

THE BEACON SCHEME 2008 APPLICATION FORM

PART 1 - AUTHORITY INFORMATION	
Authority Name	Cornwall County Council
Equality standard rating	
Beacon Theme	Preventing and tackling child poverty
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This application can be made available on the IDeA web site once Beacon awards have been made	Yes
Application Number	6153
Application Status	Submitted

2.1 Please summarise the excellent practice for which you are seeking Beacon Status.

Cornwall has succeeded in developing an innovative and unique approach to 'preventing and tackling' child poverty, ensuring that child poverty is consistently recognised as a critical underpinning issue that crosses all organisational and partnership boundaries.

This has been achieved to the point whereby preventing and tackling child poverty has been identified as a key priority in strategic documents such as the Cornwall Sustainable Community Strategy, Cornwall Children and Young People's Plan, the Cornwall Health and Well Being Strategy, Cornwall's Economic Development Strategy and also through local action within European Convergence Specifications.

By also linking into the future service design and community empowerment opportunities presented by Local Government Reorganisation in Cornwall, we have taken the opportunity to re-shape the way that services have been delivered. The result has been innovative partnership approaches that can provide support to families as early as possible to break intergenerational cycles of disadvantage.

In delivering a step change we have combined the experience, skills and local knowledge of an excellent Cornish network of public, private, voluntary and community sector partners who are actively involved in countywide and local partnerships working with families 'on the ground', to effectively change behaviours and relationships between organisations to deliver holistic services with a clear focus on preventing and tackling child poverty.

The foundations to achieving this has been the development of a unique partnership approach bringing together the work of:

- **Cornwall Family Services** - providing preventative and early intervention services, for children and families from minus 9 months to 13.
- **Cornwall Works** - aiming to reduce worklessness and unemployment in Cornwall by addressing spatial and thematic inequalities in employment rates and employment prospects.
- **Inclusion Cornwall** - working across sectors to address all aspects of inclusion, breaking down barriers.

The co-ordination of which in itself brought enhanced partnerships and integrated working between sectors and agencies, in particular with Health, Schools, Employment Providers, the Voluntary Sector and Communities themselves. This has resulted in a better collective understanding of the challenges created by the unique nature of Cornwall's peripheral rural communities, transport connectivity and economic infrastructure which contribute to poverty and deprivation and has enabled us to deliver additional and more appropriate responses.

These responses have been further developed and enhanced through the 'Real Choices - Tackling Child Poverty in Cornwall' project providing a catalyst and additional resources for developing local action and delivering a range of mutually supportive activities. The project was supported by HM Treasury's - Invest to Save Inclusive Communities Budget, one of 24 successful bids nationwide and has provided added impetus to the development of our approach, particularly through the appointment of a Child Poverty Co-ordinator to lead both the strategic approach and operational delivery of services within our local communities - ensuring that preventing and tackling Child Poverty is "Everybody's Business" in Cornwall.

2.2 Leadership, Vision and Strategy.

Leadership

Through the Real Choices Project Cornwall Family Services, Cornwall Works and Inclusion Cornwall have together developed a co-ordinated partnership approach to preventing and tackling causative factors of child poverty.

A strength of this approach has been strategic leadership and operational management by a multi agency steering group that consists of:

- Richard Williams - Head of Family Services and Cornwall Transformation Lead for Developing an Integrated Service Framework. (Chair)
- Chair Cornwall Strategic Partnership
- JobCentre Plus - European Programmes and Funding Manager
- Inclusion Cornwall Co-ordinator

- C& IOS Primary Care Trust
- Voluntary Sector Forum
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- District Council Rep
- Cornwall Education Department Rep
- Family Services Area Manager

The Chief Executive of Cornwall County Council is the project sponsor for Real Choices and the project has direct reporting links back to the Cornwall Strategic Partnership, Cornwall LAA Management Board, HM Treasury and the Cabinet Office.

A champion is also to be appointed from the Senior Leadership Team to maximise the impact of delivery of one of 8 key strategic priorities for the Cornwall Children and Young People's Partnership (CYPP) "breaking the cycle of poverty and deprivation and its impact on children, young people and families".

Through the steering group there is a direct link to the Cornwall Economic Forum and European Convergence Programme Monitoring Committee. This guarantees strong strategic and delivery links between locally identified responses to tackling poverty and worklessness supported through the European Social Fund and delivery of the European Regional Development Fund. Maximising the benefit to the small pockets of extreme deprivation that exist in a rural context like Cornwall.

Vision

Cornwall's Family Services was created in 2005 to provide a co-ordinated approach to preventative and early intervention services, for children and families from minus 9 months to 13.

'Family Services will raise aspirations and increase opportunities for all children and families throughout Cornwall and contribute to the eradication of child poverty'

This vision statement that drives the service was supported by a parallel purpose statement that recognised that the only way this could be achieved was through partnerships with other agencies.

'Family Services will achieve the vision by creating a multi-agency framework of universal and targeted support, information and activities for children up to 13 years and their families, in partnership with them, their communities and other agencies.'

In developing the vision and purpose for the new service there was a conscious decision to ensure all efforts were aligned to the priorities of the Child Poverty Accord:

- Improve employment
- Reduce inequalities
- Improve access to full services
- Improve benefit take up.

Strategy

To progress the development of Family Services and the integrated agenda the whole service was placed within the LAA process. Three key stretch targets were adopted, each of them reflecting the multi agency/partnership approach and the necessity of a whole system response to the challenges of child poverty:

- Health - Breastfeeding initiation (ECM outcome - be healthy - NI -53). Key Partner - Health Service.
- Education - Foundation Stage achievement (ECM outcome - enjoy and achieve - NI 72 and NI 92) Key Partner - Schools
- Employment - Childcare availability (ECM outcome - economic wellbeing - NI 118) Key Partner - PVI sector.

The wider approach of Family Services is also included in the LAA with a further set of targets, including the continuing development of Children Centres, the expansion of Extended Services through Schools, the development of a strategy for Parents, the formation of a Play Strategy in partnership with the Voluntary and Creative sectors and the District Councils, the integration of the Children's Fund programme and the continuing development of the Family Information Service. It is through this wider approach that the poverty of aspiration and opportunity that has a negative impact for many children and families can begin to be broken.

Whilst recognising a central causative factor of poverty is financial and a key solution to this is through employment, before this can become an option many potential issues need to be followed through. Primarily the development of self awareness and esteem of parents, putting them into a situation where they can break existing cycles of poverty, confident in the care and education of their children. This is why the holistic approach to poverty is key to the development of services in Cornwall and central to the success of a long term strategy to eradicate poverty in the

County.

To link the work of Family Services to the employment situation for families, a close partnership has been in place with JobCentre Plus for some time. The development of childcare and employment advice sessions in Children Centres is only one positive aspect of many areas of partnership work developed through Cornwall Works.

Worklessness was negotiated as one of the five priorities of the Economy and Enterprise theme of the LAA, branded as "Cornwall Works". With a specific aim to 'reduce worklessness and unemployment in Cornwall, addressing spatial and thematic inequalities in employment rates and employment prospects.

See www.CornwallWorks.org.uk www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageId=8443985

Cornwall Works has become established as the umbrella for welfare to workforce activity in Cornwall and has brought together providers, agencies and organisations that impact on the welfare to workforce agenda, joining up provision, filling gaps, developing key links between health and employment interventions and working with the VCS. The lead for Cornwall Works is a senior manager within the Jobcentre Plus and there is a team of Cornwall Works 'facilitators' who work across organisations and projects who deliver services that relate directly to worklessness.

This is delivered through a wide range of partners:

- the Learning and Skills Council
- JobCentre Plus
- The NHS
- the Private Sector
- Business Link
- The voluntary and community sector
- the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)
- Family Services and Adult Social Care
- The CCC and all the Districts in Cornwall

Inclusion Cornwall is the delivery partnership for Cornwall Works and is one of the thematic partnerships of the Cornwall Strategic Partnership. Inclusion Cornwall works across sectors through a Strategic Co-ordinator to address all aspects of inclusion, breaking down barriers that prevent excellent services. The partnership leads strategic capacity building in Cornwall, developing the CAB and Credit Unions placing them in a position of strength to address exclusion and poverty. In addition Inclusion Cornwall leads the Cornwall Benefit Forum and the nationally acclaimed Cornwall Migrant Workers Group - identified as best practice in Communities and Local Government recent report "Managing the Impacts of Migration: A Cross-Government Approach".

The Real Choices - Child Poverty Co-ordinator appointed to work across services and throughout the totality of the Local Area Agreement is employed within Inclusion Cornwall. Tasked with changing behaviours and relationships between organisations and programmes to deliver holistic services focussed on preventing and tackling child poverty in Cornwall.

2.3 Community and Customer Engagement and Empowerment.

A key starting point for the Real Choices Project and Co-ordinator through the Partnership with Jobcentre Plus was the development of 'virtual wards', mapping child poverty Cornwall wide. Identifying the small pockets of deprivation that exist in a rural context like Cornwall and developing neighbourhood level profiles overlaying poverty and wider social and economic data to form the basis of need profiling, incorporated into a wider needs assessment exercise carried out by the CYPP.

"The choice of key objectives has been informed by a wide ranging needs assessment that draws on partners' good understanding of community needs. This is the first time such intelligence has been drawn together for the county as a whole. The needs assessment draws fully a major programme of consultation with children young people, including a number of vulnerable groups." Cornwall Joint Area Review of Children's Services - June 08.

Based on this work a funding matrix has been developed locally which determines the levels of core funding allocated to each of the developing network of Children's Centres and 'Reach area'. Ensuring that resources are being targeted according to levels of need allowing additional levels of outreach work where the needs of families are greatest.

This network currently has 21 operational Children's Centres in the County, with a further 15 opening in the next 9 months and a new capital allocation confirming 100% coverage of the County by April 2010. Children's Centres are a key delivery point for Family services and its wide range of partners to engage with children and their families. In addition an 'open house' model has developed in rural, hard to reach areas based around a drop-in and play session,

with a rolling programme of visiting professionals and agencies that provide information, signposting, support and demonstrations and a one-stop shop for support. This approach takes advantage of existing local venues (e.g. youth centres, village halls, schools, community centres).

"There is an extensive network of children's centre provision and this is a strength. The centres operate both as the location for a good range of service provision and an effective communication hub for a wider network of services. Working relationships are good, family needs are viewed holistically, and provision is well targeted and coordinated." Cornwall Joint Area Review of Children's Services - June 08.

Complimenting community based delivery through Children's Centres has been the establishment of Neighbourhood Action Teams (NATs) through Cornwall Works. Additional resources to engage people in target areas where the overall benefit claim rate is highest. Typically a NAT will include community based adviser(s), a health trainer (either funded via the NHS or through Cornwall Works Plus depending on the geographic roll-out of NHS health trainers), quick access to debt advice and capacity building/training activity to add value to or form a local multi-agency network, that build on, enhance and co-ordinate existing community based resources.

Collectively the NATs provide an individual pathway to employment for each participant that is based on sound assessment of individual need linked to the demands of the private sector and local labour market and critically linked to holistic support for workless families. This approach and the learning from the previous JobCentre Plus Action Teams is being used as a basis for developing the *'budget holding lead professional'* role and common assessment approach to be implemented across children and adult services in the future.

The DWP ESF Convergence specification also specifically focuses on **"lone parents and other disadvantaged parents and carers"** as a key target group ensuring that significant additional resources coming into Cornwall are aligned to supporting our communities of need. It is widely recognised that for families with children with additional needs the extra financial and emotional issues related to the caring role can draw and maintain families into poverty. To assist with the needs of these children and their families an effective Early Years SEN service has been in operation for some years. This will now be enhanced through the implementation of the "early support" programme and bringing Child Development Centres into an integrated approach.

"Child development centres across the county provide good multi-disciplinary support and there is very effective specialist nursery provision. Pre-school educational provision more generally is very good, providing both stimulating activities for children and good support for families, including the development of parenting skills. Special education needs co-ordinators give good support for all early years settings." Cornwall Joint Area Review of Children's Services - June 08.

Engagement and empowerment are central to all our efforts and consultation and communication is ongoing with communities and our customers. Each Children's Centre has a steering group comprising of Family Services Managers, front line workers, partner agencies alongside local residents and parents all working together to shape effective and appropriate delivery within each centre. Cornwall's Parenting Strategy is also implicit in the notion that, in order to help their children fulfil their potential, parents need to have confidence in their own abilities:

"Our vision is to empower parents and carers to help children fulfil their potential, and to provide extra support for those who need it." Positive about Parenting - Cornwall Parenting Strategy - Sept 07.

The role of the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) is also central to Cornwall's empowering approach. Through Real Choices we have been able to build on existing partnership work with agencies such:

- Cornwall Centre for Volunteers;
- Cornwall Neighbourhoods for Change;
- Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB);
- Cornwall Community Health Development Team;
- Pentreath Ltd (supporting adults with mental health issues);
- Lizard Pathways to Employment and
- Penwith Community Development Trust.

We have recognised the contribution of the VCS and actively invested in their delivery through supporting:

- Cornwall Centre for Volunteers and Cornwall Neighbourhoods for Change to provide family getaway days for families, linked to volunteering and extended services opportunities.
- The CAB to develop modular training and volunteer recruitment around welfare rights, benefit take and debt.

This investment shows a synergy with Cornwall Compact, which focuses *'on a new approach to partnership working making possible more open and constructive relationships relevant to the current opportunities in Cornwall'*.

Compact promotes volunteering as:

'an important expression of citizenship that can be a powerful force for change, both for those who volunteer and for the wider community recognising that Volunteers offer support, expertise and innovation, adding value to any organisation'.

This promotion and financial support for structured volunteering is an effective and cost efficient way of adding value to public service delivery and of empowering those individuals who volunteer, particularly those from underrepresented groups.

Collectively, through the development of locality based models of delivery, integrating partnership responses centred around the holistic needs of families and effective engagement and empowerment of communities of place and interest, Cornwall is helping families and communities to help themselves in order to break the cycle.

2.4 Actions.

We know that, in order to break the cycle of poverty, we need to be addressing the needs of the family as a whole. Cornwall's holistic and partnership approach prevents and tackles child poverty through a number of mutually supportive activities all being effectively managed through the Cornwall LAA performance management framework.

Making Child Poverty "Everybody's Business" through:

- The appointment of a Child Poverty Co-ordinator to "join-up thinking" by championing and taking positive action to cement the priorities of the Child Poverty Accord and relevant strands of the LAA to what needs to be happening on the ground to reduce child poverty;
- The development of 'virtual wards', mapping child poverty Cornwall wide. Identifying the small pockets of deprivation that exist in a rural context like Cornwall;
- Delivering multi-agency stakeholder events to improve local agency knowledge and co-ordination and capacity building with parents and communities to develop an empowering approach to identifying their own needs and support solutions;
- Developing a DVD as a key engagement tool, highlighting Child Poverty in Cornwall and the breadth of factors that cause and impact on children and families. A locally developed tool which has since been used locally and Nationally to highlight our approach and to influence policy making and service delivery;
- Real Choices - Tackling Child Poverty in Cornwall was presented at the Child Poverty Summit in December 07;
- A Ministerial Workshop with the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government as part of the LAA Demonstrator Process focussing on Breaking the Cycle;
- At the request of the Child Poverty Unit a copy of the DVD was used by the Permanent Secretary for DWP for a Summer Briefing;
- The Child Poverty Co-ordinator delivered a presentation for a cross departmental child poverty focussed session for Government Office South West in partnership with the Child Poverty Unit;
- Presentation to a JobCentre Plus Regional Child Poverty Task Group;
- Real Choices was selected by the Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion as a case study and presented to the UK Welfare to Work Convention 08;
- Real Choices is a case study within the Commission for Rural Communities Report on Rural Financial Poverty to be launched by Philip Dunne MP, Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Rural Services, at the Palace of Westminster on 16 July 2008 and,
- Real Choices has had input into developing a Together 4 Children - Locality Toolkit for Tackling Child Poverty.

Preventative approaches to tackling worklessness as a key causative factor of Child Poverty include:

- Providing multi-agency training sessions with health, housing, voluntary and community sector groups, so that they can pick up on employment barriers that their customers may have and provide appropriate whole family support. Developing formal protocols to support progression to work including condition management programmes;
- Working with housing officers, so that a workless family moving into an area of social housing can be referred to the best source of back-to-work support;
- Jobcentre Plus referring those people in Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) priority neighbourhoods who make new benefits claims to local Neighbourhood Action Team support. (More recently, incapacity benefit customers have been referred automatically to the Pathways to Work provider.)
- Neighbourhood-based, job focused workshops and clubs for people who have not been claiming benefits long enough to use Jobcentre Plus mainstream provision;
- Piloting a Young Enterprise (YE) programme for young people who are either not in education, employment or training (NEET) or at risk of becoming NEET. This approach builds on lessons about the

- additional support required to assist harder-to-reach groups;
- Into-work support including money-management skills and managing the transition from benefit to work. Where appropriate, this includes some transitional funding to bridge the gap between benefits and a person's first wage;
- Adding an extra module in some leadership training for managers and supervisors (funded via Learning and Skills Council European Social Fund). This focused on the benefits of employing a diverse workforce and the possible additional support necessary in the first few months for a new employee who had been out of work for some time;
- Developing formal partnerships, protocols and activities between the health and employment sectors to support progression to work including fit for work and condition management programmes;
- Customised employment route ways for young people leaving local authority care;
- Developed additional real-work opportunities for people with learning disabilities;
- Developed an intermediate labour market option for people on health related benefits delivered through the voluntary sector;
- Active involvement with the multi-agency Migrant Workers Taskforce and 'Inclusion Cornwall' on all project activity that relates to child poverty and migrant worker families;
- Establishment of an Employers Forum to act as an advisory group on employer engagement and,
- Delivering personalised and integrated family support to those ready to move away from benefit dependency, piloting innovative ways to ease transition from benefits to work that could inform future policy around benefits.

Reducing inequalities by:

- Promoting structured volunteering to target families as a means of building skills, self confidence, improve job prospects and 'helping families to help themselves';
- Delivering family getaway events and other new experiences for children and young people to raise family aspirations build trust between families and local agencies and encourage positive change. Delivered though Voluntary Sector Partners linked to volunteering opportunities and extended services provision within a locality;
- Establishing a flexible budget capable of making one-off payments that can improve life chances for children and young people living in poverty either directly relating to the needs of the child or to the wider support of the family (e.g. back to work support, additional childcare support). This budget has been devolved to sit with the community/voluntary sector to increase flexibility and take funds closer to the families who need them;
- Working with relevant LAA outcomes leads to narrow inequalities for target children, particularly around education and health. Particularly linked to LAA stretch targets focussing on breastfeeding initiation and narrowing the gap in foundation stage educational attainment;
- Building capacity among target parents so that they can better support their children educationally, for example, raising parental aspirations and expectations and improving parenting skills. Through the delivery of a range of measures designed to tackle child poverty issues e.g. strengthening community and family events, family and community conferencing, whereby, the whole family / community is involved in the solution.

Improving access to services and benefit take up by:

- Further developing the network of Children's Centre across Cornwall;
- Developing Family Support Outreach Services across the continuum of need;
- Working with voluntary and community sectors partners and Family Information Service to improve take-up of existing services from 'hard to reach' families;
- Invest in volunteering as a way of improving service delivery;
- Working with relevant LAA outcomes leads and VCS partners to explore joint approaches to improving the take-up of benefits and tax credits within target families;
- Developing a Financial Inclusion Strategy for Cornwall involving Capacity building support for Credit Unions and the CAB;
- Investing in volunteering around debt management, welfare rights and benefit take-up; post employment support and
- Deliver financial literacy support and wider family learning opportunities.

2.5 Partnerships.

Strategic

As part of the ongoing Local Government Reorganisation in Cornwall a full scale review of the Partnership Landscape within Cornwall has recently been undertaken.

Currently the **Cornwall Strategic Partnership** (CSP) is the overarching Local Strategic Partnership for the whole of Cornwall. It currently brings together 30 members from the public, private and voluntary sectors and uniquely, 7 county strategic partnerships and 5 Local Strategic Partnerships. The organisations are brought together with the aim of

"Working together to promote the economic, social and environmental well being of the people of Cornwall".

The CSP oversees the Cornwall LAA which is managed through a Board consisting of Chief Executives, or equivalent, of all local authorities, other key public sector bodies, and of leading VCS organisations. The Board supports our work and the emerging Cornwall Sustainable Strategy has been greatly influenced by the work of Real Choices highlighting child poverty as a key strategic priority and revolving around and underpinning design principle of shifting efforts from treatment to prevention.

The outcome of the review is still to be agreed but the foundations for the review have been to ensure the CSP can effectively deliver its governing and leadership role to:

- Provide high level, strategic co-ordination of cross-cutting county-wide issues;
- Link plans and organisations at a county-wide level to inform and influence local, regional, national and international policy;
- Influence and broker effective partnership working and reconcile or arbitrate between competing interests;
- Add value to the individual efforts of the partner organisations in achieving better outcomes in Cornwall;
- Have oversight of and aim to co-ordinate community consultation and engagement activities of individual partners and where appropriate combine them;
- Produce, agree, drive forward delivery and periodically review a Cornwall Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) that includes a shared vision and priorities for action and is built on a solid evidence base;
- Develop and drive the effective delivery of the Cornwall Local Area Agreement (LAA) based on the priorities identified in the SCS;
- Have oversight of the planning and alignment of resources in Cornwall, where relevant to the delivery of the SCS and LAA, in order to achieve more effective commissioning and ultimately better outcomes for Cornwall. (Each partner will remain accountable for its decisions taken in relation to funding streams allocated to it);
- Review and performance manage progress against the priorities and targets agreed in the LAA and ensure delivery arrangements are in place;
- Ensure that local people have greater opportunities to influence decision-making and get involved and
- Ensuring equality and diversity best practice is embedded in delivery of LAA outcomes.

Fulfilling a role which when linked to the thematic partnerships detailed below, the community network local delivery structures, and area based integrated delivery teams will provide a partnership framework, better placed to deliver the co-ordination, integration and change needed at strategic and operational level to tackle and prevent child poverty in Cornwall.

The Children and Young People's Partnership works in harmony with the development of the six Local Area Groups (LAGs) that are part of Children's Trust arrangements in Cornwall. CYPP that includes representation from Schools, Connexions, Police, Probation, District Councils, Learning and Skills Council, Health, VCS, Youth Offending Teams, with responsibility for delivering Every Child Matters: Change for Children in Cornwall. This agenda demands a new approach which focuses on the well-being of children and young people from pre birth to age 19. The 'programme of change' places better outcomes for children firmly at the centre of all policies and approaches involving children's services and demands that all organisations that provide services to children work together in more integrated and effective ways. "Breaking the cycle of poverty and deprivation for Children, Young People and Families in Cornwall" is one of eight strategic priorities within the Children and Young People's Plan. Ensuring leadership and a coordinated response to tackling causative factors of child poverty.

'Inclusion Cornwall' as previously mentioned is a thematic group of the Cornwall Strategic Partnership which has for its aim to work across sectors to raise understanding of 'linked problems' and break down the barriers that have prevented residents of Cornwall obtaining equality of opportunity. Reducing inequalities is one of our key objectives and our proposal demands that we work across all sectors to understand and resolve the problems that cause child poverty. The Child Poverty Co-ordinator is based within 'Inclusion Cornwall'. 'Inclusion Cornwall' leads on the Cornwall Migrant Workers Group that has received national recognition for its work in ensuring Cornwall's migrant

workers and their families are not excluded. It has become the delivery partnership for LAA outcomes relating to Inclusion of Migrant Workers, Reducing Poverty and Reducing Worklessness. Locally, we are already seeing increasing challenges for migrant worker families and schools due to fluctuating pupil numbers, linguistic difficulties and cultural differences that are having an impact on child poverty. Similarly, cultural differences around health, e.g. reluctance from expectant mums in migrant worker families to seek anti-natal support, could also impact on the well-being of the child. The Cornwall Migrant Workers Group is working with Real Choices to ensure Migrant Families are not in poverty.

Operational

At operational level the Real Choices Steering Group has day to day responsibility for performance managing the Real Choices - Treasury Funded Project, for managing the work programme of the Child Poverty Co-ordinator and has a specific focus solely on preventing and tackling child poverty. The multi agency membership previously detailed in section 2.2 is equally responsible for championing the issue and overcoming barriers within their constituent sectors and organisations at strategic and operational level. Equally importantly though the steering groups acts as a forum for developing partnership solutions to practical barriers faced by children and families or by operational staff in providing the support that's needed.

Local

Through the members of the steering group and the Co-ordinator, Real Choices is also linking into a wide range of Inter Agency Locality Groups within particular communities highlighted due to levels of poverty and deprivation. Providing support and resources to front line staff, elected members, partners and residents in overcoming barriers and community issues. As well as ensuring good practice becomes common practice across the geographically dispersed communities of Cornwall.

This Inter-agency locality approach is being further developed as part of the transformation process and is the focus for area based delivery teams. Building on Family Services Locality Groups, Neighbourhood Action Teams, Local Operational Partnerships, and differing Neighbourhood Management Approaches in Cornwall. Capturing and rolling out best practice Cornwall wide in terms of local partnership delivery models.

2.7 Outcomes.

The outcomes being delivered as a result of Cornwall's approach to preventing and tackling child poverty are broad and wide ranging as is the previously detailed partnership approach necessary to deliver them.

Key outcomes in relation to our strategic priorities to date have been:

Better co-ordinated, and joined up approach to planning, funding and delivering local services to families living in poverty Cornwall wide. Through strategic leadership and the development of partnership approaches and outreach services to reach pockets of both rural and urban deprivation that are likely to have consistently missed out on earlier interventions.

Increased take-up of wider family support services available e.g. Cornwall's Children's Centre network, by improving local knowledge of what is available and working with families on the barriers that prevent them from accessing support.

- 5,484 individuals have been supported between Jun 07 and Jun 08 by Family Services Support Workers.
- 110 children with significant support needs and 33 children from Traveller or Migrant worker families have been supported with additional childcare support funding in Cornwall.

Improved skills, confidence and local knowledge of services so that families can begin to take responsibility for some of the solutions to child poverty, by encouraging families to take part in strengthening communities, strengthening families events, parental training, volunteering and family and community conferencing. Participants have benefited from the Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities Programme in Cornwall.

Better resourced community and voluntary sector service delivery partners. Through, for example, supporting the development of Modularisation of CAB training. Volunteers previously had to work through a broad range of training programmes. However, they are now able to focus on areas that particularly interest them. This has enabled CAB to train more specialised debt advisers to help workless individuals stabilise their financial situation, and to deliver a more preventative approach to debt management. It also has the added benefit of enabling more jobless volunteers to gain skills through CAB work, allowing them to make a quicker transition back into work.

Better informed staff working in services that do not have direct contact with the family but whose decisions have a profound impact on children living in poverty for example, housing departments. This has been developed through multi-agency stakeholder events that have included housing benefit officers, Jobcentre Plus officers probation officers, regeneration officers, LSP members as well as further supporting staff at the front line of tackling

child poverty on a day to day basis.

- LAA stretch targets for breastfeeding initiation delivered in Partnership with C&IOS PCT have already been exceeded. The number of health staff receiving Unicef training has gone from 20% two years ago, to 80%. Cornwall is the first County to achieve a certificate of commitment to Baby Friendly status across both hospital and community trusts and progress in this area has been nationally recognised'

More cost efficient services: Child poverty not only carries a cost to society in terms of quality of life, but also in public expenditure. Vast sums of public money are spent helping people face the consequences of poverty, and the public finance consequences of those who grow up in poverty being less likely to work and having lower earning expectations if they do.

- **In Cornwall** the Dept of Work and Pensions pay out £800,000 in working age benefits, each working day; it costs £630 a week to keep a homeless family in Bed and Breakfast; 80% of public service resources in Cornwall are spent on 20% of people and families most in crisis. Through Real Choices we aim to show a saving of £1,334,787 over 10 years by showing 60 positive outcomes i.e. 60 families moving off Incapacity Benefit dependency. Creating savings in 'treatment' that enables further investment in 'prevention'.

Improved employment rates, especially for hard to reach groups: Cornwall Works is now about half way to achieving the target of bringing 250 people back into work. Seven hundred people claiming incapacity benefit for two years plus have been engaged and supported through a wide range of partners including: health trainers - family support workers - Jobcentre Plus - drug and alcohol groups - housing officers - training providers - direct referrals through the website and advertising.

- So far, 134 of these people have been helped into work. Only five have dropped out of work during the first three months.
- A specific target to increase the number of young people leaving care who go into education, training or work by 25 per cent has been achieved.
- In the NRF areas the steep rise in benefit claim rates that occurred from 2005 to 2007, when Cornwall Works took on the targets, has been halted. (The rates had risen between seven per cent and 11% in NRF areas.) In three areas the claim rate has flattened out, and in one it has started to fall.

Improved income levels by financially supporting agencies working with families to increase benefit take up and reduce debt. Including financially supporting agency volunteers who are able to provide advice around benefit take-up, welfare rights, credit union take up and debt management.

Increased the protective factors associated with the negative impact of poverty. Largely through implementing the information Sharing and Assessment Agenda, overcoming unnecessary barriers to sharing and using information systematically. To support early identification of families who are experiencing problems, to prevent onset of more acute problems and achieve better outcomes for families. (There were 167 CAFs Initiated for Children and Young People in Cornwall between 1-1-07 and 31-12-07)

Reduced inequalities and improved life chances for children in need, particularly around education and health through improving home school liaison and improving the health and well-being of both the children and their parents.

"Very good steps are taken to ensure that early years education and day care provision more generally provide a good match to family needs. Individual parents and carers also get good information and support to help them access suitable provision. The quality of provision is comparatively good and, notably, helps to ensure that, at the end of the foundation stage, those from the most deprived areas achieve significantly better, relative to the average, than in most other local authorities." Cornwall Joint Area Review of Children's Services - June 08.

Higher family and community aspirations by delivering a range of mutually supportive activities which focus on positive change. Providing new experiences for families as a catalyst for positive change and a way of piloting new methods of engagement.

A Transferable model established for joined-up local delivery of LAA outcomes to the 'virtual' wards to inform future LAA delivery.

A better understanding of important policy changes that impact on family lives, and more importantly of the causes and impact of poverty from a family and community perspective.

National recognition of Cornwall's efforts in shaping local and national policy on preventing and tackling child poverty.

3 **Outline, with reference to a specific case (a geographical area, a particular section of the community, an individual or particular issue) how you have taken action to address an issue and the impact that this action has had.**

Caradon is perceived to be one of the least deprived districts in Cornwall, and hence has historically not benefited from investment in services for its population. Despite being adjacent to Plymouth, most of Caradon District is rurally isolated and 18 of the district's 53 Super Output Areas fall within the worst 10% nationally (and almost all in the worst 20%) in the Housing and Access to Services Domain. Many of the local jobs involve shift-work which is unsuitable for many parents, or are part-time or seasonal, owing to the structural shift in the economy from agriculture and manufacturing to tourism and other low-paid service sector jobs. Initial Real Choices mapping identified 1,940 of Caradon's children were living in families reliant on out-of-work benefits. Also highlighting that whilst this interim national indicator for child poverty is 19% at a national level, in Cornwall it is just 16.7%. However, in small pockets it can be up to 66%, particularly in rural areas. Using a number of tools including the Countryside Agency's rural-proofing toolkit, areas of greatest need have been identified and this informed the development of an outreach programme.

Through Family Services and partners a programme of Family Support activity has been developed. Activities include one-to-one support by an outreach worker, accompanying to meetings with other service providers (e.g. CAB), sign-posting, parent to parent support and parenting groups. A wider focus on addressing poverty in families means that focus is given to confidence-building and the development of skills (such as skills to manage personal finance) amongst parents.

In Caradon, whilst many professionals believe that the provision of transport will solve many of the District's problems, previous community consultations have shown that families do not want to travel to services but instead want a range of services to be delivered *in their local area*.

The plan is to deliver six Phase 2 Children's Centres to serve the rural towns surrounded by small village and farming communities, to be delivered between March and October 2008. Due to limited resources and a lack of suitable community venues, an 'open house' model has been developed based around a drop-in and play session, with a rolling programme of visiting professionals and agencies that provide information, signposting, support and demonstrations and a one-stop shop for support. This approach takes advantage of existing local venues (e.g. youth centres, village halls, schools, community centres) across the district, while new community centres are being built.

Community engagement

In Caradon, the project has grown from engaging just three families in the early days (June 2006) to regularly accommodating over twenty families per session. The sessions themselves have proved to be a useful way of assessing local need that is often hidden. Skilled staff members help to engage local people, and the project builds capacity with parents through giving families more control over what activities take place; this has helped to build up strong relationships and trust between staff and parents. Over time the project has seen that parents have begun to get more vocal in the issues they are facing and what services they require.

The project is now drawing together Parent Forums from the pool of parent beneficiaries of the service, to help guide and focus the service, as well as ensuring that parents are involved in the design and delivery of future services.

A real benefit has been the use of 'universal' community buildings, rather than 'specialist' locations such as social services buildings, which can be alienating.

Beneficiary vignette

Ms. A arrived at the open house with her three-year old child, anxious about being separated from him. Gradually through attendance at the session, the mother's confidence has grown and she is now booked on to the 'strengthening families, strengthening communities' programme. She is also now willing to leave her child in the crèche for short periods of time, knowing that she is on site if there are any problems. The project workers also noticed that she lacked confidence and self-belief, which made it hard to look for employment. Project workers helped Ms. A through a 'personal development plan' to get her first into volunteering (washing toys in the toy library, and subsequently going out with the toy library bus), and the next stage is to highlight some specific training opportunities for her. She has now built up enough confidence to be speaking about applying for jobs.

Learning and lessons

Through engaging a wide range of partners with one common focus (preventing childhood poverty), the programme has been able to understand local need, develop shared ownership of its strategy and targets, and inform future

service delivery. Agencies which had previously worked independently (e.g. providers of transport and social services) are now working in partnership towards a common goal, and multi-agency stakeholder events are run to improve coordination and knowledge.

Lessons from Caradon:

- Despite initial concerns, venues for the early 'mobile' service were relatively easy to identify, as many potential venues suffered from 'Sure Start envy' (Caradon was not allocated any Sure Start centres) and many of the venues were under-used;
- Through delivery of the early 'mobile' service, the community has already begun to be engaged and partnerships built (both with families and with other service providers). This pre-activity has enabled a clear indication of the needs of the local community to be developed through a quick and smooth roll-out of the centres;
- Use of the childcare seed-fund - allows the project to provide payment for the first week of childcare whilst a parent goes out to work, which provides financial flexibility before the first paycheque comes in and
- Community outreach is crucially important in isolated rural areas, but can be an expensive way of delivering services (staff travel time, mileage claims and set-up/tidy-up time of the van for example). Although expensive, outreach services play an essential part the service-provision infrastructure, and can help to prevent families from becoming part of the more expensive social care system; it will continue to be used once the Centres are built.

4.1 Factors that underpin your success.

The critical underpinning factors that have led to developing a holistic and integrated response to the challenges of child poverty have been a shared commitment across boundaries to cementing the priorities of the Child Poverty Accord into practical delivery across the Cornwall Local Area Agreement.

Shared commitment obtained through the development of an evidence base mapping child poverty Cornwall wide using a locally devised methodology of 'virtual wards'. Identifying the small pockets of deprivation that exist in a rural context like Cornwall and developing social and economic profiles at LSOA level to form the basis of need profiling.

Recognising the impact and inequalities across all outcomes that result from childhood experiences of poverty, and investing in developing a preventative approach to breaking intergenerational cycles of poverty and deprivation.

The appointment of a Child Poverty Co-ordinator bringing together leads across LAA outcomes to establish methods of local delivery of joined-up solutions to alleviating child poverty in Cornwall responding to the holistic need of families.

Innovative partnership approaches to delivering solutions to complex needs. Recognising the roles of all sectors. Engaging key partners, such as health and housing, at strategic level is vital to get commitment and to successfully drive delivery on the ground.

Effective leadership at strategic, operational and local levels.

The importance of changing behaviours and relationships between organisations and programmes to deliver a holistic service; this is more likely to be sustainable than introducing 'quick-fix' programmes.

4.2 Successful initiatives.

We would particularly like to highlight:

The Real Choices - Tackling Child Poverty in Cornwall Project one of 24 successful bids from nationwide, to the Treasury's Invest to Save - Inclusive Communities Budget. Additional resources designed to develop partnerships between local authorities and the third (voluntary and community) sector to improve public services. Aiming to 'break the cycle of child poverty' for families in Cornwall by shifting efforts from 'treatment' to 'prevention', creating savings in 'treatment' that enables further investment in 'prevention'. Joining up local delivery of LAA outcomes and linking this to families in 'target' virtual wards.

The work of Cornwall Family Services in providing a co-ordinated approach to preventative and early intervention services, for children and families from minus 9 months to 13. Creating a multi agency framework aligned to preventing and tackling child poverty. Developing a network of Children's Centres as community based hubs for service delivery alongside provision of Family Support outreach work across the continuum of need.

Cornwall Works: The Welfare to Work strategy aiming to 'reduce worklessness and unemployment in Cornwall, addressing spatial and thematic inequalities in employment rates and employment prospects, through innovative partnership solutions.

Cornwall Works has become established as the umbrella for welfare to workforce activity in Cornwall and has brought together providers, agencies and organisations that impact on the welfare to workforce agenda, joining up provision, filling gaps, developing key links between health and employment interventions and working with the VCS.

4.3 Who are the key target audiences that would benefit from hearing your key messages?

We believe that there is a wide variety of potential audiences who would benefit from sharing our best practice.

Our particular success has been our work to develop our partnership working arrangements resulting in a strong commitment and engagement with key stakeholders and partners on all levels. We would welcome the opportunity to work with officers within the following areas:

- Elected Local Authority Members

- Chief Officers from Local Authorities
- Local Strategic Partnerships
- Local Area Agreement Officers
- Senior Officers and Policy Makers
- Other Public Sector Service Providers - Particularly Health, Housing and Economic Development.
- Government Policy Makers
- National, regional and local networks for Local Government
- Voluntary Sector Organisations

4.4 Beyond the national Learning Exchange conference and Open Day, how might you work with other Beacons within your theme to maximise the impact of your learning activities?

As a county we recognise that sharing good practice is an important part of gaining beacon status. As such we feel that it would be essential to establish clear communication channels with other local authorities and our target audience in order to enhance the delivery of our learning programme. We would work in partnership both locally and across the country to develop agreements in the ways of working with and between partners and in the sharing of innovative solutions.

We would work in partnership with the other beacon authorities within this theme to deliver a programme for joint learning activities which would maximise the learning potential and experience of each organisation.

The authority has well developed ICT services and we envisage that this would be a key collaborative tool which would enhance virtual learning and improve access and service quality. Cornwall will host an interactive Beacon Website which will provide comprehensive information on the application process, key messages and themes, online learning tools and case studies and contact information. Key to the success of the work in Cornwall is the provision of e-learning and this is something that we would be keen to develop and promote if successful.

Other methods could include work shadowing, additional supported learning visits, mentoring activities and regular network meetings in order to ensure the effective and focussed dissemination of knowledge.

4.5 What experience does your authority have with sharing lessons with others? Give examples of where your authority has supported others to improve.

Cornwall recognises the importance of sharing our knowledge and skills with other local authorities and organisations across the country in order to improve and develop service delivery.

As a council we have previous experience of being a Beacon authority and of delivering effective dissemination and learning through activities. These include open days and events and more focused mentoring and regional partnership working to proactively shape behaviour.

At the heart of our application is the importance of working together through and with others to deliver valuable outcomes. This is reinforced and demonstrated by our Round Six Joint Application for Sustainable Energy which included all of the District Councils, the County Council and the Council of the Isles of Scilly working together to make a real difference. Our recent involvement in the LAA Demonstrator Site Workshop again highlights our commitment to improving service delivery.

Cornwall has a reputation for providing mentoring and work shadowing opportunities for other organisations and local authorities and frequently host tailored sessions to meet the needs of the individual organisation as we understand that this is the most effective way of sharing what we know.

The importance of learning and development is embedded in the culture of the organisation and the authority looks forward to continuing the valuable work of sharing our success with others.