Child Poverty: Emerging Issues Paper



This paper aims to provide a detailed understanding of any emerging issues and data updates linked to child poverty in Warwickshire. The original Child Poverty Needs Assessment produced by the Observatory in late 2010 highlighted the extent and geographical distribution of child poverty across Warwickshire.

Observatory

The Child Poverty Needs Assessment completed in November 2010 and the Child Poverty Strategy can be accessed using the links below:

Child Poverty Needs Assessment:

- Part 1: The Extent & Distribution of Child Poverty in Warwickshire <u>http://bit.ly/PQo7Ph</u>
- Part 2: Consultation with vulnerable Groups and Analysis of Risk Factors <u>http://bit.ly/S4gAtE</u>
- Part 3: Executive Summary <u>http://bit.ly/MhuFzN</u>

Child Poverty Strategy: http://bit.ly/qucKG9

While it is unlikely that the key drivers and impact of child poverty have changed since the needs assessment was written 18 months ago, this paper seeks to update the data and present any issues that have emerged both in terms of the economic environment and the political context.

Further work to consult with identified groups is being conducted by the Business Intelligence (Children's) Team and will feed into the evidence base to refresh the Child Poverty Strategy later in the autumn.

Background

The Government originally set out its vision for tackling child poverty in 1999, when it announced its intention to eradicate child poverty by 2020. To achieve this aim, the previous Government created a Child Poverty Act which placed a statutory duty on local authorities and their partners to co-operate in undertaking an assessment of the needs of children living locally as the basis of a joint child poverty strategy.

The Coalition Government is committed to the Child Poverty Act however, in June 2012 the work and pensions secretary proposed to deliver a new set of broader, non-income related measures of poverty. A consultation on how best to measure child poverty will begin in autumn 2012.

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There has been a significant amount of press coverage recently highlighting confusion with child poverty statistics and how they're reported. The issue lies with the definition of what constitutes poverty and the emphasis on considering poverty as a relative issue (i.e. someone is in poverty if they have an amount less than someone else) rather than in absolute terms (i.e. someone is in poverty if they don't have a, b or c).

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The indicator usually used to define child poverty, and the one that will be referred to later on in the report is based on the number of children living in homes with 60% less than the median UK income. So when median incomes fall, as we have seen in recent times, we can have a situation where fewer households fall below this threshold. This is why there are fewer children regarded as living in poverty; if median incomes fall, so does the poverty line. See the recent article on our blog for more detail: '<u>Our Take on the Child Poverty Statistics</u>.'

Despite this, much of the data considered in this paper relates to income in some way although a broader set of indicators and themes will be developed alongside this report to consider and measure child poverty in Warwickshire.

Key Messages

- In Warwickshire, there were 16,160 children considered to be living in poverty in 2009. This equates to 14.3% of all children. This compares to 14,760 (13.2%) children in 2008 representing an increase of 1,400 children or 9.5% over the year.
- This proportion is considerably below the national and regional equivalent figures of 21.3% and 24.0% respectively however, small localised pockets with relatively high levels exist. These areas show up on a multitude of indicators linked to different aspects of child poverty.
- Areas with the very highest levels of child poverty in Warwickshire's urban areas tend to be surrounded by, or are located near to other areas with above average levels. This is particularly the case in Central and West Nuneaton which highlights the concentrated nature of the issue.
- There are neighbourhoods in Nuneaton where over 50% of children are considered to be living in poverty.
- Nearly a third of all children living in 'poverty' in Warwickshire live in only 10% of the Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) across the County.
- More children in Warwickshire are likely to be living in poverty than the latest official statistics suggest as they do not reflect the impact of the economic downturn and recession.
- Over three in five of the LSOAs in Warwickshire have a larger proportion of children in poverty than the previous year. The LSOA with the highest proportion of children in poverty

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in 2009 is Bar Pool North and Crescents with 57% of children in poverty. This has risen from 47.5% in the previous year and moved from the third to first place in the County.

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- In a similar way to the proportion of children in poverty, the proxy measure for child poverty has increased with the number of children living in out of work benefit households increasing from 2008 to 2011. In May 2011, there were 15,020 children living in out of work benefit households in Warwickshire, a rise of 1,440 children or 11% over the three year period from 2008 to 2011.
- There is a strong geographical correlation between Free School Meals claimants in the County and the proportion of children in poverty. The ten LSOAs with the highest FSM claimants all feature in the top 10% of LSOAs identified in the child poverty measure with the top three LSOAs mirroring the top three in the 2009 child poverty data.

The Economy

The extent of child poverty in Warwickshire needs to be considered in the context of what is happening in the wider economy as the availability of jobs and the level of household incomes will directly impact on families' ability to provide for their children. As the UK growth forecast for 2012 is cut, the economy remains a strong focus both nationally and locally as uncertainty into the economic recovery continues.

Recent months have seen reductions in the numbers claiming unemployment benefits in Warwickshire, although numbers remain much higher than before the recession began. At its peak, in August 2009, there were 12,267 job seekers allowance claimants in Warwickshire; in June 2011, this had dropped to 8,736.

Despite this relative improvement, recovery is likely to be slow, reflected in falls in earnings and income, higher inflation levels and restrained customer demand. In the coming months it will be important to monitor the global economic performance and more importantly the impacts on the UK economy.

Welfare Reform

The Coalition Government targeted welfare expenditure with cuts totalling £18 billion from 2011 to 2014. The changes were announced in the 2010 Emergency Budget and Spending Review, and further adjustments were made in the Autumn Statement 2011. The Welfare Reform Act passed on 8 March 2012 implements some of these changes and sets further longer term plans, while the March 2012 Budget raised the potential of a further £10 billion of welfare cuts in the future.

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Some of the welfare reforms likely to have an impact on families and children include:

- Changes to child benefit payments
- Changes to rules on claiming Child Tax Credits
- Reduction on childcare element of Working Tax Credit
- Changes to local housing allowance
- Overall cap on benefits limiting the amount a household can receive in benefits
- Introduction of a universal credit to replace income-based benefits and tax credits for new working age claimants

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Localisation of council tax benefit including cut in funding

The Government ascertain they are making the system fairer for low-income working families and higher benefit payments could disincentivise work however, critics of the welfare reform argue this will unfairly penalise families and hit low income families the hardest thereby pushing more families below the poverty line.

A recent report published by the Joseph Roundtree Foundation in July 2012 highlights the cuts to tax credits twinned with areas such as child care costs and transport costs mean that working families need a to earn a third more to make ends meet. The research also points out that the level of Universal Credit in 2013 will strongly influence the ability of households to reach this minimum income standard. See the link to the report for further information: <u>http://bit.ly/MbZHrH</u>

Troubled Families

In December 2011, the Department of Communities and Local Government announced a new initiative 'Troubled Families.' The Government have pledged £448 million nationally over the next three years to address the needs of at least 120,000 families. In Warwickshire it is estimated that there are 805 families who may meet the criteria, and since the announcement was made, officers from a range of local public and third sector agencies have been working hard to develop the Warwickshire approach. The focus of the initiative is reducing crime, anti-social behaviour, school absenteeism and unemployment.

Warwickshire builds on a strong foundation from the Family Intervention Project, which will complement the work of the Troubled Families initiative. There are currently two Family Intervention Projects in operation in the county. The Nuneaton & Bedworth/North Warwickshire project launched in 2009, and the Warwick, Rugby and Stratford project has been in operation since last autumn. It is anticipated that up to 140 families will benefit from these projects.

Since then a number of meetings have been held within WCC and externally amongst partners to ensure a multi-agency approach and the evidence base to underpin the production of a concise plan that will address a range of work streams including the following:

- Identification of families including the definition of local criteria
- Identifying the current range of interventions and agencies involved
- Overall delivery arrangements
- The impact of the work in terms of service redesign
- Implications for the current work force
- Cost/ Benefit / Savings resulting from the programme
- Current and future governance and financial arrangements

Deprivation

The Indices of Deprivation 2010 show that Nuneaton & Bedworth has the highest levels of deprivation in the County, indicated by the highest average LSOA score. The Borough ranks as the 108th most deprived Local Authority District (out of the 326 Local Authorities in England). Nuneaton and Bedworth falls within the top third most deprived Local Authority Districts in England.

Figure 1: Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Warwickshire ranked in the Top 10% Most Deprived LSOAs nationally on the IMD 2010 (Ranks are shown in brackets)

Note: A ranking of 1 represents the most deprived LSOA in England and a ranking of 32,482 represents the least deprived. Source: English Indices of Deprivation 2010, Communities & Local Government.

However, there is considerable variation across the County as Stratford-on-Avon District is the least deprived in Warwickshire with a national rank of 278th.

There are nine LSOAs in Warwickshire ranked within the top 10% most deprived LSOAs nationally on the overall Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010. These are all located within Nuneaton & Bedworth



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Borough. This compares with six LSOAs in IMD 2007 and two LSOAs in IMD 2004. Figure 1 details the location of Warwickshire's most deprived areas according to the IMD 2010. These are concentrated in central and north west Nuneaton.

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It is interesting to note that the top 13 most deprived LSOAs on the IMD 2007 have all moved up the national rankings and are therefore ranked as being relatively more deprived on the IMD 2010.

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Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index

Although the income deprivation affecting children index is made up of similar indicator (the proportion of children aged 0-15 living in income deprived households) as we will go on to consider in the paper, one of the benefits of the index is that it sets the local level deprivation figures in a national context and therefore is worth highlighting.

- 44 LSOAs in Warwickshire are ranked within the 30% most deprived LSOAs in England experiencing income deprivation affecting children, compared to 42 in the 2007 indices. Of these 44 LSOAs, 20 are in Nuneaton & Bedworth, 11 in Warwick, eight in Rugby, four in North Warwickshire and one are in Stratford-on-Avon.
- Three areas feature within the top 10% most deprived LSOAs, remaining the same as the IMD 2007, all of which are located in Nuneaton & Bedworth. The top ranking area in Warwickshire is Camp Hill Village Centre LSOA in Camp Hill ward located in Nuneaton & Bedworth, with 56% of children aged 0-15 living in income deprived households, followed by 56% in Middlemarch and Swimming Pool LSOA and 54% Bar Pool North and Crescents.

Table 1: Warwickshire LSOAs in 10% most deprived LSOAs nationally in terms of income deprivation affecting children

LSOA Name	Ward	District	National Rank	Most Deprived %
Camp Hill Village Centre	Camp Hill	Nuneaton & Bedworth	1,206	Top 4%
Middlemarch & Swimming Pool	Wem Brook	Nuneaton & Bedworth	1,268	Top 4%
Bar Pool North & Crescents	Bar Pool	Nuneaton & Bedworth	1,530	Top 5%

Note: National Rank is from 1 to 32,482 where 1 is most deprived Source: English Indices of Deprivation, Department for Communities & Local Government

The LSOAs mentioned above dovetail with the top LSOAs mentioned in the revised local child poverty measure with all three of the top 10% most deprived in terms of income deprivation affecting children also in the top three LSOAs with the highest proportions of child poverty.

The full report on IMD 2010 can be accessed via the following link: <u>http://bit.ly/NsgAyB</u>

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Revised Local Child Poverty Measure: The Proportion of Children in Poverty

The key dataset used in the past to monitor child poverty is the revised local child poverty measure provided by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HRMC). This attempts to recreate the relative child poverty measure as set out in the Child Poverty Act 2010 at a local level and represents our best measure of child poverty at a local level.

Warwickshire bservatorv

The proportion of children in poverty is defined as the proportion of children living in families in receipt of out of work (means-tested) benefits or in receipt of tax credits where their reported income is less than 60 per cent of median income.

The latest data relates to August 2009. This means that it does not fully reflect the impact of the large scale economic downturn, the subsequent recession and the current economic circumstances which families across the Country are facing. However, it does allow us to better understand the variation in the characteristics of child poverty between Warwickshire's Districts and Boroughs, and shows how they fit within the national picture.

2006	5	2007		2008		2009	
Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1,690	13.0%	1,715	13.2%	1,705	13.3%	1,900	14.7%
4,835	17.4%	5,155	18.4%	5,110	18.2%	5,620	19.9%
2,500	12.5%	2,700	13.2%	2,730	13.2%	2,945	13.9%
2,245	9.5%	2,320	9.6%	2,190	9.0%	2,510	10.3%
3,025	11.7%	3,050	11.7%	3,025	11.7%	3,185	12.1%
14,295	13.0%	14,940	13.4%	14,760	13.2%	16,160	14.3%
279,100	22.9%	293,655	24.0%	287,105	23.3%	300,300	24.0%
2,298,385	20.8%	2,397,645	21.6%	2,341,975	20.9%	2,429,305	21.3%
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Table 2: Numbers and Proportions of Children in "Poverty", 2006-2009

Source: HM Revenue & Customs (snapshots as at 31st August 2006, 2007, 2008 & 2009).

In Warwickshire, there were 16,160 children considered to be living in poverty in 2009¹. This equates to 14.3% of all children. This proportion is considerably below the national and regional equivalent figures of 21.3% and 24.0% respectively. Figures for most areas show a rise in the

¹ This is calculated by the number of children living in families in receipt of child tax credit whose reported income is less than 60 per cent of the median income, or in receipt of income support or (income-based) Job Seekers Allowance, divided by the total number of children in the area (determined by Child Benefit data). In 2010/11, the 60% threshold was worth £251 per week.

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numbers of children living in poverty from the previous year. However, it is reasonable to assume that these have now risen in the light of the recession experienced during 2009 and the associated worsening economic prospects for families.

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Although the proportion of children considered to be living in poverty in Warwickshire is considerably lower than both the regional and national equivalent figures, this masks some considerable variation at a more local level. Concentrations of child poverty are most marked at Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) level and the latest 2009 dataset shows there are three neighbourhoods in Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough (up from two in the 2008 dataset) where over 50% of children are considered to be living in poverty. The list below details the top five LSOAs in Warwickshire with the highest proportions of children living in "poverty":

- Bar Pool North & Crescents LSOA, Bar Pool Ward, Nuneaton & Bedworth 265 (57.0%) risen from third place and 47.5% in 2008.
- Camp Hill Village Centre LSOA, Camp Hill Ward, Nuneaton & Bedworth 240 (53.1%) risen from 51.9% in 2008 but falls to second place in the County.
- Middlemarch & Swimming Pool LSOA, Wem Brook Ward, Nuneaton & Bedworth 260 (52.9%) risen from 50.2% in 2008.
- Kingswood Grove Farm & Rural LSOA, Kingswood Ward, Nuneaton & Bedworth 170 (43.4%) risen from 38.9% in 2008.
- Hill Top LSOA, Wem Brook Ward, Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough 150 (41.6%) risen from 37.5% in 2008.

The top 10% of Warwickshire's LSOAs with the highest proportions of children living in poverty are included in Table 3. These 10% of LSOAs alone account for nearly 30% of all children living in "poverty" across Warwickshire.

It is again worth noting the poor timeliness associated with the child poverty data, which means that this analysis relates to the position in 2009. With the impact of the economic downturn and recession, it is highly likely that the situation will have deteriorated since then with more families facing economic hardship. This suggests that larger numbers and proportions of Warwickshire's children are now likely to be living in relative poverty.

Of Warwickshire's 333 LSOAs, over three in five (204 LSOAs or 61%) have a larger proportion of children in poverty than the previous year. The LSOA with the highest proportion of children in poverty in 2009 is Bar Pool North and Crescents with 57% of children in poverty. This has risen from 47.5% in the previous year and moved from the third to first place in the County.



Table 3: Top 10% Lower Super Output Areas in Warwickshire with the highest proportions of children in "Poverty"

Lower Super Output Area (LSOA)		Total Children	% of Children	Warwickshire	% point
Name	District/ Borough	in	in	Rank	change from
		"Poverty"	"Poverty"		2008
Bar Pool North & Crescents	Nuneaton & Bedworth	265	57.0%	1	9.5%
Camp Hill Village Centre	Nuneaton & Bedworth	240	53.1%	2	1.2%
Middlemarch & Swimming Pool	Nuneaton & Bedworth	260	52.9%	3	2.7%
Kingswood Grove Farm & Rural	Nuneaton & Bedworth	170	43.4%	4	4.5%
Hill Top	Nuneaton & Bedworth	150	41.6%	5	4.1%
Mancetter South and Ridge Lane	North Warwickshire	140	38.8%	6	3.7%
Camp Hill West & Quarry	Nuneaton & Bedworth	180	38.5%	7	2.9%
Camp Hill South West & Brook	Nuneaton & Bedworth	100	37.7%	8	6.2%
Brunswick South East	Warwick	160	36.1%	9	1.8%
Atherstone Central - Centre	North Warwickshire	145	35.9%	10	0.3%
Bede East	Nuneaton & Bedworth	140	35.8%	11	-0.8%
Lillington East	Warwick	115	35.7%	12	1.4%
Brownsover South Lake District North	Rugby	180	35.1%	13	-1.1%
Keresley North and Newlands	Nuneaton & Bedworth	135	34.4%	14	1.8%
Kingswood Stockingford Schools	Nuneaton & Bedworth	140	34.1%	15	5.5%
Brunswick South & Cemetary	Warwick	100	33.7%	16	-1.8%
Wem Brook East	Nuneaton & Bedworth	115	33.3%	17	0.3%
Bede Cannons	Nuneaton & Bedworth	75	33.2%	18	8.2%
Brunswick North West & Foundry	Warwick	110	33.2%	18	1.5%
Kingswood North East	Nuneaton & Bedworth	90	31.9%	20	5.9%
Sydenham West	Warwick	105	31.5%	21	2.6%
Packmores West & The Cape	Warwick	130	31.4%	22	-2.2%
Poplar Nicholas Chamberlain	Nuneaton & Bedworth	100	31.2%	23	-0.6%
Admirals East	Rugby	140	30.8%	24	-4.7%
Bede North	Nuneaton & Bedworth	110	30.7%	25	-0.4%
Lillington South	Warwick	120	30.3%	26	3.1%
Abbey Town Centre	Nuneaton & Bedworth	80	29.3%	27	3.4%
Abbey Priory	Nuneaton & Bedworth	120	28.9%	28	1.1%
Poplar Coalpit Field	Nuneaton & Bedworth	105	28.8%	29	-1.0%
Warwick West East	Warwick	95	28.7%	30	1.1%
Heath Sports	Nuneaton & Bedworth	175	28.6%	31	3.7%
Brunswick South West & Kingsway	Warwick	80	28.5%	32	0.5%
Attleborough Central	Nuneaton & Bedworth	105	28.2%	33	4.6%
New Bilton West & Somers Rd	Rugby	170	28.2%	33	-3.5%
New Bilton North	Rugby	110	28.2%	33	5.0%
Source: HM Revenue & Customs, 2009 (snapshot as at 31 st August	2009).			

Note: **Red** denotes deterioration in proportion of children in poverty from 2008; **Green** denotes an improvement in the proportion of children in poverty from 2008.



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Proxy Measure for Child Poverty - Children in Out of Work Benefit Households

In light of the lag with child poverty data at a local level, it is worth considering a proxy measure for child poverty released by the Department for Work and Pensions. The data relates to May 2011 and show the numbers of children (aged 0-18 years old) living in households where at least one parent or guardian claimed one or more of the following out-of-work benefits: Job Seeker's Allowance, Income Support, Employment and Support Allowance, Incapacity Benefit/Severe Disablement Allowance, or Pension Credit at 31 May 2011.

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Table 4: Numbers of children in receipt of out of work benefits, 2011

	2008	2009	2010	2011	% increase from 2008 to 2011
North Warwickshire	1,560	1,850	1,890	1,690	8.3%
Nuneaton & Bedworth	4,950	5,640	5,610	5,400	9.1%
Rugby	2,450	2,900	3,010	2,830	15.5%
Stratford-on-Avon	1,900	2,300	2,270	2,150	13.2%
Warwick	2,720	3,080	3,050	2,950	8.5%
Warwickshire	13,580	15,770	15,380	15,020	10.6%
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Source: Department for Work and Pensions, released July 2012

In a similar way to the proportion of children in poverty, the increase in the number of children living in out of work benefit households has risen from 2008 to 2011. In May 2011, there were 15,020 children living in out of work benefit households in Warwickshire, a rise of 1,440 children or 11% over the three year period from 2008 to 2011. Interestingly though, the numbers of children in out of work benefit households has dropped between 2010 and 2011 and has been falling since its peak of 15,770 children in 2009. The Observatory will continue to monitor this indicator closely to see how welfare reform may have influenced the 2012 figures.

Free School Meal Claimants

There is evidence to suggest a strong link between Free School Meals (FSM) claimants and children in poverty and disadvantage. The Observatory is currently examining the links between FSM claimants and a FSM proxy of those households claiming Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit on the basis that these households are on low incomes and may qualify for Free School Meals but may not be claiming.

Table 5 shows the distribution of FSM claimants across Warwickshire's Districts/Boroughs as of January 2012. Warwickshire had 8,024 FSM claimants living in Warwickshire in January 2012 with the highest numbers in Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough.

Table 5: FSM Claimants, January 2012

District/Borough	FSM Claimants	5 – 19 population*	FSM Claimant Rate*
North Warwickshire Borough	854	10,780	7.9%
Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough	2,847	22,189	12.8%
Rugby Borough	1,496	18,012	8.3%
Stratford-on-Avon District	1,134	20,140	5.6%
Warwick District	1,693	21,591	7.8%
Warwickshire	8,024	92,712	8.7%

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* Estimated Source: Pupil and Student Services and Warwickshire Observatory, WCC

Six out of the ten LSOAs with the highest FSM claimant numbers fall in Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough, with the remaining four in Warwick District. No LSOAs in North Warwickshire, Rugby Borough or Stratford-on-Avon District feature in the top ten highest LSOAs in terms of FSM claimant numbers. Table 6 shows the distribution of FSM claimants by LSOAs across the county. The highest numbers of claimants are predominantly clustered around urban areas.

LSOA	Ward	FSM Claimants	5 – 19 population*	FSM Claimant Rate*	Feature in Top 10% of LSOAs on Child Poverty Measure
Bar Pool North & Crescents	Bar Pool	146	302	48.3%	🖌 🗸
Camp Hill Village Centre	Camp Hill	146	331	44.1%	🖌 🗸
Middlemarch & Swimming Pool	Wem Brook	135	343	39.4%	🖌 🗸
Hill Top	Wem Brook	101	314	32.2%	🖌 🗸
Lillington East	Crown	84	264	31.8%	✓
Kingswood Grove Farm & Rural	Kingswood	94	304	30.9%	✓
Sydenham West	Willes	63	226	27.9%	✓
Wem Brook East	Wem Brook	72	263	27.4%	✓
Brunswick South East	Brunswick	103	380	27.1%	✓
Lillington South	Crown	80	304	26.3%	✓

Table 6: FSM Claimants by Lower Super Output Area (LSOA), January 2012

* Estimated Source: Pupil and Student Services and Warwickshire Observatory, WCC

The ten LSOAs with the highest FSM claimants all feature in the top 10% of LSOAs identified in the child poverty measure with the top three LSOAs mirroring the top three in the 2009 child poverty data.

Poverty in England 2012

Experian have produced a ranking of the 326 local authorities by key poverty indicators, one of which being those who have the greatest for the presence of households at greatest risk of experiencing child poverty.

The data is published at district level. These generalisations mask much more complex and diverse issues at the more local level, but nevertheless provide a useful indication of positions in a national context. One specific observation is that the three northernmost boroughs in the county are considered to contain households that are at greater risk of experiencing child poverty than are currently in poverty, relative to national trends.

Nuneaton & Bedworth is ranked 96th, out of 326 local authority areas, in terms of the likelihood for the presence of households at greatest risk of experiencing child poverty, while Stratford-on-Avon is ranked 305th. Rugby is ranked 185th, around the centre of the rankings. North Warwickshire is 137th most at risk of experiencing child poverty and, in terms of rankings, sits between Nuneaton & Bedworth and Rugby. Warwick is ranked 231st and is the second best performing area in Warwickshire.

There is limited value in considering these kinds of issues at the local authority district level. Much more useful are the Indices of Deprivation, which analyse deprivation at the local level. The value of this new research is to compare Warwickshire's Districts/Boroughs in a consistent national setting.

For more information on the Poverty in England measure released by Experian, see the Observatory blog: <u>http://bit.ly/xTrGRS</u>



Observatory