

## **Report of the Anti-Poverty Coordination Group to the meeting of Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be held on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2021**

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### **Subject: Anti-Poverty Strategy**

#### **Summary statement:**

This report presents a progress update on the District Anti-Poverty Strategy from the District's Anti-Poverty Coordination Group. This Group leads the strategy, developed the accompanying delivery plan and submits an annual monitoring report to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny. It is a multi-partner group, consisting of representatives from the Council, Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), health, Incommunities and the voluntary and community sector.

The impact of the pandemic on poverty across the District has been significant. This report therefore provides an overview of the impact and examples of the great work being undertaken across the District to support our poorest and most vulnerable communities through and beyond the pandemic.

This paper also outlines the current position on addressing Period Poverty in the Bradford District.

#### **Equality impact**

Anti-poverty work is a key component of realising the Council's equality objectives, combating disadvantage and increasing the life chances of protected groups. Low income groups are one of the protected groups in our equalities strategy.

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Overview & Scrutiny Area: Corporate

## 1.0 SUMMARY

1.01 This report presents a progress update on the District Anti-Poverty Strategy (APS) and:

- Provides an overview of the APS;
- Reviews the impact of the pandemic on poverty across the District;
- Provides examples of the great work being undertaken across the District to support our poorest and most vulnerable communities through and beyond the pandemic, including work to address Period Poverty.

### Bradford District's Anti-Poverty Strategy

1.02 The current APS is based on the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) framework. The strategy was developed by officers following a recommendation by Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee (O&S), based on the findings of the Poverty Scrutiny Review. The strategy was approved by Executive in 2019. The APS is organised around the following broad themes:

- Boost income and reduce costs;
- Deliver an effective benefit system;
- Promote long term inclusive growth benefitting everyone;
- Improve education standards and raise skills;
- Strengthen families and communities.

1.03 The last report to this committee on the APS - January 2020 - predates the pandemic. Appendix 1 provides an overview of the APS key themes and accompanying delivery plan actions. Since then, work across the public, private and community sectors has focussed on coping with and recovering from the pandemic. Therefore, this report provides an overview of the full range of anti-poverty work being undertaken across the Council and by key partners. This is presented in Table 1 under the strategic themes of the APS.

1.04 **Work to Address Period Poverty.** In February 2020, a report regarding Period Poverty in the Bradford District was presented to the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This year Period Poverty has been integrated into the wider Anti-poverty report, recognising the strong links between those experiencing poverty and Period Poverty.

1.05 For the purposes of this report, Period Poverty is defined as; *'being unable to access sanitary products and having a poor knowledge of menstruation often due to financial constraints in the UK'* This definition has been adopted by the United Kingdom and the Scottish Government, the National Assembly for Wales and others. Section 3 provides a fuller report on Period Poverty.

## **Cross Council Work on Poverty and the Impact of the Pandemic**

- 1.06 Addressing the needs of people most in need, particularly those facing deprivation and poverty, is a key part of everyone's job in the authority and in the work of our partners.
- 1.07 The impact of the pandemic has seen a shift of focus as the Council and partners on the APCG worked across the public, business and community sectors to address the immediate impact of the pandemic and plan for the District's recovery to build back better. District wide strategies and plans have been refreshed and renewed to build back better from the pandemic. A full outline of this work is provided in Table 1.
- 1.08 The economic strategy and skills strategy have been refreshed and renewed and a new economic recovery plan launched. There is a developing health inequalities strategy, focused on the factors which exacerbate health and wellbeing inequalities across the District and our communities, driving a programme of community engagement and supporting the key Living Well approach. The new Council Equalities strategy specifically identifies low income as a protected characteristic and an integral part of all equality impact assessments. Born in Bradford (BiB) and programmes sitting under BiB, such as Act Early, are providing both a rich evidence base and supporting policy development locally, regionally and nationally around levelling up, tackling deprivation and inequality.
- 1.09 It is clear from the data that the pandemic has hit our poorest and most vulnerable communities hardest. As a wide range of national, regional and local research shows, the most vulnerable groups have not only faced the highest sickness and mortality rates, they have also borne the costs of the wider economic, educational, social and cultural impacts of the pandemic. This has deepened the challenges we were already facing. Further detail of this impact is outlined later in this report.
- 1.10 The response to the pandemic across the public, private, voluntary and community sectors has shown the central importance and strength of Bradford's local partnership working and how the District excels at coming together to pool resources at times of great pressure, delivering provision jointly across a wide range of needs. Examples of this work include:
- Neighbourhood and Community Services altering the way that they work. The service has moved to 7 day working and developed the existing Area Office infrastructure to mobilise 5 district hubs to provide and respond to immediate needs of families: connecting to foodbanks and other providers, providing food direct through food parcels, connecting to befriending and offering a range of services to help those isolated such as dog walking support.
  - £220m has been provided to keep local business afloat; £150 discount on Council Tax to low income families; and £2.5m provided to help 5,800 working families on low income to isolate if infected or a contact. Care leavers aged 18-21 can be exempt from Council Tax and from 21-25 can receive a 50% discount.
  - The Council and Public Health working on understanding the impact of the pandemic on health inequalities, including: a rapid assessment of mental health needs in response to the pandemic; new work around living well and community

development and developing joint work with the area offices to support community asset building; and access into Living Well and programmes such as the social prescribing networks.

- Developing a District Sustainable Food Strategy. Whilst one of the priorities is addressing food insecurity and poverty, others around healthy eating culture, community food growing and sustainable food system will also contribute.
- Providing investment and support for emergency food programmes. Commissioning through Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations has helped to maintain food supplies to the crisis food sector and provide grants to extend food support with BAME communities. Free school meals have been provided throughout the holidays and weekend hunger programmes have been run.
- Expanding credit union membership by 700 and introducing a nationally acclaimed Covid Loan and Recovery Scheme.
- Administering the various business grant schemes, including support to the large SME and family-run sectors in the District that are more vulnerable to loss of income.
- Housing Options dealing with over 8,000 enquiries related to homelessness or the threat of homelessness. Under the Everyone In programme, 435 individuals have been supported off the street, with 283 being supported to suitable moving on options.
- Maintaining welfare advice services: locality based and district wide services have continued to operate throughout the pandemic. Although access systems moved to predominately online and via telephone they have still supported over 10,500 people and managed over 28,900 queries in 2020/21.
- Developing the Warm Homes, Healthy People Service.
- Providing over 3,000 laptops to support pupils' home learning, including providing laptops and digital learning to all our children in care.
- Investing £3.7 million in Skills House to provide locality based support for 24,000 people to access the labour market and reskill and upskill to secure and maintain employment. This will be key as we see the potential impact on jobs, businesses and households as furlough is removed.
- Developing a tuition programme for over 600 year 11 pupils to raise attainment in maths.
- Developing a poverty proofing the school day pilot, to be started in 22 schools from September 2021.
- Introducing a 0-5 early help and intervention service which helps offset the lasting impact of poverty experienced in early childhood.
- Act Early, in collaboration with a range of partners, developing a neighbourhood renewal programme for Holmewood (a Well Bradford area) which, if successful, could provide a model for how to support our most vulnerable communities across the District.
- This year, and for the past 2 years, the Council has paid the Real Living Wage to relevant employees.
- Planning for investment of national grants into suicide prevention, improving public mental health and reducing obesity, focusing on inequalities and vulnerable communities.
- Providing the Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) Programme 2021. This is a Department For Education (DFE) funded programme for Easter, Summer and Christmas 2021. It provides sporting and enrichment activities for Free School Meal

children and families. Over summer, 23,000 young people were engaged in the programme. Alongside the activities, a free meal is provided and advice and guidance can be provided to families around a range of support needs.

- 1.11 The impact of, and response to, the pandemic has created a new poverty landscape. The pandemic has deepened existing inequalities, highlighted emerging ones such as digital exclusion and a debt crisis, and resulted in a wide range of strategies and policies being renewed and redeveloped. Changes to the organisation of resources and activity in the District have been taking place, with more being done at community level. These changes are set to accelerate and become ever more embedded in system's culture. At the same time, changes to the health and social care infrastructure are rapidly underway, with the move to the Integrated Care Systems (ICS) and Integrated Care Partnerships (ICP) placing greater emphasis on population-wide outcomes and equality of access to healthcare and health outcomes. The national and regional picture has also changed dramatically. For example, devolution and the creation of a West Yorkshire mayoral authority. A priority for the Mayor is creating a regional "Good Work" Charter to address issues such as low pay.
- 1.12 The last report to this committee noted that 9 of 25 actions in the APS action plan were being focussed on but that a great deal of anti-poverty work took place outside the action plan, lines of reporting were multiple and the link between the APS, work of the APCG and wider bodies, such as the Health and Well Being Board, needed review.
- 1.13 Over time, the work to address poverty in the District needs to evolve. Work is already underway with the APCG and other partners to review, map out and align anti-poverty work across the District, in light of the impact of the pandemic and the developing anti-poverty work across the District. We are focusing on:
- Mapping and joining up anti-poverty work across the Council and partners to identify gaps and opportunities to join up work;
  - Reviewing and refreshing priorities in light of the impact of the pandemic;
  - Reviewing the role, remit and membership of the APCG and its relationship to other key partnerships;
  - Developing the voice and participation of those who experience poverty.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.01 The current Anti-Poverty Strategy is based on the JRF framework. The strategy was developed by officers following a recommendation by Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee (O&S), based on the findings of the Poverty Scrutiny Review. The strategy was approved by Executive in 2019.
- 2.02 The strategy is a partnership strategy for the District. It is led by the Anti-Poverty Coordination Group (APCG) who also developed and monitored the accompanying delivery plan. The APCG is a multi-partner group, consisting of representatives from the Council, Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), health, Incommunities and the voluntary and community sector.

- 2.03 The APCG has overall responsibility for the strategy and for submitting an annual monitoring report to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny. It is chaired by Councillor Jabar. Recent consultation with members suggests a need to review membership, role and remit of the APCG and how the APCG and APS link in with wider poverty work across the District and the partnerships overseeing this work.

### Why We Need an Anti-Poverty Strategy

- 2.04 Bradford has one of the youngest and most diverse populations and an economy worth £9.5 billion, the 11<sup>th</sup> largest in England. It has a strong, broad-based, innovative and entrepreneurial business community. And we are one of the most internationally connected cities in the UK. Our cultural and historical assets together with our beautiful landscapes attract over 10 million visitors a year. In Born in Bradford, we house a world leading research programme. We have award winning youth and social cohesion projects and integrated careers and vocational skills programmes. The University of Bradford's is ranked top for promoting social mobility. Fantastic programmes such as Better Start Bradford, Act Early, JU:MP and the Bradford Outcome Area are all working on improving the health, well-being and life chances of our people.
- 2.05 Bradford is also the 5<sup>th</sup> most income deprived City in England. Over a third of our children live in families classed as being in poverty. Not only is poverty a huge cost to those individuals and families living in poverty, it is also a huge cost to our wider economy and society. It blights lives and destroys potential.

#### Social Mobility Commission 2021

Bradford has some of the worst outcomes for disadvantaged young people in the country, with earnings of £9,500 per year and one of the largest pay gaps between young people from working class and better off backgrounds, even with the same levels of education. In comparison, disadvantaged people from neighbouring Harrogate earned £18,000 per year – almost twice as much – with a smaller pay gap.

- 2.06 The poorer you are the lower your life expectancy, the poorer your overall health, the less likely you are to achieve in school, secure good jobs with good wages in adult life, secure access to good housing and participate in the full social, economic and cultural life of your community.
- 2.07 The poorer you are the more likely you are to live in neighbourhoods with higher crime and anti-social behaviour, have less access to green spaces and play areas, suffer high risk of exposure to pollution, accidents and injury, live in poor housing, pay more for basic essentials such as food, water and energy (this is known as the **poverty premium**), often facing difficult choices between whether or not to eat or pay a bill, experience lack of access to basic services such as health care (this is known as the **inverse care law**), and spend a larger part of your adult life coping with illness or disability. The stresses and anxiety of living in poverty impose huge

strains on individuals and families. The can lead to family breakup, homelessness, higher rates of drug and alcohol use.

2.08 Poverty is an enormous waste of people's lives and potential. It is also a brake on our ability to develop a strong, diverse and inclusive economy and society. Poverty means that people have little income to spend. This reduces demand in the economy so that businesses cannot grow and develop. Low wages, insecure jobs and low skill levels reduce productivity, slowing economic innovation and development. Dealing with the consequences of poverty imposes huge strains on public services and the public purse - around £1 in every £5 of public spending is spent dealing with the effects of poverty. At the same time, high levels of poverty reduce tax revenues and income, reducing the ability to provide services that meet need and develop the economic, social and cultural wealth of our communities.

2.09 In short, we cannot hope to achieve the potential of our District and ensure that all our citizens live long, happy and fulfilling lives unless we can reduce the impact of poverty on life chances.

### **Poverty Across the District**

2.10 Before the pandemic hit, progress was being made on key fronts. For example:

- The median wage rate across the District had risen from £449 in 2015 to £536 in 2020;
- Unemployment had fallen from 11% in 2013 to 5.2% in 2019;
- There were improvements in educational attainment;
- There was a reduction in the number of NEETs (not in education, employment or training).

2.11 Yet even before the pandemic hit, there were signs that poverty was increasing across the District, reflecting national trends, and the pandemic has highlighted and deepened the impact of poverty. Appendix 2 provides a fuller analysis. In brief:

- **Deprivation:** The 2019 Indices of Multiple Deprivation shows Bradford District as the 13<sup>th</sup> most deprived local authority in England. The 2015 Indices ranked it as 19<sup>th</sup>. So it has fallen six places. 14 of Bradford's 30 wards are in the 10% most deprived wards in England.
- **Child Poverty:** Research conducted by Loughborough University shows that in 2020, 37 % of the District's children lived in families classed as being in poverty; up from 30.1% in 2015. Bradford West and Bradford East constituencies are in the top 20 constituencies with the highest rates of child poverty (after housing costs).
- **Low income:** In 2019/20, over 51,000 families in Bradford were living with absolute low income; 69% were in-work; 28% were headed by a lone parent. As of April 2021, Bradford had the second highest number of families (5,000) hit by the two child limit of all local authorities (after Birmingham). 12.4% of the total householders in the District are in fuel poverty.
- **Health:** By 2020, increases in life expectancy had stalled in the Bradford District. The poorest child in the District can expect to live 10 years less than the wealthiest

and our poorest citizens can expect to spend far more of their adult life coping with ill health and disability.

- **Education and Skills:** Before the pandemic the poorest and most disadvantaged children were 18 months behind their peers in educational attainment by the age of 16. The pandemic has widened this gap. In 2020, for Bradford pupils on free school meals (FSM) the Attainment 8 score was 36.9; for Bradford pupils not on FSM it was 50.7. The adult skills base remains relatively low and young people enter labour markets where job opportunities are often limited and in poorly paid and unskilled sectors. 14% of the adult population have no qualifications and only 26% have qualifications at level 4 or above; nationally, the figures are 7% and 26% respectively.

## Poverty and The Pandemic

2.12 The pandemic has had a profound impact on poverty and inequality. It is the poorest and most vulnerable groups who have been hardest hit by the pandemic. In particular, children and young people have been very heavily hit by the wider social, educational and economic consequences of the pandemic.

2.13 National, regional and local research by Born in Bradford all show this impact. Again, Appendix 2 provides more details. In brief:

- **Unemployment:** both the adult and youth claimant count have doubled since June 2019. The unemployment claimant count in June 2021 was 9%; for 18-24 year olds it was 13.%. Bradford is the 3rd highest city for unemployment and 12<sup>th</sup> highest local authority. For youth unemployment, it is the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest city and 5<sup>th</sup> highest local authority. 21 of Bradford's 30 wards had unemployment rates higher than the national average.
- **Job Retention Scheme (Furlough scheme):** as of March 2021, 79,100 applications had been made for the furlough scheme. Furlough will end this October.
- **Health:** from March 2020 – February 2021, 50% of Covid fatalities occurred in the 20% most deprived areas of Bradford. For the 20% least deprived areas of Bradford it was 7% of fatalities. Particular groups have been hardest hit: minority ethnic communities, people with disabilities and those in deprived neighbourhoods.
- **Homelessness:** over the past year, the Housing Options Service has received 8,250 applications for help with homelessness or the threat of it. 1,890 requests relating to conditions in the private rented sector have been made – the highest ever figure and a 5% rise in one year.
- **Council Tax Reduction:** the number of people claiming Council Tax reduction rose during the pandemic from 27,000 to 32,300<sup>1</sup> due mainly to the increase in people becoming unemployed.

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<sup>1</sup> Document DS, Report to Bradford Council Executive 6 April 2021



- **Food Bank Use:** across the District, this has soared over the past year. From a base line of 15,796 meals being provided in February 2020 to 54,468 by February 2021.
- **Free School Meals:** nationally, the number of children eligible for FSM has risen by 20% and Bradford reflects this. Currently 25.3 % of secondary pupils in Bradford are eligible for FSM, up from 21.9% in 2019/20.
- **Income and Debt:** the pandemic has allowed the more privileged to save money. The poorest have not only been more likely to experience job loss or furlough, they have also not been able to minimise costs, for example, through home working. A recent (June 2021) Cities for Growth report pointed out that in cities like Bradford one in every two neighbourhoods were likely to have been pushed into debt. For every £1 reduction in spending for the poorest neighbourhoods, there has been a £12 reduction for those in the wealthiest. The richest have saved much more. People in the bottom 20% of the income scale were twice as likely to see a drop in income as those in more affluent neighbourhoods.

## What Our Families Are Experiencing

2.14 The Born in Bradford Families Survey provides detailed local data on the impact of the pandemic. The survey of over 2,000 families, conducted in June 2020, found:

- **Poverty is increasing compared to pre-Covid baselines:** fewer families are living comfortably (33% to 20%). More families are 'just about getting by' (27% to 19%) or finding it difficult to manage (11% to 7%).
- **Vulnerabilities are multiplying:** 6% of respondents reported poor general health. Respondents where the main earner was unemployed or lived in poor quality housing were twice as likely to be in poor health (14%). Families living in private rented accommodation were more likely to live in poor housing conditions (33% report problems of damp, 20% problems with vermin; 14% need major repairs; compared to 25%, 13% and 12% respectively for owner occupiers).
- **Food security is decreasing:** 23% of respondents reported that food often didn't last and they couldn't afford to buy more; 10% had to skip meals because there wasn't enough money for food.
- **Physical health behaviours are worsening:** 41% of parents who smoked reported smoking more. 37% of those who drank alcohol were drinking more.
- **Mental ill health is becoming rife:** two-fifths of respondents have depression or anxiety.
- **Physical activity levels are decreasing:** only 27% of children met the physical activity guidelines during lockdown. 29% of children didn't leave their home to do physical activity during the first lockdown, especially children of Pakistani heritage (39% compared to 18% of white British heritage).
- **Digital inequalities are limiting access to remote education:** South Asian heritage children were more likely to have had access to computer equipment only some of the time (25%) compared to children from White British (19%) and other ethnic groups (20%). South Asian heritage children were also more likely to only have access to the internet some of the time (14%, compared to 8% of White British) and to books (17% compared to 5% White British children).

- **Classroom inequalities are increasing:** in a survey conducted across all Bradford schools, teachers expressed concern over the disproportionate effect of Covid-19 on vulnerable children and children with SEND. Key issues included: the lack of access to specialist services, such as children's social services, Speech and Language Therapy (SALT), and counselling.

### **What We Are Doing: Reasons to Be Positive**

2.15 As noted above, since the last report, work across the public, private, voluntary and community sectors has been dominated by responding to the pandemic. The pandemic has shown the central importance and strength of Bradford's public services and local partnership working and how Bradford excels in partnership working and provision.

2.16 A huge amount of work has been undertaken, both in providing an immediate response to the pandemic to support our most vulnerable communities and in developing a longer term recovery plan. The breadth of this work is captured in Table 1.

2.17 In summary, this work has focussed on:

- Dealing with the immediate impact of the pandemic;
- Supporting vulnerable groups;
- Building back better.

2.18 Highlights include:

- Neighbourhood and Community Services transforming the way that they work. They moved to 7 day working and mobilised 5 district hubs to provide and respond to immediate needs of families: connecting to foodbanks and other providers, providing food direct through food parcels, connecting to befriending and offering a range of services to help those isolated such as dog walking support.
- £220m provided to keep local business afloat; £150 discount on Council Tax to low income families; and £2.5m provided to help 5,800 low income working families isolate if infected or a contact. Care leavers from 18-21 can be exempt from Council Tax and from age 21-25 can receive a 50% discount. Bradford Council has also provided grants to eligible home-based and mobile self-employed businesses, such as driving instructors and mobile hairdressers, who have not been able to apply for the other Government grants. Bradford Council has also provided a one-off support grant for all the District's taxi drivers. The funding will allow all the District's licensed taxi drivers to claim £600 in support.
- The Council and Public Health working on understanding the impact of the pandemic on health inequalities, including: a rapid assessment of mental health needs in response to the pandemic; new work around living well and community development and developing joint work with the area offices to support community asset building; and access into Living Well and programmes such as the social prescribing networks.

- Developing a District Sustainable Food Strategy. Whilst one of the priorities is addressing food insecurity and poverty, others around healthy eating culture, community food growing and sustainable food system will also contribute.
- Providing investment and support for emergency food programmes. Commissioning through VCS organisations has helped to maintain food supplies to the crisis food sector and provide grants to extend food support with BAME communities. Free school meals have been provided throughout the holidays and weekend hunger programmes have been run.
- Expanding credit union membership by 700 and introducing a nationally acclaimed Covid Loan and Recovery Scheme.
- Administering the various business grant schemes, including support to the large SME and family-run sectors in the District that are more vulnerable to loss of income.
- Housing Options dealing with over 8,000 enquiries related to homelessness or the threat of homelessness. Under the Everyone In programme, 435 individuals have been supported off the street, with 283 being supported to suitable moving on options.
- Maintaining welfare advice services: locality based and district wide have continued to operate throughout the pandemic. Although access systems have moved to predominately online and via telephone, they have still supported over 10,500 people and managed over 28,900 queries in 2020/21. The Council invested £350K Covid funds in 2020 and then, through Public Health grant, £232.5K more latterly.
- Maintaining and investing in locality based welfare advice services to provide support to those most in need and develop a wide range of online services and developing the Warm Homes, Healthy People Service.
- Providing over 3,000 laptops to support pupils' home learning, including providing laptops and digital learning to all our children in care.
- Investing £3.7 million in Skills House to provide locality based support for 24,000 people to access the labour market and reskill and upskill to secure and maintain employment. This will be key as we see the potential impact on jobs, businesses and households as furlough is removed.
- Developing a tuition programme for over 600 year 11 pupils to raise attainment in maths.
- Developing a poverty proofing the school day pilot, to be started in 22 schools from September 2021.
- Introducing a 0-5 early help and intervention service which helps offset the lasting impact of poverty experienced in early childhood.
- Act Early, in collaboration with a range of partners, developing a neighbourhood renewal programme for Holmewood (a Well Bradford area) which, if successful, could provide a model for how to support our most vulnerable communities across the District.
- This year, and for the past 2 years, the Council has paid the Real Living Wage.
- Planning for investment of national grants into suicide prevention, improving public mental health, and reducing obesity, focusing on inequalities and vulnerable communities.
- Providing the Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) Programme 2021. This is a DFE funded programme for Easter, Summer and Christmas 2021. It provides sporting and enrichment activities for Free School Meal children and families. Over summer, 23,000 young people were engaged in the programme. Alongside the activities, a

free meal is provided and advice and guidance can be provided to families around a range of support needs.

**Table 1: District Wide Anti-Poverty Work Since January 2020**

Anti-Poverty Strategy Theme	What has Been done Since March 2020
<p><b>Boosting Income and reducing costs</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Real Living Wage:</b> This year, and for the past 2 years, the Council has paid the Real Living Wage</li> <li>• <b>Feeding Families</b> (excludes children and families supported through foodbanks): Holiday Hunger programmes have run across the school holidays from Summer 2020. For summer 2021, low income families in receipt of Council Tax Reduction were given £75 supermarket vouchers to help with the cost of food. In summer 2020, 1,973 children attended sessions and 21,128 meals were provided (includes main meals; snack packs and food sent home to families). In October 2021, 3,232 families were supported (average of 4 children per family) and 23,008 meals provided. Over Easter 2021 26,432 children were fed. In addition to this Weekend Hunger programmes have been running since December 2020 and from December to March, 22,747 children had been fed.</li> <li>• <b>Credit Union:</b> An additional 700 people have joined the credit union from March 2020-March 2021. 50% of these have also been supported through access to an innovative Covid Credit Loan Scheme set up in 2020.</li> <li>• <b>Fuel Poverty:</b> A two year Warm Homes Healthy People project has just been completed. This has led to the development of a new Warm Homes Health People service, currently under commission.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Deliver an Effective Benefits Service</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Housing Benefits:</b> The service has improved the prompt payment of housing benefits, despite an unprecedented increase in cases of over 10%. The 2020/21 average time to pay Housing Benefits was 12 days; by far the best performance Bradford has achieved.</li> <li>• <b>Council Tax Reduction:</b> An additional 5,000 people have been awarded Council Tax Reduction, totalling over £5m to those on a low income. No one on a low income had to pay any Council Tax for the first 3 months of this year. This helped Bradford achieve an increase in in-year collection, despite the pandemic.</li> <li>• <b>Income Support to Self-Isolating:</b> £2.5m provided to help 5,800 working families on a low income isolate if infected or a contact. This removed a source of pressure for our low income families and meant they could focus on dealing with the pandemic rather than worrying about incurring debt. It's also meant the Council did not see a reduction in income from Council Tax.</li> <li>• <b>Advice services:</b> Debt advice, welfare rights advice, housing, immigration support has all increased. In the first 6 months of 2020, 14,824 people made a total of 42,260 enquiries to all partners within the Bradford District.</li> <li>• <b>Welfare benefits:</b> The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) has processed 10 times as many claims. Having to refocus claimants' job searches, helping them understand transferable skills and the labour market. Additional support for the BAME community has been provided and focussed support for those on Health Journey, over 50s and 18-24 year olds.</li> <li>• <b>Commissioned welfare advice services.</b> Maintained welfare advice services: locality based and district wide have continued to operate throughout the pandemic. Although access systems have moved to predominately online and via telephone they have still supported over 10,500 people and managed over 28,900 queries in 2020/21.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Improve Education Standards and Raise Skills</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Skills House:</b> £3.57 million invested in Skills House partnership to provide locality based support for 24,000 people to access the labour market and reskill and upskill to secure and maintain employment. Local partners have aligned all their adult skills and support offer through Skills House. Since September 2020, 2,000 local people have received a careers consultation through the partnership, over 7,400 have progressed into training and the partnership have led recruitment for key sectors during the pandemic, including staff supporting Track and Trace, Covid Hubs, and the vaccination roll-out. Consequently, more than 550 local residents have either progressed into work or received in-work support to sustain employment through the partnership since September.</li> <li>• <b>Future Boost:</b> New partnership approach to ensure that everyone aged 16-25 will have access to support them all into fair employment includes: careers support, mentoring, work placement and paid placements, guaranteed college placements, apprenticeships and pathways to Higher Education.</li> <li>• <b>Living Well:</b> Schools programme housing a number of projects aimed at improving the health and well-being of pupils. One of its key strands is combating classroom inequalities by: poverty proofing the school day, bridging the digital divide and reducing discrimination and prejudice.</li> <li>• <b>Poverty proofing the school day:</b> This programme is being refreshed and extended from Autumn 2021 under public health. A pilot programme will be run across 22 schools. We are also working with Action for Sports to help develop provision of free sports shoes and equipment for deprived school children.</li> <li>• <b>Digital inclusion:</b> 3,000 of our most vulnerable children have been provided with laptops to support their learning through the pandemic and onwards. All our children in care have been provided with laptops and digital learning support.</li> <li>• <b>Early help:</b> We are developing a 0-5 Early Years Programme and an Early Childhood Services Outcomes Offer. As part of this work, we will deliver a prevention and early help offer for families (to support children and young people from conception to 5 years).</li> <li>• <b>School improvement:</b> Bradford Opportunities Area (BOA) is supporting a further 17 schools to improve their Ofsted grading through a school improvement programme.</li> <li>• <b>Tuition programme:</b> The BOA is also developing a tuition programme for 600 disadvantaged year 11 pupils to improve their KS4 maths results.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Strengthening Families and Communities</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Neighbourhood and Customer Services:</b> Altered the way that they work. The service has moved to 7 day working and developed the existing Area Office infrastructure to mobilise 5 district hubs to provide and respond to immediate needs of families: connecting to foodbanks and other providers, providing food direct through food parcels, connecting to befriending and offering a range of services to help those isolated such as dog walking support.</li> <li>• <b>Food poverty and insecurity:</b> In addition to the provision of FSMs noted above and the delivery of food parcels during the pandemic, the Council and partners are developing a comprehensive <b>sustainable food strategy</b> for the whole District. One of the four key themes of this strategy is developing actions to reduce food insecurity and provide affordable food.</li> <li>• <b>Act Early:</b> This project is driving a joined up approach to early intervention policies aimed at giving our most vulnerable children and families the support they need to ensure the best start in life. The Act Early Holmewood Initiative is one example of an area based project aimed at improving the physical health, mental health, educational attainment and social mobility of people within the area. If successful, the approach can provide a model for area regeneration.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Cultural and social enrichment:</b> A cultural engagement strategy for all our children and young people is being developed as part of our 2025 City of Culture bid. We will extend the opportunities for cultural and social enrichment within local communities through, for example, developing sports, arts, and theatre and music engagement activities. Our communities should offer young people a rich cultural life.</li> <li>• <b>Housing:</b> The Council Plan set out measures to improve the poor quality of housing stock, particularly in the private sector, by working with owners and landlords and encouraging and supporting them to bring properties into good repair, including empty homes.</li> <li>• <b>Connecting communities:</b> We are developing a strategy to connect our communities, both digitally - a third of the poorest households lack access to fast broadband services - and through green transport links that allow them to move around the District and connect with family, friends and the wider life of the District.</li> <li>• <b>Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) Programme 2021:</b> This is a DFE funded programme for Easter, Summer and Christmas 2021. It provides sporting and enrichment activities for Free School Meal children and families. Over summer, 23,000 young people were engaged in the programme. Alongside the activities, a free meal is provided and advice and guidance can be provided to families around a range of support needs.</li> </ul>
<b>Supporting the economy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Business support:</b> The Council has made over 43,280 business support grant payments to over 11,000 businesses worth a total of £220.1 million. Over £50 million has been awarded in business rates relief. Bradford Council has also provided grants to eligible home-based and mobile self-employed businesses such as driving instructors and mobile hairdressers who have not been able to apply for the other Government grants. The Council has also provided a one-off support grant for all the District's taxi drivers. The funding will allow all the District's licensed taxi drivers to claim £600 in support</li> <li>• <b>The economic strategy:</b> Has been renewed and updated to build back better for the post Covid world. This is key to reducing poverty because, at its heart, poverty is about the income people receive and the opportunities open to them. High unemployment in a low skill, low wage economy will trap people in poverty.</li> </ul>
<b>Vulnerable Groups</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Housing Options Service:</b> Responded to Covid advice by introducing telephone-based assessments whereby customers are triaged by experienced officers and allocated an interview appointment. As a result, the service was able to prioritise customers based on their circumstances, offer a more targeted intervention and assist customers more effectively. There have been 1,890 requests relating to housing conditions in the private rented sector – the highest ever total and a 5% rise in a year.</li> <li>• <b>Vulnerable children and families:</b> We have worked hard to support our most vulnerable children and families. For example, 80,525 virtual and face to face visits have been carried out with vulnerable children.</li> <li>• <b>Adult Social Care Access Team:</b> working alongside other partners made a total of 76,064 outbound calls to people on the Government's Extremely Vulnerable List who were asked to shield, resulting in 28,933 people receiving information and advice, 1,007 people receiving food support and 590 people receiving social isolation related support.</li> <li>• <b>Mental Health:</b> The Council and Public Health are working on understanding the impact of the pandemic on health inequalities, including: a rapid assessment of mental health needs in response to the pandemic; new work around living well and community development and developing joint work with the area offices to support community asset building; and access into Living Well and programmes such as the social prescribing networks.</li> <li>• <b>Everyone in:</b> 435 individuals have been supported off the street, 70 individuals remain in emergency accommodation with 284 supported with securing suitable move on options. During the pandemic Central Government subsidised accommodation for people habitually sleeping rough in temporary housing which has been</li> </ul>

extended to October 2021. Sanitary products are made available for women accommodated who are menstruating and are unable to cover the costs of appropriate materials.

- **Period Poverty:** Looked after Children in the care of the Local Authority who are menstruating receive sanitary products as required. Financial allowances paid to foster carers also accounts for the costs of period products.
- **Children in care/ care Leavers:** Those aged 18-21 can be exempt from Council Tax and from age 21-25 can receive a 50% discount. Also, as noted above, all our children in care have been provided with laptops and digital learning support.



## Moving Forward Post Pandemic: A New Poverty Landscape

- 2.19 The impact of and response to the pandemic has created a new poverty landscape. The pandemic has deepened existing inequalities, highlighted emerging ones such as digital exclusion and a debt crisis and resulted in a wide range of strategies and policies being renewed and redeveloped. Tackling inequality in the District is also a key cross cutting theme in the draft Bradford District Plan. Changes to the organisation of resources and activity in the District have been taking place, with more being done at community level. These changes are set to accelerate and become ever more embedded in system culture. At the same time, changes to the health and social care infrastructure are rapidly underway, with the move to the ICS and ICP placing greater emphasis on population-wide outcomes and equality of access to healthcare and health outcomes. The national and regional picture has also changed dramatically. For example, devolution and the creation of a West Yorkshire mayoral authority. A priority for the Mayor is creating a regional “Good Work” Charter to address issues such as low pay.
- 2.20 This has transformed the context in which our anti-poverty strategy operates. The range of strategies and plans addressing poverty and the partnership bodies overseeing these is provided in Table 2 below.

**Table 2: Indicative List of Local Strategies and Policies Key to Anti-Poverty Work and their Lead Partnership Bodies**

Key Strategies/Policies (Developed or in development)	Partnerships/Lead Bodies
<b>The Economic Recovery Plan</b>	Bradford Economic Recovery Partnership Board
<b>Anti-Poverty Strategy</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Committee leads governance: Anti- Poverty Co-ordination Group co-ordinates the strategy, Anti- Poverty Events Group runs events. Well Being Board looking to link with APS.
<b>Skills Strategy</b>	Skills and Employment Partnership
<b>Equality Strategy</b>	Well Being Board
<b>Health Inequalities Strategy</b>	Well Being Board
<b>Act Early</b>	Well Being Board/Health and Social Care Economic Partnership
<b>Living Well Programme</b>	Well Being Board - Public Health leading multi-agency partnership on poverty proofing
<b>Review and Commissioning of Advice Services</b>	Public Health leading
<b>Bradford Food Strategy</b>	Well Being Board – supported by Sustainable Development Partnerships/Public Health
<b>Education Opportunity Area Programme</b>	Education Opportunity Board
<b>Children’s Plan</b>	Children’s and Young People’s Systems Board
<b>Child Friendly Communities</b>	Children and Young People’s Systems Board

<b>Culture is Our Plan (we are developing a cultural engagement strategy for children and young people)</b>	Cultural Place Partnership
<b>Warm Homes/Healthy People</b>	Housing Partnership with Public Health leading commissioning
<b>Poverty Proofing the School Day</b>	Sits under Living Well Programme, led by public Health, Education, Schools, VCS
<b>Housing improvement and Neighbourhood Retrofit</b>	Housing Partnership/Sustainable Development Partnership
<b>Digital Inclusion</b>	Well Being Board
<b>Mental Health Strategy</b>	Mental Health, Learning Disabilities, Autism Health and Care Partnership Board,

2.21 We have now moved out of lockdown measures and the Government is reducing or removing many policies introduced to help manage the pandemic and reduce the economic social and health impacts. This is likely to further increase the impact of poverty and affect our most vulnerable communities.

Key considerations here include:

- The ending of furlough in October 2021 and impact on retail and the high street.
- Removal or maintenance of the £20 per week Universal Credit uplift.
- Resumption of courts and tribunals to pre pandemic service levels which will increase demand for welfare advice and legal support.
- Reduced/ceased funding for the Everyone In programme.
- Cessation of the moratorium on no fault evictions – this ended on 31 May 2021.
- Impact of Long Covid – research suggests 55% of households with long Covid also experience financial hardship.
- Welfare advice funding –the Council has invested Covid funds and public health money in the past two years. Existing contracts are due to end on the 31 March 2022.
- Potential rise in inflation and its impact on cost of essentials such as food and fuel.

2.22 The new poverty landscape raises the question of how best to join up and align the APS with the strategies and policies working directly on anti-poverty issues and move toward a whole systems approach.

2.23 Work is already underway with the APCG and other partners focussed on the following themes:

- **Mapping and joining Up:** As Tables 1 and 2 show, there is a new policy landscape developing around anti-poverty work across the District. The dangers of overlap and duplication were recognised in the report of January 2020. Given the new policy landscape, this is even more of a danger now. Many of the key projects addressing poverty are reported on as separate projects and policies. Both having a clear map of what work is taking place and how this all joins up is key to ensuring a whole systems approach.

- **Setting priorities** in the post Covid world. The impact of the pandemic and the developing evidence base on this suggest that there will be a clear need in the short term to focus on:
  - maximising income and minimising spending and debt through:
    - debt reduction, rent, mortgage and payment holidays;
    - **poverty proofing** services;
  - reducing evictions and improving housing conditions;
  - provision of welfare advice and support services (there is an ongoing review of these services);
  - addressing food insecurity and fuel poverty;
  - developing a co-ordinated and District wide approach to debt relief strategies and minimising costs faced by those in poverty.

We know that work addressing these issues is being conducted across the District and the further mapping of this work will help identify this work. Reviewing and resetting priorities for the APS in the light of this work, and the challenges of the post Covid world, is crucial to determining future work.

- **The role, membership and remit of the APCG** and its relationship to other key partnerships. Given the new policy landscape and impact of the pandemic, the role membership and remit of the APCG bears review. We are currently exploring with the Wellbeing Board how best to align anti-poverty work across the District. We will be presenting to the Well Being Executive Group in October and will be working with Strategic Board Coordinators to connect anti-poverty work and ensure it runs through different programme areas. As part of this, we will also review and clarify the role of the APCG in:
  - Monitoring and reporting on anti-poverty work;
  - Co-ordinating strategies and policies and working in partnership to deliver key aims;
  - Setting priorities and directly delivering specific projects;
  - Monitoring and reporting on trends in poverty;
  - Providing voice for groups in poverty, linking in with key projects aimed at developing the voice of poor and marginalised groups and feeding this voice into the policy making process;
  - Driving the poverty proofing of strategies, policies and provision across the District.
- **Voice and Lived Experience:** One of the key strands of work for the APCG was giving voice to those living in poverty. The need for this voice has become all the more important given the impact of the pandemic. How best to promote this voice and capture lived experience should be reviewed, focussing on:
  - Promoting the voice, lived experience and involvement of people living in poverty at all stages of the policy making process: identification of needs, on design and delivery of policies and programmes, evaluation of what works, for who in what contexts;

- Collating, joining up and presenting clear evidence based on lived experience from the range of work going on across the District. In particular, the developing and rich evidence base of Born in Bradford;
- Campaigning and lobbying on behalf of those in poverty;
- Poverty proofing.

### **3 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

#### **Period Poverty**

3.01 There are no precise figures on numbers experiencing Period Poverty but estimates can be made.

- Office of National Statistics (ONS) data shows that, in 2018, there were approximately 27,078 females aged 14-21 resident in the District. At 9.9 % this is higher than the national average of 8.7% for this age and gender split.
- There are 143,500 women and girls aged between 13-54, the typical age range of regular menstruation.
- There is a likely correlation between poverty and deprivation levels overall in households and period poverty. However, this has not been researched. If it is estimated that 30.4% of the population is living in poverty this can be used to extrapolate the numbers of women at particular risk of experiencing period poverty as being 43,600 overall.
- Bradford also has 10% (51) of the most deprived lower super output areas (LSOA) nationally indicating that significant numbers of children (26,400) aged 0-15 years old are living in households with income deprivation.
- Education does not record period poverty or its effects as part of its routine sickness absence data collection. However, absence records due to illness for females have been rising steadily from 2.53% in 2014/15 to 2.65% in 2018/19. This is less than the concurrent rise in males' absence due to illness during this time which is less at 2.33%. It may be that period poverty has an impact on lost days in education, as the research commented on below suggests.

#### ***Impact of the Pandemic***

3.02 Research conducted by Plan International in March 2020, through surveys and the lived experience, shows that during the pandemic period poverty has continued to be an issue. The impact of school and community facilities closures has exacerbated this and it is thought that the numbers of women and girls experiencing period poverty is rising. Main outcomes from their research are:

- 10% of girls aged 14-21 said they were unable to afford sanitary products.
- 49% said they had missed at least one day of school as a result of their period.
- In a work context, 73% of women and girls said they struggled to work in the way they wanted to due to the effects of menstruation including: pain, discomfort, low energy and more general discomfort.
- The Birmingham City School of Health Research is conducting research which started in March of this year: *Periods in a Pandemic: how UK period poverty*

*initiative is mitigating COVID-19 related Challenges.* Early findings of this suggest that during COVID, disruptions to the school day have meant switching awareness raising sessions re period poverty to an on line format which for some has been positive. This has allowed proportionally more awareness raising sessions to be run and the digital format avoids 'collective embarrassment' for some students. However, for households where digital equipment and broadband connections are problematic this has had the opposite effect. With repeated school closures, new ways of distributing products to those that may need them have been set up. Requests for products from pupils during lockdown can now be received via teachers or tutors, or from central wellbeing teams, who will then send them out. Schools, particularly in Wales and Scotland, have promoted the use of reusable products during lockdown, with pupils providing positive feedback on their usage and an increase in requests for reusable products being noted as a result.

## **What is Being Done Locally**

### ***Foodbanks and other support projects***

3.03 There is a thriving network of food poverty projects across the Bradford District. Many of which offer help with hygiene and period poverty needs. In a short survey of the main projects conducted during February 2021, the majority responded to say that they made period poverty and other hygiene products available. However, this is contingent on donations being received. Returns have been received from:

- Bradford Central (Trussell Trust);
- Bradford East (Women's Zone);
- Bradford Metropolitan;
- Bradford North (Trussell Trust);
- Great Horton (St John's);
- Ilkley Foodbank;
- Lower Grange Community Centre;
- Save the Mother's trust;
- Thornton (St James);
- Wibsey (St Pauls);
- Worth Valley.

3.04 This is a small sample of all the projects available across the District. A number of responding foodbanks expressed concerns around regularly sourcing supplies, noting that they'd offer these when they had suitable donations but that these were not consistent. Others talked about their main user groups being male or past menstruation age. They also noted that the need is wider than period poverty and included personal hygiene products, such as toothbrushes, shampoo, soap and, deodorant.

3.05 There was also a need to look at distribution and an appropriate and sensitive way.

3.06 Some projects include hygiene products routinely with the food parcels offered, others wait for service users to request help, a few include sanitary products in a

separate place making it possible for women and girls to source what they need on an ad hoc basis.

- 3.07 Ensuring regular supplies and what product/s are available is contingent on what is donated, which is not necessarily driven by the providers or the end user.

### ***Holiday Schemes***

- 3.08 There are a range of holiday schemes offering activities during school holidays. A proportion are funded directly via Education and the others are supported via charitable funds and Feeding Bradford. All offer food as a routine part of their programmes and many also offer support around period poverty sanitary product needs. Unfortunately, numbers are not available for these in terms of women and girls as beneficiaries or how many products have been distributed.

### ***Council***

- 3.09 *Support schemes vulnerable and/or shielded groups.* At the onset of the pandemic in April 2020, the Council organised a central scheme for food and other essential supplies to a range of households across the District unable to support themselves. This included a range of hygiene supplies, shampoo, nappies, sanitary products etc. In the few months this operated, it is estimated that 3,000 sanitary goods and 5,000 nappies were distributed this way.
- 3.10 *Donation and collections schemes.* Prior to the pandemic and subsequent lockdown there were two period poverty schemes operating from Council office bases. In Britannia House there was a hygiene poverty donation project that consisted of donation boxes placed in the largest kitchen facilities on each floor. When these were full, Facilities Management collated the goods which were then given to a local charity, Innchurches, for distribution. This was a successful project which has ceased temporarily but it hoped to resurrect when offices begin to open post June 2021.
- 3.11 The other approach was fostered by the Unite union, the Period Dignity project encouraged public bodies such as local and central government to stock sanitary products in female toilets in publicly accessible offices. In Bradford this included Sir Henry Mitchell House, Margaret Macmillan Towers, City Hall and Keighley Town hall. As the majority of offices are closed and/or operating at much reduced occupancy at present, this is scaled back; however, Customer Contact Staff, accessible from the ground floors in Britannia house and Keighley town hall, can and do offer period poverty supplies if and when requested.

### ***Schools***

- 3.12 The Government has made finance available for the supply of period products and also to raise awareness and dispel some of the stigma attached to period poverty. This is accessed directly through the Department of Education portal and schools and any state supported establishment for education specifically aimed at learners aged 16-19 may claim. The amount claimable is levied on 35% of the number of

learners in the organisation whose legal gender is female and who, based on age, are likely to have started their periods.

- 3.13 Government has invested £11.4 million with the Personnel Hygiene Services Group (*phs* is a private sector company) to supply personal hygiene goods to schools and other educational establishments direct. Whilst this is positive, according to their own needs mapping, if 100% of those likely to be in need were supplied, the anticipated costs projected would be closer to £18 million.
- 3.14 Establishments may purchase a range of disposable and reusable products including;
- Period Pads;
  - Environmentally friendly period pads
  - Reusable period pads
  - Applicator tampons;
  - Non-applicator tampons;
  - Menstrual cups.
- 3.15 Each school or establishment is responsible for their own needs and must claim their costs. Unfortunately, this is not currently part of the monitoring arrangements between the Council and local schools therefore information specific to Bradford District for period poverty in schools, costs and their take up is not available.
- 3.16 With repeated school closures, new ways of distributing products to those that may need them have been set up. Requests for products from pupils during lockdown can now be received via teachers or tutors, or from central wellbeing teams, who will then send them out. Schools, particularly in Wales and Scotland, have promoted the use of reusable products during lockdown, with pupils providing positive feedback on their usage and an increase in requests for reusable products being noted as a result.

### ***Everyone In project***

- 3.17 During the pandemic, central Government subsidised accommodation for people habitually sleeping rough in temporary housing, which has been extended to October 2021. Sanitary products are made available for women accommodated who are menstruating and are unable to cover the costs of appropriate materials.

### ***Looked after Children***

- 3.18 Children who are in the care of the Local Authority and are menstruating receive sanitary products as required. Financial allowances paid to foster carers also accounts for the costs of period products.

## **4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL**

- 4.1 There are none arising from this report.

## **5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES**

5.1 There are none arising from this report

**6. LEGAL APPRAISAL**

6.1 There are none arising from this report

**7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

**7.2 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

7.21 There are none arising from this report

**7.3 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACTS**

7.31 There are none arising from this report

**7.4 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

7.41 There are none arising from this report

**7.5 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT**

7.51 There are none arising from this report

**7.6 TRADE UNION**

7.61 There are no trade union implications.

**7.7 WARD IMPLICATIONS**

7.71 The Anti-Poverty Co-ordination Group intends to work directly with Council officers with a direct remit for developing and monitoring ward action plans.

**7.8 IMPLICATIONS FOR CORPORATE PARENTING**

7.81 Children in Care are one of a number of groups most affected by poverty and reduced life chances. The report identifies specific measure to support children in care and care leavers. For example, children in care have been supplied with laptops and a digital learning programme and care leavers from 18-21 can be exempt from Council Tax and from age 21-25 can receive a 50% discount.

**7.9 ISSUES ARISING FROM PRIVACY IMPACT ASSESMENT**

7.91 There are no issues arising from the privacy impact assessment.

**8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS**

8.1 None.

**9. OPTIONS**



9.1 Not applicable.

## **10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

10.1 That the Committee consider the report and agree to have an update on progress in twelve months' time.

## **11. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1: Key Themes and Delivery Plan

Appendix 2: Poverty Across the District Before and After the Pandemic.

## **12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

12.1 None.

## Anti-Poverty Strategy and Delivery Plan

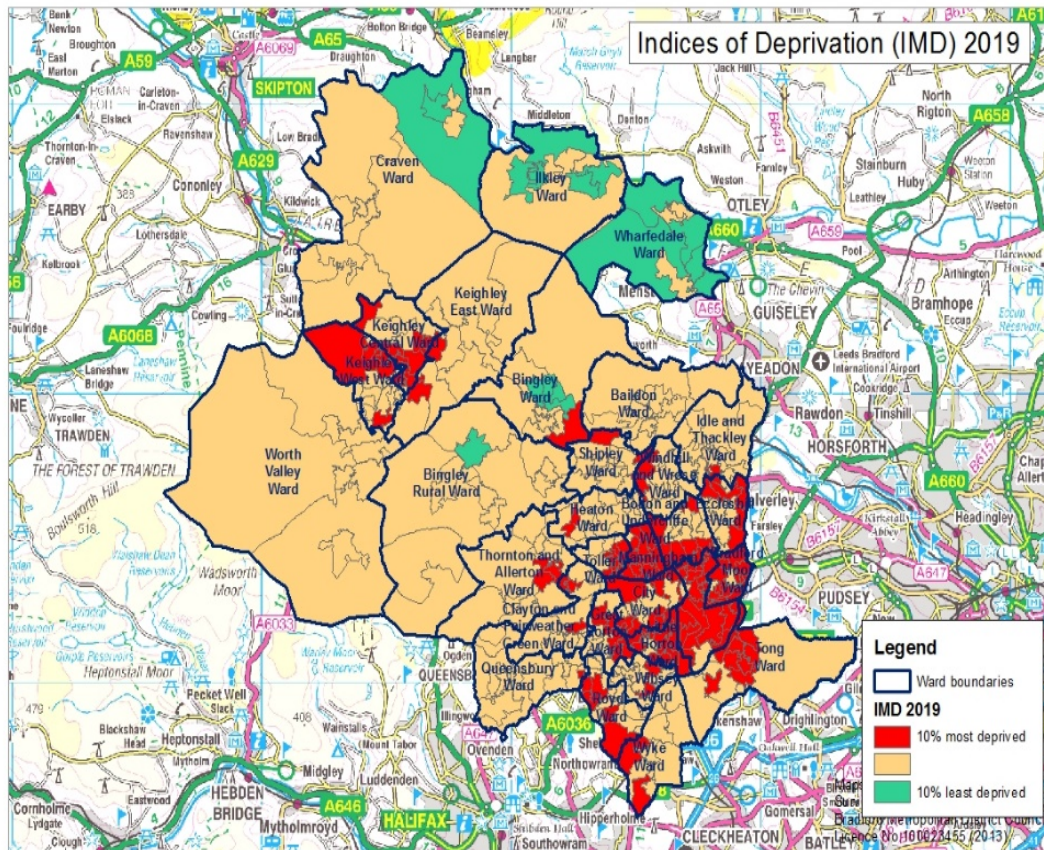
Theme	Delivery Plan Actions
Boost Income and Reduce Costs	Consider different approaches to recovering statutory debt such as Council tax, rent arrears, utilities bills, court costs and fees and charges (Local Charter)
	Develop a different way of recruiting to entry level jobs that delivers literacy and numeracy support on the job.
	Investigate, with a view to developing and implementing, the use of social inclusion currency in the District (the currency is virtual and is earned through taking part in specified activities. It can be used to access discounts with local participating retailers and services).
	Work with the Stronger Communities Programme (Integration pilot area) and other programmes to consider how barriers to employment experienced by those currently living in poverty might be overcome.
	Encourage workplace representative groups to better publicise membership – as they offer a means for people to improve their working conditions and also to access a range of services, such as legal advice, and discounted services. Partner organisations to offer these groups space in their staff newsletters.
Promote Long Term Growth Benefitting Everyone	Appropriate APCG members to consider how to support implementation of the Council's Social Value and Inclusive Growth Policy to ensure big local employers use their collective spending power to better connect jobs and opportunities to neighbourhoods and businesses that would benefit most.
	Consider if additional support is required for the self-employed who are claiming Universal Credit.
Deliver an Effective Benefits System	Raise the profile of financial capability, access to low-cost credit and highlight the dangers of loan sharks.
	Consider measures needed to ensure all private rented sector residents are aware of and claiming benefits they are entitled to, including Tax-free childcare.
	Develop recommendations for action as informed by the recent mapping exercise undertaken about the needs and entitlements of refugees.
	Seek information about Roma and Travellers communities on which to base future recommendations for action.
	Lobby central government to increase the weekly allowance for asylum seekers and to allow them to work.
	Work closely with the Stronger Communities Programme (integration Area pilot) to develop and deliver awareness and information sessions for service providers about support available to help people access benefits including provision of ESOL.
	Create/improve data sharing agreements - with clarity of use of information across frontline agencies to ensure individuals can access appropriate support.
	As is happening in the social rented sector, increase digital access and enablement to access benefits for those in the private rented sector.
	Consider future joint lobbying activity and response to consultations about changes to the benefits system.
	Consider with Children's Services, and others, actions needed to 'poverty proof the school day' – for instance encouraging schools to provide used uniform and shoe swap shops, items of uniform to be available from high street supermarkets.
Improve Education Standards and Raise Skills	Consider data from Bradford Education Opportunity Area volunteer literacy and numeracy in schools mapping and plan appropriate actions.
	Consider how to target the apprenticeship levy at the most vulnerable residents.

	Consider with Education how community venues (including schools out-of-hours) could be used to run skill development sessions.
Strengthen Families and Communities	Involve people with first-hand experience of poverty in shaping policies and approaches to prevent poverty and enable people to get out of poverty – consider establishing a Poverty Truth Commission or other mechanism.
	Facilitate community-led solutions to poverty through an asset-based approach within communities, recognising the strengths and skills already present (including those with a lived experience of poverty).
	Work with social enterprises and voluntary and the charity sector to find new and innovative solutions to address food poverty in the District.
	Encourage initiatives to reduce the risk of social isolation.
	Identify groups with destitute members – current support available to them and unmet needs.
	Consider how our multi-lingual people could be involved to support individuals in community settings to inform about interventions and gather views on proposed actions.

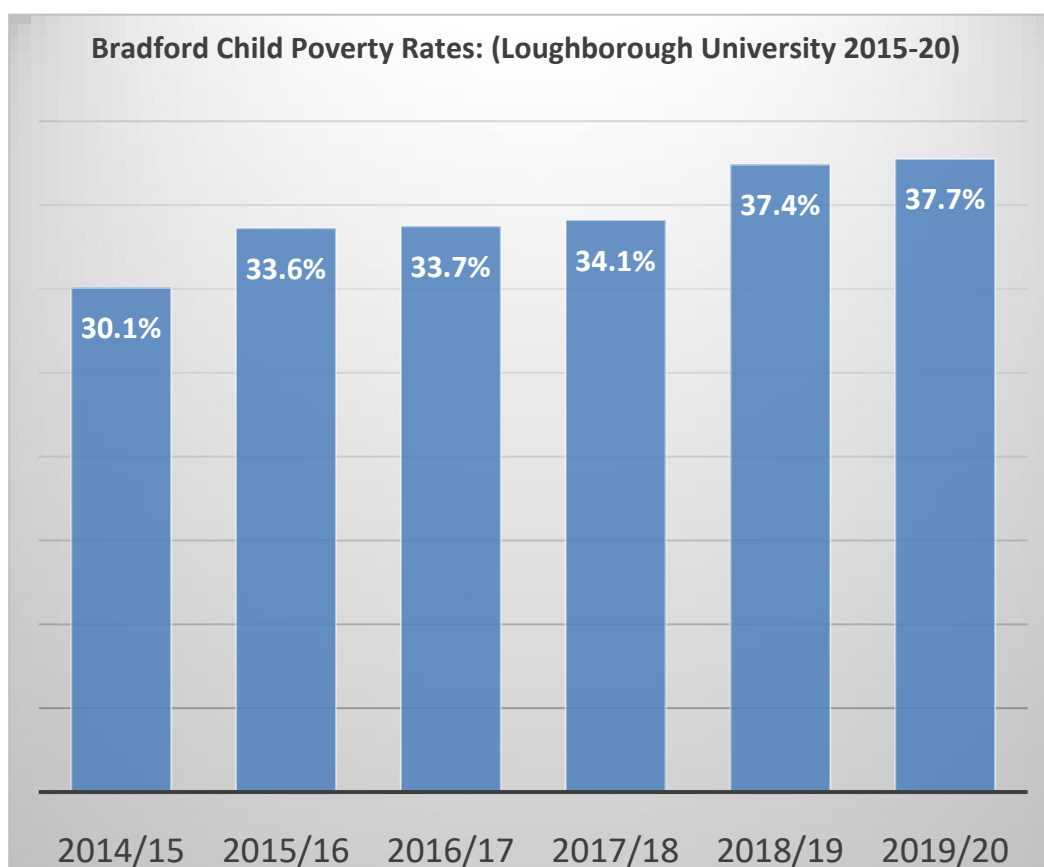
## Appendix 2: Poverty Across the District Before and After the Pandemic

### Poverty and Deprivation

- The 2019 Indices of Multiple Deprivation shows Bradford District as the 13<sup>th</sup> most deprived local authority in England. The 2015 Indices ranked it as 19<sup>th</sup>. So it has fallen six places. Bradford is the 5<sup>th</sup> most income deprived local authority. 14 of Bradford's 30 wards are in the 10% most deprived wards in England.



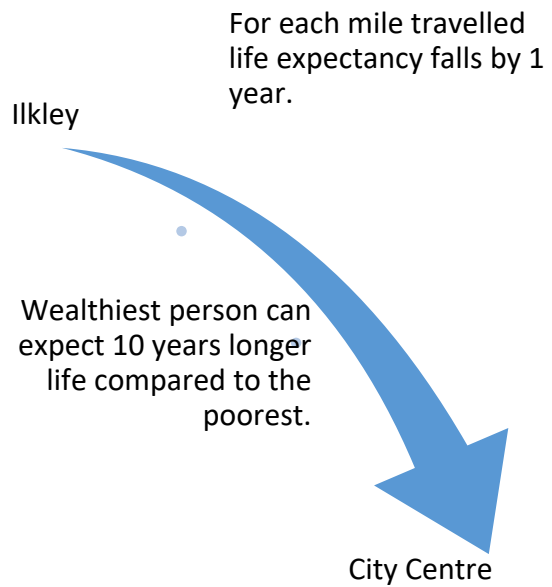
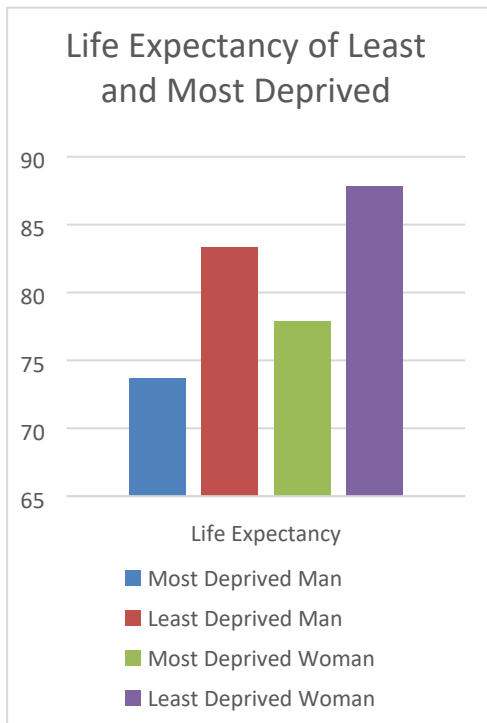
- Research conducted by Loughborough University shows that in 2020, 37 % of the District's children lived in families classed as being in poverty. Bradford's has two constituencies – Bradford West and Bradford East – in the top 20 constituencies with the highest rates of child poverty (after housing costs). By March 2020, Bradford West had 47.3% of children lived in families classed as being in poverty; in Bradford East, 46.7%. From 2015-2020 the rates increased by 10.8% and 8.7% respectively.



- In 2019/20, over 51,000 families in Bradford were living with absolute low income. Of these families, 69% were in-work and 31% were not in work; 28% were headed by a lone parent and 72% were headed by a couple.
- 12.4% of the total householders in the District are in fuel poverty.

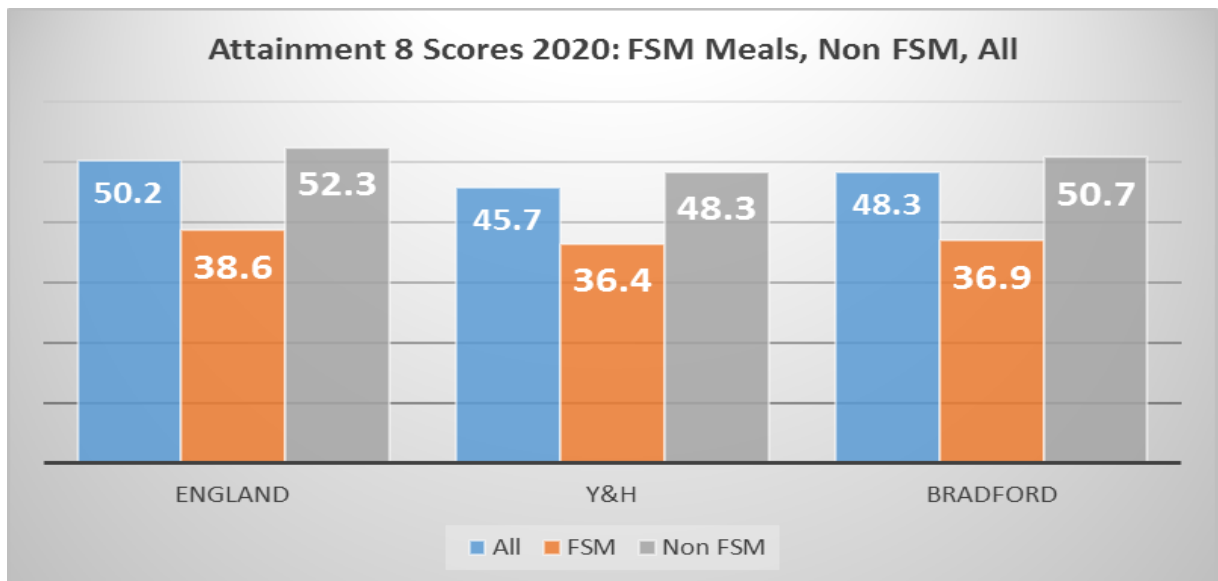
### **Health inequalities**

- By 2020, increases in life expectancy had stalled in the Bradford District. The poorest child in the District can expect to live 10 years less than the wealthiest. Our poorest citizens can expect to spend far more of their adult life coping with ill health and disability. From Ilkley to the centre of Bradford it is approximately 10 miles. For each mile travelled from Ilkley to the centre, life expectancy drops by a year.



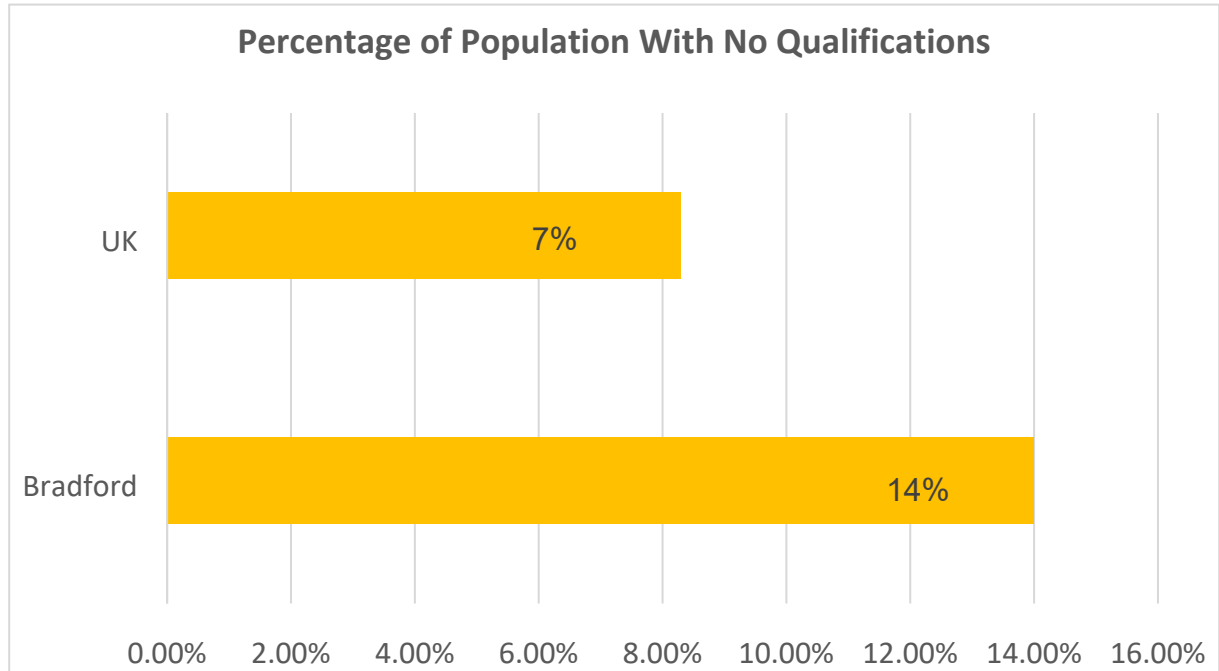
### Education and skills:

- While progress has been made in closing the gap in educational attainment between the District and the national average, it has not gone far enough or fast enough. Before the pandemic the poorest and most disadvantaged children were 18 months behind their peers in educational attainment by the age of 16. The pandemic has widened this gap.
- In 2020, for Bradford pupils on free school meals (FSM) the Attainment 8 score was 36.9; for Bradford pupils not on FSM it was 50.7



- The adult skills base remains relatively low and young people enter labour markets where job opportunities are rare and in poorly paid and unskilled sectors. The pandemic has significantly worsened this situation. 14% of the adult population

have no qualifications and only 26% have qualifications at level 4 or above; nationally, the figures are 7% and 40% respectively.



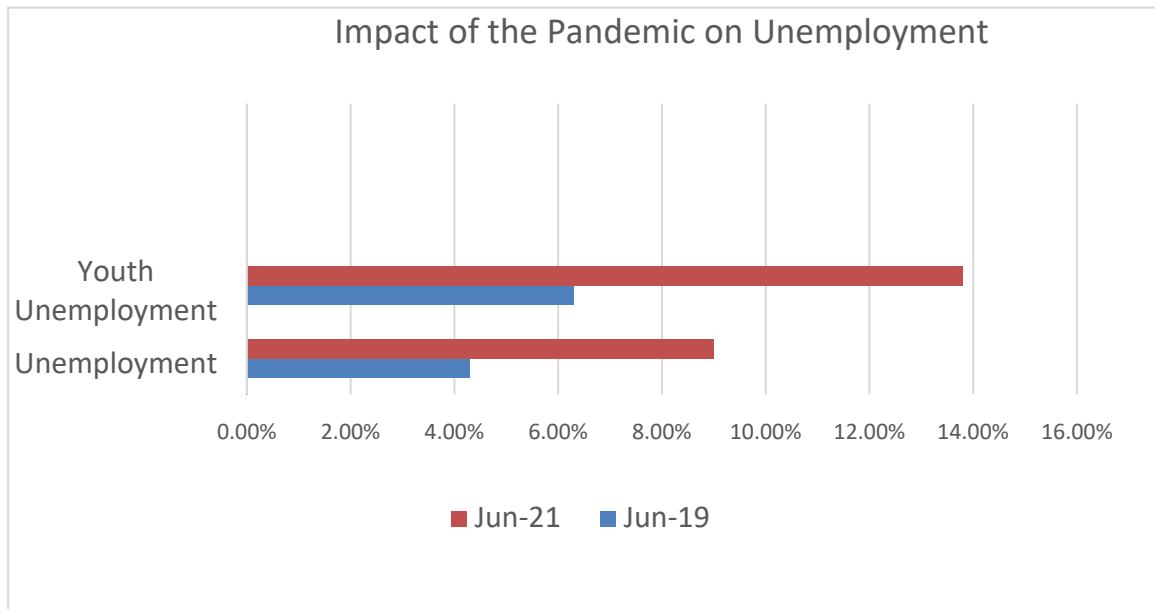
## Poverty and The Pandemic

The pandemic has had a profound impact on poverty and inequality. It has shone a light on and further deepened our longstanding social, economic and health inequalities and high rates of poverty. It is the poorest and most vulnerable groups who have been hardest hit by the pandemic. In particular, children and young people have been very heavily hit by the wider social, educational and economic consequences of the pandemic.

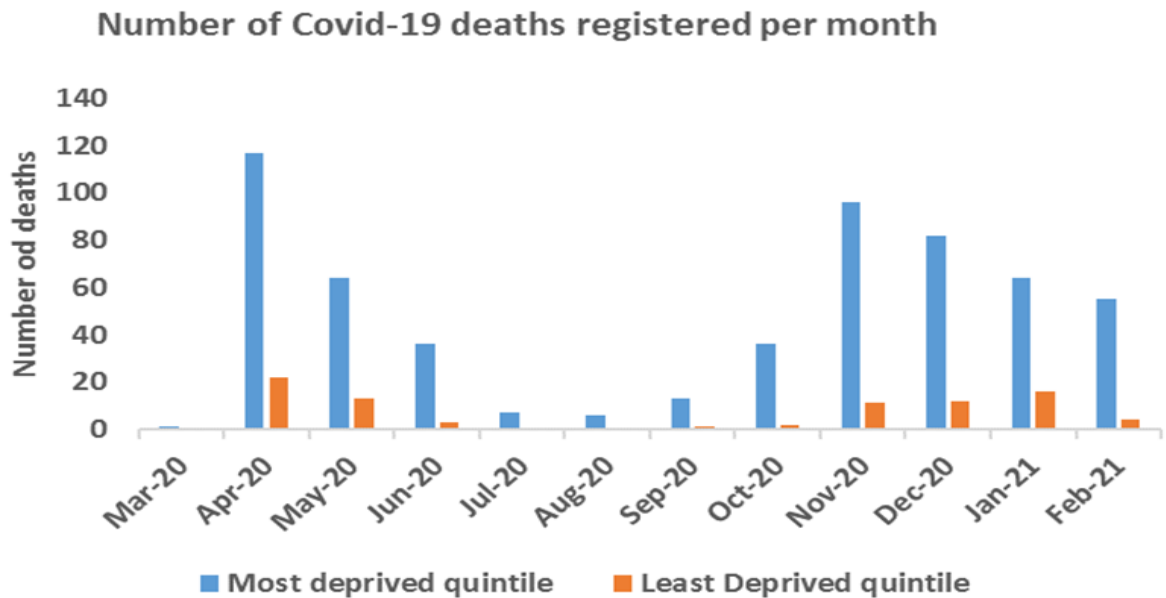
National, regional and local research by Born in Bradford all show this impact. Examples are given below:

### Unemployment.

- Since June 2019 unemployment and youth unemployment have doubled. The unemployment claimant count in June 2021 was 9% compared to 5.6%. For 18-24 year olds in June was 13.%. The West Yorkshire rate is 10% and national rate is 8.8%.
- Bradford is the 3rd highest city for unemployment and 12<sup>th</sup> highest local authority. For youth unemployment, it is the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest city and 5<sup>th</sup> highest local authority.
- 21 of Bradford's 30 wards had unemployment rates higher than the national average. Manningham is highest at 16.9%, followed by Little Horton, 15.5%, and Bowling and Barkerend, 14.5%.



- **Job Retention Scheme (Furlough scheme):** as of March 2021, 79,100 applications had been made for the furlough scheme. Furlough will end this October.
- **Health:** from March 2020 – February 2021, 50% of Covid fatalities occurred in the 20% most deprived areas of Bradford. For the 20% least deprived areas of Bradford it was 7% of fatalities. This division between rich and poor is reflected in national research. This shows that mortality has been twice as high in the poorest 10% of areas and 4 times as high for those aged between 50-69 when compared to the wealthiest areas. Particular groups have been hardest hit: minority ethnic communities, people with disabilities and those in deprived neighbourhoods.

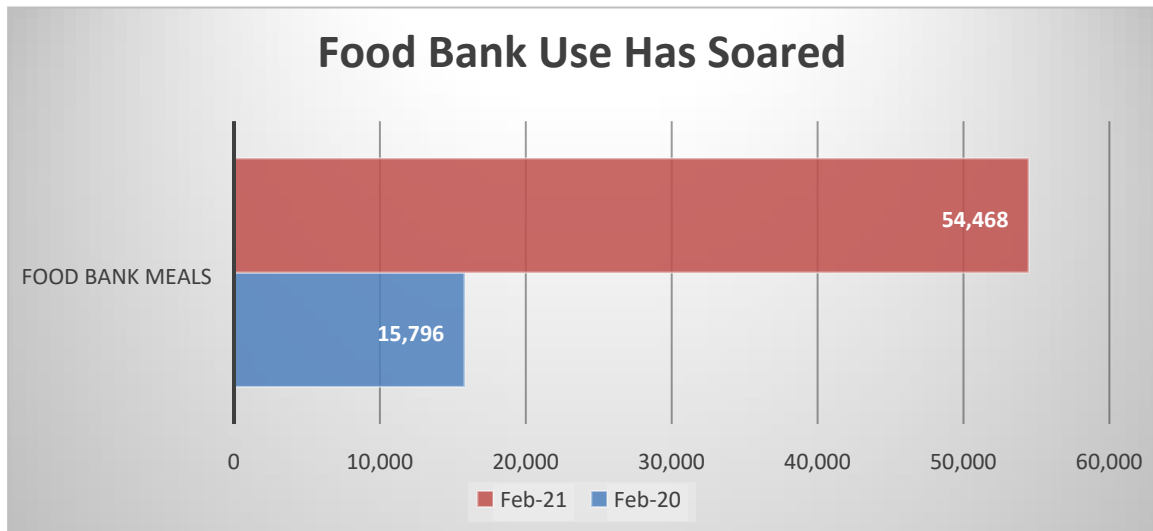


- **Homelessness:** over the past year, the Housing Options Service has received 8,250 applications for help with homelessness or the threat of it. 1,890 requests



relating to conditions in the private rented sector have been made – the highest ever figure and a 5% rise in one year.

- **Council Tax Reduction:** the number of people claiming Council Tax reduction rose during the pandemic from 27,000 to 32,300<sup>2</sup> due mainly to the increase in people becoming unemployed.
- **Food Bank Use:** across the District, this has soared over the past year. From a base line of 15,796 meals being provided in February 2020 to 54,468 by February 2021.



- **Free School Meals:** nationally, the number of children eligible for FSM has risen by 20% and Bradford reflects this. Currently 25.3 % of secondary pupils in Bradford are eligible for FSM, up from 21.9% in 2019/20.
- **Income and Debt:** the pandemic has allowed the more privileged to save money. The poorest have not only been more likely to experience job loss or furlough, they have also not been able to minimise costs, for example, through home working. A recent (June 2021) Cities for Growth report pointed out that in cities like Bradford one in every two neighbourhoods were likely to have been pushed into debt. For every £1 reduction in spending for the poorest neighbourhoods there has been a £12 reduction for those in the wealthiest. The richest have saved much more. People in the bottom 20% of the income scale were twice as likely to see a drop in income as those in more affluent neighbourhoods.
- **Two Child Limit:** As of April 2021, Bradford had the second highest number of families (5,000) hit by the two child limit of all local authorities (after Birmingham).

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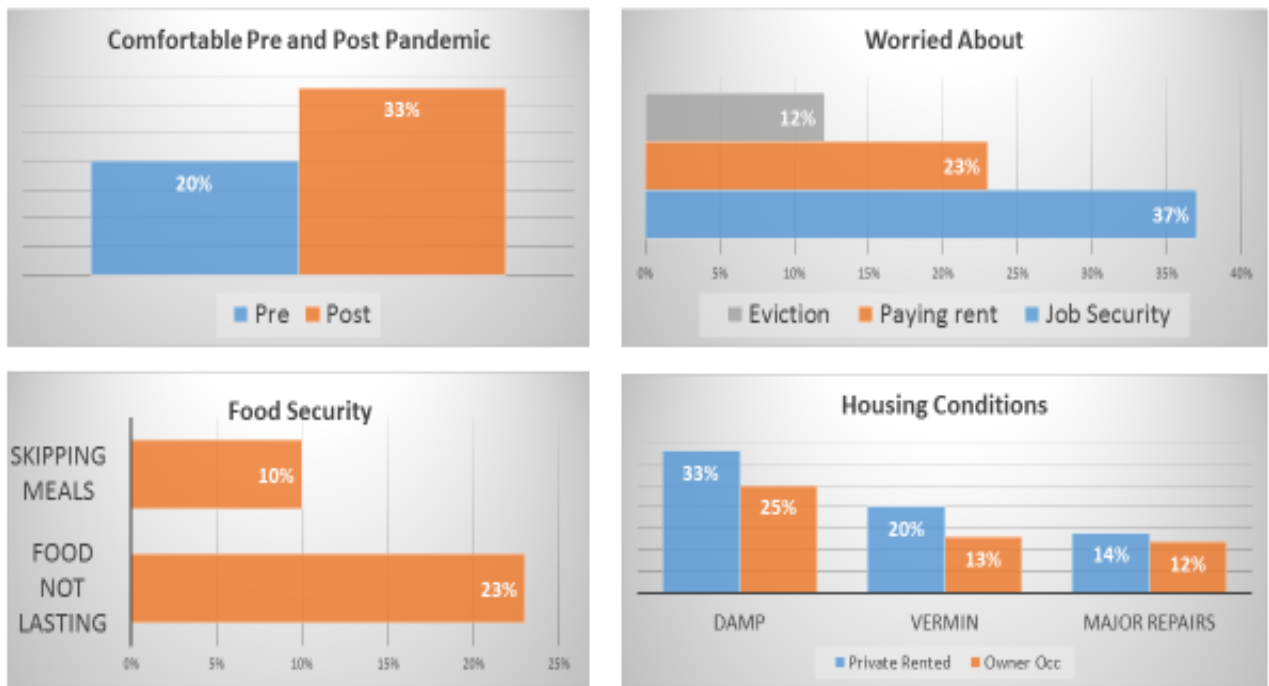
<sup>2</sup> Document DS, Report to Bradford Council Executive 6 April 2021

## What Our Families Are Experiencing

The Born in Bradford Families Survey provides detailed local data on the impact of the pandemic. The survey of over 2,000 families, conducted in June 2020, found:

- **Poverty is increasing:** compared to pre-Covid baselines, fewer families are living comfortably (33% to 20%). More families are 'just about getting by' (27% to 19%) or finding it difficult to manage (11% to 7%). 37% of families are worried about the job security of the main earner; 23% are worried about paying the rent; 12% worry about losing their home (eviction/repossession).

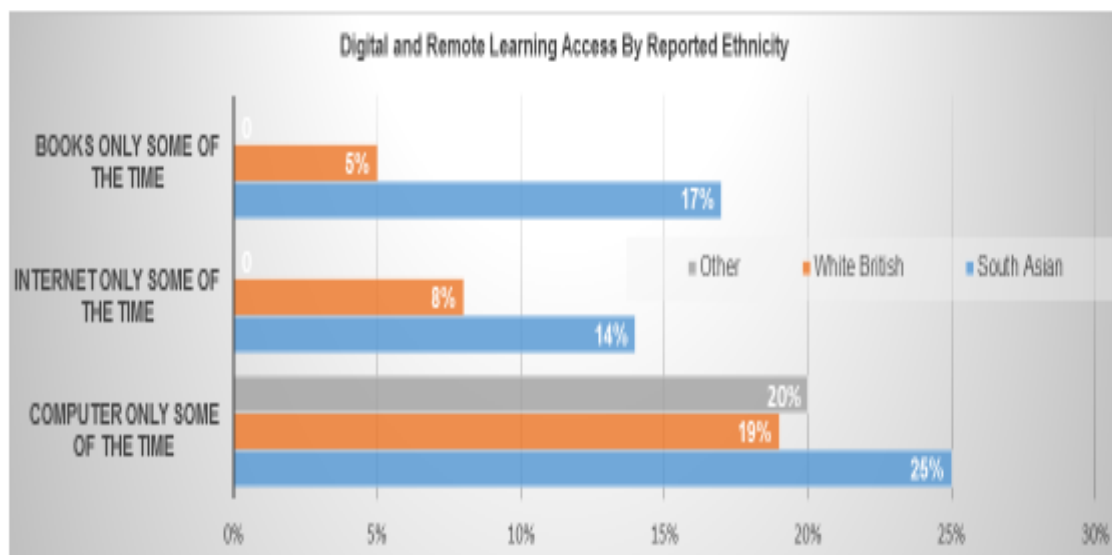
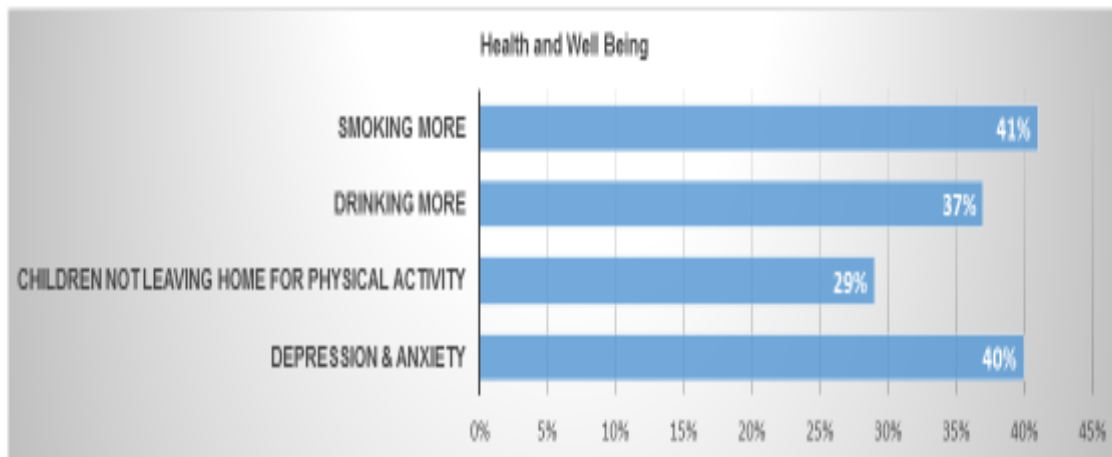
## Lived Experience of First Lockdown: Born in Bradford Family Survey



- **Vulnerabilities are multiplying:** 6% of respondents reported poor general health. Respondents where the main earner was unemployed or lived in poor quality housing were twice as likely to be in poor health (14%). Families living in private rented accommodation were more likely to live in poor housing conditions (33% report problems of damp, 20% problems with vermin; 14% need major repairs; compared to 25%, 13% and 12% respectively for owner occupiers).
- **Food security is decreasing:** 23% of respondents reported that food often didn't last and they couldn't afford to buy more; 10% had to skip meals because there wasn't enough money for food.

- **Physical health behaviours are worsening:** 41% of parents who smoked reported smoking more. 37% of those who drank alcohol were drinking more during lockdown.
- **Mental ill health is becoming rife:** two-fifths of respondents have depression or anxiety. This is more common in these families than before the pandemic. The risk of poor mental wellbeing is higher in those struggling financially. Children’s most common worry was health anxiety around Covid-19: themselves or their family becoming ill and dying, particularly family members working for the NHS. There was also anxiety about wider society and when the pandemic would end.

Lived Experience Of First Lockdown  
Born in Bradford Family Survey



- **Physical activity levels are decreasing:** only 27% of children met the physical activity guidelines during lockdown. Boys were more likely than girls to meet the guidelines (30% compared to 25%). White British children were more likely to meet

the guidelines than children from Pakistani heritage (34% compared to 22%). 29% of children didn't leave their home to do physical activity during lockdown, especially children of Pakistani heritage (39% compared to 18% of white British heritage).

- **Digital inequalities are limiting access to remote education:** South Asian heritage children were more likely to have had access to computer equipment only some of the time (25%) compared to children from White British (19%) and other ethnic groups (20%). South Asian heritage children were also more likely to only have access to the internet some of the time (14%, compared to 8% of White British) and to books (17% compared to 5% White British children).
- **Classroom inequalities are increasing:** in a survey conducted across all Bradford schools, teachers expressed concern over the disproportionate effect of Covid-19 on vulnerable children and children with SEND. Key issues included the lack of access to specialist services, such as children's social services, Speech and Language Therapy (SALT), and counselling.

### What Our Families Say About the Early Impact of Covid

I was advised to self-isolate with my husband as he is classed as a vulnerable person. I could not do this as I would not have had the money to pay bills or for food.

I have maxed out my credit card so I'm worrying how I'm going to pay it back and when I'm going to pay it back

We are surviving only on child tax credit and unable to pay rent, insurance, even Council Tax. All accounts are on overdraft limit.

It has been very difficult. Nothing has been easy. Husband and son lost their jobs. I have been ill and it has taken an effect on our relationship.