



London Child Poverty Commission Legacy

Background

The Commission was set up as an independent body by the mayor and London Councils in 2006. The aim was:

- to address the London challenge of child poverty
- to identify solutions to help reduce and finally eradicate poverty

Sittings were planned to continue until 2010. Commissioners included people from diverse backgrounds with expertise and interest in poverty, including: the voluntary and statutory sectors; business; policy and research; academia; regional and local government; and the trade unions.

Work of the Commission focused on 4 areas, gathering a wide range of case studies and commissioning research as well as collaborating with many partners including from the voluntary sector:

- employment and income
- housing and mobility
- mental health
- children's life chances

In February 2008, recommendations from the Commission were published in *Capital Gains* with emphases on:

- need for action at all levels
- making work pay for more families
- improving training and development opportunities
- joined-up services to support parents into jobs and holding on to employment
- improved chances for parents in social housing
- enhancing benefits and tax credits to reduce child poverty
- raising children's educational chances
- tackling mental health and employment problems
- reducing costs including childcare and transport

Having been supported for a further 2 years, the Commission published a progress report on the achievement around the above recommendations as *Capital Gains ~ One Year On* (March 2009). A further year later, on 22nd March 2010, the Commission issued a *Legacy Report*, which notes that whilst progress in combating poverty in London has been achieved there remain in poverty far too many young people and their families. The Mayor commented:

"In a city so full of wealth and resources, it is unacceptable that children should be living in poverty. London has particular challenges ~ especially in making work pay. The high cost of childcare, travel and housing in the capital act as barriers to work. I want to ensure that together with colleagues in local government and also with the support of central government, we redouble our efforts to get parents into good quality, decently paid, work. Tackling poverty also brings wider social benefits, by making work pay, improving the quality of life for families and promoting children's life chances."

The Legacy

In acknowledging that recent years have seen the slight reduction of the gap between London and UK child poverty levels, the Commission argues for more and quicker progress to be made in the capital. The *Legacy Report* makes the case through a number of headline statements:

- **there should be a continuing government focus on reducing child poverty in London.** 1 in 8 children living in poverty, live in London! Families, here, are the most vulnerable to poverty

and experience higher levels of poverty than elsewhere in the UK. Tackling poverty in London is key to eliminating child poverty in the UK

- **moving resources away from child poverty will raise longer term costs.** The Commission advocates an *invest to save* approach
- **parent support needs to be simplified.** Present arrangements, especially regarding employment/childcare/benefits are complex and fragmented. Simplification, not at the expense of the most vulnerable families, should lead to better and more efficient services
- **'Think Family'.** The Commission propounds such an approach as core to how agencies should work across the region. There needs to be flexibility of service provision across traditional boundaries to reduce child poverty.
- **child poverty work in London should be driven by an evidence-based approach.** Pilot schemes should be compared from the point of view of measurable outcomes for children and families against the cost of intervention. In this respect, successful initiatives must be mainstreamed

For further information on the Commission, please visit the website www.londonchildpoverty.org.uk

If you would like more information, please contact Ray Phillips rayp@lvstc.org.uk or Ingrid Babcock ingridb@lvstc.org.uk at LVSTC by email or telephone 0845 262 2006 / 020 7538 4309.