

**Wiltshire Children & Young People's Trust**  
*To improve outcomes for children & young people in Wiltshire  
and to promote and support resilient individuals, families and communities.*



## **Reducing Child Poverty Strategy**

**2014 – 2020**  
**Version 1.1**

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## Introduction

1. Reducing child poverty has been a government target for many years. The [Child Poverty Act](#), which commits this and future governments to eradicating child poverty by 2020, received Royal Assent in March 2010 tasking local areas to produce a child poverty needs assessment and strategy. This strategy document fulfils that requirement.
2. It is acknowledged that the huge changes resulting from the national cost pressures which are impacting at the time of writing, both on public services and people's lives, are creating some uncertainty and shifting baselines. Future strategies and action plans will need to build on this document in light of these changes.
3. This strategy has been developed by the multi-disciplinary Child Poverty Group which reports to the Wiltshire Children & Young People's Trust Executive. This consultation draft will be available for wide consultation with the public including children and young people, the public and private sector, businesses and voluntary sector organisations. All responses will be considered and will inform the final strategy prior to sign-off.
4. A child poverty needs assessment sits alongside this strategy and a summary of its main findings is included in this document.

## Links to other strategies

5. Child Poverty features as a priority in key top-level Wiltshire documents. It is in the Wiltshire Assembly's "People, Places and Promises: Wiltshire Community Plan 2011-2026" which was adopted in April 2011. It is woven through the Wiltshire Council's 2013-2017 Business Plan through its priorities to protect those who are most vulnerable, boost the local economy and bring communities together to enable and support them to do more for themselves. In addition the Wiltshire Children and Young People's Trust (comprised of representatives from key children's services in Wiltshire) specifically states in its vision to "reduce, prevent and mitigate the effects of child poverty" – and this is reflected in its Children & Young People's Plan 2012-2015 and in the various commissioning strategies which sit underneath it.
6. Early intervention has become a strong theme underpinning national policy and guidance over recent years (such as the Allen and Munro reports, revised Ofsted Inspection Framework and Working Together to Safeguard Children and Young People). A growing evidence base showing how providing help as soon as it's needed can greatly improve outcomes for children and young people is supporting this agenda. In Wiltshire the Children and Young People's Trust and the Wiltshire Safeguarding Children Board (through their joint Early Intervention sub group) have recently approved their joint Early Help Strategy and an Early Help Improvement Plan is currently being prepared. Through cross-membership of the Early Intervention sub group and the Child Poverty Task Group the two strands of work will be coordinated to ensure consistency and reduced opportunity for duplication.
7. In late February 2014 a Child Poverty Strategy consultation was launched by the government setting out the action to be taken from 2014-17. Although the final strategy will not be available for some months there are key principles which are echoed within Wiltshire's draft

strategy. The government's consultation document focuses on tackling child poverty through:

- Supporting families into work and increasing their earnings
- Improving living standards
- Preventing poor children becoming poor adults through raising their educational attainment.

## **The aim**

8. The goal of the Child Poverty Act is to end child poverty by 2020. The Child Poverty Act sets targets for the government to meet by 2020 on four different measures of poverty – including relative income poverty. These targets are based on the proportion of children living in:
  - relative low income (whether the incomes of the poorest families are keeping pace with the growth of incomes in the economy as a whole) - target is less than 10%
  - combined low income and material deprivation (a wider measure of people's living standards) - target is less than 5%
  - absolute low income (whether the poorest families are seeing their income rise in real terms) - target is less than 5%
  - persistent poverty (length of time in poverty) - target is to be set in regulations by 2015
  - Data for these 4 measures are currently not available at a local level
9. This strategy supports both the reduction of child poverty in Wiltshire and mitigation of the effects of child poverty. It seeks to provide a view of the causes, barriers and challenges of child poverty, set a shared vision and encourage a coordinated approach to address child poverty and its impact.
10. The Wiltshire Children and Young People's Trust partnership will be asked to sign up to this strategy and are tasked with driving change at a local level to improve outcomes for children and young people.

## **What is child poverty?**

11. Children are said to be living in relative income poverty if their household's income is less than 60 per cent of the median national income. Essentially, this looks at whether the incomes of the poorest families are keeping pace with the growth of incomes in the economy as a whole. It should be noted that a change to the way in which poverty is measured has been proposed and is currently under discussion by central government. Some of the suggested possible dimensions for inclusion in this new measure are income and material deprivation; worklessness; unmanageable debt; poor housing; parental skill level; access to quality education; family stability, and; parental health. For the purposes of this Strategy the existing measure is used and if a subsequent change is made the Child Poverty Group will refresh reported data.
12. Today in the UK 17% of children, 2.3 million, live in poverty. This is one of the highest rates in the industrialised world.

13. Living in poverty means more than just having a low income. Extensive research and data show that children who grow up in poverty face a greater risk of having poor health, being exposed to crime and failing to reach their full potential. This in turn can limit their potential to earn the money needed to support their own families in later life, and so a cycle of poverty is created. Therefore in order to ensure today's poor children are not tomorrow's poor adults child poverty must be tackled.
  
14. The central government Child Poverty Unit has collated an extensive library of research and data. Particularly relevant to Wiltshire is the research report on the cost of living in rural communities. "Country Life: tougher to make ends meet"<sup>1</sup> says that people living in rural communities need to spend 10-20% more than those in urban areas to reach a minimum acceptable living standard. This is due to things such as the need to run a car, higher energy bills and the location of rural services. This is further exacerbated as pay levels for many rural workers are often lower than those working in urban areas.

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<sup>1</sup> Country Life: tougher to make ends meet – Nov 2010 Joseph Rowntree Foundation/Commission for Rural Communities

## Children at greatest risk of poverty<sup>2</sup>

15. Some groups of children living in particular circumstances are known to be at a greater risk of living in poverty:

- **Lone parents** - before housing costs over a third, 35%, (50% after housing costs) of children living in lone parent families are poor, compared with 18%, of children in couple families.
- **Large families** - 40%, of children in families with four or more children are poor, compared with 19% of children in one-child families.
- **Children with disabilities and children with disabled parents** - a result of lower incomes as either the parents/carers need to look after disabled children and so cannot work) or disabled parents being less likely to be in paid work. Additional disability-related costs also impact on family budgets.
- **Children who are carers** - young carers, those living with a disabled parent or in households with drug/alcohol misuse or domestic violence all have experiences or responsibilities that can make it difficult for them to focus on their education and achieve good outcomes.
- **Children who have teenage parents** – babies of teenage mothers have a 63% increased risk of being born into poverty compared to babies born to mothers in their twenties.
- **Children growing up in social housing** - 49% of children in local authority accommodation are poor before housing costs (rising to 58% after housing costs).
- **Black and minority ethnic children** - children living in households headed by someone from an ethnic minority are more likely to be living in a poor household. This is particularly the case for households headed by someone of Pakistani or Bangladeshi origin, where well over half the children are living in poverty.
- **Asylum seekers** - there is no robust quantitative data on asylum seekers. Parents in this group are prohibited from working and are only entitled to safety net support at a lower level than the usual income support/Jobseekers Allowance.
- **Traveller and gypsy children** - there is a severe lack of robust quantitative data, including poverty, for this group. However, both practice knowledge and other studies show that some have few financial resources.
- **Children with a parent in prison** – it is recognised that these children are more likely to be living in poverty.
- **Children in care** - young people leaving care are likely to be at increased risk of living in poverty. Attainment levels of children in care are not equal to their peer group and more children who have been looked after become NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) than those who have not been looked after.
- **Children offending or at risk of offending** – being involved in criminal activity whilst young has been shown to have a negative impact on later life chances. Furthermore, the children of young offenders are more likely to live in poverty themselves, reinforcing the ‘cycle of poverty’.

## Local Needs Assessment

16. Whilst Wiltshire is considered to be a generally prosperous area, there are pockets of deprivation that are often hidden in official statistics. Wiltshire is a large, predominantly rural

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<sup>2</sup> Children at Greatest Risk of Poverty available at [www.childpovertytoolkit.org.uk/At-Greatest-Risk-of-Child-Poverty](http://www.childpovertytoolkit.org.uk/At-Greatest-Risk-of-Child-Poverty)

county with a population of 474,300, of which 19.2% (91,066) are aged 15 years and under. Almost half of the population resides in towns and villages with less than 5,000 people<sup>3</sup>.

17. An analysis by HMRC demonstrated that in August 2011 Wiltshire had 11,610 children (0-19yrs) living in poverty, which represents 11.4% of children. This is an increase of 400 children (0.4%) in Wiltshire since 2008, which compares well with other local authority areas in the South West of England. However, as detailed within the report, there is high variability in Wiltshire with pockets of high deprivation found in particular localities and significant deprivation across some vulnerable groups.
18. Through the work of our Joint Strategic Assessment, we are familiar with areas of poverty and deprivation in Wiltshire. There are challenges in rural areas when using measures of deprivation, as deprivation is less obvious and can be 'hidden' when factors such as economies of scale and the distances involved are not taken into consideration.
19. Deprivation data is usually reported against defined geographical areas known as Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs). There are 285 LSOAs in Wiltshire. These are defined nationally for the release of statistical information at a small geographical area. For planning purposes the County is split into 20 community areas. These community areas generally include a market town and its surrounding villages. Where possible the data within this strategy will be presented by LSOA or community area.
20. Wiltshire as a whole is characterised by its rurality and is notable for the scale of its military presence. Currently 1 in 50 residents in Wiltshire are Army personnel – that's around 12,000 (30,000 including their families) and 27% of this population are veterans. This is set to rise to around 16,000 (est. 38,000 including families) by 2020 making Wiltshire the largest military county in the UK. Approximately 1,000 young people in Wiltshire are Army Cadets and 12% go on to have careers within the Army<sup>4</sup>.
21. This strategy is supported by a comprehensive needs assessment which gives detailed evidence of both national and local child poverty gained through analysis of data and direct input from stakeholders and families.

## Geographical assessment

22. Of the 285 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Wiltshire, 14 have numbers of children living in poverty which are more than 2 standard deviations<sup>5</sup> above the Wiltshire average of 11.4%. This means that in certain LSOAs the percentage of children living in poverty ranges from 26.9% to 46.1%. These areas are detailed in table 2 below. Ten LSOAs have over 30% of children living in poverty, an increase of one extra LSOA in Wiltshire with this high percentage of children living in poverty when compared to 2008.

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<sup>3</sup> Office for National Statistics. 2011 Mid year estimate

<sup>4</sup> Wiltshire Assembly Conference "Wiltshire – a military county", 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2013.

<sup>5</sup> Standard Deviation is a measure of the spread or [dispersion](#) of a set of data. The more widely the values are spread out, the larger the standard deviation. In data which is normally distributed it is very likely that 95% of the data points will lie within 2 standard deviations of the mean. Therefore any that lie outside of this range would be considered significant.

**Table 2** LSOAs with a percentage of children in low income families two or more standard deviations above the Wiltshire average (Source: DWP)

Lower Super Output Area name	Community Area	Children in Child Benefit families	Children in families in receipt of CTC (<60% median income) or IS/JSA	% of children in low-income families	Number standard deviations above average
Trowbridge John of Gaunt - Studley Green	Trowbridge	555	255	46.1%	4
Melksham North - north east	Melksham	380	135	35.5%	3
Calne Abberd - south	Calne	255	90	35.4%	3
Amesbury East - north central	Amesbury	275	90	32.8%	2
Chippenham Queens - east	Chippenham	325	105	32.7%	2
Salisbury St Martin - central	Salisbury	355	115	32.0%	2
Trowbridge Drynham - Lower Studley	Trowbridge	590	180	30.9%	2
Chippenham Audley - south	Chippenham	360	110	30.7%	2
Melksham North - south west	Melksham	340	105	30.7%	2
Chippenham Hill Rise - north west	Chippenham	465	140	30.4%	2
Salisbury Bemerton - south	Salisbury	520	150	29.2%	2
Wootton Bassett North - central	R.WB & Cricklade	410	115	28.5%	2
Salisbury Bemerton - west	Salisbury	480	130	27.1%	2
Westbury Ham - west	Westbury	470	125	26.9%	2

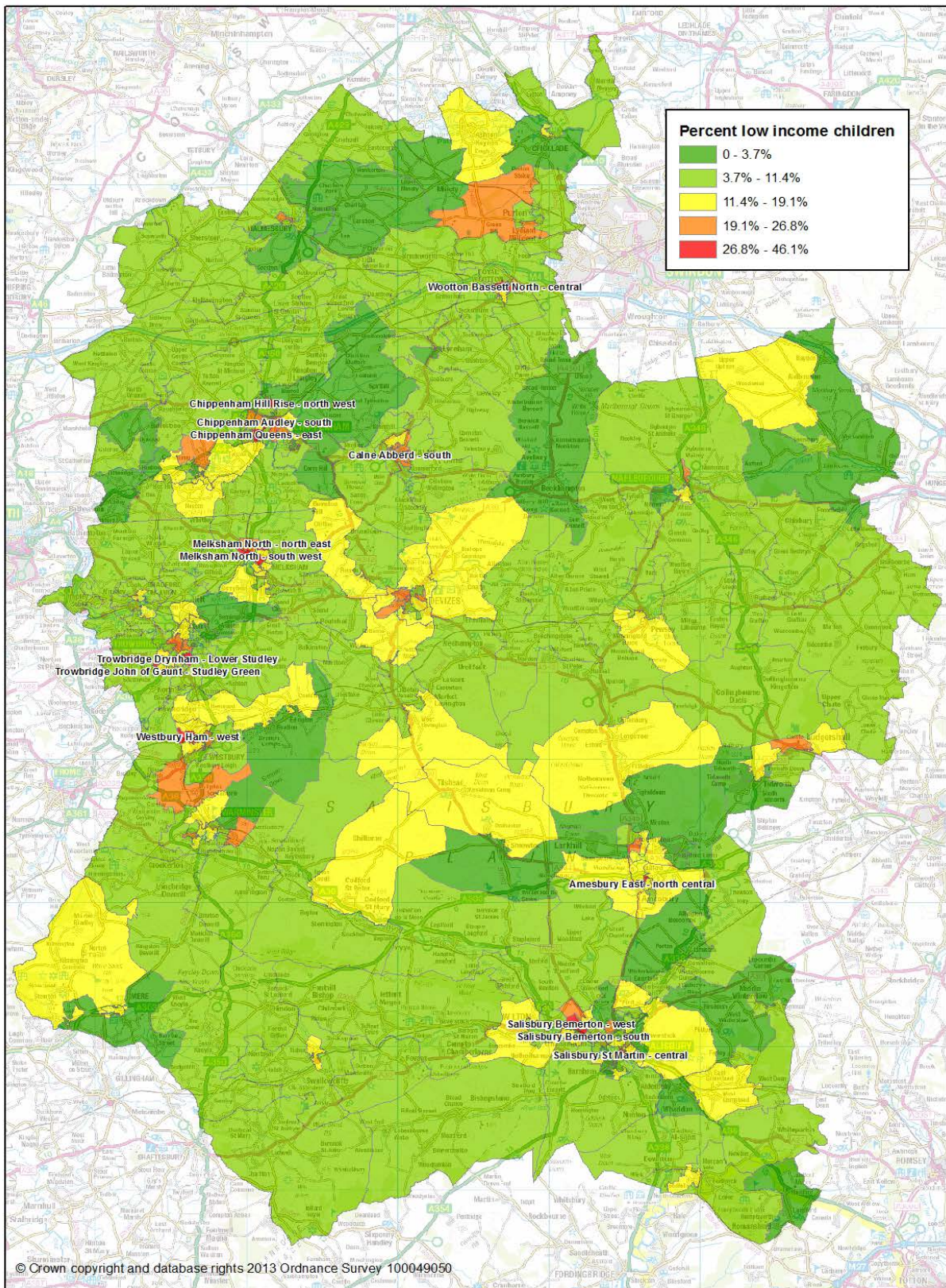
23. The percentage of children living in low income families in each LSOA has not remained constant between 2008 and the latest figures of 2011. Some LSOAs in Wiltshire have shown a decrease in the percentage of children in low income families since 2008. The largest decrease in percentage was seen in Salisbury Bishopdown – central, the rate decreased here from 17.1% in 2008 to 7.5% in 2011. The 12 LSOAs in Wiltshire with the largest decrease (5% or more) in children living in low income families are detailed in table 3 below.

**Table 3** LSOAs where the percentage of children in low income families decreased by five percentage points or more between 2008 and 2011 (Source DWP)

LSOA name	Community Area	2008	2011	Change in % points
Salisbury Bishopdown - central	Salisbury	17.1%	7.5%	-9.6%
Melksham North - north east	Melksham	42.7%	35.5%	-7.2%
Trowbridge Drynham - central	Trowbridge	25.1%	17.9%	-7.2%
Pewsey south	Pewsey	22.0%	14.8%	-7.2%
Cricklade central	Royal Wootton Bassett & Cricklade	26.0%	19.0%	-7.0%
Ludgershall east & Faberstown	Tidworth	24.6%	17.9%	-6.7%
Salisbury St Martin - central	Salisbury	38.0%	32.0%	-6.0%
Dilton Marsh & Upton Scudamore	Part Warminster; Part Westbury	25.8%	19.8%	-6.0%
Staverton & Hilperton (part)	Part Bradford on Avon; Part Trowbridge	22.7%	17.3%	-5.4%
Trowbridge John of Gaunt - Wingfield Rd	Trowbridge	18.2%	12.9%	-5.3%
Salisbury St Edmund - east (Milford north)	Salisbury	15.8%	10.7%	-5.1%
Trowbridge Adcroft - Seymour	Trowbridge	29.8%	24.7%	-5.1%



Figure 2 Map of percentage of children living in poverty by LSOA, 2011



24. Of the ten areas with over 30% of all children living in 'poverty' seven are located in one of three towns (Trowbridge, Melksham and Chippenham) and the remaining three are in the towns of Salisbury, Calne and Amesbury.

## Thematic Assessment

### Jobs and the Economy

25. Worklessness and low paid work are the key factors in child poverty. The term worklessness includes:
- Those that are economically active but unemployed i.e. those claiming Jobseekers Allowance;
  - Those that are economically inactive but who would want to work. There is evidence to suggest that a significant proportion of the economically inactive population would like to work if they had the right opportunity, incentive or path back to employment. This could include lone parents and/or people claiming incapacity or other health/income related benefits.
26. Historically worklessness has been a major cause of children living in poverty. However, the underlying causes as to why adults are out of work are complicated and issues differ for those long term unemployed versus those who have recently lost their job. The level of worklessness has increased in recent years with approximately 9.3% of the working age population in Wiltshire being on one or more out of work benefits in February 2013. The proportion of workless households in Wiltshire has risen from 12.5% in 2008 to 16.1% in 2012.
27. The percentage of children living in workless households in Wiltshire in 2012 was 8%, this compares well to the national average of 14.9%, and the South West regional average of 11.2%.
28. However, this figure varies significantly by community area, from the lowest percentage in Malmesbury where 6% of households with dependent children have no adult in employment to Westbury where 12.8% of households with dependent children have no adult in employment. To improve young people's outcomes and outlook on life, it is vital that the cycle of dependency on benefits is broken and young people aspire to a career or work life.
29. Wiltshire continues to have a high economic activity rate for residents aged 16-64 (80.1%) compared to other areas; Wiltshire claimant count levels are consistently below those found in the South West and England. Since the start of 2014 the national Job Seekers Allowance claimant rate has been maintained at 3.0%. The latest rate for Wiltshire at 1.5% is half the national rate. The proportion of 18-24 year old JSA claimants in Wiltshire currently stands at 3.6% (nationally 5.2%). Youth unemployment continues to account for a disproportionate share of unemployment in Wiltshire (29.5%). The adjusted NEET (not in employment, education or training) figure for Wiltshire, based on the period November 2012 to January 2013 was 6.0% and equates to 493 of 12,803 young people aged 16-18. This is higher than the comparable figures for England and the South West but not appreciably so.
30. Residents' pay rates in Wiltshire are 7% lower than the national average and in-work poverty is becoming a real issue. Similarly, workplace pay rates are below the national average, with those working in Wiltshire only earning 89% of the average across England. Overall, total pay has declined by £7.50 per week in Wiltshire whilst in England it has risen by £16 per week. Data on pay levels and commuting flows indicates that the outward commuting of higher skilled workers from Wiltshire has long been a feature of the economy.

31. Future increases in part-time and principally female employment are anticipated. Forecasts show that between 2010 and 2020 female employment is expected to rise by 11.4%. This partly reflects the rise in part-time work which is expected to grow at almost twice the rate (13.4%) of full time work (7.5%). The availability of part time work in the local economy may be enabling more young people than average to combine work with learning.
32. Overall, employment is forecast to increase in Wiltshire by 19,300 (or 9.1%) over the period 2010-2020. Note that these employment projections exclude the potential outcomes of the military/civilian integration programme. The programme represents an opportunity to change the skills and business profile of the county.
33. The occupational profile is predicted to continue to shift towards higher-order occupations, with the greatest levels of growth being amongst Managers, Professionals and Associate Professionals.
34. The key priorities for Wiltshire Council and partners is to create new jobs and businesses, to seize the opportunities generated by the military/civilian integration programme, and to develop the skills of its residents, ensuring many more young people are working in Wiltshire.

Education

35. Children who grow up in poverty are more likely to leave school without qualifications. Local authorities measure the attainment gap to enable comparison with other areas.
36. In Wiltshire there is continued focus on the attainment of vulnerable groups of children and young people at various stages of their development. The first key measure is at the Foundation Stage Profile which measures achievements of children aged 5 against assessment scales. There are subsequent measures at Key Stage 2 and GCSE level for children who are eligible for free school meals compared with children who are not eligible.

	2010 %	2011 %	2012 %		2013 %
<b>Narrowing the gap between the lowest achieving 20% in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and the rest</b>					
Wiltshire	29	29	27	<i>(Testing changes)</i>	32
Statistical neighbours	30	29	28		32
England	33	31	30		37
<b>Attainment Gap FSM/non FSM Key Stage 2 inc English &amp; Maths (Read, Write &amp; Maths from 2013)</b>				<i>(Testing changes)</i>	
Wiltshire	27	24	20	24	23
Statistical neighbours	26	26	23	26	24
England	21	20	17	19	19
<b>Attainment Gap FSM/non FSM GCSE inc Eng &amp; Maths</b>					
Wiltshire	36	32	31		36
Stats Neighbours	33	33	33		32
England	28	28	26		27



37. For Wiltshire across all three measures there is a percentage difference or “gap” and this gap is increasing as seen in the preceding table (note, however, that changes to testing took place during 2012 meaning year to year comparisons should be made with caution). The Vulnerable Learners Action Group is in place to set out the strategy and specific initiatives to close these gaps.
38. Adult attainment is also key to ensure the resident working population in Wiltshire have the skills and knowledge to improve their employability and/or sustain employment. Adult attainment measures are taken at ‘Level 2’ which broadly means the literacy or numeracy required to meet the standards of a key skills qualification at Level 2 (or, very roughly, the underlying literacy/numeracy required to achieve GCSE grades A\*-C).
39. Between 2009 and 2012 Wiltshire’s performance on adult attainment has continued to improve:
- The Level 2 attainment rate has increased by a further 3.2% to 77.7%. Wiltshire continues to outperform the regional rate of 75.2% and the national rate of 71.8%.
  - Those without at least a Level 2 qualification (generally considered to be the minimum for employability) has decreased from 25.5% to 22.3%. Wiltshire continues to outperform the regional rate of 24.8% and the national rate of 28.2%.
  - Those without any qualifications at all has reduced from 7.0% to 5.9% (16,400 people compared to 19,600). Wiltshire continues to outperform the regional rate of 7.0% and the national rate of 9.7%.

### Transport

40. Getting to work, school or college and accessing services is all dependent on transport. Poor public transport can mean that low income families face reduced choice or difficulties accessing services, employment and support - or are forced into car ownership (reducing the money they have available to spend on other things).
41. Wiltshire Council spends £5 million on supported bus services and community transport, which doubles the level of public transport that would otherwise be available. 44% of rural households have access to an hourly or better weekday daytime bus service, 89% to a daily or better weekday service. However, due to the growing pressures on public spending, budgets have been reduced in recent years and an ongoing programme of reviews is underway focusing in particular on services that are relatively poorly used or expensive to provide in relation to the number of passengers using them. A thorough assessment of local transport needs for those areas with the highest number of families living in poverty or at risk of living in poverty (whether in-work or not) must be undertaken to inform the development of a socially-inclusive transport policy for Wiltshire.

### **What works?**

42. The Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People’s Services<sup>6</sup> has reviewed a variety of child poverty publications, toolkits and guides to produce the key

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<sup>6</sup> C4EO Research Summary 1 Child Poverty January 2010

components of a child poverty strategy:

- effective multi-agency partnerships which draw on the experience, resources and expertise across the whole area
- sufficient and sustained resources
- active participation of children, young people, families and communities
- differentiated approaches to address the needs of different groups or areas in the community
- monitoring and evaluation focused on outcomes rather than outputs.

The Centre for Excellence and Outcomes also concludes priority outcomes are:

- maximising of family income – a mixed economy of provision is required, which can help the jobless into work, help those in work to progress, and financially support those unable to work
- narrowing outcome gaps for children and young people living in poverty, particularly in education and health.

### **Independent Reviews – the case for early intervention**

43. Government sponsored reports from Professor Eileen Munro and MPs Frank Field and Graham Allen have all stressed the importance of intervening earlier. Professor Eileen Munro in her review of child protection writes of the need to develop an “all-encompassing and pervasive early intervention culture” and notes “Preventative services can do more to reduce abuse and neglect than reactive services. Many services and professions help children and families so coordinating their work is important to reduce inefficiencies and omissions.”
44. Providing early help can narrow the gap for children who are at risk of poorer outcomes (Waldman, 2008, Karoly, Kilburn, & Cannon, 2005; Statham and Biehal, 2005). It can also improve practice and outcomes by attending to risk and protective factors at an early stage, focusing on causes of problems not symptoms. The 2010 Marmot Review, ‘Fair Society, Healthy Lives’ was clear that “later interventions are considerably less effective if children have not had good foundations”
45. Frank Field’s “The Foundation Years: preventing poor children becoming poor adults”<sup>7</sup> found that “... children’s life chances are most heavily predicated on their development in the first five years of life. It is family background, parental education, good parenting and the opportunities for learning and development in those crucial years that together matter more to children than money, in determining whether their potential is realised in adult life. The things that matter most are a healthy pregnancy; good maternal mental health; secure bonding with the child; love and responsiveness of parents along with clear boundaries, as well as opportunities for a child’s cognitive, language and social and emotional development. Good services matter too: health services, Children’s Centres and high quality childcare.” The report notes that differences in skill levels are impacted by 22 months of age. It acknowledges that later interventions can be effective but stresses that the most effective and cost effective way to help is in the earliest years of a child’s life. It also stresses the importance of breaking

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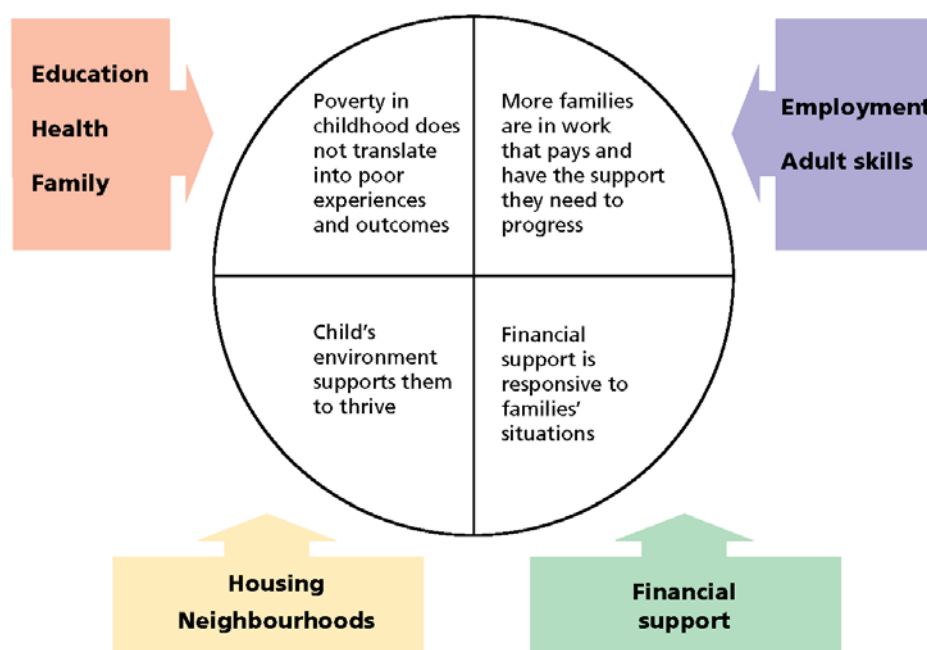
<sup>7</sup> “The Foundation Years: preventing poor children becoming poor adults:” Frank Field December 2010. The report of the Independent review on Poverty and Life Chances.

intergenerational cycles of poverty and raising parental aspiration.

46. In response to growing support and a growing evidence base for early intervention the Early Intervention Foundation was launched April 2013 with cross-party support. Chaired by Graham Allen, the EIF is offering assessment of what works, advice to commissioners and providers and advocacy to assist with gaining support for early intervention locally. Wiltshire was successful in its application to the EIF to become one of the pioneering “Early Intervention Places” and a Statement of Intent was agreed in February 2014 outlining work which will be done together in 2014/15. There is a need to ensure the early intervention work focuses on those factors which are likely to result in a child or young person living in poverty.

### The building blocks to combat child poverty

47. Nationally, it has been suggested that there are 4 key building blocks which work together to prevent, reduce and mitigate the effects of poverty<sup>8</sup>.



#### Education, health and family

- ensuring access to quality education for all children and young people and narrowing the gap in attainment of different groups
- improving physical and mental health outcomes for all children and parents, reducing health inequalities and improving support for those with disabilities and poorer health
- reducing pressures on families and strengthening their capabilities by providing as much support as possible.

#### Housing, neighbourhoods and communities

- ensuring all children grow up in decent homes that support their health and education

<sup>8</sup> “Ending Child Poverty: Making it happen”, HM Government Child Poverty Unit, 2009

- taking action on neighbourhoods, play and green spaces, transport and crime to ensure all children can thrive in safe and cohesive communities, with equal access to work, cultural and leisure opportunities.

### **Adult skills and employment**

- building on successes in education to ensure all adults have the skills necessary to enter, stay and progress in work
- ensuring more parents can enter, stay and progress in work (including childcare), to help parents balance work and family life and ensure those in work can escape poverty.

### **Financial support**

- ensuring financial and material support remain an important public service; provided through a modern welfare system that recognises the additional barriers families face, while maintaining incentives to work.

48. In addition, promoting resilience in children and young people is key to them being able to cope with adversity and helps to minimise the impact of poverty. Factors known to promote resilience in children and young people<sup>9</sup> are:

- Strong social support networks.
- The presence of at least one unconditionally supportive parent or parent substitute.
- A committed mentor or other person from outside the family.
- Positive school experiences.
- A sense of mastery and a belief that one's own efforts can make a difference.
- Participation in a range of extra-curricular activities.
- The capacity to re-frame adversities so that the beneficial as well as the damaging effects are recognised.
- The ability - or opportunity - to "make a difference" by helping others or through part time work.
- Not to be excessively sheltered from challenging situations which provide opportunities to develop coping skills.

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<sup>9</sup> "Promoting Resilience: a review of effective strategies for child care services", Tony Newman 2002, prepared for the Centre for Evidence-Based Social Services, University of Exeter.

## What's happening to tackle child poverty in Wiltshire?

49. As child poverty manifests itself in a multitude of ways and can have many causes, any attempt to describe the wide array of plans, interventions and activities being undertaken by services in Wiltshire is unlikely to be fully comprehensive. The following provides a flavour of some of the initiatives in Wiltshire; a fuller account of what is happening in Wiltshire is available in the accompanying Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (section 7).

Area	Provision and/or initiatives (indicative, not exhaustive)
Early years education, childcare, parenting & carers support and early intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free Entitlement to 15 hours childcare per week for 3-4 year olds and free education and childcare to 2 year olds from the most vulnerable families.</li> <li>• Children's Centres offering a wide variety of support to parents of 0-11 year olds</li> <li>• Monitoring of childcare sufficiency with action plans to develop provision in areas/communities in need</li> <li>• Educational programmes in schools with targeted intensive support</li> <li>• Parent Support Advisers providing parenting programmes and 1:1 parenting support working with both the child and the family in and out of school</li> <li>• Teenage Pregnancy and Young Parents support – reducing teenage conceptions, raising aspirations and supporting teenage parents into education, employment and training</li> <li>• Family Learning and Partners in Literacy - accreditation of settings as Investors in Families and supporting literacy in the home</li> <li>• Young Carers support service offered through Spurgeons and Youth Action Wiltshire</li> <li>• High-need intensive family support offered through Wiltshire Families First (Action for Children) and Wiltshire Family Support Teams (part of Children's Social Care services)</li> <li>• Healthy Child Programme and Family Nurse Partnership programme</li> <li>• A breadth of Voluntary sector support to Children and Families</li> </ul>
Encouraging economic development, including training skills and opportunities for parents and young people	<p>Formation of a new Wiltshire Education, Employment &amp; Skills Board (amalgamating some existing groups) began in January 2014 and has a direct relationship with the Swindon &amp; Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). The new Board enables full integration of the Education, Employment &amp; Skills agenda and work has commenced on developing a new multi-agency Education, Employment &amp; Skills Strategy for Wiltshire accompanied by an Increasing Participation &amp; Employment Plan and Apprenticeship Action Plan. The new Board has 5 sub groups focused on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ sustained engagement in education, training or work</li> <li>○ increasing apprenticeships and maximising their up-take</li> <li>○ developing workplace skills</li> <li>○ equal economic opportunity</li> <li>○ realising the potential of those in low-wage work</li> <li>○ economic development and planning</li> </ul> <p>A major area of focus has recently been supporting the Swindon &amp;</p>



	<p>Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to develop its Strategic Economic Plan and identify priorities for its Growth Deal, City Deal and European Structural Investment Funds submissions.</p> <p>Examples of initiatives currently underway:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wiltshire Skills 4 Success – supporting educational transition to further education/employment/training (focusing on 9 &amp;10 yr olds, 14 &amp;15 year olds and 16-24 year olds.)</li> <li>• Your Choices - The Your Choices Theatre Tour is now in its 4<sup>th</sup> year of touring and this engaging production portrays the full range of options available to young people.</li> <li>• Project IMPRESS – Provision of in-work support services to new employees/labour market returners aged 16+ to help them sustain their employment and develop/advance their careers.</li> <li>• Action for Wiltshire: Flexible Support Fund – Personal development mentoring, job coaching support and assistance with overcoming personal and employment barriers for those JSA and ESA customers who are not currently supported through other initiatives.</li> <li>• Wiltshire Money supports a number of projects to promote financial inclusion</li> </ul>
<p>Targeted housing support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritising the reduction in the number of children and young people who experience statutory homelessness.</li> <li>• Prevent children and young people from going into unsuitable temporary accommodation and prevent families becoming homeless.</li> <li>• Ensuring that families have access to good quality and affordable homes</li> <li>• Increasing the supply of family-sized accommodation</li> <li>• Supporting families to keep their own homes during the recession</li> <li>• Retain housing-related support for young 16 – 17 year olds</li> <li>• Improving homes with low energy efficiency for households on income based benefits</li> </ul>
<p>Targeted transport support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post 16 education transport policy - guarantees transport to the nearest sixth form or FE college</li> <li>• For under 16 pupils, the Education &amp; Inspection Act introduced free transport to a ‘preferred’ school for children from low income families</li> <li>• Reduced-rate travel pass is available for students from low income families</li> <li>• Investment to provide bus services and community transport, which doubles the level of public transport that would otherwise be available</li> <li>• Retain levels of public transport service that meet demand within available resources and meet accessibility needs for those without private transport</li> </ul>

## **Key priorities for Wiltshire**

50. Child poverty is a complex issue and benefits from an integrated approach. Specific groups of people will be more vulnerable and will gain from a targeted action. The following key priorities are identified to improve the delivery of services and the lives of some of the more vulnerable families in Wiltshire.

### **Objective 1 – Provide effective support to vulnerable families with 0-5 year olds**

51. Evidence suggests that children’s lives are significantly shaped during their first 5 years of life so it is vital to support the optimum physical, psychological, emotional, social and educational development of children. As stated earlier in this report, activities will be coordinated with the Early Intervention sub group to ensure work is fully collaborative and informed – with no duplication of efforts.

#### **What do we need to do?**

52. Develop an evidenced-based early help offer (in line with the Early Help Improvement Plan) which promotes prevention, early intervention, parental engagement strategies and effective family support – with a targeted focus on vulnerable families with children aged 0-5.
53. Further develop the role of the children’s centres and other early year settings (including voluntary sector services) and continue to strengthen their links with community health services. Children’s Centres need a continued focus on the most vulnerable families and to provide strong outreach services. They need to provide targeted support to ensure good health, appropriate development and successful early education of young children. This will include working with the Family and Parenting Commissioning Group to develop the family support role, including supporting the benefits of paid employment.
54. Deliver the Healthy Child Programme, which focuses on both physical and mental health, to all children 0-19 years within available resources and specifically target families with 0-5 year olds.
55. Develop early years parenting programmes for teenage parents-to-be and vulnerable families which promotes the importance of the early years in a child’s development.
56. Recognise the inter-generational factors which can cause child poverty and develop an approach to break the cycle.

### **Objective 2 – Narrowing the Educational Attainment Gap**

57. A child’s education is key to ensuring that they have appropriate knowledge and skills for the future and that they are prepared for working life. A culture for learning is key together with early identification of vulnerable children and targeted support both within school and from other agencies.

### **What do we need to do?**

58. Support and encourage the take-up of free childcare places for 2, 3 and 4 year olds to support early educational development and give children the best start in life and prepare them for beginning school. Develop a targeted programme for hard-to-reach and hard-to-engage families.
59. Work together with schools to close the educational attainment gap and further develop the role of school leaders in tackling the under-achievement of vulnerable learners.
60. Working with the Vulnerable Learners Action Group, develop measures which track the ongoing attainment of those vulnerable groups of young people identified in this strategy and align programmes to target and support their educational needs and aspirations (to include regular review of the use of Pupil Premium funding to remove barriers to learning for children and young people in receipt of free school meals).
61. Work with the Vulnerable Learners Action Group on a range of measures with schools that will deliver better early identification of the needs of vulnerable children and young people by further development of the links between primary schools with pre-schools and children's centres, and between secondary schools with their feeder primary schools to ensure effective transition arrangements and information sharing that will support educational needs.

### **Objective 3 – Develop an inclusive economy that will enable equality of economic opportunity for all**

62. Worklessness is a major cause of children living in poverty. Barriers to employment for parents include:
  - not being able to manage family finances
  - partnership breakdown
  - debt
  - fear of leaving the benefit system
  - English for speakers of other languages
  - housing issues
  - not being able to access affordable, trusted childcare
  - training and employment services inaccessible for parents
  - lack of skills, confidence, motivation and aspiration
  - chaotic lives
  - health problems which could be the result of any of the above

### **What do we need to do?**

63. Encourage and actively support jobs growth for the vulnerable young people and families identified in this strategy through the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership's Strategic Economic Plan.
64. Realise the potential of people trapped in low wage work through training and advice to help them develop appropriate aspiration, achieve progression, independence and resilience in the

workplace and support them into higher paid more productive employment through the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership.

65. Through the Wiltshire Education, Employment & Skills Board, identify and understand the causes of **barriers** to employment, education and training for families and young people living in (or at risk of living in) poverty and develop a plan of action for removing them or reducing their impact. Engage with relevant services to ensure a multi-agency approach is taken (e.g. housing, benefits, family support, disability teams, etc).
66. Through the Wiltshire Education, Employment & Skills Board, identify and understand the causes of barriers to the stability of employment, education and training for families living in or at risk of living in poverty and develop a plan of action that supports sustainability. Engage with relevant services to ensure a multi-agency approach is taken (e.g. housing, benefits, family support, disability teams, etc).

#### **Objective 4 – Provide locally-focused support based on a thorough understanding of needs**

67. Due to the dispersed nature of child poverty in Wiltshire and the broad ways in which poverty manifests itself there is a need for a comprehensive assessment to understand the needs in areas where child poverty is identified as a key priority within the Community Area Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. This enables a holistic view and helps to identify opportunities to more effectively target and coordinate multi-agency support.

##### **What do we need to do?**

68. Using the Community Area Needs Assessments and the poverty indicators used in this strategy, produce a thorough multi-layered assessment of poverty for localities where child poverty is key issue. From this, assess the provision of services and support in place and engage with community area boards to discuss, develop and agree a local response. An example of multi-layered assessment can be found in appendix 1 – other indicators may prove more useful and the Child Poverty Task Group will refine this as required.
69. Using needs assessment data and local intelligence build a mechanism for forecasting future needs and ensure these are appropriately reflected in future planning.

#### **Objective 5 – Promote engagement with the Child Poverty Strategy and related implementation plan**

70. It is important to promote and progress the aims of this strategy and maintain engagement from partner agencies, including the private and voluntary sectors. It is also important practitioners are aware of child poverty and recognise the signs when assessing a child and family's needs.

##### **What do we need to do?**

71. Continue the multi-agency child poverty task group, accountable to the Children and Young People's Trust Commissioning Executive, to develop and oversee a top level implementation plan.
72. Develop a Child Poverty 'scorecard' to monitor emerging areas of need and impact of interventions and activities (see the next section on monitoring arrangements).
73. The Children and Young People's Trust Commissioning Executive and the Public Services Board to receive regular updates regarding progress and to challenge other strategies and plans to ensure the needs of those living in poverty are addressed.
74. Engage relevant services, organisations and groups in the delivery of the Strategy's implementation plan – thinking beyond those traditionally engaged with this work - and encourage these groups to identify Reducing Child Poverty actions in their plans.
75. Develop and disseminate 'signs of poverty' to help practitioners to identify children living in (or at risk of) poverty, understand the causes in each case and take appropriate evidence-based action.

## **Monitoring Arrangements**

76. Reducing child poverty requires a truly collaborative approach and therefore implementing this strategy will involve actions from a number of agencies including the voluntary and private sectors. The complexity of the cause and effects of child poverty mean that it is often difficult to directly attribute specific actions to specific impact.
77. Since the last Wiltshire Child Poverty Strategy was published in 2011, National Indicators have been abolished (central government have re-considered data collection and performance indicators, greatly reducing the number of indicators local authorities have to record and measure – there is now a Single Data List of all the data that local authorities are required to submit to central government departments in a given year) and the public health outcomes framework (PHOF) was published in 2013. Given the still vast array of indicators the first action of the Child Poverty Task Group is to assess which indicators provide useful markers for:
- a. aiding the identification of areas of need (existing and emerging)
  - b. provide evidence of good outcomes

For example, the Fuel Poverty indicator from the PHOF can show over time whether there is a growing need to increase support for this issue and, likewise, indicator 009-00 from the government's single data list (statutory homelessness statistics and information on homelessness prevention and relief) can evidence the impact of activities.

78. The Task Group will be responsible for compiling the indicators in a 'scorecard' which will be regularly reported to the Children & Young People's Trust (either in its own right or amalgamating with the Trust's own scorecard).

## **Equality and Diversity**

79. The whole aim of this strategy is to improve equalities. Any adverse or positive impacts from an equalities perspective have been incorporated within the identified issues in the strategy and delivery plan. For example, it is recognised in the section "Children at greatest risk of poverty" that some groups of people are more likely to be impacted by poverty and therefore there needs to be awareness of the potential risks.
80. The implementation plan will be a live working document and hence there will be an opportunity to review progress from an equalities perspective. This demonstrates best practice as the equalities issues are embedded and addressed within these documents. Lower level action plans will also be reflecting and addressing equalities issues.

## **Risk Assessment**

81. At the time of writing the UK is emerging from recession and the government is implementing a major spending reform, reducing budgets in many public services and making many changes. It is difficult to know how these changes will impact this strategy. Unemployment of the working-age population has risen in recent years and studies<sup>10</sup> have also show that the proportion of children living in poverty in working families has also risen due to employers avoiding redundancies through reduction in hours/pay rates.
82. The new Welfare Reform programme will replace the current benefit structure with a universal credit which began rollout during 2013. This is intended to make transition between different types of benefits and employment easier. The Government has also made changes to the way Housing Benefit is calculated from April 2011. These changes should have a positive effect on poverty however, it will be some time before baselines and impact can be properly measured.
83. Locally, provision of services is being reviewed by all partner agencies in light of budget and policy changes. There is a risk that some of the activities outlined in this strategy will reduce and/or be delivered differently in future. The needs assessment, strategy and delivery plan will need to monitor this change, its impact and any unforeseen consequences that may arise as a result of any changes.
84. As specific risks arise, they will be considered and escalated through the Child Poverty Task Group, Children and Young People's Trust Board and Public Services Board as appropriate.

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<sup>10</sup> In-work poverty in the recession, Institute for Public Policy Research September 2010

## Appendix 1 – Multi-layered assessment

Community Area	Poverty measures					Associated issues							NCMP
	DWP 2011	Census	Wilts data	Census	Census	Wilts data	Wilts data	DWP 2011	Indices of Deprivation 2010		Teenage conceptions		
	% Children in families in receipt of CTC (<60% median income) or IS/JSA	% of households with dependent children in which there is no adult in employment	Children entitled to FSM per 1,000 5 to 15 year olds	% Lone parents with dependent children who are unemployed	% Lone parents with dependent children who are long-term sick	PA per 1,000 5 to 15 year olds	CiN per 1,000 5 to 15 year olds	% low income children in large families (4 or more children)	Number of income deprived children living more than 1km from a primary school	Attainment gap KS2 (2012) **	Attainment gap KS4 (2012) **	Overweight and Obesity reception year 2012/13	
Amesbury	9.0%	7%	66	6.4%	3.3%	50	23	20%	310	1.6	31.8		
Bradford on Avon	9.6%	8%	69	7.2%	4.2%	32	15	14%	190	-6.9	34.9		
Calne	13.7%	11%	87	8.1%	4.7%	40	18	16%	120	24.7	20.1		
Chippenham	11.1%	9%	70	7.3%	3.6%	34	19	22%	140	15.5	28.2		
Corsham	10.9%	9%	87	6.9%	4.1%	33	18	14%	330	16.1	32.9		
Devizes	13.5%	10%	89	6.0%	4.6%	44	27	21%	430	27.0	33.3		
Malmesbury	7.5%	6%	39	7.7%	3.6%	26	10	11%	230	-1.3			
Marlborough	8.3%	7%	40	8.3%	3.6%	30	13	18%	140	15.5	62.7		
Melksham	13.6%	11%	111	7.1%	4.0%	40	28	22%	390	19.8	25.9		
Mere	10.5%	8%	41	2.5%	3.0%	11	17	28%	60				
Pewsey	6.9%	6%	52	4.8%	3.0%	38	15	16%	110	4.9	12.5		
Royal Wootton Bassett & Cricklade	9.2%	7%	61	6.5%	5.0%	37	15	13%	250	1.4	27.8		
Salisbury	12.7%	11%	88	6.2%	6.4%	47	27	15%	220	45.7	41.3		
Southern Wiltshire	7.9%	7%	42	4.9%	3.6%	32	9	18%	260	52.7	75.3		
Tidworth	9.9%	9%	46	5.8%	4.3%	25	13	21%	140	11.0	54.3		
Tisbury	8.8%	9%	28	7.6%	2.5%	11	4	24%	100	-3.7			
Trowbridge	15.2%	12%	120	9.3%	5.1%	39	34	17%	330	17.7	21.6		
Warminster	11.2%	8%	73	5.4%	4.6%	36	22	13%	100	34.3	17.6		
Westbury	15.9%	13%	134	7.3%	5.2%	57	37	23%	210	43.3	30.6		
Wilton	9.3%	9%	54	5.6%	5.4%	22	17	7%	130		62.7		