

Child Poverty and Deprivation

Dr Charlotte Greenway

Poverty in the UK

Key Facts



Official figures show there are 3.5 million children living in poverty in the UK after housing costs have been deducted (DWP, 2013)

This is one of the worst levels of child poverty in the industrialised world.

Around 1.9 million children live in workless households in the UK (ONS, 2001).

Therefore the UK has a higher proportion of children living in workless households than any other European Union country (Labour Force Survey, 2011).

However, more than half 63% of all children in low income households live in families where at least one of the adults is in paid work (DWP, 2013)

Children are much more likely to live in low-income households than the population as a whole: 27% compared to 21% (DWP, 2013)

Poverty: change



Child poverty in the UK has changed significantly, the proportion of children in poverty has risen considerably in the last 30 years - in 1979 around 14% of children lived in poverty and by 2012 it was 27% (DWP, 2013).



A recent Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) report estimated that 800,000 more children will be pushed into poverty by 2020 meaning one in three children in the UK will be living in poverty (IFS, 2013).



What is child poverty?

Child poverty is about children living in households suffering from a lack of material resources.



....lacking “the resources to obtain the types of diets, participate in the activities, and have the living conditions and amenities that are customary... In the societies to which they belong”. Such resources may include money, but they may also include other forms of material resources – such as access to healthcare, a decent home and a high-quality free education (Townsend, 1979).

In reality it means tough choices between having to heat your home and feeding the children.



For young people themselves, it means not having a birthday celebration as parents can't afford it, chronic stress and missing out on learning opportunities.

The Child Poverty Act (2010)

...sets a duty on the Government to work towards the eradication of child poverty in the UK by 2020.

The Act measures child poverty according to four measures:

1. Relative low income: relating to children living in households that have an income below the “relative” poverty line (60% of median household income).



2. Combined low income and material deprivation



3. Absolute low income



4. Persistent poverty



The Child Poverty Act (2010)



The relative low income target is frequently used as the core measure for assessing levels of child poverty in the UK as this measure assesses the extent to which the lowest income families are keeping pace with growth in the economy in general.

This recognises the importance not only of absolute low income, but also of low income relative to others in society.



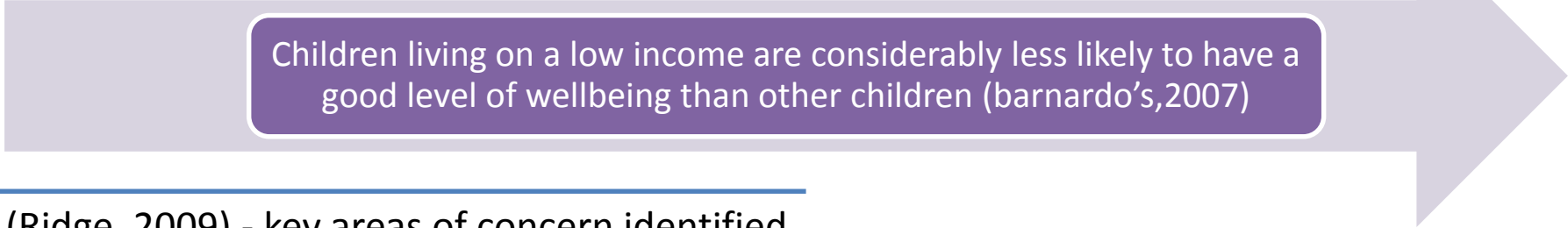
This is crucial because if children fall behind on this measure, then they will be unable to afford to take part in the kind of “normal” activities which enable social inclusion with their peers.

Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016



http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2016/7/pdfs/ukpga_20160007_en.pdf

The Impact of Child Poverty



Children living on a low income are considerably less likely to have a good level of wellbeing than other children (barnardo's,2007)

(Ridge, 2009) - key areas of concern identified by children included:

Economic and material deprivation – anxiety their family not having enough money for their needs and going without the essentials like food and clothing.



Social deprivation – poverty restricting their access to attend social events and their ability to maintain friendships.



School – inability to pay for resources needed e.g. uniform, study guides and not being able to afford to go on school trips.

Poor quality housing, homelessness and neighbourhoods – affected children sleeping, studying and playing at home, as well as, their mental/physical health. Feeling unsafe and there is nothing to do in their local area.



Family pressures – tensions between parents due to severe financial pressure and children taking on additional responsibilities in the home.



Stigma and bullying due to visible signs of poverty and difference.

Children at highest risk of poverty

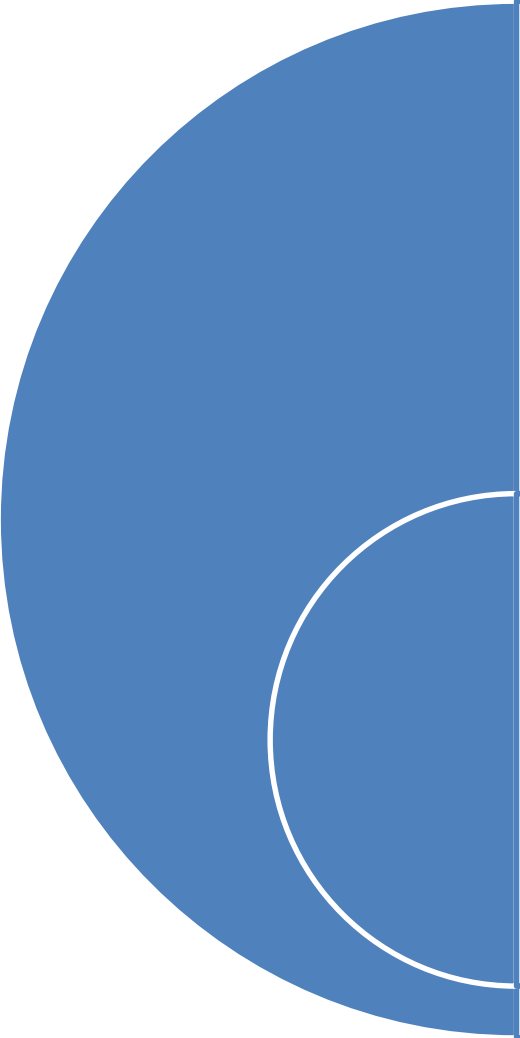
Children in households affected by disabilities: 4 in 10 disabled children have been found to be living in poverty once you take into account the extra costs these families face as a result of disability (The Children's Society, 2011).

Lone parent families: 43% of children in lone parent households live in poverty compared to 22% in two parent families (low income, isolation/poor mental health) (DWP, 2013).

Large families: 36% of children in families with three or more children are at risk of being in poverty, in comparison to 24% of families with two children (childcare places)

Black and minority ethnic groups (BME): Within Black or Black British households 44% of children are living in poverty, this rises to 55% in Pakistani and Bangladeshi households compared with 25% of White children (DWP, 2013).

Children at high risk cont....



Workless and working households: Household work status is very strongly associated with child poverty. 67% of children in workless households currently live in poverty and it is the low level of out-of-work benefits that mean that most of these children are poor. However, 6 in 10 children in low-income households have someone in their family doing paid work. In-work poverty is a result of low pay jobs with little chance of progression.

Asylum seeking families: there is a lack of quantitative data on asylum seekers and poverty. However, asylum seeking families are prohibited from working and only entitled to a lower level of benefit support than UK citizens and many are left relying on little more than £5 a day or worse.

Poverty demographics



Child poverty levels vary greatly between regions of the country – from 21% in the South East of England to 36% of children in London.

WHY?

Local access to employment



Local wages



Levels of housing costs.



Why are children growing up in poverty?

Short-term issues

The loss of parental employment

Barriers to employment: unable to access affordable child care, ill health, disability, caring responsibilities, lack of access to transport or few appropriate jobs available.

The onset of illness or disability

Changes to family structure: separation or death, increase in household

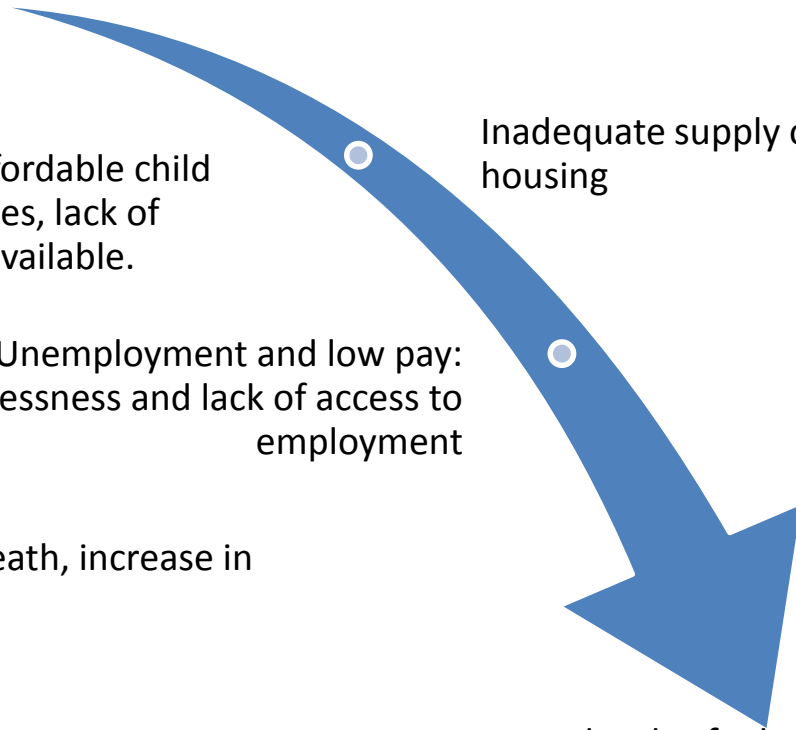
Inadequate welfare support

Unemployment and low pay: worklessness and lack of access to employment

Long-term issues

Inadequate supply of affordable housing

Low levels of education and skills: access to poor quality schooling and achieve poor results.



What are the consequences of child poverty?

Immediate experiences in childhood

- Mental health, engagement with their education and their family life etc.
- Children living in low-income households are nearly three times as likely to suffer mental health problems as their more affluent peers.
- Poverty can make good family functioning and strong parent-child relationships more difficult.
- Economic factors have a significant link with children's subjective well-being
- More likely to suffer from low self-esteem and to be socially isolated.

What are the consequences of child poverty?

The long-term consequences of poverty

Health

- Poor health is strongly linked to low socio-economic status (Marmot, 2010) Children born into poor families are more likely to be born premature, have low birth weights and die in their first year of life.
- Poor children have a higher rate of accidents and accidental death (13 times more likely to die from unintentional injury).
- More likely to be absent from school due to illness, to be hospitalised, to report a long-standing illness.
- Children living in low-income households are nearly three times as likely to suffer mental health problems as their more affluent peers.

(HM Treasury, 2008)



Education

- Differences between children's cognitive development related to parental social status are evident as early as 22 months (Feinstein, 2003).
- The highest early achievers from deprived backgrounds are overtaken by lower achieving children from advantaged backgrounds by age five.
- Only 26.6% of pupils eligible for free school meals achieved five or more A*-C grade GCSEs, whereas, 54.2% of pupils not eligible for FSM achieved this (Department for Education, 2009).

What are the consequences of child poverty?

The long-term consequences of poverty

Employment

- Inequalities in education and health drive a similar divide in the world of employment and later adult outcomes.
- Children on FSM in Year 11 were more likely than those not eligible FSM to become NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) in the following three years (DfE, 2010)
- Young people NEET are more likely to have grown up in social disadvantaged households including low levels of employment, single parent families and parents with low educational qualifications.
- Young people who have grown up in low-income households are overall more likely than their more affluent peers to be unemployed, working in low or unskilled jobs and to be poorly paid in adult life (Fabian Society, 2006) .



Family and relationships and children's subjective well-being

- Living on a low income is often a stressful and difficult experience and can impact on the running of family life and the quality of intra-familial relationships. This all also affects the subjective well-being of children, that is, their assessment of their satisfaction with their own life.
- Poverty has an impact on parents' ability to manage stressful events (Fabian Society, 2006) and can make good family functioning and strong parent-child relationships more difficult (Gill and Sharma, 2004).
- Lower levels of subjective well-being (Pople, and Solomon, 2011).

How can child poverty be tackled?

Action which directly lifts children out of poverty by giving their families the resources they need: improving welfare support, improving pay and increasing employment, reducing the costs of working, increasing access to affordable housing.

Action which builds children's resilience to deal with poverty, and to improve the child's future outcomes: Reducing the intergenerational transmission of poverty.

Interventions focussing on improving educational attainment and health outcomes for disadvantaged children may fall into this category of intervention.



Multi-level intervention



The Child:

- Improving access to health and education services – increasing the likelihood that they are able to escape poverty and to reduce the risk of intergenerational transmission of poverty to their own children.



The Family:

- The vast majority of children's economic well-being is tied directly to that of their parents or care-givers. Very few children have access to finances outside of their family household. Interventions need to be targeted at the whole family rather than the individual child. For example, in almost all cases benefit payments will be paid to the adults in a household.



The Community:

- Some factors beyond the child and their family are associated with child poverty. For example, the local jobs market, and the adequacy of local services can both affect the likelihood of children living in poverty. Action must target support for the whole community.

Resources for activity

- https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/324103/Child_poverty_strategy.pdf
- http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/docs/UK_Poverty_Rip_Off_Brief_1.pdf
- http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/docs/No_Child_Left_Behind_1.pdf

Using the resources above – in 3 groups create 3 posters that that highlights the extent of Poverty in the UK today

Poster 1 – The state of Poverty in the UK today

Poster 2 – Interventions that are currently in place in the UK to try to alleviate Poverty

Poster 3 - What are the future goals/interventions?