learning. Poorer families can face the greatest challenges because of the direct impact on living standards and the stresses that poverty puts on family life such as effects on mental health including depression. Early learning can help all children’s development but poor children benefit most from attending a high quality pre-school \(^1\).

The Government’s review of the evidence for the drivers of child poverty concluded that “there are a range of factors that increase the risk of a poor child growing up to be a poor adult. The most influential factor is child educational attainment” \(^10\).

Those with a low level of educational attainment are almost five times as likely to be in poverty as adults as those with a high level of education. Children who leave school with few or no qualifications are far more likely to be unemployed in adulthood and, if they are able to find work, are far more likely to be in low-skilled, low-paid and insecure employment\(^13\). Pupils who achieve five A*-C grades at GCSE earn around 10% more than those who do not whilst pupils who achieve two or more A-levels earn around 14% more than those without\(^1\).

Preventing poor children becoming poor adults is also important for economic growth. The national Child Poverty Strategy found that “If every child does well at school and finds a job, they would earn more for themselves and boost economic growth. Countries with successful education systems grow faster and education is becoming increasingly important for growth…… More qualified people earn more, reflecting their higher productivity” \(^1\).
What do we know about the issues in South Gloucestershire?

Supporting families before children start school

The early years are very important in reducing child poverty. It is during early years that children learn basic skills such as language and communication, which are the foundations of their future learning. It is also when the gaps in development between children from rich and poor backgrounds (that are the key drivers of future life chances) begin to emerge. The level of development at age two is a good predictor of whether children will go on to achieve good educational outcomes at school and enjoy success in the labour market as adults. 

Good quality childcare can also play a key role in early years development. In September 2013 a government-funded national scheme was introduced which offers free childcare for two year olds from families on low incomes with an Ofsted registered early years provider (for example, pre-schools, nurseries and childminders) totalling 570 hours a year (or 15 hours a week if distributed over 38 weeks).

South Gloucestershire has now reached a 95% participation rate for the Department of Education target of eligible two year olds. The government’s criteria for take up of this funding is 40% and the national average is currently 55%. A significant element in achieving this target has been the further use of the groups operating in former children’s centres, particularly in the priority neighbourhood areas.

The Government also provides funding for all three and four year old children. A child’s free entitlement begins at the start of the term after their 3rd birthday and lasts until they reach statutory school age (the term after their 5th birthday). Take up of this offer in South Gloucestershire exceeds 95%.

Development in a child’s early years is measured by The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) which sets standards for the learning, development and care of children from birth to 5 years old. All schools and Ofsted-registered early years’ providers must follow the EYFS. The assessment of the EYFS measures whether children have achieved a ‘Good Level of Development’.

Overall, South Gloucestershire performs very well on early years; the proportion of children achieving a good level of development in the EYFS in South Gloucestershire in 2013/14 was...
This represents a 5% increase from 2012/13 and is higher than both the England average of 60% and the average for South Gloucestershire’s statistical neighbours of 62%. This places South Gloucestershire 5th nationally and 1st among its statistical neighbours.

In order to measure outcomes specifically in the children from low-income families, receipt of free school meals (FSM) is often used as a proxy indicator for low income\textsuperscript{viii}. Table 3 below shows the proportion of pupils entitled to FSM and other children who achieved a Good Level of Development in the EYFS in 2013 and 2014.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FSM</th>
<th>Non-FSM</th>
<th>Gap between FSM pupils and non-FSM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Gloucestershire</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistical Neighbours’ Average</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Report “Review of 2015 standards and performance (all wards) to SGC Children and Young People Committee 21 January 2015

Key points from the table above are:

- The percentage of children entitled to free school meals in South Gloucestershire in 2014 who achieved a good level of development was 52% - this is 10 percentage points better than the statistical neighbour average and 7 percentage points better than the national average.

- However, the gap in those who achieved a good level of development and between SGC children entitled to FSM and non-FSM pupils was 23 percentage points (52% compared to 75%). This gap is 1 percentage point wider than the previous year and 4

\textsuperscript{viii} From September 2014, all children in reception, year 1 and year 2 at state schools in England automatically get free school meals. The data used in this needs assessment pre-dates this change.
percentage points wider than the national average but is in line with the statistical neighbour average.

In summary, South Gloucestershire has exceeded targets in take up of free child care for disadvantaged two years old and all three and four year olds. Overall, South Gloucestershire children achieve highly at the Early Years Foundation Stage. South Gloucestershire pupils receiving free school meals (FSM) perform well at the early years compared to pupils receiving FSM in other areas.

However, the gap within South Gloucestershire between FSM and non-FSM pupils is wider than the national average. Given the high performance of pupils overall in South Gloucestershire at the early years stage, the performance of pupils receiving FSM, i.e. those from the poorest families, is cause for concern.

Educational attainment

Educational attainment in England is measured at the end of each Key Stage (the National Curriculum is divided into four Key Stages that children are taken through during their school life). Details on how each key stage relates to pupil age and school year are contained in Table 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key stage</th>
<th>Ages</th>
<th>School years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Key Stage 1</td>
<td>5-7</td>
<td>Years 1 and 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Stage 2</td>
<td>7-11</td>
<td>Years 3, 4, 5 and 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Stage 3</td>
<td>11-14</td>
<td>Years 7, 8 and 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Stage 4</td>
<td>14-16</td>
<td>Years 10 and 11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Whilst South Gloucestershire pupils generally do well in the earlier stages of education, performance deteriorates between key stage 2 and 4. The current performance for KS4 (all pupils) places South Gloucestershire in the bottom quartile nationally. Overall, 54% of all South Gloucestershire pupils achieve 5 or more GCSE grades A* - C (including English and maths) which is lower than the England average of 57%.
As with early years, analysis of data for pupils receiving free school meals provides a proxy measure of performance for pupils from low income families.

Data from the national child poverty basket of indicators shows that in 2012/13 South Gloucestershire had a wider gap in attainment between pupils with FSM and those who don’t than the national average for key stage 2\textsuperscript{x} and for the local and national averages for key stage 4\textsuperscript{x} (Table 5).

*Table 5 - Educational attainment – gaps between those in receipt of FSM and other pupils at KS2 and KS4 2012/13*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>South Gloucestershire</th>
<th>South West</th>
<th>England</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FSM/non-FSM achievement gap at KS2 (percentage point difference)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSM/non-FSM achievement gap at KS4 (percentage point difference)</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Department for Education - Child Poverty Basket of Local Indicators.

Further analysis of the performance of South Gloucestershire pupils and those in receipt of free school meals at the different key stages shows the impact of family income on attainment, with pupils eligible for free school meals doing much worse academically than their peers at all stages of education (Table 6 below).

\textsuperscript{iX} Defined as those achieving at least Level 4 in English and Maths at KS2

\textsuperscript{x} Defined as those achieving 5A*-C grades at GCSE (and equivalent) including GCSE English and mathematics at KS4
Table 6 - South Gloucestershire Performance pupils eligible for free school meals and those not eligible at key stages 1, 2 and 4, 2012/13 – 2013/14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FSM pupils</th>
<th>Non-FSM pupils</th>
<th>FSM gap</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Key Stage 1 attainment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2 and above in reading</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2 and above in writing</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2 and above in mathematics</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KS2 attainment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L4+ in reading</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L4+ in writing</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L4+ in mathematics</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KS4 attainment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% pupils achieving 5 or more GCSE grades A* - C inc English and maths</td>
<td>n/a xi</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>n/a xi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Department for Education statistics for key stage 1, key stage 2 and key stage 3.

The above table shows that:

- Performance of pupils receiving free school meals has improved between 2013 and 2014. However, the gap between pupils receiving free school meals and those not receiving FSM widens as children get older.

- In 2014 at KS4 (the stage at which South Gloucestershire’s performance overall deteriorates) only 22% of FSM pupils achieved 5 or more GCSE grades A* - C (including English and maths) compared to 57% of non-FSM pupils.

---

xi The Department for Education advises that 2013/14 figures are not comparable to previous years due to changes in methodology. Therefore previous years’ figures have not been included.
Given the enormous impact that educational attainment has on child poverty, the performance of all pupils at KS4 is a case for concern but the very poor performance of FSM pupils is extremely worrying.

In summary, tackling the gaps between poor pupils and other pupil’s attainment is key in determining how they will do in the future compared to their peers and this should be a priority for South Gloucestershire. Pupils who achieve five A*-C grades at GCSE earn around 10% more than those who do not and are more likely to be employed 1.

The transition from school to higher education or work

Those not in education, employment or training

Young people not in work, education or training are at greater risk of becoming poor adults. Nationally, the number of children staying in school post 16 has been rising since the 1980s. However in 2010, children eligible for free school meals in year 11 were almost three times as likely to not be in work or education at age 19 as other children1.

In December 2014 the proportion of 16 to 19 year olds not in education, employment or training (NEET) in South Gloucestershire was 2.9%, compared to 4.7% for England and 4.5% for the South West, although there is a higher proportion of 16 – 18 year olds in South Gloucestershire whose current status is not known than other councils (an issue which is recognised by the council with a number of plans in place to tackle it)xii. The figure below shows the proportion of young people who are NEET over the last two years.

---
xii Source: South Gloucestershire skills and employability plan
Although the percentage of young people age 16 – 18 not in education, employment or training is comparatively low, the number of young people age 16 – 18 participating in learning is 58.5% compared to the England average of 81.9% and the SW average of 79.1% indicating that a greater proportion of South Gloucestershire pupils enter the workforce directly after school. Improving the proportion of young people engaging with education or training after the age of 16 will improve their prospects for life, for example, people with two or more A-levels earn around 14% more than those without.

The number of young people who are not in education, employment or training is an issue that is recognised within the Council. The Council’s Children’ and Young Person’s Plan 2012 – 2016 identifies as a key issue that “There are low aspirations among some groups of young people who become disengaged or do not achieve their potential; fewer than nationally go on to university or good quality vocational education”.

Progression to higher education

Data published by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills shows the estimated percentage of pupils who entered higher education by pupils who receive free school meals and other pupils (Table 7). This shows that whilst the percentage of South Gloucestershire pupils receiving free school meals who entered higher education increased between 2011/12 and 2012/13, it is lower than the percentages for South West and England, Furthermore the

---

xiii Source: South Gloucestershire Employability and Skills Plan
gap between FSM pupils and others is higher in South Gloucestershire than the South West and England.

Table 7 - Progression to higher education by FSM and non FSM pupils 2011/12 - 2012/13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FSM pupils</th>
<th>Non-FSM pupils</th>
<th>FSM gap</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2011/12</td>
<td>2012/13</td>
<td>2011/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Gloucestershire</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South West</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills

Youth unemployment

The proportion of South Gloucestershire’s population aged 18 – 24 who claim job seekers allowance (an indicator of unemployment) was 1.6% in May 2015 compared to the England average of 2.5%. However as with all age unemployment there is wide variation between wards (Table 8 below)

Table 8 - Estimated proportion of 18 – 24 years olds claiming JSA by ward May 2015

---

Proportions for some wards may be influenced by low resident populations in the 18-24 age group and / or the effects of rounding – data is rounded to nearest 5.
There were approximately 380 JSA claimants age 18 to 24 in May 2015. Kings Chase (with 40) was the ward with the highest number of JSA. The wards with the highest proportion of their resident population aged 18-24 years claiming JSA were Yate Central (4.6%), Kings Chase (3.8%), Staple Hill (3.1%), Woodstock (2.9%), Rodway (2.9%) and Parkwall (2.7%), all of which had rates above the England average of 2.5%.

However, as with all adult JSA claimants, fewer than three in every ten JSA claimants age 18 – 24 lived within Priority Neighbourhoods (Figure 6).

*Figure 6 - Proportion of JSA claimants age 18 – 24 living within priority neighbourhoods*

![Proportion of JSA claimants aged 18-24 living within Priority Neighbourhoods - Sept. 2013](source)

Source: SGC Safe, Stronger Communities Team
Children who are healthy, fit and alert will benefit most from their education and be able to realise their potential. But a child born in poverty is more likely than other children to be born early, born small, die in the first year of life, die before adulthood or experience health problems in later life. Equally, children coming to school hungry or stressed as a result of their social and economic environment will be unable to take full advantage of learning opportunities.¹

The health and wellbeing of children in South Gloucestershire is generally better than the England average.¹⁵ For example:

- The infant mortality rate (mortality age under 1 year) for 2011-2013 for South Gloucestershire was 2.5 per 1,000 live births compared to the England average of 4.1.
- The child mortality rate (mortality age 1-17) for 2011-2013 for South Gloucestershire was 12.9 per 100,000 children age 1-17 years which is similar to the England average of 11.9.
- The percentage of low birthweight babies (percentage of live and stillbirths weighing less than 2,500 grams) in South Gloucestershire in 2013 was 4.6% compared to an England average of 7.4%.
- The rate of hospital admissions as a result of self-harm (10-24 years) is 398.8 per 100,000 compared to the England average of 412 per 100,000.
- In 2012/13 92% of young people in treatment for substance misuse left the service in a planned way, compared with 79% nationally.¹⁶

Children who have Special Educational Needs (SEN) require special arrangements for their education. Nationally, poor children with SEN do worse at school than other children with SEN. In 2012/13 only 15% of pupils on free school meals with SEN got five good GCSEs (including English and maths), slightly over half the attainment of SEN pupils not on free

¹ Directly standardised rate
school meals. It is important to support poor children with SEN to achieve more at school in order to break the cycle of disadvantage and prevent them becoming poor adults.

Data on educational attainment amongst pupils on free school meals with SEN is published at national but not local authority level. However, data is published on attainment amongst pupils with different levels of SEN. Table 9 below shows the % of pupils with SEN who achieved 5 A*-C GCSEs in 2013/14.

Table 9 - % of South Gloucestershire pupils achieving 5+ GCSE A*-C grades including English & mathematics by SEN status 2013/14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2012/13</th>
<th>2013/14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pupils with no identified SEN</td>
<td>62.9</td>
<td>59.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupils at school action</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupils at school action plus</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>20.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupils with special education needs but without a statement</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>21.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupils with a statement of special educational needs</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table shows that GCSE performance for pupils with SEN improved between 2012/13 and 2013/14 except for pupils with a statement of special educational needs.
What is the evidence on how to prevent poor children becoming poor adults?

Some key points from the published literature are:

- Early learning can help all children’s development but poor children benefit the most from attending a high quality pre-school ¹⁷

- Research strongly suggests that only good-quality early childhood education and care has positive short-term and, possibly, longer term, educational effects for poor children. Children’s centres, in close partnership with local authorities, can play a key role in brokering access for poor children to quality ECEC, coupled with other family support provision ¹⁷

The national Child Poverty Strategy states “We know that it is possible for poor children to do much better at school. For example, in London 51% of pupils on free school meals got five good GCSEs (including English and maths), compared to 35% in the rest of England ¹. An example from the national Child Poverty Strategy of a school which was able to improve performance is given below:
An example of good practice from the national Child Poverty strategy

Pakeman is a school in Islington in an area of high social deprivation. In 2012/13, 85% of the pupils attracted the Pupil Premium and the school received £145,000 in pupil premium funding. Pakeman took a multi-strand approach together with rigorous tracking and assessment procedures so any gaps in pupils’ learning could be quickly identified and addressed.

- **Building belief:** a culture in which staff believe that ALL children can succeed – no excuses for underperformance and no “artificial ceilings”.
- **Data and identification of pupils:** all staff are involved in analysing data and identifying pupils underachieving at any level. These children, and not just lower attainers, are targeted.
- **Improving day-to-day teaching:** established a Team Leader Model to address any within-school variances and to increase the percentage of outstanding teaching across the school.
- **Increasing learning time:** maximising children’s learning time by improving attendance and punctuality, providing earlier intervention (KS1 and EYFS) and extending learning out of school hours.
- **Improving the effectiveness of interventions:** using the Sutton Trust Teaching and Learning Toolkit for guidance on the cost and effectiveness of a range of interventions.
- **Increasing parental engagement:** setting up targeted termly individual meetings for parents of underachieving children.

By 2013 Pakeman had significantly narrowed the gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers. The school intends to use future Pupil Premium money to improve feedback to pupils by providing termly individual mentoring sessions for pupils, extending one-to-one tuition to provide earlier intervention and focusing on digital literacy.
What South Gloucestershire is doing to prevent poor children becoming poor adults

There are a range of strategies in place in South Gloucestershire to support early years, promote educational attainment and transition from school to work or higher education. These include:

- South Gloucestershire Early intervention and preventative Services
- South Gloucestershire Early Help Strategy
- South Gloucestershire Disadvantaged Pupils strategic plan
- South Gloucestershire Strategic Review of Special Educational Needs
- South Gloucestershire education commission
- South Gloucestershire Raising Participation Strategy
- South Gloucestershire Apprenticeship strategy

Further details are contained in Appendix 1.
Summary of key findings on preventing poor children becoming poor adults and suggestions for next steps

Whilst South Gloucestershire pupils generally do well in the earlier stages of education, performance deteriorates between key stages 2 and 4. Poor children in South Gloucestershire have lower levels of attainment than other children at all stages of education. The gap between the attainment of poor pupils and other pupils in South Gloucestershire starts at the early years stage and increases as children progress through school and go onto higher education.

Given the evidence that educational attainment is the key determinant of life chances, tackling the gap in attainment between children from low-income families and other pupils whilst aiming to raise attainment across the board, particularly at key stage 4, should be a priority for South Gloucestershire.

Although the proportion of young people in South Gloucestershire who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) is comparatively low, the number of young people age 16 – 18 participating in learning is lower than the South West and England average, indicating that a greater proportion of South Gloucestershire pupils enter the workforce directly after school. Intervening early to improve the proportion of young people engaging with education or training will reduce the risk of adult unemployment and low pay. There is need for improved management of transition and tracking when young people leave school.
Tackling worklessness, barriers to work and low pay

Why it’s important

This chapter covers employment and unemployment levels, barriers to employment and low pay, all of which have been identified as key drivers of child poverty \(^{10}\). The national Child Poverty Strategy uses the term ‘worklessness’ rather than unemployment so this is the term that is used throughout this needs assessment.

Evidence provided in The National Child Poverty Strategy \(^1\) identified that the root causes of families being in poverty are worklessness, and low earnings (due to either not working enough hours or not being paid enough). Children in workless families are three times as likely to be in relative poverty compared to families where at least one parent works.

A review of the evidence for reducing child poverty carried out by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation\(^{xvi}\) found that “While the poverty risk is higher for workless households, working households now constitute the largest share of overall poverty. A substantial proportion of in-work poverty is made up of families with ‘low work intensity’ – including single-earner couples, families with only part-time earners and those working intermittently” \(^{17}\).

The main factor affecting child poverty is lack of sufficient income from parental employment, which restricts the amount of earnings a household has. Lack of sufficient income from parental employment has also been identified as the main influencing factor on the length of the spell of child poverty \(^{10}\). Lack of income can be caused by:

- Long-term worklessness which can lead to increasing difficulties in returning to work, including skill loss, employer bias and changes in attitudes to work

- Low parental qualifications which drive poverty because of their impact on employment opportunities and wage potential. National data shows that 20% of all individuals with no qualification are in persistent poverty compared with 9% of the population overall
• Parental ill-health or family instability which can both reduce the number of parents whose earnings contribute to income, and may also mean the remaining parent is more restricted in terms of employment due to caring responsibilities either for the child or the disabled family member

• Family size, with larger families requiring higher levels of income to avoid poverty. It can also restrict parental employment due to caring responsibilities

• Parental drug and alcohol dependency. Although only a small number of children are affected, the effects for these parents and children are profound

As worklessness and low pay have been identified as key drivers of child poverty, it is important to try to understand their prevalence in South Gloucestershire.
What do we know about worklessness, low pay and barriers to work in South Gloucestershire?

Employment and unemployment

Overall, employment levels in South Gloucestershire are high. In the year to September 2014, 79.8%\textsuperscript{vii} of South Gloucestershire’s working age population (those aged 16-64) were in employment compared to 72.3% for England as a whole \textsuperscript{18}.

In relation to levels of unemployment within South Gloucestershire, there are a number of different measures which can be used:

- Job seekers allowance (JSA) monthly claimant is not the official unemployment rate but is the most detailed and regularly updated source of unemployment data at a local level. It counts the number of people who are receiving benefits principally for the reason of being unemployed. These figures are published by the Department for Work and Pensions and are included in the South Gloucestershire Monthly Labour Market review\textsuperscript{viii}.

- The Census collects information on employment status every 10 years. It should be noted that unemployment status from the census is self-reported and therefore may differ slightly from the unemployment statistics based on JSA claimant count.

In relation to JSA monthly claimant count the key points from the available data for South Gloucestershire are:

- The overall JSA rate for South Gloucestershire remains considerably lower than the national and sub-regional rates (Figure 7). In May 2015, 1,532 South Gloucestershire residents were claiming JSA – 0.9% of the working age population.

\textsuperscript{vii} It should be noted that due to the sample size, there are confidence intervals associated with this data set at local authority level. For example, for South Gloucestershire the confidence interval is 2.7% for the figure quoted, meaning the actual employment rate could be up to 2.7% higher or lower than the figure given above.

\textsuperscript{viii} Available at: \url{http://www.southglos.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/census/economic-briefings/}
• Within South Gloucestershire rates for JSA claimants vary considerably between wards and between small areas. Two wards – Kings Chase (2.0%) and Staple Hill (1.9%) - had a claimant rate above the England average of 1.7%.

• Analysis of JSA claimants within South Gloucestershire, undertaken in September 2013 showed that more than two-thirds (68.5%) of all JSA claimants in South Gloucestershire lived outside the six Priority Neighbourhoods – a proportion which has remained broadly consistent since 2008.

Data on the levels of JSA claimant count refers to all South Gloucestershire residents and will include those without dependent children (i.e. those at risk of child poverty). Data from the 2011 census allows identification of employment issues that specifically affect families with children within South Gloucestershire. The census data showed that:

• The proportion of South Gloucestershire families with no working parent is 6.5% which is significantly lower than the England rate of 12.1%.

• However, 42 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) within South Gloucestershire have significantly higher rates of parental worklessness than South Gloucestershire as a
whole, with LSOA rates ranging from 25% to 9.1%. This includes 20 LSOAs that are not part of the South Gloucestershire six priority neighbourhoods.

- In comparison to the England rate, nine LSOAs have significantly higher parental worklessness rates, all of which are within Priority neighbourhoods (range 25% to 15.8%).

Low pay

The national review of evidence on the drivers of child poverty found that “of all currently poor children, around two-thirds are in families with at least one adult who is working, suggesting that a combination of low hours and low pay plays a key part in determining poverty” 10.

Official data on earnings is derived from the Office of National Statistics Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings. The latest published data is for 2013. This showed that the median annual earnings for South Gloucestershire as whole were £27,343. This represents a 0.5% decrease on the 2012 figure for South Gloucestershire (£27,474) and is the first time a decrease has been observed since 2002. In comparison, annual earnings for England and the South West increased by 2.0% and by 2.4% respectively. South Gloucestershire’s average earnings are consistent with the national average (£27,375) but higher than the regional average (£25,632) 19.

The lowest geographical level for which data is published is parliamentary constituency level. Median annual earnings for the three South Gloucestershire constituencies is contained in Figure 8.
Analysis of the occupation of South Gloucestershire residents may give some further indication of pay levels. In South Gloucestershire from October 2013 to September 2014, the proportion of residents employed in elementary occupations which require a low level of education (such as farm workers, cleaners and waiters) is 13.3% and is higher than the national and sub-regional averages (10.6% and 10.0% respectively). This suggests that there may be a higher proportion of South Gloucestershire residents employed in low paid jobs.

In summary, the above analysis shows that although the earnings of South Gloucestershire residents are consistent with the national average, they fell by 0.5% between 2012 and 2013. There may also be an above average proportion of residents in occupations which are likely to be low paid. Low pay is a key driver of child poverty and nationally the majority of children in poverty are in families with at least one adult who is working. Supporting families to maximise their earnings should therefore be a priority for South Gloucestershire.

**Barriers to work**

The national Child Poverty Strategy identifies a number of key family characteristics which make it harder for some poor families to work their way out of poverty. The five key factors...
are long-term worklessness, low parental qualifications, being a single parent, having three or more children to care for and parental ill health.

**Long-term worklessness**

Long-term worklessness is a particular risk factor for child poverty. In May 2015, 315 South Gloucestershire residents (0.2%) of the working age population had been claiming JSA benefits for over one year. The long term claimant rate in South Gloucestershire remains lower than both the national and sub-regional averages. This is not therefore recommended as a priority area for further work in terms of tackling child poverty.

**Parental qualifications and skills**

Low parental qualifications are relevant to child poverty because of their impact on employment opportunities and wage potential.

Information on the highest level of qualification achieved is collected in the census. Definitions of the categories used in the census are contained in Appendix 2. Analysis at LSOA level of parental qualifications from the 2011 census for South Gloucestershire shows that:

- The proportion of parents in South Gloucestershire whose highest qualification is Level 1 (the lowest level) or no qualification is 29.2% which is significantly lower than the England rate of 32.7%.

- However, there are wide variations within South Gloucestershire in the proportion of parents with low or no qualifications. 57 of the 165 LSOAs in South Gloucestershire have a significantly higher proportion of parents with low or no qualifications than South Gloucestershire as a whole. The proportion of parents with low or no qualifications in these LSOAs ranges from 49.7% to 33.1% and the majority (32 LSOAs) are not part of a priority neighbourhood.

- In comparison to the England rate of 32.7%, 36 LSOAs have a significantly higher proportion of parents with low or no qualifications (range 49.7% - 36.75), 14 of these LSOAs are not part of the Priority neighbourhoods.
The above analyses indicate that although South Gloucestershire has a lower proportion of parents with no qualifications than the average, levels of parental qualifications vary throughout the authority.

The impact of low levels of adult qualifications in some parts of South Gloucestershire is recognised within the Council. A presentation to the SGP Chief Officer’s Group in September 2013 identified some key issues including:

- There are too many initiatives and too great a focus on targets and accountability measures resulting in a poor match of skills to labour market requirements.
- There is a growing demand for higher qualified technical workers to meet the needs of the increasing numbers of small and medium sized businesses in the area.
- The skills employers need are not met by the currently available workforce in South Gloucestershire.

The South Gloucestershire Economic Development Strategy 2008 – 2015 also identifies relatively low levels of educational attainment within the South Gloucestershire resident workforce as a key threat to economic development.

In summary, in relation to parental qualifications, data shows that although the proportion of parents with low or no qualifications is lower in South Gloucestershire than the national rate, there is great variation within South Gloucestershire, with some areas with low qualifications outside the priority neighbourhoods. In some areas as many as 50% of parents have low or no qualifications. Given the evidence that low parental qualifications are a barrier to work (and that worklessness is a key driver of child poverty) and the link between low pay and child poverty, supporting parents to gain better qualifications is a key issue for the Council to take forward.

*Parental ill health*

Poor parental health limits the ability of parents to work and therefore can be a contributory factor to low income and child poverty. The National Child Poverty Strategy found that parental ill health (which includes physical and mental illness and disability) creates significant barriers to work. Children in families with a disabled adult are over a third more
likely to be in poverty than children in families with no disabled adult (22% compared to 16%)\(^1\). Children with caring responsibilities for their parents or whose parents have mental health or substance misuse issues are at a greater risk of lower educational attainment and poorer employment outcomes. Mothers’ mental health is strongly linked to children’s health and development\(^1\).

Adults in South Gloucestershire are generally healthy and have better health than adults nationally\(^2\). Key information on the health of adults in South Gloucestershire is contained in a number of existing documents\(^{xx}\) and there are a range of workstreams looking at adult health.

The recent South Gloucestershire Adult Mental Health and Wellbeing Needs Assessment found that in general terms mental health outcomes in South Gloucestershire are better than the England average. However, it found that the prevalence of common mental health conditions such as anxiety and depression will increase based on projections until 2020. It also found that with the exception of eating disorders, the prevalence of mental health conditions was highest in people from the most deprived socioeconomic quintiles and those from priority neighbourhoods. Further information on the mental health and wellbeing of adults in the South Gloucestershire is available in the Adult Mental Health and Wellbeing Needs Assessment\(^{23}\).

The census allows analysis of self-reported health at ward level. The 2011 census showed that the proportion of households with dependent children and a person with a limiting long term condition in South Gloucestershire is 17.2% which is not significantly different from the England rate of 17.0%. Data for this indicator is available at ward level but not at LSOA level. Seven wards have levels of household with dependent children and a person with a limiting long-term condition which are significantly higher than both South Gloucestershire as a whole and England, with a range of between 19.7% and 22.3%; these wards are Almondsbury, Bitton, Boyd Valley, Bradley Stoke Central and Stoke Lodge, Bradley Stoke North, Bradley Stoke South and Charfield.

\(^{xx}\) For example South Gloucestershire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, South Gloucestershire Health Profile, South Gloucestershire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Director of Public Health Report, Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment, Substance Misuse needs assessment, Mental health needs assessment
Improving the health of parents and families would help tackle child poverty and South Gloucestershire Council should prioritise this within existing workstreams and with healthcare partners, ensuring all are aware of the impact on tackling child poverty.

*Family size*

The national Child Poverty Strategy and accompanying evidence review concluded that it is harder for one-parent families to move out of poverty as they only have one potential earner in the household and less ability to share childcare responsibilities. Children in one-parent families are over a third more likely to be in poverty than children in couple families and over a third of families who become one-parent families enter poverty \(^1\)\(^{10}\).

Large families are also at greater risk of being in poverty. More than a third of children in relative poverty live in families with three or more children. Larger families face significant barriers to work such as greater childcare responsibilities. Poor children from larger families are also more likely to have parents with no qualifications than poor children from smaller families.

Self-reported information on family size is collected in the census. Analysis of data from the 2011 census found that the percentage of large or one-parent families in South Gloucestershire is lower than for England as a whole. However, there are variations in rates of large or one-parent families within South Gloucestershire with some wards higher than the local and national rates:

- Approximately 23% of families in South Gloucestershire with dependent children have only one parent, which is lower than the England rate of 29%. The areas with rates of lone parent families significantly higher than the South Gloucestershire rate are Kings Chase (37%), Patchway (35%), Woodstock (32%), Staple Hill (31%), Parkwall (30%), Filton (28%) and Dodington (27%).

- 14% of those families who have dependent children in South Gloucestershire have more than three dependent children slightly lower than the England rate of 16%. The only area with a significantly higher rate than South Gloucestershire as a whole is Yate Central with 18% of all families having three or more dependent children.
The percentage of all families with dependent children who are lone parents and who have more than three children is 2.9% in South Gloucestershire and 3.9% in England. The areas with significantly higher levels than the South Gloucestershire average are Almondsbury (5.3%), Bitton (4.9%), Patchway (4.8%), Kings Chase (4.5%) and Filton (4.3%).

The percentage of lone parents with 3 or more children in South Gloucestershire is 12%, which is slightly below the England rate of 14%. Almondsbury and Chipping Sodbury wards have significantly higher levels than South Gloucestershire as a whole with 26% and 18% respectively. Almondsbury also has a significantly higher rate than England as a whole.

**Substance Misuse**

Substance misuse can also create barriers to work. Users of drugs are significantly less likely to be employed than other working age adults. Around 70% of parents in the UK who are problem drug users (and have accessed treatment) are not employed. Parental substance misuse or dependence can have serious consequences for children, including neglect, educational problems, emotional difficulties, abuse, and the possibility of becoming substance misusers themselves.

In South Gloucestershire it is estimated that there are between 1139 and 1708 children affected by parental drug misuse, 12529 children living with hazardous drinkers and 3417 children living with dependent drinkers. Further information on levels of substance misuse is available in the South Gloucestershire Substance Misuse needs assessment.

**Key points from the evidence on tackling worklessness and low pay**

Given the strong evidence that worklessness and low pay are key drivers of child poverty, tackling these in areas and amongst groups where prevalence is highest is a priority for South Gloucestershire Council if we want to improve the life chances of children in poverty and reduce inequalities. Tackling these issues is complex and requires action at both national and local level and there is no one source of evidence or good practice on what local authorities should do. However a review of evidence on child poverty identified some key actions that could be taken forward including:
• Active labour market programmes that include job search services and sanctions or employer incentives (e.g. wage subsidies) have the best employment outcomes while training programmes vary in impact.

• Employment growth is not always associated with poverty reduction because the jobs created may not go to households in poverty. This suggests that helping families in poverty get jobs that are created (for example removing barriers to work such as low parental qualifications).

In relation to improving qualifications, a review of evidence on the drivers of poverty identified some problems and solutions\(^7\):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Solution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A lack of meaningful, recognised opportunities for those wishing to pursue adult and tertiary educational routes out of poverty.</td>
<td>Investment in paid, work-based initiatives and educational partnerships similar to those available in so-called ‘apprenticeship countries’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mismatch between skills and qualifications of young people and those rewarded in the wider job market.</td>
<td>Flexible training pathways that provide high-quality academic and vocational training that is more sensitive to local economic needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social disadvantages, such as a negative prior educational experience, low confidence, poor health, and limited information, advice and guidance which lock negative attitudes and practices in place from an early age.</td>
<td>Targeted, brokered outreach work and a provision that begins where learners ‘are’, not only in terms of their knowledge, skills and qualifications but also in terms of how they think and feel about themselves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National policy that disregards local, life-shaping interactions between individual young people and the local context.</td>
<td>A more localised or ‘ecological’ approach, particular for young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs), and adult learners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaps in higher education participation rates between young people from different socio-economic backgrounds.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Solution: more ambitious widening participation targets, accompanied by rigorously evaluated, long-term outreach initiatives that target children from the most economically disadvantaged backgrounds from earlier ages.

• Problem: universities working individually and in competition to widen participation rather than collectively and in collaboration.

• Solution: long-term funding for new combined outreach initiatives, and the introduction of measures that reflect the ‘greater good’ of widening participation rather than placing universities in opposition with one another.
What South Gloucestershire is doing to tackle worklessness, barriers to work and low pay

Tackling worklessness and low pay and improving parental qualifications

Many of the issues relating to worklessness, barriers to work and low pay are already recognised in South Gloucestershire and are included in key strategic documents produced by the council and its partners. There are also a number of working groups and operational initiatives currently in place designed to decrease worklessness and increase pay. Improving the qualifications and skills of the adult workforce is a key workstream in many of these strategies.

These include:

- Priority neighbourhoods
- West of England Local Enterprise Partnership
- South Gloucestershire Economy and Skills Partnership
- South Gloucestershire Skills and Employability Plan and working group
- Families in Focus (known nationally as the ‘Troubled Families’ initiative)

Further details of each of these is contained in Appendix 3.

An example of a local initiative aimed at improving employment levels in a priority neighbourhood is detailed below.
A local initiative: Kingswood Social and Economic Engagement Officer

In January 2015 the Council employed a Social and Economic Engagement Officer on a two year contract specifically to help people find work in the Kingwood area (one of the Council’s priority neighbourhoods). The role will be a ‘one stop shop’ for its customers, helping them to become ‘work ready’ by identifying what job they want, what their previous qualifications work were, identify any barriers such as IT, lack of interview experience or lack of confidence. This role involves working for the benefit of the residents of Kingswood, by co-ordinating and leading work within Kingswood to provide support to help local residents, particularly supporting the long-term unemployed into employment.

This will include the following areas of activity:

- Identifying individuals in Kingswood who are unemployed, in particular those unemployed for 12 months or more and working with those individuals to secure appropriate support for them and to mentor them into employment.
- Building relationships with employers and signposting help to enable them to employ more local people and to encourage them to improve the quality of employment provided.
- Working with employers to see if Kingswood residents can be guaranteed an interview.

Any agency who is working with families can refer to this service and the Engagement Officer will start to mentor people from the end of February 2015. Success will be measured by the number of people who obtain work and the longevity of the employment.

Tackling parental ill health

The health of the working age population is covered in a number of existing strategies and workstreams within South Gloucestershire, for example the South Gloucestershire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, the Director of Public Health Annual Report, Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment, Substance Misuse Needs Assessment and Mental Health Needs Assessment

Tackling substance misuse

South Gloucestershire provides a wide range of support for people with substance misuse issues. As part of its support to people with substance misuse problems, DHI (the main
provider of drug and alcohol services in South Gloucestershire) provide a range of ‘reintegration services’ aimed at enabling service users to maintain their income and their accommodation. Reintegration workers support clients to address a range of issues including housing and access to employment, voluntary work, training, education and a range of meaningful activities to support the development of self-confidence, self-esteem and skills.

Opiate and crack users (OCUs) are a specific cohort of service users who evidence shows have significant impact on crime, unemployment, safeguarding children, and long-term benefit reliance for the local area. In 2013/2014, 55% (n=493) of the estimated number of OCUs in South Gloucestershire were engaged in structured treatment which is notably higher than the Avon & Somerset average of 46% 24.

Summary of key findings on tackling worklessness and low pay and suggestions for next steps

Worklessness and low pay have been identified as two key drivers of child poverty. South Gloucestershire has a lower rate of worklessness than the national average. However there is considerable variation in rates across South Gloucestershire with some pockets of parental worklessness and long-term worklessness that are higher than the national average.

The average earnings of South Gloucestershire residents are consistent with the national average. However, they fell by 0.5% between 2012 and 2013. There is also be an above average proportion of residents in occupations which are likely to be low paid.

Low parental qualifications are relevant to child poverty because of their impact on employment opportunities and wage potential. Analysis shows that although South Gloucestershire has a lower proportion of parents with no qualifications than the national average there are areas within South Gloucestershire that have a significantly higher proportion of parents with low or no qualifications than national average. Given the evidence that low parental qualifications are a barrier to work and the link between low pay and child poverty, supporting parents to gain better qualifications is a key issue for the Council and its partners to take forward.
Poor parental health can limit the ability of parents to work and therefore be a contributory factor to low income and child poverty. Adults in South Gloucestershire are generally healthy and have better health than adults nationally. However there are variations across wards. Improving the health of parents and families would help tackle child poverty and South Gloucestershire Council should prioritise this within existing workstreams and with healthcare partners, ensuring all are aware of the impact on tackling child poverty.
Supporting Families’ Living Standards

Why is this important

The impact of low income is that families may not able to afford basic living costs such as housing, fuel and food and ‘supporting families living standards’ is a key element of the national Child Poverty Strategy ¹.

Affording good quality housing is also an issue for many low-income families. The national Child Poverty strategy acknowledges that for the last two decades or more too few homes have been built in the UK.

Families on low incomes may be unable to afford to keep their home adequately heated. This is known as fuel poverty and can involve serious hardship and poses risks to physical and mental health. Cold housing negatively affects children's educational attainment, emotional well-being and resilience²⁵.

Although retail food prices are still lower in real terms than they were two decades ago, recent changes in global prices have affected the poorest the most ¹.

Poor households are at greater risk of experiencing financial difficulties and problem debt than those who are better off. 24% of children in poor families live in households that are in arrears with at least one bill, compared to 14% of all children ¹. Low income is an underlying cause of problem debt whereby low income households lack the resilience to cope with unexpected changes in income or expenditure. In the absence of savings or other resources this can lead poor households to use credit and default on payments ¹⁷.
What do we know about families’ living standards in South Gloucestershire?

This section looks at the evidence of need in South Gloucestershire in relation to low income families’ ability to afford living costs such as housing, fuel and food and to avoid problem debt.

Affordable housing for families/preventing homelessness

The average house price is South Gloucestershire in September 2014 was £199,600 compared to £179,492 in England and Wales and house prices are rising faster in South Gloucestershire than in England and Wales as a whole 18. Current house prices are 7.8 times average earnings for South Gloucestershire.

‘Affordable housing’ is for people who cannot afford to privately rent or buy on the open market. The Council’s Core Strategy (Forward plan from 2006-2026) seeks to secure up to 35% affordable housing in all housing schemes of more than 11 dwellings. However the Core Strategy also recognises that “Despite the housing market downturn of 2008 and 2009 and reduced access to mortgage finance, house prices have risen in South Gloucestershire compared to incomes over the last 10 years. This has resulted in an affordability gap with people unable to rent or buy homes on the open market. This is a particular issue in rural areas, where there is both a limited supply of affordable housing and where property prices are highest.” 26.

Some key figures relations to housing need amongst families and children in South Gloucestershire include:

- It is estimated that around one in five families in South Gloucestershire live in housing classified as ‘non-decent’ – mainly due to poorly insulated and/or heated homes in the private owner-occupied or private rented housing sectors 27.

- The rate of family homelessnessxxi for South Gloucestershire in 2013/14 was 1.0 per 1,000 households (compared to England average of 1.7 per 1,000 households) which equates to 111 households15. This is slightly higher than the 2012/13 rate of 0.9 per 1,000 households which equated to 104 households28.

xxi Family homelessness is defined as statutory homeless households with dependent children or pregnant women.
The numbers of households with dependent children or including women occupying temporary accommodation as at 31 March 2015 was 61 which included 123 children with 37 of these housing being accommodated in Bed & Breakfast (B&B) accommodation including 78 children. This is an increase on the total in March 2014 of 44 households including 72 children of whom 16 were in B &B with 29 children.

- 20.5% of private rented properties are reported to have actionable hazards compared to 9.9% in the owner occupied stock which means that approximately that 1130 families with dependent children are living in private rented accommodation are living in housing with an actionable hazard under the Housing Act 2004.

Tackling problem debt

The South Gloucestershire Advice Consortium collects information on the number of South Gloucestershire clients who receive debt advice and therefore provides a snapshot of need. The consortium report that for the period 1 July to 30 September 2014, a total of 801 clients were advised on their debt and welfare benefit issues. During that quarter, £2,294,325 of debt was managed by clients with the support of the consortium members. Over the year (from 1 October 2013 to 30 September 2014) a total of £9,920,063 of debt was managed, which, when compared with the previous year’s figure (£8,893,455 over the same period in 2012/13), is an increase of 11.5%

Details of the assistance for welfare benefit and debt advice and the amount of debt are contained in Table 10.

| Table 10 - welfare, benefit and debt advice provided by South Gloucestershire 2011/12 to 2013/14 |
|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| 3,620 | 3,162 | 3,916 |
| Total number of client assisted through advice | 5,285 | 5,172 | 5,274 |
| Debt managed for SG clients. | 7,793,521 | 8,893,456 | 9,920,063 |

Figures are not available on how many of the clients given benefit and debt advice have dependent children. However, the impact of problem debt is illustrated by a case study.
The impact of debt on families – a South Gloucestershire case study provided by Talking Money.

Mr M is severely disabled. He is in the support group for employment support advice and receives personal independence payments. He is a non-UK national and has limited English. He relies on his 13 year old daughter to translate for him.

South Gloucestershire council introduced a minimum 20% council tax liability for all council tax reduction claimants. Mr M did not understand how the change in law had affected him and struggled with payments ever since.

Mr M presented to Talking Money’s advice session after his council tax account had been passed to an enforcement agent. Using a telephone translation service over an extended appointment, the service advised Mr M about his right to peacefully refuse entry to the enforcement agent, and to be sure his blue badge was shown in his car so that it couldn’t be seized. They secured medical evidence and presented it to the enforcement agent and to the local authority, arguing that the client was extremely vulnerable.

The council tax recovery team accepted that Mr M was a vulnerable person and recalled the account from its Enforcement Agent and set up an affordable repayment plan. Mr M is happy with this outcome. He now understands his obligation to pay ongoing council tax even though he is in receipt of income related ESA, and has set up a direct debit.

Fuel Poverty

Fuel poverty can impact negatively on children’s health and long-term life prospects. Children living in cold homes are more than twice as likely to suffer from a variety of respiratory problems as children living in warm homes. Cold housing negatively affects children’s educational attainment, emotional well-being and resilience 25.

Fuel poverty in England it is measured by the ‘Low Income High Costs definition’ 31, which considers a household to be in fuel poverty if:

- they have required fuel costs that are above average (the national median level)
were they to spend that amount they would be left with a residual income below the official poverty line.

Previously fuel poverty was defined as needing to spend more than 10 per cent of income on fuel to maintain adequate warmth in the home. The inclusion of an income threshold in the new measure of fuel poverty puts greater focus on the experiences of low-income households.

Fuel poverty statistics published by the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) estimate that there were 10,243 fuel poor households in South Gloucestershire in 2013 which represents 9.1% of all households \(^{31}\) compared to 11.5% of all households in the South West as a whole \(^{31}\) and 10.4% in England \(^{32}\). This represents an increase in the number of fuel poor households in South Gloucestershire from the 2012 figure of 7,481 households which represented 6.7% of all households \(^{33}\), compared to 9.3% across the South West \(^{33}\) and 10.4% for England \(^{34}\).

Analysis of fuel poverty by ward in 2012 shows that rates of fuel poverty vary within South Gloucestershire (Figure 9):

*Figure 9 - Fuel poverty in South Gloucestershire by ward 2012*

Source: Department for Energy and Climate Change Fuel Poverty Statistics
Further analysis of data provided by DECC at Lower Super Output Area level suggests that in 2012 South Gloucestershire had three LSOAs which have significantly higher proportions of fuel poverty than the England rate of 10.4%. These are Tormarton and surrounding rural area (14.4%), Oldbury on Severn rural area (13.6%) and Doynton / Dyrham rural area (13.4%), none of which are in a priority neighbourhood. 34 LSOAs had significantly higher fuel poverty rates than South Gloucestershire as a whole (6.7%) 22 of which are not in priority neighbourhoods.

The above analysis shows that rates of fuel poverty vary throughout South Gloucestershire with high levels of fuel poverty in both priority neighbourhood and areas outside priority neighbourhoods. However, fuel poverty data is not available specifically for families with dependent children and the above figures include low income households without children.

Food Poverty

As there is no consistent or measurable definition of food poverty, it is difficult to give accurate estimate of the number of families affected in South Gloucestershire.

Food bank use is one indicator that can be used to help build a picture of the nature of food poverty. A food bank is an organised way of getting emergency support to people in a short term crisis. Food banks are run on a charitable and voluntary and basis and there is no requirement for them to provide data to the local authority, however the South Gloucestershire food banks provide some information that is useful in understanding the extent of food poverty in low income families. Key information on the South Gloucestershire food banks and their clients is contained in Appendix 4.

South Gloucestershire food banks report that use of food banks is increasing in South Gloucestershire and that that common reasons for seeking help from a food bank include low pay and debt. Further information on the use of food banks in South Gloucestershire is contained in Appendix 4.

Interpreting the increase in use of food banks is difficult, for example it could indicate better awareness of food banks and more efficient systems for referral. However a recent study in the British Medical Journal found that welfare reform and unemployment rates were significantly associated with higher rates of food parcel distribution, even when taking into
account the association between food bank use and the capacity of food banks to provide food.

What is the evidence for initiatives to support families' living standards and what is South Gloucestershire doing.

Raising incomes and tackling problem debt

In its review ‘Reducing Poverty in the UK: a collection of evidence reviews” the Joseph Rowntree Foundation concluded that there is a need for measures to help low-income households manage drops in income and peaks in expenditure and strengthen their resilience. Measures that could help poor families manage these include:

- Access to debt advice that is free and impartial and free at the point of use. This was found to maximise income and reduce the amount owed to creditors.
- Greater access to affordable small-sum loans that could help low-income households to cope with both peaks in expenditure and cover everyday expenses following an unexpected fall in income.

Providing affordable housing and preventing homelessness

The ‘Gold Standard Challenge’ is a local authority, peer-review scheme designed to help local authorities deliver more efficient and cost effective homelessness prevention services. Based on self-assessment and benchmarking with other authorities, the challenge follows a 10 step continuous improvement approach that starts with a pledge for local authorities aspiring to 'strive for continuous improvement in front line housing services' and culminates in an application for the Gold Standard Challenge. This is funded by the Department of Communities and Local Government and based on the Government report 'Making Every Contact Count'.

Tackling Fuel Poverty

The national fuel poverty strategy “Cutting the cost of Keeping Warm: a fuel poverty strategy for England” published by the previous Coalition government in March 2015, recognises that a multi-agency approach to tackling fuel poverty is needed involving local authorities, the
NHS, industry, local community energy groups and the third sector. The strategy contains a range of national and local challenges in relation to fuel poverty including:

- improving energy efficiency standards in fuel poor homes
- working together to help the fuel poor through partnership and learning
- increasing effective targeting of fuel poor households
- improving the reach of support to certain high cost homes
- improving the reach of support to certain low income households
- tackling the financial burden of energy bills for those on low incomes

The strategy contains a number of case studies such as the Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Local Authorities’ Energy Partnership (LAEP). The LAEP comprises 18 councils that have worked together since 1996 to deliver domestic energy efficiency measures and affordable warmth projects. In 2013, the Department for Energy and Climate Change awarded the Partnership £2.16 million to run a project aimed at helping vulnerable fuel poor households to upgrade their heating systems. Establishing an effective targeting methodology to identify people living in cold damp homes became a priority for the LAEP, and the Derbyshire Healthy Home project was subsequently developed to do this, in partnership with Derbyshire Public Health. Vulnerable residents are identified by cross-referencing data on benefits, housing and health to find those who have a long term health condition made worse by living in a cold home and who are eligible for Affordable Warmth grants. GP practices then write to this target group, inviting them to contact the project for assistance. This approach increases response rates due to the trust patients have in their doctors’ recommendations and maximises the efficiency of staff interventions by pre-selecting those who can be assisted.

The national strategy recognises that not all local authorities have access to the resources or expertise required to replicate sophisticated targeting approaches like the one developed by LAEP but states a commitment to finding ways to make these approaches a realistic option for a greater number of local authorities through a combination of practical steps, such as new data sharing arrangements and the provision of software tools.
Tackling Food Poverty

There have been a number of reports published on the food system in the UK and the impact of food poverty including:

- Feeding Britain: A strategy for zero hunger in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland ³⁷
- ‘A Recipe for Inequality: Why Our Food System is leaving low-income families behind’ ³⁸

There is no commonly agreed ‘good practice’ in relation to food poverty. However, the Sustainable Food Cities Network has published an assessment tool for local areas to monitor their programmes in tackling food poverty. This includes monitoring progress against actions such as implementing policies and initiatives to increase healthy options and reduce unhealthy choices in areas of deprivation and ensuring that relevant agencies are working in a coordinated way to provide rapid referral to hardship funds and to support and advice on food access and issues, including - in extremis - emergency food aid.
What is South Gloucestershire doing to support low incomes families’ living standards?

There are a range of initiatives and strategies in place in South Gloucestershire to support families’ living standards. Details are contained in Appendix 5 but they include:

**Affordable housing and avoiding Homelessness**

- Building affordable housing
- The South Gloucestershire Council Housing Strategy 2013 – 2018
- South Gloucestershire HomeChoice service
- Knightstone Housing ‘Floating support service’
- South Gloucestershire is part of the Gloucestershire cluster working toward the Gold Standard Challenge

**Tackling fuel poverty**

- The ‘Warm and Well’ scheme
- The Affordable Warmth working group and action plan

**Tackling food poverty**

- The South Gloucestershire Food Poverty Network

**Increasing incomes/avoid debt**

- South Gloucestershire Welfare Advice Partnership
- South Gloucestershire financial inclusion service
- Provision of welfare advice/welfare grants
- Local council tax reduction scheme

**Affordable transport**

- Wheels to work
Summary of key findings on supporting families’ living standards and suggestions for next steps

The impact of low income is that families are often not able to afford basic living costs such as housing, fuel and food and evidence shows that this is the case for some families in South Gloucestershire.

- Many families are living in accommodation which is classified as non-decent, particularly in the private rented sector.
- There are rates of fuel poverty above the national average in some parts of South Gloucestershire.
- Data from South Gloucestershire food banks indicates that food bank use is increasing
- The number of people seeking advice on welfare and benefits has increased

Many of the issues identified in relation to improving families’ living standards are already covered by existing workstreams within South Gloucestershire and there are many existing projects aimed to support families’ living standards. Suggestions for further work include:

- Supporting families’ living standards by helping low-income families maximise their income
- Supporting families who are in poor housing, homeless or experiencing fuel or food poverty
References


Appendix 1– Existing South Gloucestershire strategies relating to preventing poor children becoming poor adults

Early Intervention and Preventative Services (part of South Gloucestershire Council Integrated Children’s Services)

Services provided include:

- Six Children’s Centres
- Parenting & Family Support (including school liaison)
- Youth Services
- Troubled Families (known within South Gloucestershire as Families in Focus. Further details in Appendix 3)

South Gloucestershire Early Help Strategy

Early Help means getting additional, timely and effective support to children, young people, and families who need it. It aims to enable children to flourish and to prevent costly, long term and damaging outcomes.

Integrated multi agency partnership working is an essential part of Early Help. South Gloucestershire has examples of good and developing partnership working in place. Examples of this include:

- Integrated hubs with collocation of staff from Integrated Children’s Services, NBT and Education, Learning and Skills
- Multi-agency partnership boards and steering groups. Examples include The Children’s Trust Board, Local Safeguarding Board, Youth Offending Service Management Group and the Children’s Centre Steering Group.
- Locality based multi-agency cluster groups based around school clusters to discuss the needs and provision for individual children and young people.

The South Gloucestershire Early Help Strategy was finished in early 2015 and includes a range of indicators (agreed with the Children’s Trust Board) against which performance will be measured. Many of these are relevant to reducing child poverty. For example the indicators include
• Sufficient free high quality Early Years and Nursery places.
• % uptake of entitlement to free nursery places and disadvantaged 2 year olds.
• % of disadvantaged and vulnerable families in contact with Children’s Centres.
• % of children of healthy weight in reception and Y6.
• % of children who are ‘school ready’.
• Number of parents successfully completing parenting programmes.
• Uptake and outcomes of Family Nurse Partnership provision.
• % of students achieving 5+ GCSEs including English and Maths at A*-C.
• % of children attracting a successful level of educational achievement at each Key Stage.
• Reduced gap in achievement between those entitled to free school meals and their peers.
• % of young people who are in employment, education or training (EET).
• Proportion of those from vulnerable groups and Priority Neighbourhoods who remain in education, training, or secure employment.
• % of young parents supported by children’s centres.
• Numbers of young people misusing drugs and alcohol.
• % of young people requiring high level mental health services.
• Achieving national Troubled Families Initiative measures on attendance.
• Number of young people reporting as homeless.

The actions and resources that contribute to each are part of individual service action plans and of the Children’s Trust Board Senior Officer Group’s action plan.

South Gloucestershire Disadvantaged Pupils Strategic Plan 2015 – 2016

The Disadvantaged Pupils Strategic Plan includes key targets to reduce the attainment gap between poor pupils and other pupils.

Targets for 2016 include:

• To reduce the gap between FSM children and their peers by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage
• Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils to be above the national average at primary and secondary level.

South Gloucestershire strategic review of SEN

The strategic review of SEN was commissioned and set up by South Gloucestershire Council to evaluate the current quality, efficiency, effectiveness and sufficiency of school provision for children and young people with Special Educational Needs (SEN).

The findings from the evidence provided are grouped into four overarching themes:

• Improving the quality of specialist provision and outcomes for children and young people with Special Educational Needs

• Supporting the implementation of the Local Offer for children and young people who are disabled and/or have Special Educational Needs

• Ensuring sufficient and effective provision for children and young people aged 0-25 is planned effectively based on current and forecast need

• Ensuring effective school funding arrangements for SEN are planned and implemented

The review report made 18 recommendations each related to one of the four overarching themes.

South Gloucestershire Education Commission

The South Gloucestershire Education Commission was set up by the local authority to investigate the model of secondary and post-16 provision in South Gloucestershire and the educational achievement of young people. The Commission reported in January 2014 and grouped its findings from the evidence into three key themes:

• Improving attainment and progress for all young people, with access to a curriculum relevant to their needs in a 21st century global economy;

• Improving the quality of educational provision in secondary schools and post-16, to ensure that young people have access to, and achieve their potential through the full range of opportunities in education, employment and training;

• Strengthening the impact of leadership by the local authority – taking difficult decisions about surplus school places and poor performance in a timely way, and
reframing its arrangements for supporting school improvement to help promote a network of self-improving schools.

The Commission’s report will inform the future planning of educational provision and approaches to improving the quality of education in South Gloucestershire.

South Gloucestershire Raising Participation Strategy

The council has a ‘raising participation’ strategy which is the responsibility of the South Glos Employment & Skills Group. The key objectives include:

- Ensure strategies and plans are in place to reduce the number of young people not in employment, education and training
- Ensure that priority is given to focus on the needs of particularly vulnerable groups
- Ensure effective engagement of all key partners, including schools, colleges, independent learning providers and guidance services
- Ensure employer support and engagement in RPA through effective links with West of England Local Enterprise Partnership

South Gloucestershire Apprenticeship Strategy

The aims of the apprenticeship strategy are to:

- To increase employer adoption of and investment in apprenticeships
- To ensure apprenticeships meets the needs of the South Gloucestershire economy and future skills needs
- To promote apprenticeships as a quality route to South Gloucestershire residents and to drive increased participation
- To ensure that apprenticeships delivered in South Gloucestershire are of the highest quality
Appendix 2 – 2011 census qualification categories

Data on the highest level of qualification is derived from the 2011 census where people were asked to indicate all types of qualifications held.

These are combined into:

- **No Qualifications**: No academic or professional qualifications

- **Level 1 qualifications**: 1-4 O Levels/CSE/GCSEs (any grades), Entry Level, Foundation Diploma, NVQ level 1, Foundation GNVQ, Basic/Essential Skills

- **Level 2 qualifications**: 5+ O Level (Passes)/CSEs (Grade 1)/GCSEs (Grades A*-C), School Certificate, 1 A Level/ 2-3 AS Levels/VCEs, Intermediate/Higer Diploma, Welsh Baccalaureate Intermediate Diploma, NVQ level 2, Intermediate GNVQ, City and Guilds Craft, BTEC First/General Diploma, RSA Diploma

- **Apprenticeship**

- **Level 3 qualifications**: 2+ A Levels/VCEs, 4+ AS Levels, Higher School Certificate, Progression/Advanced Diploma, Welsh Baccalaureate Advanced Diploma, NVQ Level 3; Advanced GNVQ, City and Guilds Advanced Craft, ONC, OND, BTEC National, RSA Advanced Diploma

- **Level 4+ qualifications**: Degree (for example BA, BSc), Higher Degree (for example MA, PhD, PGCE), NVQ Level 4-5, HNC, HND, RSA Higher Diploma, BTEC Higher level, Foundation degree (NI),

- **Professional qualifications** (for example teaching, nursing, accountancy)

- **Other qualifications**: Vocational/Work-related Qualifications, Foreign Qualifications (Not stated/ level unknown).
Appendix 3 – Existing South Gloucestershire strategies and workstreams relating to reducing worklessness and low pay


Strategic Objective 5 of the South Gloucestershire Economic Development Strategy is to raise skill levels and to meet the skill and workforce needs of employers. As part of this, key priorities include increasing the percentage of people with level 4 qualifications and above and reducing the numbers of young people not in employment, education or training

Priority neighbourhoods:

One of the six key Themes in the Safer and Stronger Communities Partnership Strategy adopted by the Council and the Safer and Stronger Communities Strategic Partnership is Priority Neighbourhoods. The Aim of work in priority neighbourhoods is “to reduce the level of multiple deprivation experienced in our priority neighbourhoods compared to the average levels for the whole of South Gloucestershire.”

The priority neighbourhoods were established through analysis of the themes in which clusters of Lower Super Output Areas were in the bottom 20% nationally as assessed in the Indices of Multiple Deprivation.

West of England Local Enterprise Partnership

South Gloucestershire is part of the West of England local enterprise partnership, a group where councils across the west of England (Bristol, B&NES, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire) and businesses work together to support economic growth and attract new jobs to the areas.

The South Gloucestershire partnership

The South Gloucestershire partnership is a non-statutory body made up of public, private, community and voluntary organisations which aims to work together to promote the economic, social and environmental well-being of the people in South Gloucestershire. It has been working together since 2002 and its vision for the area and its people is set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy.
The South Gloucestershire Economy and Skills Partnership have agreed to focus on delivering on seven key strategic objectives, two of which form the basis of the Strategic Plan for Employability and Skills:

1. **Training, skills and workforce development** – to raise aspirations and skill levels through our schools, colleges, and universities and meet the skill and workforce needs of local employers.
2. **Sharing the benefits of economic growth** – to ensure that all parts of South Gloucestershire and all groups share the benefits of economic development, in particular priority neighbourhood areas, rural areas, and disadvantaged groups including young people and families.

### South Gloucestershire Skills and Employability Plan and working group

The overarching group bringing tighter all the different stakeholders involved in improving skills and employment is the Skills and Employability working group which was formed in 2014. The group’s aim is to “to maximise opportunities to access first class education and prosper through a balanced economy, a well-trained workforce and sustainable jobs for all”. The group oversees the delivery of the Skills and Employability Plan which focuses on four key strands for development:

1. **Securing high quality careers education for young people**
2. **Reducing 'NEET' (not in education, employment and training) and worklessness**
3. **Developing skills and increasing employability of all age groups.**
4. **Increasing the number of adults gaining higher level technical skills.**

The plan outlines the measures, baseline position and target for the end of 2018 for each of the strands.

### Families in Focus (the local South Gloucestershire’s response to the national Troubled Families Initiative)

Phase 1 of the Families in Focus initiative was from 2012 -2015 and there were 295 families in South Gloucestershire who fitted the Government definition of those households with issues of crime, anti-social behaviour, poor school attendance and worklessness.
Phase 2 of the initiative is planned as a 5 year expansion from March 2015 and South Gloucestershire is expected to work with 1025 families over this period. South Gloucestershire was a pilot area for the new programme. Phase 2 has an expanded criteria to include wider outcomes:

- Parents and children involved in crime or antisocial behavior.
- Children who have not been attending school regularly.
- Children who need help.
- Adults out of work or at risk of financial exclusion and young people at risk of worklessness.
- Families affected by domestic violence and abuse.
- Parents and children with a range of health problems

The work around the Troubled Families Initiative (Families in Focus) includes multi-agency delivery of interventions for families in the Families in Focus cohort. Interventions are delivered through Integrated Children’s Services, partner agencies, and specialist commissioned services using a ‘whole family approach’ to tackling multiple high cost issues with families. The aim is to strategically change the culture of service delivery and to embed multi-agency family intervention with cross agency buy-in. Families in Focus is governed through a partnership project board which reports to the Children’s Trust Board.
Appendix 4 – Reports received from South Gloucestershire food banks.

The information contained in this Appendix is self-reported and has not been externally validated.

Report from: Yate and Chipping Sodbury Food Bank

Report on the clients in the 12 months to July 14

50% of clients had some form of benefit issue for example job seekers allowance, employment support allowance, personal independence payment. tax credit, housing benefits

25% of clients are people in work. Issues identified include minimum wage, zero hours contracts; agency work, late payments. Some clients report that job seekers allowance stops the minute they have started work and then when work stops they have to sign back on with further delays in getting their benefits

The remaining 25% of clients are experiencing life issues such as bereavements, relationship breakdown, illness, mental illness– this is the core that will always be present.

Service provided by Food Bank

- 3 fold increase this year over last year – stabilised at the moment
- 32,000 meals in the last 12 months – 545 households – 2.5 people per household, 2.5 times per year
- The above is made up of 5,600 meals – 96 families at Mangotsfield (opened 1 October 2013), 5,400 meals – 94 families at Thornbury (opened 1 July 2013) and 21,000 meals – 355 families at Yate (opened 1 November 2011)
- a gap in services has been identified and that is support with debt problems/budget management – Food Bank would be able to hold their hand and come to referral meetings

Report from: Resound Foodbank – Emersons Green, Mangotsfield and Downend

The Resound Foodbank is a voluntary service provided by members of the local churches and community as a response to the needs of people and families in the surrounding area.

In an apparently affluent area such as Emersons Green, Mangotsfield and Downend it may surprise many to know that there are still people who from time to time struggle to put food on the table. For many foodbank clients, the rising cost of food and fuel combined with static incomes, high unemployment and changes to benefits have forced them into a crisis where they cannot afford to eat.

The single biggest reason that people were referred to foodbanks was:

- benefit delay (29%), followed by
- low income (19%).
Other reasons for referrals include delayed wages, domestic violence, sickness, unemployment, debt, benefit changes, refused crisis loans, homelessness and absence of free school meals during school holidays.

Report from: Kingswood Food Bank.

Opened 4th November 2013, donations have also come from schools, organisations and individuals. This has allowed us to feed 586 adults and 388 children in the first year.

Report from: Cadbury Health Foodstore

Juice works in Partnership with the Matthew Tree Project to provide services in Cadbury Heath.

Clients in the last twelve months - 42 households which equates to 94 people. The clients receive 7 days food for their family each time they attend.

Reason for using food bank

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Number of Clients</th>
<th>Percentage of Clients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benefit Delay</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debt</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Income</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduced Benefit</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Violence</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lost Job</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lost home (Sofa Surfer)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prison release</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asylum</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Job wage Delay</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other services we provide:

1. Monthly Budgeting training and in the New Year we will be running a 6 week course.
2. Support with filling in Forms such as Charity grants for essential items, ESA, DLA
3. Practical support - attending meetings with clients, liaising with Merlin with housing matters, meeting with them for coffee
4. Counselling Service and other activities e.g. Parents and Toddlers.
Appendix 5 – Existing South Gloucestershire strategies and initiatives relating to supporting families’ living standards

Provision of affordable housing

Although South Gloucestershire council does not own its own housing stock, it provides new affordable homes in the following ways:

- 35% of housing on new private developments through planning policy
- On small sites as 100% affordable housing schemes
- By redeveloping poor standard homes
- Rural exception sites in villages
- As specialist housing for people with specific needs
- As affordable custom build

Affordable housing is provided in a mix of house types and tenures to meet identified housing need at local affordability levels to achieve mixed and balanced communities.

The level of affordable housing provision has been able to be sustained at about 300 new homes per year over the past 5 years. In 2014/15 there were 326 new affordable homes supplied. The mix was 187 social rent, 49 affordable rent and 90 intermediate affordable housing (mainly shared ownership). There were 85 large family homes built (3bed+).

The Council's affordable housing delivery programme is based largely around affordable housing provision through planning policy, and is therefore dependent on privately owned sites coming forward for development and so sensitive to changes in the housing market, which can be volatile. Individual circumstances relating to a site will always have an impact on the overall amount, type and mix of housing that is viable at a location but the Council aims for the full policy requirement of affordable housing to be included on sites. The council’s annual target is set following an assessment of the total number of affordable homes which are likely to be built each year, and given the scale of the housing development in the Core Strategy we are likely to see a significant increase in the number of affordable homes being provided over the next 10 years.

---

xxii Source: Personal Correspondence with South Gloucestershire Council Enabling Programme Manager
there remains an issue with households being able to access market housing in South Gloucestershire and a reduction in housing options for many households, whether by tenure or by type or location. Many households relying on benefits to subsidise their income have been impacted by welfare reforms in the last couple of years, which impacts the ability to pay rent at local market levels and further restricts housing options and choice. Rent setting at appropriate local affordability levels is crucial to meet identified housing need hence the Council seeks to ensure the provision of affordable housing at rent levels local eligible households can afford and which are sustainable for those on lower incomes in the longer term to avoid households being caught in the poverty trap.

The Council has been able to maintain a pipeline of predominantly social rented homes, where rents are set at levels well below market rents according to the property type and location in relation to local earnings. Changes in market rent levels directly impacts affordable rented homes, as rent for this tenure is set at the lower of local LHA or 80% median market rent and increases of rents after initial letting due to inflation will further impact on the deliverability and the retention of affordable rented homes, so they may therefore only be available for specific house types in specific locations in the district. Likewise affordable home ownership options such as shared ownership will be impacted by mortgage availability and affordability which may limit it as a choice for some households. However, affordable rented homes and homes for affordable home ownership can provide additional housing choice for those on lower incomes in affordable housing need and hence are also aimed at specific affordability levels with regard to local incomes and house prices in order to maximise the housing as an option for eligible households.

The Council seeks to provide a range of good quality housing to meet local needs. For affordable housing particularly this means a range of house types to meet identified need (flats and houses of differing bedroom sizes), provided at minimum house sizes - as the homes will usually be fully let, not under occupied - built to the highest possible development standards. The quality standard is important not only so decent and sustainable housing is provided, but also in order to reduce the costs in use of the housing and related services where possible and so relating to affordability of housing costs. For example the addition of energy efficiency measures should reduce energy use and therefore costs, and preparing homes for any future adaptations should mean that improvements for ageing households or prevention measures for vulnerable residents can be undertaken with less disruption and cost.
Participation in the housing Gold Standard Programme

South Gloucestershire is committed to participating in the Gold Standard Challenge’, a local authority, peer-review scheme designed to help local authorities deliver more efficient and cost effective homelessness prevention services. A self-assessment is taking place in 2015 with the aim of peer review being completed in early 2016 leading to an application for the Gold Standard.

The South Gloucestershire Council Housing Strategy 2013 – 2018

As already stated, many of the issues in relation to housing are well recognised. The South Gloucestershire Housing Strategy 2013 – 2018 sets out the Council’s vision for housing and identifies a number of challenges facing South Gloucestershire in terms of housing including:

- Dealing with the challenge of welfare reform changes
- Addressing affordability and preventing homelessness by helping people to find and keep the housing they want, which meets their needs and they can afford
- Bringing more homes up to the decent homes standard. Living in a good quality home will improve health, maintain independence and have a significant effect on wellbeing.
- Improving the energy efficiency of our homes and working to address fuel poverty so that rising energy prices have less of an impact, especially for our poorest families

It outlines a number of key measures of success including:

- Level of low cost homes delivered, aimed at first time buyers
- Number of households in temporary accommodation
- Average time spent in temporary accommodation and bed and breakfast accommodation
- Number of households accepted as statutory homeless
- Number of homelessness preventions
- Percentage of population suffering fuel poverty

The South Gloucestershire Council Homelessness Review and Strategy 2013-2016
This strategy includes an estimate of the numbers of homeless people in South Gloucestershire and contains an action plan. Key actions include:

- The need for prevention and early intervention to target services at those at highest risk and facing an escalation of the likelihood of homelessness
- Access to support for vulnerable households
- Promoting financial inclusion

**HomeChoice**

The South Gloucestershire HomeChoice team offers advice and assistance to help clients maintain their current accommodation, or, if this is not possible, to help them move somewhere more suitable. This could include,

- Moving to private sector housing.
- Applying to the housing register for permanent housing, sheltered housing, or shared ownership.
- Assessing if the Council has a duty under homelessness law to provide applicants with temporary accommodation.

**Floating support service**

The Council commission Knightstone Housing to provide a ‘floating support service’. This service offers short term housing related support to people who need help with housing issues. This can include support with settling into a new home, helping people to keep their home if they get into difficulties and support for people who are homeless. The service is run across South Gloucestershire regardless of whether people are in social housing or private rented, own their own home or have no home.

**Affordable Warmth Action Plan and working group**

South Gloucestershire is part of the Gloucestershire Affordable Warmth Partnership. Formed in 2001 and chaired by Severn Wye Energy (a local charity and non-profit company), the Partnership has representation from South Gloucestershire Council, the six Gloucestershire District Councils and a range of other partners including the Department for Work and Pensions, ‘Care and Repair’ and a range of voluntary sector partners (for example Talking Money, Age UK, the Red Cross and the CAB). The partnership has an Action on Affordable

The four key aims within the Affordable Warmth Action Plan are:

- **Aim 1:** Co-ordinate delivery, work in partnership and influence policy
- **Aim 2:** Improve energy efficiency across all housing tenures
- **Aim 3:** Promote and provide advice and information
- **Aim 4:** Identify and help people at risk of fuel poverty

Under key aim 4 actions include:

To target the homes which present the greatest risk of fuel poverty and to specifically target households and vulnerable people who are at risk of fuel poverty and the cold (including specific action to target market households and families with young children e.g.- single parent

A recent update progress showed that recent actions taken include:

- Within South Gloucestershire 6 school workshops have been completed (163 children) and delivered 3 presentations to Sure Start centres.
- At least 5 events attended in each of the 7 partner local authority areas, focusing on families with young children as well as with disabilities.

**Warm and Well**

‘Warm and Well’ is managed by Severn Wye Energy and is supported by South Gloucestershire Council, the six Gloucestershire District Council and Gloucestershire County Council. Aimed at people on low incomes, the scheme helps people with a range of energy issues from providing advice about simple measures they can take in the home, through to helping people access grants to improve their homes.

**The South Gloucestershire Food Poverty Network**

The South Gloucestershire Food Poverty Network was established in December 2014 and is a multi-agency partnership which brings together organisations to assess and develop an understanding of local food poverty issues. The purpose of the group is to support the development of a more collaborative and strategic approach to tackle the full range of issues that contribute to food poverty locally.
The key tasks of the network include:

- enhancing the delivery and effectiveness of food assistance programmes
- identify issues which affect service provision (e.g. warehousing, map areas where there are gaps in services)
- taking an integrated approach to services; linking community development programmes with food assistance
- developing a database/information of support available for service users
- sharing advice and resources for frontline workers
- identify training needs
- ensure that food poverty is included within relevant key plans and strategies that oversee practice and provision of health and wellbeing for the residents of South Gloucestershire

**Welfare Advice Partnership/financial inclusion service**

The South Gloucestershire Welfare Advice Partnership is a support network for advice and support-giving organisations in South Gloucestershire funded and co-ordinated by South Gloucestershire Council.

To complement the work of the Welfare Advice Partnership, the council has commissioned the South Gloucestershire Advice Consortium to provide the South Gloucestershire Financial Inclusion service - a general advice service with specialist knowledge in the areas of welfare benefit and debt advice. The service is provided by a consortium of five voluntary sector organisations – Age UK, Avon and Bristol Law Centre, North Bristol Advice, the Citizens Advice Bureau and Talking Money. Drop-in sessions which are run at community venues across South Gloucestershire based in each priority neighbourhood. The full timetable of sessions including locations and contact numbers is published on the South Gloucestershire Council website.

**Provision of welfare advice/welfare grants**
The Council employs a Welfare Advice Officer whose role is to provide advice on income maximisation. The Welfare Advice Officer primarily works with working age adults although it is not possible to identify how many have children.

The Council runs a welfare grant scheme which was established in April 2013 after the national ‘crisis loan’ scheme was abolished by the government and the service was devolved to the local authorities. There is no statutory duty to provide this service but SGC members decided that continuing to provide this service is a priority for the Council.

There are no current campaigns in South Gloucestershire to improve uptake of benefits. The SCG Welfare Advice & Liaison Team have laid on advice in the past but report these have been very poorly attended.

Local council tax reduction scheme

The Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTR) is a scheme that can be applied for by any South Gloucestershire council tax payer with savings below £6,000. The scheme uses a person’s income to decide how much discount to apply to their Council Tax liability.

Wheels to work

The Bristol and South Gloucestershire ‘Wheels to Work’ scheme helps people who are finding it difficult to get to interviews, training or work access travel services. It does this by working in partnership with organisations and charities that already provide support to people who are looking to start or return to work. Services provided are free bus tickets, loan bikes and loans to buy a scooter. To be eligible, applicants must live or work in Bristol or South Gloucestershire, must be referred by a partner organisation or their employer and must live more than 1½ hours away by public transport or 30 minutes by bicycle.