

Poverty Reduction: Strategic Framework 2022-2026
February 2022

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Introduction: Poverty in Hackney

Life in Hackney can be a very different experience, depending on who you are and what resources you have. Despite visible affluence, there remains a high proportion of residents who live on lower incomes. At the time of finalising this framework, leading organisations like the Resolution Foundation¹ and Institute for Fiscal Studies² are predicting further reductions in household income, when it is already estimated that a third of Hackney households and half of children are already in poverty after housing costs.

Poverty can have a very damaging effect on individuals and families. It can cause poor physical and mental health, affect a child's development and educational attainment and lead to a person feeling excluded from society. Poverty affects everyone, leading to higher public spending. Poverty limits economic performance, because of lower productivity and reduced demand for goods and services. It can also contribute to wider social problems such as crime and increased community tensions.

This strategic framework sets out the Council's approach to poverty reduction and how we aim to do this. This the first time in recent years that Hackney has developed a poverty reduction strategic framework for residents of all ages and builds upon previous work focussed on child poverty.³ The framework was designed based on the best available evidence of what works⁴ and on a detailed review of needs which will be published alongside the framework.

Before the pandemic, we were already concerned about the ways that the benefits system, housing costs and low wages had driven up levels of poverty and specifically in-work poverty. In 2018, tackling poverty was adopted as a priority for the new administration, alongside shaping a more [inclusive economy](#). By the time the pandemic had started, improvements were underway to provide a more co-ordinated approach to those in food poverty and to improve support offered by advice providers. We had also committed £500k in 2020/21 to develop poverty related support and tackle key inequality. This meant we were better prepared to support residents in poverty who were impacted directly and indirectly by the pandemic. In 2021/22 a further £500k was invested to develop the work further and this framework summarises how we have used this investment.

Throughout this time, we have kept in mind how we developed the long term cross sector partnerships we know we will need as we come out of the pandemic. This practical, granular work has been used to develop the poverty reduction framework; it is not theoretical and throughout the framework, case studies are used to bring to life what we have already done.

Whilst we are ambitious about doing what we can do to have an impact on people's lives, we recognise there are limits. We are also realistic about whether we can impact on overall poverty rates in the face of so many external forces working against residents, including the

¹ The Big Squeeze, Resolution Foundation, September 2021 [Link](#)

² The Cost of Living Crunch, Institute for Fiscal Studies, January 2022 [Link](#)

³ Child and Family Wellbeing Plan 2016-18, Hackney Council, 2016 [Link](#)

⁴ UK Poverty: Causes, costs and solutions, JRF, 2016 [Link](#)

emerging cost of living crisis. Moreover, we do not want to bring poverty rates down by seeking to change the tenure mix, when Hackney has worked so hard to protect its social housing stock. Any available social housing goes to residents who are in greatest need. This alone means Hackney will, in the near future, be home to a large proportion of people on low incomes. The framework sets out measures of success based on an honest assessment of what is possible and where we can have an impact.

As well as working with partners we will be clear about what we need from others, including central government, to make progress and hold others to account for the impact of their decisions. The benefit cap, two-child limit for tax credits and adequate funding to provide free childcare entitlement at the local level are all examples of this. The Government has recently launched a White Paper on Levelling Up. The White Paper focuses on regional inequality, and on levelling up other regions to match London's economic success. London, however, has a higher proportion of people living in poverty than any other region so we need a Levelling Up approach that does not disadvantage Londoners. This framework will provide the evidence base and business case to advocate for the needs of Hackney and London, for fair levels of resourcing and for an approach that looks at people as well as places.

Summary of Hackney's approach

The causes and effects of poverty are varied and complex and the Council's response reflects this. For example, Hackney has high rates of both child and pensioner poverty, however, the causes of this and therefore the solutions needed will be different.

Similarly, the framework strikes a balance between meeting the immediate needs of people already in poverty whilst working towards preventing poverty for future generations. Early in the development of this framework, a conscious decision was taken to adopt this multi-dimensional approach. This was based on the nature of poverty in the borough and on evidence of what works and a review of the approach being taken in other areas. Focusing solely on actions that lift the next generation out of poverty would have ignored the impacts of poverty now, on a very significant proportion of residents. Actions to improve lives will be ineffective if people's basic needs are not met, and we miss opportunities to intervene before a crisis. Conversely, focusing resources solely on those in material needs now is unsustainable, and would fail to have the wider impact and influence we need to have across the system. It would also miss opportunities to take action that shapes a better future, either through focusing on early years, preparing people for the jobs of the future or coming up with housing innovation. How we work is also important. We need to support frontline workers so that they can take a more holistic and compassionate approach to meeting a person's needs in order to offer more effective help.

What we can do locally cannot however match the scale of the challenge. We will also continue to make the case for a benefits system which provides an adequate safety net and helps people into work; ensuring children have access to early years education and care; calling for investment in social housing; and an end to unfair no recourse to public funds conditions which mean many many long term residents live very precariously.

Overview of Poverty Reduction Framework

This framework identifies **the importance of early years** to improve life chances for children. It advocates for **an early help approach for all ages**, so that the Council can work with others to try to prevent crisis points and needs becoming more complex.

The framework identifies how the Council will work with partners to improve **the crisis support** that is available when things go wrong, because people on low incomes have no financial safety net. It **makes the connection between crisis support and early help**, because the request for help is likely to be an indication of greater need. It does this by providing frontline workers with the resources to offer follow up help and support.

The framework highlights the impact of the **external drivers of poverty**, including low wages and housing costs, which drive up the cost of living. It sets out what the Council is doing to intervene in these markets, whilst being honest about the limitations. It sets out how we will firstly support **residents on low incomes to maximise their income and secure better jobs**. It **makes the case for shaping the labour market by** attracting sectors that offer better quality jobs and creating more inclusive and accessible pathways into these jobs, as well as working with local employers to improve terms and conditions and pay London Living Wage. The framework sets out what we are doing to **increase**

affordable housing supply, but is honest about what is possible, given the local housing market and national policy.

This is all underpinned by a focus on **improving ways of working** and valuing and supporting frontline workers, so that, whenever we come into contact with someone on a low income, we work with empathy and compassion and support the whole person. We work with all of their needs, not just the presenting issue, but also all of the strengths and resources they have around them.

A summary of the framework is set out below, indicating what will be prioritised in the short term, to address pressing needs or to put the foundations in place for longer term work.

The areas of focus

Long term prevention	Tackling market drivers	Mitigation
1. Prevention, early years and early help	2. Tackling low wages and cost of living	3. Responding to the material needs of poverty
Aim: to focus on prevention, early years and early help for all ages, as a key way to improve life chances and tackle poverty.	Aim: to take actions to address low wages and the cost of living, as key drivers of poverty in London.	Aim: to better meet people’s immediate material needs and offer more preventative help.
Strategic objective: to support children and families in a child’s early years and to provide early help to prevent crisis points and needs becoming more complex as someone gets older.	Strategic Objective: to maximise opportunities for affordable housing and good quality employment, making the case for national policy change when needed.	Strategic Objective: to develop a more coordinated emergency support and advice offer, with more preventative help, and to make the case for a better benefits system.
We will focus on identification and prevention of harm, escalation of need and crisis by strengthening our early help offer for residents of all ages.	We will take long term action to address what is driving poverty in London, specifically low wages, housing costs and the cost of living.	We will take action in response to the direct material needs of people already experiencing or at risk of experiencing poverty and destitution.
Cross cutting		
4. Prioritising poverty reduction across the system Aim: to ensure poverty reduction is a priority across the system Strategic objective: to ensure the needs, drivers and impacts of poverty are understood and that responses are embedded into key strategy We will influence the whole system so we are better able to tackle poverty because poverty is a complex issue which cuts across many other areas.		
5. Ways of working Aim: to help people on low incomes address all the issues which matter, not just the presenting issue. Strategic Objective: To offer training, support and resources to all staff across sectors so they can work with residents in a strengths based way. We need to look at how all services that come into contact with residents understand the impact of poverty and the approaches that are needed to work preventatively and in a strength based way. This work has already started during the pandemic and will be a priority to continue in the first year of this framework to build momentum, and because it underpins the other areas of focus.		

Detailed framework

1. Prevention, early years and early help

Aim: to focus on prevention, early years and early help for all ages, as a key way to improve life chances and tackle poverty

Strategic objective: to support children and families in a child's early years and to provide early help to prevent crisis points and needs becoming more complex as someone gets older

We will invest in early and integrated education and support for under 5s and families with particular support for those in greatest need. We will focus on identification of need and prevention of harm, escalation of need and crisis by strengthening our early help offer for residents of all ages.

Rationale:

48% of children live in poverty after housing costs. There is a body of research that shows experience of adversity in the earliest years of life relates closely to poverty, unemployment, homelessness, and poor mental, emotional and physical health later in life and to complex needs. Poverty is itself a form of childhood trauma. We have seen an increase in numbers of residents presenting with complex needs in housing needs, in Education and Children's Services, Adults, as well as in partners' services. See the [Who is Affected by Poverty](#) section for more details.

An inclusive and relentless focus on the early years help us to tackle poverty in the long-term by giving children the best start in life. Our approach starts with a focus on early years when we can make the biggest difference to someone's life chances but we cannot stop there. We need to identify and respond to key points in a resident's life when they might experience disadvantage. For example, key points in education and entering the world of work when a young person. An increasing number of residents face multiple and compounding disadvantages - impacted by poverty, poor quality and insecure housing, mental and physical health, language barriers and immigration issues. Without the right co-ordinated support these issues can combine over time and escalate to crisis. Crisis is not only the worst outcome for residents - it also creates challenging work for staff and pressure on budgets.

Early help is not a service, it is an approach that relies on changes to practice, but also to the culture, systems, collaboration and leadership. There is therefore a strong link to the focus on ways of working and also to more coordinated emergency support, as this can help identify risks.

Many of the resources to provide early help will be in families, communities and community based organisations, so we need to ensure we value the strengths, assets and resources in communities that can support residents. This means understanding the best ways to reach residents, through trusted organisations and by working in specific localities. The Council

and health partners are progressing work on prevention, creating an integrated health and social care system delivering services locally, in non-institutional settings if possible (the Neighbourhoods Programme). We have identified the importance of aligning this framework with the Neighbourhoods Programme.

Success measures:

We will develop metrics based on service outcomes data and mapping customer journeys to understand if we are making a difference:

- There is no delay to getting support for children and families, with a single point of access, and the quality of support is consistent.
- Early help offers children the support needed to reach their true potential and develop the strengths and skills that can prepare them for adult life.
- Residents are receiving help at an earlier stage and reducing demand for more acute services and avoiding crisis situations.

We will also look at data across the life course by different groups who are most likely to be in poverty and disadvantaged to understand if, over time, the gap is narrowing in education, employment and income.

Immediate priority	Medium term work
<p>Developing children and family hubs to help to provide more holistic help to families in closer partnership with other frontline services to broaden and connect support for children and families in the community.</p> <p>Ensuring a renewed focus on 'parents as experts' in every intervention recognising that sustained outcomes for a child start with the parents and carers</p> <p>Delivering early help through the lens of trauma-informed, attachment aware and strength based practice that recognises the impact of poverty on a parents capacity</p> <p>Working with families and carers to understand and support their child's development from pregnancy, build resilience and promote wellbeing. Improving our approach and focus to early years and early help ensuring that children have the best possible start in life,</p>	<p>Focussing on holistic support for families in communities in the early years through the development of Children and Family hubs. Working with the early help partnership system to improve residents living conditions to give children the best possible start at the time that can have the greatest impact</p> <p>Developing closer working between family services through the family hub model with wider services like employment, training and skills. There is also potential to take a more structural approach to strategic issues like income maximisation services.</p> <p>Embedding tackling child poverty, early years and early help in a new Children's Partnership plan and underpins a shared approach across all partners to improving the lives of children in Hackney.</p> <p>Developing a holistic approach to get it right for residents first time and prevent</p>

<p>particularly in the critical first 1,001 days, with a refreshed Early Years Strategy.</p>	<p>those with multiple and complex needs being referred to a multitude of services.</p> <p>Developing community based and place-based approaches more consistently, as a way to better reach residents and develop solutions with communities to tackle poverty.</p>
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How we are already putting this into practice

Early years

Investment in the development of the approach to early help recognises the importance of early intervention in early years by improving life chances and tackling poverty. The early help hub and the development of a number of children's centres into family hubs for children and families supporting parenting from 0-19 will help improve reach to those experiencing poverty. We work with Peabody on the Pembury Children's Community on the Pembury Estate, and this is a good example of the ways in which holistic and place-based approaches working in partnership with communities. Findings from the independent evaluation of the project have demonstrated the importance of helping children be better prepared for school, supporting parents to maximise their income and creating supportive and active networks of residents.

Early help in Education to support inclusion and belonging

A sense of belonging in school has been identified as a key part of children and young people being happy and achieving well educationally. The Re-engagement Unit is a team within Hackney Education that delivers targeted social, emotional and mental health support to schools and families that need it; it is a multi disciplinary team (with an embedded CAMHS clinician) that works systemically to deliver lasting, positive change to children's lives when they are at risk of exclusion from education. The team has a proven track record of delivering positive impact, and in September 2022 the service will become available to all schools (primary and secondary phase) in the borough free of charge. The service has many practitioners from various different backgrounds (clinical, education, social care and more), and this allows the child, family and school to receive holistic and consistent support across a range of areas, strengthening their stability and improving the likelihood of positive outcomes for the child and their family.

Early help across the life course

Mental health and social work professionals have been embedded within the Benefits and Housing Needs service in 2020 - 2022 to support staff to support residents. This has been in place because Housing Needs are seeing residents with increasingly complex needs. The social workers have received 120 referrals in total, averaging four enquiries a day. They are focused in particular on building the confidence of officers to support their clients, supporting the discharge from hospital process and seeking to prevent crises in temporary

accommodation (that can lead to vulnerable people being evicted and ending up in a cycle of homelessness). They work with the resident and other services to ensure a joined up understanding of residents' circumstances with clearly defined responsibilities for each service in the residents journey to sustain their accommodation in the long term.

2. Tackling low wages and cost of living

Aim: to take actions to address low wages and the cost of living, as key drivers of poverty in London.

Strategic Objective: to maximise opportunities for affordable housing and good quality employment, making the case for national policy change when needed.

We will take long term action to address what is driving poverty in London, specifically low wages, housing costs and the cost of living. In order to achieve this we will focus efforts on increasing local housing affordability and improving housing standards and improving high quality employment, training and skills for those most at risk of poverty.

Rationale:

In Hackney, a focus on prevention, intervention and early help will improve life chances, but it is not enough. Neither is getting people into employment a guaranteed route out of poverty. This is because the high cost of housing and low and insecure wages mean many people in Hackney are struggling on low incomes, even when they are in work and this can make it difficult to move from benefits into work. The unfolding cost of living crisis will push more residents into poverty. Demand for genuinely affordable social housing outstrips supply and for many the private rental sector is the only option, despite high rent levels. See [Markets- the Labour market, childcare and the housing market](#) for more information.

We are taking action to intervene in this crisis and increase affordable housing supply. That approach has already delivered one of the biggest direct delivery programmes of any council in London and we are close to fulfilling our commitment to build nearly 2,000 homes between 2018 and 2022. We are, however, honest about the limitations of any actions, given the local housing market and national policy. We also take action to improve the private rented sector offer and have adopted a more transparent social lettings policy. There is a strong link between this area of focus and what we can do to offer early help because people in housing need, whether single households or families, are coming to us with increasingly more complex needs.

Good quality employment is one of the best forms of protection from poverty but many residents are disadvantaged in the labour market for reasons including health conditions, caring responsibilities and lack of development opportunities. Even when people do well educationally they may still encounter barriers and end up underemployed.

Anchor institutions, organisations which have a stake, in the long term, in the local community, like the Council and local hospital have significant resources that could be put to work benefiting the community and tackling poverty. We will work with local anchor institutions together to maximise this collective impact through the job opportunities we create and the contracts we let.

Success measures:

We will use the Council's housing and planning data to track progress on:

- An increase in affordable housing options across all tenures.
- A housing offer that is of good quality (that then costs less to keep warm and keep in a state of repair)
- Improved energy efficiency in the Council's housing stock

We will use local insight to understand if we are making a difference on local landlord behaviour with regards to:

- Residents in the social and private rented sector are not being forced to spend even more of their income on things such as tenancy agreement charges, excessive deposit schemes and pay for insurance and repairs which are the landlord's responsibility.

We will use the Council's employment support data to understand if we are:

- Creating accessible pathways into good quality employment for groups most at risk of poverty and most disadvantaged from these higher skilled jobs
- Increasing the number of local jobs that pay London Living Wage
- Creating good quality employment as a Council and as partners

We will use local economic data to understand:

- If our area Inclusive Economy activity is bringing better quality jobs to Hackney

Housing

Immediate priority	Medium term work
<p>Continuing on our current programmes to increase the supply of high quality genuinely affordable new homes for rent and low cost home ownership, through our own delivery, working with social landlords and through a planning system that prioritises developer contributions going towards affordable homes. These homes will be well-designed and well-insulated so as to minimise maintenance costs and energy bills.</p> <p>Continuing to be as innovative and creative as possible in how we increase housing supply.</p> <p>Supporting private renters and residents living in shared accommodation or houses in multiple occupations which are more likely to be overcrowded and unsafe to improve housing standards.</p>	<p>Developing a new housing strategy that resets our approach to affordable housing in the current context, where we are faced with greater needs and greater challenges to house building.</p> <p>Raising the energy efficiency of Council homes and private rented homes to help reduce fuel poverty and integrate fuel poverty reduction with the wider support</p>

Employment, training and skills

Immediate priority	Medium term work
<p>We will work with employers to make the case for the benefits of better quality jobs and will use the Hackney Business Toolkit to work with larger businesses in priority areas which sets out how we expect to work together to secure benefits for the local community including good quality jobs.</p> <p>We will work with employers, training providers and schools to develop skills pathways for better quality employment outcomes for residents.</p> <p>We will continue to proactively engage with and encourage the local businesses community to become London Living Wage (LLW) employers and require our contractors to pay LLW.</p> <p>Addressing some of the barriers which prevent people being able to access employment, skills and training services and puts them at high risk of poverty. Specific groups include disabled residents and lone parent households.</p> <p>Addressing the barriers faced by residents who have good educational attainment and skills but are not reaching their potential in employment.</p> <p>Collaborating with anchor Institutions to create well paid quality employment opportunities, particularly for those most at risk of poverty and facing disadvantages in the labour market.</p>	<p>Supporting the development of quality employment opportunities, and pathways into these opportunities, with a focus on reaching those most at risk of poverty</p> <p>Developing the role and potential of anchor institutions to tackle poverty through the collective impact they can make in employment and skills development.</p>

How we are already putting this into practice

Innovation to increase affordable housing supply

- [A self-build pilot](#) has been developed, focusing on two sites within council ownership, the first is in Balcombe Street, and we are expanding funding to housing associations to build even more genuinely affordable homes using income from homes that we are forced to sell under the government's Right to Buy policy.
- Although impacted by the pandemic, Hackney Council continues to crack down on illegal subletting and enforce tenancy conditions to make sure all residents are getting a fair deal and not have their health and wellbeing, finances and family life impacted by poor quality housing. Up to March 2020 Hackney Council completed just under 2,500 tenancy audits and recovered just under 90 properties. This also acts as a deterrent to landlords in creating a fairer private rented sector.
- We have bought back twenty-five former Council homes, which were lost to the Government's Right to Buy policy but through the actions of the Council will now be available again so they can be rented to families on Hackney's housing waiting list.

Addressing barriers to good quality jobs

We are focused on access to quality jobs in what we call STEM careers (jobs that require knowledge of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics). A [Commission](#) has been set up to understand the intersecting barriers facing residents looking to launch their careers in the digital tech economy and how we can work with local employers to overcome these challenges. We are working with schools to strengthen links with STEM employers and improve careers advice by benchmarking their work against set standards. The [Leading Inclusive Futures through Technology \(LIFT\)](#) programme is a partnership with the boroughs of Camden, Hackney, Islington and Tower Hamlets which aims to help residents into jobs in the tech, digital, sciences, and creative production sectors, and to support businesses and start-ups in these sectors. The Commission collaborates with the LIFT programme to help address the underrepresentation of some communities in the digital tech economy, applying the insight and findings to the practical support offered.

Alongside this, we run apprentice programmes to tackle the barriers as an employer. 59 digital apprentices have been employed since the programme launched. 24 apprentices have successfully completed their apprenticeships so far and 15 apprentices have now secured jobs on successful completion with a further six either going on to a high apprenticeship or external employment. 48% of the current digital apprentices are women and the same percentage of those who declare come from Asian, Black, or Mixed heritage backgrounds. We will recruit again in Summer 2022, continuing to develop the offer.

3. Responding to the material needs of poverty

Aim: to better meet people's immediate material needs and offer more preventative help.

Strategic Objective: to develop a more coordinated emergency support and advice offer, with more preventative help, and to make the case for a better benefits system

We will take action in response to the direct material needs of people already experiencing or at risk of experiencing poverty and destitution.

Rationale:

This framework balances long term work and work to develop economic opportunity with the need to respond to pressing material needs that people face now. Focusing resources solely on these material needs is unsustainable, and would fail to have the wider impact, but ignoring these needs, which are faced by a very significant proportion of residents, would ignore the devastating impact that poverty has now and missing opportunities to intervene before a crisis and offer the early help outlined in this framework. See the [Who is Affected by Poverty](#) section and the [Effects of the pandemic](#) section for more information.

Independent advice providers have a key role to play in the work we develop. Since 2019, we have been working closely with them to develop a new personal centred advice model. During the pandemic, we started to develop the advice model further as well as a more coordinated approach to emergency support. In 2020, a Food Poverty Action Plan was developed which considered data on need with residents' lived experience of poverty and stakeholder perspectives. The plan highlighted the need for greater coordination of emergency support and advice and join up with preventative work.

This framework takes this work further. All of this is underpinned by the way we work because if we want people to seek emergency help and to take up further help beyond that, we have to be trusted, keep people engaged and have partnerships in place to support them.

Success measures:

We will develop metrics based on service outcomes data and mapping customer journeys to understand if we are making a difference and building a more effective system of support:

Emergency Support

- Residents are accessing effective emergency support which meets immediate needs, including culturally specific needs
- Residents who apply for emergency support are provided flexible longer term support

Income maximisation and debt services

- Residents income is maximised

- Debt situations are stabilised
- Levels of access to affordable finance are increasing

Community Partnerships

- There is a community based network of provision that is accessible and meets their specific needs and these organisations can work together to offer more preventative support as well.

Immediate priority	Medium term work
<p>Emergency support We will improve access and co-ordination of emergency support for people experiencing or at risk of destitution and hardship. We will do this by:</p> <p>Improving awareness and access to emergency forms. This includes the Council’s own schemes as well as support available from other organisations such as national charities and local charities.</p> <p>Ensuring that residents who receive emergency forms of support are supported to access other services, for example housing and welfare advice, to address underlying causes</p> <p>Community Partnerships Network</p> <p>The Community Partnerships Network is a broad network of community organisations which was developed during the pandemic response as a way of building local systems of support which make the best use of available resources when responding to the needs of residents. By</p>	<p>Emergency support Learning and evaluation of emergency support to better understand the issues which are affecting residents and make system improvements.</p> <p>We will develop this support to seek to meet the immediate needs of residents as well as offer longer term solutions, by integrating emergency support with wider support to address the causes of a resident reaching crisis. We will make sure that we learn how to address where the current system is failing residents.</p> <p>Supporting the development of a poverty-aware workforce to identify and respond to the needs of residents on lower incomes. This can be done by training frontline staff to have conversations about personal finances and knowing what support is available be that through hardship funds, the benefit system or employment support.</p> <p>Community Partnerships Network</p> <p>Developing and enabling community partnerships as a longer term system of support, working across partners to meet material needs and better pick up vulnerability and develop pathways of support.</p>

<p>working together in partnership the Community Partnership Network is better able to understand and respond to the needs of residents with material needs. We will do this by :</p> <p>Developing the Community Partnership Network to support community organisations to work in partnership to most effectively support residents</p> <p>Providing strategic and operational support to the local food response</p> <p>Learning from the Community Partnership Network about the issues affecting residents and communities and how we can best respond</p> <p>Advice model, income maximisation and debt support services</p> <p>We will develop the support available for people to maximise their incomes and access debt support service. We will do this by:</p> <p>Mapping the current service offer for income maximisation and debt services to create a more joined up system of support for residents.</p> <p>Working in partnership with local DWP and others to deliver Universal Credit as effectively as possible for all claimants</p> <p>Collaborating with Registered Providers to encourage them to put in place income maximisation strategies and make link them with wider services</p> <p>From 2022/23, spend a greater share of the Community Grants budget, £1m out of a £2.5m budget in recognition of the impacts of the pandemic that has increased demand.</p>	<p>Advice model, income maximisation and debt support services</p> <p>Developing the advice model further for 2023/24.</p> <p>Building mutuality and shared responsibility for advice work, rather than seeing themselves as separately funded organisations.</p> <p>Further development of advice providers ability to map the journey their clients make through a system, in order to understand impact and improvements needed.</p> <p>Developing a more strategic approach to income maximisation and debt services which responds to the needs of residents</p>
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How we are already putting this into practice

Improving awareness of emergency-hardship support

We have included the Council's main forms of financial and hardship support on the Better Conversations tool which is a digital tool built to support council staff and partners to make more effective referrals for residents. By including these forms of support on the tool we aim to improve awareness and access to these schemes. We have held information briefings with the Advice Network to inform local advice providers of the main schemes available and there has been regular communication about what support is available to residents in response to the direct impacts of the pandemic and general schemes. We are looking to build on this engagement and a workshop we held with partners to improve how we make emergency forms of support and hardship schemes more accessible to residents.

Community Partnerships Network

The Community Partnerships Network is a broad network of community organisations which was developed during the pandemic response as a way of building local systems of support which make the best use of available resources when responding to the needs of residents. The Community Partnership Network includes Hackney's Food Network and wider Hackney Food Justice Alliance which leads the local food response and the development of a more sustainable food system. The Community Partnership Network also includes the Advice Network which brings together local advice providers to address shared issues. Beyond these formal groups the Network plays a key role in supporting a range of community organisations accessing resources, problem solving and organisational development. We will support the local Community Partnerships Network to better pick up vulnerability and develop pathways of support.

Food Network

The food network is a network of local partners providing immediate food support to residents. The network formally developed in Summer 2020 after the beginning of the pandemic and the end of the first lockdown. Many groups were already providing food support before the pandemic and others were new to providing food support. The network has grown in membership and become a more diverse group of organisations representing different communities and with different ways of providing food (e.g. food banks, hot meals and food deliveries). There are currently three food hubs in the borough which receive large donations of food and where smaller organisations can go to collect food for residents. The food network is mainly voluntary and community sector led with some council operational and strategic support due to the high importance of meeting the immediate needs of residents for food support.

Developing a new model for advice

Since 2019, we have been working closely with advice providers to make sure their support is more connected, and focuses on resolving people's issues (not counting appointments given) and this has made for much more effective working during the pandemic, although demand is growing. This is long term culture change across funders, advice providers and the statutory sector, but based on self assessment and case studies we can demonstrate that :

- There is now a much stronger working relationship between Council departments and advice partners.
- Advice providers are thinking beyond the presenting issue to tackle the root problem and take a person centred approach
- Providers are mapping customer journeys to form a stronger picture of impact

4. Influencing the wider system

Aim: to ensure poverty reduction is a priority across the system

Strategic objective: to ensure the needs, drivers and impacts of poverty are understood and that responses are embedded into key strategy

We will influence the whole system so we are better able to tackle poverty because poverty is a complex issue which cuts across many other areas.

Rationale: Poverty is a key driver of inequality and so the actions to tackle poverty and to shape a more inclusive economy are integral to tackling inequality. Poverty is concentrated in some groups more than others, in part because of the way social structures disadvantage some groups more than others, now and historically. We need to ensure a focus on groups that are more likely to be disadvantaged, and take an intersectional, structural and systemic approach to poverty, considering all of the drivers in the round. There is a complex interrelationship between poverty and health⁵. This is also the case for children and young people experiencing poverty and the long term disadvantage they can experience in terms of educational attainment and employment⁶.

Ensuring all residents have access to a good education system and that all residents are treated the same through that system can be one of the most powerful interventions we make in improving life chances for the next generation. Disadvantage can accumulate for specific groups of children and young people, such as residents who have had experience of care⁷. See [Individual Risk factors - Taking a structural, systemic and intersectional approach for more information](#).

This section of the framework identifies the key strategic areas that need to embed poverty reduction. This section also identifies the key asks of central government including a more generous benefit system, more affordable childcare to support parental employment and educational allowances for young people to continue in further education. The actions outlined under Prevention, Early Years and Early Help and Tackling Low Wages and the Cost of Living will be ineffective if we cannot influence the wider long term strategies for tackling inequality, health, education, area regeneration, local economic development, employment, climate change, planning and housing. The Council and health partners are progressing work on prevention, creating an integrated health and social care system delivering services locally, in non-institutional settings if possible (the Neighbourhoods Programme). Through this programme, GP practices have joined with residents and partners to create eight "Neighbourhood" areas. Over time, it is intended that services become more person-centred, working with residents to help manage their own health and care needs as well as supporting them to look at and access local support. Ensuring join up between this preventative work and the poverty reduction framework is key.

⁵ Psychological perspectives on poverty, JRF, 2015

⁶ An evidence review of the drivers of child poverty for families in poverty now and for poor children growing up to be poor adults, DWP, 2014

⁷ The Child Welfare Inequalities Project: Final Report, Child Welfare Inequalities Project and Nuffield Foundation, 2020

Success measures:

- There is a substantive focus on poverty reduction across the wider system, that is reflected in all key strategies and policy frameworks
- Performance data tracks whether strategies and policies are having an impact on lower income groups
- There is a clear ask of central government about policy and funding needed to tackle poverty, as evidenced in public affairs and communications work

Immediate priority	Medium term work
<p>Ensuring a focus on poverty reduction and addressing the needs of lower income residents in key strategies.</p> <p>Establishing strong working relationships and partnerships, formal and informal, with other key strategic areas in order to support one another to achieve our shared priorities:</p> <p>Prevention, early years and early help</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Health and Wellbeing - Children’s Partnership Plan - Education (and reducing school exclusions) - Reducing Harm and the Community Resilience Partnership - Neighbourhoods Programme <p>Cost of living and low wages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inclusive Economy - Housing Strategy - Homelessness Strategy - Rough Sleeping Strategy - Area Regeneration - Planning frameworks, policy and guidance <p>Making the case through public affairs of the need and evidence for funding to</p>	<p>Ensuring that this ultimately leads to a whole system getting behind poverty reduction rather than broad alignment of priorities.</p> <p>Applying a poverty proof approach to service design and delivery to ensure that we are building in positive ways to tackle poverty and not taking actions which do not inadvertently impact on people’s income or ability to move from benefits to work.</p> <p>The Health and Wellbeing Strategy will have a priority on financial resilience which makes clear the intention to address the relationship between health and poverty. The actions under the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Poverty Reduction Framework will be developed in tandem and closely aligned.</p> <p>There is a strong link between parental employment and poverty in the immediate term and educational attainment and poverty in adulthood in the longer term⁸. The development of Hackney’s Children Partnership Plan creates an opportunity for renewed focus on these important areas and tackling disadvantages amongst children and young people from lower income backgrounds. By working together with a shared understanding of these issues and what could improve life chances</p>

⁸ Poverty in the UK: Statistics, House of Commons Library, 2021 [Link](#)

<p>support policies which support poverty reduction and improve life chances.</p> <p>Leading public affairs campaigns which highlight the need and evidence for national policies which support poverty reduction and improve life chances. This includes arguing for a benefits system which provides an adequate safety net and helps people into work; ensuring children have access to early years education and care; calling for investment in social housing; and an end to unfair immigration conditions.</p>	<p>we will have a greater chance of success.</p>
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5. Ways of working

Aim: to help people on low incomes address all the issues which matter, not just the presenting issue.

Strategic Objective: To offer training, support and resources to all staff across sectors so they can work with residents in a person centred, strengths based way.

We want to see those who work with lower income residents taking a whole person approach which goes beyond the presenting need to address the issues which matter most to a resident. If someone is struggling financially this should go beyond immediate forms of support to support residents with what might be causing money problems in the first place. This could cover employment support, debt issues, poor quality housing and problems accessing the benefit system.

Rationale:

We need to ensure services that come into contact with residents understand the impact of poverty and the approaches that are needed to work preventatively and in a strength based way. This means working with empathy and compassion to support the whole person. It means working actively with a resident to identify what matters to them, build confidence and take action together as equal agents. This recognises that residents who may have been marginalised, traumatised or discriminated against and those with multiple and complex needs need to be given every opportunity to engage in ways that offer choice and control and help build resilience. In Hackney the level of complex need is increasing, so we could increasingly miss opportunities to intervene with good help before issues escalate because of the fragmentation of services that are difficult to navigate and focus on one 'problem' with high thresholds. See [Individual Risk factors - Taking a structural, systemic and intersectional approach](#) for more on the level of need in the borough.

By working in this way, offering what is sometimes called "Good Help," we are more likely to engage residents positively and we can help improve residents' lives now and support them to thrive, prevent crises and adversity and help us to break intergenerational patterns of deprivation. This work has already started during the pandemic and will be a priority to continue in the first year of this framework to build momentum, and because it underpins the other areas of focus. This means making sure that the early help and employment support outlined earlier in the framework is guided by the ways of working outlined in this section.

Success measures:

Hackney residents are heard and responded to in the most helpful way however they come into contact with us, strong referral pathways underpinned by strong relationships. We will develop metrics based on service outcomes data and mapping customer journeys to understand if we are making a difference in:

- The way we can resolve issues with good help that leads to fewer repeat requests for help
- Residents are receiving help at an earlier stage and reducing demand for more acute services and avoiding crisis situations.

We will also track the impact on the confidence of frontline workers.

Immediate priority	Medium term work
Working across the whole system to share learning and develop shared approaches and deliver more consistent good help	<p>Developing a workforce that is aware of the extent and impact of poverty in Hackney and can identify and respond to needs that relate to low income or financial difficulty</p> <p>Developing a poverty aware workforce which helps all people working with residents to identify and respond to needs</p> <p>Enabling the development of sustainable partnerships between frontline services working to support the most vulnerable residents and facilitating the sharing of assets and resources</p>
Roll out support, shared learning and reflective spaces to develop their practice and support wellbeing. This recognises that supporting residents with multiple and complex needs takes its toll on frontline staff and that better support can lead to better interactions and support.	Embedding reflective practice and peer support in teams and services to enable trauma-informed and anti-racist practice to support residents with complex needs and work in a holistic way

How we are already putting this into practice

Investment in ways of working that supports poverty reduction

The Council has used some of its limited resources and budget to invest in ways of working which support poverty reduction. We have brought frontline staff together from a range of council services and partner organisations to talk about cases, identify issues, reflect on what works for residents and identify ways to improve ways of working. It has also created more ways for us to understand poverty from a resident perspective and hidden drivers of poverty. This has been extremely valuable for frontline practitioners who often don't have the time or resources to do this kind of reflective work. The work has been independently evaluated by UCL and found to be highly beneficial for practitioners and residents and

there is a recommendation that if possible such work continues and becomes a permanent way of working.

Governance and delivery

The framework indicates what will be prioritised in the short term, to address pressing needs or to put the foundations in place for longer term work. Once approved a full delivery plan linked to the measures of success will be developed.

The framework is designed to be a live document which is flexible and adaptive to changing circumstances. Although accountability for the framework will sit within the Council, the framework will also guide partnership working.

The framework will be driven by Hackney's Corporate Leadership Team, which includes the Chief Executive and Group Directors. Directors will report to Cabinet Leads identified as leads for poverty reduction, who directly report to the Mayor.

Contextual indicators

The measures of success are incorporated into each of the five areas of focus, We will also track the following indicators to ensure that delivery of this framework and measures of success are understood in this wider external context.

Direct measures of poverty

- Outcome: Poverty is reducing
- Current rate: 17.9% of households before housing costs and 36.3% of households after housing costs
- Aspiration: Reducing to Inner London average after housing costs of 30% after housing costs⁹
- Measure: Relative poverty, 60% of median income, before and after housing costs for the total household population
- Source: Poverty estimates before and after housing costs at MSOA-level in Hackney, ONS, 2017
- Update: TBC from ONS

- Outcome: Child poverty is reducing
- Current rate: 25.4% before housing costs and 47.9% after housing costs
- Aspiration: Reducing to Inner London average after housing costs of 42%¹⁰
- Measure: Relative poverty, 60% of median income, before and after housing costs for children aged 0-16/19 using population estimates for 0-18 year olds
- Source: (i) Children in low income families: local area statistics: FYE 2015 to FYE 2020, DWP, 2021 (ii) Population estimates - local authority based by single year of age, ONS, 2021 (iii) Local child poverty indicators 2019/20 – estimates of rates, after housing costs, End Child Poverty, 2021
- Update: Annual for all three sources

- Outcome: Pensioner poverty is reducing
- Current rate: 41% of older people (60+) are in income deprivation
- Aspiration: Reducing to Inner London average of 28%
- Measure: Percentage of of the population aged 60+ who receive income support, income based job seekers allowance, pension credit or child tax credits
- Source: Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index, DLUHC, 2019
- Update: Expected in 2023

⁹ Poverty in London 2019/20, London Datastore/GLA, 2021 [Link](#)

¹⁰ Ibid

Context and drivers of poverty

The framework has identified a number of causes and effects of poverty including low levels of formal qualifications, high housing costs, and labour market disadvantage due to disability. It is important for the delivery of the framework that we maintain a good understanding of the wider context affecting the overall aim of poverty reduction. As part of Hackney Council's Inclusive Economy Strategy a set of core measures have been developed to provide a contextual analysis for this strategy across a number of areas. The framework can benefit from this contextual analysis to inform its own development and delivery. There are a number of indicators contained within the core measures which are highly relevant to poverty reduction. These include:

- Employment rate
- Unemployment rate
- Employment rate for disabled vs non-disabled residents
- Long term unemployment rate
- Employment in lower pay occupations
- Low qualifications (Level 1 or no formal qualifications)
- Attainment 8 scores for pupils eligible for FSM and not
- Proportion claiming Universal Credit
- Proportion claiming Universal Credit in employment
- Proportion claiming Free School Meals in primary and secondary school
- Food bank use
- Total rent arrears to Hackney Council
- Households living in Temporary Accommodation
- Difference between Local Housing Allowance and the mean private rent for a two bedroom property

The core measures are updated every year with a complementary analysis. It is recommended that the poverty reduction strategic framework make use of this analysis to inform its own delivery with particular focus on the indicators listed above. In addition we will monitor the following indicators:

- Households not in work (available at Local Authority level)
- Fuel poverty (available at Local Authority level)
- Median gross weekly earnings for full-time employees (available at Local Authority Level)
- Healthy Start uptake (available at Local Authority level)
- Poverty levels by ethnic groups (regional only)
- Lone parent households in poverty (regional only)
- Disabled parents in poverty (regional only)
- Disabled children in poverty (regional only)
- Age of children in poverty (regional only)
- Working status of households in poverty (regional only)

Building on what we have learnt during the pandemic and Council investment in poverty reduction

Up to March 2020, we were concerned about the ways that the benefits system, housing costs and low wages had driven up levels of poverty and specifically in-work poverty. This was why the Council was committed to poverty reduction and shaping an inclusive economy and was looking at what was needed, beyond creating routes to good quality jobs, training and enterprise. This formed a part of the Council's 2020 budget and by 2023 a total £840k of investment will have been made to the development work needed to be better able to support residents in poverty and a further £160k will have supported engaging with residents on solutions to tackle key inequalities.

We have designed a way to help people impacted directly and indirectly by the pandemic whilst also building a partnership with many across the system including, critically, a diverse range of voluntary and community sector organisations that is sustained in the long term. This work was always intended to lay the foundations for a more coordinated and sustainable way to respond to the material impacts of poverty in the longer term. The investment made and impact so far is summarised in the table below. The outstanding budget for 2022/23 is £127k.

Objective	Impact	Investment
<p>Ways of working</p> <p>Support over 100 frontline workers to work differently, so we offer more effective “good help”, developing digital tools, arranging staff development so staff can offer good help, that respects and empowers residents.</p>	<p>An independent evaluation has found that staff have increased knowledge and are working more closely and collaboratively with other services and partners organisations. There is greater trust and empathy between colleagues and with residents. The work culture was also found to have developed positively.</p>	<p>£75k</p>
<p>We invested in the development of the approach to early help, recognising the importance of early intervention in early years in improving life chances and tackling poverty.</p>	<p>Early help routes were in place as part of Hackney’s First Access and Screening Team and improving links with partners, including schools.</p> <p>We are now developing a number of children’s centres into hubs for children and families to support parenting from 0-19 (or 0-25 with SEND) and again, this</p>	<p>£60k</p>

	will help improve reach to those experiencing poverty.	
<p>Prevention, early intervention and early help</p> <p>We have invested in changing the way we help people with housing needs secure and sustain tenancies. Social workers have been embedded into the Benefits and Housing Needs services to offer holistic, wraparound and psychologically-informed services for the most vulnerable residents.</p>	<p>Social workers have received 120 referrals in total, over the last two years, averaging four enquiries a day. They are focused in particular on building the confidence of officers to support their clients, supporting the discharge from hospital process and seeking to prevent crises in temporary accommodation.</p>	£320k
<p>Responding to the material needs of poverty</p> <p>We have invested staff time and partnership development, ensuring that we have a more coordinated approach to meeting material needs across a system that has been too disjointed and fragmented:</p>	<p>We have improved the way food surplus is distributed, maximising take up by diverse organisations.</p> <p>We have developed local food networks that can start to work together independently from the Council and helped food partners connect with wider support.</p> <p>We have funded Alexandra Rose to develop their fresh food voucher scheme, which can be collected from local hubs and children's centres, working with affordable and independent retailers mainly in markets, thus also boosting the local economy.</p> <p>By working together, to maximise our collective impact, we have sought to make the best use of all funding coming into the borough and to cater to diverse cultural and dietary needs. Through this, we have continued to deliver several thousand hot meals and parcels to</p>	£258k

	<p>residents in poverty, despite organisations also opening up their usual services again and have supported over 2000 people who needed to shield or self isolate. We joined other local authorities in successfully campaigning for the continuation of poverty related funding after the initial Winter Grant was set up in 2020. We have made sure that this support reaches groups most affected by poverty during holiday periods including over 20,000 children, people struggling with fuel bills and those who are in temporary accommodation and hostels.</p>	
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Background and data

What we mean by poverty

‘When a person’s resources (mainly their material resources) are not sufficient to meet their minimum needs (including social participation)’¹¹

How poverty is measured

There is no universally accepted definition of poverty with organisations using different measurements to understand and explain the concept of poverty. The recognised international measurement and the one used by the UK Government in its official statistics defines poverty as households with an income below 60 percent of the national median household income before and/or after housing costs¹². This measure of poverty understands poverty as a relative measurement of household income between middle and low income households. Historically poverty has been measured by the UK government both before and after housing costs and for its effect on different groups of people - normally focussing on different age groups (e.g. child poverty, working age poverty and pensioner poverty).

We have complemented official measurements of poverty with other indicators to build a fuller picture of poverty and life on a lower income in line with our working definition. For example, by using measures like Free School Meals (FSM) and Pension Credit. We have worked with community partners to reach those pupils who are not registered for FSM, for example the Charedi communities in Hackney with pupils in independent (non-Hackney Education maintained) settings. We have also looked at available information on personal debt and rent arrears to understand issues which might affect what resources someone has available to them beyond income and costs.

¹¹ A Definition of poverty, JRF, 2014 [Link](#)

¹² Poverty in the UK: Statistics, House of Commons Library, July 2019

Who is affected by poverty

In Hackney latest estimates (mainly pre-pandemic) find that:

- **1 in 3 households in poverty after housing costs:** Just under 20% (17.9%) of Hackney households live in poverty before housing costs and this rises to over a third (36.3%) after housing costs - Hackney is ranked the third highest out of all London boroughs for poverty after housing costs¹³. This represents 39,000 households¹⁴.
- **Almost half of children in poverty after housing costs:** In 2021 it was estimated that 48% of children in Hackney were living in poverty after housing costs¹⁵. This represents just under 28,000 children¹⁶. Child poverty affects all age groups but especially younger families with children aged under 10 and larger families with more than two children¹⁷.
- **Around 40% of secondary school pupils and 30% of primary school pupils claiming free school meals:** For the 2020-21 school year 38% of secondary school pupils¹⁸ and 30% of primary school pupils were entitled and claiming free school meals¹⁹.
- **2 in 5 older people in income deprivation:** A total of 41% of residents in Hackney aged 60 and over live in income deprivation²⁰. This represents just under 12,000 people²¹. This compares to a London average of 22% and makes Hackney the Local Authority with the second highest level of income deprivation affecting older people²².
- **In London one third of disabled people are in poverty after housing costs compared to one quarter of non-disabled people in London:** Poverty and disability are closely associated. In London poverty after housing costs is 35% for households in which someone is disabled compared to 26% for households in which no one is disabled²³.
- **In London 2 in 5 residents from non-White backgrounds are in poverty after housing costs compared to 1 in 5 White Londoners:** At regional level poverty is significantly higher amongst the non-White population than the White population. Poverty is 39% after housing costs for non-White Londoners and 21% for White Londoners²⁴.
- **Poverty is relatively evenly distributed in all areas of Hackney:** Poverty is relatively evenly distributed across the borough with some concentration in the

¹³ Small area model-based households in poverty estimates in England and Wales, ONS, 2017 [Link](#)

¹⁴ Household estimates by local authority, Annual Population Survey, ONS, 2021

¹⁵ End child poverty website accessed November 2021 [Link](#)

¹⁶ Population estimates, ONS, June 2021 (for 0-15 year olds)

¹⁷ Child poverty and family wellbeing needs assessment, Hackney Council, 2015 [Link](#)

¹⁸ Schools, Pupils and their Characteristics, DfE, 2021

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index, MHCLG, 2019

²¹ Population estimates, ONS, June 2021 (for 60+ year olds)

²² Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index, MHCLG, 2019

²³ Households below average income, DWP, 2019

²⁴ Poverty rates by demographic characteristics in London (3 years to 2019-20), Trust for London, accessed January 2022 [Link](#)

centre and east of the borough. Hackney is one of only two London boroughs with all its middle-super output areas being in the poorest fifth nationally²⁵.

- **A total of 40% of people claiming Universal Credit are in some form of employment in Hackney:** In September 2021 of those people claiming Universal Credit just under 40% (39.6%) of claimants were employed and 60% were not in employment²⁶. This shows that work alone is not protecting people from life on a lower income.

Please refer to the [Poverty Evidence Base](#) prepared in 2019 for more details.

Groups of residents most at risk of poverty

The poverty reduction framework has been developed to respond to the needs of all residents, however, there are some groups of residents we would like to focus on account of them being at higher risk of experiencing poverty. These include:

Child poverty

- Lone parent households²⁷
- Households with a disabled child²⁸
- Larger families (2+ children)²⁹
- Households with younger children - particularly multiple children aged under 10 years old and when the youngest child is under 4 years old³⁰

Working age adults

- Households not in work³¹
- Households with only one working adult³²
- Households with a disabled adult, including carers³³
- Adults with low formal qualifications³⁴

Other groups

- Older residents³⁵
- Tenants in the private rented and socially rented sectors³⁶
- Non-White households, particularly Black and Other ethnic households³⁷

²⁵ Small area model-based household sin poverty estimates in England and Wales, ONS, 2017 [Link](#)

²⁶ Stat-Xplore, DWP, November 2021

²⁷ Child poverty needs assessment, Hackney Council, 2014 [Link](#)

²⁸ Ibid

²⁹ Ibid

³⁰ Ibid

³¹ Estimates of in-work poverty by region: three year averages for 2014/15 to 2016/17, DWP, 2018

³² In-work poverty in the UK: Problem, policy analysis and platform for action, Cardiff University, 2017

³³ Poverty profile 2017, Trust for London, 2018

³⁴ An evidence review of the drivers of child poverty for families in poverty now and for poor children growing up to be poor adults, DWP, 2014

³⁵ Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index, MHCLG, 2019

³⁶ London Poverty Profile, Trust for London, 2017

³⁷ UK Poverty 2017: A comprehensive analysis of poverty trends and figures, JRF, 2017

- Households with the condition 'No Recourse to Public Funds' attached to their immigration condition³⁸
- We recognise the specific needs of the rough sleeping population and the framework will support ongoing work in this area. We know that single men who often make up a significant proportion of the rough sleep population.
- The needs of those provided accommodation in Temporary Accommodation outside of the borough also remain a key group.

The delivery plan and outcomes will explain how the needs of these groups of residents are being responded to across the five focus areas. For example, its actions will support employment amongst disabled residents and therefore respond to the needs of this group.

Effects of the Pandemic

- **Universal Credit claims:** In September 2021 there were just under 34,250 people claiming Universal Credit in Hackney, this has increased from 13,700 at the start of the pandemic in March 2020³⁹. This represents just under 17% of the population aged 16-64 years old and is an increase from 6.8% in March 2020⁴⁰.
- **Unemployment:** In Hackney the unemployment rate has risen from 4.9% at the start of the pandemic (Q1 2020/21) to 7.6% (Q2 2021/22)⁴¹
- **Food support:** In 2020 the number of clients served by Hackney Food Bank increased to just over 19,000 from just under 8,400 in 2019⁴².
- **Destitution and falling under the radar:** Many households with the condition 'No recourse to public funds' attached to their immigration status may have had paid employment. With the loss of jobs during the pandemic, and no recourse to welfare support, many would have found themselves in very difficult and unsupported positions.

Lived experience insight

The lived experience of residents living on a lower income helps us to understand:

- the people behind the policy, who can often feel dehumanised by systems of support
- the importance of tackling poverty by understanding the impact of poverty on wider outcomes
- the way services need to be organised to make sense to people who need them
- what people do to cope and the networks they already draw on, so we take account of these
- what "[good help](#)" looks like as opposed to well-intentioned but poor quality advice or short term handouts.

³⁸ Reflecting on Early Help with Migrant Families: A View from Practice, Begum, Flint, Hunt, Jolly & Amy Stringer Practice: Social Work in action, 2021

³⁹ Stat-Xplore, DWP, November 2021

⁴⁰ Ibid

⁴¹ Annual Population Survey, NOMIS, October 2021

⁴² Through grants reporting (private source)

Before the pandemic we started to gather insight from those with lived experience of food poverty and this [analysis](#) informed the food poverty action plan and the development of this framework. We have also reviewed primary and secondary research in the [community impact assessment](#) that has gathered indirect and direct impacts of the pandemic since March 2020. It seemed insensitive to gather more first hand lived experience directly during the pandemic, when people may be at crisis point, but we have gathered a range of frontline experiences and captured these in videos to support awareness and understanding of poverty from a resident perspective.

We plan to undertake focus groups and survey work to understand what did help people in crisis during the pandemic, by working with schools and other partners who distributed the Covid Local Support Grant.

The current context - January 2022

The effects of the pandemic mean that the framework is being developed in an even more uncertain context than usual. The economy recovered reasonably well in 2021 and unemployment has not reached the heights some feared but there are many challenges remaining. Some of the main forms of covid employment support ended in Autumn 2021 such as furlough for employed people and the self-employment support scheme. Policy changes like the eviction ban ended in May 2021 and the end of the £20 weekly uplift for Universal Credit at the end of September 2021 is even more recent. Similarly, increases in inflation, partly due to rising energy prices, have only just started and we are yet to see their full effects and tax and National Insurance contributions are due to rise for most earners in April 2022. Further policy changes relating to the Levelling Up agenda for regional economic development in England pose different challenges as policy and resources are potentially moved away from London which could further disadvantage residents. At a local level the effects of the pandemic and the cyber attack in October 2020 on how we operate as a council are still with us. The challenge of recovering our systems and correcting customer accounts is a significant and unprecedented challenge for the organisation. The framework is designed to be a flexible and responsive document. As noted in the introduction, the challenge of poverty reduction is even more challenging than normal and we will remain open to the changing situation and adapt our approach as and when we need to.

The causes of poverty

The causes of poverty are varied, complex and often interconnected. When combined these causes can lead to a resident experiencing multiple forms of disadvantage. This section gives an overview of some of these causes. We have selected some of the leading causes of poverty which include: Market forces: Labour market, childcare and housing, the State: inadequate benefit system, Individual Risk factors: Disability and Socio-Economic factors: ethnicity and immigration status. Many residents experience a number of these causes at once and the way in which they interact in a person's life demonstrates the complexity of poverty and the need for person-centred holistic support.

Markets - The labour market, childcare and the housing market

Worklessness

The majority of households in which no one is working experience poverty⁴³. Worklessness is therefore a significant risk factor for experiencing poverty. However, worklessness has decreased significantly in the ten years leading up to the start of the pandemic. In Hackney the number of workless households fell from 16,500 in 2010 to 12,100 in 2020⁴⁴. Although a significant factor, worklessness alone does not explain the levels of poverty experienced by residents in Hackney.

In-work poverty

A majority of people in poverty now live in a working household. This is a significant change in the nature of poverty. In London it is estimated that 60% of households in poverty were working households which is an increase from 44% fifteen years ago and 24% twenty five years ago⁴⁵. Hackney has experienced a similar change. In 2011 28% of housing benefit claimants were employed rising to 44% in 2019 and in September 2021 40% of people claiming Universal Credit were in some form of employment. At the end of 2021 we also found that of those residents living in Temporary Accommodation claiming Housing Benefit a third of residents or their immediate partner was in some form of employment. One of the highest risks of in-work poverty (just under 34%) is to live in a household with only one person in employment⁴⁶. These households make up a substantial proportion of those experiencing in-work poverty at 60%, more than double their population size⁴⁷.

Low pay

Low pay is one reason why we are seeing more working households experiencing poverty. A national study has shown that for all households experiencing in-work poverty just under half of these households include someone who is low paid⁴⁸. However, only one in five households with a low paid person experience poverty overall because often these lower

⁴³ Estimates of in-work poverty by region: three year averages for 2014/15 to 2016/17, DWP, 2018

⁴⁴ Annual Population Survey, NOMIS, 2020

⁴⁵ Poverty Profile 2017, Trust for London, 2018

⁴⁶ Ibid

⁴⁷ Ibid

⁴⁸ In-work poverty in the UK: Problem, policy analysis and platform for action, Cardiff University, 2017

paid people live with higher earners⁴⁹. Despite the change at the household level, low pay remains a significant factor contributing to in-work poverty. In Hackney between 2008 and 2018, the percentage of employees being paid below the London Living Wage has more than doubled from just under 10% in 2006 to just over 22% in 2018⁵⁰. For 2008 the London Living Wage was £7.20 per hour (2007 rate) and in 2018 it was £10.20 per hour (2017 rate).

Insecure employment

Insecure employment is another factor contributing to the increase in in-work poverty. Insecure employment is when someone is on a zero-hours contract, in temporary employment, working for an agency, or some combination of these. In London around 1 in 10 working age adults are at risk of insecure work with young people (aged 16-24 years old) particularly affected⁵¹. For some people this type of employment offers flexibility which they value and benefit from but for others it can create significant problems. For example, the number of workers on temporary contracts reporting that they were in this form of employment because of being unable to find a permanent position has increased in recent years from just under a quarter in 2004 to almost a third in 2016⁵². We also saw how this group was impacted at the start of the pandemic and was not entitled to employment support schemes.

Childcare costs

Childcare cost is another market driver for poverty as parents and carers are unable to fully participate in the labour market or address skills and educational needs. The Nuffield Trust reports that 'it is no surprise that families with children are represented amongst those who struggle to exit poverty as they enter work⁵³'. In the past ten to fifteen years childcare costs have increased above the rate of inflation. In England the weekly cost of childcare for an under two year old in 2017 was £154 compared to £71 in 2005 - if costs had risen with inflation the cost in 2017 would have been £93⁵⁴. Recent research has shown that in Inner London the cost is even higher at £175 per week⁵⁵. As well as involving high costs the childcare market can also be unsuited to parents and carers working atypical hours, does not offer day care and has limited holiday provision⁵⁶.

Housing costs

Poverty is not only driven by low income but also by the high cost of living and specifically the cost of housing.. In Hackney the poverty rate more than doubles after housing costs from 17.9% to 36.3%⁵⁷. This is also the case when looking at child poverty which rises from

⁴⁹ Ibid

⁵⁰ Living wage, Annual Population Survey, 2019

⁵¹ London Poverty Profile, Trust for London, 2017

⁵² Ibid

⁵³ In-work poverty in the UK: Problem, policy analysis and platform for action, Nuffield Trust, 2017

⁵⁴ Childcare costs, JRF, 2017

⁵⁵ Childcare Survey 2019, Coram Family and Childcare, 2019

⁵⁶ Creating an anti-poverty childcare system, JRF, 2016

⁵⁷ Households in poverty estimates for middle layer super output areas in England and Wales, ONS, 2017

25.7% before housing costs to an estimated 48% after housing costs⁵⁸. In London it has been estimated that households in poverty spend 56% of their take home income on housing costs⁵⁹.

The housing tenure of people living in poverty has been another significant change in the past decade. In London by 2015-16 the private rented sector had become the most common tenure for people living in poverty at 43%, followed by social housing at 36% and owner occupiers at 22%⁶⁰. In 2005-06 the social rented sector was the most common tenure for people living in poverty at 45%, followed by owner occupiers at 32% and 23% in the private rented sector⁶¹. Hackney has experienced a considerable change in its housing tenure with the proportion of households living in the private rented sector almost doubling between 2001 and 2011 from 15% to 29%⁶². In Hackney, 44% of households live in the social rented sector, 29% in the private rented sector and 26% are owner-occupiers⁶³.

Growth in private rents in London increased by 20% between 2010 and 2015 compared to the rest of England⁶⁴. In Hackney for 2015-16 the average rent for a two-bedroom property in the lower quartile (lowest 25%) was £1517 a month representing 73% of the gross full-time earnings for the lower quartile (lowest 25%) of earners in the borough⁶⁵. The impact of the benefit cap and the freezing of Local Housing Allowance between 2016 and 2020 has further impacted the affordability of housing in Hackney for lower income residents.

In Hackney the rise in the number of households in temporary accommodation further demonstrates the impact of unaffordable housing. In the decade leading up to the pandemic the number of households in temporary accommodation more than doubled from just under 1,300 in 2010-11 to just under 2,900 in 2017-18⁶⁶.

State

Inadequate benefit system

The welfare system offers essential support to individuals and households on low incomes through tax credits and benefits for those working, out of work and unable to work. The support available through the benefit system is often very limited and designed to only meet someone's basic needs. Universal Credit, the main benefit for working age adults, offers very low income protection compared to the support available in other comparable countries and is at the lowest real terms level since the early 1990s⁶⁷. The inadequacy of the benefits system can be further demonstrated by the number of households claiming Universal

⁵⁸ End child poverty website accessed June 2019 [Link](#)

⁵⁹ Estimates of in-work poverty by region: three year averages for 2014/15 to 2016/17, DWP, 2018

⁶⁰ London Poverty Profile, Trust for London, 2017

⁶¹ Ibid

⁶² Census 2011, ONS, 2012

⁶³ Ibid

⁶⁴ London Poverty Profile, Trust for London, 2017

⁶⁵ Rents and affordability, Trust for London, 2017

⁶⁶ Statutory homelessness tables, DLUHC, 2019

⁶⁷ Half Measures: The Chancellor's options for Universal Credit in the Budget, Resolution Foundation, February 2021 [Link](#)

Credit who are already in financial difficulties. It was reported in February 2021 that 1 in 5 families on Universal Credit were behind on essential bills (excluding housing costs) and almost half of new claimants of the benefit reported a fall in income of over 25%⁶⁸. The main welfare system is also not accessible to households with No Recourse to Public Funds.

Individual Risk factors

Taking a structural, systemic and intersectional approach

“Almost anyone can experience poverty, but some groups face higher risks. This is because they face greater barriers to increasing their income, or have higher costs, or both. Racism and discrimination can hold back ethnic minority groups from progressing in work, and illness or fluctuating health conditions can make training and work difficult to manage in the absence of flexibility and good support from employers. Lone parents, and parents of children with disabilities, may struggle to find quality part-time work and affordable childcare. Disabled people often face extra disability-related costs, which are only partly compensated through benefits. They also face barriers in employment. Almost half (48%) of people in poverty in the UK are either themselves disabled or living in a household with a disabled person.”⁶⁹

In line with the approach advocated by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, this framework identifies the groups who are most likely to be in poverty, but advocates a structural, systemic and intersectional approach. This means that we understand that some groups are more likely to be disadvantaged (ie structural inequality), that this is linked to prejudice and discrimination in society (ie systemic inequality), that they can face multiple, compounding disadvantage because of this and that we have to look at all the reasons together to come up with the right solutions (ie take an intersectional approach).

Complex needs

Complex needs can lead to people being in poverty and keep people in poverty, destitution and homelessness. By complex needs we mean people who have high support needs because they experience difficulties in their daily lives and in their relationships with other people and social institutions.⁷⁰ Research over the last decade has shown how people with complex needs who have mental health conditions, homelessness, experiences of violence, substance misuse or involvement in the criminal justice system are likely to have experienced an adverse childhood experiences.⁷¹ Poverty is itself a form of childhood trauma⁷².

⁶⁸ The debts that divide us: flash findings from a survey of families claiming Universal Credit, Resolution Foundation, February 2021 [Link](#)

⁶⁹ We can solve poverty, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2016 [Link](#)

⁷⁰ NICE Guidelines Scope for Complex Needs, 2020 [Link](#)

⁷¹ Hard Edges, Mapping Severe Multiple Disadvantage, Lankelly Chase, 2015, [Link](#) and [Research and resources](#) from Early Intervention Foundation

⁷² <https://cpag.org.uk/child-poverty/effects-poverty>

We have seen an increase in numbers of residents presenting with complex needs in housing needs, in Education and Children's Services, Adults, as well as in partners' services. As the number of children with higher needs increases, this is also leading to requests to rehouse families that cannot be met. Out of nearly 2000 homeless approaches from single people, nearly 60% declared multiple needs (mental health, physical health needs, substance misuse and domestic abuse). City & Hackney has the fifth highest rate of psychotic and bipolar disorders in England, with 4,500 on the Serious Mental Illness register and 11,000 people diagnosed with a personality disorder (linked to childhood abuse and neglect).

Disability

Disabled people are more likely to be in poverty because of a number of societal barriers which may create multiple disadvantages. At a national level, poverty is significantly higher amongst households in which at least someone in the family is disabled. In London it is estimated that after housing costs over a third (35%) of households in which someone has a disability are in poverty compared to just over a quarter (26%) for non-disabled households⁷³. Disabled people are more likely to experience poverty compared to non-disabled people because of difficulties accessing employment⁷⁴ and lower pay when in employment⁷⁵. They may also face higher costs for adjustments and adaptations and the benefits intended to help often don't fully cover them so there is an unfair penalty that may further disadvantage them. These issues can also affect carers supporting disabled family members and friends. In Hackney, in 2018 51% of the disabled working age population were employed and 14% were unemployed compared to 74% and 4% of the non-disabled population⁷⁶.

Ethnicity

At the London level poverty is significantly higher amongst the non-White population compared to the White population. In London in the three years leading up to 2019-20 poverty rates after housing costs were 39% for the non-White population and 21% for the White population⁷⁷. There are several reasons why this might be the case including direct and indirect discrimination, higher rates of people not in paid work, larger household size, younger demographics and underemployment. In 2020-21 it was estimated that in London 41% of Pakistani/Bangladeshi working age residents were not in paid work, 35% of Black residents, 33% of Other ethnicity residents, 31% of Mixed ethnicity residents, 22% of White residents and 21% of Indian residents⁷⁸. It should be noted that worklessness has decreased significantly for all people in the past ten years. At a London level, the unemployment rate is higher for the the non-White population. In March 2020 at the start of the pandemic the unemployment rate for people aged 16 years and over of White ethnicity was 3.5% compared to 7% for the non-White population⁷⁹. There was considerable

⁷³ Households below average income 2015-16 to 17-18, DWP, 2019

⁷⁴ Disability, long-term conditions and poverty, New Policy Institute, 2014

⁷⁵ Disability and poverty, New Policy Institute, 2016

⁷⁶ Employment status by disability status, Annual Population Survey, 2019

⁷⁷ Poverty rates by demographic characteristics in London 2019/20, Trust for London, accessed January 2022 [Link](#)

⁷⁸ Worklessness by ethnicity group, Trust for London, accessed January 2022 [Link](#)

⁷⁹ Unemployment rate by ethnic groups, London Datastore, accessed January 2022 [Link](#)

difference amongst different ethnic groups. The unemployment rate in London was highest for Black residents at 8.9%, 7.4% for Other ethnicity residents, 7.2% for Mixed ethnicity residents, 5.5% for Pakistani/Bangladeshi residents and 4.6% for Indian residents⁸⁰. National research before the pandemic has shown that Black-Caribbean residents in Hackney may be even more likely to experience unemployment than the Black population⁸¹.

In Hackney the considerable Orthodox Jewish population in the north of the borough will also mean there are higher rates of economic inactivity due to religious and cultural practices. At a national level higher rates of economic inactivity amongst women from non-White ethnic groups has also been identified as a driver for higher poverty rates⁸². There is also evidence to suggest that non-White groups are more likely to experience underemployment compared to the White population with higher rates of part-time employment for certain groups⁸³. There is also some evidence at the national level that overqualification is more prevalent amongst the non-White ethnic groups. In 2016 a total of 40% of Black-African and 39% of Bangladeshi employees were found to be overqualified for their roles compared with 25% of White workers⁸⁴.

Women

Women face significant challenges which increase their risk of experiencing poverty. Lone parents are particularly at risk of poverty in the UK and 9 in 10 lone parents are women meaning that the overwhelming number of lone parents at risk of poverty will be women⁸⁵. As noted in the previous section, higher rates of economic inactivity amongst women has been identified as a cause of poverty. This is often linked to unpaid caring responsibilities and cultural barriers. Part-time work and low pay are more prevalent among women because of gender discrimination and caring responsibilities⁸⁶. The quality of the local labour market, transport and childcare provision are particular issues for women.

Immigration status

Migrants have a higher and long-term risk of poverty compared with the rest of the population⁸⁷. Driving factors for higher risk of poverty for migrants include living in the private rented sector, being younger adults and living in a couple where only one person is earning as well as having no recourse to public funds status⁸⁸.

In Hackney research into the experience of vulnerable migrants found that migrants can experience several challenges that make them particularly vulnerable to living on a low

⁸⁰ Ibid

⁸¹ Poverty and ethnicity in the labour market, JRF, 2016

⁸² Ibid

⁸³ Ibid

⁸⁴ Ibid

⁸⁵ Office for National Statistics, Families and Households: 2014 [Link](#)

⁸⁶ Poverty through a Gender Lens: Evidence and Policy Review on Gender and Poverty, University of Oxford, 2014

⁸⁷ Foreign-born people and poverty in the UK, JRF, 2016

⁸⁸ Ibid

income. For example, due to lack of understanding or distrust of public institutions and the government, some migrants do not claim the benefits that they are entitled to⁸⁹. Migrants may also be given the wrong information and advice about their entitlements to services meaning they pay for services when they don't need to do so or decide not to do something because of prohibitive cost⁹⁰. Those migrants with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) status can find themselves destitute and unable to access the main forms of support⁹¹.

A review into poverty amongst refugees and asylum seekers in the UK has found that poverty has become more severe due to a reduction in welfare entitlements and restrictions in access to the labour market in the past ten years⁹². The review found that the UK's asylum process itself and the insufficient level of financial support is the main cause of poverty for this group⁹³. London has also seen [an increase in asylum seekers](#) even before the current Afghan refugee crisis (from 700 to 5000 in 5 years).

⁸⁹ Understanding vulnerable migrants and how they access services in Hackney, Hackney Council, 2017

⁹⁰ Ibid

⁹¹ Ibid

⁹² UK Poverty 2018, JRF, 2019

⁹³ Ibid