



5. If you would like to share views or evidence about reducing and alleviating the impacts of child poverty generally, please do so below.

Growing up in a low-income family is associated with poorer emotional health and development.¹ This is a contributing factor to the worse outcomes that children and young people from lower income families experience across a wide range of domains.² Any strategy to mitigate the effects of child poverty must therefore include early intervention to support emotional development and close gaps between disadvantaged children and their peers.

Child poverty is a major driver of health inequalities. As noted by the latest review of health inequalities by Professor Marmot: "Poverty experienced during childhood harms health at the time and throughout the rest of life."³

The government's opportunity mission milestone is to improve the percentage of children reaching a good level of development aged five. To achieve this, the government should increase investment in the first 1001 Days, which is the most effective time to invest.⁴ Addressing disparities in development linked to poverty must be part of the opportunity mission too, so that babies growing up in deprivation also get 'the best start in life'. In the most deprived areas of England, the percentage of children achieving the expected level of development aged two, is consistently below the England average.⁵

¹ Yoshikawa, H., Aber, J.L. & Beardslee, W (2012).

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/224956205_The_Effects_of_Poverty_on_the_Mental_Emoional_and_Behavioral_Health_of_Children_and_Youth_Implications_for_Prevention

² Feinstein, L (2015) Social and Emotional learning: skills for life and work. Early Intervention Foundation

³ [Health Equity in England The Marmot Review 10 Years On executive summary web.pdf](#)

⁴ [The Heckman Curve - The Heckman Equation](#)

⁵ [Child development outcomes at 2 to 2 and a half years, 2023 to 2024: statistical commentary - GOV.UK](#)

Sensitive and responsive parental care provides the foundations for healthy development, and is particularly important in the first 1001 days. But more than one in ten babies in the UK today is not getting the nurturing care they need, as recognised in the Start for Life programme guide. These babies are living in fear and distress, at risk of ‘disorganised attachment’ - which is associated with the worst developmental outcomes. Babies growing up in poverty are at a higher risk of disorganised attachment⁶⁷

The Start for Life programme provides £36.5 million annually for perinatal mental health and parent-infant relationship services.⁸ But the programme only runs in half of English local authorities – it should be rolled out nationally.

8.If you would like to share views or evidence about how we could **increase financial resilience** please do so below.

Increasing financial resilience means low-income families could tackle problem debt and manage financial shocks including through savings and access to affordable credit

Abolishing the two-child limit is an important first step to begin levelling the playing field for babies. Introduced in 2017, the two-child-limit policy restricts the financial support provided to families through Tax Credits and Universal Credit to two children per household. This means a baby who happens to be the third or fourth child is not supported as their older siblings were. The impact of this may fall on all the children, but the obvious inequity of effectively penalising babies who happen to be born into families with two or more children is immoral. It should be abolished at the earliest opportunity.

Fathers and partners provide crucial support too. However, fathers and partners on low incomes cannot always afford to take time off following the birth. We

⁷ [Attachment and stress regulation in socioeconomically disadvantaged children: Can public childcare compensate? - PMC](#)

⁸ [Families to receive £126 million in early years support - GOV.UK](#)

recommend that government should provide six weeks' well-paid paternity and parental leave as recommended by First 1001 Days member, the Fatherhood Institute.⁹

9. If you would like to share views or evidence about how we could **enhance local and community support** please do so below. (1638 characters)

Enhancing local and community support means low-income families could access quality health and education services to tackle the impacts of poverty, particularly in early years:

Family hubs and the Start for Life programme offer vital services to the 75 areas of England that currently receive funding. We are delighted that the funding has been extended recently but have concerns over the longevity of the funding package and the geographical scope of the programme. We recommend extending the programme to every local authority so that every family can access a Family Hub or Children's Centre in their neighbourhood. Continuation of funding through the next parliament would also make it possible to evaluate the programme fairly. As we learnt from Sure Start, it can take several years to measure the impact of new programmes.

Services should be co-produced with the sector, working directly with families, to reach the most vulnerable babies in marginalised and isolated families. There is good practice to draw on here from the five A Better Start partnerships, based in Blackpool, Bradford, Lambeth, Nottingham and Southend. The five partnerships have developed ways to embed parent voice in service development and delivery, for example through parent mentors. This approach ensures service providers reflect and reach the communities they serve, which can help families from minority communities to feel safe and included.¹⁰

The UK-wide Child Poverty Strategy should include specific goals to improve access to community-based early childhood services in areas of deprivation. These should include ensuring there is a family hub or children's centre in every local community in England, particularly in neighbourhoods of high deprivation. It should recommend services are co-produced to ensure maximum impact.

⁹ [Six weeks for dads | Our campaigns](#)

¹⁰ [Insight-6-Addressing-Inequalities-August-2022-002.pdf](#)