

### **Service specification: 53 Service to tackle child poverty**

#### **Section one – outcomes**

53 Service to tackle child poverty - Targeting families with multiple barriers to accessing employment
Available funding: £400,000 per year for up to four years
Outcome 1: improved access to sustainable employment for parents (employment sustained for at least 6 months)
Outcome 2: reduction in barriers to employment for parents such as improved physical or mental health, reduced drug/ alcohol dependency, improved levels of English, improved confidence, motivation and skills
Outcome 3: improved attainment of children and young people in the family
Outcome 4: reduction in barriers to attainment of children and young people in the family such as improved confidence, motivation and attendance, improved physical or mental health, improved levels of English
Outcome 5: increased ability to access benefits and entitlements.

#### **Section two - evidence of need**

##### **Level of need and method of delivery**

London Councils intends to fund one or two organisations to deliver this service. This organisation would target beneficiaries living in social housing where there are high levels of worklessness and poverty.

The service will provide a holistic approach for families with multiple barriers to exiting poverty, working with both parents and their children. The service will focus on families with multiple barriers to accessing employment, achieving at school and exiting poverty. Multiple barriers could include:

- accessing training, skills and qualifications
- lack of affordable childcare provision
- lack of fluency in English
- lack of motivation/aspiration
- mental health problems
- drug or alcohol misuse
- involvement in criminal activities/ ex-offenders.

The service will improve access to employment for parents but will also support beneficiaries into sustained employment. The service will improve attainment for children and young people, supporting them to enjoy and achieve at school and in the wider community. The service needs to have strong links to boroughs and other agencies and work in partnership with health services, schools and agencies such as Job Centre Plus.

The proposed model developed for the service will be a holistic approach providing an intensive intervention for a small number of beneficiaries from a specific geographical area. The service should include:

- Support tailored to the needs of the individuals within a family;

- Employers included in the development and design of the project so that any training is specifically linked with employer needs;
- Work placements that are an integral part of the project;
- Free childcare available to all those who need it whilst attending the project;
- Support provided for parents after they have got a job – to help them with the transition from being out of work to employment and checks are made after 3 and 6 months to see if individuals are still in employment;
- Schools included in the development and design of services to complement and build on what already exists;
- Links to relevant services so that individuals receive a holistic package of support;
- Outreach work and referrals from other public services, where appropriate.

Due to the pilot nature of the service, an important aspect will be the reviewing and evaluation of the project. This will enable the service to be adapted and scaled up in line with lessons learnt and allow the London Child Poverty Commission (LCPC) and London Councils to promote the model at a wider level. Evaluation needs to look at effectiveness of service delivery and efficiency savings.

Over half a million of London's children live in poverty. 52% of children in inner London live in poverty: 33% of children in outer London live in poverty. The national average is 28%. Unlike child poverty levels nationally, rates in London have not reduced in recent years. The impact of child poverty for the child includes inequalities in health and education and access to housing, transport, play and leisure services resulting in reduced future life chances.

In October 2004 London Housing reported that "For the first time in London, overcrowding in social rented housing is worse than in the private sector. Over half of England's severely overcrowded households live in London with certain localities particularly badly affected." (*Overcrowded housing and the effects on London's communities*, London Housing, October 2004)

The report *Making work pay in London*, highlights the fact that if you are claiming benefits in London then you have less incentive to take a job in comparison with the rest of the country. Additionally, the employment rate in London for people with no qualifications is 9% lower than the national rate at only 44%. (*Making Work Pay in London*, Mayor of London, London Development Agency and Association of London Government, 2003)

### **Location of need and maximum amount of funding available per year to benefit people from each borough**

London Councils intends to fund one or two organisations to deliver this service. The service should be delivered in a small geographical area affected by high levels of deprivation. The area of benefit needs to cover two boroughs, such as a housing estate or primary school which is split over a borough boundary, but with a strong local focus on a small geographical area.

### **The policy context**

The LCPC Housing Sub-group is currently commissioning research on "Housing Costs, Employment Incentives and Benefits in London."

Relevant reports include:

- *Interim report*, London Child Poverty Commission, 2007

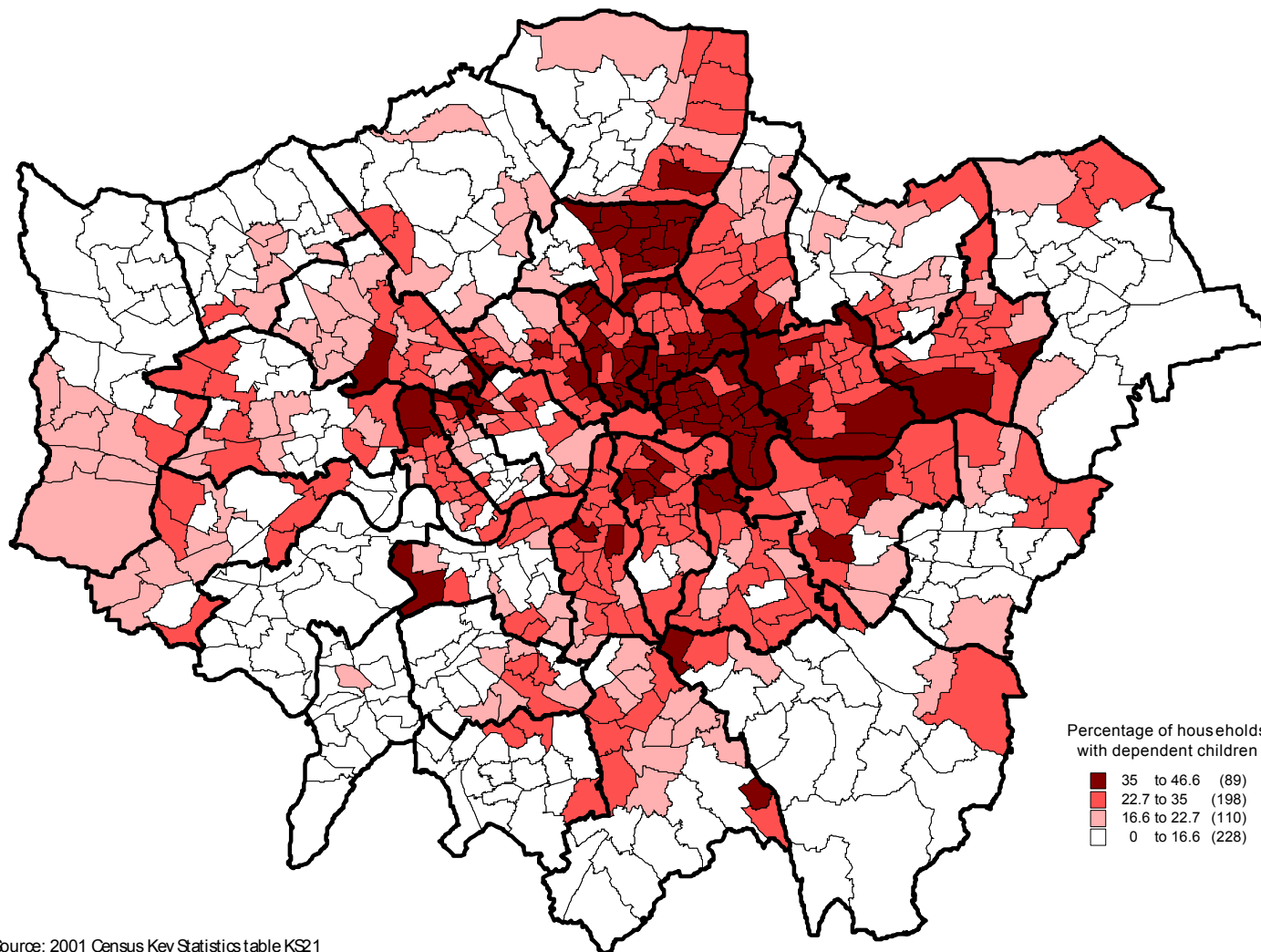
- *Making Work Pay in London*, Mayor of London, London Development Agency and Association of London Government, 2003
- DfES *Every Child Matters*
- *The State of London's Children* report, Mayor of London, 2007

### **Promoting equality**

The service should be accessible to all equalities groups including people with disabilities, LGBT, BAME. The service should target groups that are overrepresented in child poverty statistics. For example, the higher rates of child poverty in certain BAME groups are highlighted in the *Interim Report* of the London Child Poverty Commission and *The State of London's Children* report. Parents for whom English is not their first language are over-represented in unemployment figures and households living in deprivation, face additional barriers to accessing and sustaining employment and training opportunities and experience lower financial incentives for entering work. There are also higher rates of child poverty in lone parent households.

Other target groups include disabled parents and those who care for disabled children. "Not only do they face barriers to entering into employment, such as inadequate childcare provision, but they also face challenges in maintaining employment." (*Tackling Child Poverty in London: A guide to borough initiatives and good practice*, London Councils, 2006)

## Workless Households in London



Source: 2001 Census Key Statistics table KS21

This map shows workless households with children as a percentage of all households with children, London wards, Census 2001