

CHILD POVERTY STRATEGY

2008-2011

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Foreword

Children and young people are Haringey's future.

Above all we want them *to be happy, healthy and safe with a bright future*. We have to plan for that future - to make it the best we possibly can.

Every year we see young people excel against the odds given their personal circumstances but these are exceptions. Too many children across the country and particularly in London grow up in poverty. We have an affluent society but with extremes of wealth and poverty. Haringey is no exception; it is a borough with high levels of deprivation which impact on children's life chances.

Families both in and out of work can experience poverty, depending on their circumstances. We know that poverty rates are highest for workless families, whether lone parents or couples. Whilst the number of children living in temporary housing has reduced and employment has risen, levels of worklessness remain high impacting on health, well-being and life chances.

We have seen enormous improvements in services for children and young people in Haringey. Progress in achieving five good GCSEs has been sustained at twice the national rate for over seven years. Sixteen children's centres are now providing good services for young children that enable many parents to return to work. This, together with other central and local government initiatives has led to a 4% reduction in the number of children living in poverty in Haringey; a much faster pace than most other parts of London.

This document draws together cross cutting work which will accelerate the pace at which we can lift children out of poverty in Haringey. Our ambition, reflected in our new LAA target on Child Poverty, is to achieve a further reduction of 4.5% by 2011.

Realising this ambition will draw upon the work of many departments across the council and all of the council's partners represented on the Haringey Strategic Partnership.

We want everyone in Haringey to get behind reducing poverty. We all have a role to play in delivering a better future for children and young people in the borough.

Together, we can do it.

Cllr Santry
Cabinet Member
Children and Young People

Cllr Reith
Cabinet Member

Executive Summary

There are a number of reasons for developing this strategy. Haringey, like London as a whole, has stubbornly high rates of child poverty with 36% of children in the borough growing up in families struggling to meet the basic necessities of life. At the same time, a number of recent reports and policy statements have stressed the important role that local services, especially local government services, can make to helping families out of poverty. Finally, Haringey's Councillors themselves want to see a renewed drive to reduce child poverty.

The fundamental aim of the strategy is to ensure that all council services and local partners are working in a joined up way to do everything possible to reduce child poverty in the borough and ensure that today's children don't become the parents of poor children tomorrow. It builds on a number of existing strategies, including the Regeneration Strategy and the Children and Young People's Plan.

The strategy identifies four **objectives** that the council needs to meet in order to achieve a substantial reduction in child poverty. These are adapted from already existing service priorities, although they also reflect objectives identified and recommendations made in the London Child Poverty Commission report.

- Objective 1: Increasing parental employment in sustainable jobs
- Objective 2: Improving take up of benefits and tax credits
- Objective 3: Reducing educational attainment gaps for children in poverty
- Objective 4: Ensuring all Haringey children have decent and secure homes.

This document will be supported by an action plan laying out how the council will deliver on each of these objectives.

Introduction

1 Despite being one of the richest cities in the world, 40% of children in London grow up in poverty. Haringey, the 5th most deprived borough in the capital, is certainly no exception to this broad London pattern. Too many of our children are living in inadequate housing, with parents unable to afford the basic necessities of life.

2 There is, however, nothing inevitable about this. The government has already succeeded in bringing down child poverty. Over the last decade some 600,000 children have been lifted out of poverty since 1997. Many examples of local agencies and local initiatives – including many Haringey initiatives - have helped families out of poverty. In fact, between 2004-2007, the number of children living in poverty in the borough fell by 4%.

Why we need a strategy

3 A number of factors have prompted us to write this strategy.

- Child poverty has fallen over the last decade but the rate at which poverty is falling has begun to decline. The government is likely to miss its national target of reducing child poverty by half by 2010 – with nearly 2.7 million children projected to still be living in poverty. Against this background, the Government is strongly encouraging local services to take an ever more active role in reducing poverty.
- The London Commission on Child Poverty stressed the important contribution that local services could make to reducing poverty.
- Haringey's councillors want to see a renewed drive by the council to improve the circumstances and opportunities of the borough's poorest children.

4 The fundamental aim of the strategy is to ensure that:

all council services and local partners are working in a joined up way to do everything possible to reduce child poverty in the borough and ensure that today's children don't become the parents of poor children tomorrow.

5 The strategy builds on a number of existing council and HSP strategies, including the Income Maximisation Strategy, the Regeneration Strategy, the Well-being Strategic Framework and the Children and Young People's strategic plan, *Changing Lives*.

6 This strategy recognises that in attempting to address this issue there are certain actions that can only be initiated by central government such as increases in child tax credit which are clearly beyond the remit of local government. The actions identified in this paper are within the scope and responsibility of the local authority and its key partners.

Defining Child Poverty

The official Government measure of child poverty is defined as children living in a family with an income less than 60% of the national median (average) after taking into account household size and composition. Children are defined as individuals under the age of 16, plus 16/17 years old in full time education.

As an illustration, using this measure a couple with one child under 14 would be living in poverty if they had an income below £11,569 per year (at 2005/06 prices) and a lone parent with one child aged under 14 would be living in poverty with an annual income below £7,540.

The National Context

7 In the mid to late 1990s the United Kingdom suffered higher child poverty than nearly all other industrialised nations. In 1999 the Government pledged to eradicate child poverty in the UK within a generation - by 2020 - with interim commitments to cut it by a quarter by 2004 and by half by 2010. Although child poverty was reduced by 16% in 2004/5, the target to reduce it by a quarter was missed.

8 Nationally nearly one in three children - 29% - are growing up poor. But some groups have higher than average rates of child poverty including :

- some Black and Minority Ethnic groups
- single parents
- disabled parents
- parents with a disabled child
- refugee families
- families with many children
- teenage parents.

9 At the same time, it is worth underscoring that child poverty is much more widespread than is perhaps generally realised – poverty is not limited to workless and/or single parent families. Indeed almost six in ten (57%) of poor households have someone in work; in London 30% of children who live with both parents are poor.

London Context

10 London has higher levels of child poverty than the rest of the country.

- During a three-year period, 2003 – 2006, over 650,000 children in London lived under the poverty line. This is 41% of London's children compared with 29% nationally.

- There are 105 wards across London where the percentage of children living in families who are in receipt of key benefits is at least twice the national average; 10 of these wards are in Haringey.
- 55% of children in London who are living with a disabled parent are in poverty compared to 39% nationally.
- 60% of children in lone parent families in London are in poverty compared to 50% in the UK, and 30% of children in couple families, compared to 23% nationally.
- 68% of children in social housing in London live in poverty compared to 58% nationally.

11 In order to address London's particularly high rates of child poverty an independent body, The London Child Poverty Commission, was set up by the Mayor of London and London Councils in February 2006. The Commission's report was published in February 2008. See Appendix A for further details.

Haringey Context

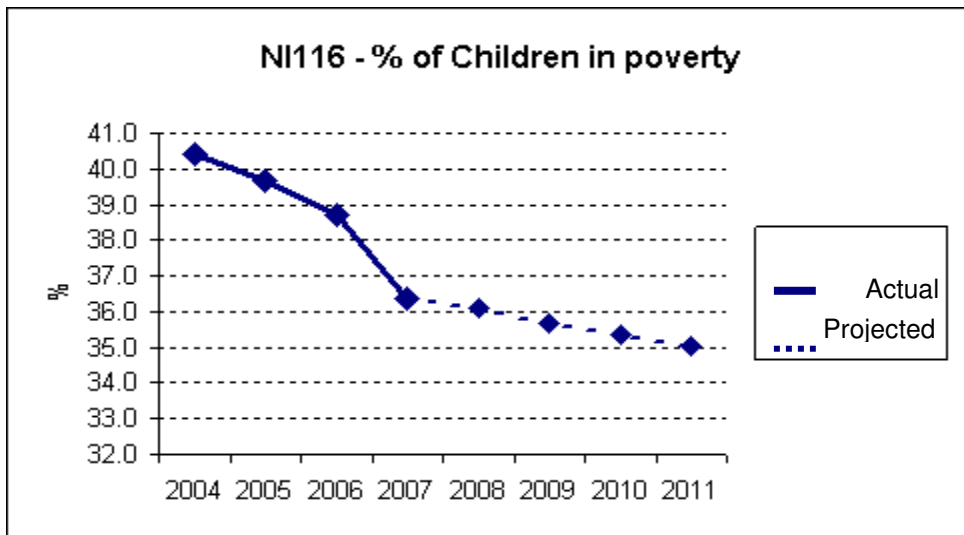
12 At present it is not possible to measure child poverty at the borough level – at least not using the government's preferred measure (children living in families with incomes below 60% of the median). Until data is available local authorities are expected to use uptake of out of work benefits as a proxy for poverty – including Job Seekers' Allowance, Incapacity Benefit, Income Support and Pension Credit.

13 According to DWP figures, between 2004-2007 the percentage of children living in families who are in receipt of out of work benefits has declined by 4% to 36.4%. This downward trend is projected to continue for the next four years with an estimated 35% of children living in poverty by 2011.

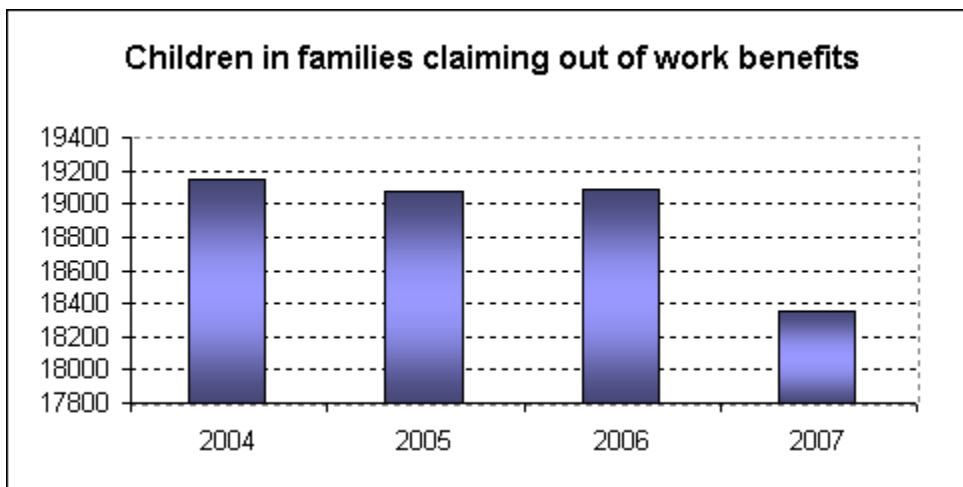
14 Some facts, figures and trends

	Number of Children	Children in families claiming out of work benefits	% of Children in poverty
April 2004	47400	19145	40.4
April 2005	48085	19080	39.7
April 2006	49320	19090	38.7
April 2007	50475	18350	36.4
April 2008	50115	18105	36.1
April 2009	49990	17845	35.7
April 2010	49745	17595	35.4
April 2011	49545	17350	35.0

Source: DWP



Source: DWP



For more information on child poverty in Haringey please see Appendix B.
Tackling Child Poverty in Haringey

15 Tackling child poverty is a priority for Haringey Council and the HSP. This is reflected in Haringey's Children and Young People's Plan, the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) and takes full account of ethnic, cultural and religious needs of Haringey people.

16 The Council's commitment to tackling child poverty is also reflected in Local Area Agreement targets around worklessness and improving educational attainment, and for our new LAA (2008-11), a new target committing us explicitly to reducing child poverty.

Our Child Poverty Objectives

17 We have identified four objectives that the council needs to meet in order to achieve a substantial reduction in child poverty, each elaborated in the next section. These are adapted from already existing service priorities, although they also reflect objectives identified and recommendations made in the London Child Poverty Commission report.

- Objective 1: Increasing parental employment in sustainable jobs
- Objective 2: Improving take up of benefits and tax credits
- Objective 3: Reducing educational attainment gaps for children in poverty
- Objective 4: Ensuring all Haringey children have decent and secure homes.

OBJECTIVE 1: INCREASING PARENTAL EMPLOYMENT IN SUSTAINABLE JOBS

18 Worklessness is a major cause of poverty. The largest out-of-work group in London are those with dependant children. However, it is increasingly being recognised that in-work poverty is a major problem too. There is a need to improve people's skills which will enable them to secure better paid jobs as well as helping them to sustain jobs and progress at work.

19 Current initiatives include:

Delivering and promoting the Haringey Guarantee which supports residents farthest away from the labour market into sustained employment. To date, the Guarantee has helped over 150 residents into work and has supported over 100 lone parents through training, volunteering, work placements or jobs. The programme offers a guarantee:

- **to local residents** to deliver quality driven employment and skills programmes

- **to employers** by providing local workers who meet or are trained to meet their recruitment and skills needs and who have a positive attitude to work
 - **from employers** to guarantee interviews for beneficiaries of projects who can be demonstrated to be 'Guarantee Ready' and meet the person specification for the role
- Developing *"Families into Work"* in Northumberland Park with the aim of tackling worklessness in the community and amongst lone parent and couple families through an intensive programme of support around a range of needs.
 - Working in partnership with mainstream welfare to work providers such as Reed and Working Links to encourage workless couple families and single parents back into work, particularly single parents with children under 12.
 - Working in partnership with Neighbourhood Management and Job Centre Plus, The Children and Young People's Service have established a range of targeted projects and initiatives to support parents into employment, including promoting clear referral routes to employment and training support providers and establishing Jobs Clubs, CV workshops, and Job Fairs in Children's Centres.

Future Priorities

20 Delivering and Promoting the Haringey Guarantee

- To strengthen existing partnerships and establish new partnerships to support disadvantaged groups, including lone parents and long-term benefit claimants, develop partnerships to deliver more family-friendly employment opportunities, and work to extend the programme's reach, including exploring the potential for joint-commissioning with Job Centre Plus and developing the North London Pledge.
- To develop a stronger and more integrated in-work support offer, incorporating elements such as tax credits and Train to Gain, to help break the cycle of welfare to work and back to welfare.
- To continue to lobby Government to increase funding to support people into employment and seek further opportunities to assist jobseekers in the transition into work.

21 Launching and delivering "Families Into Work" in Northumberland Park

- To robustly monitor and evaluate the pilot to measure the impact of combined interventions and the success of the project overall, with a view to exploring the viability of a roll-out across the borough.

- To co-ordinate the multi-agency approach to address the multiple factors contributing to clients' social exclusion.
- To establish referral routes between agencies and encourage appropriate information sharing.

22 *Other*

- To align Haringey's homelessness services with the Haringey Guarantee and other local training, education and employment provision.
- To increase young offenders' engagement in suitable education, employment and training.
- To ensure all teenage parents known to Supporting Teenage Parents have education or employment plans and access to accredited training programmes.
- To use the childcare sufficiency audit to identify any gaps in provision and to ensure that childcare places are available within the areas of most needs.
- To ensure adult education provision especially ESOL provision.

OBJECTIVE 2: IMPROVING TAKE UP OF BENEFITS AND TAX CREDITS

23 Many poor families are not aware of all the benefits and tax credits to which they might be entitled. London has some of the lowest uptake of certain types of benefits in the UK. Benefit and tax credit take-up campaigns have proven to be effective in increasing household income for significant numbers of low income families.

24 Current initiatives include:

- Working closely with Job Centre Plus to promote the take-up of Working Tax and Child Tax Credits.
- Providing income maximisation information through: Customer Services, Benefits and Taxation Services, the Financial Assessment Team, Homes for Haringey, Housing Services, The Children and Young People's Service, Physical Disabilities Service and Supporting People.
- Working in partnership with the Citizen's Advice Bureau in running 'Reaping the Benefits', a year long project aimed at driving up benefit and tax credit take-up, and delivering debt counselling in eight different venues in Northumberland Park, Bruce Grove and Noel Park.

Future Priorities

- To increase the take-up of Disability related benefits.
- To increase financial capability amongst the most disadvantaged communities, including support in accessing benefits such as work and family tax credits, subsidised childcare places, educational maintenance allowance and community based credit unions.
- To increase take up of Housing Benefit for low paid workers.
- To increase take up of Council Tax Benefit for low paid workers.
- To build on current work to effectively drive up take-up of Working Tax and Child Tax Credits.
- To provide local people who struggle with paying Council Tax with the opportunity to seek debt management and welfare benefit advice.
- To ensure that staff in Children's Centres and family support workers are equipped to advise on an increased range of financial benefits that are available to low income families.
- To visit primary schools and offer parents benefits and tax credit advice.
- To further build upon the partnership work with the Citizens Advice Bureau.

OBJECTIVE 3: REDUCING EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT GAPS FOR CHILDREN IN POVERTY

25 Education provides one of the principle routes for escaping intergenerational poverty. It provides a child with the skills and confidence to navigate through life, offers greater chances for sustainable employment opportunities and helps give children a more equal start in life.

26 Children should be given the opportunity to develop their full potential and make a success of their lives for themselves and their families. They should have the best possible start in life and not be disadvantaged by family circumstance.

27 Current initiatives include:

- Children's Centres which aim to give children the best start in life and to support parents offer a range of integrated services including care, education, health and family support.
- Extended schools schemes.

- The Vulnerable Children: a single multi-agency conversation and the single route of referral which both aim to identify the most vulnerable learners at the earliest stage of their education.
- National Healthy Schools Programme which aims to raise achievement as well as reduce health inequalities and promote social inclusion.
- Intervention programmes at all key stages focussed on improving educational achievement.

Future Priorities

- To further reduce the number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET).
- To extend at Foundation Stage the Targeted Pupil Initiative to better identify the most vulnerable learners at the earliest stage of their education and involve their families in wider family learning initiatives.
- To ensure that by 2009 99% of young people leave school with at least one qualification.
- To empower parents to maximise their pivotal role of supporting their children to make a positive contribution and support them to combat deprivation through educational opportunity.
- To explore the case for minimising low attainment at the same time as focusing on prioritising high achievement.
- To work with similar London boroughs as a consortium to share best practice in relation to reducing child poverty and to ensure that inter-borough processes regarding mobile families are robust and minimise the disruption to children's education when home circumstances are changing.
- To review the take-up of free school meals by Haringey families and qualifying criteria, to identify any potential areas where take-up maybe lower than entitlement and take active steps to improve publicity and to support families in making claims.

OBJECTIVE 4: ENSURING ALL HARINGEY CHILDREN HAVE DECENT AND SECURE HOMES

28 Access to adequate housing is an important element of a strategy to address child poverty. Housing issues including poor property condition, overcrowding, living in temporary accommodation and housing related debt can all act as contributing factors to high levels of child poverty.

29 Current initiatives include:

- Delivery of a NRF funded “Tackling Fuel Poverty” project which is adopting innovative ways to alleviate fuel poverty.
- Availability of floating support services to families who need to move into temporary accommodation to help them settle into a neighbourhood and access the services they need.
- Education Welfare Officer working with Housing officers to minimise the impact of pupil mobility on children’s education.
- Joint working with partner agencies through Hearthstone to support survivors of domestic violence to minimise the disruption to their lives.
- Availability of advice and support for households who are experiencing benefit or debt problems, which may threaten their home.
- Allocation of social housing lets through Home Connections, the choice based lettings scheme.

Future Priorities

- To strengthen links between Supporting People & Supporting Teenage Parents to ensure appropriate accommodation is available and accessible.
- To reduce the number households living in temporary accommodation by 50% by 2010.
- To address overcrowding across tenure.
- To deliver on the decent homes programme.
- To expand Hearthstone to increase the range of services available to survivors of domestic violence.
- To deliver initiatives to tackle fuel poverty.
- To ensure young offenders have suitable housing and housing related support services.

Implementation, monitoring and evaluation

30 An action plan has been developed to deliver this strategy and it compliments and links with the action plans of the various HSP theme boards.

The action plan is a rolling three year document which will be monitored quarterly and reviewed and updated annually, in a similar way to all LAA action plans. Progress reports will be presented to Cabinet and to several theme boards.

31 The Children and Young People's Service will be responsible for managing the strategy, and for monitoring and evaluating the action plan, with support from the Corporate Policy team.

32 The strategy will be monitored internally by the Regeneration Stream Board and will report to the Children and Young People's Service Partnership theme board of the HSP.

Consultation

33 The strategy will be sent out for consultation to external partners through the HSP and its partnership boards beginning September 2008.

Appendix A

The London Child Poverty Commission [LCPC]

The LCPC identified the factors driving child poverty in London above the national average. These include:

- London's population has a high share of groups who face high poverty risks at national level, including most ethnic minority groups, lone parents and families in social housing.
- While there has been major increases in lone parent employment outside the capital this has been less marked in London.
- Higher cost of living means the gain from moving from benefits to employment is worth less in real terms for some families.
- There is a relative shortage of part-time child care provision.
- Many part-time service sector jobs pay lower wages than in the rest of the UK.
- Fewer part time opportunities reduce employment chances for disabled parents

London Child Poverty Commission - Recommendations

The Commission made 26 recommendations across four broad themes:

- Employment and Skills
- Incomes and Incentives
- Child Development and Education
- Housing

Recommendations of particular relevance to local services include:

- Jobcentre Plus to work with employers to raise understanding of mental health issues and promote best practice in supporting people with mental health difficulties in work.
- The Low Pay Commission to consider the case for a London minimum wage.
- Transport for London to introduce concessions for lower income workers.
- Government, GLA and councils to find additional funding for extended schools in London.
- London Councils to improving post-16 options for young people.
- Policies to ensure minimum disruption of school career for children living in temporary accommodation.
- Improved support for children moving from primary to secondary school.
- Social landlords and their partners to provide closer integration of housing and employment services.

Appendix B

Child Poverty in Haringey

- As of April 2005 the three Haringey wards with the highest levels of children living in families in receipt of key benefits are :

1. Northumberland Park	54.6%
2. White Hart Lane	52.7%
3. Tottenham Green	52.4%

- As of March 2007, 8,598 children live in temporary accommodation.

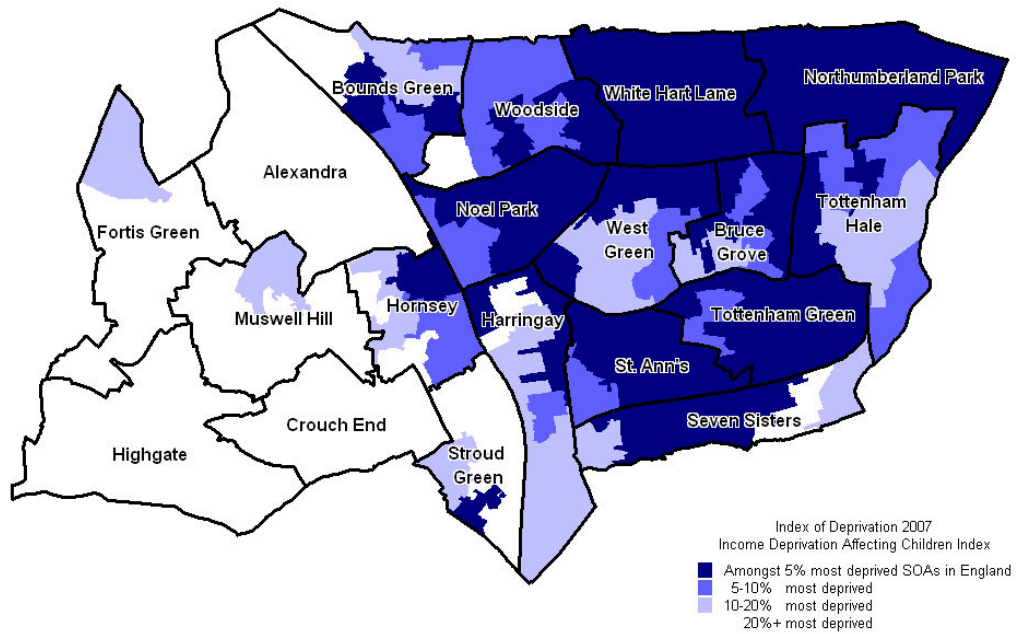
- There are a total of 10,775 pupils eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) out of a total of 33,865 pupils aged 5-16 years in Haringey schools. For pupils living in Haringey there are 9,956 eligible for FSM out of a total of 29,806 .pupils aged 5-16 years.

- The 2007 Haringey's Housing Needs Assessment indicates that 8.9% of households are overcrowded. Over crowding was more predominant in wards of Bruce Grove, Seven Sisters and White Hart Lane. Overcrowding brings particular problems for children and young people and adversely impacts upon their education.

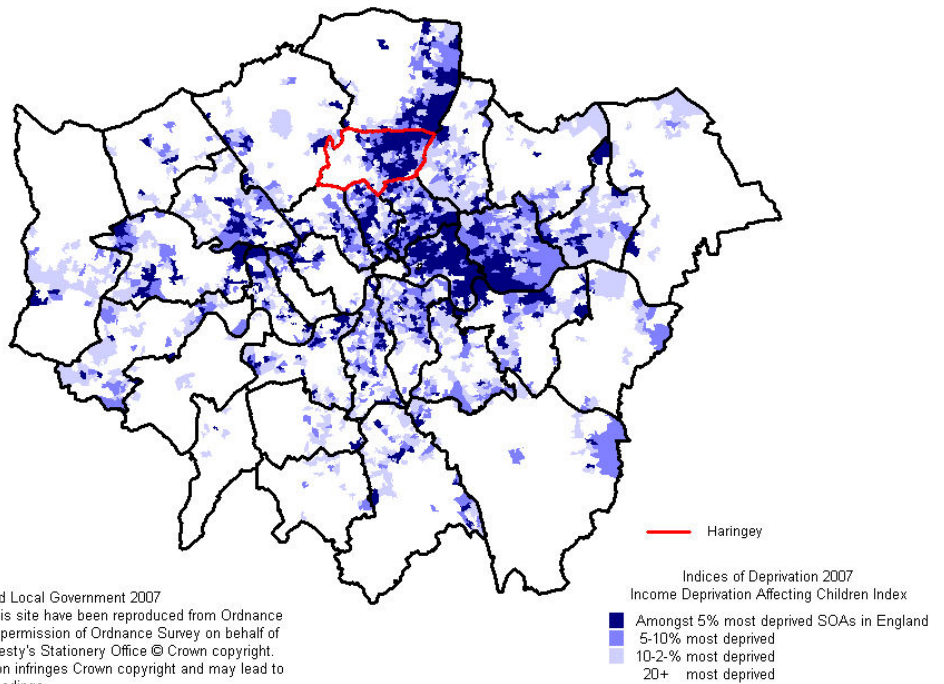
- The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2007 (IMD 2007) ranks every area of England according to its degree of deprivation. It shows that is a measure of multiple deprivation at small area level; it draws together a number of socio-economic criteria such as education and income so that comparisons can be made across the country. The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2007 indicates that 16 of Haringey's 144 Super Output Areas (SOA) are amongst the 5% most deprived in England, while a further 25 SOA are amongst the 5-10% most deprived.

- The IMD also provides information on Income Deprivation Affecting Children (IDACI). This is the proportion of the under-16s in a family in receipt of means-tested benefits. The IDACI 2007 shows that 57 SOA are in the 0.1% to 5% of the most deprived in England. A further 23 are amongst the 5-10% most deprived.

**Indices of Deprivation 2007
Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index
Haringey SOAs**



**Indices of Deprivation 2007
Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index
London SOAs**



Source: Communities and Local Government 2007
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