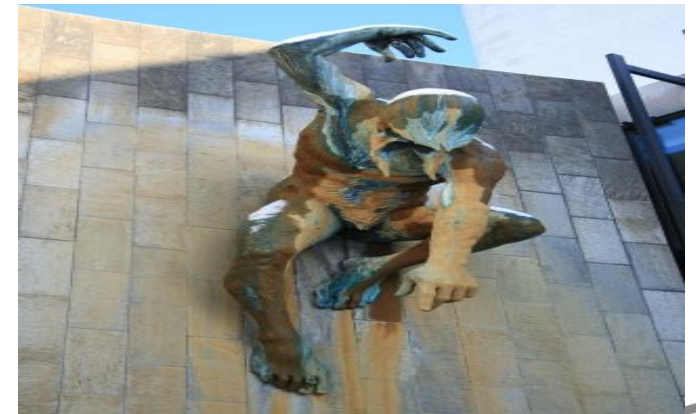


# Role of local authorities in countering child poverty

**EPHA Seminar: Brussels  
December 2012**

**Councillor Doreen Huddart  
Newcastle City Council**

# Newcastle



**Child poverty is everybody's business**

# Newcastle City – some facts

- **Regional Capital – North East England**
- **Population 280,200**
- **Formerly an area of heavy industry; mining & shipbuilding**
- **Ethnic minorities 12%**
- **North east: Unemployed 9.8%**
- **North East: Average disposable weekly household income after housing costs is £327 (lowest in England)**

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# Child Poverty Act (March 2010)

- Requires responsible local authorities and their partner authorities to cooperate to reduce and mitigate the effects of child poverty in their local areas.

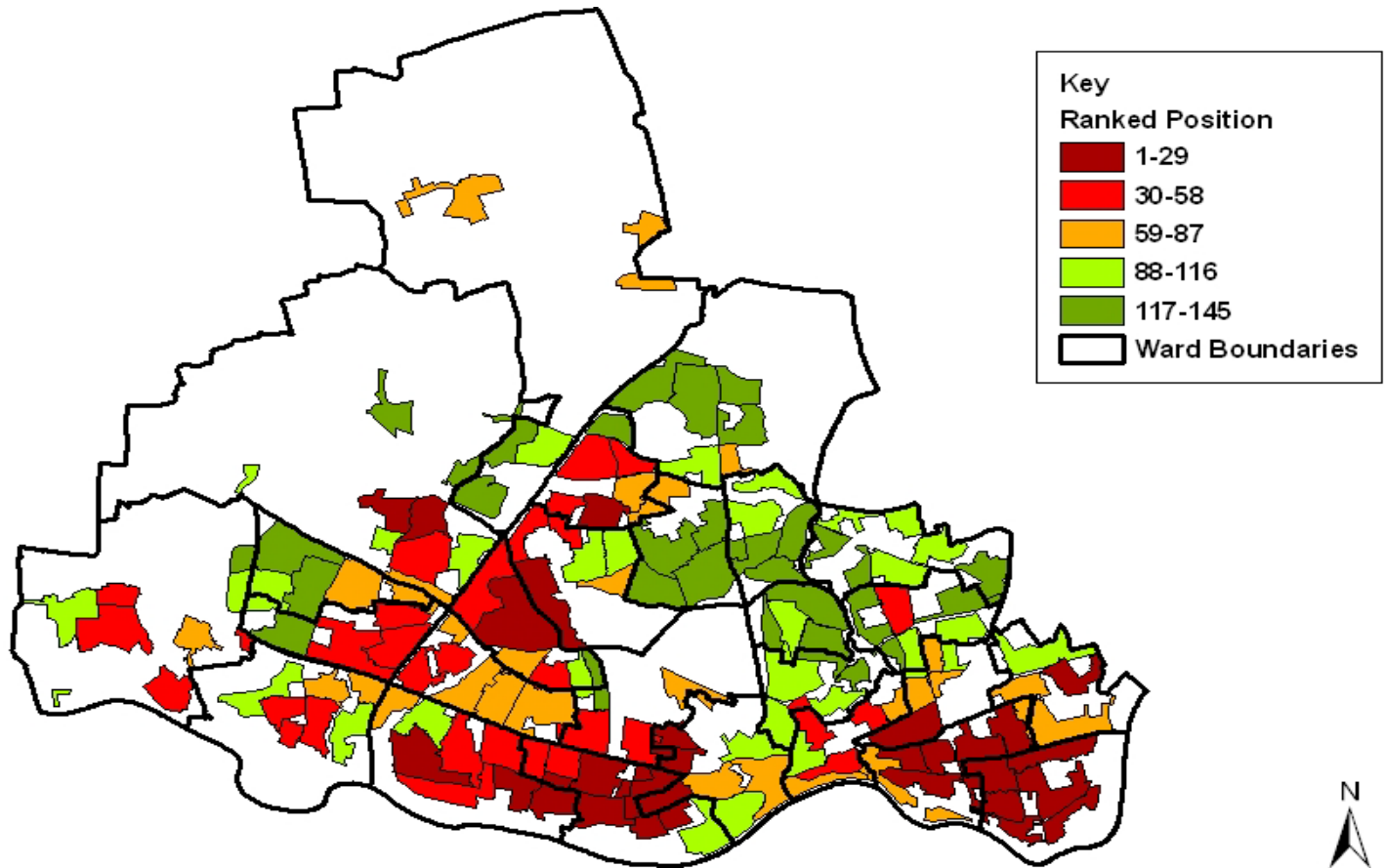
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# ***Child Poverty: Definitely not a thing of the past***



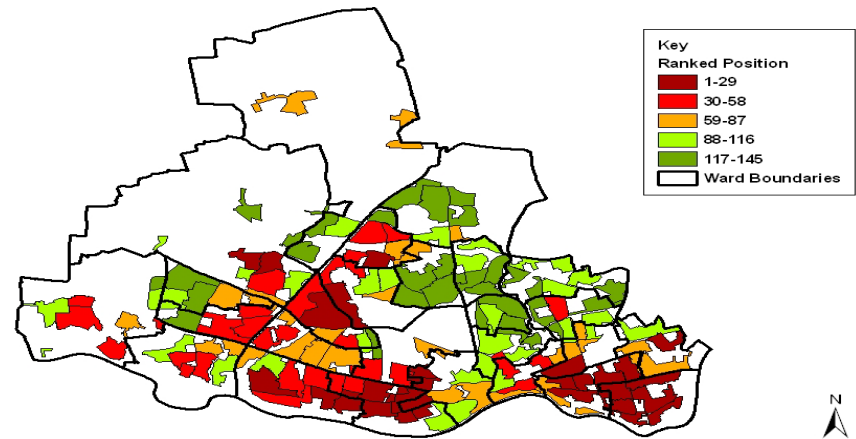


# Neighbourhood Vitality Index



# What this means

- **Parents:** Walker, Byker, Elswick and Westgate (most disadvantaged wards) have the highest unemployment rates
- **Children:** - 18% of pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) achieved 5 good GCSE's (compared to non-FSM pupils 48%)
- **Children:** - 12% of FSM pupils are persistently absent from school (compared to 5% for non-FSM pupils)
- 30.5% children in poverty
- City council has an on-going strategy to tackle child poverty



# Child Poverty – Recurring Issues

- It is multi-dimensional and not a thing of the past
- It is present in all EU countries despite prosperity
- It is a relative concept in different countries and defined differently
- It is linked to unemployment and low wage incomes
- More prevalent in certain ethnic minority communities, families with substance misuse, disabilities, histories of crime or abuse and refugees.

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# What is increasing?



- Unemployment and short time working
- Demand for services and advice
- Looked after and children in care
- Terminations in the over 30 age group
- Demand for social housing and people defaulting on their mortgages
- Childhood obesity and poor nutrition
- In work poverty

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# What is decreasing?



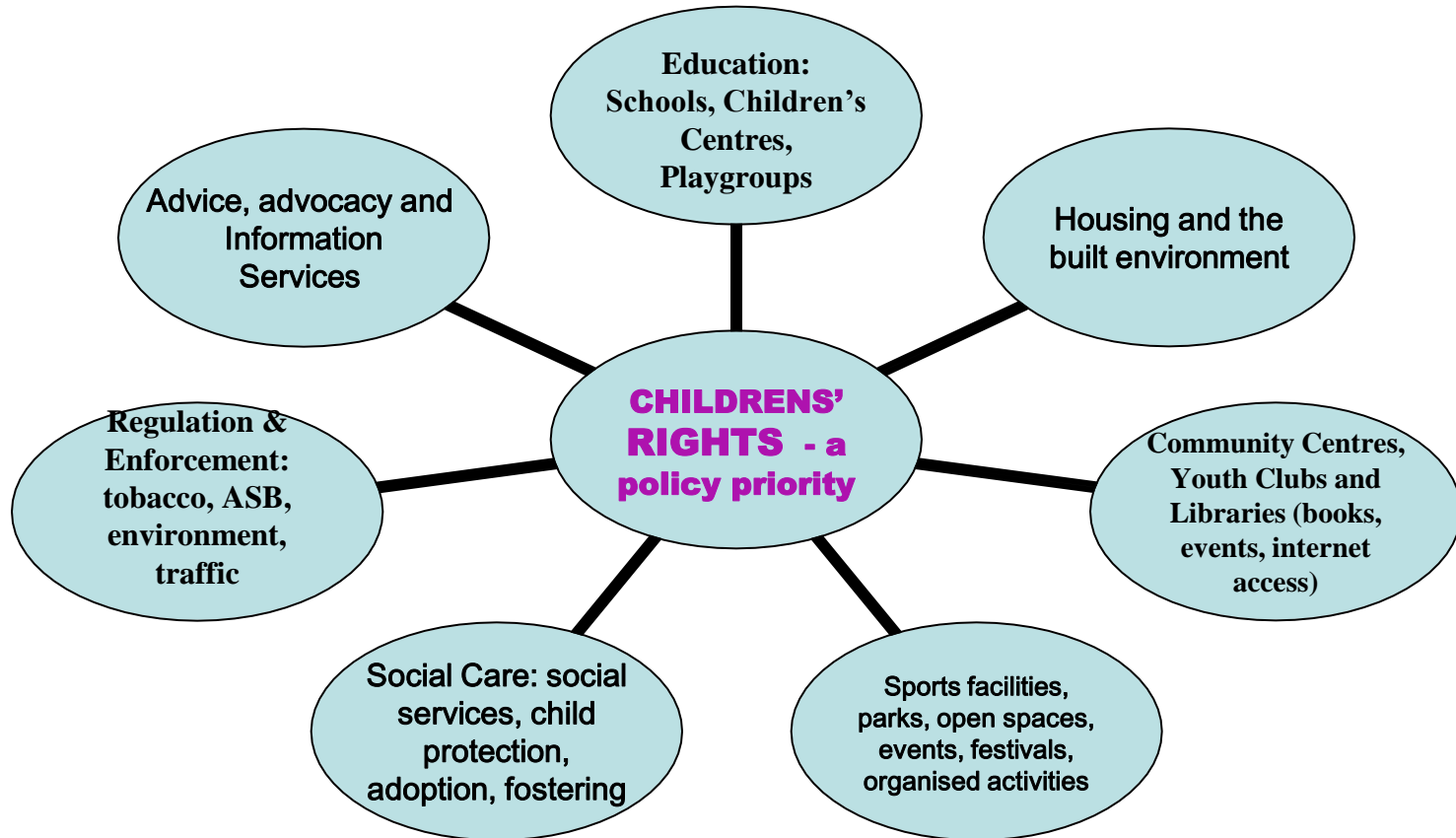
- Incomes, wages and availability of social housing
- Resources available for service provision
- Funding for infrastructure projects
- Finances available for social benefits and protection
- Number of under-18's wanting terminations
- Number of under-18's not in employment or training
- Spending on social participation (eg clubs, holidays)
- 2.3 million children in UK below 60% median income

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# The role of local authorities

- **Local authorities are not able to provide increases to income, but can work with others to identify problems and lobby for change.**
- **They are at the forefront of work to tackle child poverty and disadvantage. Their role is crucial in offering services and activities to promote the wellbeing of families and children.**

# Local Authority Services



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# Joint working and network links with:

- Health services
- Legal, police and community safety
- Voluntary sector and social enterprises
- Housing providers
- Child care and disability agencies
- Universities and research provision
- Leisure and recreation providers
- Credit unions and financial advice
- Local businesses, industry and training

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# Actions to promote wellbeing

- Clear strategies which recognise the nature of the problem and evidence based solutions
- Practical priorities to prevent, mitigate and measure poverty and promote community cohesion
- Advice and information: benefits, training, jobs
- Partnership working with services and facilities as well as other local authorities and agencies
- Promote consultation, empower communities and reduce anti-social behaviour
- Policies to make the local authority 'child friendly' and inclusive of 'child proofing'.
- Improved housing and neighbourhood provision

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# How are we reducing child poverty?

Focus upon 14 – 19:  
(Apprenticeships and  
leisure access)

Innovation to  
Increase  
Employment  
and raise  
aspirations

Physical  
regeneration,  
including housing  
improvements

**Preventing  
and Tackling  
Child Poverty**

Improving support to  
families eg.  
Children's Centres  
and policy focus

Addressing health  
inequalities and fuel  
poverty

Welfare Rights,  
financial advice  
and increasing  
benefits take-up

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# On-going Challenges

- The need to maintain standards alongside financial and resource reductions
- How to meet competing demands for all priority groups (e.g. elderly, disabled)
- Reaching out to the most needy and vulnerable
- Managing the stigma of poverty

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# Local Authorities should...

- Share learning and good practice with other authorities and partner agencies
- Be prepared to be accountable and be open to research and scrutiny



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# Child Poverty Indicators

- UK Government consultation (Nov'12-Feb'13)
- Proposed indicators include:
- Worklessness, unmanageable debt
- Access to healthcare and quality education
- Family stability, parenting skills
- Nutrition, sanitation
- Poor Housing

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# Thank you. Any questions?



- Councillor Doreen Huddart
  - Newcastle City Council
- [doreen.huddart@newcastle.gov.uk](mailto:doreen.huddart@newcastle.gov.uk)

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