

Barnardo's reveals poverty rise in London

Figures released by Barnardo's late last year revealed that a staggering number of children living in London are growing up in struggling families, with levels as high as 70 per cent in some areas.



Having analysed these figures across London, 4in10 is calling for more action to support London families in the recession. "The value of the third sector in London cannot be underestimated", said London Development Manager, Liz Thorne. "We want more organisations to join us to ensure children living in poverty are not ignored and are able to access the best support possible."

There are now seven London constituencies with over 70 per cent of children on low incomes compared with only four in the previous year. Furthermore, it is likely that these figures, measured before the UK entered the recession, do not show the true depth of child poverty.

With rising unemployment and reduced working hours, thousands more families are facing poverty each week.

A recent report produced by the New Policy Institute and the City Parochial Foundation, launched in 2009, revealed the profound inequality entrenched in the capital and showed London to be the most deprived and unequal region in the UK. Specific problems faced by London, according to the report, include a vast inequality of wealth and expensive living conditions.

The capital is already host to a variety of initiatives to tackle these issues. One example of such an initiative is the London Child Poverty Network, which links up local authorities and partners to share good practice, discuss local issues and to support pan London approaches to tackling child poverty. But given the scale of the issue, it is clear more needs to be done. 4in10 is calling on all third sector organisations not already signed up to become members of our free network, to share good practice and add your voices to the debate. For more information, contact London Project Assistant Sarah Barber on 020 7278 6746 or 4in10@ecpc.org.uk.

The grim league table showing the 10 constituencies with highest numbers of children in struggling families:

Constituency	Tottenham	Poplar and Canning Town	Bethnal Green and Bow	East Ham	West Ham	Hackney South and Shoreditch	Camberwell and Peckham	North Southwark and Bermondsey	Hackney North and Stoke Newington	Holborn and St. Pancras
% Children Living on Low Income (2007)	80%	79%	78%	74%	71%	71%	70%	69%	68%	67%

Darling's School Meal Bonus

In his Pre-Budget Report (PBR), issued on December 9th 2009, Alistair Darling pledged to continue to work towards ending child poverty by extending the offer of free school meals to another 500,000 children. Darling claimed, 'Once fully rolled out, this will lift up to an additional 50,000 children out of relative poverty, towards our target of abolishing child poverty by 2020'.



This initiative is one of the suggestions we at End Child Poverty lobbied for as part of our Recession Recovery Package. We would like to thank all those organisations who supported us to campaign on this issue and who have ultimately helped to see this policy realised.

Samantha Hyde, Director of End Child Poverty has said; "The extension of free school meals will take 50,000 children out of poverty but falls woefully short of what is needed to make the Government's 2010 target to halve child poverty. The goal to end child poverty by 2020 can be met but we need to see the government taking bolder action. "

While we welcome the government's announcements on free school meals, however, we recognise that this still does not go far enough, and that more must be done to have a direct impact on children living in poverty.

"The recession must not be used as an excuse for missing the 2010 target; ending child poverty is not only a moral obligation but would also save the exchequer an estimated £25billion a year and go a long way towards cutting the government deficit."

Members' Spotlight

A very warm welcome to all of our new members, four of whom are:



Elmago Concern Centre



Those of you who haven't yet completed your registration questionnaires please do so and email them to 4in10@ecpc.org.uk. If you have any questions please do contact us.

Cash Counts for Families with Disabled Children

Contact a Family has launched Cash Counts, a new online service dedicated to ensuring families with disabled children are getting every penny. Cash Counts includes:

- An online benefits calculator
- A top tips guide on the benefits available
- A frequently asked questions page

Srabani Sen, Contact a Family Chief Executive,

said: "It costs three times more to raise a child with a disability. In these tough economic times, finances are tight for all families, but for those with a disabled child things are even harder. They need a helping hand to navigate the complex benefits system."

Find out more and access the free benefits calculator here: www.cafamily.org.uk/cashcounts

Supporting Black and Minority Ethnic Communities

4in10 is pleased to announce the fourth in our series of highly successful good practice sharing conferences, to be held on February 19th 2010. This conference will explore the challenges faced by some BME communities in tackling child poverty, and showcase third sector projects working to offer innovative support. The day will begin with a keynote speech by Dinah Cox,

London Child Poverty Commissioner and former CEO of ROTA. Round table discussions will follow, with presentations delivered by projects from across London on initiatives such as supporting parents from BME backgrounds into work and helping young people from BME communities to influence decision making. 100% of participants at our previous two workshops said they would

recommend future workshops to colleagues. This event will take place at Hamilton House in London between 9.45am and 1.15pm.

If you would like to attend and are from either a voluntary or community organisation, please contact Sarah Barber on 020 7278 6746 or at 4in10@ecpc.org.uk.

Westminster and Housing

Westminster has the 14th highest level of child poverty in London, with a shocking 53% of the borough's children growing up in struggling families. To explore the issues causing and exacerbating this, 4in10 has been working with local groups in Westminster since March 2009, and is now looking to support more parents to get involved in campaigning on the issue.



The overwhelming response from Westminster's third sector organisations has been that lack of housing stock, leading to overcrowding, is the most pressing need. Research by housing charity Shelter supports this, having shown that overcrowding causes anxiety and depression, limits educational success and harms the health of children.

Over 1,000 households in Westminster are currently experiencing overcrowding, and 8,394 households are on social housing waiting lists in the borough.

With the council consulting on social housing renewal plans at the end of 2009, 4in10 brought organisations together to give their opinions on future action the council should take. 24 local organisations supported and contributed to 4in10's response to the council's plans. Notably, the response focused on reducing overcrowding for existing tenants, highlighting the importance of play space in a child's development and ensuring sustained investment and responsible community development. The full document can be read in the campaigns section of the 4in10 website: www.4in10.org.uk.

We now want to support Westminster parents to get their voices heard. 4in10 will be running free campaigns training for aspiring campaigners who are interested in forming a parents group. This is a fantastic opportunity for parents to achieve real change locally on issues they know are important.

To find out more please contact Natasha Adams on 020 7278 6676 or natasha@ecpc.org.uk

Newham Campaign Progress

We now have 50 organisations supporting this campaign, calling for fairer funding for Newham's schools, school clothing grants for workless families and improvements to sub-standard temporary accommodation.

Thanks to all those who have promoted the campaign to their friends and colleagues, displayed posters and worked to fill in paper petitions.

Thanks also to MP Lyn Brown who has described our Newham work as 'One of my campaigns of the year'. Her praise can be found in full in her monthly column for local paper the Newham Recorder here:

<http://tiny.cc/Recorder4in10>.



If you haven't done so already, please take the time to visit our website and sign our online petitions here: www.4in10.org.uk/takeaction.

With your help we can create real change for Newham's children.

Free Computers and Internet Access

Home Access is a government drive working to help low-income families to get access to a computer and the internet to get online at home.

Low income families in receipt of certain benefits could qualify for a grant to buy a computer and/or a minimum of one years' internet access. The programme is aimed at those that need it most and targets families that do not have access to a computer or the internet at home.

Low income parents in receipt of benefits, may qualify for a grant if they are living with a child:

- Attending school in years 3 to 9
- Attending a state-maintained school in England full time
- Who has not already had a computer from a Home Access Grant or similar programme, such as Computers for Pupils

Find out more and download an application form here: www.homeaccess.org.uk or call the Home Access Grant Helpline on **0333 200 1004**.