

Summary of Communications Plan for Child Poverty

July 2024

Introduction

Sefton's child poverty communications plan sets out how Sefton Council will communicate its work around childhood poverty in line with the aims set out in its Child Poverty Strategy. It is a high-level document which covers all key aspects of communications and sets out ambitions for delivery over a phased approach.

The plan covers the key areas of internal and external communications, brand management and promotion, campaign work, consistency, digital communications, stakeholder engagement, research and learning and will include a specific focus on the priority areas we have identified in phase one which will be the focus of our work for the next two years. This will include, education and schools' communications, culture and leisure communications, charity communications, healthcare and community and is summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1
Priority work areas identified as 'Phase 1'

Area of Work	Date
Education & Schools Children's NE Commissioned Programme	October 24 – October 26
Respiratory Programme	January 24 – March 26
Culture Services Children's NE Commissioned Programme	Sept 24
VCF Parenting 2000 & Living Well Sefton	April 24 - March 29
Corporate Training Team	TBC
Healthcare Social Prescribing	TBC
Recruitment of Advanced Practitioners – Social Determinants	July 24 Appointment due Jan 25
Creation of Steering Group to Tackle Child Poverty	September - December 24
Sound City Apprenticeships AW to insert date	Date

Context

In 2021 Sefton Council declared a poverty emergency and in December 2022 published its Child Poverty Strategy. Led by the Council's Public Health team, the Child Poverty Strategy was informed by a broad range of evidence including epidemiology, local insight, national surveys, examples of local child poverty strategies developed elsewhere and a discrete piece of local research, funded by the Cheshire and Merseyside Health and Care Partnership's Marmot Communities Programme. This funding was used to commission a qualitative insight study to capture the voices of individuals with first-hand and near experience of living in poverty.

Over the last two and a half years, three senior level conferences have now taken place and the recommendations from over three hundred delegates have been considered as opportunities to tackle child poverty. The Public Health Team have taken a whole system partnership approach with a focus on asset-based changes that can be initiated and driven by partners working at a local level. It is obvious that a clear and area specific communications plan is now required to support our internal and external communications.

The focus of the strategy crosses three core themes:

- **Pockets** – maximising the financial resources of families on low incomes.
- **Prospects** – improving the life chances of children in poverty.
- **Places** – creating connected, inclusive and distinctive environments where everyone can enjoy the good things in life.

The aims of the strategy are:

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

The Approach

The communications plan describes the consistent, organisation-wide approach the Council will take to tackling the causes and effects, immediate and long-term effects of growing up with poverty and how Sefton Council will communicate this work to a range of audiences. All communication related to Sefton Council's Child Poverty Strategy will have the objective of improving the prospects of children and young people in Sefton affected by poverty. It will build upon our research and understanding of these issues and our work with those people directly affected by them and the sharing of good practice and new ways of working that are shown to make a positive difference.

The plan outlines roles and responsibilities across the Corporate Communications Team, Council staff and partners and the Child Poverty Steering Group and makes clear the support and resource required to deliver the communications for the Child Poverty Strategy.

The plan emphasises that no one organisation can successfully implement the Strategy, therefore endorses the importance of different departments and organisations working together more effectively in key areas such as jobs, skills, housing and health. This work will be coordinated by recruitment of an Advanced Practitioner in Public Health and directed by a multi-agency partnership Child Poverty Steering Group. Communications and marketing, future priority setting, performance management and evaluation will be managed within this group and all liaison with Sefton's Corporate Communications Team will be coordinated through this route. Creation of a Steering Group with appropriate governance will ensure communications are coordinated and on message. The Steering Group will also be responsible to capture what has been delivered and achieved as a direct result of the Strategy and how it will act as an influencer and driver for change for doing things differently.

A strong brand will support additional resources funding and investment, recruitment and retention, as well as providing reassurance to staff and the wider community about the Council's commitment to tackle child poverty. Through this communications plan, we will outline the approach to raising the profile of child poverty and position Sefton as a local centre of learning and best practice, a nationally leading Council, and as a trusted voice that challenges child poverty both regionally and nationally.

We will work to ensure that all interactions with both the Council and our Sefton partners whether as resident, family member, visitor, stakeholder or staff member ensures child poverty remains central to our work through a focus on the different communication channels including printed materials, the Council environment, support information, the recruitment

process, digital media including the Council website, social media and staff intranet. We will work with teams across the borough to improve processes and outputs where possible through communications – for example, the recruitment and retention journey, resident communications, and the Council experience.

Evaluation

This plan will be supported by an additional phased and specific delivery plan which will specify the detailed approach to achieving the objectives and goals identified within this document. As an internal document, the delivery plan will be reviewed on a biannual basis to ensure it remains current and aligned with the changing landscape and needs of the Council. It will be measured against its objectives and qualitative and quantitative metrics.

Communications will be a standing item for the Steering Group and will include key metrics around external and internal communications, social media and digital as well as regular updates to Sefton Council's Executive Director, Health and Wellbeing Board and Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing.

It is recommended that these processes are continued, with additional evaluation metrics identified and reported on, dependent on further work around key objectives and deliverables.