

# Tackling Child Poverty & Improving Life Chances

C4EO Excellence & Evidence Training  
Workshop  
Child Poverty Unit



Child Poverty Unit

HM Government

## What I want to cover today

1. The scale of the challenge
2. Commitment to goal of eradicating child poverty by 2020
3. The UK Government's policy direction
4. Local areas and innovation



# 1. The scale of the challenge

- 2.8m children are in relative poverty
- 1.2m of these live in workless and 1.6m in working households
- At 22 months, children who would qualify for Free School Meals (FSM) are 2.5 times more likely to fall short of the expected Foundation Stage standard than those who would not qualify for school meals
- Lowest achievers tend to be from disadvantaged groups: Black and Minority Ethnic groups, those with Special Educational Needs, those receiving FSM, and Looked After Children
- Children born to teenage mothers are 63 per cent more likely to live in poverty, and are themselves more likely to become teenage parents

# If we don't take action by 2020 the number of children in poverty is likely to rise by 3%

Where we are:	<b>22%</b>	= Percentage of UK children in households with Income below 60% of median income in 2008/9
Where we have come from:	<b>26%</b>	= percentage of UK children in households below the relative poverty line in 1998/9
Where we need to get to:	<b>&lt;10%</b>	The relative income target for 2020 is for less than 10% of children to be in poverty in 2020
Where we will be in 2020 without further action:	<b>25%</b>	Projected percentage of children in poverty in 2020, on current trajectory

## 2. The Coalition document maintained the goal of ending child poverty by 2020

**The Child Poverty Act sets out how government will be held accountable. It must:**

- Publish a **strategy** every three years to 2020
- **Consult** on the national strategy
- Publish the first strategy by March 2011, to cover the first 3 years up to 2014.
- Publish an **annual report**

# The act also sets out some local Duties which are already in force

## Local Authorities and partners to:

- **cooperate to address child poverty in their areas;**
- **prepare local child poverty needs assessments; and**
- **publish joint child poverty strategies for their local areas.**

### 3. The coalition Governments emphasis is on tackling the causes of poverty

Likely that the UK child poverty strategy will aim to:

- Make a real difference to equality of opportunity and for those in severe and persistent poverty
- Empower local delivery partners and their communities
- Build on the wider public sector reforms and ensure there are incentives to encourage personal responsibility
- Be deliverable and sustainable in the current fiscal climate

# The ambition to tackle intergenerational disadvantage is visible throughout Government thinking

## Independent reviews

Frank Field: Poverty and Life Chances

Graham Allen: Early Intervention

## Ministerial groups

Ministerial Group on Social Mobility

Social Justice Cabinet Committee, with Child Poverty sub-Committee

Children and Families Taskforce

## Recent or upcoming white or green papers

Welfare reform, public health, flexible working, Schools, social housing

# The introduction of Community Budgets is one of the ways the Government is showing its commitment to localism and giving areas tools to innovate

- **First phase implemented in 16 places from April 2011**
- **Initially focused on families with complex needs**
- **Will have ‘Champions’ from different Departments**
- **Potential to strengthen local child poverty strategies and encourage more integrated working**

## 4. The child poverty unit has run a suite of 9 pilots looking at innovative ways to tackle child poverty

The pilots have looked at new delivery methods to find better ways of working with families at risk of child poverty, they include joining up services and innovative community based approaches.

Emerging evidence suggests:

- Improved co-ordination of services and a more flexible and personalised approach has helped engage low-income parents previously not engaged
- Families can face a range of barriers in accessing provision and that, to address these barriers, family-based interventions are required
- Soft outcomes reported as being most prevalent for participants are: greater confidence; increased awareness of opportunities and options; access to job preparation skills and support

## Further contact and information

- **Register at the LGID community of practice (we will be ramping up activity on this site):**  
[www.communities.idea.gov.uk/reg/sp.do](http://www.communities.idea.gov.uk/reg/sp.do)
- **Sharing good practice**  
[www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/families/childpoverty/sharinggoodpractice](http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/families/childpoverty/sharinggoodpractice)