Key Points:

Poverty is a relative concept which applies to people who are considerably poorer than mainstream society, with resources well below those of the average individual or family which excludes them from ordinary aspects of life which are the norm for the majority (JRF 2016).

A lack of financial resources severely limits the opportunities available to people and the life outcomes they can expect. Social mobility is difficult and most people born into poverty stay there (JRF 2016).

Poverty limits the ability of people to participate in society, change their lifestyles and determine their own destiny. This results in fuel poverty, poor diet, unhealthy lifestyles, low aspirations and dependency (JRF 2016).

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) has produced this diagram to illustrate the main causes of poverty in the UK (JRF 2016).

Work undertaken on behalf of the Barnsley Anti-poverty Board (APB) in 2014 into the local evidence of poverty identified a number of the same problems (APB 2014).

The Counting the cost of UK poverty report (JRF 2016) established that work is the main way in which households can avoid or escape from poverty. However, whilst the UK is the fifth largest economy in the world and is enjoying an all-time high level of employment, there are different types of work. It contrasts those firms who depend on low-paid, low-skilled, insecure work with little prospects of betterment, with those with reasonable pay, security and prospects.

From the Anti-poverty Board report (APB 2014), the overall picture that emerges in Barnsley is that for some people in the borough low-paid work is often the only option.
The JRF report explains why the benefits system is ineffective at preventing poverty and at helping people to escape poverty. It looked at benefits for those in work, those seeking work and those with health or care issues that make work difficult.

The JRF report examines why the people in poverty are also the people who pay more for their goods and services. Themes that emerged in the Anti-Poverty Board report included:

- The findings do not show that people on low incomes use credit more often than affluent people; the rates are pretty similar across all income bands. What they do show is that people on low incomes borrow to cover the costs of essentials ‘to make ends meet’ and limited financial options available result in them paying a much higher fee for their credit than those with higher incomes.
- In general, Barnsley residents are making use of services such as the Credit Union, especially in areas with high levels of deprivation (PNA 2014).

There is also evidence that the earnings in Barnsley are failing to keep up with the regional and national levels:

- Incomes in Barnsley are lower than the regional and England averages, at £469 per week (gross), Y&H £480 & England £530. The differences between males and females are also wider, in Barnsley men earn £530 and Women £408 a gap of £122, in the Y&H the gap is £99, and nationally it is £98 (NOMIS 2016)
- Evidence from the MOSAIC customer insight data suggests that 1 in 3 households found it difficult or very difficult to manage their household incomes (MOSAIC 2016).

Fuel Poverty

The number of households affected by fuel poverty is roughly in line with the national and regional average, but there are significant variations across the borough.

- The latest data estimates that 11,505 (11.3%) Barnsley households are in fuel poverty (the figures were 9.2% in 2013, 9.7% in 2012 and 10.9% in 2011) (Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC), 2014).
- The rate varies substantially across the borough from 5% to 24.3%, with 61 out of the 147 LSOAs being above the borough average (red and pink on the map overleaf).
It is estimated that 20% of Excess Winter Deaths per annum can be directly attributed to excess cold hazards. There is compelling evidence that the drivers of fuel poverty (low income, poor energy efficiency and energy prices) are strongly linked to living at low temperatures. The Marmot Review Team report showed that low temperatures are strongly linked to a range of negative health outcomes (Fuel Poverty Review 2012, PHO 2015, Marmot Review ‘Fair Society, Healthy Lives’2010).

In 2014/15 there were 340 social rented homes in Barnsley which failed to have sufficient heating and insulation to meet the decent homes standard (Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), 2015).

The average energy efficiency rating¹ for a Council property is C, showing that Council homes in Barnsley are more energy efficient than England where the average rating is D. (DCLG, 2015 and DCLG, 2013).

People on low incomes, in chronic ill-health or with limited mobility are significantly less able to access and pay for the transport they need to access work, education and services.

Access to cars and vans is up to 5 times higher in the least deprived wards than in the most deprived (ONS 2011 Census).

Older people rely most on public transport, and those who are in poverty are least likely to have access to alternatives. They also have the highest rates of mobility issues, which make shopping, banking and medical journeys even more difficult (Centre for Social Justice (CSJ), 2010, Department for Transport (DT), 2014).

¹ The Energy Performance Certificate / Standard Assessment Procedure
https://www.gov.uk/guidance/standard-assessment-procedure
Child Poverty

Child Poverty is an issue which occurs throughout the borough, but with large differences between communities.

The likelihood of a child living in poverty is up to 6 times higher in some parts of the borough than in others; in Penistone East Ward it is 6.2%, and in Dearne North Ward it is 37.0% (HMRC 2014, released 2016).

The England rate of children living in low-income families was 19.9% in 2014 compared to the regional rate of 22.2% for South Yorkshire and an overall rate of 23.8% for Barnsley. This has risen 1 percentage point since 2012. The England rate rose by 1.9 percentage points in the same period, so the gap is narrowing.

There was a strong relationship between ward areas of high deprivation and the rate of children in low-income families as can be seen in the graph above with Dearne North Ward showing a rate of 37.0% compared to Penistone East Ward showing a rate six times smaller at 6.2%. Areas of high deprivation therefore have greater numbers of children living in relative low-income poverty.

Younger children are more likely to live in households where a parent or guardian claimed an out of work benefit, than older ones. Of the children living in an out of work household, 34% (3,610) are aged under 5, a further 32% (3,405) are 5 to 10 years old, 22% (2,310) are 11 to 15 years old, and 11% (1,165) are 16 to 18 years old (DWP 2016).

There are 32,410 children (20,485 families) in Barnsley in receipt of Tax Credits, of which 20,800 (64%) are part of in-work families (including 7,220 lone parent families) and 11,620 (36%) are from out of work families (including 7,445 from Lone Parent families).

One of the key barriers to people entering the labour market is childcare costs. In 2015, national research found that part-time childcare costs outstrip the average mortgage. In Barnsley, the average cost for 25 hours of childcare is £85 a week per child or almost £4,500 a year; however, rates in Barnsley are cheaper than regional and national averages (Family and Childcare Trust 2015).
Lone parents are one of the highest risk groups for persistent poverty, having some of the highest entry rates into poverty and lowest exit rates. This is partly due to the difficulties in achieving a good income level compared with dual headed households (Jenkins 2011).

The number of lone parent families in Barnsley is in line with regional and national rates. However, lone parents are twice as likely to live in the more deprived wards than in the less deprived (ONS 2011 Census). There is significant variation in Family Composition across the wards, with the least deprived ward (Penistone East) is made up of: Couples Married/Civil Partnership (75%); Couples Cohabiting (11%); and Lone Parent (14%) compared with the most deprived ward (Dearne North) made up of: Couples Married/Civil Partnership (49%); Couples Cohabiting (18%); and Lone Parent (33%).

Approximately 4,000 (14%) Barnsley children come from large families (defined as 3 or more children), a lower than both England and Yorkshire and Humber at 16% (HMRC 2015).

**Pensioner Poverty**

There is very little evidence concerning older people affected by poverty in Barnsley, but the data that is available does suggest that levels of poverty are not increasing in this age group. Age UK says that many people do not realise when they're entitled to benefits, but also says some feel too proud or embarrassed to claim, while others find the process of claiming too intrusive.²

- 1 in 6 of all people aged over 60 years living within Barnsley claim Pension Credit and of these, 77% are single. The numbers of Pension Credit claimants has reduced over the past 3 years; in 2014 1 in 5 of all people aged over 60 years living within Barnsley were claiming Pension Credit. However, the claimant rates for Pension Credit in Barnsley (9,170 or 16%) are higher than the regional and national averages of 15% and 13% respectively (NOMIS 2016, ONS 2015)

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