

Hastings & St Leonards

Anti-Poverty Strategy Refresh 2016-2020

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Foreword

Poverty continues to affect the lives of many people in Hastings and St Leonards. It limits the opportunities and prospects for children and young people, damages the quality of life of individuals and families and ultimately harms the long-term health and life expectancy for many Hastings residents.

Poverty isn't just an economic issue – it has a direct impact on health, well-being and on quality of life. It doesn't just affect the here and now – it has effects, which outlast single generations and families, reaching into the future to affect the lives of those not yet born. Children growing up in poverty in Hastings and St Leonards are more likely to suffer poor health, do less well in school and become the next generation of adults at risk of unemployment and long-term poverty.

People living on low incomes, in many of our communities, find it hard to access advice, facilities and afford opportunities and services that others take for granted. Poverty is part of life for many of those both in and out of work in Hastings. Low pay, limited job security and the necessity to take multiple part-time jobs is a feature of many people's lives.

The current economic climate is making this situation more acute. People in our town face significant challenges with changes to welfare benefit and housing policy. The depth of poverty experienced by many means they are not likely to benefit quickly from any economic recovery.

Working with our partners¹ we have an obligation to protect the interests of those in greatest need and to champion the cause of those who are most at risk of a lifetime of poverty. People who experience poverty are all too often those who have the least choice, say or direct influence on decisions affecting their lives.

Councillor Kim Forward
Lead Member

¹ See appendix 1 for definition of Partners

Executive Summary

This Strategy confirms the Council's commitment to working with our partners to tackle poverty and its implications for low educational attainment, poor health and sub-standard housing in the town. At the core of the Strategy is the overriding objective to increase life opportunities – thereby raising aspirations and enabling people to exert influence and control over their lives.

The inter-generational nature of poverty in Hastings and the disproportionate levels of deprivation as compared with other areas in the South East and East Sussex are widely reported. This Strategy recognises these factors and sets out a way forward that provides the foundation from which the Council and its partners can work together to continue to make inroads into the far-reaching consequences of poverty.

Tackling the causes of poverty requires a commitment from all partners and is particularly challenging in the current economic climate, given the impact of the Government's welfare reform agenda on some sections of the community, reductions to public sector spending and new housing legislation that favours those in employment rather than those dependent upon welfare benefits. Reducing benefit dependency and increasing employment opportunities will be key therefore to the long term success of the Strategy.

Joint working between all partners across the town and clear, effective partnership working are paramount to overcoming these issues and making a real difference to the lives of local people who are being directly impacted by living in poverty.

The Strategy's priorities are:

Education and Employment

Improve education and employment opportunities for the most disadvantaged groups

Health and Well-being

Reduce health inequalities and promote well-being

Housing

Seek adequate provision and access to affordable, good-quality homes

To ensure the strategy achieves its aim of guiding and supporting partners' work in addressing poverty, progress will be monitored by the Hastings and St Leonards Strategic Partnership (LSP). An Annual Statement will also be produced, which outlines the actions partners have taken over the preceding year and sets out key areas of work moving forward.

Introduction

Tackling poverty in Hastings & St Leonards has underpinned delivery of the Town's Sustainable Community Strategy through a strong commitment to working in partnership. The Hastings & St Leonards Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) has worked together for nearly 15 years to deliver its aim of addressing inequality and 'narrowing the gap', i.e. to bring the quality of life for people in the most deprived areas up to those of the rest of the town, and the town up to East Sussex and national averages.

Through effective partnership working and investment this activity has achieved good progress against key objectives but much more remains to be done to tackle poverty in the town. However, the current economic climate coupled with extensive welfare and housing reforms is really challenging for partners at a time when public services across the town are facing significant funding cuts. There are no quick fixes – tackling poverty requires a long term horizon. Despite the challenges, there are real opportunities for local people arising from improved educational performance and the potential for new training and employment opportunities linked to the Seachange² development programme; particularly the opening of the new Bexhill to Hastings link road and the North Bexhill development. Maintaining and developing effective partnerships is key to maximising the impact that these opportunities can have on tackling poverty in the long term

Hastings – Poverty at a glance

35% of households are living in poverty

16.7% of people claim out of work benefits

10.8% of households are in fuel poverty

This strategy builds on the direction established in the previous Anti-Poverty Strategy³. It sets out our approach for tackling poverty across the town against a backdrop of a growing demand for services and reducing public sector budgets. The partnership remains ambitious but acknowledges there are limits on the impact local action can have on some aspects beyond their control, for example, those largely driven by the success or otherwise of the national economy and central government policy. By working together partners aim to intervene in the cycle of poverty to help mitigate the effects of poverty and to help the poorest people in our communities to have more influence and control over their futures. Progress against objectives adopted in the Anti-Poverty Strategy 2011-14 is summarised at Appendix 3.

With this in mind, the strategy provides the local context, identifying the key issues contributing to poverty in the town, and sets out priorities for action agreed with partners, that are designed to help deliver the biggest impact for local people around issues such as education, employment, health & wellbeing, and housing. Delivery of the strategy will be overseen by the Hastings & St Leonards LSP, which meets throughout the year and will consider the main challenges and responses from partners. The strategy will be accompanied by an annual statement, which will provide context and detail progress made throughout the year.

² <https://www.seachangesussex.co.uk/our-programme/>

³ Hastings & St Leonards Anti-Poverty Strategy 2011

Tackling Poverty - A Vision for Hastings

Partners have adopted the following vision to help guide the town's Anti-Poverty strategy:

"The voluntary, statutory and business sectors will work together, creating a successful community in which poverty and the struggles associated with poverty have been eliminated"

Seeking to break the cycle of poverty is a long term process. The causes of poverty are multi-faceted. Low income is part of an inter-relationship between causal factors e.g. poor educational attainment, unemployment, poor health and poor housing. Alone, the Council and partners will not eradicate poverty. However, working together, it is possible to intervene in the cycle of poverty, and enable the poorest people in our communities to have more influence and control over their futures. The national and local strategic context underpinning the strategy is set out at Appendix 4.

With this in mind, the Council and Partners will work together to achieve the following priorities:

Education and Employment:

- Improve education and employment opportunities for the most disadvantaged groups.

Health and Well-being:

- Reduce health inequalities and promote well-being.

Housing:

- Seek adequate provision and access to affordable, good-quality homes.

What is poverty⁴ and why does it matter?

Poverty has been described as the final stigma in 21st century Britain:

*"Poverty is not simply about not having enough money or going without luxuries. It is about struggling to get through each day. About constantly making sacrifices; about living in a state of worry verging on perpetual fear, about never knowing how you will survive the week; about never having a few days away, let alone a holiday. It is about your children being haunted by the prospect of being stigmatised, humiliated and bullied. About pensioners not knowing how they can carry on living yet dreading imposing a burden on relatives when they die.... Most of those in poverty cannot help being in their situation. No one chooses to be poor."*⁵

People living in poverty are more likely to be affected by:

⁴ See appendix 1 for definition of poverty

⁵ Reporting poverty in the UK, A practical guide for journalists, page 9

Revised edition 2009, Copyright: Society of Editors. Published by: Joseph Rowntree Foundation, ISBN: 978 1 85935 673 9

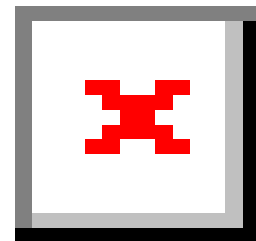
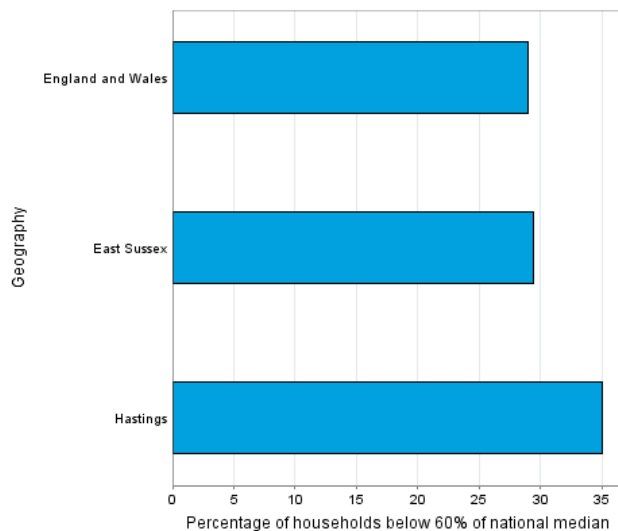
- under-achievement at school
- unemployment
- health problems (physical and mental)
- abuse of alcohol, drugs and other stimulants
- debt
- poor quality accommodation
- insecure housing and homelessness

Levels of UK poverty

Income poverty and inequality remain a major problem in the UK. Data from 2011/12 shows that:

- **13m** people (21% of the population) were living in poverty.
- **3.5 million** Children were living in poverty (that's 27% of children).
- For the first time on record the majority of people in poverty are in working families. Two-thirds of adults in these families are in work.
- The number of people in low-paid jobs has risen. There are now around 5 million people paid below the living wage. (The living wage is based on the amount an individual needs to earn to cover the basic costs of living).
- All types of people live in poverty. Life changes such as unemployment, illness or family separation can happen to us all. Shifts in the cost of living, especially higher prices in essentials such as food and fuel, also affect most people. Poverty isn't something that happens to others. It's something that can happen to almost anyone. However certain groups of people face a much higher risk of living in poverty than others. For example; families that include a disabled person are more likely to be in poverty than any other group. In the UK 24% of families with a disabled person live in poverty.

Households in poverty in 2014 Hastings in Context



Poverty levels in Hastings

Levels of poverty in Hastings are higher than the England and South East averages and are significantly higher than across East Sussex, as indicated in the chart above.

- 14,584 households (35%) are living in poverty
- 16.7% of working age people are claiming out of work benefits in Hastings. This is the 8th highest rate of all Local Authorities in England.

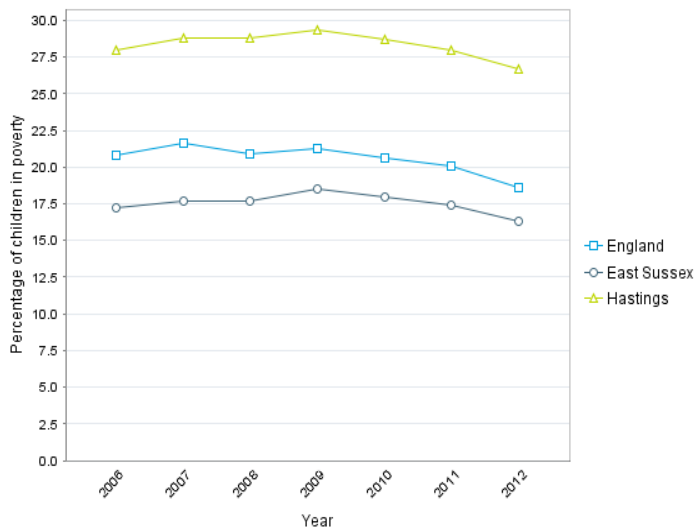
- For those who are working in Hastings, pay remains stubbornly low. Full-time workers living in Hastings earn the 10th lowest weekly gross pay of any local authority in England and Wales.

More detail is available at Appendix 2 on poverty levels in Hastings compared with the South East region and England.

Child poverty in Hastings

Levels of child poverty in Hastings are also higher than the England and South East averages and are significantly higher than across East Sussex.

Children living in poverty 2006-2012



- 5,275

children, well **over a quarter** of all children, living in Hastings live in low income households

- Child poverty levels are highest in Baird, Tressell, Central St Leonards and Hollington where **over 40%** of children in these wards are living in poverty.

The Wider Impact of Poverty

Poverty is not just about a low income. The manifestations of poverty include unemployment, poor housing, poor educational attainment, poor health and disability, crime and limited access to services. The impact of these combined factors is identified in the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), which was updated in 2015.

The IMD 2015 ranks Hastings as the 20th most deprived area in England. It also shows that:

- Hastings remains the most deprived area in the South East and the second most deprived seaside town after Blackpool
- Almost **a third of people** in Hastings live in neighbourhoods that are in the most deprived 10% in England
- The most deprived neighbourhoods are the Broomgrove and Farley Bank/Halton estates and the '7 Streets' area of Central St Leonards, which are among the **most deprived 2%** in England.

The IMD 2015 is the first to include summary measures for local authorities for all seven of the domains and these are set out in the table below.

Domain	Rank
<i>Overall Position for Hastings</i>	20
Income	16
Employment	8
Health & Disability	44
Barriers to Housing & Services	166
Education	36
Crime	52
Living Environment	61

The domains in which Hastings has the most deprived rankings are for income and employment, which are both ranked as more deprived than the town's overall ranking. Education followed by health and disability are the next most deprived domains. Barriers to housing and services are the least deprived.

Although relative deprivation is broadly similar to the position identified in the last IMD published in 2010, the IMD 2015 indicates the town has seen some improvements. The key messages are that:

- Deprivation across the town has reduced overall – nearly 80% of neighbourhoods are ranked as less deprived than in 2010
- Hastings has seen less improvement than other East Sussex districts but has fared better in comparison with other seaside resorts
- Least signs of improvement in neighbourhoods experiencing the greatest levels of deprivation

Finances: The challenges for Hastings

The Welfare Reform Act 2012 put into law the biggest overhaul of the benefits system since the 1940s. The reforms were designed to save £18 billion nationally. Hastings has a high number of households claiming benefits and therefore the impact of welfare reform has been strongly felt.

For example, in Central St Leonards almost 1 in 3 working age residents are claiming out-of-work benefits, including benefits due to sickness or disability. In Hastings overall almost 1 in 5 residents in Hastings are claiming working age benefits: 15.6% of working age residents are claiming out-of-work benefits, of whom two thirds (10.3% of working age people) are claiming due to sickness or disability (compared to 6.3% nationally).

<p>Finances – The Challenges</p> <p>20% of residents are claiming working age benefits</p> <p>Nearly 16% of working age residents are claiming out of work benefits – 2/3rds (10.3% of working age people) are claiming due to sickness or disability (compared to 6.3% nationally)</p>	<p>The welfare reforms made changes across all tenures, which fuelled the need for partner agencies to work together to address the emerging issues relating to poverty. Further welfare reforms are now being introduced under the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016, including a reduction in the Benefit Cap and a freeze on all benefits and the Local Housing Allowance rates until 2020. Although some households continue to be at risk of homelessness or experiencing other issues as a consequence of the changes, the anti-poverty partnership remains strong and significant efforts to mitigate the detrimental effects of the changes are continuing.</p> <p>Universal Credit</p> <p>The last, but certainly the biggest, change for local residents is making the transition to Universal Credit, which was introduced in Hastings in April</p>
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2015. Although initially very small numbers of households will make the shift to claiming Universal Credit, the Government's aspiration is that all households will be claiming it by 2017.

The new challenge for local agencies is to ensure a smooth transition to Universal Credit for all residents going forward. The work must focus on digital inclusion and financial management as the process for applications for universal credit must be made on-line and is paid 4 weekly in arrears. This is a huge change of process and culture for claimants and professionals supporting households to manage the change.

Financial Hardship

The Department of Work and Pensions has also chosen to enforce their Sanctions policy, which penalises claimants who fail to comply with the terms of their benefit payment. Local issues reported to Citizens Advice 1066 have included long delays in benefit assessment, unfair benefit sanctions or stoppages and hardships caused by lack of funds in a crisis. Anecdotally it seems that sanctions have caused financial hardship for some local residents.

There is a high concentration of people struggling with debt in Hastings. The Citizens Advice Bureaux named Hastings in the top 20 top debt hotspots across England and Wales. People are being pushed into debt as they struggle to stretch their income to cover everyday living costs.

Funding for statutory and voluntary services has been reduced. The challenge of supporting households in financial need is therefore ever greater.

Discretionary East Sussex Support Scheme

After much representation, including that of the Anti-Poverty steering group members, the Government changed its decision to withdraw all funding for local welfare provision. However, the amount available has been reduced by over 50%. In East Sussex, this means a total budget of £584,000 for The Discretionary East Sussex Support Scheme (DESSS). Because of the reduction in funding, the circumstances covered by DESSS have been reduced and some of the items that were provided under the scheme have been removed from the new scheme. Funds have still been made available (although reduced) for rent in advance and rent deposits through each borough and district council. The DESSS team will provide help with food, utilities and certain essential household items where people meet the scheme criteria.

Education and Employment in Hastings

Education

Supporting child development and educational achievement are key areas to help people escape poverty in a sustainable way. Poor educational attainment is acknowledged to be an important contributor to poverty levels.

Research demonstrates that one in four residents in Hastings aged 16+ have no qualifications. Whilst 21% do have a qualification at level 4 or above, this is well below East Sussex and England and Wales, which average 26% and 27% respectively.

Hastings – Education in numbers

51.2% of school pupils achieved 5 or more GCSE's – compared with 56.1% across East Sussex

25% of school pupils receive free school meals - compared with 14% across East Sussex

22% of pupils have special educational needs

There are growing numbers of pupils in Hastings for whom English is not their first language. In 2013/14 there were 769 pupils in Hastings who spoke English as an additional language (EAL) and in 2014/15 this rose to 790. It is also very likely that these figures are under-represented as there are a number of pupils for whom this data is not available.

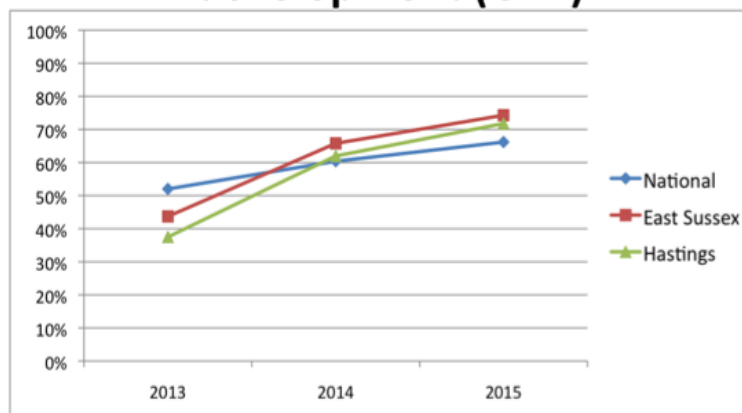
In Hastings, 22% of pupils also have Special Education Needs, which further increase support requirements. 25% also receive schools meals compared with only 14% across East Sussex, which is indicative of the disproportionate level of poverty with Hastings comparative to neighbouring areas⁶.

Hastings has lagged behind East Sussex and the national position on many primary and secondary education performance indicators. Following an

Ofsted 'school improvement' inspection of East Sussex in 2014⁷ concerns were raised about the effectiveness of arrangements for supporting school improvement across East Sussex, particularly in relation to primary school performance, those pupils in receipt of free school meals and the lower than average number of 18 year olds successfully moving on to education, training or employment. It is heartening to note that positive outcomes are being achieved through the resulting action plan, which is delivering improvements across East Sussex, especially in relation to Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 2 performance. Ofsted has recognised this in their 2015 follow up inspection⁸.

In Hastings and St Leonards the last three years have seen improvements and particularly so in relation to early years and primary school performance. At Early Years Foundation stage (age 5) the proportion of children achieving a 'good level of development' has improved significantly year on year since 2013. Hastings achieved 71.8% and has exceeded the national average (66.2%) but still lags behind East Sussex at 74.3% (see chart below).

Percentage of children achieving a good level of development (GLD)



	2013	2014	2015
National	52%	60.4%	66.2%
East Sussex	43.7%	65.8%	74.3%
Hastings	37.5%	62%	71.8%

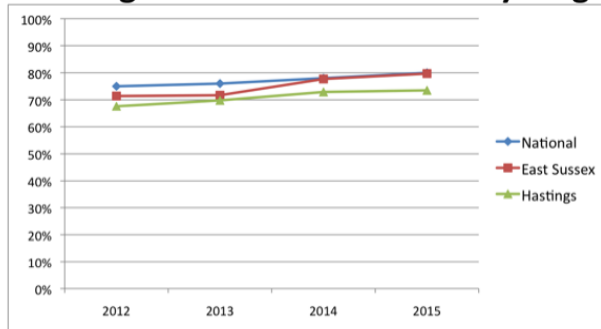
⁶ East Sussex in Fig

⁷ Ofsted Inspection L

⁸ Ofsted Inspection Letter 11 January 2016

At Key Stage 2 (age 11) the percentage of pupils in Hastings achieving Level 4 (average) in reading, writing and maths has increased to 73.5% but this remains less than the East Sussex (79.7%) and national (80%) averages. GCSE performance has also improved.

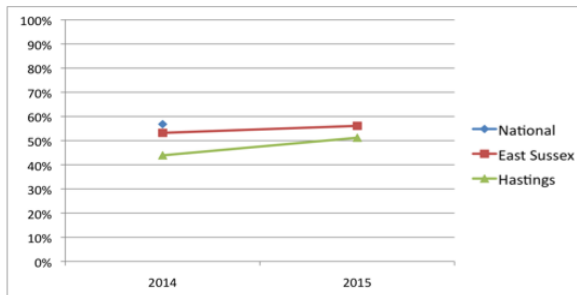
Percentage achieving Level 4 or above in Reading, Writing and Mathematics at Key Stage 2



	2012	2013	2014	2015
National	75%	76%	78%	80%
East Sussex	71.4%	71.7%	77.7%	79.7%
Hastings	67.6%	69.8%	72.9%	73.5%

The percentage of pupils achieving 5 GCSE A*-C passes including maths and English increased from 43.9% in 2014 to 51.2% in 2015, which is a considerable achievement. This is still less than the national (56.8%) and East Sussex (56.1%) averages but is a positive news story if the direction of travel can be sustained.

% of pupils achieving 5 or more GCSEs at A*-C including English & maths



	2014	2015
National	56.8%	N/A
East Sussex	53.2%	56.1%
Hastings	43.9%	51.2%

Over the last 4 years the educational provision in Hastings has moved rapidly to the Academy model with the aim of improving educational attainment and achievement. Two Academy Trusts now operating locally are Hastings Academies Trust (led by the University of Brighton) and ARK (a large, business focused trust). If the improvements taking place at Early Years Foundation key stage, Key Stage 2 and recently in relation to GCSEs are sustained into subsequent years there is reason to be optimistic about future improvements in educational attainment. The key to long term success will be to maintain and develop effective partnerships with and between providers and other partners to maximise the impact improved education and performance can have in tackling poverty.

Employment

Although the number of Job Seekers is falling nationally, Hastings still has the highest Job Seekers Allowance Rate in the county with a rate of 3% (ESiF March 2015). This is nearly double the East Sussex average of 1.6% and is 50 percent more than the Great Britain average of 2%. Similarly, at 8.6% the unemployment rate in Hastings is significantly higher than the East Sussex average of 5.3% (ESiF 2013/14).

Hastings – Employment Key Issues

8.6% unemployed – compared with 5.3% across East Sussex

3% of workforce claiming Job Seekers Allowance - compared with 1.6% across East Sussex

5.8% of 16-24 year olds claiming JSA – compared with 3.4% across East Sussex

With 5.8% of 16-24 year olds claiming JSA, young people in Hastings are worryingly overrepresented within JSA claimants. Whilst youth unemployment is recognised as a national problem, the issue is more significant in Hastings relative to East Sussex and Great Britain, which have claimant rates of 3.4% and 3.1% respectively.

Over one quarter of all employment within Hastings is within the public sector (ESiF 2013). This means that Hastings is reliant on continued Government spending to support these jobs and further cuts to welfare spending would have significant knock-on effects.

The four main industries of employment in Hastings are:

- Human health and social work activities – 18.4%
- Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motors – 16.6%
- Construction – 9.8%
- Education – 9.4%

This industry distribution is broadly similar across East Sussex (ESiF 2011).

Moving forward, employment forecasts suggest that the top four growth industries across East Sussex in the next 10 years will be:

- Construction – 19.4% (4,000 jobs)
- Accommodation & Food Services – 13.5% (2,100 jobs)
- Electricity, Gas & Water – 12.5% (200 jobs)
- Financial & Business Services – 11.1% (4,600 jobs)

Conversely, manufacturing jobs are forecast to drop by 13.4%, a loss of 1,700 jobs (ESiF 2014).

The challenge to Hastings will be ensuring that residents are suitably skilled and qualified to pursue careers within the new growth areas. At the present time the skillset of Hastings residents is considerably lower than counterparts within the county, which means they are at a disadvantage when vying for jobs in a competitive marketplace. The recently completed link road between Bexhill and Hastings opens up the possibility of developing new training and employment opportunities for both towns. Crucially it is important to continue and develop effective links between job creation through Seachange⁹ and local people, particularly as North Bexhill develops in the coming years.

Health Inequalities in Hastings

Many people in Hastings have significantly worse health outcomes than the rest of England. Men in the most deprived areas of Hastings are expected to live 11.1 years less than those in the least deprived parts of the town – the biggest gap in the south east. Life expectancy for both men and women is lower than the England average.

There are a range of underlying reasons for poor health in Hastings, including the high level of deprivation, the percentage of children living in poverty, the percentage

⁹ <https://www.seachangesussex.co.uk/our-programme/>

of overcrowded households, households without central heating and the rate of long term unemployment.

For women, the main cause of the life expectancy gap between the most and the least deprived area is cancer. For men it is due to external causes (particularly suicide and undetermined injury), circulatory disease and cancer.

There are a number of lifestyle factors contributing to residents poor health including; high smoking rates, high levels of alcohol and substance misuse, risk of obesity related illnesses and poor sexual health.

There are high levels of many chronic diseases such as diabetes, respiratory diseases and hypertension. Hastings has significantly worse rate of early deaths from heart disease and stroke than England.

There is also a high level of mental health need. For example, the prevalence of depression, psychoses and dementia are significantly higher than England. Hastings also has a significantly high rate of hospital admission for self-harm.

There is also a relatively high rate of accidents, injuries and falls. For example the hospital admission rate for people aged 65 years + due to falls is significantly higher in Hastings when compared to England figures, as are A&E attendances due to assaults.

Health inequalities related to children and young people.

A child born and growing up in Hastings can expect to live nearly 5 years less than someone in Lewes (30 miles away) where average incomes are much higher.

Compared to other East Sussex districts and boroughs, many lifestyle factors of relevance for children and young people are worse in Hastings. Hastings has: lower breastfeeding rates, a higher proportion of young people who are not meeting the required levels of fruit and vegetable intake; higher rates of smoking in pregnancy and young people smoking; higher rates of alcohol and drug use; poorer sexual health with the highest under 18s conception rate and a significantly higher rate of Chlamydia for persons aged 15-24.

The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services caseload rate is significantly higher in St Leonards than East Sussex. Emergency admissions for under fives are particularly high in Hastings, many of which are for asthma, diabetes or epilepsy. All localities of Hastings and Rother have significantly higher rates of referrals to children's social care than East Sussex. St Leonards has the highest rate of all wards in the county.

Housing in Hastings

Historically Hastings was a bustling tourist destination for holidays and retreats as evidenced by the large Victorian buildings that can be found throughout the locality. However, the failure of the traditional holiday market led to the creation of large numbers of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), replacing firstly holiday business, and then displacing family housing. An excessive supply of HMOs became the housing solution for many vulnerable households on low incomes, who often relocated from other areas to access this accommodation. This influx of vulnerable

Health Inequalities in Hastings

Men in the most deprived areas of Hastings can expect to live 11 years less than those in the least deprived parts of the town

Life expectancy for men and women is lower than the England average

A child born and grown up in the town can expect to live 5 years less than a child in Lewes

households has contributed to the creation of areas of extreme social deprivation. The high levels of crime, health problems, educational failure and population churn in some areas of the Borough have created a barrier to inward investment, and the attraction of economically active residents and visitors.

The council is working with partners to ensure a broad approach to economic and social recovery by:

- Business and community led regeneration through the Town Team and other initiatives
- Physical regeneration that has helped to establish large numbers of new culturally based and related businesses to set up and survive in a previous retail wasteland
- Support for a private rented sector and a balanced housing market, which provides for and attracts a range of households rather than being directly linked to the benefit economy.

However, property and land values in Hastings continue to be amongst the lowest in the south east region despite having increased significantly over the last 10 years. Even with the comparatively low values, local residents still struggle to purchase affordable, good quality accommodation, particularly as the average household wage or income is significantly less than that of other households in the surrounding areas.

The supply of social housing is not sufficient to meet housing demand locally. There is therefore a reliance on the private rented sector, which makes up 30% of all the housing stock in the Borough. The private rented sector as a proportion of all the housing available in the Borough is larger than the rest of East Sussex and more than double the national average. Private sector rents in some areas remain comparable with social housing rents and are set around Local Housing Allowance levels. However, more recently the gap between the two tenures has widened making it increasingly difficult for those on low incomes to secure suitable housing for private rent.

Nevertheless, relative to many other areas of the South East, accommodation costs are more affordable making it an attractive option for households who need or wish to relocate from outside the area in order to find more affordable housing solutions. This can make the housing market increasingly competitive.

Despite progress to address issues of deprivation in the town, poverty remains a feature. Central St Leonards is the most deprived community in the South East. The worst housing conditions and some of the highest levels of deprivation are concentrated within private sector housing in the town centres of Hastings and St Leonards.

Anti-Poverty: Strategic Priorities & Objectives

Despite the current climate of funding streams being cut, there remains a sustained commitment from the voluntary, statutory and business sectors in mitigating, combating, and alleviating poverty. The strategy is intended to guide partners' work in addressing poverty. Delivery of the strategy will be overseen by the Hastings & St Leonards LSP, which meets throughout the year. The strategy will be accompanied by an annual position statement that will:

- Consider the main anti-poverty challenges and responses from partners
- Highlight successes and the progress made towards meeting objectives throughout the year
- Outline priorities for action over the year ahead

The strategic priorities for action agreed with partners are a direct response to many of the local issues identified in the preceding chapters concerning education, employment, health & wellbeing, and housing. The priorities are designed to help deliver the biggest impact for local people in respect of these issues and are supported by a range of agreed objectives. Partners recognise that the public sector has diminishing resources and acknowledge the need to prioritise the use of those resources that are available to best effect. It will be important, therefore, to use the priorities identified within this strategy to support bids for external funding, such as 'community led local development' (CLLD). The objectives are set out below against each of the three strategic priorities:

Education and Employment: Improve education and employment opportunities for the most disadvantaged groups.

Objectives:

- 1) Improve educational attainment for all.
- 2) Promote and extend where possible opportunities to increase digital inclusion.
- 3) Support children and young people from 'troubled families' to progress well from early years to school leaver and into education, training or employment.
- 4) Create employment opportunities for local people and support local businesses to thrive and grow.
- 5) Increase the number of businesses engaged in work-based training, apprenticeships and graduate training.
- 6) Support ESCC plans to increase the availability of good quality, affordable childcare.

Health and Well-being: Reduce health inequalities and promote well-being.

Objectives:

- 1) Reduce health inequalities to improve the prospect of a longer, healthier life.
- 2) Support the best possible start for babies and young children so that they develop well and are safe and healthy.
- 3) Enable people to manage and maintain their mental health and well-being.
- 4) Minimise negative impacts of welfare reform for local people.
- 5) Maximise income and minimise incidences of debt.

Housing: Ensure adequate provision of affordable, good-quality homes.

Objectives:

- 1) Tackle poor housing and support regeneration.
- 2) Prevent homelessness and deliver affordable homes.
- 3) Address the housing and support needs of vulnerable people

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Definitions

Poverty:

Poverty in the UK tends not to be absolute, but relative poverty.

- Absolute poverty: When basic human needs are lacking, e.g. clean water, nutrition, health care, education, clothing and shelter.
- Relative poverty: When someone's resources are so seriously below those commanded by the average individual or family that they are, in effect, excluded from ordinary living patterns customs and activities.
- Relative income poverty: Households whose combined income is 60% or less of the average (median) British household income in that year (after housing costs). Such a level of income restricts one's ability to fully participate in society. This is the most common measure of poverty and is used by the UK Government. References made to poverty within this strategy are to relative income poverty.

Partners/partnership:

Throughout this document reference is made to partners/partnership. Those partners include the many voluntary organisations, statutory organisations and businesses working to minimise poverty in Hastings. At a time when funding streams are being cut, there is even greater value in pulling together as a community to combat poverty. A short, sample list of partners includes:

- Amicus Horizon
- Brighton Housing Trust
- Citizens Advice 1066
- East Sussex County Council
- Education Futures Trust
- Hastings Advice and Representation Centre (HARC)
- Hastings and Rother Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)
- Hastings and Rother Credit Union
- Hastings Neighbourhood Policing Team
- Hastings Voluntary Action
- Kings Church
- Orbit South
- Snowflake Night Shelter
- Sussex Coast College
- Sussex NHS Foundation Trust
- The Department of Work and Pensions
- The Seaview Project

Appendix 2 – Households in Poverty

Households in poverty in 2015 – Hastings Compared with East Sussex, South East and England

This dataset shows the number and percentage of households living in poverty. A household in poverty is one whose income is below 60% of national median household income, which in 2015 was £17,217.

Measure	Total number of households	Number of households below 60% of national median	Percentage of households below 60% of national median
Geography			
England	22,818,109	6,453,002	28.3
South East	3,692,838	845,538	22.9
East Sussex	239,884	68,802	28.7
Hastings	41,994	14,588	34.7

Source: CACI household income estimates, 2014

Households in poverty in 2015 – Hastings Compared with East Sussex Districts

This dataset shows the number and percentage of households living in poverty. A household in poverty is one whose income is below 60% of national median household income, which in 2015 was £17,217.

Measure	Total number of households	Number of households below 60% of national median	Percentage of households below 60% of national median
Geography			
Eastbourne	46,264	15,085	32.6
Hastings	41,994	14,588	34.7
Lewes	44,037	11,549	26.2
Rother	41,741	12,731	30.5
Wealden	65,848	14,850	22.6

Source: CACI household income estimates, 2014

Older people affected by income deprivation in 2012

This table shows the number and percentage of older people (aged 60 and over) living in poverty, as a percentage of the total population in that age group. It shows results from the Indices of Deprivation 2015 (ID 2015) on the proportion of older people in East Sussex living on low incomes in 2012. This is given in a supplementary index from the ID 2015 - the Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index (IDAOPI).

Measure	Total number of people aged 60 and over	Number of older people affected by income deprivation	Percentage of older people affected by income deprivation
East Sussex	162,420	21,314	13.1
Hastings	21,805	4,784	21.9

Source: Indices of deprivation 2015, Department for Communities and Local Government.

Children in low-income families, 2009 – 2013

This dataset shows the number and percentage of children living in low-income families, here described as children in poverty. The Children in Low-Income Families Local Measure is the proportion of children living in families in receipt of out-of-work benefits or in receipt of tax credits with a reported income below 60% of the national median income.

Measure	Percentage of children in poverty					Total number of children in poverty				
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Geography										
England	21.3	20.6	20.1	18.6	18.0	2,429,305	2,367,335	2,319,450	2,153,985	2,097,005
South East	15.4	15.0	14.6	13.5	13.2	280,755	275,935	270,945	252,520	245,960
East Sussex	18.5	18.0	17.4	16.3	15.8	19,325	18,830	18,230	17,150	16,655
Hastings	29.3	28.7	28.0	26.7	25.4	5,725	5,635	5,505	5,275	5,080

Source: HM Revenue & Customs, Children in Low-Income Families Local Measure statistics.

Appendix 3 - Hastings Anti-Poverty Strategy 2011-2014

Key Successes

The Council's first Anti-Poverty Strategy was adopted in 2011 demonstrating a firm commitment to addressing poverty in Hastings. This document outlined the key strategic priorities to:

- Dispel the Myths about Poverty
- Help People to Manage Poverty
- Help People to Escape Poverty
- Help Prevent and Minimise Poverty

Significant progress was made to achieve these priorities. Key successes include:

- The East Sussex Welfare Reform Project was established in 2013 to assist households to manage the impact of the welfare reform. The Supporting People funded service has provided advice and assistance to those affected by benefit changes. The total additional income gained for Hastings residents between April 2013 and November 2014 was approximately £1M. (See Appendix 5 for Welfare Reform Project example case study).
- Additional to the £1 million achieved with the support of the East Sussex Welfare Reform Project, Hastings Advice and Representation Centre (HARC) has generated almost a further £2 million for Hastings residents during the period 1st December 2013-30th November 2014. HARC are specialists in providing advice and representation on all welfare benefits and tax credits. They have provided support to residents through a range of funded projects, including the Hastings Borough Council Community Partnership Fund e.g. They provide advice and representation to housebound people through a project funded by Henry Smith and the Tudor Trust; advice and representation at outreach surgeries across Hastings through a project funded by Hastings Borough Council (REACH) and advice and representation to Hastings' pensioners through a project funded by Magdalen & Lasher. (See Appendix 5 for HARC case study).
- The Discretionary East Sussex Support Scheme (DESSS) was set up in 2013 to fill the gap left by the Government's abolition of the Social Fund. Funded by central Government, DESSS provides individuals and families in crisis with essential items such as clothing, nappies, beds and heaters. From April 2013-November 2014 DESSS provided support worth £370,228 to 760 households in Hastings. (See Appendix 5 for DESSS example case study).
- From 6th April 2013-5th April 2014 DESSS, together with Hastings Borough Council and Hastings and Rother Credit Union also provided loans to cover rent in advance and other housing costs to 220 households providing £110,000 financial support. Without this support these residents might not have been able to secure a private tenancy and could have faced homelessness.
- Hastings Foodbank provides a minimum of 3 days food and support to local people in crisis. Since opening in April 2012 until November 2014 its team of volunteers has provided support to nearly 9,000 local people, giving out over 67,000kg of food. Recipients have been referred on to over 50 frontline agencies for further support.

- Citizens Advice 1066 is a charity offering local residents information and advice on some of the most pressing issues they face today, including debt, benefit entitlement, housing, employment, consumer, immigration and relationship problems. The service is independent, confidential, impartial and free of charge, and is run with the help of around 40 trained volunteers supported by a core team of staff. In the year 2013-2014 they helped 5,160 people across Hastings and Rother to find solutions to 13,741 problems.
- Hastings Furniture Service (HFS) serves Hastings and Rother with furniture stores in Hastings and Bexhill. The stores are open to all but give large discounts and free delivery to low income households receiving benefits or working tax credits, other charities and community groups, students and pensioners. Over 4,000 furniture deliveries are made each year for low income households, helping them furnish their homes affordably. HFS also delivers the furniture, appliances, starter packs and bedding funded by the Discretionary East Sussex Support Scheme (DESSS) which helps resolve or prevent homelessness. HFS has led the campaign to save government funding for this scheme in our area. A non-profit removals service is also available for households with low-incomes, providing access to a professional level of service at an affordable price. Each year 300 tonnes of furniture and electrical goods are reused through HFS and the charity's craft workshops are working to extend this reuse and create further training opportunities through their creative Craftivists project. Annually, around 100 people benefit from training, volunteering or paid work-with-training with the charity, gaining qualifications, skills and confidence.
- A successful training event for professionals took place in September 2014. This event, run by The Department for Work and Pensions and Local Authorities, attracted over 70 professionals from the statutory and voluntary sector to attend. Entitled "Managing the impact of the benefit changes" the training included key note speeches about benefit reform and sessions to enable staff to support residents more effectively.

Appendix 4 - Tackling Poverty Together: Hastings Borough Council and Partners

National context

In March 2010 [the Child Poverty Act](#) legislated that the Government commit to eradicating child poverty in Britain by 2020. It required the Government to publish a UK child poverty strategy, which must be revised every three years.

The Government published [the Child Poverty Strategy 2014-2017](#) in June 2014. It outlines aims to end child poverty by 2020. However, Hastings Borough Council and partners are acutely aware that poverty affects all ages and are committed to addressing poverty for any household affected by poverty in the borough.

Sub-regional context

[The East Sussex County Council Plan](#) sets out strategic priorities to achieve by 2017. The four priority outcomes are: driving economic growth; keeping vulnerable people safe; helping people to help themselves; making best use of resources.

Local authorities and strategic partnerships in East Sussex have worked together to produce [Pride of Place](#), the sustainable community strategy for East Sussex. Pride of Place sets out a long term plan for improving people's quality of life.

[The Child Poverty Act 2010](#) places duties on local authorities and partners to work together to tackle child poverty and produce a child poverty strategy. In East Sussex this is covered through The Children and Young People's Plan 2015-2018. This document includes priorities to improve the lives of children, young people and their families in East Sussex.

[The Health and Social Care Act 2012](#) requires the establishment of Health and Wellbeing Boards. The aims of these forums are to improve the health and wellbeing of the local population and reduce health inequalities. In East Sussex The Board's strategic priorities are recorded [In Healthy Lives, Healthy People: The East Sussex Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2013-2016](#).

[East Sussex Better Together](#) is a programme to ensure a cost-effective, integrated, health and social care system in East Sussex. The Programme brings together East Sussex's four health and social care commissioning organisations, including Hastings and Rother Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and East Sussex County Council.

In the summer of 2014 [Hastings and Rother CCG](#) launched a £5 million action plan to tackle poor health in the area. [The action plan](#) has been developed as local people currently suffer significantly worse health outcomes when compared to other areas. The reasons for this are linked to factors such as deprivation and the economy.

Appendix 5 – Case Studies

Welfare Reform Project Case Study 1

A client who works part-time made a claim for Disability Living Allowance (DLA) in April 2013, she was sent a decision in March 2014 telling her she was not entitled. She had submitted the appeal herself and called the helpline a week before the hearing date for help. Her case was referred to a specialist advisor.

The Department for Work and Pensions refused the DLA claim because the client had not been resident in the UK for two of the last three years. She explained to the advisor that she had spent the last 10 years living between France and the UK, returning to the UK for good in March 2013.

The advisor met the client and explained an appeal would not succeed unless she could provide evidence about the amount of time she spent in both countries with dates. She agreed to provide the advisor with bank statements, diaries and other paperwork about her comings and goings. She also agreed to ask the Tribunal to postpone the hearing date.

The advisor met the client several times before the new hearing date in June 2014 and was able to establish from her records that she had spend two of the last three years in the UK. This new information was presented to the Tribunal, which she won.

The client was awarded DLA middle rate care and higher rate mobility (£108.25 per week) backdated to April 2013. Her DLA is currently being paid at £111.20 per week, the client said this helps her to leave an independent life and continue working part-time.

Welfare Reform Project Case Study 2

Following his attendance at an ATOS medical appointment in March, Mr X was informed by telephone and then in writing that he had not scored "enough points" to continue to receive employment and support allowance (ESA) which was his only source of income. Mr M has a number of physical and mental health issues and considered he was still not able to work. This view was shared by his GP.

Mr X sought help through the telephone helpline to make a mandatory reconsideration. He was seen by an advisor who explained that DWP would take between 2 - 6 weeks to make a decision. Mr X was advised if he was not able to work, his only option was to claim Jobseekers Allowance while the reconsideration was ongoing.

Mr X wanted to make a new claim for ESA because he was still getting medical certificates, the advisor explained a new claim would not succeed because there had not been a serious deterioration in his health and he did not have any new medical conditions.

The advisor explained to Mr X that DWP would notify the local authority he was no longer entitled to benefit and he should contact the council to explain the situation to them. He made his reconsideration request in writing.

Mr X submitted a claim for Jobseekers Allowance, but was concerned he would be subject to sanctions because he would be unable to comply with his job seeking requirements. The advisor explained he could ask for reasonable exemptions due to his health, but it was important he complied with his claimant commitment. Mr M was not in fact sanctioned.

Mr X was provided with a food voucher to cover the delay between the last payment of his ESA and his first payment of JSA. There were no problems with his housing benefit or council tax reduction not being paid or delayed.

By early May, Mr X had not received his ESA reconsideration decision. The advisor contacted DWP who said it was sent to Mr X two weeks previously, but it transpired it had been sent to the incorrect address. The reconsideration had not been unsuccessful. The advisor had managed Mr X's expectations by telling him he may need to appeal if the reconsideration was refused.

An appeal was submitted to Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service, two weeks after this he stopped "signing on". ESA was paid at the basic rate (this is the same rate as JSA) while the appeal was being dealt with by HMCTS. Mr X's advisor considers that he has a good chance of winning the appeal having seen DWP's reasons for not awarding it. He is receiving ongoing support from the specialist advisor with his appeal. (Nov 2014.)

Discretionary East Sussex Support Scheme (DESSS) Case Study

Ms D faced starting a new home for her two children with very little money, having fled from an abusive partner. She went to a Hasting Furniture Service store to buy some second-hand beds so the children would at least have something to sleep on and staff there told her about DESSS. She called the helpline to apply and the DESSS responded quickly, sending confirmation of her award within 24 hours, which Hastings Furniture Service was able to deliver the next day. Ms D was delighted that the scheme provided bedding for her beds and also a cooker, kitchen starter pack and fridge-freezer so she could make meals for her family.

HARC Case Study – Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) Sanction

Mr W contacted HARC because an agreed hardship payment had not been paid to him on the agreed date. The advisor established that Mr W was due to receive a hardship payment because he had been sanctioned. The four week sanction was given because he had failed to sign at the agreed times and dates on three occasions. The advisor contacted the Jobcentre to confirm that the first signing Mr W had was late because his child was ill and he had taken the child to the doctor. The second signing (a week later) had been missed because the same child was taken into hospital, but again he attended the Jobcentre the next day. The following week Mr W did not need to attend the Jobcentre because he usually attended every two weeks. However, he had been changed to weekly signing. The Jobcentre agreed to treat the discussion with the advisor as a mandatory reconsideration request and decided to remove the sanction because Mr W had good reasons for attending the JCP office late on the first two occasions and that on the third occasion he had been given misleading information about his signing date.

Appendix 6 - Background Documents and Links to Research

Statistics:

Key statistics included in this document were sourced from East Sussex in Figures <https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/>

Department for Work and Pensions yearly [Households Below Average Income](#) figures - includes figures before and after housing costs.

The English Indices of Deprivation 2015 - <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2015>

Her Majesty's Revenues & Customs - Child Poverty Statistics - <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/personal-tax-credits-children-in-low-income-families-local-measure-2013-snapshot-as-at-31-august-2013>

Department for Work and Pensions Pension Credit information sourced from NOMIS - <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/> Pension Credit tops up the income of those entitled to the basic state pension

Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings sourced from Office for National Statistics - <https://www.ons.gov.uk/>

Reports:

Reducing Health Inequalities in Hastings and Rother CCG area, April 2014, East Sussex Public Health

Reducing Health Inequalities in Children and Young People in Hastings and Rother CCG, Updated March 2015, East Sussex Public Health

The Local Impacts of Welfare Reform, August 2013, Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion/Local Government Association

Monitoring Poverty and Social Exclusion 2013, Joseph Rowntree foundation http://www.jrf.org.uk/topic/monitoring_poverty

Monitoring poverty and social exclusion 2010 by Anushree Parekh, Tom MacInnes and Peter Kenway. Joseph Rowntree Foundation www.jrf.org.uk

[Reporting Poverty in the UK: A practical guide for journalists](#)

Revised edition 2009, Copyright: Society of Editors. Published by: Joseph Rowntree Foundation, ISBN: 978 1 85935 673 9

Poverty Rip Off – Save the Children Fund - http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/en/docs/UK_Poverty_Rip_Off_Brief.pdf

Poverty among ethnic groups how and why does it differ? Peter Kenway and Guy Palmer, New Policy Institute (JRF) <http://www.poverty.org.uk/reports/ethnicity.pdf>

Poverty and Exclusion, Special Eurobarometer, European Commission September 2007 www.ec.europa.eu/publicopinion/archives/ebs/ebs_279.pdf