

Child Poverty

Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

North Somerset

**(Please see North Somerset Partnership Child Poverty Strategy,
'Pathways out of Poverty' [Pathways out of Poverty](#))**

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Introduction

Poverty damages. It damages childhoods; it damages life chances; and it damages us all in society¹.

Some children are at much greater risk of experiencing poverty than others².

- Single parent families
- Ethnicity
- Sickness and disability
- Large families
- Unemployment
- Underemployment
- Low wages

Why is Child Poverty important?

On average throughout the UK, nearly one in six (15.9%) children are classified as below the poverty line before housing costs, while one in four (25.1%) are in poverty once housing costs have been deducted from their income³.

Child poverty has been a major focus of political debate, in the UK in recent years. In 2010 the Child Poverty Act was passed, which created a target to reduce the proportion of children in poverty (according to the headline measure, based on relative household income) to just 10% by 2020–21 (plus targets for two additional measures of child poverty).

All local authorities were required by statutory duty to produce a child poverty strategy showing how they would work together with other agencies to ‘radically reduce child poverty’. In North Somerset, our Child Poverty Strategy, ‘Pathways out of Poverty’ was published in November 2011.

In October 2014, the Institute of Fiscal studies stated in their paper **Child poverty in Britain: recent trends and future prospects**

‘The fiscal and political climate has now changed significantly, and the 2020–21 targets look increasingly like a curious irrelevance. There is no serious prospect of them being met, or even got close to. The current coalition government is presumably aware of this, but has attempted neither to repeal the supposedly legally-binding Child Poverty Act nor to formulate a credible plan for moving towards the targets contained within it’⁴.

¹ CPAG website <http://www.cpag.org.uk/content/impact-poverty>

² Prof Tess Ridge Bath University Child Poverty and Social exclusion A child’s perspective

³ Child Poverty map of the UK End child poverty October 2014

⁴ Child poverty in Britain: recent trends and future prospects IFS Robert Joyce

National Current Trends

- Since the mid-2000s, the absolute living standards of poor families with children have stagnated or declined. Looking ahead, it is not clear what mechanisms could bring about the large additional reductions in child poverty that are in theory legally required under the Child Poverty Act.⁵
- As a direct result of tax and benefit decisions made since 2010, the Institute for Fiscal Studies project the number of children in relative poverty will have risen from 3.6m to 4.3 million by 2020
- Work does not provide a guaranteed route out of poverty in the UK. Two-thirds (64 per cent) of children growing up in poverty live in a family where at least one member works.
- Families experience poverty for many reasons, but its fundamental cause is not having enough money to cope with the circumstances in which they are living. A family might move into poverty because of a rise in living costs, a drop in earnings through job loss or benefit changes.
- Child poverty blights childhoods. Growing up in poverty means being cold, going hungry, not being able to join in activities with friends. For example, 60 per cent of families in the bottom income quintile would like, but cannot afford, to take their children on holiday for one week a year.

Section 1. Needs Analysis

Child poverty is an important issue for us to all focus on in North Somerset

'Pathways out of Poverty' shows that outcomes for the majority of North Somerset's children are good and that most children and young people benefit from a secure path into adulthood. However, despite this high quality environment, there is still a significant gap between the outcomes of children and young people who are poor and those who are not poor.

This picture is mirrored across the United Kingdom.

Education

- Children from poorer backgrounds lag at all stages of education.
- By the age of three, poorer children are estimated to be, on average, nine months behind children from more wealthy backgrounds.
- According to Department for Education statistics, by the end of primary school, pupils receiving free school meals are estimated to be almost three terms behind their more affluent peers.⁶
- By 14, this gap grows to over five terms.

⁵ IFS Child poverty in Britain: recent trends and future prospects

⁶ <http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000977/index.shtml>

- By 16, children receiving free school meals achieve 1.7 grades lower at GCSE.

Health

- Poverty is also associated with a higher risk of both illness and premature death.⁷
- Children born in the poorest areas of the UK weigh, on average, 200 grams less at birth than those born in the richest areas.
- Children from low income families are more likely to die at birth or in infancy than children born into richer families.
- They are more likely to suffer chronic illness during childhood or to have a disability.
- Poorer health over the course of a lifetime has an impact on life expectancy: professionals live, on average, 8 years longer than unskilled workers.


Communities

- Children living in poverty are almost twice as likely to live in bad housing. This has significant effects on both their physical and mental health, as well as educational achievement.⁸
- Fuel poverty also affects children detrimentally as they grow up. A recent report showed the fuel gap has increased from was £256 in 2004 to £402 in 2009, and that low income families do sometimes have to make a choice between food and heating.⁹
- Children from low income families often forgo events that most of us would take for granted. They miss school trips; can't invite friends round for tea; and can't afford a one-week holiday away from home.
- While studies show that there are more play areas in deprived areas, their quality is generally poorer. Vandalism, playground misuse and danger of injury all act as deterrents to using what otherwise might be good facilities.

What are the needs of the local population?

Public Health outcomes Framework - Child Poverty data

The table below shows child poverty data as of 2013. The green dot means that child poverty is lower overall in North Somerset than in other local authorities across the country.


Indicator ¹⁰	Period	N Somerset		Region England		England		
		Count	Value	Value	Value	Worst/Lowest	Range	Best/Highest
1.01i - Children in poverty (all	2013	5,700	13.1%	14.2%	18.0%	35.5%		5.9%

⁷ See, for example, <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/subnational-health4/life-expec-at-birth-ag...>

⁸ <http://image.guardian.co.uk/sys-files/Society/documents/2006/11/28/Again...>

⁹ J Hills, *Fuel Poverty: The Problem and Its Measurement*, Interim Report of the Fuel Poverty Review, CASE Report 69 2011

¹⁰ Percentage of all dependent children (living in households where income is less than 60% of median household income before housing costs)

Indicator ¹⁰	Period	N Somerset		Region England		England		
		Count	Value	Value	Value	Worst/ Lowest	Range	Best/ Highest
dependent children under 20)								
1.01ii - Children in poverty (under 16s)	2013	5,055	13.6%	14.8%	18.6%	34.4%		6.1%

However, to understand the picture of child poverty in North Somerset, it is very important to look behind this overall figure at the breakdown of child poverty data in smaller areas within the authority

End Child Poverty area Maps 2014

The Campaign to End Child Poverty published figures¹¹ (October 2014) that provide a child poverty map of the whole of the UK. The figures are broken down by parliamentary constituency, local authority and ward. These figures update the End Child Poverty maps that were published in March 2011 and used in North Somerset's Child Poverty strategy

The figures in the report reveal the wide disparity in poverty rates across the UK, between regions and striking variations even within regions. The table below shows the number of children living in poverty in each ward across North Somerset, before and after Housing costs. It shows us that:

- There is a wide disparity in child poverty rates across our wards.
- There are particular areas where child poverty is a significant issue.
- In four wards more than one quarter of children are living in poverty
- In areas of significant affluence, pockets of children are living there in poverty. (We know that there are particular issues for children who are poor and live in affluent areas)

¹¹ Child Poverty maps of the uk Oct 2014
http://www.endchildpoverty.org.uk/images/ecp/Report_on_child_poverty_map_2014.pdf

ONS code	Percentage of children in poverty, Oct-Dec 2013	BEFORE HOUSING COSTS	AFTER HOUSING COSTS
	Local Authority and wards		
	National	15.9%	25.1%
E06000024	North Somerset	11.85%	19.03%
E05002007	Backwell	6.22%	10.14%
E05002008	Banwell and Winscombe	11.67%	18.74%
E05002009	Blagdon and Churchill	7.93%	12.77%
E05002010	Clevedon Central	11.58%	18.56%
E05002011	Clevedon East	12.34%	19.64%
E05002012	Clevedon North	5.45%	8.86%
E05002013	Clevedon South	9.27%	14.77%
E05002014	Clevedon Walton	3.46%	5.69%
E05002015	Clevedon West	4.03%	6.69%
E05002016	Clevedon Yeo	10.99%	17.62%
E05002017	Congresbury	11.99%	19.49%
E05002018	Easton-in-Gordano	0.36%	0.60%
E05002019	Gordano	4.49%	7.41%
E05002020	Hutton and Locking	12.05%	19.21%
E05002021	Kewstoke	5.13%	8.42%
E05002022	Nailsea East	5.70%	9.26%
E05002023	Nailsea North and West	8.22%	13.32%
E05002024	Pill	14.21%	22.52%
E05002025	Portishead Central	9.02%	14.50%
E05002026	Portishead Coast	7.04%	11.34%
E05002027	Portishead East	7.72%	12.55%
E05002028	Portishead Redcliffe Bay	0.83%	1.38%
E05002029	Portishead South and North Weston	10.38%	16.62%
E05002030	Portishead West	8.25%	13.46%
E05002031	Weston-super-Mare Central	23.58%	36.35%
E05002032	Weston-super-Mare Clarence and Uphill	9.81%	15.96%
E05002033	Weston-super-Mare East	18.45%	28.57%
E05002034	Weston-super-Mare Milton and Old Worle	9.86%	15.98%
E05002035	Weston-super-Mare North Worle	10.50%	16.97%
E05002036	Weston-super-Mare South	24.07%	37.99%
E05002037	Weston-super-Mare South Worle	15.35%	24.48%
E05002038	Weston-super-Mare West	20.96%	32.03%
E05002039	Winford	8.37%	13.52%
E05002040	Wraxall and Long Ashton	6.13%	10.02%
E05002041	Wrington	10.96%	17.32%
E05002042	Yatton	8.05%	13.07%

Inequality

North Somerset is an economically diverse area with areas of extreme affluence and considerable deprivation and is more likely to experience wider inequalities than areas with more similar populations. When our Child poverty strategy was published

in November 2011, North Somerset had the 7th largest range of inequality of all the 326 local authorities in England.

‘The IMD2015 deprivation scores show North Somerset has the 3rd largest range of scores in the country’

The English Indices of Deprivation

This data was released in September 2015, updating the previously published 2010 indices. This data, although not just focused on children, further demonstrates the need for us to look at regional differences in North Somerset to understand child poverty in North Somerset.

The IMD compares around 32,800 small areas of approximately 1,500 people (called Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs)) across England. These LSOAs are then ranked to give a relative position vis-a-vis all other areas across England.

The North Somerset area is divided into 135 LSOAs.

It is important to note the following key messages from this data set.

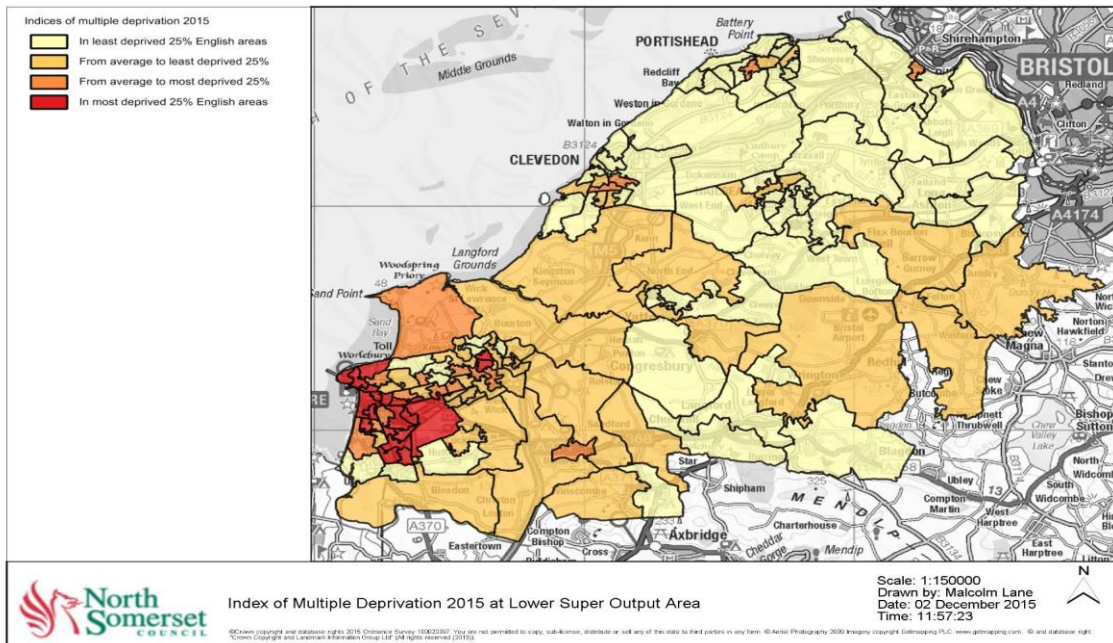
- North Somerset Council ranked as the 121st most deprived district out of 326 districts.
- North Somerset was the district with the 3rd highest inequality, as measured by the range in national ranking between the most and least deprived LSOAs in the district.
- North Somerset had 5 LSOAs within the most deprived 5% in England, all within South or Central wards of Weston-super-Mare.
- There were 11 LSOAs within the least deprived 5% in England and these were spread across the district.
- The more relatively deprived LSOAs in IMD 2010 had generally become more relatively deprived and these were located in Weston-super-Mare.
- The IMD gives an aggregated overview of deprivation and sometimes misses pockets of deprivation within affluent areas

And note that:

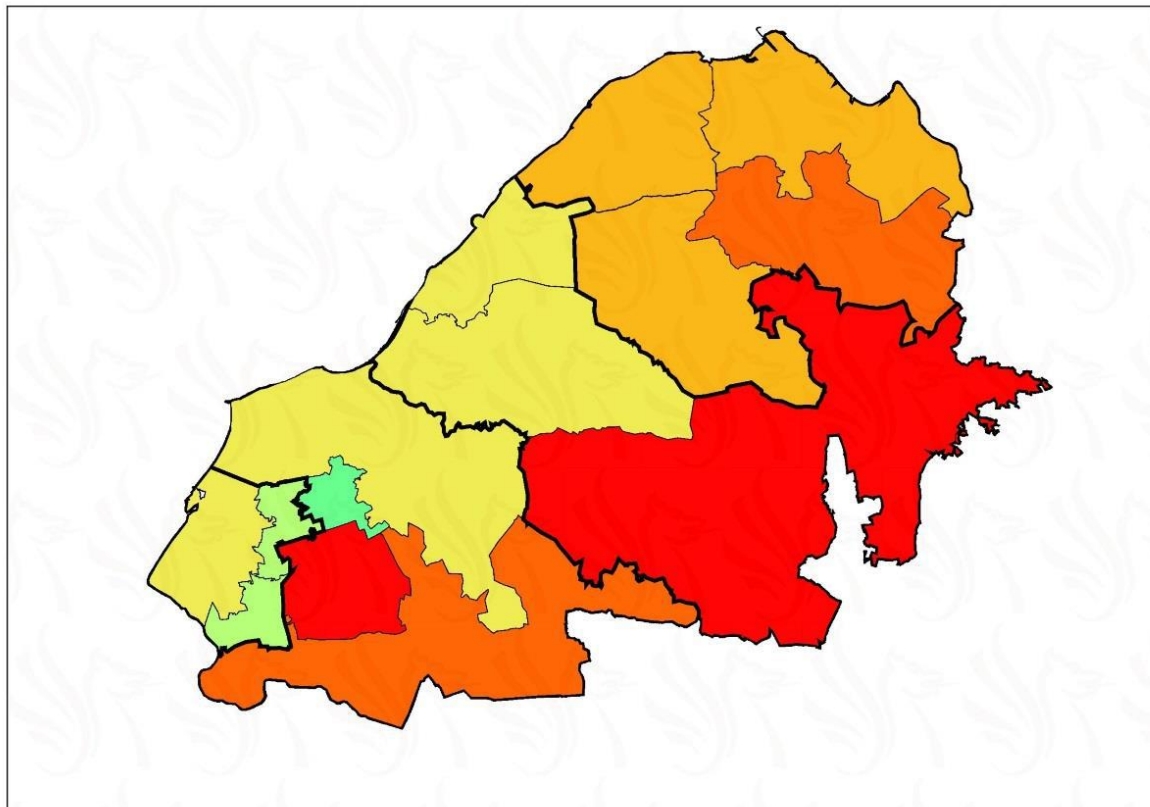
- Deprivation indices are relative to the rest of England, not absolute.
- The indices are a measure of relative deprivation, not affluence.
- The index of multiple deprivation is different from poverty, which is focussed on the availability of financial resources.
- IMD 2015 used data from 2012/13.
- The indicators used in IMD 2015 are very similar to those used in IMD 2010, but there are some differences, making comparisons approximate.

The report also shows an income related indices directed specifically at children. North Somerset’s ranking of the proportion of LSOA in the most deprived 10% nationally was - Income deprivation affecting children index – 117th

DEPRIVATION AT A LOCAL LEVEL – IMD MAP AND MAPS OF EACH DOMAIN OF DEPRIVATION



The map below shows the strand of the IMD that looks at ‘barriers to access of services’ Although the concentration level of poverty is not as high, Those in the Central and North will face greater barriers when accessing services due to the rurality aspect



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How Poverty affects Children and Young Peoples Outcomes in North Somerset

Education

Over the last few years, schools have received Pupil Premium funding with the purpose of raising the attainment of disadvantaged pupils of all abilities to reach their potential.

It is difficult to map trends to see if the attainment gap is shrinking or growing over the last few years. The way Pupil Premium funding has been allocated and attainment results collated and published have been slightly different each year.

For example, when the child poverty strategy was published in 2011, data on education outcomes reported on pupils who were currently eligible for free school meals. Since then, children and young people are identified as being eligible for pupil premium funding if they have been entitled to free school meals in the last **six** years.

Published education outcomes are now published together with children who are also regarded as 'disadvantaged'. Disadvantaged pupils also includes children who are looked after by the local authority, service children and children who have been adopted from care.

This data however, does show us very clearly that there is a significant issue in the different educational outcomes for young people who are 'disadvantaged' including by poverty and young people who are not.

The attainment gap at KS4 between disadvantaged children and those not recognised as disadvantaged was higher than the national average in 2015.

Disadvantaged pupils shown below includes: Deprivation premium, Children Looked After premium, Adopted from care premium and Service children premium

	% achieving GCSEs A* - C in GCSE Incl. E & M			
	All Pupils	Disadvantaged Pupils	other pupils	Pupil Premium gap
LA average	58.8	32.8	65.1	32.3
National	57.3	36.8	65.1	28.3

Health

The effects of deprivation on health can be seen in the current gap in life expectancy between the most affluent 10% and the most deprived 10% in North Somerset which is 9 years for men and 6.5 for women. This is amongst the largest gap in England. Inequalities are persistent and trends suggests the gap in life expectancy has shown little change since 2002.

Further examples of differing outcomes between groups can be found within the JSNA [INSERT LINK](#)

Early Years

Children's Centres data pack (2015) includes a breakdown of a range of data affecting children aged 0 – 5.

Section 2 - Current Strategies, Services and Community Voice

In North Somerset, our Child Poverty strategy 'Pathways out of Poverty' was published in November 2011. It recognised that due to changes in national policy, and a significant reduction in local authority income, reducing child poverty would not be easy. However, it welcomed the duty placed on us to work together with partners to support children living in poverty. All partners made a commitment to concentrate on practical steps that help mitigate the effect poverty can have on children. And to do all they could to prevent poor children from becoming poor adults

Understanding the experience of poverty in childhood¹²

The experience of childhood poverty can be difficult to capture. Children's concerns are different to those felt by adults. Without a good understanding of childhood poverty from a child's perspective, policies may fail.

All children should have access to learning opportunities that set them up for successful lives, yet, growing up in poverty has severe adverse outcomes for many children. Poverty affects all areas of children's lives - at home, in their neighbourhoods and at school in many different ways:

- Economic and material
- social relationships and participation
- neighbourhoods/schools
- welfare/public services
- children's personal wellbeing

Social aspects are most important for children. Growing up in poverty can severely compromise children's ability to participate with their friends. Childhood is increasingly commodified and there is a growing trend towards leisure consumption. In addition to this, activities at school and after school can be costly and excluding. We all know that learning doesn't stop at half past three, and that what happens outside the classroom has a significant impact on what goes on inside it.

Statistics inform but do not always enlighten

Listening to children can give an insight into their everyday experience of poverty and is essential when developing policy and practice to support children living in poverty

¹² Prof Tess Ridge Bath University Child Poverty and Social exclusion A child's perspective

Lewis: *'I couldn't do nothing on the weekends, just stayed in, couldn't go out with my friends and go to the shop or anything like that, so bit boring'*

Nicole: *'You can't do as much and I don't like my clothes and that. So I don't really get to do much or do stuff like my friends are doing... I'm worried about what people think of me, like they think I am sad or something'*

Karen: *'when we went to school and teachers would say that we needed this and it would cost so much money. Well I'd sit there and think - well hang on - have we got enough for that? But I didn't want to say anything to the teachers because then I'd feel embarrassed. So I kept it to myself really'*

Ashia: *'I don't like asking for money to go on school trips because, sometimes I feel, like, we struggling to come up with the money to go on school trips'*

Children worry about school

The quotes above from children in Professor Tess Ridge's research on 'child poverty and social exclusion' give us a glimpse into how poverty impacts on children's learning and participation. Children spend a lot of time at school. It should be a safe haven but many children who are poor report feeling excluded 'within' school. Children worry about the following.

- **Feeling excluded 'within' school** for example, if you can't afford private music lessons the school orchestra might not be an option open to you
- **Unable to get appropriate school uniforms** – It is important to young people that they 'fit in'. Clothes really matter to them.
- **Lacking books and materials to participate fully in lessons** – Children can 'forget' their ingredients for cooking, because they know their family can't afford to buy the ingredients. Many children will avoid telling their parents about the things they need for school.
- **Scared about bullying and stigma** – we know many children do not take up their offer of a free school meal for this reason
- **Unable to access extracurricular activities which help make learning meaningful and fun** – there are many reasons for this. If parents are unable to help with lifts, pay additional fees, buy the right kit etc etc. Also the 'first come first served' approach used in schools is not helpful for children who are poor'
- **Problematic welfare delivery** –. This will impact on children and their ability to participate fully in school and learning in numerous ways

Children also worry about transport

Transport is a key issue for many children not just low-income children. Children depend on adults for their transportation needs. In poor households transport is a scarce resource and adults in turn will often depend on public transport to meet these needs. Particularly in rural areas, public transport is decreasing in availability and flexibility due to reductions in Local Authority support and the cost of alternatives – such as taxis - is prohibitive. Access to safe and affordable transport for children affects many areas of children's lives: leisure/friendships/family/reciprocity/autonomy

Poverty amidst affluence can be particularly problematic for children. It can lead to

- Hidden needs
- Heightened stigma and isolation
- Stigmatising welfare support
- Diminished capacity for social reciprocity
- Costly social participation and lack of access to affordable opportunities
- Lack of infrastructure to identify needs

The challenge for local areas The recent assessment of the latest **draft Child Poverty Strategy by the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission (2014)** – an independent body created by the Child Poverty Act to hold the government to account – is instructive: They say in their report:

“[The strategy] falls far short of what is needed. Key problems include:

- *The lack of any clear measures, with the Government continuing to distance itself from the statutory measures in the Child Poverty Act 2010 without suggesting any additions or alternatives... a strategy which cannot be measured is meaningless...*
- *The absence of a step-by-step plan for meeting the statutory targets, with the strategy presenting a list of policies rather than a detailed plan with impacts clearly delineated. 21 HM Government, 2012.*
- *A failure to engage with independent projections [produced by the present author and colleagues] that poverty is set to increase substantially. This leaves a credibility gap at the heart of the strategy.”¹³*

However, we know through the work we have done through our Child Poverty strategy that children who are poor are at risk of poor outcomes. It is vital we continue to do all we can to understand both the impact of poverty on children and also the experience of children who are poor.

Child Poverty is everyone’s business and it is important that we continue to consider children and the effect of poverty in all of our local policies

Section 3: Key issues

What might children be doing during times of austerity?¹⁴

- Experiencing increased anxiety about money and security
- Moderating their needs - especially girls
- Reducing social participation
- Experiencing stigma humiliation and shame
- Going without or hiding change

¹³ IFS Child poverty in Britain: recent trends and future prospects

¹⁴ ProfTess Ridge Bath University, Presentation to Elmbridge District Council

- Leaving school earlier
- Losing confidence in the job market
- Taking the role of mediator in families

Policy insights from child research

- Instability in employment problematic for children
- Children protect their parents from poverty
- Stress and poor parental health are highly damaging
- Small interventions can make big differences
- Children are very aware of stigma
- Money matters – small increases can make a difference
- School important setting for making a difference – but also for reproduction of inequalities
- Poverty for most children is very localised experience
- Housing neighbourhoods, schools, services and transport are all important

Key policy issues from a child's perspective:

- Social investment policies - understanding the importance of childhood
- Children are active not passive
- Understanding how policies may intentionally and unintentionally impact upon children
- A focus on families may obscure children
- A focus on children may ignore children's roles within families

For further information on child poverty in North Somerset, please see its [Child Poverty Strategy Pathways out of Poverty](#) (Insert link)