



Knowsley Child Poverty Programme

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National Context

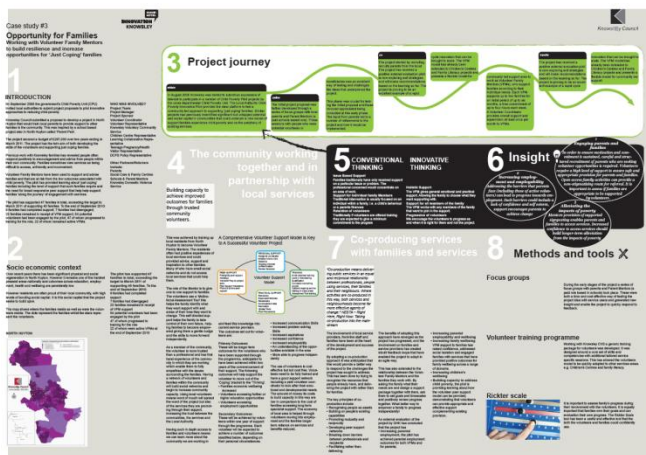
- 2008 - Ending child poverty: Everybody's business
- 2010 - Child Poverty Act
- Independent *Review on Poverty and Life Chances*
- Graham Allen Review of Early Intervention
- 2011 - Government child poverty strategy consultation and strategy



Regional & Local Context

- Liverpool City Region (LCR)
 - Knowsley lead authority for child poverty
 - LCR Needs Assessment and Strategy
 - Poverty Commission (Frank Field Chair)
- Knowsley Child Poverty Programme
 - Strategic approach to child poverty in Knowsley
 - £2m secured from government for pilot projects
 - Supported Frank Field review and development of life chances indicators
 - Local Needs Assessment and Strategy

Role of innovation



- Innovation Unit - innovation partner
- Projects tested ideas around:
 - Volunteering
 - Incentives
 - Outreach
 - Co-production
- Co-designing project with parents
- Scaling up good ideas





New insights: Ethnographic research

- Services needed to better understand families
- Add value to quantitative data
- Ethnographic research (ESRO)
- Revealed risk factors but also protective factors that are a source of resilience
- Research has
 - Supported project development
 - Challenged professional assumptions
 - Informed Needs Assessment





Knowsley Child Poverty Programme

Project	Purpose
Local Authority Innovation Pilot	Build family and community resilience by training local volunteers to work provide advice and support to other local families.
Child Development Grant	Extend the reach of children's centres in the community through incentives and new outreach practices.
2 Year Old Childcare Offer	Extended offer of childcare to support parents to enter the job market
School Gates	aims to increase employment and enterprise support for non-working parents in and around their children's school
Extended Services Disadvantaged Subsidy	helps schools provide activities for children and young people disadvantaged by economic circumstances
Family Nurse Partnership	Targeted support for young parents to improve health outcomes during early years
Child Poverty Family Intervention Project	Targeted and intensive support for chaotic families to increase employment, health and educational opportunities.

Learning has informed Child Poverty Needs Assessment and forthcoming strategy






Local Authority Innovation Pilot

- Volunteer Family Mentor project
- What did the VFM pilot consist of?
- What were the outcomes from the pilot?
- What have we learned?
- What is the pilot's legacy for Knowsley?






Knowsley's previous experience – Factors that influenced the VFM concept:

- Original concept based on experience of providing support/opportunities through e.g. Parent Mentor, Parent Support Worker roles, Parent Pals;
- Lack of confidence, low self-esteem, social isolation, low aspirations prevent many families from addressing consequences and causes of their poverty;
- Through provision of appropriate help and encouragement, a foundation of stability, confidence, self-esteem and resilience can be established for these families;
- This enables them to be supported to access the range of existing services and opportunities available to them;
- Families characterised above often respond better to the encouragement and advice of those in their communities than to 'professional' support;
- Support provided in this way can have major benefits for the 'supporter' as well as the 'supported'.



The model:

- Recruit volunteers from the community (including those who have benefitted from opportunities and support);
- Provide them with quality training and ongoing support to provide 1:1 mentoring to families to help them to begin to access opportunities and support;
- Match them with families referred to by local services/agencies;
- Mentors help families grow in confidence, self-esteem, aspirations – begin to access support and opportunities;
- Families eventually become empowered to continue their own development – support from mentor can be withdrawn.
- Project delivered by Project Manager and Volunteer Coordinator




Testing the model – Consultation with families and practitioners:

- Consultation events held with families and local front-line practitioners to ‘test’ the proposed model;
- Provided practical insights into how the project would be perceived by families e.g. the best way to initially engage with families;
- Opportunity to pre-empt potential issues e.g. Would the project replace existing roles?
- Gave local community and local services a sense of ownership of the project.



Outcomes of project - families:


- 40 families engaged - supported/receiving support (project target 20)
- Many families' self-assessments show significantly improved family relationships, confidence levels etc.
- 2 families have entered the employment market
- Parent from 1 family has started a vocational training course
- 2 families have become volunteers
- Parents from 6 families have started courses including parenting, literacy and numeracy
- 1 Parent gained her provisional driving licence
- 7 families helped to access support from another service – inc. Drug and Alcohol, parenting, FIP, Children's Centre, Adult mental Health



Volunteering has made me grow as a parent, if I hadn't had the support, I wouldn't be standing here now, I wouldn't be the same person. It's not just one person supporting you, or the centre manager; it's everyone across the board. I feel more confident. I've gone on to paid employment. I'll attain my level 3 NVQ. All of this is due to the voluntary work. Before I was buried within myself.'

Volunteer Family Mentor





Outcomes of the project – volunteers:

- 35 volunteers trained, 25 became Family Mentor Volunteers (project target 10);
- 36% have applied for jobs and had interviews
- 20% Volunteers have gained employment
- 24% are seeking a new career or career change
- All volunteers successfully completed intensive initial training and up to 12 additional training sessions
- 64% volunteers embarked on 2 Level 2 qualifications
- 1 volunteer has gone into higher education



Success factors – What have we learned from original hypothesis?

- Volunteers from the community *can* be engaged to undertake roles which demand high levels of training, high levels of responsibility
- Families *will* accept and welcome support from volunteers
- Support achieves *real positive outcomes* for families
- Process provides *real benefits* for volunteers
- Model is ‘low-cost, not no-cost’ – quality training and ongoing support/supervision is essential to success and safety;



Additional learning:

- Families with higher than expected levels of needs/problems have engaged with and been successfully supported through the project;
- Families valued holistic, non-specific support (as opposed to support focussed on a specific problem);
- Volunteers can be engaged in providing 'peer support' to other volunteers;
- Non-threatening 'self-assessment' ('Rickter Scale') used at the beginning of the support helps families identify their own needs and helps volunteers focus support;
- Estimated costs per volunteer £920 per year - expenses (travel, childcare) and accreditation;



External Evaluation

- GHK commissioned by Child Poverty Unit
- Qualitative and quantitative evaluation
- Project is:
 - Increasing parental employment
 - Increasing parental employability and wellbeing
 - Increasing family wellbeing
 - Increasing children's wellbeing
 - Building capacity to address child poverty
- Evaluating Social Return on Investment



The pilot's legacy for Knowsley:

Increased understanding:

- Engaging, training and supporting volunteers
- Providing support to families, including those with a high degree of need;

Volunteer Family Mentors:

- Team of trained volunteers currently working with families and supporting agencies and services.

The Model:

- Model of engaging, training and supervising/supporting volunteers that could be applied to other contexts/issues.
- Volunteers currently being developed to support: Children's Centres; parents' literacy; 'Ready for School'
- Other potential contexts/issues - Early language? Ongoing support for families after specialist interventions? Positive parenting advocates?



Thank you

- **Q&A?**

- **More Information**

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