

Report Author: Jacqueline Laughton, Assistant Chief Executive

Responsible Leads: Vicki Nixon, Head of Communities & Inclusion
Jill Harland, Public Health Consultant, Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
Gary Charlton, Deputy Director Commissioning and Corporate Development, North Tyneside ICB

Relevant Partnership Board: Poverty Intervention Partnership Board

1. Purpose: Equally Well: Ensure and Healthy Standard of Living for All Progress Update:

This item relates to Ensuring a Healthy Standard of Living for All theme of the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, "Equally Well: A healthier, fairer future for North Tyneside 2021- 2025".

As outlined in Equally Well this means that we want a fair economy that works for and includes everyone where the benefits of the economy are spread, so that all communities in North Tyneside flourish and grow equally.

2. Recommendation(s):

The Board is recommended to: -

- Note the progress in delivering the Ensure a Healthy Standard of Living for All theme by the Poverty Intervention Partnership Board
- Discuss the progress and approach to food insecurity in North Tyneside as set out in the separate presentation.

3. Progress update: Healthy Standard of Living for All

Evidence shows that insufficient income is associated with worse outcomes across virtually all domains, including long-term health and life expectancy. Living on a low income is associated with a greater risk of limiting illness and poor mental health including maternal depression. Children who live in poverty are more likely to be born early and small, suffer chronic diseases such as asthma, and face greater risk of mortality in early and later life.

As digital connections become a key requirement of the future economy, it is important to focus on digital technology as a key element of an inclusive economy.

The Poverty Intervention Partnership Board is responsible for the leadership and governance of this theme. Highlights of achievements against actions in the implementation plan for 2023/24 include:

- 3.1 The Poverty Intervention Partnership Board has increased its membership and meets quarterly to review actions. Recent developments include four working groups looking to address: food insecurity, transport issues, school-based support, and fuel poverty. Each group is accountable to the Poverty Intervention Partnership Board.

A Poverty Intervention Network has been introduced to support a wider discussion with organisations across North Tyneside and has grown in strength. Both the Board and the Network deliver on the six pillars of support:

3.1.1 *Food insecurity*

A food strategy for North Tyneside is currently in development which includes a focussed strand on food insecurity. Actions include activities to support the development of affordable food provision within communities across North Tyneside which address lack of access, skills, and equipment to make nutritious food in those local areas which have been identified as at considerable risk of food insecurity.

A network of affordable food clubs, pantries and community shops are developing across North Tyneside which are focussed on making nutritious food accessible in local communities. This includes the Bread-and-Butter Thing, delivering food to up to 480 residents across 6 locations weekly. The hubs run in Whitley Bay, Collingwood Ward, Shiremoor, Longbenton, Howdon and Fordley with support from VCSE organisations and schools locally.

The Warm Welcome Programmes within VCSE locations over the winter will have a food focus with up to 10 venues delivering community cooking as part of the offer. Open access to a warm safe space for residents will become the basis of other wraparound services including equipment and skills to prepare nutritious meals at home.

The Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programme has continued to support children and young people eligible for income related free school meals to have access to meals and different activities delivered through a broad range of voluntary and community sector partners across the borough. During summer 2023, match funding of £46,000 expanded the reach of HAF to allow more children to access the programme from low-income households who would have been otherwise ineligible. In total, over £500,000 funding was given to VCSE organisations to deliver activities within the community ensuring that 2048 children got the opportunity to take part in the summer programme.

Supermarket vouchers have continued to be provided to families on income related free school meals for all school holidays at a rate of £15 per week per child.

Healthy Start Scheme vouchers for pregnant women and children under 4 in eligible low-income families have continued to be delivered. Through the Trust, the Best Start in Life service discuss Healthy Start vouchers with all women and support them to apply/access if needed (this is included in pathway). Midwives also discuss the scheme at the booking appointment, and we routinely promote the scheme via maternity social media platforms. This is covered more widely in the Best Start in Life implementation plan.

Presentation and discussion on expanding the support in relation to food insecurity and the development of the food strategy to follow at this meeting.

3.1.2 Fuel poverty support

Warm Welcomes originally launched winter 2022/2023 to support residents with a warm, safe space in community settings, to ease anxiety around fuel costs, health issues related to cold weather and sign posting opportunity for additional support. The Warm Welcomes continued to run over the spring/summer and were also extended to offer after school activities in 10 local schools up to July, including offering food.

Warm Welcomes are not means-tested and are available for all residents.

From November 2023 there are 29 organisations (of those 3 are funded as part of the Community Cooking Grant to extend their warm welcome provision and offer cooking programmes) delivering Warm Welcomes. Included in this number are 9 schools delivering family cooking programmes. Community and

Family Hubs are also offering Warm Welcomes ensuring that residents can make best use of council buildings through the autumn/winter period. Care and Connect Navigators are offering advice and guidance at community hubs and will also be out and about visiting VCS organisations. In total there will be 86 Warm Welcome sessions each week, offering activities such as cooking, community meals, board games, movie nights, support groups, parent, and toddler sessions. All sessions can be found on the cost of living webpages here <https://my.northtyneside.gov.uk/category/1655/support-all-residents-including-low-income-households>

3.1.3 Clothing costs

We have increased the number of schools which have been supported to develop their uniform policies to encourage more recycling and swapping, with 19 schools now on board. A list of schools including those involved in these schemes are available on the cost-of-living pages on the North Tyneside website. In addition, school staff told us that they want to learn more about what opportunities there are out there to help families. To support this work, we held our first Uniform Summit in March 2023 to share good practice between schools.

3.1.4 Support for household bills

A trial of FSM auto enrolment in summer 2023 identified 17 pupils who were entitled but not already in receipt of free school meals. This exercise confirms that because of previous work by the Student Support team in the Employment and Skills Service, extensive communications with parents and carers including promoting FSM vouchers and the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme and work undertaken by schools to encourage take up of FSM we had already achieved almost 100% FSM entitlement in North Tyneside.

3.1.5 Financial crisis or emergency

Support for residents by delivering projects with essentials such as food, energy and clothing has been delivered using the Household Support Fund. Plans have been developed to use the HSF to support the priorities identified in the borough. These include an amount for welfare provision to operate an application-based offer based on estimated demand.

Additional funding has been given to the food bank to help address the rising level of referrals at a time where they have seen a decrease in donations. The Bay Foodbank have also been supported with officer time to develop their

marketing and communications to help increase their reach to potential donors. Within these projects we have given special consideration to carers which has been raised as a specific group of residents who may be struggling financially at the current time

3.1.6 *Other forms of support*

The **Digital Inclusion strategy** was signed off by the Poverty Intervention Board in 2023. The strategy highlights that residents identified the need for a coordinated support offer across North Tyneside. To include self-help and peer support, basic frontline assistance within the community, complemented by detailed one-to-one support.

Poverty Proofing the School Day is a programme designed to identify barriers faced by children living in poverty when engaging with school life and help alleviate these. As of May 2023, 34 schools in North Tyneside have completed this process. The support around schools has continued and contributes toward projects funded through the North of Tyne Combined Authority Child Poverty Prevention Programme.

Additionally, the Trust have worked with the Children North East charity to pilot a poverty proofing audit within two services: Child and Adolescent Mental Health and Speech and Language Therapy Service. This supports our commitment to addressing health inequalities, inclusive, accessible services and is helping us to identify actions we need to take to reduce the financial burden on of healthcare on low-income households.

As part of a broader programme of work to understand and **address barriers to access healthcare**, Northumbria Healthcare Foundation Trust have implemented a quality improvement project to understand and address transport and travel barriers to access healthcare appointments. Actions include, improved and co-designed communications about help and support available to patients with travel costs and longer-term needs.

As an anchor institution Northumbria HealthCare Trust has made a formal commitment through its '**Community Promise**' to support action around five key pillars:

- Education
- Employment
- Economy
- Environment
- Inequalities

Linked to this programme we have undertaken a needs assessment of financial wellbeing of our staff which has informed actions within the integrated staff health and wellbeing delivery plan. These include increasing membership of Northumbria Community Bank – currently 1030. Access to financial, legal and welfare advice via a pilot with LegaCare and Citizens Advice Bureau. Financial wellbeing clinics and the development of a cost-of-living information and signposting section within our staff health and wellbeing portal. A proactive approach is taken to recruiting apprentices from areas of deprivation, currently 35% up from 20% in 2021. We have a widening participation offer and have engaged with 73 career events and schools to promote career opportunities in the Trust.

3.2 *Communication plan*

The Trust has an objective to expand the number of staff trained in MECC to embed MECC across the Trust. The MECC training in the Trust aims to help all staff use their routine contacts with patients, colleagues, and the community to raise awareness, motivate and signpost people to help them improve their health and wellbeing (including financial wellbeing).

The regional MECC Gateway website can be used by staff as a signposting tool to support MECC conversations. This includes information on a full range of self-care, national and local, support services, so provides an important opportunity to promote services available within North Tyneside [MECC | Home \(meccgateway.co.uk\)](https://meccgateway.co.uk). In the past 12 months, we have 64 new train the trainers, 944 staff have completed core MECC training, which is in addition to the 1200 staff who had previously been trained. We are also seeking to be able to record when MECC conversations have occurred within clinical noting.

Working with NTC Comms team to continually update the space on the council website to signpost residents who need support during the cost-of-living crisis. <https://my.northtyneside.gov.uk/category/1652/cost-living-support>. These pages have been replicated in the autumn/winter resident's magazine as well as through the Warm Welcome hubs. The pages highlight the support available from the Council, advice, and signposting to other relevant organisations. This includes help for families and individuals, whether you're working or not. The rising cost of living, and the support to help to deal with it, is changing quickly. We regularly review and update these pages to reflect this and to make sure help is always available to those who need it. The support is categorised into support for families, older people, all residents, including low-income households and businesses.

4. Performance indicators

The indicators in the Healthy Standard of Living for All Implementation Plan which the Poverty Intervention Partnership Board will monitor are as follows.

Across out most disadvantaged communities we will see:

a) Reduction of number of children in poverty

Equally Well - Healthy Standard of Living for All | Relative Low Income Families



Definition of Relative Low-Income Families

Percentage of children (<16) in a local area, living in relative low-income families.

Relative low income is defined as a family in low income Before Housing Costs (BHC) in the reference year. A family must have claimed one or more of Universal Credit, Tax Credits or Housing Benefit at any point in the year to be classed as low income in these statistics.

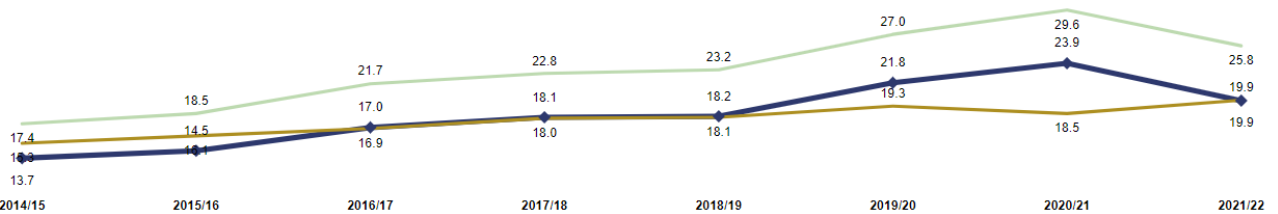
Relative low income sets a threshold as 60% of the UK average (median) income and moves each year as average income changes. It is used to measure the number and proportion of individuals who have income below this threshold.

The percentage of individuals in relative low income will decrease if:

- Average (median) income stays the same or rises, and individuals with lower incomes see their incomes rise more than the average, or
- Average (median) incomes fall, and individuals with lower incomes see their incomes fall less than average incomes.

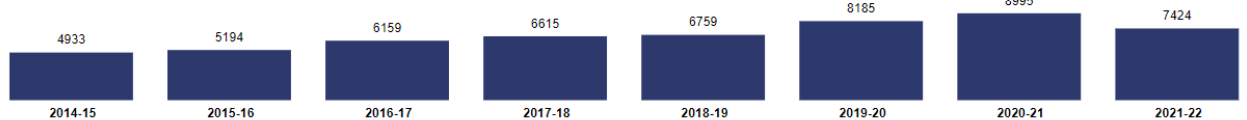
Percent of Children in relative low income families (under 16s)

Area Name ◆ North Tyneside ● North East region ● England



Number of Children in relative low income families

● North Tyneside



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Equally Well - Healthy Standard of Living for All | Absolute Low-Income Families



Definition of Absolute Low-Income Families

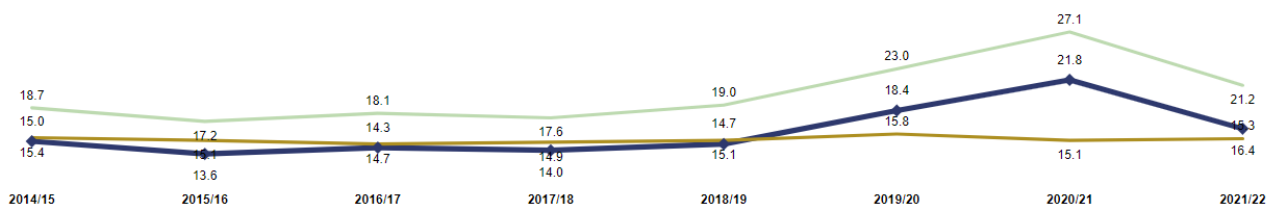
Percentage of children (<16) in a local area, living in absolute low-income families.

Absolute low income is defined as a family in low income Before Housing Costs (BHC) in the reference year in comparison with incomes in 2010/11. A family must have claimed one or more of Universal Credit, Tax Credits or Housing Benefit at any point in the year to be classed as low income in these statistics.

Absolute low income takes the 60 per cent of median income threshold from 2010/11 and then fixes this in real terms (i.e., the line moves with inflation). This is designed to assess how low incomes are faring with reference to inflation. It measures the number and proportion of individuals who have incomes below this threshold. The percentage of individuals in absolute low income will decrease if individuals with lower incomes see their incomes rise by more than inflation.

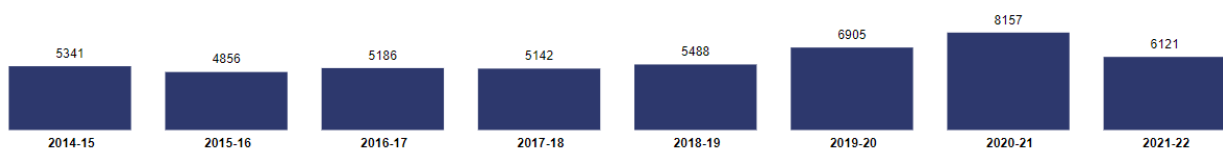
Percent of Children in absolute low income families (under 16s)

◆ North Tyneside ● North East region ● England



Number of Children in absolute low income families in North Tyneside

● North Tyneside



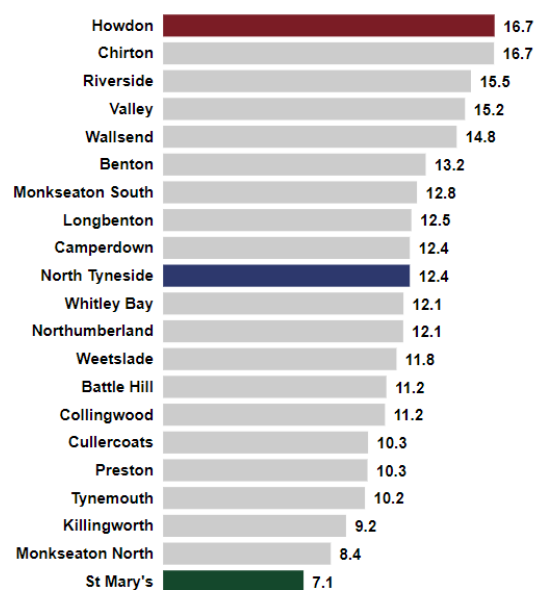
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b) Fuel poverty for high fuel cost households (%)

Equally Well - Healthy Standard of Living for All | Fuel Poverty

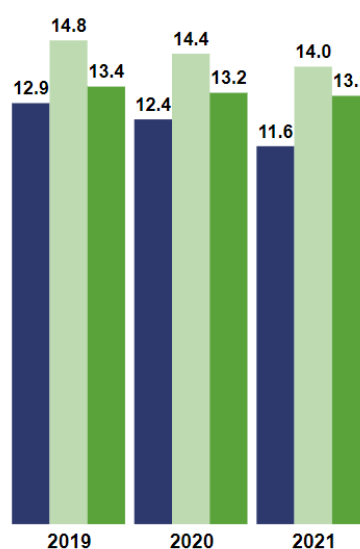


Modelled estimates of the proportion of households in fuel poverty (%)



Percentage of Households that Experience Fuel Poverty (low income, low energy efficiency methodology)

● North Tyneside ● North East region ● England



Definition of Fuel Poverty (Low income, low energy efficiency methodology)

Under the "Low Income Low Energy Efficiency" measure, a household is considered to be fuel poor if:

- it is living in a property with an energy efficiency rating of band D, E, F or G as determined by the most up-to-date Fuel Poverty Energy Efficiency Rating (FPEER) methodology

AND

- its disposable income (after housing costs and energy needs) would be below the poverty line

There are 3 important elements in determining whether a household is fuel poor:

- household income
- household energy requirements
- fuel prices

More detailed information on the methodology used to model fuel poverty rates is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fuel-poverty-sub-regional-methodology-and-documentation>

Produced by Policy Performance and Research

c) Reduction in the number of residents experiencing digital exclusion.

Research carried out by Northumbria and Newcastle Universities, which involved sending a survey to every household in North Tyneside asking about their digital usage and capabilities. This local approach has helped us better understand the issues, rather than making assumptions based on national and regional indicators. Overall, the research identified 12.3 per cent of respondents as digitally excluded. This means they have either no digital confidence, a lack of skills and/ or access, or they are not using any digital technology.

It also identified that people are more likely to be digitally excluded the older they are, with over 94 per cent of digitally excluded residents in North Tyneside aged over 60 years. But this is not the only characteristic. Digital exclusion can also be greater for:

- females
- those with lower educational achievement
- those on lower incomes
- those living with a disability or live in a household with someone with a disability.
- people in smaller households
- people not in work

d) As of October 2023, the number of people accessing The Bread-and-Butter Thing was 3471.

5. Contact officers:

Jacqueline Laughton, Assistant Chief Executive
Vicki Nixon, Head of Communities & Inclusion

COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING

6 Finance and other resources

The Healthy Standard of Living for all themes will be supported by delivery of projects funded through the Household Support Fund and the Poverty Intervention Fund.

7 Legal

The Board has a duty under Section 195 of the Health & Social Care Act 2012 to encourage partners to work closely together and in an integrated manner for the purpose of advancing the health and wellbeing of the people in the area.

8 Consultation/community engagement

The creation of the Poverty Intervention Partnership Network means that we continue conversations with organisations supporting residents ensuring that we are addressing the needs of the borough.

At the State of the Area Conference 2022 workshops were delivered on the cost-of-living crisis and how we support our residents. The findings from this event further shaped the work of the Poverty Intervention Partnership Board.

9 Human rights

There are no human rights implications directly arising from this report.

10 Equalities and diversity

There are no equalities and diversity implications directly arising from this report. The work undertaken by the Poverty Intervention Board specifically looks at socio economic factors as well as addressing specific needs identified by those residents with protected characteristics.

11 Risk management

Any risks identified can be managed following the Council and partners' existing risk processes.

12 Crime and disorder

There are no crime and disorder implications directly arising from this report.

SIGN OFF

Chair/Deputy Chair of the Board

Director of Public Health

Interim Director of Children's Services

Interim Director of Adult Services

Director of Healthwatch North Tyneside

Integrated Care Board Director of Place

Director of Resources

Monitoring Officer