



**Redcar & Cleveland's
Child Poverty Mission:**

**Start life well,
live well and age well.**



this is Redcar and Cleveland

The evidence is clear: your early years can set the foundation for the rest of your life. Growing up in a safe, stable, and prosperous environment gives a child every chance of thriving and fulfilling their dreams.

In Redcar and Cleveland there is much to be proud of and much to be optimistic about – but the level of child poverty is holding us back. This means that some of our children are going without food and clothing, and families are struggling to earn enough to cover their bills. The long-term impact is poorer health, lower educational attainment, and higher likelihood of not being in employment, education or training. This is therefore not just a moral imperative but an economic one; if we address this issue, we can boost productivity and unlock growth.

We must act now to seek to reduce and mitigate the impact of poverty and improve the life prospects of our children now and in the future.

Child poverty is a complex and multi-faceted matter, one which is not easily or quickly solved. What is clear, though, is that in order to make a difference, the Council, schools, public sector partners, the voluntary sector, businesses and others must come together as one community.



Some statistics

As there is no single measure of poverty, quantifying the extent is not straightforward. There are a number of measures, such as those set out, which give a good indication of the current position.



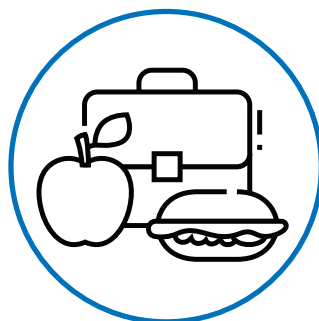
Households below average income (HBAI) data

In Redcar and Cleveland, 35.4% of children are living in relative poverty after housing costs, nationally this is 29%



In-work poverty

In 2021/22, 63% of children in poverty in the Redcar parliamentary constituency were from working households. 65% Middlesbrough South & East Cleveland



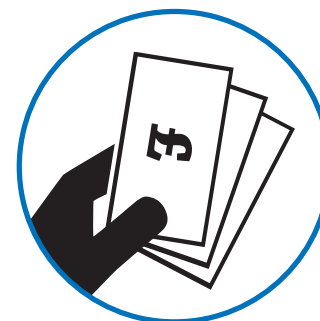
Free school meals rate

30.2% of children in Redcar and Cleveland are known to be eligible for means-tested free school meals, across England this is 23.8%



Universal Credit

Around 11,060 children in Redcar and Cleveland are living in households in receipt of Universal Credit, both in and out of work



Wage

The average weekly wage in Redcar and Cleveland is £568, nationally this is £642



Unemployment

8.2% of 18 to 24 year olds in Redcar and Cleveland are in receipt of unemployment benefit, compared to 4.9% nationally



What are we going to do about it?

The overwhelming majority of policy levers to address this issue are national ones – public service investment, minimum wage levels and the strengthening of the social security safety net – but this is not an excuse for our council not to act. It is our job to work with partners to pull together a plan which enables the children of the borough to start life well, live well and then age well. We propose to do this by developing a strategy and action plan which will focus on a number of areas including:

1) Practical local interventions which will help people now

A lot of good work is going on already to help people. It is important that we build on what we know works in order that we can best help and support people in the future. This includes helping people to get a hot meal by working with schools and food banks, helping with life skills, helping to access health and leisure activities, providing employability support, as well as financial support, advice and guidance. We will build on this work, with a focus on making sure that people are receiving the support they are entitled to – like free school meals or council tax support.

2) Learning by listening to children and families with real life experience

We can't make a difference to people's lives by sitting in a boardroom away from the people that know best. At the heart of the work to seek to reduce and mitigate the impact of child poverty will be speaking with and acting on feedback from the people who are living through the challenges that we are seeking to address.

3) Seizing opportunities for a better future

Redcar and Cleveland is well-positioned to be at the heart of an economic renaissance, with the potential for thousands of new green jobs, bringing prosperity and social value to the borough. It is vital that a collective effort is made to prepare young people for and connect parents with the well-paid careers that will make such a difference to their life.



4) Getting everyone on the same page

We all want the best life for our children; it is however the case that individuals and organisations don't always know how they can help to reduce child poverty. It is also the case that work is sometimes done in isolation. An important part of this work will be coming together as one team, rallying around our shared mission and sharing our expertise to develop a clear, widely-owned plan with our collective resources.

5) Supporting the vulnerable

Children grow up in a variety of households and circumstances which on occasion requires some extra help. The link with poverty, the number of children requiring care, and future prospects is clear. It will be vital to connect those that are most vulnerable with the help and support which is available.

6) Lobbying and advocacy

Working together, local interventions can help children and families; however there are factors beyond local control which require considered, evidenced lobbying and advocacy. This will mean calling on leaders including central government, the Tees Valley Combined Authority, and the private sector to improve incomes and address child poverty.



How can you help?

Reducing and mitigating the impact of poverty will not be a short-term fix, however if more of us are working in the same direction we can make a bigger difference faster. If you feel that you can support our efforts to reduce and mitigate the impact of child poverty, by supporting the development of our plan of action please get involved by emailing:

consultation@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

