Sutton Child Poverty Needs Assessment

February 2015
## Contents

Executive Summary & Areas for consideration ............................................................................. 3  
Introduction .................................................................................................................................. 6 
Understanding Poverty .................................................................................................................... 6 
Sutton Poverty Profile .................................................................................................................... 8 
Children at higher risk of poverty ................................................................................................ 15 
Drivers of Child Poverty ................................................................................................................. 24  
  Parental Employment .................................................................................................................. 24 
  Low-income and material deprivation ....................................................................................... 28 
  Housing & Homelessness ......................................................................................................... 30 
Impact of Child Poverty ................................................................................................................ 32 
Services to address Child Poverty ................................................................................................. 37  
  Parental Employment ................................................................................................................ 37 
  Low income & material deprivation ......................................................................................... 39 
  Housing & Homelessness ....................................................................................................... 44 
  Children and Young People education & employment ............................................................. 44 
Appendix ....................................................................................................................................... 48 
  Appendix Item One – Benefit Uptake in Sutton ............................................................... 48 
  Appendix Item Two – Children’s Centres locations ............................................................. 49
Executive Summary & Areas for consideration

In the United Kingdom it is estimated that more than one in four (27%) children live in poverty, with levels expected to continue to rise to an estimated 4.7 million children by 2020.\(^1\) London has much higher levels than the national average, with an estimated four in ten children living in poverty.\(^2\)

End Child Poverty have identified that within Sutton 20.13% of children are living in poverty after housing costs. Compared to the other London Boroughs, Sutton has one of the lowest levels of child poverty, with only Richmond upon Thames less.

Despite the overall comparatively low levels, there are significant variations within the borough at ward level. Those wards with the highest levels of child poverty have the greatest prevalence of the key drivers of child poverty and also groups at higher risk of child poverty. These are St Helier, Wandle Valley in the north of the Borough, and also Beddington South, in the south east corner.

**Deprivation in Sutton**

Levels of deprivation are closely linked to child poverty. The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) and Index of Deprivation affecting children index (IDACI) data revealed that there could be pockets of deprivation in the wards where there were relatively low levels of child poverty, with these areas tending to be on the periphery of the borough. For example, the IMD data identified that there was an area in the Carshalton South & Clockhouse ward with relatively high levels of deprivation, but the ward itself had relatively low levels of child poverty.

The Council should seek to understand more about the experiences of children and families living in the periphery of the borough, particularly in regards to the services that can be accessed and the issues that may impact on accessing services, such as public transport.

**High risk groups at Risk of Poverty**

The needs assessment has identified that all of the high risk groups (children in households affected by disability, lone parent families, large families, teenage mothers, black and minority ethnic groups, workless and low-income households, poor fluency in English and asylum seeking families) can be found in the borough. The prevalence and location of these groups varied across the borough, for example in Beddington South 27% of children were living in low-income households, compared to only 5.6%%% in Cheam.

On the whole the areas with the greater percentage of the high risk groups tended to follow the distribution of the poverty levels, with a higher percentage of the at risk groups being in the areas with the higher levels of poverty and / or deprivation.

---


There were however anomalies to this trend. For example, Nonsuch Ward, which has 11.6% of children living in poverty (the second lowest in the borough), had relatively high levels of teenage conception rates, with a rate of 31.49 per 1,000 females aged under 18, compared to the borough average of 25.8 per 1,000 females under 18 years.

The needs assessment was unable to identify the number of Asylum Seeking families that were housed in the borough due to the limited information available at borough and ward level. It is important for the borough to have an understanding of this population as they are at increased risk of poverty due to the lower level of benefits they receive.

**Drivers of child poverty**

The analysis has identified that, to some degree, all the key drivers (ill health & disability, unaffordable childcare, welfare reform, debt, low-benefit uptake, unaffordable housing and poor housing) of child poverty are present within the borough of Sutton.

The needs assessment however has revealed some interesting findings that are of particular interest in helping to understand the levels of child poverty in the borough. These are detailed below:

- Many parents may not be able to return to work after having a child due to the high costs of childcare. The Childcare Sufficient Assessment found the average cost of childcare is £5.49 per hour for a nursery place, which is only slightly below the current national minimum wage for an over 21 year old (£6.50).

- Some families, particularly in the north and central parts of the borough, may possibly be more likely to experience prolonged poverty as a result of a higher percentage of adults having no qualifications. With no qualifications it could mean that these adults face greater barriers in progressing their employment opportunities and increasing their income.

The Council could look to explore how / if they could help to secure more affordable childcare for those families on a low-income, while also looking to increase uptake and participation from childcare providers of the free childcare entitlements.

**Impact of child poverty**

Unfortunately many of the impacts of child poverty are not measureable, such as levels of self-esteem, social isolation and poor family relationships. However there are some impacts which are measureable, such as low-birth weight babies, child obesity, education attainment and the number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs).

One of the key areas in which children are being impacted by child poverty is through educational attainment, which as a result impacts future employment opportunities. The percentage of children that achieve 5 GCSEs A*-C (including Maths, English, Science) is lower in those who are eligible for free school meals (47.7%), compared to their non-eligible peers (83.7%). This large disparity in achievement suggests that poverty is severely limiting the educational attainment and future employment prospects of children living in poverty.
With regard to low birth weight babies, in 2012, 2.9% of live births were below 5.5 pounds. Although this figure only accounts for a small proportion of live births, it is slightly higher than the average for England (2.8%) and many of the neighbouring boroughs, including Merton, Richmond-upon-Thames and Kingston-upon-Thames. As low-birth weight babies are associated with higher levels of deprivation and poverty, it would have been expected for Sutton to have a lower percentage of low-birth weight babies.

This could be of particular importance as low-birth weight babies are strongly linked to maternal health, which could suggest Sutton has poorer levels of maternal health compared to the neighbouring boroughs.

Services to address poverty

The service provided by the Children’s Centres could be considered one of the key services that are aimed directly at working with the parents and children to decrease the impacts of poverty on the child. Although many children regularly attend the service, the service is not reaching many of the hard-to-reach groups, which are those groups that are at higher risk of poverty. The groups that were especially underrepresented were disabled children and children in workless households. This was particularly pertinent in the Children’s Centre Green Locality. The Children’s Centres also do not report on a lack of fluency in English, which has been identified as a group that are at a high risk of experiencing poverty.

With the Children’s Centre going through a period of change it is important the service is still able to support those who are most in need of the service, while also trying to engage and increase the numbers accessing the service who are most at need (target groups). Children’s Centres could also look to include lack of fluency in English on their target groups. As this is a group at higher risk of experiencing poverty and with a varying distribution of the population across the borough it is vital that this population are engaged with the service.

The service provided by the Sutton Foodbank has reached many adults and children in the borough, with approximately 17,118 meals provided in 2014. There are currently three foodbank location distribution points: Sutton Central, Sutton South and St Helier. Many of the people supported by this scheme are from the wards where there are high levels of poverty, such as St Helier and Wandle Valley. However, there were some wards that appeared to have low numbers of residents accessing the service but had relatively high levels of residents experiencing poverty, such as Sutton Central, Sutton North and Worcester Park. As many people are referred to the Foodbank through agencies or professionals it raises concerns that families in these areas may be failing to access the services and support available. It could also suggest that not all families may have equal access to the Foodbank, due to location or opening times.

The Crisis Loan & Grant Scheme is benefiting many people in the borough, and as a result many children are being supported through the scheme. The ward analysis has shown that there tends to be a higher percentage of applicants from those wards with higher levels of child poverty, except for Worcester Park. Successful applicants from Worcester Park only accounted for 4% of the total successful applicants (with children), yet this ward has the 6th highest levels of child poverty in the borough (22.08% of children are estimated to be living in poverty). Like the Sutton Foodbank data, it suggests that residents in Worcester Park may not be accessing the services they require.
Introduction

In 2010 the Government made a commitment to end child poverty by 2020. This commitment formed the Child Poverty Act 2010. This legislation ensures that sustained action must be taken to tackle child poverty by the government, all future governments, and by local government and their partners. All local authorities are required to publish a local needs assessment and also prepare a child poverty strategy.

This child poverty needs assessment will be used by the London Borough of Sutton and any interested organisations to help develop a strategy and action plan to end child poverty in Sutton.

Understanding Poverty

*Individuals, families and groups in the population can be said to be in poverty when they lack resources to obtain the type of diet, participate in the activities and have the living conditions and amenities which are customary, or at least widely encouraged and approved, in the societies in which they belong.*

The Scale of child poverty in England

In the UK it is estimated that more than one in four (27%) children live in poverty, with levels expected to continue to rise to an estimated 4.7 million children by 2020. At regional levels there are slight variations, with London having much higher levels than the national average, with an estimated four in ten children living in poverty.

Reasons for living poverty

The Child Poverty Action Group has identified the following as the key reasons why some individuals may live in poverty:

- Worklessness – Worklessness could be due to the individual not being able to work due to a health condition, disability or a caring responsibility. There are also barriers that stop people getting into work, such as discrimination or a lack of jobs that match skills.
- Low paid work – Work is not always a route out of poverty. There are some jobs where the wage is too low or other instances where the employment is only sporadic.
- Inadequate benefits – Benefits are often seen as the safety net to support people when they are out of work or not earning a high enough wage. However if they are not of a sufficient amount it can leave people without enough money.

---

Although there are key reasons why people live in poverty, poverty is not restricted to a group of people. It can impact any person at any point in their life, such as being made redundant or illness. However, Child Poverty Action Group, have identified that there are some groups of people who are at a higher risk of living in poverty. These groups have been identified as:

- Families with children
- Lone parents
- People with a disability
- Certain ethnic minorities
- Workless families or households

**The impact of child poverty**

Research by the Children’s Society has identified that growing up in poverty can have a significant detrimental impact on a child’s quality of life, well-being and life chances. 6

Similar findings were in the Frank Field MP review, which identified that the first five years of a child’s life impacts heavily on the child’s future:

“children’s life chances are most heavily predicated on their development in the first five years of life... The things that matter most are a healthy pregnancy, good maternal mental health; secure bonding with the child; love and responsiveness of parents along with clear boundaries, as well as opportunities for a child’s cognitive, language and social and emotional development....Later intervention to help poorly performing children can be effective, but in general, the most effective and cost-effective way to help and support young families is in the earlier years of a child’s life.”7

Children that grow up in poverty are themselves more likely live in poverty as an adult, due to unemployment or low-paid work, and have children themselves who grow up in poverty. This is known as the poverty cycle.8

Not only does poverty have a serious impact on the child, families and possible future generations, it also impacts the wider community and society. In June 2013 The Child Poverty Action Group estimated that child poverty costs the country £29 billion a year, with about half spent on unemployment and lower productivity and the other half spent on social problems resulting from high levels of child poverty.9

---

**Sutton Poverty Profile**

**Population**

At Census 2011 the population of Sutton was 190,146 usual residents. This was a 5.8% increase from 179,768 residents in 2001. The mid-year estimates for 2013 estimate the population of Sutton to have increased to 195,914.

Putting a definitive figure on the future population size of Sutton is difficult, as with any area in the United Kingdom. The line graph below shows the estimated population of Sutton by the GLA and the ONS:

**Projected by Population Growth in Sutton**

![GLA 2013-round and ONS 2012 population projections for Sutton](image)

*Source: Research & Intelligence Service, London Borough of Sutton*

**Where are the young people in the borough?**

At Census 2011, the population of Sutton was 190,146 usual residents, of which 20% (37,988) were under the age of 16 years. Looking at age by ward, almost 25% of the population of St Helier are under the age of 16 compared to only 15% in Sutton South.

Looking at population under the age of five, Wandle Valley has the highest population of children aged 0-4 years (8.5%) and Cheam had the lowest, with only 5% of the population aged 0-4 years.
With an uneven distribution of under 16’s and under 5’s, it could suggest that there could be a greater chance of child poverty in particular areas of the borough, such as the north of the borough.

**Poverty levels in Sutton**

End Child Poverty have identified that in Sutton 12.55% of children are living in poverty before housing costs and 20.13% after housing costs. The Child Poverty Action Group advise using the ‘after housing costs’ as housing is an unavoidable expenditure for all households. The ‘before housing costs’ and the ‘after housing costs’ difference illustrates the variations in housing costs across the country. From this analysis we could assume that housing costs in Tower Hamlets is greater than that of Sutton, as in Tower Hamlets there is an increase of 15.66% of children, compared to 7.58% in Sutton.
Compared to our neighbouring boroughs, only Richmond-upon-Thames has lower levels of child poverty. Croydon has much higher levels, with 30.70% of children living in poverty after housing costs.

Looking at the boroughs with lower levels of child poverty, Richmond-upon-Thames links the low levels to the borough having some of the lowest rates in the country for Free School Meals, obesity, teenage pregnancy and unemployment.\(^\text{11}\)

Overall Sutton has relatively low levels of poverty compared to other boroughs in London, however within the borough variations of poverty levels can be found. This is best summarised in the following graph:

---


In Beddington South 31% of children are thought to be living in poverty (after housing costs). This result is much higher than the borough average (20%) and slightly higher than the average for London (27%).

**Deprivation levels in Sutton**

Another data source that can be used to understand the poverty levels in the borough is the English Indices of Deprivation. This provides a relative measure of deprivation at Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) across England. Areas are ranked from least deprived to most on seven different dimensions of deprivation and an overall composite measure of multiple deprivations.

The dimensions used in the Indices of Deprivation 2010 are:

- Income deprivation
- Employment deprivation
- Health deprivation and disability
- Education deprivation

---

The index of multiple deprivation has identified that the borough of Sutton has 17 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) that are in the 30% most deprived in England. Mapping this data reveals that the most deprived LSOAs can be found in the north of the borough, with pockets of deprivation in Sutton Central, Beddington South and Wallington South.

Rank of deprivation by LSOAs in Sutton, 2010 Index of Multiple Deprivation data

On the whole the areas with the higher levels of deprivation are located in the wards where there are higher levels of child poverty. However there are some areas in the borough where there are higher levels of deprivation but relatively low levels of child poverty (as circled on the map above). These higher levels of
deprivation, although indicative of possible issues for children, could be linked to other factors, such as access to services, which may or may not be directly related to child poverty.

It should be noted that the LSOA in Carshalton South and Clockhouse only has a population of 1,596 people. This is a relatively small population per hectare, with only 24 people per hectare, compared to the borough average of 43.4 per people per hectare.

Another tool that can be used to understand the levels of deprivation in a borough is the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI). The IDACI measures at Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) the proportion of children under the age of 16 that live in low income households.

### Rank of Income Deprivation affecting Children by LSOAs in Sutton, 2010 IDACI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>29.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>49.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>63.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>83.99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI), Department of Communities and Local Government, 2010

Again, many of the LSOA’s identified as having higher levels of income deprivation are located in the wards where End Child Poverty has identified higher levels of child poverty. However, there are some LSOAs where there could be a number of children affected by poverty which had not been identified in the child
poverty analysis. As these LSOA's are also surrounded by LSOA's with lower levels of deprivation, there is the possibility that families in need may not be able to access the services required.

**Free School Meal Eligibility**

Eligibility for free school meals is another tool that can be used to measure potential levels of poverty within the borough.

Free School Meals are currently available to children if their parents are claiming income related benefits (income support, income-based JSA), Universal Credit and / or Child Tax Credit. The aim of free school meals is to ease the strain on family budgets and ensure that children receive a healthy meal a day.

At October 2014, 11.1% of Sutton pupils attending school in Sutton were eligible for Free School Meals. This result is lower than the average for England (16%) and many of Sutton’s statistical neighbours, as shown in the following graph:

### Percentage of pupils eligible and claiming Free School Meals, Sutton's statistical neighbours, 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistical Neighbours</th>
<th>Sutton Average</th>
<th>England Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barnet</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bedford</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bexley</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bracknell Forest</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bromley</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henleyshire</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kingston upon Thames</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milton Keynes</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swindon</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: School – age Children Profiles, CHIMAT, 2014*

The percentage of Free School Meal eligibility and take up in Sutton varies by ward, with some wards having a much higher percentage of pupils than others.
The following map illustrates this variation across the borough:

**% of Sutton Pupils (in Sutton schools) eligible for Free School Meals**

![Map of Sutton showing percentages eligible for Free School Meals](image)

Source: Research & Intelligence Service, Sutton Council

The free school meal distribution across the borough follows a similar pattern to that of the Index of Multiple Deprivation and the poverty levels by End Child Poverty. In the Index of Multiple Deprivation it was identified that there was an LSOA in Worcester Park that had slightly higher levels of deprivation than the surrounding LSOAs, which is also mirrored in the eligibility for Free School Meals data. This finding stresses the importance of ensuring this ward is not isolated from the services and support required.

**Children at higher risk of poverty**

The Children’s Society has identified that that there are certain groups of children that are at a higher risk of poverty than others. This section of the needs assessment will look at why these groups are at a higher risk and the population of these groups within Sutton.
Children in households affected by disabilities

Research by the Children’s Society identified that children living in households with a disability (whether parent or child) were more likely to grow up in poverty. It is estimated that four in ten disabled children are living in poverty. The Children’s Society believes this is due to the additional costs of a disability and the difficulties in entering and sustaining employment.\textsuperscript{13}

Using Census 2011 data it was possible to identify that there were 3,483 households in the borough that had at least one person in the household with a long-term health problem or disability with dependent children. This accounts for 4.5% of households in Sutton and 13.7% households with dependent children. Analysis by ward found that St Helier had higher levels, with 17% of households with dependent children had one person in the household with a long-term health problem or disability and lowest in Beddington South (11%).

With some children living in households with disabilities, there are a number of children that are acting as carers. In Sutton 9.6% of the population stated they provided unpaid care.\textsuperscript{14} Analysis by age revealed that 429 0-15 year olds provided unpaid care, accounting for 1.12% of the 0-15 population. Geographical analysis identified that the highest percentage could be found in Beddington South (1.9%) and lowest in Worcester Park (0.4%).

As part of the Care Act 2014 local authorities will have a duty to consider the needs of children living in households where there is an adult who has a disability or impairment that requires help or care as part of a whole family assessment. The Care Act also requires local authorities to conduct a needs assessment with children when transitioning to an adult, at 18 years. These duties will help to ensure that the needs of young carers and children living in a household with a disability are considered and that, where possible, additional support and care is made available.

Lone Parent Families

Lone parent families are more likely to have children living in poverty, with The Children’s Society estimating that 43% of children in lone parent households live in poverty compared to 22% in two parent families. The factors that are seen contribute to child poverty are: there is no partner to help contribute towards the household income and the parent is less likely to work due to caring responsibilities. It has also been suggested that some lone parents feel isolated, can lack confidence and can experience poor physical and mental health.\textsuperscript{15}

In February 2014, in Sutton there were 1,415 lone parent benefit claimants, making up 1.2% of the working age population. This rate is lower than both London (1.5%) and England (1.3%). However, analysis at a lower geographical level identified that there are some pockets within the borough where this level is

\textsuperscript{13} A good childhood for every child? Child Poverty in the UK, The Children’s Society.
\textsuperscript{14} Health and Provision of unpaid care (all usual residents), Census 2011 (Nomisweb), 2011.
higher. For example, in St Helier and Wandle Valley Lone Parent Benefit claimants made up 2.1% of the working age population. This suggests that there are some areas in the borough where there is a higher chance of children experiencing poverty.

**Large Families**

The Children’s Society has identified that 36% of children in families with three or more children are at risk of being in poverty, compared to 24% of families with two children. This increased chance is due to increased costs of living and the issues that parents can experience in finding affordable childcare for larger numbers of children.

Using Census 2011 data it has been possible to identify that there were 25,325 families in Sutton that had dependent children. Of the families with dependent children, 14% had three or more dependent children.

**Percentage of families with dependent children who have three or more dependent children at Ward Level, Sutton (2011 data)**

These findings reveal that there could be a greater risk of child poverty in particular areas of the borough, such as Beddington South and lower risk in others, such as Sutton South.

**Teenage Mothers**

Child poverty and teenage pregnancy is complex. Research by the Department of Health has shown that the majority of teen pregnancies are unplanned and over half end in abortion. Of the pregnancies that do result in a birth, evidence has shown that it damages young women’s health & well-being and severely limits their education and career prospects. Longitudinal studies have also revealed that while the parents
may be competent, children born to teenagers are more likely to experience a range of negative outcomes in later life and are three times more likely to become a teenage parent themselves.\textsuperscript{16}

The Department for Health found that children of teenage mothers have a 63\% increased risk of being born into poverty compared to babies born to mothers in their twenties.

With teenage pregnancy having such an impact in the present and the future (for both mother and child lives), it is important that the levels of teenage pregnancy are reduced and that those who chose to have the child are given the support they require.

Teenage pregnancy is measured by the conception rate. This rate is the number of pregnancies that start before the mother’s 18th birthday (per 1,000 young women) and includes pregnancies that end either in birth or in termination.

Within Sutton, in 2012 there was a rate of 25.8 conceptions per 1,000 females aged 15-17 years. This rate has reduced significantly from the 1998 rate of 38.8 per 1,000. However since 1998 there are have been severe fluctuations, particularly in 2008 and 2011, indicating that Sutton’s levels are not guaranteed to continue to fall.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conception rate per 1,000 females aged 15-17 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{chart.png}
\caption{Conception rate per 1,000 females aged 15-17 years}
\end{figure}

\textit{Source: Public Health England, 2012}

As teenage conceptions are closely linked to factors such as low educational attainment and economic deprivation, it is unsurprising that there is an uneven distribution of teenage conceptions across the borough. The following map identifies the under 18 year olds conception rates by ward.

The geographical analysis shows that the wards with the higher levels of under 18 conception rates are the same as the wards with the higher levels of deprivation. However, Nonsuch ward does not follow this pattern, as it has similar levels of teenage conception to St Helier but lower levels of deprivation.

Unfortunately at the time of writing it was not possible to identify why Nonsuch ward had higher levels of conception rates, however research by National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) identified that high conception rates are linked to the quality of contraception services. Therefore it could be assumed that within the area there could be a shortage of quality contraception services for young people.

**Black and minority ethnic groups**

Highlighted by The Children’s Society, the Department of Works and Pensions has calculated that 25% of white children live in poverty compared with 44% of Black or Black British households and 55% in Pakistani

---

17 Contraceptive services with a focus on young people up to the age of 25, NICE guidelines, NICE, March 2014
and Bangladeshi households. Research by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation has identified that the relationship between poverty and ethnicity is complex, with the relationship yet to be fully understood\textsuperscript{18}.

Within Sutton, 79% of the population were White or White British, 11.6% were Asian/Asian British, 4.8% were Black/African/Caribbean/Black British, 3.7% were multiple ethnic groups and 1.3% stated they ethnicity was other.

Looking at children (15 and under), the Census 2011 revealed slight variations, as summarised in the graph below:

**Ethnicity by total population and 15 and under population only, Census 2011**

![Ethnicity Graph](image)

Analysis by geographical area revealed that there were large variations in the distribution of the 0-15 year olds across the borough. For example, in one LSOA, only 11% of the 0-15 population were BME but over 50% in another LSOA.

This variation shows that there are some areas of the borough where there could be a increased risk of children experiencing poverty. These areas tend be in the areas where there are higher levels of poverty, such as Beddington South and St Helier. However there are areas where there are lower levels of deprivation and poverty, such as in Sutton South, Sutton North and Worcester Park.

**Workless and low-income households**

Children in workless and low-income households are more likely to be living in poverty, with figures suggesting that 67% of children in workless households currently live in poverty.\(^{19}\) The Children’s Society believes this could be due to inadequate out-of-work benefits, low paid jobs and jobs with little chance of progression.

One of the most reliable sources of information to calculate the number / percentage of children living in workless or low-income households is through the Children in Low-Income Families Local Measure produced by the HMRC. Unfortunately the most up-to-date data available is from 2012.

The Children in Low-Income Families Local Measure shows the proportion of children living in families in receipt of out-of-work (means-tested) benefits or in receipt of tax credits where their reported income is less than 60 per cent of UK median income. The measure is calculated by the number of children living in families in receipt of Child Tax Credit whose reported income is less than 60 per cent of the median income or in receipt of Income Support or (Income-Based) JSA, divided by the total number of children in the area (determined by Child Benefit data).

The data revealed that within in England, 18.7% of all children are living in low-income or workless households. This is much higher than that of Sutton, where only 14.7% of children were living in low-income and workless households.

When we compare this to other London boroughs, it reveals that Sutton has a relatively low percentage of children living in these households. It is only Kingston-upon-Thames and Richmond-upon-Thames that have a lower percentage of children that are living in low-income or workless households.

### Percentage of children living in workless or low-income households, London Borough Councils (2012 data)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Borough Name</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tower Hamlets</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islington</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westminster</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hackney</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camden</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enfield</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lambeth</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwark</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newham</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harrow</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenwich</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brent</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waltham Forest</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croydon</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ealing</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hammersmith and Fulham</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kensington and Chelsea</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hillingdon</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Havering</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redbridge</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bexley</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barnet</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harrow</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merton</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bromley</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sutton</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kingston upon Thames</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of London</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richmond upon Thames</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: HM Revenues & Customs.*
Although on the surface Sutton appears to have low levels of children living in low-income households, analysis at ward level reveals that this does not continue to be true:

### Percentage of children living in workless or low-income households, Ward Level, Sutton (2012 data)

Although on the surface Sutton has a less than average percentage of households who are workless or on a low-income, there are some areas within the borough where the problem is more acute. There are also areas in the borough where there could possibly be a problem in the future due to the percentage levels bordering on the average for the borough, such as in Sutton North and Sutton South. As a result it is important the groups at higher risk of poverty are targeted to help ensure they are able to manage their household financial situation.

### Fluency in English

Recent research by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation has found that a lack of fluency in English, although mitigated in time, can be a major barrier to securing well-paid work for many migrants, and as a result contributes to an increased risk of poverty.\(^\text{20}\)

The Census 2011 identified that in Sutton 90% of the population (aged 3+) have English as their main language and only 0.2% of the population could not speak English at all.

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proficiency in English</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main language is English</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main language is not English: Can speak English very well</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main language is not English: Can speak English well</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main language is not English: Cannot speak English well</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main language is not English: Cannot speak English</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysis by ward identified only slight variations, with St Helier and Sutton Central having just over 2% of the population stating they could not speak English well or at all, compared to 1.3% for the borough average. Looking at a lower geographical level it is possible to ascertain that there are some small areas in the borough where there is a higher risk of some residents living in poverty.

Analysis has shown that lack of fluency in English could be a minor issue for the borough; however there are a few small isolated LSOAs in the borough where limited English could be an issue. As a result, these LSOAs have an increased risk of developing pockets of isolated communities and children living in poverty.

**Asylum seeking families**

As Asylum seeking families are prohibited from working and entitled to a lower level of benefit support than UK citizens it means that these families are at a much higher risk of poverty.

Currently Sutton Council is involved in supporting asylum seekers in the borough through providing care for asylum seeking children who have no parent or guardian.

Housing services are provided by the National Asylum Support Service (NASS).

Unfortunately at the time of writing there was limited information about the asylum seeking population within the borough. To help understand more about these households and their experiences of poverty there could be the need to conduct further in-depth research into this population.

**Drivers of Child Poverty**

There are many factors that can act as a cause or trigger for child poverty. The following section identifies some of the main causes of child poverty, how they can cause child poverty and the scale of the issue in the borough.

**Parental Employment**

As we have seen, parental employment, or lack of, can seriously affect whether a child experiences or does not experience child poverty. There are many drivers related to parental employment, of which many could be seen to be barriers to employment, as opposed to not choosing to work.
Level of education / qualification

Research has shown that children in households where there are low levels of educational attainment or qualifications are more likely to live in poverty. This could be due to the parent(s) not being able to find low-skilled employment that has a salary to support a household, or find employment at all. Households with low levels of educational attainment or qualifications are more likely to experience prolonged poverty as there is limited potential to increase earnings and income.

In Census 2011 a question regarding qualification level was asked, revealing that 18.6% of the 16+ population in Sutton have no qualifications. Analysis by ward revealed vast variations, with 27% of 16+ adults in St Helier having no qualification, compared to only 14% in Sutton West. As ward analysis revealed stark contrasts, analysis at LSOA was also conducted. This analysis only revealed further disparities in the levels of residents with no qualification across the borough. This is illustrated in the following map.

Percentage of 16+ residents who do not have a qualification, LSOA, 2011

Source: Census 2011

---

With there being such strong contrasts in qualifications achieved across the borough, it means that some locations within the borough have a higher chance of experiencing child poverty, such as in St Helier and Beddington South. It could also be true that these areas of the borough could experience prolonged poverty due to the low level qualifications limiting the potential for increasing employment and income progression. Long term this means that households will experience poverty for longer, entrenching and exacerbating the impacts of the poverty, as explored in the Impact of Poverty section (See page 32).

**Ill health and disability**

Ill health and disability can also be a barrier to employment due to being unable to work or unfair treatment or discrimination by the employer, resulting in children in these households being more likely to live in poverty.

Of the working age population, 7% of the 16-49 year olds stated they had day-to-day activities limited and 18% of 50-64 year olds. This finding suggests that there could be a higher risk of children experiencing poverty in households with older aged adults, particularly in households with adults over the age of 50 years.

Of all the usual residents in Sutton, at Census 2011 14% of the population stated they had day-to-day activities limited a little or lot due to long-term health problems (including ill health and disability). Analysis by age revealed slightly different results, with only 3.3% of 0-15 year olds stating they had day-to-day activities limited compared to 24% of those aged 65 and over.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of residents with day-to-day activities limited a little or a lot</th>
<th>All categories: Age</th>
<th>Age 0 to 15</th>
<th>Age 16 to 49</th>
<th>Age 50 to 64</th>
<th>Age 65 and over</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further analysis identified that there were 1,460 households with dependent children where one of the adults in the household was above the age of 55 years. This accounts for 6% of households with dependent children (n=25,363).

**Unaffordable childcare**

Every year The Family and Childcare Trust collect information on childcare costs and availability. This collection has shown that since 2010 prices of childcare have increased 32%, while wages have remained largely the same, which has only increased the burden of childcare costs on parents. For many parents, childcare can now be the largest outgoing, including that of mortgage and rent.

Analysis by the Family and Childcare Trust has identified that the cost of childcare varies across Britain, with London having the most expensive childcare.

---

22 Childcare costs Survey 2014, Family and Childcare Trust, 2014
Analysis of the data from childcare providers has identified that within Sutton the cost of a nursery and childminder is higher than the national average, but slightly less than the average for London. The table below summarises the national, regional and local cost of childcare:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of provider</th>
<th>Great Britain Average (per hour)</th>
<th>London Average (per hour)</th>
<th>Sutton Average (per hour)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nursery</td>
<td>£4.39 - £4.62</td>
<td>£5.63 - £6.08</td>
<td>£5.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childminder</td>
<td>£4.12 - £4.16</td>
<td>£5.77 - £5.85</td>
<td>£5.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These comparisons have shown that childcare within Sutton is considerably more expensive than the national average, for both nurseries and childminders. This suggests that within the borough there could be parents who struggle to afford childcare, particularly those on low-incomes. For some households, particularly those on minimum wage (£6.50 per hour for 21 years & over) there could be little incentive to work.

The parental childcare survey found that only 20% agreed that childcare was affordable, compared to 59% that disagreed.

The high cost of childcare in the borough means that parents may not be able to return to work and there could be many households struggling to balance their household finances. These findings suggest that the borough would benefit from more affordable childcare.
Low-income and material deprivation

As we have seen, children in low-income households are at a higher risk of living in poverty compared to their peers. The following sets out some of the key reasons why low-income households are at greater risk of living poverty.

Welfare Reform

The key aspects of Welfare Reform are:

- Introduction of a benefit cap – The limit on the total amount of benefit that most people (16-64) can get. The cap is currently set at £26,000.
- Removal of the spare room subsidy (also known as the Bedroom Tax) – Housing benefit payments depend on the number of people in a household and the size of their accommodation. If it is deemed that the household had additional bedrooms that were not needed, the amount of housing benefit received would go down.
- Localised Council Tax Benefit (now known as Council Tax Reduction) – Councils in England were given the authority to design their own Council Tax Support schemes, based on slightly reduced funding.
- Localised the Social Fund (now known as the Crisis Loans & Grants scheme) – Social Fund scheme was handed over to local authorities to design and administer their own schemes.
- Began replacing Disability Living Allowance (DLA) with Personal Independence Payment (PIP) – PIP started to replace DLA for people with a long-term health condition or disability in April 2013. PIP is designed to help with the extra costs caused by long-term ill-health disability, if you’re aged 16-64.
- Introduction of Universal Credit (currently being tested in Sutton) – Universal Credit is a single payment for people who are looking for work or on a low income. It aims to simplify benefits, by replacing income-based Jobseeker’s Allowance, income-related Employment and Support Allowance, income support, Child Tax Credits, Housing Benefit, into one payment.

The number affected by the introduction of the benefit cap and the removal of the spare room subsidy can be shown, these figures are shown in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of residents affected by Benefit Cap and Removal of the Spare Room Subsidy</th>
<th>Number of households affected</th>
<th>Number of individual children affected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benefit Cap</td>
<td>138 Households</td>
<td>477 Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Removal of the Spare Room subsidy (Bedroom Tax)</td>
<td>585 Households</td>
<td>Approx 40% of households have children</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Revenues & Benefits, Sutton
Levels of debt

Many households in the United Kingdom live in an extremely precarious financial position, with this only being increased when the household has dependent children. With children in the household, debt can become a necessity to help manage financial issues and to help ensure a basic standard of living for the children. Once using credit, households can often become reliant on further credit to help manage quality of life and the pressure of repayments.23

The findings of a Children’s Society and Step Change research project into indebted families identified that children can experience emotional distress, feel unable to join in with friends and school activities and develop strained relationships with family and friends.

Unfortunately it is not possible to measure the scale of debt at a local level but The Money Charity has looked to understand the scale at a national level. The money Charity revealed that at the end of November 2014 people in the UK owed £1.463 trillion, which equated to £55,384 (including mortgages) per household.24 Consumer credit debt reached £168.8 billion at the end of November 2014, which is £6,389 per household and £3,342 per UK adult.

Although it does not show the level of debt, enquiries from clients from the Citizens Advice Bureau help to show the possible extent of debt in the borough. The 2012/13 data revealed that Sutton CAB had 2,195 enquiries regarding debt, accounting for 19% of their total percentage of enquiries. The primary areas that residents were asking for advice were on credit / store cards, Council Tax and fuel.

Sutton CAB has found that many of the clients who enquire about debt advice are vulnerable and extremely stressed about their situation, and often need assistance in negotiating with the creditors. Of those that sort advice on debt 79% had dependent children.

Low-benefit uptake

Increasing benefit take-up of means-tested benefits and tax credits would contribute to poverty reduction, and improvements in other areas, such as health, well-being and employment participation.

Research by the Centre for Social and Economic Inclusion showed that there a multiple reasons why people may not be claiming the benefits they require.25 The key reasons are identified as:

- Knowledge of the benefits
- Entitlement eligibility rules
- Perceived cash value of the benefit compared to the effort in involved in claiming
- Stigma of benefits and welfare dependency

---

23 The Debt Trap: Exposing the impact of problem debt on Children, The Children’s Society & Step Change, May 2014
Conditionality and sanctions associated with benefits can disconnect people from the benefits and services available. National trends show that income related benefits have the lowest uptake, with this being greater in young men and women. Higher levels of benefit uptake can be found in benefits that are linked, for example when someone qualifies for income support they automatically qualify for housing benefit and council tax reduction.

To help understand the level of benefit uptake in the borough, analysis of the current Council Tax Reduction and Housing Benefit claimants has been conducted. This analysis revealed that there were 15,598 households in the borough that were claiming Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Reduction (CTR). Of which, 5,840 Housing Benefit households and 6,980 CTR households contained children. On average, the Housing Benefit households with children received £143.47 per week and the CTR households with children received £17.26.

Housing & Homelessness

The relationship between housing and poverty is complex, with it being seen to cause child poverty and also exacerbate experiences of poverty. The cost of housing is the key way in which housing is seen to cause child poverty, as the high costs reduce household spending in other areas, such as heating, electricity and food. Housing can also exacerbate child poverty as many households find themselves living a property that is uninhabitable, impacting health (i.e. mould, damp) or not large enough (so children have no space for homework or study).

### Housing as a cause of poverty

Increasing housing costs and limited availability are seen to be the main ways housing can cause child poverty.\(^{26}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average house prices, Sutton, September 2014/15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average cost of a detached house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average cost of a flat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Sutton Economy Watch, Q2 (2014/15)*

Housing costs can have a heavy impact on many low-income households, with housing costs increasing the number of children in poverty. This was evidenced by the Child Poverty Action Group who identified that the percentage of children who experience poverty increases when housing costs are taken into consideration. This was very evident when looking at the data for Tower Hamlets, which revealed that due to housing costs, 15.66% more children were considered to be living in poverty. Although not to the same extent, housing costs also affect the percentage of children experiencing poverty in Sutton; before housing costs 12.55% of children were living in poverty and 20.13% after housing costs.

---

\(^{26}\) A decent home for every family, End Child Poverty Action Group, [http://www.cpag.org.uk/content/decent-home-every-family](http://www.cpag.org.uk/content/decent-home-every-family) (Webpage visited: January 2015).
For the End Child Poverty Action Group the limited availability of housing in the United Kingdom increases the demand, pressure and cost of housing. The shortage of affordable housing in the United Kingdom has been linked to families and individuals being made homeless and long local authority housing waiting lists.

In 2013/14 there were 369 households that made homeless applications to Sutton Council. Of these 369 households, 55% (204) were households that included children. Of the 195 successful applications for homelessness, 80% (157) of households included children.

During 2013/14 there were 358 households placed in emergency accommodation, of which 62% (221) were households with children.

The 2013/14 housing data shows that many of the households who were supported through the Council’s housing advice centre had children. This suggests that within in Sutton many families are being affected by the housing costs and shortage of houses in the borough.

**Housing exacerbating poverty**

As well as being a cause, housing can also be seen to exacerbate the experiences of poverty. With housing being so in demand and costly, many low-income households may find themselves trapped in housing that is unsuitable for occupation, particularly for children. To help ensure that as many households are living in adequate accommodation a decent home standard has been set by central government that requires local authorities to improve housing stock to a reasonable standard.

In January 2015 there were approximately 1,700 households in Sutton that were seen to not meet the decent standards set by central government. Within those households, there were approximately 900 children (under the age of 16 in these households), which equates to roughly 300 households in the borough, with children, that are deemed non-decent.

Although a useful indicator, non-decent housing data should be used with caution, as there are possibly some duplicates due to double entry for some households and not all the households may actually be living in non-decent housing. For example, under the standards set by central government, houses with roofs older than 50 years are considered non-decent, even if the roof is fully functioning. Therefore it should not be assumed that every child in a 'non-decent' house is living in poverty.

However, some of the children in these households could have heightened experiences of poverty, and as a result be at increased risk of poor physical health (accidents, asthma), mental health and overcrowding (so no space for homework).
Impact of Child Poverty

Research by The Children’s Society has identified that growing up in poverty can have a significant detrimental impact on a child’s quality of life, well-being, opportunities and future life chances.\textsuperscript{27} Unfortunately many of the impacts of child poverty are not measureable, such as levels of self-esteem, social isolation and poor family relationships. However there are some impacts which are measureable, such as levels of obesity and education attainment. This section of the needs assessment will look at the key measureable impacts, identifying why they are an impact of child poverty and the scale of the issue in the borough.

\textbf{Low-birth weight babies}

According to research by UNICEF, a baby’s weight at birth can be a strong indicator of maternal and newborn health and nutrition, with a low-birth weight baby being at increased risk of death in the first few months and years of a child’s life.\textsuperscript{28} Low-birth weight babies vary by socio-economic status, with the lower socio-economic groups accounting for a higher rate of children being classed as low-birth weight babies.\textsuperscript{29}

Newborn babies as defined as low-birth weight when they less than 5.5 pounds (2,500 grams).\textsuperscript{30}

The rate of newborn babies in a given area is calculated by the number of low birth weight full term live births as a percentage of all full term live births.

In 2012, 2.9\% of births (at 37 weeks gestation) were born below 5.5 pounds. This is just below London (3.1\%) but slightly above the average of England (2.8\%). Looking at trends over time, in Sutton the percentage of low birth weight babies has increased since 2005, albeit with fluctuations.

London and England appear to have more stable levels of low birth weight babies. However, the fluctuating levels of low birth weight babies in Sutton could be linked to the low numbers, so for example there were only 73 babies classified as low birth weight in compared to a total of 2,549 live births in 2012. As a result the data must be used with some caution as it only reflects a small number of babies and also it is only those babies that were born in that year.

\textsuperscript{27} A good childhood for every child? Child Poverty in the UK, The Children’s Society, \url{http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/tcs/2013_child_poverty_briefing_1.pdf}
\textsuperscript{28} Undernourishment in the womb can lead to diminished potential and predispose infants to death, UNICEF \url{http://data.unicef.org/nutrition/low-birthweight} (January 2015)
\textsuperscript{29} Poverty and Life Chance: The effects of Child Poverty, End Child Poverty, \url{http://www.endchildpoverty.org.uk/why-end-child-poverty/the-effects} (January 2015)
\textsuperscript{30} World Health Organisation,
Comparing the percentage of low birth weight babies to other authorities is another way to understand the scale of the issue in the borough.

When comparing the levels of low birth weight babies in Sutton to other London Boroughs it is possible to identify that in 2012 Sutton had the 19th highest levels (of 32 authorities) of low birth weight babies in Sutton.

**Percentage of low birth weight babies, by local authorities in London, 2012**

*Source: Office for National Statistics*
Although Sutton is roughly average for the rate of low birth weight babies, it could have been expected for the levels to be lower due to the lower levels of child poverty in the borough, which can be seen in other boroughs. For example Richmond-upon-Thames had the lowest levels of child poverty in London and also the lowest levels of low birth weight babies.

At the time of writing there was no definitive understanding as to why Sutton could have a slightly higher rate of low-birth weight babies compared to neighbouring boroughs. As the rate of low birth weight babies is strongly linked to maternal health, it could suggest that Sutton has poorer levels of maternal health. However further investigative work is needed to help understand the rate of low-birth babies in Sutton before any actions are planned.

**Child Obesity**

For the World Health Organisation childhood obesity has become one of the most serious public health challenges of the 21st century. It was estimated that globally there are over 42 million overweight children under the age of five. Childhood obesity not only affects childhood but also later life, as the children are likely to stay obese and more likely to contract diseases like diabetes and cardiovascular diseases.31

Analysis by National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) identified that there was a strong relationship between deprivation and childhood obesity. The analysis found that obesity prevalence increased with socio-economic deprivation, in both Reception and Year 6 children.

The 2010/11 to 2012/13 the National Child Measurement Programme data revealed that within Sutton, at Reception, 20.3% of pupils had excess weight and 8.6% were obese and in Year 6, 33.2% had excess weight and 18.9% were obese.

Analysis of obesity levels found that higher levels of obesity could be found in the wards where there are higher levels of deprivation and poverty. For example, child poverty data identified that Beddington South had the highest levels of child poverty in the borough, with 31% of children being identified as living in poverty (after housing costs). This ward also has high levels of child obesity, with 24% of year 6 and 11% of Reception pupils being obese.

There are however wards with higher levels of childhood obesity than would have been expected, for example in The Wrythe 8.2% of Reception pupils and 21.5% of Year 6 were classified as obese, yet the child poverty data estimated that there were only 11.57% of children living in poverty before housing costs and 18.66% after housing costs.

The opposite is also true of Wandle Valley, which was identified as having the third highest levels of child poverty in the borough (27.45% after housing costs), but only has 20% of Year 6 and 11.8% of Reception children classified as obese.

---

31 Childhood overweight and obesity: Childhood overweight and obesity on the rise, World Health Organisation, [http://www.who.int/dietphysicalactivity/childhood/en/] (January 2015)
Due to the long term implications and costs associated with child obesity a target has been included in the Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2013-2016, under the priority of improving and protecting health and wellbeing (early intervention and prevention). The current indicator for the objective is to increase the prevalence of 4-5 year olds and 10-11 year olds living in the most deprived small areas of the borough being a healthy weight.

**Percentage of children in Reception and Year 6 obese, 2010/11 – 2012/13, Sutton**

Source: National Child Measurement Programme

Educational Attainment

Child poverty is more likely to result in poor educational attainment. Research by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation identified that it could be strongly linked to the aspirations, expectations and ambitions of the parents and the transfer of cognitive abilities from one generation to another. The research also identified that educational attainment was at the lowest when poverty had existed across many generations and highest when wealth had been long lasting.\(^{32}\)

The best method to measure child poverty and attainment is through monitoring test/exam score results and eligibility for Free School Meals.

In 2013/14, 80.2% of (2,693) pupils achieved 5+ A*-C grades (including English and Maths GCSE). When this is analysed by Free School Meal eligibility it reveals differences in educational attainment:

---

### Key Stage 4 Sutton Performance: FSM pupils compared with non-FSM meals, 2013-14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of eligible pupils</th>
<th>Percentage of pupils who achieved 5+ A*-C, including England and Maths GCSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Pupils</td>
<td>2,718</td>
<td>80.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free School Meals (FSM) Eligible Pupils only</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>47.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All other pupils (non-FSM pupils)</td>
<td>2,458</td>
<td>83.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Research & Intelligence Service, January 2015*

These results show that those who are not eligible for free school meals (FSM) achieve almost as well as those who are eligible, suggesting that within Sutton child poverty is severely affecting the educational attainment and future of many children.

**Young People not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)**

NEETs are young people aged between 16 - 24, who are not in Education, employment or training. Please note that this section only focuses on 16-18 year olds.

Data has shown that children who grow up in poverty and those who are eligible for free school meals (FSM) are more likely to not be in education, employment or training after leaving school. Ensuring that young people enter education, employment or training after leaving school is vital. Research by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation found that NEETs were more likely to end up involved in criminal activity, drugs and alcohol, early parenthood and long-term employment. As a result NEETs are estimated to cost society more, in terms of a loss in taxes paid and the benefits paid out.

At September 2014 there were 154 actual NEETs in Sutton. Of these, 53% were male and 47% female and 80% were White. By ward, the highest numbers were in Wandle Valley (22), Sutton Central (19) and St Helier (19). Belmont, Wallington South and Sutton West all had less than 5 NEET’s each.

Using the NEET adjusted figure it is possible to identify that the NEET figure accounts for 5.6% of the 16-18 year olds. This figure is below that of London (6.3%) and slightly below England (5.9%). Sutton is also roughly in line with the neighbouring boroughs (at September 2014):

- Merton – 4.9%
- Richmond – 5.7%
- Kingston – 6.2%
- Croydon – 7.3%

---


35. The NEET adjusted figure is a result of the changes in calculation in April 2013. This figure includes those NEET activities which have passed their 3 month currency period will no longer lapse into the now know group. As a result local authority NEET totals will be inflated and the unknown group deflated.
Services to address Child Poverty

The following section sets out the services that are specifically designed to address child poverty in Sutton. This is just a summary and does not aim to identify all the services that look to reduce or end child poverty.

Parental Employment

Research by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation has identified that families with children in poverty tend to have either one or both parents out of work, mainly with mothers being out of work to care for children. With employment being a key way to help families move out of employment it is important for parents to have access to employment services in the borough.

Adult Education

Poverty is closely linked to education and skills, with the Joseph Rowntree Foundation identifying households containing individuals with no skills and/or no work being at particular risk of poverty. The research also found that skill enhancement could assist people to progress in the market and increase earnings. However, Joseph Rowntree Foundation felt that the training would need to fit in with working life and be employer-driven.

The key provider of adult education in Sutton is the Sutton College of Learning for Adults (SCOLA). The main college is in central Sutton with some college courses being provided in Carshalton and Wallington. The college also offer tailor-made training for local employers.

In 2013/14 SCOLA had 2,918 learners attending courses through funding from the Adult Skills Budget (ASB). The Adult Skills Budget funds all non-academic education for those 19 or over. Many of the learners are fully funded to attend these courses. They qualify for this funding when they are in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance or Employment and Support Allowance (work related group).

Of the 2,918 ASB funded learners, 85% were between 24 and 59 years, 65% were female and 50% were of white ethnic group. The full summary of the ASB funded learners is best illustrated in the following graph:

---

36 Poverty, economic status and skills: What are the Links? Joseph Rowntree Foundation, November 2013
37 Poverty, economic status and skills: What are the Links? Joseph Rowntree Foundation, November 2013
The key courses funded by the ASB funding were the Preparation for Life & Work courses. These accounted for 61% of those on ASB funding, demonstrating that many residents are accessing the courses they need (with the appropriate funding) to help improve employment prospects.

In 2013/14 there was an 89.13% success rate of course attendees on the ASB funding. The success rate is the rate of learners that qualified on the course(s) they were registered on. Analysis of the demographics revealed that the lowest success rate was in the 19-23 year olds, with an 86.87% success rate.

As residents with poor English skills are at a higher risk of experiencing poverty it is important that these residents are also engaged in adult education services. Looking specifically at English as a second or foreign language course, there were 50 learners on this course with ASB funding in 2013/14. The success rate of this course (with ASB funding) at 2013/14 was 92.36% (n=1,057). Further analysis identified that the Black or Black British group had a lower success rate (86%), as did males (87.67%) and the over 60’s (80.95%).

These findings suggest that there are many people within the borough who are accessing the education they require to help improve their employment prospects and opportunities. Unfortunately it is not possible to identify how many children would have benefitted as a result, however as many of the attendees are between 19 and 59 years and many are female, we could assume that a small number of children may be experiencing poverty to a lesser degree as a result.
Low income & material deprivation

As we have seen, children in households where the parent(s) are on a low income or not in work have a higher chance of growing up in poverty. As a result it is important that these residents have access to financial support and assistance to help manage their personal financial situation. This is particularly pertinent as the benefit system is currently going through many changes, known as the Welfare Reform.

Welfare Reform

To help manage the changes and support residents through the Welfare Reform, the Council created the role of the Welfare Reform Outreach Officer. This role provides information & advice and support to those affected by the welfare reform, on topics such as: debt management, budget advice, signposting to services and processing Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) claims.

Much of this support provided by the Welfare Reform Outreach Officer is through face-to-face meetings (at the individual’s home or in the Civic Centre) and through outreach work, such as sessions at the Children’s Centres.

The service offered by the Welfare Reform Outreach Officer means that Sutton Council is able to try to engage with residents who are affected by the Welfare Reform and provide the support and help required to those who do engage. This role can also ensure that those who are in contact are claiming the benefits they are entitled to, which can help to reduce the risk of the household experiencing poverty.

With the rollout of Universal Credit still to come it is important that Sutton Council is fully able to support residents through this change, while also ensuring there is adequate outreach work to ensure that those affected are aware of the changes and are prepared for any changes and amounts received.

Credit Union

Credit Unions are a non-profit financial organisation set up by members with something in common to benefit their community. They allow members to mutually benefit as there is no profit for third-party shareholders, which as a result means the Union is often able to help those who can’t access ordinary bank products, which can often act as an alternative to payday loans or loan sharks. Although the Credit Unions offer loans their primary aim is to encourage people to save rather than borrow.

In Sutton the local Credit Union is the CMS Credit Union (Croydon, Merton & Sutton). The CMS Credit Union offers residents and those who work in the borough the option to save with the CMS Credit Union and borrow money at affordable rates.

The CMS Credit Union annual report for the financial year ending 30/09/2013 highlighted that 31% of members are males and 69% female. The income of the members also varied, with 51% of the membership being those who reported an income exceeding £30,000 per year, 35% with an income between £15,000 to £30,000 and the remaining 14% being those with an income below £15,000 per year.

One of the key offers provided by the Credit Union that could help families manage their finances is through the use of child benefit for savings and loans. Child benefit can be used as security for a loan and can also
form the basis of the loan repayments, with the CMS Credit Union ensuring that only a proportion of the child benefit is used in repayments and the remainder being saved.

The CMS Credit Union provides outreach services in all three boroughs, with the newest pilot scheme currently operating in Pollards Hill, Mitcham. The continued aim is to extend outreach services where possible in hard to reach areas. If this pilot is deemed to be successful then other pilot branches would be considered.

The CMS Credit Union provides many residents and employees in the area the option to save and access affordable loans. The use of child benefit for loan repayments, while also promoting savings, could be beneficial to many residents in the borough.

**Sutton Foodbank**

Sutton Foodbank is run by Churches in the London Borough of Sutton. The Sutton Foodbank gives free emergency food to people in crisis and is linked to the Trussel Trust, a national network of foodbanks. The Sutton Foodbank provides help and support for people in crisis until the appropriate agencies can offer support.\(^{38}\)

Sutton Foodbank operates mainly through donations and volunteers. Much of the food is donated by local people, churches and businesses, which are then sorted by volunteers into individual food boxes. The food boxes contain non-perishable foods and are supposed to last up to three days.

An individual in crisis is referred to the foodbank by frontline care professionals or an agency to the Food Bank Centre.

There are currently three foodbank distribution centres in the borough. These are:

- Sutton Salvation Army Church (Sutton Central)
- Apple Lodge (Sutton South)
- Bishop Andrewes Church (St Helier)

Between January and December 2014, Sutton Foodbank provided 17,118 meals to clients in Sutton. Of which, 1,233 were adults and 669 were children.

Sutton Foodbank also gave out additional food to the Families Matters Team and the Women’s Refuge. By providing additional food to these groups, Sutton Foodbank believe they could have potentially reached a further 52 people through Families Matters and 83 through the Women’s Refuge.

Looking at the distribution of the clients:

- 13% were from Wandle Valley
- 10% from St. Helier
- 5% from The Wrythe
- 5% for Beddington South

- 5% from Wallington South

Many of these wards listed above also have high levels of child poverty; however there are some wards where there are relatively high levels of poverty but low levels of residents accessing the Foodbank, such as Sutton Central, Sutton North and Worcester Park.

In 2013 the key reason for people having to attend the Sutton Foodbank was due to benefit delays and changes. Other changes were due to low income, job loss, homelessness and domestic violence.

It should be noted that the Sutton Foodbank are seeing an increasing number of clients who are working yet struggling due to rising living costs (food and energy).

**Sutton Council’s Crisis Loan and Grant Scheme**

From 1 April 2013 responsibility for the Community Care Grants (CCGs) and Crisis Loans transferred to Local Authorities from the Department of Works and Pensions.

Although Sutton Council is not required to use the funding to deliver a hardship scheme, it has been decided that Sutton will continue to support vulnerable residents at a time of need. The scheme is currently voucher based and only helps residents in extreme hardship or crisis.

From 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014, there were 1,385 applicants for a Crisis Loan and Grant Scheme, of which 1,126 were successful. Of all the successful candidates, over half were single and almost a third was households with children.

**Household Type of Successful Crisis Loans & Grants Applicants, 2013-2014**

![Chart showing household types of successful applicants]

*Source: Revenues and Benefits Team, Sutton*
In total there were 424 successful applicants with households with children, which equates to 852 children being supported through this scheme.

Looking specifically at the successful applicants with children, 80% were lone parents and 20% were in families with two adults. On average, each successful applicant had two children.

Of the adults (with children that successfully applied), two in three of the applicants were under the age of 35 years and only 1% were over the age of 55 years.

Using the Crisis Loan and Grants data is also possible to identify the distribution of the successful applicants with children. This analysis identified that almost 20% of the applicants were in Wandle Valley and there were none from Nonsuch ward.

% of successful Crisis Loan & Grant Recipients, by Ward (where postcode was known), April 2013 – March 2014

Source: Revenues and Benefits Team, Sutton
The analysis of the 2013/14 Crisis Loan & Grant data shows that the scheme is benefiting many people in the borough, and as a result many children are being supported through the scheme. The ward analysis has shown that there tends to be a higher percentage of applicants from those wards with higher levels of child poverty, except for Worcester Park. Successful applicants from Worcester Park only accounted for 4% of the total successful applicants (with children), yet this ward has the 6th highest levels of child poverty in the borough (22.08% of children are estimated to be living in poverty).

In December 2013 the DWP announced that it was cutting the funding to local authorities from 2015/16. To date there has been no change in this position and the council expects to lose £500k of funding in 2015/16. As a result the Council has had to reduce the amount of money spent on funding and administering the Crisis Loan and Grant Scheme.

Through a public consultation, the council have decided to continue to provide hardship support in the form of:

- Food and utility vouchers
- Any award for furniture or white goods will be restricted to beds, fridges, fridge freezers and cookers
- If a resident is re-settling into the community a broader range of furniture may be available on an individual basis.

**CAB Information & advice**

Within the borough residents have free access to contact the Citizen’s Advice Bureau for information and advice regarding a variety of issues, such as, housing, benefits, relationship breakdown, employment and debt.

Residents can contact the CAB for information and advice by visiting the Sutton CAB office or contacting the CAB through their website or phone. Appointments can also be made at the Sutton or Wallington CAB offices.

In 2013/14, Sutton CAB had 11,842 client contacts through their call centre or website. Of these enquiries, benefits, debt and housing were the most common areas people sort information and advice. Sutton CAB estimates that 68% of the welfare benefits clients and 50% of the debt clients had dependent children.

The work of the Sutton CAB ensured that Sutton residents saw a financial gain of £2 million in benefits and helped to successfully appeal 84% of the benefit appeal cases.

Through the work of Sutton CAB many children in the borough will be receiving the support needed and some may also be shielded from poverty as households will be accessing the benefits they require.
**Housing & Homelessness**

Housing costs can affect many children. The latest child poverty data has shown that before housing costs there are 12.55% of children that live in poverty and after housing costs there are 20.13%. This shows that for many households in the borough housing costs are forcing many families to live in poverty.

**Housing advice centre**

Residents are able to use the housing advice centre to seek support on mortgage & rent arrears, eviction, homelessness and joining the housing register for affordable housing. The Centre also helps residents with finding private accommodation, particularly when there are issues with sourcing a deposit and affordable accommodation.

In 2013/14, 892 households approached Sutton Council’s Housing Advice Centre. Unfortunately it was not possible to ascertain the number of households that included children. However, data from the homelessness applications accepted and the households in emergency accommodation show that many children will have been supported by this service.

The Council’s Housing division are also carrying out work that could help to address the impacts of child poverty, such as increasing the provision of affordable housing and making best use of existing housing assets. These aims could help to improve the conditions of where children are living and increase their access to suitable accommodation, which in turn could help to improve the health and childhood experiences of vulnerable children in the borough.

**Children and Young People education & employment**

Research has shown that education and improving the chances of accessing good employment is vital in helping end child poverty.

**Children’s Centres**

In 2010 the Frank Field MP review identified that the first five years of a child’s life can heavily impact their performance at school and, as a result, future employment. Unfortunately not all children have the same experiences between when they are born to when they first attend school, resulting in some children being at a disadvantage to their peers.

To help address this inequality all local authorities have to provide the equivalent of ‘Sure-Start Centre’.

The aim of this service is to:

“Improve outcomes for young children and their families, with a particular focus on those in greatest need. They work to make sure all children are properly prepared for school, regardless of background or family circumstances. They also offer support to parents.”

---


In order to meet the requirements, centres provide a range of universal and targeted services. Each Children's Centre has a number of target groups for whom they deliver services. These groups are identified from data taken from the borough's profile, as well as knowledge of local need that has been gathered by Children's Centres and partners.

Some Centres also deliver childcare, particularly in relation to vulnerable two year olds, to help count towards the school readiness. The majority of centres have some form of child health clinics (as part of the Healthy Child Programme) run from their buildings on a weekly basis. These include: ante-natal for teenage parents, child health clinics and two year old checks.

At January 2015 there were 11,072 children registered to the 14 Children's Centres in the borough. This accounts for 83% of the 0-4 year olds in the borough. Of those that are registered, 6,250 had participated in a Children's Centre activity since April 2014.

Of those that were registered, 31% of 0-4 years old were registered in the Red Locality (3,521), 39% in the Blue Locality (4,413) and 28% in the Green Locality (3,138). Please see appendix item two for a map of the Children's Centres.

As one of the key aims of the Children’s Centres is to help improve outcomes and reduce inequalities, the Children’s Centres aim to engage the groups most at risk. These groups are children from: lone parents, workless households, BME families, teenage parents & mothers, disabled children, disabled parents and children on Children in Need as assessed by statutory social care services.

To effectively measure contact with these target groups, Children’s Centre’s are monitored on the number of times a parent from one of the target groups are seen at a centre. The target groups selected are similar to those that have been identified as those household types that are at higher risk of poverty, with only fluency in English not being included.

Analysis of the data revealed that overall the Green Locality had the lowest percentage of the target groups being seen. There were also some target groups had lower levels of being seen in across all Children’s Centre, such as children in workless households, disabled children and children with a lone parent. The analysis also does not show the percentage of households with limited English, who we know are at higher risk of living in poverty.

**Families Matter**

The Families Matter service provides early help to children and young people aged 0-19 and their families. The Families Matter programme is a statutory service that is funded through central government’s Troubled Families Programme.

The Troubled Families Programme was launched in April 2012 and aims to help families who may have problems or be a problem to the community around them. The programme helps to give the children in these families the chance to a better life, while at the same time reduce the money spent on handling the problems caused by these families. The key families that the programme aims to reach are:
• Where children are not attending school
• Young people committing crime
• Involvement in antisocial behaviour
• Adults out of work

In Sutton the aim of the Families Matter programme is to prevent escalation of need and support families to be resilient and self-reliant. This is achieved by working on a locality basis, with the children and families that have been referred to the team (by a professional) as they are deemed to be vulnerable or have complex needs that require a multi-agency response.

In order to be supported by the Families Matter team, referrals have to meet a criteria, of which some examples are listed below:

• 1 or more adult in the household in receipt of Out of Work benefits, including carers allowance
• 1 or more young people in the household have a proven offence in the last 6 months
• Young person with 15% or more unauthorised school absence in 3 consecutive terms

To date the Families Matter programme (in relation to the Troubled Families programme only) have had 192 households referred to the programme. Of these households referred, 95% (183) have been in recipient of benefits provided by the Department of Works and Pensions. The key reasons why these households have been referred is due to crime / anti-social behaviour (83 referrals) and school exclusion (56).

In 2014 it was announced that the Government were planning to expand the Troubled Families Programme to increase the number of families supported by the scheme and the range of issues covered by the programme. Under the new scheme, each family must have at least two of the following six problems:

• Parents and children involved in crime or anti-social behaviour
• Children who have not been attending school regularly
• Children who need help: children of all ages, who need help, are identified as in need or are subject to a Child Protection Plan
• Adults out of work or at risk of financial exclusion or young people at risk of worklessness
• Families affected by domestic violence and abuse
• Parents and children with a range of health problems.

As part of the expansion, local authorities will have the flexibility to include their own indicators, suggested nomination routes and information sources, under the six headings (listed above) to best reflect local need.\(^\text{41}\)

\(^\text{41}\) Financial Framework for the Expanded Troubled Families Programme, Department of Communities and Local Government, November 2014
As central government are providing some flexibility around how Sutton Council manages the scheme, it could be beneficial to build in some of the drivers and impacts of child poverty. One key area that could be considered is the inclusion of low birth weight babies, under the heading of ‘parents and children with a range of health problems’. As low birth weight babies can be an indicator of poverty and can cause concerns for the future health and well-being of the child, it would be beneficial to start working with these families as soon as possible.
Appendix

Appendix Item One – Benefit Uptake in Sutton

Benefit Uptake

The following sets out the benefit uptake of residents in the borough:

- At December 2014 there were 1,702 individuals claiming Job Seekers Allowance, which accounts for 1.3% of Sutton’s working age population.
- JSA by duration revealed that only 0.8% of the working age population had been claiming JSA up to 6 months, 0.2% 6-12 months and 0.4% over 12 months.
- At May 2014, 4.3% of the working age population were claiming ESA and Incapacity benefits and 1% were claiming disability benefits.
- In May 2014 there were 1,360 claimants of lone parent benefits, accounting for 1.1% of the working age population. This is slightly below that of London (1.3%) and Great Britain (1.2%).
- At January 2015, 15,598 households were claiming housing benefit and/or council tax reduction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Housing Benefit</th>
<th>Council Tax Reduction Scheme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of claimants</td>
<td>12925</td>
<td>12,698</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average age</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender - Male</td>
<td>4524</td>
<td>4440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender - Female</td>
<td>8401</td>
<td>8249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of claimants with disability</td>
<td>2575</td>
<td>2663</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claimant households with children</td>
<td>5840</td>
<td>6980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of claimant who had children &amp; disability</td>
<td>663</td>
<td>876</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Claim (Per week)</td>
<td>£124.43</td>
<td>£17.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Claim with children (Per week)</td>
<td>£143.47</td>
<td>£17.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household Composition - Pensioner</td>
<td>3577</td>
<td>4946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household Composition - Lone Parent</td>
<td>3704</td>
<td>5302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household Composition - 2 parent &amp; children</td>
<td>2136</td>
<td>1678</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household Composition - Couple no children</td>
<td>914</td>
<td>1323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household Composition - Single adult no children</td>
<td>6126</td>
<td>4543</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix Item Two – Children’s Centres locations

Map of Sutton Children’s Centre by locality, Sutton, January 2015

Source: Research & Intelligence Service, London Borough of Sutton