

**Motion to:** Council

24 September 2024

**Subject:** Child Poverty

**Proposer:** Councillor Giles

**Seconder:** Councillor Padda

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It was one of the key achievements of the last Labour Government to lift more than 1 million children out of poverty. Official DWP figures released in March estimate there are 4.3 million children in the UK living in relative low income poverty after housing costs, an increase of over 60% on the number when Labour last left office in 2010. A Joseph Rowntree Foundation Report in October last year highlighted over 1 million children experienced destitution in 2022-23, triple the number in 2017. This is a shocking indictment of the previous Conservative Government's record on child poverty.

This Labour-led administration welcomes:

- The new Labour Government's fifth mission, "to break down the barriers to opportunity, for every child at every stage and shatter the class ceiling...and make Britain one of the fairest countries in the OECD". The new Labour Government's Mission Plan includes a commitment to reduce child poverty.
- The first steps the new Labour Government has set out in the King's Speech towards tackling child poverty. Free breakfast clubs in every primary school. Raising family incomes by introducing a Real Living Wage reflecting the cost-of-living. Enhancing families' financial security through a New Deal for Working People, and protecting families privately renting from arbitrary Section 21 evictions.
- The creation and scope of a cross-departmental Government Child Poverty Taskforce to produce a national Child Poverty Strategy.
- The decision as a short-term measure to extend the Household Support Fund for a further six months

This council notes that:

- 1) One of the key priorities in our Community-led Plan is a "Fairer Norwich".
- 2) Our published Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy includes a strong commitment to tackle broader socio-economic inequalities beyond the scope of those protected characteristics we currently have legal obligations towards.

- 3) The Norwich Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023-2025 prioritises tackling the broader socio-economic determinants of health and reducing health inequalities. As such social and economic wellbeing forms one of three strategic themes, with key workstreams on social mobility and food equity.
- 4) Norwich City Council unanimously passed a motion (Item 12(e)) in January 2024 calling on the then Government to end the two child benefit cap.
- 5) Norwich City Council unanimously passed a separate motion (Item 12(f)) in January 2024 resolving to call on the Government, among other resolutions: to end holiday hunger through permanent provision of free school meals in school holidays; and as a short-term measure in advance of more holistic solutions, provide an adequate level of Discretionary Housing Payment funding to ensure local authorities can support all Housing Benefit and Universal Credit claimants struggling to pay their rent throughout the entire financial year.
- 6) Norwich City Council passed a third motion in January 2024 asking the City Council to, among other resolutions, collate and produce a report on the poverty premium in Norwich City Council, and commit to monitoring Norwich's Poverty Premium through future annual Equality Information Reports

This council **RESOLVES** to:

- 1) Work constructively with the Government and its Child Poverty Taskforce, our local MPs, and local partner agencies in achieving the Government's Mission in Norwich to reduce child poverty by delivering the "Fairer Norwich" strand of our Community-led Plan.
- 2) Use the forthcoming procured report from the Norfolk Office of Data Analytics revising Norwich's Reducing Inequality Target Areas as a key holistic evidence base for working with partners on place-based interventions to reduce child poverty.
- 3) Ensure the combating of child poverty is a key priority in the emerging Norwich Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan and the emerging Norwich Financial Inclusion Action Plan, and continues to be a key priority following a refresh of the Norwich Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- 4) Continue to fund a Financial Inclusion Consortium of advice and advocacy agencies in Norwich.
- 5) Continue to provide a maximum 100% Council Tax Reduction Scheme.
- 6) Monitor the impact of the poverty premium on families in Norwich through our annual Equality Information Reports, commencing in the 2025-26 EIR.
- 7) Thank City Council officers across service areas and partner agencies for the continued work to support families to mitigate against child poverty.
- 8) Call on the Government's Child Poverty Taskforce to ensure the Local Government Association is a key partner in producing and delivering a national Child Poverty Strategy.

- 9) Call on the Government to ensure that district-level Health and Wellbeing Partnerships receive an adequate level of public health funding to continue funding place-based interventions to combat the broader socio-economic determinants of ill health upstream, including child poverty.
- 10) Call on the Government to work with the Local Government Association on policies to combat poverty premiums facing families as part of the Government's commitment to produce a national Financial Inclusion Strategy.