

# South Tyneside Council Anti-Poverty Strategy 2024



Our South Tyneside - A place where people live healthy, happy, and fulfilled lives



South Tyneside Council

Spread the word!

**THIS IS  
SOUTH  
TYNESIDE**

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# Foreword

**There is much to celebrate in South Tyneside, and I am a passionate advocate of our local area. We have so many strengths within our borough and residents are rightly proud to live in South Tyneside.**

The strength of partnership here runs throughout all areas of work and helps shape our local landscape. In the current climate, it is now more important than ever that we prioritise the need to tackle poverty and work in collaboration to do so.

The impact of persistently high inflation, combined with existing high levels of poverty in South Tyneside, has had significant consequences for many of our residents. This has been particularly so for residents who were just about managing. Food and energy prices continue to place pressure on household budgets, resulting in unprecedented demand on foodbanks and other vital support services.

The fact we have got to the point of needing an any poverty strategy in the first place is testament to the situation we are in at both local and national level.

This strategy sets out the work that we, as a partnership, are doing to support residents at the sharp end of the cost of living crisis. We have also set out some longer term goals in recognition that poverty prevention is better than the cure. We know that many of the levers to do this are with Central government and we will continue making our case on behalf of South Tyneside residents.

Our partners continue to be central to the shaping and delivery of our ongoing anti-poverty work. As we move forward, we want to ensure we listen and respond to the voice of lived experience, our commitment to the Poverty Truth Commission being a good example of this.

This Strategy is our unwavering commitment as a Council and a partnership to tackling poverty in the borough.

It is fundamental to delivering on the South Tyneside Vision ambitions that residents are financially secure, healthy and well, connected to jobs and part of strong communities. Through this Strategy we will target support to make things fairer and deliver on our goal of:

**Our South Tyneside: a place where people live healthy, happy and fulfilled lives.**



Cllr Paul Dean, Cabinet Member for the Voluntary Sector, Partnerships & Equalities

# Vision and Ambitions of South Tyneside

In October 2022, the Council and partners launched a new 20 year vision for South Tyneside. That Vision – to make **South Tyneside a place where people live healthy, happy, and fulfilled lives** – was informed by the latest evidence and engagement with a wide range of people.

Five 'Ambitions' were identified:

The infographic consists of five horizontal bars, each with a unique icon, a title, and a description. The bars are colored teal, purple, pink, orange, and yellow from top to bottom.

- Financially secure**: Represented by an umbrella and a pound coin icon. Description: Residents will have what they need for a good standard of living.
- Healthy and well**: Represented by a person holding a heart icon. Description: Residents will enjoy good mental and physical health throughout their lives. They will have the best start in life and be able to age well.
- Connected to jobs**: Represented by a magnifying glass over a person icon. Description: Residents have access to jobs, skills and learning. They will have the skills and confidence to apply for a wide range of local jobs. These jobs will be in key and growing areas of employment and benefit all of our borough.
- Part of strong communities**: Represented by a group of people icon. Description: Residents will live in clean, green and connected communities where they feel safe.
- Targeting support to make things fairer**: Represented by an equals sign icon. Description: We will target support at the residents and parts of our borough that need it the most, reducing inequalities and making things fairer.

This strategy is crucial to the success of the vision and delivering on our five ambitions. Financial security is at the heart of everything we do. It's embedded in plans across the council and this document sets out how we will work in partnership to reduce poverty.

We know that deprivation has strong links with poor health and South Tyneside has worse health outcomes than other, less deprived authorities as well as worse health outcomes in its most deprived neighbourhoods.

This relationship goes both ways - low income can both lead to and be caused by poor health. Being able to stay healthy and well enables people to be socially connected, benefit from education, training and job opportunities and ultimately, live a long, happy and fulfilled life.

The Council and its partners recognise this, which is why this strategy is underpinned by a wide range of ongoing work across the Council and partners.

## Linked strategies and policies



**The South Tyneside Vision, Ambitions and Strategy**



**Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy**



**The South Tyneside Anti-Poverty Strategy**

Loneliness and Isolation Strategy	Inclusion and Skills Action Plan	Community Safety Partnership	Fuel Poverty Strategy	Age Friendly Strategy
Integrated Housing Strategy	South Tyneside Homes Corporate Plan	South Tyneside Safeguarding Plan	Transport Strategy Plan	Physical activity strategy
Digital Infrastructure Strategy	Economic Recovery Plan	NELEP Strategic Economic Plan	South Tyneside Carers Strategy	Oral Health Strategy
Cultural Strategy	Gambling Licensing Policy	South Tyneside Pledge	Local Plan	Sustainable South Tyneside Strategy



# The challenge

## As a North East post-industrial, coastal area, we have a legacy of intergenerational deprivation as well as acute skills and health challenges

As we continue to navigate a particularly challenging economic context, we know that ensuring our residents are financially secure will be very difficult. Post pandemic, the global economic context remains tough with domestic and international events resulting in inflationary pressures, high interest rates, and weak growth.

According to a recent report by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, the North East has the highest proportion of individuals living in households under the Minimum Income Standard.

With many households already struggling pre and during the pandemic, the cost-of-living crisis has put unprecedented pressure on household budgets. While we have all been impacted by inflationary rises in some way, we know that soaring energy, fuel, and food costs hit the poorest households hardest. Far too many people in our borough are going without the things we know are essential to lead healthy, fulfilling lives.



Food banks have seen a significant rise in residents asking for help.

Climate change and other environmental issues disproportionately affect those living in poverty. Often, more deprived individuals have fewer resources to recover from both the direct impacts of climate change (such as extreme heat and flooding) and indirect (such as rising food costs, public transport disruption, and wide-ranging health burdens). Areas of high deprivation can also be more exposed to certain threats (such as pollution or a lack of green space). We must therefore ensure that Council interventions maximise the mutual benefits of climate action and poverty reduction. 'Win-win' activity – such as schemes supporting active travel; energy saving; food waste reduction; or the re-use economy – should be prioritised and counterproductive interventions avoided where possible.

As we look to the future, we know there are very difficult times ahead. In November 2023, the Office for Budget Responsibility forecasted living standards in 2024/25 to be 3.5% lower than their pre-pandemic level, marking the largest reduction since ONS records began (the 1950s). Meanwhile, local government continues to operate in an extremely challenging financial context.

This means that now, more than ever, we need to work closely with partners to 'do more with less' and look for new, innovative, and proactive ways to support our most disadvantaged communities and reduce demand on Council services.

**We know that the situation in South Tyneside is particularly acute;**

**39%**

of children were living in poverty in 2020/21

A quarter of our population live in the

**10%**

most deprived areas in England

**1 in 7**

residents aged 16 and over are claiming Universal Credit (18,180 people) - a third of whom are in employment.

We have an ageing population, many of whom live in poverty (21.4%).

**45%**

of South Tyneside's neighbourhoods are in the most deprived 20% nationally.

South Tyneside was ranked the

**26th**

most deprived area

out of 317 local authorities nationally in the latest Index of Multiple Deprivation (2019).

**13.9%**

of households in South Tyneside are in fuel poverty

There is a prevalence of low paid jobs in South Tyneside with

**1 in 5**

below the living wage

**30.2%**

of school pupils are eligible for free school meals

Approximately

**12,800**

children live in households in receipt of Universal Credit

Around

**3,790**

children in South Tyneside are impacted by the 'two-child limit' in Universal Credit and Child Tax Credit.

There were

**163,000**

workless households across the region in 2022

# What is poverty?

Poverty centres on insufficient income to meet basic needs and occurs when an individual's resources fall below minimum needs, hindering participation in society.

## Measures of poverty include:

- Joseph Rowntree Foundation's Minimum Income Standard (MIS) – MIS itself is not a measure of poverty, but is what the public has told the JRF is sufficient income to afford a minimum acceptable standard of living
- Relative income poverty, where households have less than 60% of contemporary median income
- Absolute income poverty, where households have less than 60% of the median income in 2010/11, uprated by inflation
- Material deprivation, where you can't afford certain essential items and activities
- Destitution, where you can't afford basics such as shelter, heating, and clothing

Research highlights poverty's detrimental effects on physical and mental health, educational attainment, life expectancy, housing access, crime vulnerability and community participation. Poverty increases family stress, raising the risk of conflict, abuse, substance issues, and homelessness.

There are many situations that could result in potential poverty, including illness, injury, job loss, or family breakdown, though its impact varies. Certain groups, including Black, Asian, and minority ethnic households, lone parents, large families, those in social housing, individuals with disabilities, caregivers, and pensioners on low-income face increased risks.

We recognise that 'one size does not fit all' and commit to providing additional support and interventions for residents identified at being at particular risk of poverty. We know that the conditions in which people live, learn and work are important to their health. The resources that people have available to them, including the amount of money they have, are important too.

“

**Overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity. It is an act of justice. It is the protection of a fundamental human right, the right to dignity and a decent life.** Nelson Mandella

”



# The lived reality

**In addition to facts and figures, it is important to dig much deeper and continue to listen and learn from the lived experiences of people in poverty and those witnessing the direct impact.**

The core principles in the South Tyneside Vision include a commitment to listen, collaborating and empowering others and to take evidence-based decisions.

We know that residents are being forced to make impossible decisions between food and warmth – but the essentials are more than this. Local food banks have told us about ‘an increasing trend of people referring to essential items such as toilet roll, toothpaste and toiletries as luxury items, down to the bottom of the shopping list by a mile’.

In a year long study that explored the experiences of Universal Credit for claimants, their families and support staff in South Tyneside, interviews with claimants made evident the far-reaching impacts of financial insecurity. Interviewees expressed how payments are typically too low to meet basic needs, leading to reliance on family, friends and organisations for loans, food, and other support, often causing feelings of shame.

In addition, claimants mentioned often becoming isolated due to being unable to afford travel costs or being unable to take part in social activities such as having a cup of tea in a café with friends. Month after month, feedback from our network of Welcoming Places highlights how important social networks are to peoples’ mental health, with ‘feeling lonely/socially isolated’ one of the most popular reasons for visiting such places.

## **We want to have more conversations with people on the lived reality of poverty in South Tyneside.**

*“I have got family but they all work so I am, more or less, on my own. Me and my snuggly blanket during the winter. Yes. But yes, the cost-of-living rise in the heat has hit, not just me, but the group that we are with, we are all a little bit concerned about whether or not we will be able to afford, because we are all pensioners whether or not we can afford to put the heating on.”*

*“Poverty kills aspirations when you’re young.”*

*“If you are very poor it affects almost everything you do. [Name] was saying how it limits your life opportunities and experiences. We know how it limits the amount of food that people can eat and they can’t afford to put their ovens on. So all this talk about cooking healthy food and things, it goes down the drain if you can’t afford to put your oven on and you can’t afford to buy fresh food. And you don’t know how to cook it anyway. And deprivation affects how the kids are at school, and so on.”*

*“It is a struggle, day-to-day life, honestly it is. Even going to work, you get a full-time job, by the time you’ve paid out your bills, you’ve paid out your outgoings, like if you’ve got a car or anything like that, and you’re back to square one again.”*



Advice and signposting to services for residents



Hospitality & Hope provide community shops and a food bank

We are working to establish a South Tyneside Poverty Truth Commission to ensure that we continue to engage those with first-hand knowledge and listen and learn. This will be underway in 2024.

**There is a clear commitment to partnership working and this is demonstrated through the attendees and contributions made at recent summits of key partners:**

*“While we do not have a system where we have oodles of money or oodles of time, we all are wanting to work together.”*

*“Loved meeting new partners to discuss how we can work together”*

*“Willingness to make a difference,”*

*“Care about solving poverty”*

*“Great to be with like-minded partners.”*

*“Inspired by idea of designing out deep poverty”*

*“There is a lot of good work going in South Tyneside and people are passionate about helping others.”*

People on the lowest incomes are significantly more affected by rising prices and services are witnessing record numbers of residents in dire need requesting urgent support. Our Welfare Support Team experienced their busiest month ever in March 2023, and we know from partners that there is unprecedented pressure on their services too. Local food banks report increases in demand with donations below normal levels, while Citizens Advice report significant rises in the number of people seeking advice for a financial crisis issue.

The Council has been working with key partners, particularly intensely over the past two years, to prevent, mitigate and reduce poverty. However, many of the key levers to support this work lie with central Government. We recognise, within this strategy, the importance of influencing national Government and actions identified in the plan reflect this commitment.

# What is already happening?

Since the Council's Vision was launched in 2022, good progress has been made in delivering many of its key commitments

Here are some highlights showing some of our key achievements over the past year in relation to poverty and financial security.

- **The multi-agency Poverty Group** was established in 2022 and brings together partners from across South Tyneside to ensure **efforts are co-ordinated and targeted** where they are needed most. A new Anti-Poverty Coordinator has been appointed to help facilitate multi-agency action.
- **Two summits of key partners** across the public, private and voluntary sectors have taken place in 2022 and 2023, emphasising the need for partnership working. South Tyneside Homes have also hosted cost of living roadshows for residents and further cost of living and energy roadshows are planned for 2024 with officers from Welfare Support in attendance.
- **A Young Carers ID card has been co-produced with local young people with caring responsibilities.** This helps support young carers and their families experiencing financial difficulties due to the level of care and support needs.
- The **newly established Social Navigator team** have provided support to over 200 residents in the last year with issues including financial exclusion, help to navigate bank accounts, utilities, benefits and debt advice. A new **Tenancy Sustainment Team** at South Tyneside Homes is working with residents with complex needs to provide support to sustain their tenancies.
- Meanwhile, our new **cost-of-living web pages** have received over 12,000 visits in 2023 and **a cost-of-living support directory** has been developed and distributed to front-line staff to help signpost residents to the appropriate support.



Cost of Living Summit held in October 2022



Anti-Poverty Summit held in September 2023





Key2Life community bus food project

- A **new fuel poverty strategy** has been developed to support residents in the Borough. It aims to maximise household income and reduce household costs where possible, improve the energy efficiency of homes and reduce household energy consumption. The Healthy Homes initiative is piloting a new way of doing this.
- A focus on a reduction of **transport costs** has included free travel for people aged 18-25 who have recently left local authority care (Care Leavers), reduced ticket costs for young people aged 22 and under and the extension of the National Bus Fare Capping of £2 per journey until December 2024.
- New initiatives have been implemented aimed at addressing food poverty including the **Key2Life community food bus project** which provides foods, uniforms, free wifi and much more and **three community shops established via Hospitality and Hope**.
- A **joint campaign to increase the take-up of Pension Credit** is already yielding results with support from the Council, Citizens Advice, Age Concern and other partners.
- More than 1,000 families across South Tyneside received **supermarket vouchers to help ease financial pressures associated with new uniform costs**. Families with children who would usually receive free school meals during term time were also supported over school holidays this year with supermarket food vouchers worth £10 per child per week and access to the popular **Holidays, Activities and Food programme**.
- Our Welfare Support Team play a pivotal role in this, **helping residents navigate the benefits system** to ensure they are receiving the help they are entitled to. The team also helps people recover benefits and in the last financial year (2022/2023) nearly 5000 applications for support with food, utilities and household items were processed. The Council is also **changing the Council Tax Support Scheme** to help residents on the lowest incomes.



Cllr Paul Dean and Rev Lesley Jones highlighting the positive impact of Welcoming Places in South Tyneside

- Working together, we have developed a **‘Winter-readiness’ card for frontline workers**, volunteers and key organisations prompting them to ask vital questions of those most at risk, allowing them to signpost them to the required help and support.
- The Council has continued to invest in measures to help residents live healthy, happy and fulfilled lives, including: the network of **Welcoming Places (formerly warm spaces)**, new **Family Hubs** and the nationally recognised **South Tyneside Pledge** which has brought an extra £3million to South Tyneside economy.
- **The Welcoming Places network includes more than 70 community centres, churches, charities, and family hubs** provides invaluable support for residents including during potentially isolating and financially challenging times, for example, Christmas. These venues host external speakers to deliver advice around finances, health, and other essential information. An independent evaluation of the Welcoming Places evidenced the positive impact they are having on reducing loneliness, isolation and supporting with the cost of living:

“

**“I was getting a bit depressed sitting in the house. And I think the best thing I ever did was to come around here for a cup of coffee.”**

**“I think they make an absolute, totally determined effort here to make sure they get the best value meals.”**

**“It was just a couple of hours where you are not spending your money but you are keeping warm, and you have got company, with a nice cup of coffee, they even know how to make it now,”**

*Quotes from The Evaluation of Welcoming Places in South Tyneside August 2023*

”





**A summary of work in 2023:**

**99** attendees from across 36 organisations attended the 2023 South Tyneside Anti-Poverty Summit

**200+** residents have accessed help with finances and debt through the new Social Navigator service

**1000** low-income families have received help with new uniform costs

**£7.2m** in unclaimed benefits has been accessed by residents through support from the Council

**70+** welcoming spaces have been established for local people to connect, get advice and access services

**12,000** low-income households were supported with an additional £100 Council Tax rebate to help with the cost of living

**£128,000** given to local foodbanks by the Council to support residents facing hardship and food poverty

**£2m** has been secured from the government's Rough Sleeping Accommodation programme and is supporting outreach services for those in crisis and seven new local move-on properties for tenants experiencing or at risk of rough sleeping

**5,000** low income pensioners have received additional financial support

**10,000** residents will benefit from support with Council Tax bills as part of the new, fairer Council Tax Reduction Scheme

**£8.87m** has been secured for South Tyneside from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and is helping to support projects like the WHIST Food Fare Project, Hospitality & Hope community shops, Big Local Jarrow community centre activity expansion, Wise Group Home Energy Advice Team and much more

**12,087** visits have been received to the Cost of Living and Household Support Fund web-pages since they were first set up in October 2022

**740** staff are having Winter Readiness conversations with residents

**250+** local employers are engaged with the South Tyneside Pledge, helping to boost the local economy and support the voluntary sector

# The Action Plan

Tackling poverty is key to delivering on each of the 5 ambitions in the South Tyneside Vision as set out at the start of this document.

## we will continue to:

- Work with partners to share intelligence and identify residents close to, or experiencing, financial hardship and poverty.
- Promote, signpost and deliver interventions to support residents through short-term hardship and enable good long-term financial wellbeing.
- Provide targeted support to those who are disproportionately likely to experience poverty and financial insecurity.
- Find new ways of listening and learning, working with communities to co-produce interventions to tackle poverty.

While much has already been achieved, we want to go further and faster to support our residents and make a real difference, reducing rates of poverty.

That is why we have produced an action plan. This has been created through engagement with key partners, listening to lived experience and the key themes of the Poverty Summits and looking at anti-poverty strategies across the country.

Our key areas of focus going forward are as follows.



# Financially Secure

## 1.1 We will improve access to financial support, products, and services by:

- Working with partners, particularly the Welfare Support Team, Age Concern and Citizens Advice, to increase the number of people claiming all the benefits they are entitled to.
- Boosting awareness of key benefits including Pension Credit, Carers Allowance, tax free childcare and fuel poverty support. This will be through clear advice from the welfare support team, providing face to face drop ins and support and a planned annual programme of promotion.
- Work with Society Matters to explore in-work poverty audits and interventions to support employees.
- Providing training for volunteers and services to enable preventative identification of poverty risk factors and proactive signposting of information.
- Delivering financial and gambling awareness sessions and budgeting skills training to staff and volunteers to enable effective signposting and support.

- Promoting savings and affordable credit through credit unions to ensure more people excluded from mainstream banking can benefit from a convenient way of saving regularly and cheaper lending. We will make a commitment to explore how effective our signposting to Credit Unions are, to support more residents to make financial savings.
- Making clearer the Council's Cost of Living support, both digitally and paper based, to ensure residents are aware of available services.
- Sharing more literature and information in key council, health, and community buildings to boost awareness, ensuring advice is available in a range of formats and languages.

## 1.2 We will improve access to nutritious and affordable food by:

- Mapping out networks of community organisations delivering free and low-cost food services in South Tyneside, so residents know how to access support.
- Implementing a collaborative Sustainable Food Group to focus on access to nutritious food at a lower cost. This is an emerging piece of work and one of the identified workstreams is poverty and health.
- Ongoing support for, and additional development of, community shops and community fridges.



Cookery classes in community settings



Cllr Carter, with Marsden Primary School Headteacher Caroline Marshall, supporting the 'help with uniform costs' scheme.

### 1.3 We will support residents experiencing fuel poverty by:

- Providing information and advice to reduce energy costs and maximise energy efficiency.
- Working with utility providers to ensure all residents receive their entitlements.
- Piloting and rolling out energy projects such as Heathy Homes and through the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund to ensure homes are as energy efficient as they can be.

### 1.4 We will work with schools to reduce the cost of the school day by:

- Working with schools to provide suggestions and resources to support this process.
- Establishing a single point of poverty related access within school and connecting this member of staff to a wider network.
- Continuing to provide financial support with the cost of school uniforms and other equipment.

- Increasing the number of children taking up their free school meals entitlement and accessing HAF programmes.
- Providing cost-of-living guidance to school staff to enable signposting to services.

### 1.5 We will roll out a Volunteer Skills Training Programme to equip volunteers to support people experiencing financial insecurity by:

- Providing information training including understanding of the benefits system, fuel poverty, food security, housing needs and signposting to services.

### 1.6 We will support a circular economy in which goods can be made more affordable and accessible by:

- Exploring opportunities for community shared goods (e.g. Libraries of Things).
- Supporting residents to minimise waste (e.g. of food or clothing) through education, upskilling, and resource provision.





# Healthy and Well

## 2.1 We will work together to provide the best start in life by:

- Ensuring our South Tyneside Family Hubs support young people and families to access child health, parenting and relationship help, along with support to improve school readiness.
- Providing online promotion of access to childcare to ensure parents have the quality support they need.
- Working with family hubs to increase the take-up of Healthy Start Vouchers to ensure our babies and youngest children benefit from vitamins, milk and fresh fruit and vegetables.
- Implementing the Baby Box Project enabling access to much needed early provisions and stimulation activities for newborn babies including first books, toys and blankets.

## 2.2 We will work in partnership to help those at risk by:

- Delivering planned programmes of training and resources including the Winter Readiness Programme.
- Rolling out widespread opportunities for vaccinations utilising family hubs, Welcoming Places, and other community venues.
- Providing 'Safe and Well' preventative fire checks to support vulnerable residents.
- Linking experts to Welcoming Places to provide invaluable advice and support.
- Providing easily accessible cost-of-living guidance.

## 2.3 We will ensure decent housing for all by:

- Tackling poor-quality homes, across all tenure types, specifically in respect of damp and mould. This is through a robust process of reporting, inspecting, remedying, advising and revisiting.
- Ensuring we have the right accommodation in the right locations to meet residents housing needs. We will work with developers based on our housing need assessment data to tackle the gaps we currently have in homes in the borough, this will include size, location, adaptations, specialist or supported accommodation.
- Creating a more thriving private rented sector, promoting community led housing and having a more proactive, integrated and collaborative approach to identifying and managing Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO).
- Implementing a new Integrated Housing Strategy will help to ensure development of additional affordable homes. Through working with Homes England, Registered Providers, and other agencies, we will continue to encourage investment in affordable homes and associated services in the borough





CLr Ellison and the HAF (Holiday Activities and Food) Programme.

#### **2.4 We will ensure digital inclusion and social connectivity by:**

- Providing accessible digital skills training in a wide range of settings including community venues and Welcoming Places.
- Ensuring digital equipment, internet access and data is available to access for people experiencing digital poverty.
- Increasing opportunities for social connectivity through digital provision in Welcoming Places and other community venues.

#### **2.5 We will work with partners to tackle health inequalities linked to poverty by:**

- Helping more people adopt healthy lifestyles through A Better U and encouraging organisations (through the South Tyneside Pledge) to become A Better U champions.
- Providing support for a range of conditions linked to deprivation, including poor mental health, cardiovascular disease, drug and alcohol misuse, as well as social isolation and loneliness.
- Working closely with the ICB on mental health support.
- Providing stop smoking services.

#### **2.6 We will seek to ensure a high-quality early years provision for all by:**

- Working with Job Centre Plus to implement the new childcare offer, removing any previous barriers to accessing reduced cost childcare provision for children under the age of two.
- Through promoting take-up of funded childcare. This positively impacts children's social and emotional development and supports parents into work.

#### **2.7 We will reduce the number of those homeless or at risk of eviction by:**

- Providing outreach support for tenants who are at risk of eviction or who have been evicted due to rent arrears.
- Focused work on early prevention and addressing the causes of homelessness including an assessment of homelessness services and a new homelessness and rough sleeper strategy.
- Working closely with partners including MEARS on support for asylum seekers and refugees.

#### **2.8 We will ensure access to culture and leisure opportunities to help people experiencing poverty to have a good life by:**

- Providing access to cultural/sporting activities in Welcoming Places.
- A rich offer of free cultural activities and events including parades, food markets, performances and museum-based workshops.
- Continuing to provide an extensive Holidays and Food (HAF) programme providing free activities for children in receipt of free school meals during holiday periods.
- Exploring varied and extensive enrichment programmes incorporating schools, voluntary sector, youth groups and other providers.



# Connected to Jobs



Welcoming Places previously branded as Warm Spaces



South Tyneside Pledge network events

### 3.1 We will link training and skills provision into key local community settings by:

- Implementing a range of courses and training opportunities into Welcoming Places, family hubs and community settings.
- Providing links with South Tyneside Works and other training providers to implement and signpost residents seeking employment to available training and opportunities in the local labour market.
- Implementing a Volunteer Training Programme with Inspire South Tyneside including a combination of accredited training sessions.

### 3.2 We will work with the South Tyneside Pledge local organisations, including anchor institutions, to reduce in-work poverty by:

- Exploring the potential for the Council to sign up to become a Real Living Wage employer and encouraging other organisations to do so.
- Linking with other services to provide accurate information on benefits, pay and conditions to help employers.
- Conducting focused pilots to determine in-work poverty challenges, barriers and identify potential solutions.
- Working with employers to link them to the North of Tyne Good Work Pledge.
- Establishing a work-based Period Poverty Dignity scheme.

- Providing advice and guidance to employers from the recruitment and skills offer – educating employers on how to recruit, retain and retrain ensuring businesses are engaged and providing quality, sustainable and accessible opportunities for our residents.
- Up-skilling employees to gain roles that meet their financial needs.
- Fostering greater links between the private sector and VCS organisations to encourage support for the VCS, for volunteering and work experience/placements.
- We will commit to the Age Friendly Employee Pledge supporting older workers to stay in employment and supporting young people to be aspirational and to access high value and emerging local sectors.
- Working in collaboration with local programmes and initiatives funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Scheme and South Tyneside Works will ensure that people of all ages and circumstances are supported, on an individualised basis, to find and maintain sustainable employment. In work support ensures that residents are able to sustain employment and will help to reduce in-work poverty.



Healthy Schools Celebration 2023

### **3.3 We will ensure high quality careers advice is accessible for all by:**

- Continuing to work in close partnership with schools and other partners to equip young people with skills and careers confidence, including through the new Careers Leaders Network, World of Work Programme and South Tyneside Works School Engagement Programme.

### **3.4 We will ensure affordable and accessible transport links by:**

- Working with Nexus on subsidised travel and promoting support they offer for young people and care experienced young people.
- Developing a new journey planning and public transport information website with partners across the region.
- Introducing of new bus and improved bus services, and the preservation of other services that would otherwise have been cut.
- Exploring barriers faced by residents in accessing vital services.
- Promoting and facilitating active travel through better education and infrastructure.



Raising aspirations through Employment and Skills Roadshows



# Part of Strong Communities

## 4.1 We will map out the support available at a local level to ensure essential services are easily accessible within each locality by:

- Convening mini summits to enable further coordination of services and identify barriers, building on recent pilots.
- Mapping out access to services and facilities, highlighting any identified gaps and convene working groups to share findings at a local and national level.
- Identifying and implementing community led activities encouraging participation and building capacity within communities, for example, the development of a further community-based shop.

## 4.2 We will support the sustainability and development of Welcoming Places by:

- Signposting funding opportunities and supporting with bid-writing for potential grants.
- Revamping the brochure/website to provide further information on times and the type of activities and support provided.
- Providing opportunities for expert advice and guidance within Welcoming Places.
- Through support and engagement from the Council and other service providers, particularly around skills and employment.

## 4.3 We will access and respond to the voices of lived experience by:

- Forging close links and learning from the outputs of the Poverty Truth Commission.
- Holding localised based meetings with residents to ascertain priorities for each local area.
- Collaboration of a wide range of representatives attending and contributing to the Poverty Group.



Community craft activities enjoyed with healthy food





# Targeting support to make things fairer

## We will review data sharing and look at our approach to intelligence gathering and sharing by:

- Taking a thorough approach to building on the existing evidence base, conducting a Joint Needs Assessment, and updating this when new intelligence emerges.
- Implementing a publicly accessible data observatory sharing platform that provides up to date information about our local population and communities.
- Learning from the Poverty Truth Commission and the work of all agencies, identifying residents at risk of poverty and connecting them to help and support that is tailored to their needs.
- Working with partners through the Poverty Group and by hosting localised meetings (mini-Summits) to understand the latest situation.

## 5.2 We will explore opportunities for further research and evaluation by:

- Working with Newcastle University and the North East Child Poverty Commission's Strategy on combined research opportunities.
- Utilising research and evaluations to inform evidenced based policies in tackling inequalities, learning from projects that work well and building on our track record of attracting research funding.
- Carry out research into multiple, complex needs to identify how best to support our most vulnerable residents.
- Working on shared research projects through the North East Mayoral Combined Authority.

“

**A better future is possible. We work to speed up and support the transition to a future free from poverty, in which people and planet can flourish.**

Joseph Rowntree Foundation

”



**Could you or someone you know be missing out on pension credit?**

You could be entitled to **EXTRA** money to help you cover your costs if you are State Pension age and living on low income.

For information call Citizens Advice on 0191 455 7958 or Welfare Support on 0300 123 663

**THOUSANDS of people in South Tyneside are missing out!**

Check your eligibility TODAY at [gov.uk/pension-credit](https://www.gov.uk/pension-credit) | 0800 99 1234

South Tyneside Council | South Tyneside Homes | Citizens Advice South Tyneside | Spread the word! | THIS IS SOUTH TYNESIDE

Invaluable signposting of information to residents

### 5.3 We will ensure the voice of those living in poverty informs targeted support and strategies by:

- Establishing and further developing the South Tyneside Poverty Truth Commission to continue to listen to the lived experience of people living in poverty and explore new solutions together.
- Implementing recommendations from the Poverty Truth Commission.
- Consider adopting, as other councils have done, the socio-economic duty which calls on public authorities to consider the way their decisions increase or decrease inequalities that result from socio-economic disadvantage.
- Carrying out an in-work poverty audit within the Council and partners.
- Linking in with wider Council work on particular groups we know are more impacted by poverty, such as care experienced young people and carers.

### 5.4 We will continue to influence national government by:

- Ensuring Government are aware of the impact of poverty on residents of South Tyneside.
- Feeding into the North East Child Poverty Commission's Child Poverty Strategy.
- Joining campaigns for change in Government policies and practices, such as the Trussell Trust's Guarantee Our Essentials.
- Implementing targeted interventions, pilots and presenting analysis of findings to national government, including seeking funding for the Universal Basic Income pilot in Jarrow.
- Campaigning for long-term change around specific policies that have a direct, negative impact on the residents of South Tyneside.

# Driving long-term change

**In South Tyneside, we have a fully involved, committed and passionate public and voluntary sector who work tirelessly to support our residents.**

However, it's crucial to recognise that many factors contributing to the challenges we face are beyond our local control and lie with national, rather than local, Government.

Issues such as the two-child benefit system, the National Living Wage, and Local Government funding fall outside our direct influence. Therefore, it's essential that the voice of South Tyneside is not only heard but also understood by National Government.

While we strive to combat poverty locally, the reality is that the primary drivers often originate from national-level decisions. This emphasises the importance of actively participating in the regional and national poverty debate, lobbying for increased government attention through our Influencing Strategy and for action on poverty prevention and reduction.

To help this, we are committed to playing a leading role within the North East Mayoral Combined Authority, particularly on skills, economic inclusion, employment and child poverty.

**We will continue to collaborate with stakeholders to build a compelling case for change and some of our planned influencing activities include:**

- Fair Local Government Funding: Advocating through local, regional, and national networks for a funding settlement that accurately reflects the needs of South Tyneside given huge increases in demand and significant cuts to budgets over the past decade.
- Reversing problematic Welfare Changes: Calling for an end to unjust welfare policies, such as ending the two-child limit, benefits cap, bedroom tax and supporting the Trussel Trust 'Guarantee Our Essentials' campaign . Around 3,790 children in South Tyneside are affected by the 'two-child limit' in Universal Credit and Child Tax Credit, constituting 12% of all children in the borough. Families are losing out on £62 per week per ineligible child.
- Improving Universal Credit: Urging for an end to the five-week wait for Universal Credit and a fairer rate for parents under 25. In South Tyneside, approximately 12,800 children in households receiving Universal Credit, both employed and unemployed, highlights the significance of our support for the Essentials Guarantee campaign.
- Addressing In-Work Poverty: Calling for the alignment of the national living wage with the real living wage.
- Expanding Free School Meals: Working towards extending free school meals to all children. We know that around 23% of children living in food insecurity are currently ineligible for free school meals.

# 5 years on – what success looks like

Tackling poverty is a long term challenge and significant change will not happen over night.

Nor does it stand still. Therefore, we will constantly review progress against this strategy (particularly on the back of research, findings and the voice of lived experience) and will formally revisit it in line with the Council's wider Strategy in 2026.

## The key indicators to measure success over the long term are:

- Fewer households (and children) living in poverty
- Fewer households living in fuel poverty
- An increase in accredited Real Living Wage employers
- An improvement in population, health and wellbeing
- An improvement in educational attainment
- Fewer people with no qualifications or skills training
- More residents in higher paid employment
- Fewer young people aged 16-17 who are not in education, employment or training (NEET).
- An increase in the amount of affordable housing
- Fewer economically inactive people



South Tyneside Homes Energy Roadshow








'Isaac's Wind Mirrors Invention' from the Powering the Future: South Tyneside and Beyond Challenge.

Poverty is not new. What is different is the current, unprecedented scale of the crisis. Organisations and services have stepped up and continue to provide much needed help. However, the scale of the challenge needs joined up, collaborative action.

This strategy is a starting point. It is a sign of the Council's intent to work differently with residents, partners, VCS organisations and businesses to redouble our efforts for residents to live healthy, happy, and fulfilled lives.

## Plan on a page

 <b>Financially secure</b>	 <b>Healthy and well</b>	 <b>Connected to jobs</b>	 <b>Part of strong communities</b>	 <b>Targeting support to make things fairer</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Financial support</li><li>• Access to food</li><li>• Support with fuel costs</li><li>• Reduce cost of school day</li><li>• Training for volunteers</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Best start in life</li><li>• Support those at risk</li><li>• Decent housing for all</li><li>• Digital inclusion</li><li>• Tackle health inequalities</li><li>• High quality early years provision</li><li>• Reduce homelessness</li><li>• Access to leisure and cultural activities</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Training and skills</li><li>• Reduce in-work poverty</li><li>• High quality careers advice</li><li>• Affordable and accessible transport</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Map out essential services</li><li>• Welcoming Places</li><li>• Voice of lived experience</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review data sharing</li><li>• Research and evaluation</li><li>• Lived experience informs actions</li><li>• Influence national government</li></ul>

## Key Contacts

### Action Station

Offers free advice on money, debt, and other services.

Call: **0191 455 8122**

### Age Concern Tyneside South (ACTS)

- For people over 50 in South Tyneside.

ACTS offers information and advice on debt, benefit, and money issues.

Call: **0191 456 6903**

Email: [info@ac-ts.org.uk](mailto:info@ac-ts.org.uk)

### Citizens Advice South Tyneside

Citizens Advice offer free and confidential advice on a range of topics.

Call: **0191 455 7958**

**The Housing Options Service** - Free housing advice and help if homeless, rough sleeping, fleeing domestic violence or at risk of becoming homeless for any other reasons.

Call: **0800 141 2645** (freephone) – Monday to Thursday, 9am- 5pm, and Friday, 9am- 4.30pm

Call: **0191 456 2093** - out of office hours

Email: [housing.options@southtynesidehomes.org.uk](mailto:housing.options@southtynesidehomes.org.uk)

### Welfare Support Team

The service is free and confidential for anyone living in South Tyneside.

Call: **0191 424 6040**

Email: [welfaresupport@southtynesidehomes.org.uk](mailto:welfaresupport@southtynesidehomes.org.uk)

Website: [www.southtyneside.gov.uk/welfaresupport](http://www.southtyneside.gov.uk/welfaresupport)

**Cost of living Support** Website and links to Welcoming Places: [www.southtyneside.gov.uk/welcomingplaces](http://www.southtyneside.gov.uk/welcomingplaces)



## Contact

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