



# Poverty in Western Cities

## Child in the City Conference

### Leeds

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# A growing issue



- Estimated 4.1 million children in relative poverty across the UK
- In Leeds, 20% of all dependent children under the age of 20 (33,485 children) lived in relative poverty in 2016, in comparison to 17% nationally.
- Impact of poverty- typically discussed in terms of statistical difference
- Education, physical and mental health, wellbeing and employment outcomes





# Children's Agency



- There is a conception that children should not be involved in conversations/ research/ approaches around poverty
- *'As subjects and citizens in their own right, children have remained largely absent from poverty discourse and public policy responses, and the experiences and needs of children in poverty have frequently been ignored or obscured' (Ridge, 2002:33)*
- Developmental theories of childhood focus on children as 'becoming', rather than 'being'





# Child poverty & adult poverty



- Child poverty has historically been understood, and tackled, through an adult centric framework
- The ways in which poverty is experienced by children cannot be understood through solely talking to adults

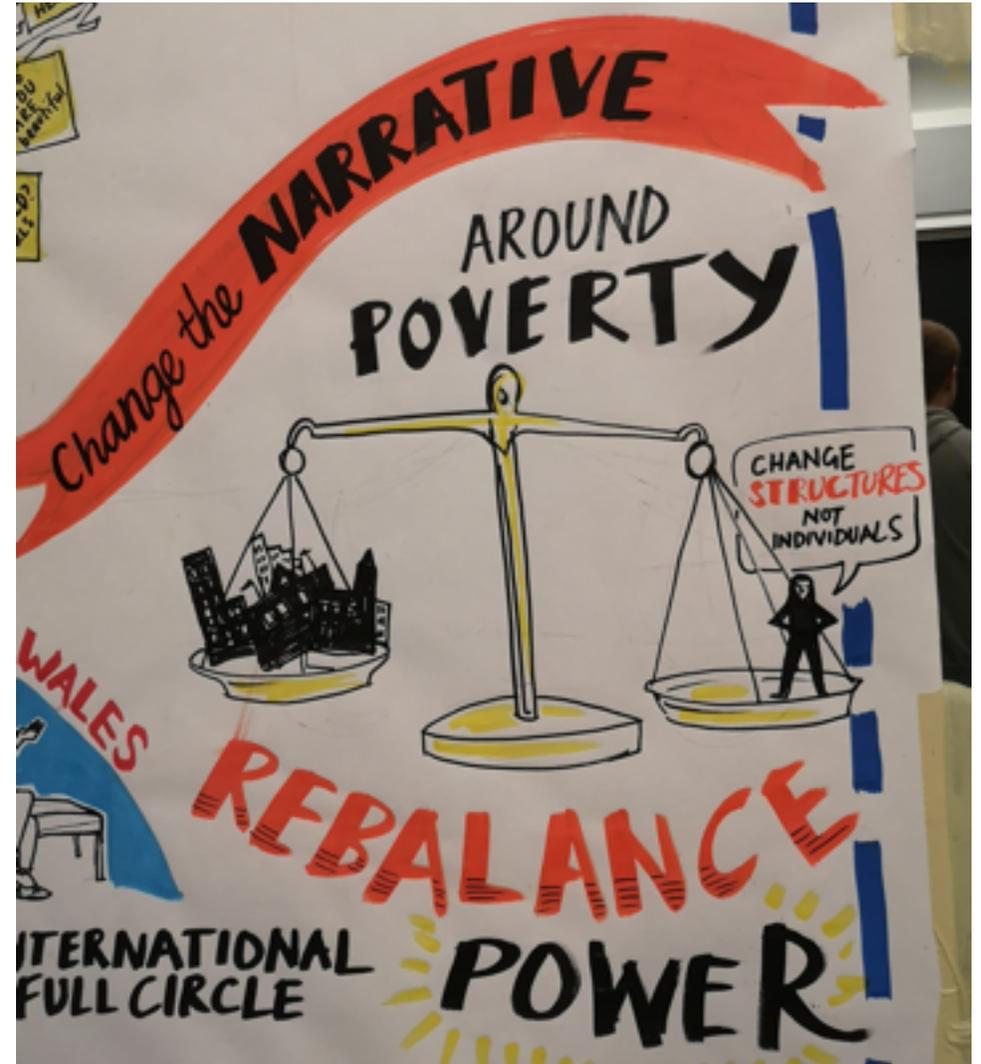




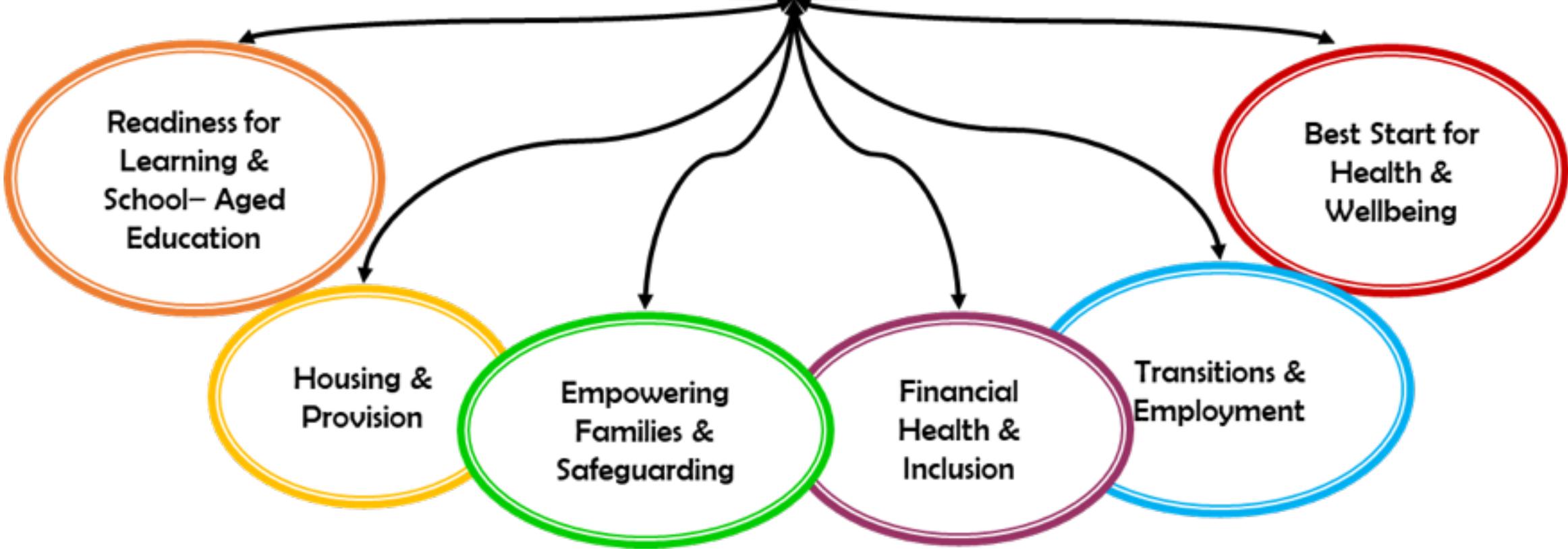
# Thriving: The Child Poverty Approach



- 1) All work needs to be informed by the voices of children, young people and parents
- 2) Partnership based
- 3) Changing structures, not individuals
- 4) Reframing understandings and language
- 5) Research informed



# Child Poverty Impact Board





# A range of projects...



- Financial literacy in schools
- Children's Centres & Employment and Skills
- Housing quality
- Best Start
- 50 Things to Do Before You're 5
- Barriers to attendance
- Poverty Proofing Social Care





# Logistics

Funding- private, public, third sector, university

Resources- 'in kind' partnerships

Streamlining work and resources

Developing local partnerships, building on community capacity

Needs led- working with people who experience poverty to tackle issues of poverty



# A Different Take

- Raising awareness of poverty and the impact of poverty
- Informing the strategy & projects
- Readdressing the power divide
- Used in training, strategy creation and events



# Period Poverty

- Approach led by children, young people and parents
- Wide range of partners from public, private, third, community sectors, education and academia
- Research informed- focus groups, surveys, discussions
- Clear that stigma and shame needs to be addressed, as well as education and provision of products





# Healthy Holidays



- Funded by Leeds City Council, Department for Education, other grants
- 42 schools, 10 community hubs, 50 charities providing food, activities and support over the summer holidays
- £549,598 total amount of funding awarded
- Average project cost- £7,138
- At least 5,441 children and 903 parents
- 15.21 tonnes of intercepted food distributed- £21,645 estimated value
- 10.5 tonnes from another provider
- Benefits to education, safeguarding, relationships, mental and physical health, access to services





“The boy came [to]... the group with his head down and disengaged. The boy had said to a member of staff 'I know I'm a tramp'. He knew he was [poor]... By the end of the scheme he was engaged, had made friends his own age. He said 'It's helped me feel like a kid again'”



# Challenges

Not establishing and agreeing expected ways of working/  
outcomes

Importance of understanding what is possible and what is  
not possible from the outset

Delicacy of working with partners and multiple systems

Culture change- 'We've always done it this way'





# Learning



- Early intervention is key
- There needs to be a shift in thinking on all sides
- Patience and time
- Relationships
- Managing expectations
- Avoiding 'tokenism'

