

Report to:	Health and Wellbeing Board	Date of Meeting:	Wednesday 6 March 2024
Subject:	Progress update on the Sefton Child Poverty Strategy		
Report of:	Director of Public Health	Wards Affected:	(All Wards);
Portfolio:	Health and Wellbeing Communities and Housing		
Is this a Key Decision:	No	Included in Forward Plan:	No
Exempt / Confidential Report:	No		

Summary:

The purpose of this report is to provide the Health and Wellbeing Board with an update on the progress of the [Sefton Child Poverty Strategy](#)¹, by providing the following.

- A summary of strategy background and development.
- A brief overview of the child poverty strategy's goals, priorities, and suggested actions.
- Discussion on arrangements for implementation, governance, and monitoring.
- A review of progress using the accountability framework.
- Comments on wider policy context - opportunities and challenges.

Recommendations:

The Health and Wellbeing Board is recommended to,

- 1) Note the content of the report and the progress made since the launch of the strategy.
- 2) Consider how the Board can best promote and support the child poverty strategy in its second year.

Reasons for the Recommendations:

The Health and Wellbeing Board has a governance role to provide oversight and support for the delivery and progress of the child poverty strategy. This report sets out information about progress in the year following its launch and proposals relating to its further implementation in 2024.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: (including any Risk Implications)

An alternative was not considered. The Council's vision and core purpose demonstrate its continued commitment to support the most vulnerable, reduce poverty and its short-

¹ [Childhood Poverty Strategy 2022 \(sefton.gov.uk\)](https://sefton.gov.uk/childhood-poverty-strategy-2022)

and long-term impacts, and to foster prosperity and good prospects for all. Advancing strategic and co-ordinated action on the issue of child poverty is aligned with the Council’s responsibilities towards children and has co-benefits across the priorities expressed in our Core Purpose.

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

There are no new revenue costs associated with the contents of this report.

(B) Capital Costs

There are no new capital costs associated with the contents of this report.

Implications of the Proposals:

<p>Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets): The actions and intentions in this report are intended to be achieved from within the existing resources of the Council and its partners. Implementation of actions to achieve the goals of the child poverty strategy is founded on an assets-based approach.</p>									
<p>Legal Implications: There are no legal implications arising from this report.</p>									
<p>Equality Implications: The equality implications have been identified and risk remains, as detailed in the report. Inequality is inherent in the subject matter of this report concerning child poverty. An equality impact assessment was completed alongside the current child poverty strategy, and mitigations to maximise inclusivity and diversity are ongoing considerations in the implementation of the strategy.</p>									
<p>Impact on Children and Young People: Yes Set out in full in the report.</p>									
<p>Climate Emergency Implications:</p> <p>The recommendations within this report will</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Have a positive impact</td> <td>No</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Have a neutral impact</td> <td>Yes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Have a negative impact</td> <td>No</td> </tr> <tr> <td>The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors</td> <td>Yes</td> </tr> </table> <p>There are no direct climate emergency implications arising from this report. However, implementation of Place actions and priorities as set out in the child poverty strategy are considered supportive of the Council’s work to reduce the scale and impact of climate change, particularly unequal impacts on health.</p>		Have a positive impact	No	Have a neutral impact	Yes	Have a negative impact	No	The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors	Yes
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Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

Protect the most vulnerable:

The focus of the strategy, and therefore also this report, are the one in five under 16s who are living in relative poverty. Abundant evidence shows that at a population level, childhood poverty increases the risk of entering adulthood with less good health, qualifications and earning prospects. The strategy's priorities and actions are focused on disrupting this relationship and reducing the short- and long-term vulnerability that often results from experiences of poverty in childhood.

Facilitate confident and resilient communities:

The strategy and this report emphasise the role that everyone must play in tackling child poverty, including those who live with, or closest to the most difficult challenges. The strategy emphasises routes towards developing more cohesive, healthier communities, with better opportunities and experiences. These changes can help children grow a positive sense of themselves, their value in society, and potential for the future.

Commission, broker and provide core services:

Neither the current strategy nor this report implies the need to commission new services. Instead, the emphasis is on enabling services to be even more systematic and deliberate in how they are designed and delivered, so as to minimise the direct and indirect negative impacts of poverty on uptake and outcomes.

Place – leadership and influencer:

This strategy has already received recognition from beyond Sefton, including from Sir Michael Marmot. Given the strength of support demonstrated by senior officers and elected members, the Council is well-placed to take this strategy forward.

Drivers of change and reform:

The child poverty strategy represents an important opportunity to unify and align all aspects of the Council's work and work with partners around the mutually beneficial goal of reducing child poverty and its impacts, now and for the future. Therefore, this strategy can be seen to make a positive contribution as a driver of equitable, inclusive change and reform.

Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity:

Forging a path away from persistent disadvantage requires changes to the opportunities and experiences that currently shape children's development. In turn, the benefits from mitigating the impacts of child poverty to the maximum extent possible are the positive returns to the future skills and knowledge profile of Sefton's young labour market. This synergistic relationship is also captured in the Sefton economic strategy.

Greater income for social investment:

The child poverty strategy does not generate income for social investment directly, but it promotes and invites stakeholders to recognise the benefits of social value investment and returns, including less formal, community-driven approaches to local wealth redistribution.

Cleaner Greener:

As indicated under the climate emergency section above, the strategy is likely to contribute to lowered climate risk, and a cleaner and greener environment, especially through actions under the place priorities.

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (FD.7549/24...) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD.5649/24...) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations

This report includes information about external engagement that took place to inform the development of the strategy, and subsequent community insight work to capture a more in-depth, first-hand understanding of the experiences of children and their families in low income households in Sefton.

Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately following the Committee meeting.

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Appendices:

There are no appendices to this report.

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

The Sefton Child Poverty Strategy is published on the Sefton Council website [Sefton Child Poverty Strategy](#).

1. Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide the Health and Wellbeing Board with an update on the progress of the [Sefton Child Poverty Strategy](#)², including the following.

- A summary of strategy background and development.
- A brief overview of the child poverty strategy's goals, priorities, and suggested actions.
- Discussion on arrangements for implementation, governance, and monitoring.
- A review of progress using the accountability framework.
- Comments on wider policy context - opportunities and challenges.

² [Childhood Poverty Strategy 2022 \(sefton.gov.uk\)](#)

1.1 Summary of strategy background and development

The Council declared a poverty emergency in 2021. A comprehensive desk-top review of child poverty in the context of the pandemic was prepared for the Welfare Reform and Anti-Poverty (WRAP) Cabinet Members' Reference Group (CMRG) and this informed the decision to create a dedicated child poverty strategy. Staff in the public health team led and co-ordinated the process of developing the strategy with input from the WRAP partnership and oversight from WRAP CMRG. The strategy was developed during 2022 and launched that December. It was informed by a broad range of evidence, for example.

- The epidemiology of child health, educational attainment, and subsequent income inequalities in Sefton, which are known to be associated with child poverty at a population level.
- The epidemiology of the social and wider causes of these outcomes, including the distribution of income deprivation affecting children; groups at greater risk of relative poverty; the economic and employment profile in Sefton.
- Evidence from research about which risk and protective factors in childhood mediate risk of continuing poverty in adulthood.
- Evidence from national surveys of children's and families' experiences of situations like home-schooling during the pandemic.
- Insights from members of the WRAP partnership group and broader internal and external stakeholder workshops. These were central to development of the suggested actions that fall out of each of the six priority areas in the strategy.
- Examples of local child poverty strategies developed elsewhere (mostly from Scotland, which has a national child poverty reduction strategy).

Funds provided by the Cheshire and Merseyside Health and Care Partnership's Marmot Communities Programme were used to commission a qualitative insight study to capture the voices of individuals with first-hand and near experience of living in poverty. One to one discussions sought to explore what poverty means for children and families in Sefton now, their hopes and expectations for the future; and how living on a low income affects day to day experiences, e.g., take-up of services, opportunities for leisure and socialising, learning at home and school.

Aside from this investment, the strategy has been developed with a focus on assets-based changes that can be initiated and driven by partners working at a Sefton level.

2. Overview of the child poverty strategy's goals, priorities, and suggested actions



The image above shows the goals, themes, and priorities in the Child Poverty Strategy and how these relate to the suggested actions listed under each of six priority areas. Important points to note are:

- The **goals 1-3**, address prevention of both root causes and unequal effects of child poverty, in the present and future lives of today's children.
- The **pockets, prospects, and places themes** used to group the **six priorities** were inspired by Scottish strategy on child poverty and help to structure a complex issue.
- The strategy has a **long lifespan (to 2030)** in keeping with the scale and range of changes that are needed, but this does not rule out necessary updates. The temporal context for child poverty reduction is often (rightly) described as being 'inter-generational'. However, many meaningful improvements in the lives of children can be achieved more quickly than this.
- The intended **audience** for the strategy is not limited to Sefton Council.
- The **actions** that were suggested and endorsed during the drafting process are presented in more general, rather than specific terms. They do not constitute a true action plan since they are not tied to specified timescales or action owners. This reflects several considerations –
 - Lines of action should be reasonably future-proof – more than just transient priorities.
 - It is not helpful to set out actions which turn out to rely on unmanageable assumptions about capacity and resource.
 - The type of change required must allow for a large degree of bottom-up innovation and co-production, alongside enabling actions, for example policy changes.

- Many decision-makers and change-makers who have a vital part to play in realising our child poverty goals are not employed or commissioned by the Council.
- It is appropriate for stakeholders, including the Council, to develop specific action plans (or highlight child poverty reduction actions in existing ones), closer to where change will happen.
- When the current version of the strategy was published, qualitative insight work to gather in-depth information from lived experience had not been completed. From the outset, it was anticipated that this new knowledge would suggest new actions and/or refine some existing actions.

2.1 Is the Sefton Child Poverty strategy good?

England does not have a national child poverty reduction strategy, although the need for one has often been highlighted over the past year, for example this was a top recommendation in the Mentally Healthier Nation report produced by the Centre for Mental Health.³

Greater Manchester Poverty Action has recently produced a report on local anti-poverty strategies, setting out good practice and effective approaches⁴. The report includes a framework of essential, inter-dependent and complementary elements that the authors propose are necessary for an anti-poverty strategy to be successful (below).



An in-depth audit to benchmark Sefton's strategy against this framework has not been undertaken, but a positive reflection is that none of these elements are wholly absent from our local strategy. Some are well-developed, for example, the definition of poverty

³ [AMentallyHealthierNation_Summary_Digital.pdf \(centreformentalhealth.org.uk\)](https://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/AMentallyHealthierNation_Summary_Digital.pdf)

⁴ [GMPA-Local-anti-poverty-strategies-report-2023-final.pdf \(gmpovertyaction.org\)](https://www.gmpovertyaction.org/gmpa-local-anti-poverty-strategies-report-2023-final.pdf)

and its drivers, adopting a medium and long-term perspective, and political and officer leadership. From this checklist, areas for further development may include,

- Clearer **prioritisation** of actions the Council will take to directly further the strategy's goals – a good example of this is the recent adoption of the socio-economic duty, as well as actions that enable partners and wider stakeholders to implement changes in what they do. This element is discussed further in the next section under the heading of 'milestones'.
- **Action plan:** a high-level action plan focusing on the Council's core capabilities to bring about change and key milestones, can aid the process of embedding anti-poverty, pro-equity considerations into the wider work of the Council (**reinforcing and aligning with existing strategies**). An existing example of this is the deliberate cross-referencing between the child poverty strategy and the economic strategy.
- **Monitoring and evaluation:** an appropriate accountability framework has been developed, but it has not been fully and routinely adopted into governance arrangements. This means that its potential to shape, guide and promote the child poverty strategy is not being fully realised.

3. Plans for monitoring, governance, and implementation

Monitoring

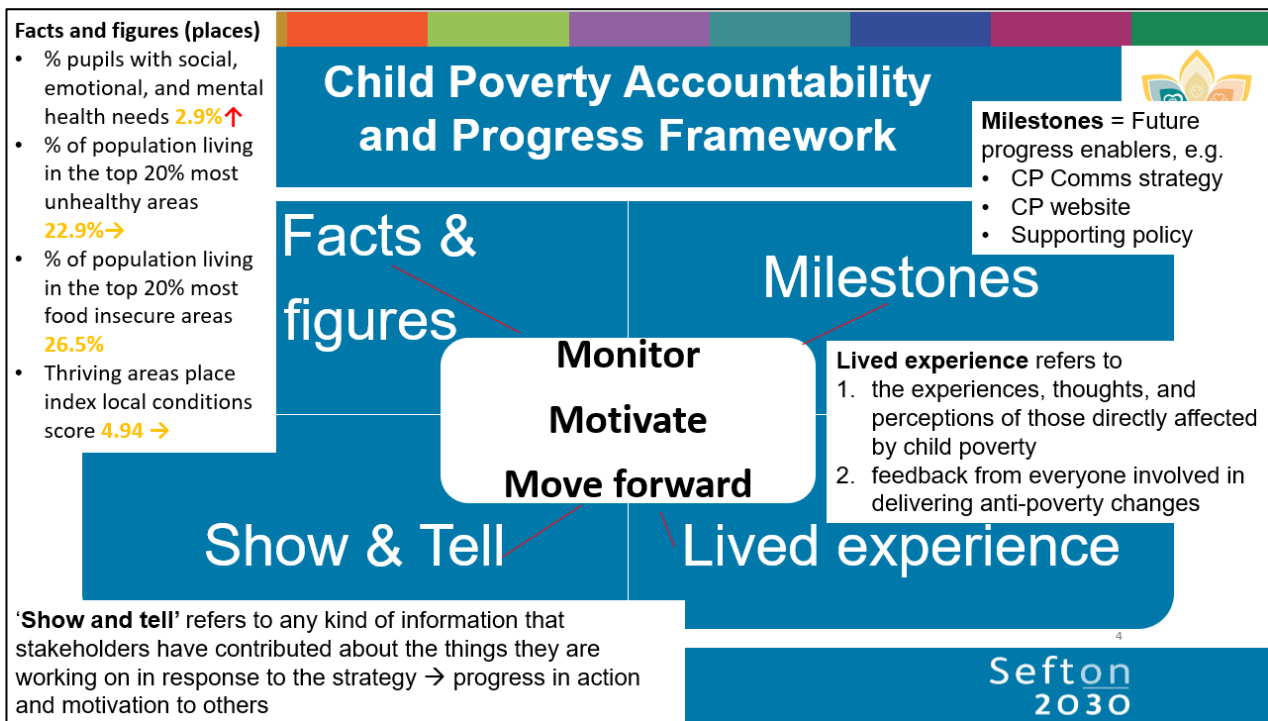
As part of the process of developing the strategy, a proposal for monitoring and evaluating implementation and progress towards outcomes was presented to the WRAP CMRG in August 2022. This was also a topic for stakeholder discussion and feedback at the launch and prospects events and was the subject of a workshop at the most recent Place event.

The first step towards developing an accountability framework for the child poverty strategy was to identify important characteristics and attributes the final model should have. In summary, the accountability framework should,

- **Enable progress that is flexible and responsive** rather than becoming overly and rigidly focused on numerically measurable outcomes.
- **Minimise duplication** of established reporting and monitoring. Use information that is already collected, or which can be collected incidentally through activities that also support dissemination and delivery of the strategy, e.g., stakeholder events.
- **Be lean** - adequate and sufficient.
- **Add value** – by acting as an invitation to others to share things they are doing differently to tackle child poverty, the framework can act as a conduit, taking in valuable learning and inspiration that can be used to promote change elsewhere. In time, this can become a visible and meaningful way of holding one another to account.
- Monitor **progress as well as outcomes**.

- **Capture the voice of the child and families** and reflect what matters.
- Demonstrate dimensions of **quality**⁵.

Outside of the carefully controlled environment of a research study it is not possible to definitively attribute changes in the level of child poverty, the level of persistent disadvantage, or young people’s health and educational outcomes to actions initiated by this strategy. It is still appropriate and important to monitor child poverty statistics, but it is also necessary to look to other types of information that can reflect where progress is and is not being made and how this is being felt in the lives of local families and communities. Taking account of these requirements, the child poverty accountability framework has four dimensions, as illustrated below.



Facts and figures

This element of the framework is currently comprised of 22 quantitative indicators, linked to the strategy’s six priorities (mapped below, next page), which are sourced from the Cheshire and Merseyside Marmot indicator dashboard, Fingertips data profiles from the Office of Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID), and the Thriving Places Index.

⁵ [Quality in public health: a shared responsibility - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

INDICATORS	POCKETS	POCKETS	PROSPECTS	PROSPECTS	PLACES	PLACES
Indicator mapped to strategic priorities identified in the Sefton Child Poverty Strategy	1. Increase the number of households who can access employment that provides an acceptable standard of living	2. Do what we can to reduce the cost of living and to remove financial and other barriers that lower the benefit low income families get from local opportunities and support on offer	3. Acting early and focusing on the needs of parents to create the best possible support for children's learning and development at home	4. Narrow the educational attainment gap between children from low income families and their better off peers	5. Ensure the places where we live and spend time are strong on the fundamental, universal things everyone needs to live well	6. Create more connected, accessible and inclusive spaces, that support social cohesion, diversity and participation
Percentage of children achieving a good level of development at 2-2.5 years (in all five areas of development) 2020						
Percentage of children(no FSM) achieving a good level of development at the end of Early Years Foundation Stage (Reception) 2022						
Percentage of children(FSM) achieving a good level of development at the end of Early Years Foundation Stage (Reception) 2022						
Average Attainment 8 score (no FSM) 2022						
Average Attainment 8 score (FSM) 2022						
Percentage of 16-17 year-olds NEET 2021						
Percentage unemployed (aged 16-64 years) 2022						
Median pre-tax weekly earnings (£) 2021						
Percentage of employees who are employed on a non-permanent contract 2021						
Percentage of employees earning below real living wage 2022						
Percentage of children in workless households (dependent children) 2021						
Percentage of under 16s in relative poverty, after housing costs 2021						
Percentage of pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs 2021						
Percentage of population living in the 20% most unhealthy environments (Access to Healthy Assets and Hazards Index) 2022						
Food insecurity (indirect measure) Percentage of population who live in LSOAs scored in the top 20% for risk of food insecurity nationally on the Food Insecurity Risk Index 2021						
Crude rate per 10 000 of children under 18 in care 2022						
Pupil absence (%) 2021						
Crude rate per 1000 of households with dependent children owed a duty under homelessness act 2021						
Crude rate per 1000 households in temporary accommodation 2021						
Thriving places index local conditions composite score 2022						
Thriving places index participation score 2022						
Thriving places index community cohesion score 2022						

Milestones

Ultimately, change can only happen when staff, volunteers, and the public all start doing some things differently to release poverty-reduction potential. Turning priorities on the page into real-life change for the better requires its own deliberate programme of facilitative and enabling actions, as well as ways of tracking progress on processes and impact.

Milestone achievements enable future progress. At this relatively early stage in implementation, they largely relate to the business of setting the strategy on firm footings. For, example actions that promote the existence of a new child poverty strategy in Sefton, both internally and externally are fundamentally important milestones. This is for the obvious reason that awareness and knowledge are prerequisites for change. An overview of progress against year one milestones is included in the next section.

Show and tell

The 'Show and tell' section refers to any kind of information that stakeholders have contributed about the things they are working on or intending to work on in response to the strategy. Simple examples of changes an organisation made, how children/parents/carers benefited, and what they will do next, show progress in action, but also motivate others to move forward with their own changes. Early in the life of the strategy, the progress and impacts we expect to see are from new examples of good practice and innovation. Over time, with continued support, progress should increasingly reflect more widespread adoption of anti-poverty changes in a wider range of settings in Sefton.

Lived experience

Lived experience refers primarily to the experiences, thoughts, and perceptions of those who are directly affected by living on a low income, and secondarily to qualitative feedback from everyone involved in delivering anti-poverty changes. In this foundational phase of the strategy this information is largely from three sources: the specific qualitative insight work commissioned to inform our work; feedback gathered at the launch and prospects events; and through other engagement with stakeholders, for example through Symbol reports produced by Sefton Young Advisers and Youth Voice.⁶ In time, we hope to be able to gather more case studies that capture first-hand experience of the improvements and differences that the strategy is striving to make, both through input from partner organisations and through increasing co-production.

Implementation

The table below illustrates the essential importance of effective communications to encourage widespread ownership of the issue and solutions to child poverty. It is written from a system-wide perspective, but also applies to internal communications within organisations like the Council. Ideally, this strategy would benefit from its own communications strategy.

Communication need for sustainable change	Enabling factors/resource
<p>WHO? Potential change-makers must know they can act to reduce child poverty and inequality in Sefton</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Themed ‘conference’ events. • Promotion at other learning events e.g., cost of living. • Plan on a page to represent the strategy. • Brief communication leads in partner organisations – consider longer-term comms collaboration on child poverty agenda. • Complementary joint approach with other communications, e.g. cost of living, child health, climate emergency. • Adopt consistent ‘branding’ – logo, tagline, hashtag to make messaging memorable, distinctive, and cohesive.
<p>WHAT? Change-makers must know what they could realistically do to make a difference</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider sharing a simplified version of the earlier Sefton Child Poverty Model to help organisations spot where they may have opportunities for pro-equity, child-friendly actions, e.g., poverty-proofing⁷ tools/support or a socio-economic duty ‘checklist’. • Share local examples of simple changes, e.g., from child poverty prospects and place events.

⁶ [SYMBOL \(sefton.gov.uk\)](https://sefton.gov.uk)

⁷ [Poverty Proofing© Services - Children North East \(children-ne.org.uk\)](https://children-ne.org.uk)

Communication need for sustainable change	Enabling factors/resource
<p>WHY? Change-makers must be sufficiently motivated to do something/s differently and understand how benefits outweigh costs for them.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop CP webpages to host resources and promote poverty proofing activity.⁸ • Consider ways to put trailblazers in touch with new adopters. • Later, consider some sort of Child Poverty Champion stamp of approval/hallmark. • Continue to create opportunities to celebrate and spotlight good practice.
<p>HOW? External change-makers must be able to select and implement pro-equity, anti-poverty changes (rather than waiting for a top-down instruction. An element of self-service needs to be supported).</p> <p>Council-based change-makers must know what tackling child poverty means for how their role and day to day work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote complementary resources, e.g., from national and regional bodies, Marmot Communities, ICS Anchor Institutions, Social Value Charter, learning and training on making pro-equity changes at work. • As above a dedicated webpage would support this. • Schedule online or in-place events help to form a ‘coalition of willing early adopters’. • Build on successful policy change and implementation, e.g. Climate Emergency.
<p>FOR HOW LONG? Change-makers must be able to see (and have others see) how their changes benefit them, and children and families to help motivate and sustain new anti-poverty ways of operating.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dovetail with other priority issues, e.g., seasonal comms for holidays, winter warmth, health campaigns, back to school, cost of living etc. • Boost reputation and reward good practice by sharing and promoting widely.

In addition to work already taking place to mitigate immediate material deprivation e.g., food banks and community pantries, emergency payments, welfare, and debt support; a lot of the change that is required is best supported by initiating changes in policy, e.g., implementation of the socio-economic duty. To be successful, policy changes must be feasible, realistic, and practicable. Plans should be shaped alongside people who will enact the policy in their day-to-day work, and those who are intended to experience the benefit.

Governance

Current oversight and governance arrangements for the strategy are provided by the WRAP CMRG and the Health and Wellbeing Board, and externally via the Cheshire and Merseyside Marmot Communities Leads Group.

⁸ Capabilities appear similar to www.seftonsab.org.uk (Sefton Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board), which has been recently commissioned and is separate from Sefton.gov.uk


4. A review of progress using the accountability framework

Facts and figures

The table below is the latest update to the 22 quantitative indicators selected to measure progress. These are the latest statistics available as of 30 January 2024. Eleven date to 2022, ten to 2021, and one from 2020. This means that any impact from the strategy and other influences in 2023 is not yet 'visible' in this data. Post-pandemic and cost of living impacts and inequalities are in evidence across several indicators.

Indicator mapped to strategic priorities identified in the Sefton Child Poverty Strategy	Latest statistic (RAG compares to England)	3-Year trend
Percentage of children achieving a good level of development at 2-2.5 years (in all five areas of development) 2020	82.70	Stable
Percentage of children(no FSM) achieving a good level of development at the end of Early Years Foundation Stage (Reception) 2022	65.50	Worse
Percentage of children(FSM) achieving a good level of development at the end of Early Years Foundation Stage (Reception) 2022	41.60	Worse
Average Attainment 8 score (no FSM) 2022	48.20	Stable
Average Attainment 8 score (FSM) 2022	35.00	Stable
Percentage of 16-17 year-olds NEET 2021	3.10	Better
Percentage unemployed (aged 16-64 years) 2022	4.10	Worse
Median pre-tax weekly earnings (£) 2021	445.40	Stable
Percentage of employees who are employed on a non-permanent contract 2021	3.60	Stable
Percentage of employees earning below real living wage 2022	14.00	Better
Percentage of children in workless households (dependent children) 2021	4.50	Better
Percentage of under 16s in relative poverty, after housing costs 2021	18.30	Worse
Percentage of pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs 2021	2.90	Worse
Percentage of population living in the 20% most unhealthy environments (Access to Healthy Assets and Hazards Index) 2022	22.90	Stable
Food insecurity (indirect measure) Percentage of population who live in LSOAs scored in the top 20% for risk of food insecurity nationally on the Food Insecurity Risk Index 2021	26.50	Unknown
Crude rate per 10 000 of children under 18 in care 2022	113.00	Stable
Pupil absence (%) 2021	8.00	Worse
Crude rate per 1000 of households with dependent children owed a duty under homelessness act 2021	7.40	Stable
Crude rate per 1000 households in temporary accommodation 2021	0.30	Stable
Thriving places index local conditions composite score 2022	4.94	Stable
Thriving places index participation score 2022	6.46	Better
Thriving places index community cohesion score 2022	5.66	Better

Milestones

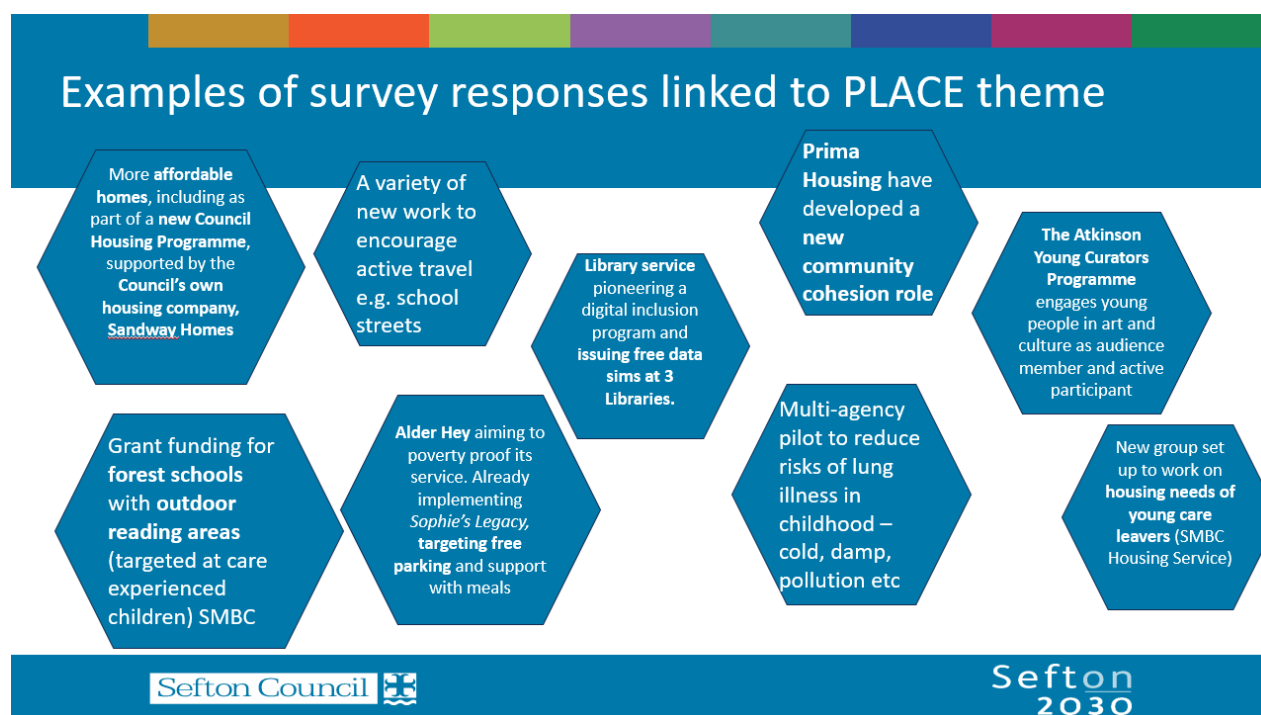
Year one milestones	Achieved?
Launch event	Yes – December 2022
Communications plan and ‘brand’	<p>Partially</p>  <p>Striking ‘brand’. Successful communications for events led by public health, with input from Communications team.</p> <p>No formal communications strategy in place.</p>
Online or in-person events to promote strategy, develop network of collaborators and supporters and collate evidence of progress and change.	Yes –Prospects event in 2023 and Places event in early 2024.
Supporting resources: webpage, plan on a page, audit tool, poverty-proofing checklist	<p>Partially</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Webpage but can be developed further Sefton Child Poverty Strategy - Original audit tool was too complex based on feedback. External options that are more actions sed have been identified. - Research to collate examples of checklists etc that organisations can use to decide on mitigating action against poverty-related disadvantage facing children, parents and carers is being undertaken by public health registrar.
Accountability and progress framework in use	Yes
Shared progress on year one priorities	Yes – see appendix for outputs of the prospects event and ‘show and tell’ below from the pre-place event survey.

Show and Tell

The graphic below shows examples of work taking place in Sefton that were gathered using a short Your Sefton, Your Say online survey ahead of the most recent Place themed event on 18 January 2024 (see appendix for examples of post-event reports from the Prospects event). The simple questions below elicited 18 responses, amounting to over 6000 words.

1. What good practice would you like to share in relation to one or more of the Child Poverty Priorities above? This can include something your organisation is already doing. Use numbers 1-6 to indicate the relevant priority/s within your answer.

2. Please tell us about something you are doing differently in response to the Sefton Child Poverty Strategy. What change did you decide to make, and why? What happened? Were there any sticking points?
3. Which priorities/s do you think are most important for your organisation, team or service to explore or act on in the future? Say why and what you plan to do?



Subsequent developments have included,

- Public Health registrars are gathering evidence on two of the research questions posed by the strategy: what models exist to deliver customer-to-customer wealth redistribution e.g. pay it forward? And what good resources are available to help organisations identify and make poverty-proofing changes to how they design and deliver services?
- Public health colleagues have identified poverty-proofing support developed in the North East⁹ and aimed at schools, health and care providers, and cultural activities.
- Two officers from public health and regeneration attended an introductory event to learn more about piloting the Place Standard community engagement tool in Sefton.¹⁰

The **Place event** early this year also had an aim very much in keeping with the 'show and tell' aspect of the accountability framework:

- To introduce attendees to relevant information and inspiration about the kinds of places that improve children's life and health chances, and the tools we can use to make Sefton a more child-friendly place.

⁹ [Poverty Proofing@ Services - Children North East \(children-ne.org.uk\)](https://www.children-north-east.org.uk/poverty-proofing-services)

¹⁰ [The Place Standard tool is a way of assessing places. | Our Place](#)

The event featured keynote addresses from prominent experts in child poverty and spatial and economic development, including Ruth Hussey, Michael Chang, and Stephen Watson. Objectives for the event were to,

- Bring together an audience of decision-makers and implementers working with spatial determinants of health and with children whose lives are most affected by poverty.
- Share information that helps attendees identify the characteristics of places that have a positive impact on child health, development, and educational outcomes, and contrast this with characteristics of places where child outcomes are lower.
- Inspire with visual information from high quality child friendly schemes and counterexamples.
- Present information about ways of working that best support the creation of spaces which promote equitable outcomes and mitigate the effects of poverty (including policy and community-centred/led approaches).
- Facilitate attendees to identify and commit to actions they can take or enable.
- Strengthen dialogue and our common sense of purpose.

Lived Experience

Below, are some examples of quotations and themes from the in-depth ‘Understanding Child Poverty in Sefton’ report completed by Drs Rust-Ryan. A formal proposal for changes to the strategy resulting from this important information will now be developed following the publication of the report.

The evaluation workshop at the Place event used a simple exercise to match verbatim quotations to Place actions from the strategy. This served to highlight an under-addressed issue in connection to household items including carpets, furniture and white goods, which families often lack for when they have moved accommodation frequently.

Theme	Example evidence (<i>direct quotations</i> and report extracts)
Trade-offs	<i>“The taxi to the community pantry costs £5.”</i>
Poverty awareness.	<i>“Some people have more money than they know what to do with, some manage and are okay, some struggle, and some have nothing. It’s those with too much money who make the rules and don’t know what it is like for everyone else. It shouldn’t be like this. Everyone should be okay.”</i>
Fear and safety.	<i>“We don’t play out at the front – Mum says it’s not safe. It’s not safe here. People drive fast and there are gangs. There’re nice places around here, but some people start trouble and some smash things.”</i> ‘Only two of the 20 families could afford household insurance.’

Sacrifice and guilt.	Children spoke about wanting to relieve their parents of the challenge of living on a too low income. <i>“I want to be a member of the government so that I can change how they are doing things... Then people like my mum won’t have to struggle and worry about money anymore.”</i>
Gratitude.	Children were often keenly aware of the things their parents went without to give them the things they need. ‘They spoke about how their parent(s) wanted them to do well at school because it would help them secure a good future for themselves despite their family’s current situation.’
Money and influence.	‘Parents felt that growing up in a family facing financial hardship clearly impacted on children’s life-chances. Having sufficient money was regarded as being an important determinant of future success as it ‘opened doors’ in relation to education, training, and employment. Also, where families live was regarded as determining opportunities.’
Shrinking world.	‘She talked about how families with more money can afford to go on holiday and enjoy leisure activities. This meant that families with more money could go places and do more, while poorer families are limited to places such socialising at home or at family or friends’ houses.’
Change and ideas.	‘[One] child said that she would like to see families giving away things they do not need to people who might need them: <i>“...whatever you don’t want in your house, you could give it to them”.</i> <i>“Financial struggles not only have financial impacts on children and adults, but also on people’s mental health – adults need help as well as children.”</i> [Sefton child]

5. Comments on wider policy context - opportunities and challenges

Since its launch, the child poverty strategy has gathered support and enthusiasm in Sefton and more widely. Child poverty is a high-stakes and emotive issue. Through engaging with the major influences on pockets, prospects and places, stakeholders encounter a relatable and tangible new way to understand how social determinants play out in children’s life chances. This knowledge can lend new saliency and value to work that could otherwise seem remote from the lives of children and young people. As the unequal impacts of the pandemic continue to register on ‘start well’ outcomes, families continue to grapple with the competing challenges of high living costs, compounded by added risks to health and wellbeing stemming from climate change. This year has seen the preparation and publication of several reports, which have highlighted sources and causes of adversity and inequality being faced by children. Some notable recent examples include,

- The Government Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee conducted an **inquiry into Children, Young People and the Built Environment**, which issued a call for evidence on the following key areas.¹¹

The experiences of children and young people of their built environment

- How do children and young people experience outdoor spaces in towns, cities and rural areas across the country? For example, their streets, estates, villages, neighbourhoods and parks?
- How do these experiences vary across income, race, gender, age?
- How easily can children and young people travel to outdoor spaces and schools? How has this changed over the years?

The planning system

- How well are children and young people's needs currently met by the planning process in terms of policy and guidance?
- How are children and young people's views and voices heard, considered and acted upon in the planning system if at all?

Best practice and evaluation

- Where are the examples of policy and good practice that are improving children and young people's experiences in the built environment, either directly or indirectly, in the UK or internationally?
- How are these outcomes measured? For example, through economic or health and wellbeing indicators?

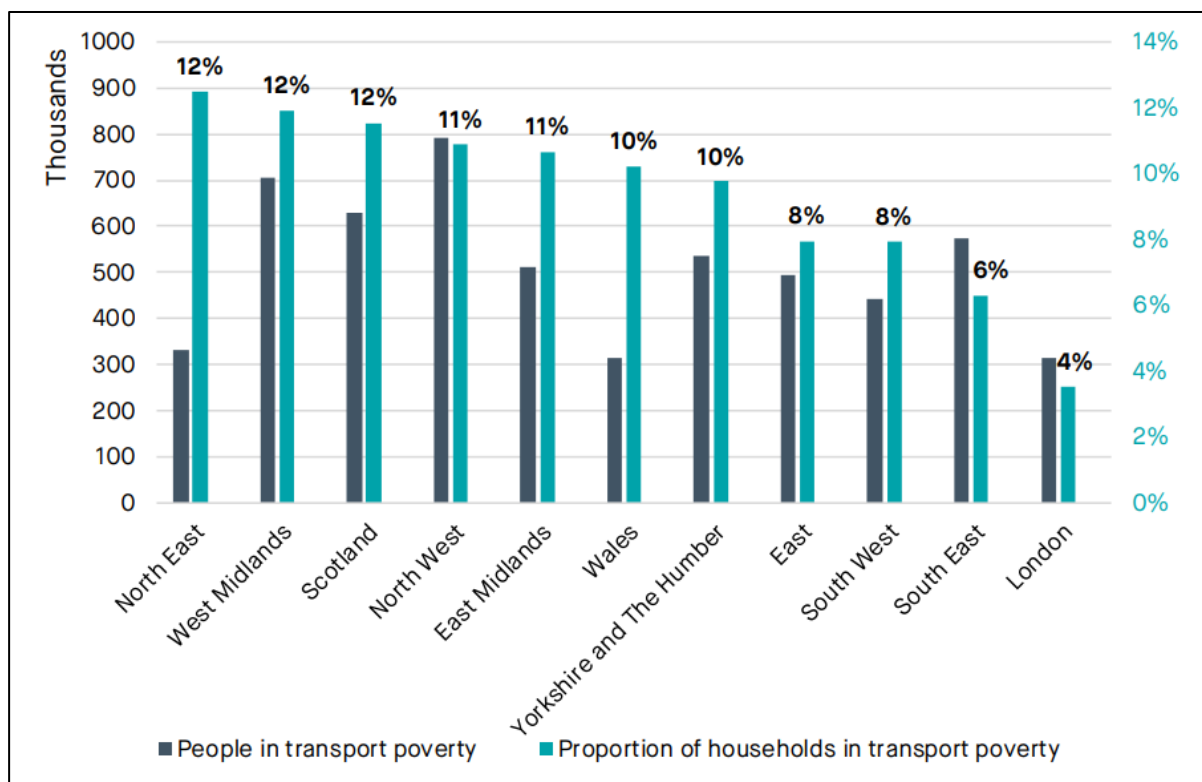
Cross Government working

- How does the relationship of children and young people with the built environment overlap with policy areas beyond the work of DLUHC, such as public health, transport, policing and net zero?
- Are government departments working together to address children and young people's needs in this respect?

- **The Social Mobility Foundation published a report in November on transport poverty**¹². The authors look at three dimensions - poverty linked to poor access, poverty linked to poor choice, and poverty linked to relatively high cost.
- The report found that the region with the biggest number of people living in poverty due to the unaffordability of their transport costs is the North West (800 000 people; 11%), which far exceeds the number affected in London (300 000; 4%), below.
- Economic modelling from the reports suggests that 'for every 10% increase in public transport speeds relative to motoring, the average household saves more than £434 each year. If this average is extrapolated, every 10% increase in relative public transport speeds pulls 500,000 out of poverty, decreasing poverty in Britain by 0.8 percentage points. Those with fast public transport in London pay the least, while households with slower public transport pay the most, such as in the East Midlands and the North West'.

¹¹ <https://committees.parliament.uk/work/7981/children-young-people-and-the-built-environment/>

¹² [Getting-the-measure-of-transport-poverty-Nov-2023.pdf \(smf.co.uk\)](https://www.smf.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Getting-the-measure-of-transport-poverty-Nov-2023.pdf)



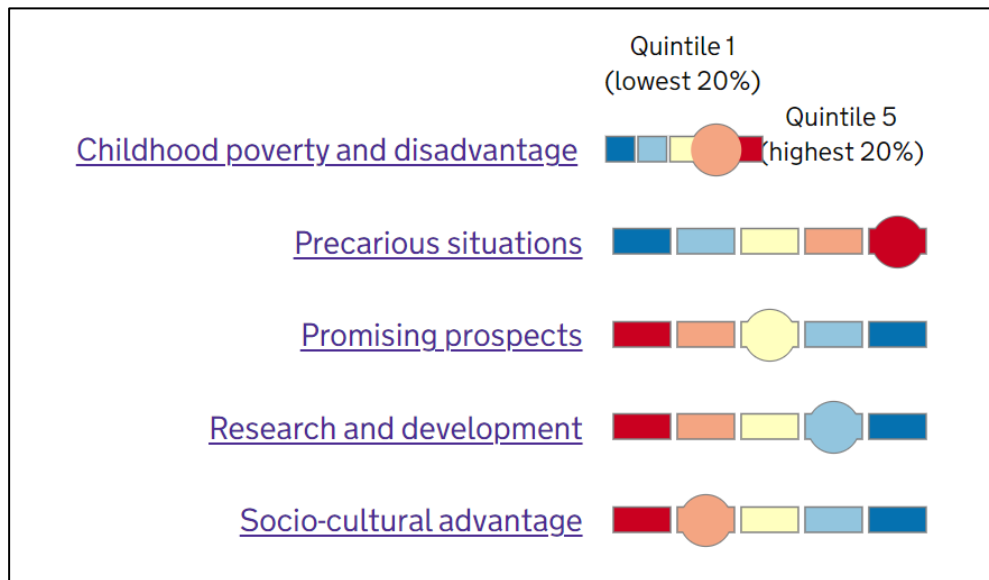
- The Social Mobility Commission has released its State of the Nation Report 2023 on people and places**¹³, accompanied by an interactive data tool¹⁴ presenting the commission's new approach to measuring social mobility. The summary graphic below shows the five major influences on social mobility for the area of Merseyside. A limitation of this analysis is that indicators are presented within sub-regional geographies, which can tend to obscure the significant inequalities within places such as Sefton. (Analysis undertaken at parliamentary constituency level using the previous metric showed very unequal social mobility for children from different parts of Sefton. Southport's score ranked 95/533 and Sefton Central 96/533 – both were in the top-performing fifth of the distribution, while Bootle's social mobility score was one of the lowest in the country, 502/533).

Nevertheless, the updated index does present a useful way of conceptualising key influences acting for and against social mobility local to Sefton. The graphic below summarises the level of each composite indicator relative to other parts of the UK. In the simplest terms, a ranking on the red or orange part of the scale does not favour social mobility compared to other areas, whereas a position in the blue section shows a more positive influence compared to other areas.

¹³ [State of the Nation 2023: People and Places - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/state-of-the-nation-2023-people-and-places)

¹⁴ [Merseyside - GOV.UK State of the Nation \(data.gov.uk\)](https://data.gov.uk/state-of-the-nation-2023-people-and-places)

Summary of five composite indicators of social mobility in Merseyside from the 2023 State of the nation report from the Social Mobility Commission.



- **Child poverty and disadvantage:** Merseyside falls within the second highest quintile for this measure. Some areas in the red part of the distribution have notably higher rates of child poverty and disadvantage than Merseyside, for example London and the West Midlands.
- **Precarious situations:** this domain represents the most difficult economic circumstances for 25- to 29-year-olds – measured by levels of unemployment, economic inactivity, and lower working-class employment. Here, Merseyside ranks second highest, but still some distance behind Northumberland, Tyne and Wear.
- **Promising prospects:** this measure is based on the outlook and opportunities for 25- to 29-year-olds and comprises levels of university education, professional work, and earnings. Merseyside falls just within the middle fifth – many areas do better on this measure, e.g., London, and some areas do worse, e.g., Lancashire.
- **Research and development:** this is a compound measure of conditions that favour research and development across UK regions - measured by broadband speed, numbers of university research students, and business spending on research. Merseyside ranks towards the upper end of the distribution, but overall conditions are most favourable in south central England. The positive potential for long-term poverty reduction represented by this indicator is not immediately available to all those who can benefit, and the strategic effort needed to achieve this was a key discussion point at this year's Prospects event.
- **Socio-cultural advantage:** measured by parental education (university degree), parental occupation (higher professional), and professional work for young people. Merseyside falls in the second lowest bracket on this measure. Cheshire is an example of an area with one of the highest levels of socio-cultural advantage, similar to the South and London. West coast areas of Scotland, England, and Wales, and the east coast of England have the lowest levels of socio-cultural advantage.

This is a simplified overview of a more complex and nuanced report, which warrants further study and discussion to gain helpful new insights into where changes in policy and practice can best address these issues in the context of Sefton's disadvantaged children and young people.

6. Next steps

Taking account of progress in year one and evidence from the accountability framework, proposed next steps are to,

- Produce an annual progress update in accordance with governance and oversight arrangements.
- Formalise a high-level plan for communication and strategic implementation within the Council, also taking account of the Greater Manchester Poverty Action strategy framework (section 2.1 above).
- Conduct a review of the strategy in conjunction with the Internal Audit Team.
- Disseminate the qualitative report into experiences of child poverty in Sefton and determine what changes should be made to the strategy based on its findings.
- Agree year 2 milestones/enabling actions and a plan to resource and implement these:
 - Further develop year 2 communications strategy, including Sefton.gov micro-site, and topic plus timing for the next child poverty 'conference' event or alternative.
 - Identify and share simple tools to enable frontline and other services to systematically mitigate disadvantages identified under the socio-economic duty.
 - Consider commissioning practically focused training to support more equitable design and delivery.
 - Consider funding a Poverty Proofing¹⁵ audit for school/s or a frontline Council service such as Family Hubs.
 - Identify one or two other policy changes, e.g., introduction of a health impact assessment policy.

7. Recommendations

The Health and Wellbeing Board is recommended to,


- 1) Note the content of the report and the progress made since the launch of the strategy.
- 2) Consider how the Board can best promote and support the child poverty strategy in its second year.

¹⁵ [Poverty Proofing© Services - Children North East \(children-ne.org.uk\)](https://www.children-north-east.org.uk/poverty-proofing-services)

Appendix

Update newsletter produced following the strategy launch.

Sefton's Childhood Poverty Strategy launch Update and Next Steps



Thank you for attending Sefton's Childhood Poverty Strategy launch earlier this month. It was wonderful to welcome almost a hundred senior leaders and practitioners from both Sefton and across the region, all committed to tackling this difficult and challenging issue.

The event was designed to formally launch the strategy and highlight the scale and complexity of child poverty in the borough. Our intention was to bring a positive focus to pockets, prospects, and places - the key drivers of the strategy, and to explore the real and lasting changes local organisations can make for children and families here in Sefton.

Your feedback

We have now had the chance to review the feedback from the tabletop sessions and were delighted to see so much energy, determination, and innovation across so many organisations.

We welcome all the constructive feedback on the self-assessment tool. We will work on making it simpler, and easier to navigate so it is ready to use early next year

Other feedback picked up from discussions revealed some shared priorities, including

- tools and training to help staff and volunteers identify those who may be experiencing the hidden hardship of child poverty
- a joint approach to tackling the shame and stigma linked to poverty, developed with input from young people and communities
- making simple changes within our own organisations

Plans for 2023


The broad attendance at the launch, the wealth of information shared in thought-provoking presentations and the evident energy and drive of everyone who gave up valuable time, all reveal a gathering momentum to tackle child poverty together. If we are serious about implementing this strategy for Sefton, this is momentum we cannot afford to lose.

We will share the updated child poverty self-assessment tool early next year, which will help kick-start organisational change and further inform year one priorities.

Find out more

We will be organising a further event in the spring of 2023 and if you would like to be kept on our database for further contact and events or to nominate a colleague please email Helen.Oreilly@sefton.gov.uk.

You can view, download and share the strategy here [link](#). And in the meantime, we would like to share the Social Mobility Commission's brand new [State of the Nation report 2022: A fresh approach to social mobility](#) (publishing.service.gov.uk) – including Jordan Coulton from Bootle, featured on page 33.

Sefton Council 

Sefton
2030

A visual summary of the second child poverty event, which took place at the end of June 2023 and focused on priorities and actions under the Prospects theme.

