

# Equality Analysis Report – Sefton Child Poverty Strategy

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## **Details of proposal:**

The EIA for the new Sefton Child Poverty Strategy is being kept open and will be continually revised to reflect any changes to the development, implementation and review of impact of the strategy.

This EIA has six functions:

1. Identify changes that will impact on those impacted by the objectives of the strategy.
2. Identify potential negative impacts that may or have the potential to be discriminatory
3. Identify potential mitigations
4. Inform design, planning and implementation process on any necessary considerations
5. Highlight any actions that may need to be considered in facilitating change linked to protected characteristics
6. Provide feedback and insight to support ongoing development of the strategy

Sefton Council declared a poverty emergency in March 2021. The Council was then presented with challenging findings of a review of child poverty in Sefton leading to the recommendation that Sefton develop a childhood poverty strategy. Subsequently, the 'Tackling Childhood Poverty Strategy' responds to these challenges and provides the blueprint for our approach to tackling childhood poverty in Sefton.

The strategy has been developed during a global pandemic and a cost-of-living crisis presenting the toughest economic times for a generation. Its objective and focus are to provide short, medium and long-term support to our most vulnerable families, as well as poverty proofing in the longer term to work in partnership to secure our children's futures.

The strategy is designed to tackle poverty and deprivation and is particularly important in the context of the current financial pressures facing households. It will form part of our bold approach to improve social, environmental, and economic sustainability, which will help protect communities for future generations.

## **Ramifications of Proposal:**

The strategy supports all children in Sefton but focuses on those experiencing poverty

now or who are at risk of experiencing poverty in the future.

Living in poverty has negative impacts in other aspects of people's lives and is not just about money – it impacts educational attainment, access to good paying work, increases the risk of developing poor health conditions and reduces life expectancy. It also means that many people are not able to take part in the normal life of a place as experienced by other residents.

The double shock from the pandemic and high cost of living creates the severest impact amongst the poorest in society and will increase the number of families who rely most on public services. This poses a major setback children, young people and families trying to alleviate the causes and consequences of poverty in everyday life.

Approval of this strategy and its focus on pockets, prospects, and places is an important step towards realising a fairer and more inclusive Sefton, where everyone is able to prosper, explore their potential and feel fulfilled.

The strategy will focus on delivering the following outcomes.

- Fewer children living in poverty.
- Fewer families with no qualifications or skills training
- A reduction of the impact of fuel poverty on families
- An increase in affordable housing
- An increase in average household incomes
- A reduction in families who are unemployed and in receipt of out of work benefits.
- Fewer young people aged 16-17 who are not in education, employment, or training

### **Are there any protected characteristics that will be disproportionately affected in comparison to others?**

See Appendix 1 below.

The strategy provides a framework to prevent people from falling into poverty as well as supporting those who are already struggling. The strategy will have an overall positive effect across all equality strands. Delivery of the ambitions of the strategy will make a significant difference to the health and wellbeing of our local communities and tackle health inequalities. Equality and diversity considerations are an integral part of our approach to addressing poverty in Sefton.

The strategy focuses on ensuring that the most vulnerable people in our communities receive the support they need, those most at risk and in need of accessing our services.

There is evidence that age, race, disability, pregnancy, and being a lone parent can all factor in poverty. Discrimination based on faith or sexual orientation can also lead to circumstances that risk poverty.

*The protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are:*

- *Age*
- *Disability*

- *Gender Reassignment*
- *Marriage and Civil Partnership*
- *Race*
- *Religion or Belief*
- *Sex*
- *Sexual Orientation*
- *Pregnancy and Maternity*

**Consultation:**

Wide consultation has been undertaken with desk top analysis reviewing the quantitative and epidemiological data and qualitative analysis via stakeholder engagement with Sefton Council officers in Education, Communities, Public Health, Children's Services and the Voluntary Community and Faith sector.

Engagement with the multi- agency partnership, Every Child Matters Forum has provided stakeholder insight as well as externally commissioned research funded by the Health Equity programme – Marmot (which is still underway) and will provide additional insight into the strategy action plan. (Research completion expected Oct/Nov 22)

In addition to the data, continuous engagement will remain central to our approach by listening and learning from the lived experiences of people in poverty that we engage with through those with first-hand knowledge. To inform the development of the strategy we have sought evidence from local voluntary and community organisations, along with key front-line services who are directly supporting Sefton's most vulnerable people.

The strategy has been coproduced in consultation and discussion with partners, elected members, service providers, public health, housing and voluntary and community representatives, including the VCF. The Welfare Reform Anti-Poverty Group, a multi-agency partnership has provided oversight in developing the strategy and will be instrumental in progressing an outcomes and performance framework which will underpin the action plan. The strategy will be kept under regular review as new evidence and learning emerges from the impact of the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis so we can continue to be informed of emerging issues.

The close involvement of our communities in shaping our approach will ensure that we are meeting the differing needs in all the communities in Sefton to ensure those who experience poverty first-hand remain at the heart of what we do.

**Is there evidence that the Public Sector Equality Duties will be met?**

*The Equality Act 2010 requires that those subject to the Equality Duty must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:*

1. *Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.*
2. *Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.*
3. *Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and*

*those who do not.*

*The Act explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves:*

- *Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.*
- *Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.*
- *Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.*

Poverty has wide ranging impacts. Being in poverty can mean that basic material resources are lacking and can lead to people living in poor quality and insecure housing. It can also lead to missed opportunities exclusion and even stigma and discrimination. If people are prevented from accessing resources and experiences, it limits their ability to participate and feel valued and included in society. The places where people live and the circumstances into which they are born have a fundamental effect on life chances. People may be living in poverty if they lack the financial resources to meet their needs, whereas people can be regarded as deprived if they lack any kind of resources, not just income. The strategy provides a strategic framework for how we intend to tackle childhood poverty. It has three key priorities:

- Reduce the level of poverty and time spent in poverty now
- Minimise the harmful effects of poverty on educational achievement, health, and wellbeing now and later in life
- Prevent future poverty for today's children and young people

#### **What actions will follow if proposal accepted by Cabinet & Council?**

*Include details of any mitigating action and ongoing monitoring to address any of the equality impacts highlighted above*

- The strategy will be launched at a multi-partner event in autumn 2022
- Partners will agree a plan of action
- A performance framework will be developed which will help to measure our success against the delivery of the outcomes.
- The partnership will receive the results of the qualitative research with families at the end of 2022
- The EIA will be reviewed in response to significant developments in poverty experienced in Sefton, e.g., Fuel cost rises.
- Maintain a responsive and dynamic communication approach to stakeholders to ensure messaging and communication is appropriate, sensitive and timely.

## Appendix 1

Protected Characteristics and the Identification of Potential Issues/Barriers					
Protected Characteristic	Tick which applies		Tick which applies		Reasons for the positive impact or potential negative impact, *although PH will identify negative impacts, it may not be realistic to negate these due to a lack of resources.
	Positive Impact		Potential Negative Impact		
	Yes	No	Yes	No	
<b>Age</b>	x			x	<p>The objectives of the strategy are likely to have a positive impact for those most at risk of poverty, that is children.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Although most parts of the North West have higher rates of child poverty, Sefton has seen an 17% rise over the last 5 years from 2015/16</li> <li>• Almost 1 in 6 (8202) under 16s live in relative poverty</li> <li>• The Index of Income Deprivation Affecting Children, which covers 189 neighbourhoods in Sefton shows that 31 (16%) are ranked amongst the top 10% most deprived in England, with 5 areas falling into the top 1% most deprived</li> </ul> <p>The Consultation underpinning the strategy is broad and involves families and young people living in areas of highest deprivation</p> <p>The wider consultation has involved stakeholders and service providers in education across schools and community partners</p> <p>Public Health (PH) have the support of Sefton Young Advisors to consult with YP in informal youth settings, which enables the consultation delivery to involve a wider-YP audience.</p> <p>The Every Child Matters Forum has supported the consultation providing an opportunity for young people and families to</p>

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					<p>provide important information regarding perceptions and experience of poverty and interaction with existing services and also how to shape future service provision.</p> <p><b>Mitigation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that all needs of families are considered in service design and delivery. We aim to offer different interventions and support for both individual young people and families.</li> </ul>
<b>Disability</b>	x			x	<p>The objective of the strategy is likely to have a positive impact on children and families with regard to disability. The strategy aims to increase financial security, improve educational attainment and employment prospects as well as creating a more supportive and inclusive place to live.</p> <p>We know that people who are disabled are more at risk of living in poverty and we also understand the impact of carers who may have limited employment opportunities. There may be barriers in terms of disabled people engaging in the consultation.</p> <p>The strategy consultation exercise is available in a variety of formats and should therefore be inclusive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Telephone Interview</li> <li>• Focus Group</li> </ul>

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					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Survey</li> </ul> <p>Many commissioned services are community based and the service models provide opportunity for individuals and families to receive support in a variety of community settings including their home.</p> <p><b>Mitigation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure venues used are accessible to all</li> <li>Where appropriate the service will deliver in a community setting suitable to the client's needs.</li> <li>Differentiation of materials such as easy read versions for people with low levels of literacy.</li> </ul>
<b>Gender Reassignment/ Transgender</b>	x			x	<p>The objective of the strategy is likely to have a positive impact on children families with regard to gender reassignment/transgender.</p> <p>However further work with transgender community may be needed to ensure specific aspects of poverty outcomes such as education and employment are considered from the perspective of the trans community.</p>
<b>Marriage and Civil Partnership</b>	x			x	<p>The objectives in the strategy will provide positive impacts and are likely to have a positive impact for all members of the community and fully includes individuals within the protected</p>

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	Yes	No	Yes	No	
					characteristic of marriage and civil partnership.
<b>Pregnancy and Maternity</b>	x			x	<p>The objectives of the strategy are likely to have a positive impact on women and children with regards to the protected characteristic of Pregnancy and Maternity, with interventions to protect the health and wellbeing of pregnant women and their children</p> <p>Pregnancy and maternity is a potential risk area for women who may face employment challenges as well as issues such as teenage pregnancy where the risks of poverty could be increased.</p> <p><b>Mitigation:</b></p> <p>Understanding of any additional health/service needs to be identified for appropriate referral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor responses in relation to complaints and compliments</li> <li>• Ensure the service policies are compliant.</li> </ul>
<b>Race</b>	x			x	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individuals from Ethnic Minority groups are more likely to live in high levels of population density, use public transport, high household composition (houses of multiple occupancy) and poor housing conditions.</li> </ul>



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	Yes	No	Yes	No	
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language needs of Sefton families and English not first language.</li> <li>• Cultural issues of those needing support are met and understood.</li> <li>• Lack of engagement and effective communications with Ethnic Minorities.</li> <li>• Language and information navigability barriers. There may be concerns around the impact in immigration status that act as barriers to engagement with services</li> <li>• Gypsy and Romany Travellers are largely mobile populations and populations with lower literacy are more likely to miss accurate public messaging re available support.</li> </ul> <p>Due to the changing demographics of Sefton in some areas/wards, any data and information can become quickly outdated and may not be relevant to some sections of the community. There may be some sections of the community e.g., asylum seekers who may not have been included in the research</p>

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	Yes	No	Yes	No	
					<p>Awareness is needed of any language barriers to accessing the service and lifestyle information to support service planning.</p> <p><b>Mitigation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure information can be communicated effectively where English is not first language.</li> </ul>
<b>Religion or Belief</b>	x			x	<p>Religion or beliefs respected without discrimination in the service.</p> <p><b>Mitigation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure all policies are compliant</li> </ul>
<b>Sex</b>	x			x	<p>The objectives in the strategy are likely to have a positive impact on individuals and communities with regards to the protected characteristic of sex</p>
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	X			x	<p>The objectives in the strategy are likely to have a positive impact on individuals and communities with regards to the protected characteristic of Sexual Orientation.</p>