

From innovation to improvisation: community budgets as a vehicle for tackling child poverty

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Islington's response to child poverty

- 2007 – Islington Strategic Partnership (ISP) co-sponsors the *Child Poverty Toolkit*, developed by Child Poverty Action Group and *Inclusion*
- 2008 – ISP includes child poverty target in LAA and agrees actions under the London Child Poverty Pledge
- 2009 – Islington Council becomes Child Poverty Innovation pilot site
- 2011 – Islington becomes Community Budget Pathfinder

2008 - 2011 : distance travelled

2008: What we were listening to:

- - Pink *So What*
- - Jason Mraz *I'm Yours*
- - Pussycat Dolls *When I Grow Up*

What we were reading:

- - Gregg *Realising potential: a vision for personalised conditionality and support*

What was happening to parents

- - Income support *No requirement to be available for work 'til youngest child was 16*

The new context

- Life chance indicators
- “it would be wrong to say that income is unimportant..” (DfE etc: *Tackling child poverty and improving life chances, 2011*)
- £18 billion cut to benefits bill from Budget and CSR
- Lone parents and ICB claimants transferring to JSA
- Housing Benefit – caps, cuts and penalties
- Community Budgets
- Work Programme
- Universal Credit – “lone parents will, on average, lose in the long run” (IFS: *Universal Credit: a preliminary analysis, 2011*)

Islington's child poverty crisis

- How useful is the 'poverty line' in Islington?
- Better or worse – visible trends
- Patterns of child poverty in Islington
- Work as the route out of poverty – visible risks
- What have we been doing about child poverty
- Next steps

What is the UK “poverty line”?

- Children in families below 60% of average income – (BHC)
 - Single parent, two children (5 & 14 years) **£293 a week**
 - Couple, two children (5 & 14 years) **£374 a week**
- Children in families below 60% of average income – (AHC)
 - Single parent, two children (5 & 14 years) **£247 a week**
 - Couple, two children (5 & 14 years) **£333 a week**

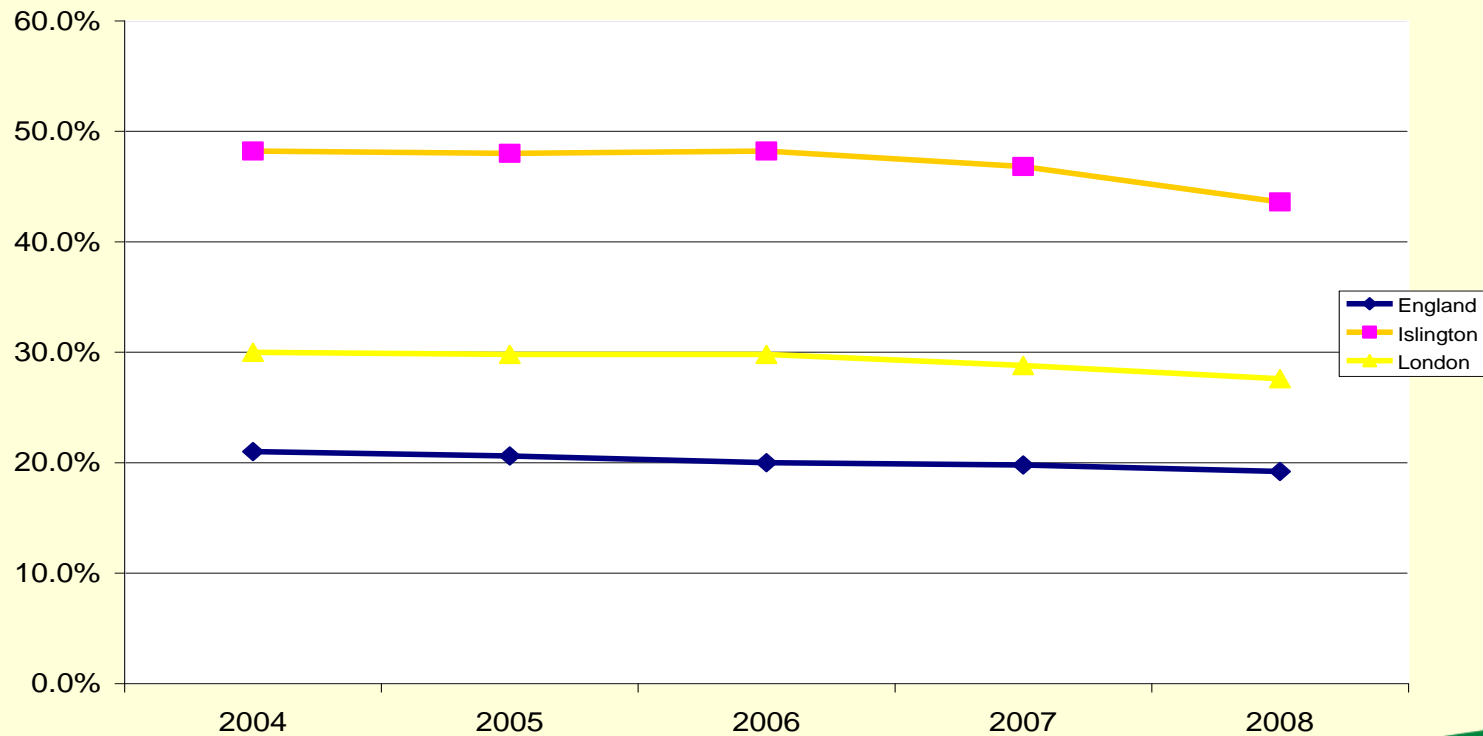
– Source: Households Below Average Income: 2008/9 (DWP, 2010)

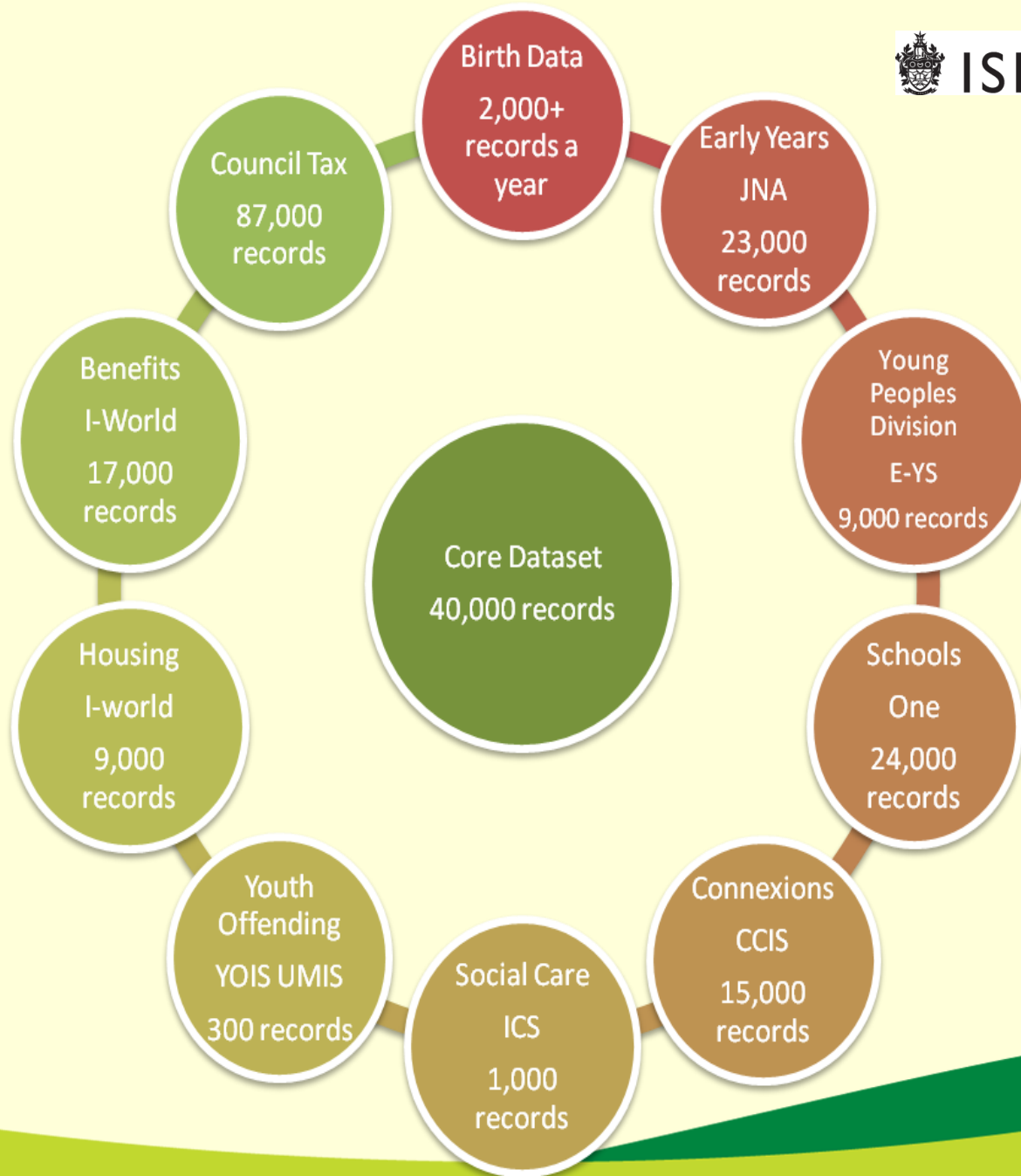
The reality of poverty in Islington

- **Single parent, two children (5 & 14 years)**
 - Income *before* housing costs: **£ 305.50 a week**
 - This is *62.5%* of average income (BHC)

 - Income after housing costs **£197.99 a week**
 - This is *43.7%* of average income (AHC)

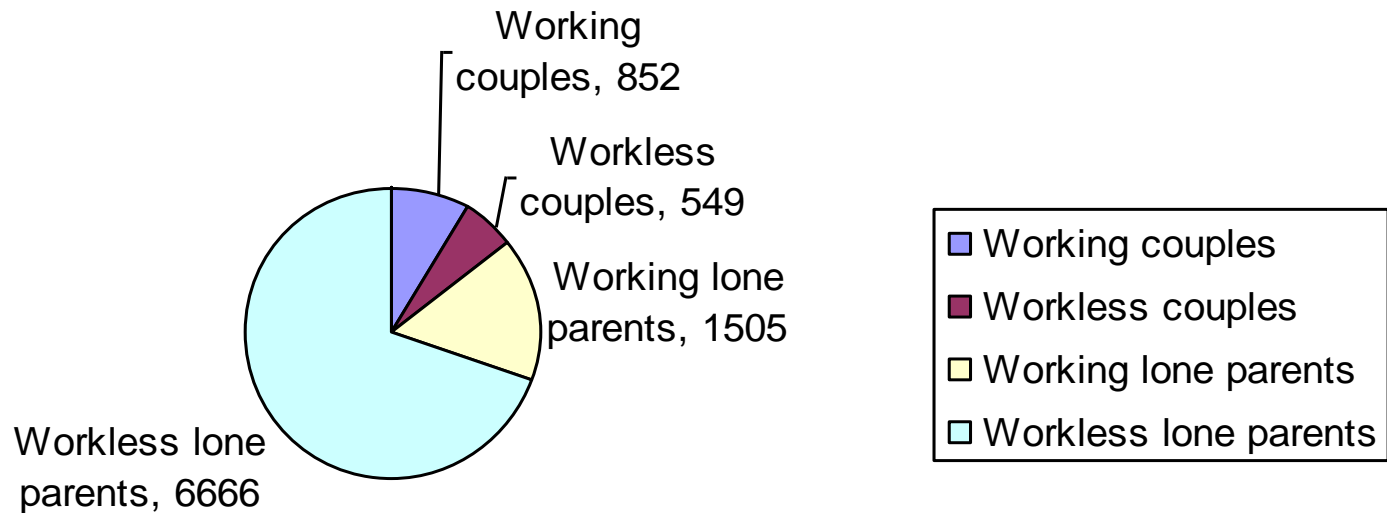
Is it getting better or worse: proportion of children in workless households 2004-08





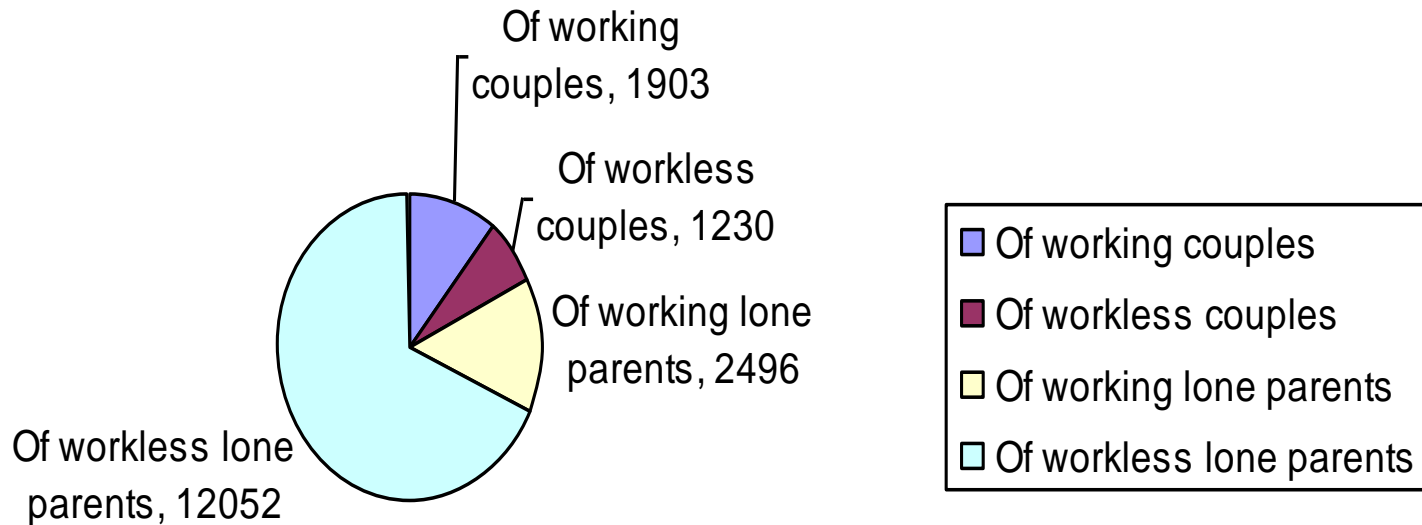
Patterns of child poverty in Islington: households

Islington: low income households



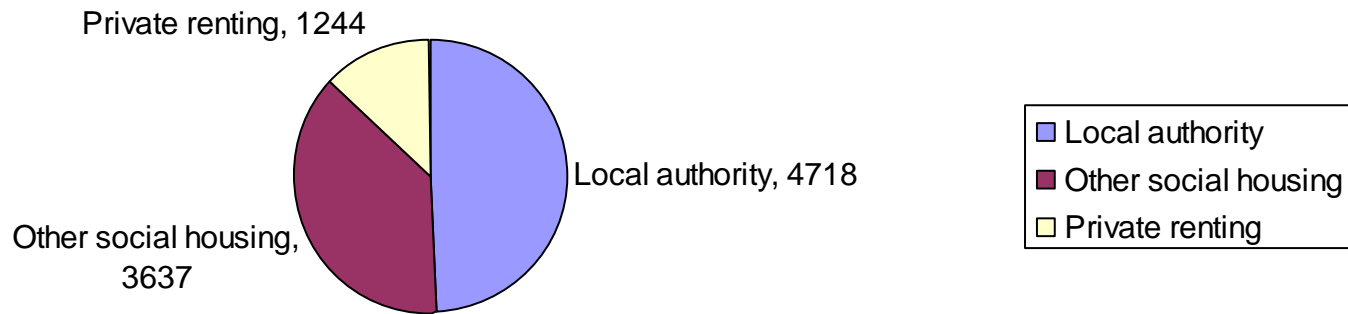
Patterns of child poverty in Islington: children

Islington: children in low income households



Patterns of child poverty in Islington: tenure

Islington: tenure of low income households



What have we been doing about child poverty?

Early intervention to support families in poverty

Learning from low income families

Multi-agency action to address multiple barriers

Employment is best route out of poverty

But:

Need to reduce the impact of existing poverty

Low paid 'starter jobs' are not enough

Sustained employment requires progression in work

Islington's approach to child poverty

- Islington Working for Parents targets parents of children 0 to 7
 - Outside mandated job seeking regime of JSA
- IWF offers core programme of employability support:
 - Benefit checks to reduce under-claiming and better-off calcs
 - Employment support pathway to move parents closer to work
 - Help to find child care
 - Help to improve skills and training

Employability plan

- Leads to personalised 6 month employment plan
- A way of tracking a parents' journey
- Easy to see progress
- Proven track record in other organisations (St. Mungo's, Camden)

The Outcomes Star (work) DRAFT not for circulation

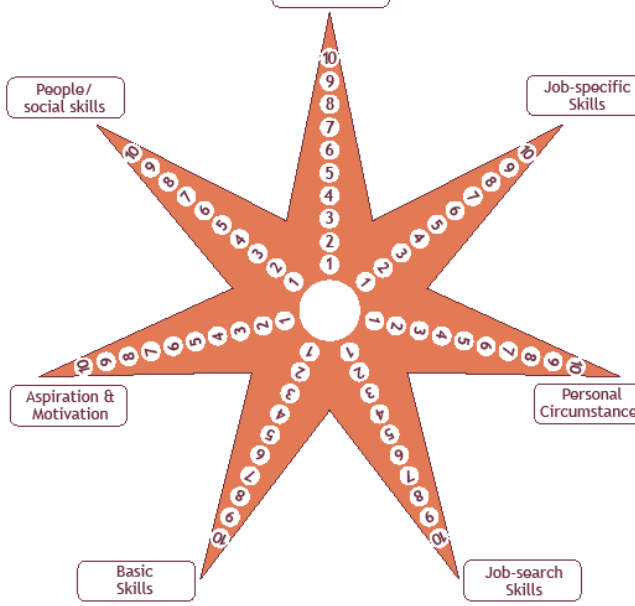
Star Chart and Action Plan

Client Client ID

Date of Completion assessment review retrospective

Date joined project Completed by: Worker and client
Worker alone
Client

Challenges



People/ social skills

Job-specific skills


Aspiration & Motivation

Personal Circumstances

Basic Skills

Job-search Skills

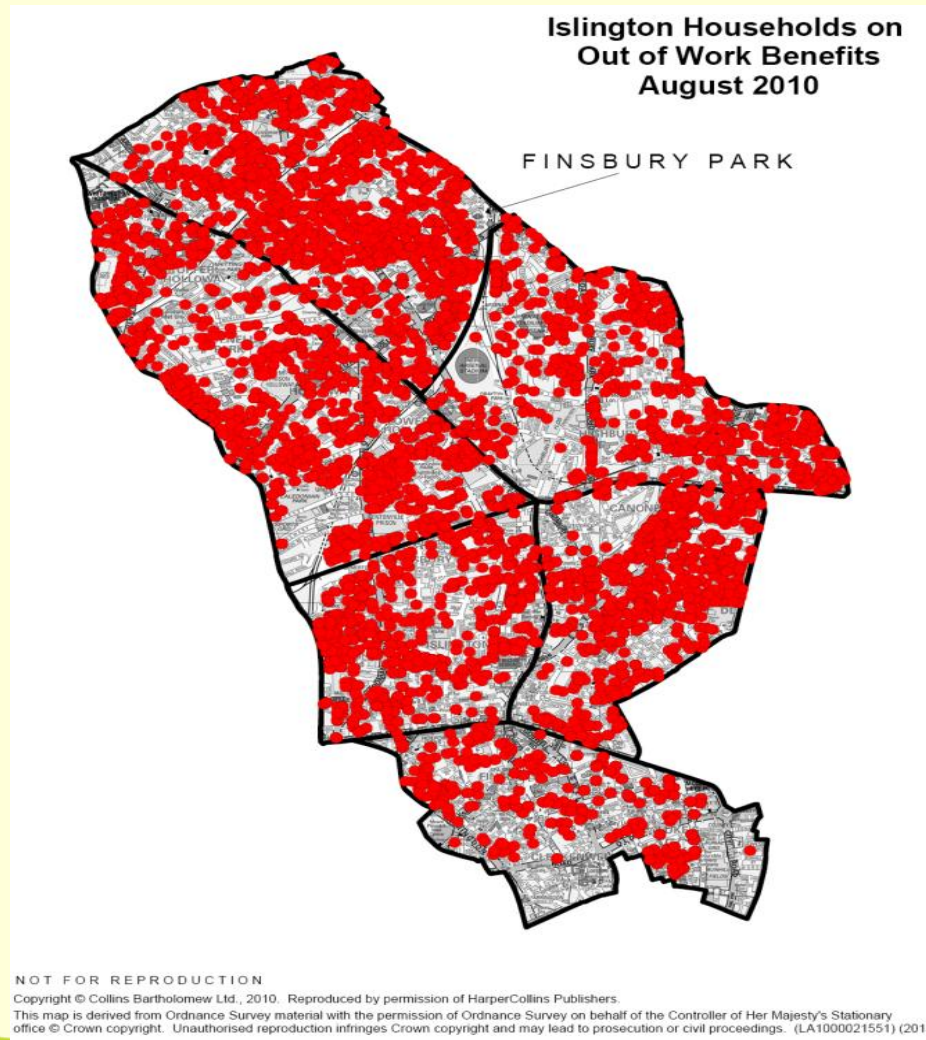
Client: I was involved in completing this Star Chart

 Outcomes Star (cc) Triangle Consulting

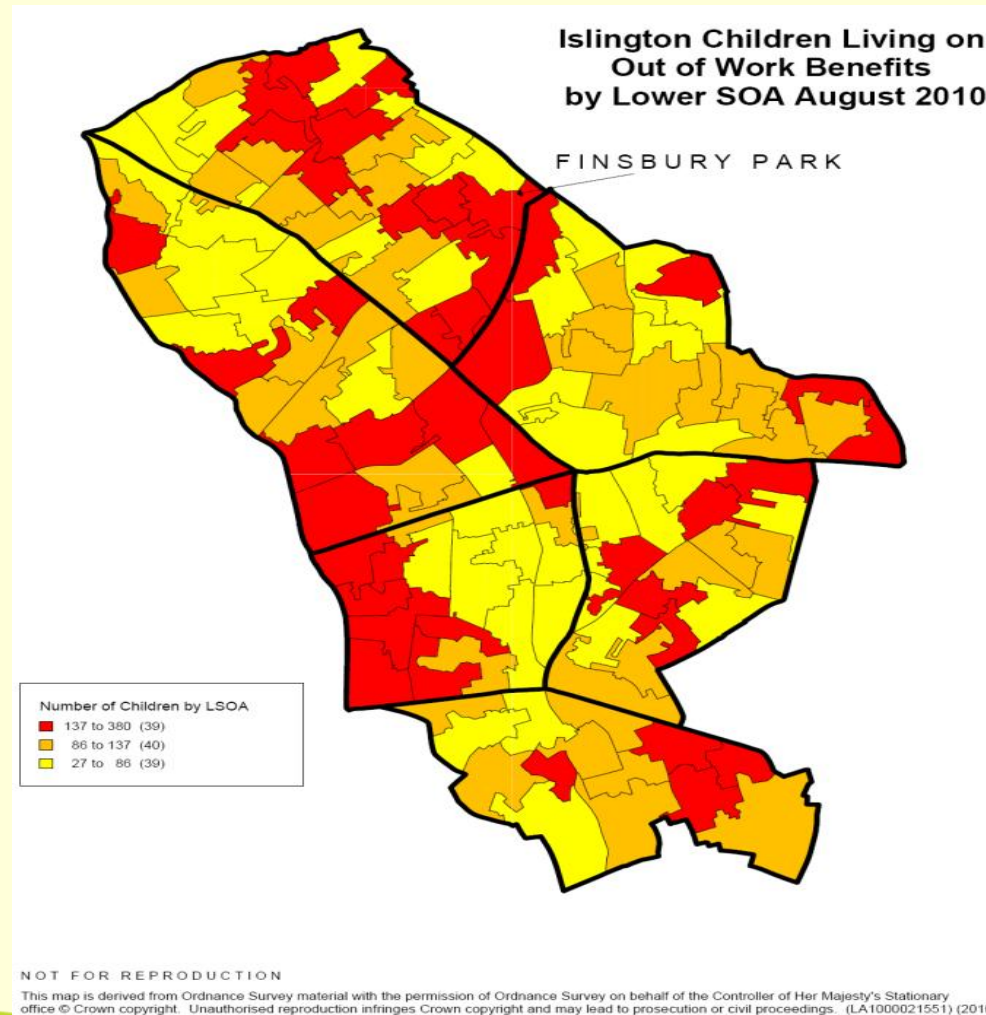
Islington's approach: better service integration

- Casework is not enough:
 - child poverty objectives embedded in public-facing frontline services
- Parents offer peer to peer advice
- All mainstream services need to address child poverty
 - Not just a Children's Services issue
- All Council services now have child poverty objectives
- Frontline staff trained to promote:
 - benefit checks – see how work can make you better off
 - Access to pre-employment support
 - Training in basic skills
 - Access to affordable child care

Distribution of households with children – out of work benefits



Density of children in households living on out of work benefits



Escaping poverty: lone parent with 2 children (5 & 14)

In or out of work	Weekly income (AHC) (IS or NMW)	%age of average income
Workless	£197.99	44%
16 hours – year 1	£319	78%
<i>16 hours – year 2</i>	<i>£259</i>	63.%
24 hours – year 1	£325	79%
<i>24 hours – year 2</i>	<i>£264</i>	64%
30 hours – year 1	£333	81%
<i>30 hours – year 2</i>	<i>£268</i>	65%

Impact of the HB savings on Islington - 2011

- LHA caps for new claims – c. 630 affected (530 by £30+ a week)
- LHA 30th percentile for new claims (existing claims 9 month transition) – c. 1310 affected
- LHA £15 excess removed – c. 1,870 affected
- Up-rating of non-dependent deductions by 27%

Impact of the other savings on Islington - 2011

- 12,240 ICB claimants reassessed – unclear how many will transfer to JSA
- 2,180 lone parents with youngest child 5+ transfer to JSA
- EMA abolished – 44% of Islington age cohort affected
- Tax Credit Deductions – working lone parents with two infant children to lose £30+ a week

Islington's next steps

- Community Budget pilot
- Multi agency support, including employment support, for families with complex needs
- Offer pre-employment and employment support by co-locating and co-designing support services with JCP, delivered in community settings
- Programme to mitigate the impact of the benefit cuts

Questions to be faced

- Beyond child poverty – what do we do for young people?
- How do we promote parental employment and make work pay?
- How can we increase affordable child care?
- How do we protect high-cost urban centres from becoming ‘no-go areas’ for claimants?

For more information

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