

National Research

Selective key research that provided government with an evidence base.

1. *Ending Child Poverty: Everybody's Business (March 2008)*

HM treasury DWP DCSF

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Everybody's Business describes the characteristics of poor families and the causes of poverty, concluding that families are poor because they are workless or in low-paid work, and the causes of low-paid work and worklessness are multiple, complex and overlapping:

- Low skills can make it difficult to find work and can reduce job stability and progression, and can limit an individual's earning capacity;
- High demand on public services in deprived areas can affect access to and quality of service provision, and a lack of safe, pleasant spaces exacerbates children's experiences of deprivation in childhood which can cause poverty in the future. Poor

children are less likely to achieve higher level skills and qualifications, which are critical to enter the workforce and progress in work, as well as to thrive in other areas of life; and

- Some parents find it difficult to work. For example, one in four children in poverty has a parent with a self-reported disability or a long-standing health condition

2. *Take Up The Challenge (June 2009)*

HM Government Child Poverty Unit

This report brings together the views of a wide range of professionals from organisations in the public and voluntary sector to capture the principles of effective service delivery and to develop ways to support local services to help parents to access the benefit and credits to which they are entitled, whilst supplementing existing efforts to support and encourage parents to enter work and ensuring those in work are better off.

- There are 400,000 children living in poverty nationally as a result of families not claiming all the benefits and tax credits to which they are entitled. This means that compared to the current baseline, every 10% increase in take up of income related benefits and tax credits could lift 40,000 children out of poverty;
- Poverty means more than just low income and material deprivation. It affects the everyday experiences of families and communities. The tax and benefits system provides financial support to help make sure that work pays and supports families who cannot work. But many families are not taking up all of the financial support to which they are entitled;
- There is a strong argument for local authorities and partners to focus on increasing take up of benefits and tax credits by poor families with large unclaimed amounts. Take up can contribute to tackling child poverty, and related issues such as social exclusion and health inequalities. There are also benefits for the local economy, with money claimed in benefits and

tax credits being spent in local communities. Furthermore, improving take up will help local authorities and partners to ensure that hard to reach and vulnerable families are receiving support, and are in contact with services.

3. *New Opportunities White Paper (January 2009)*

HM Government

The New Opportunities White Paper brings together measures across a range of departments looking at ways of supporting individuals "at key stages of their lives to make the most of their potential". The focus of the document is "fairness", with an emphasis on narrowing the gap between the rich and the poor and increasing opportunities for the least favoured social groups.

- Success in education is becoming less dependent on a person's social background, more young people from low-income backgrounds are going to university, and evidence suggests that improvements in earnings mobility are helping people to get on in work;
- There is more to do to enable everyone, whatever their background, to fulfil their talents and potential. But with the right policies, we can both raise the overall level of skills, incomes and the number of good jobs, while at the same time building a fair society;
- Helping low-income families access the childcare they are entitled to – evidence shows that the most vulnerable families and those at the most risk of poverty are the least likely to take up their free entitlement, and often do not engage with services such as Sure Start Children's Centres, which support their child's development;
- The attainment gap by poverty is substantial, and it opens up very early. It is strongly evident by the age of five (which is

why in chapter 3 we focus on the early years). It narrows only slightly in primary school, and widens again after age 11. For example, the chances of a child eligible for free school meals – roughly the poorest 15% by family income – getting good school qualifications by age 16 are less than one-third of those for better off classmates;

- Children growing up in low-income households are less likely to achieve their potential through school and further education. They are more likely to suffer from physical and mental ill-health and experience worklessness and poverty themselves as adults.

4. *Every Child Matters – The Children’s Plan: Building Brighter Futures (December 2007)*

DCSF

- While fewer children now live in poverty, too many children’s education is still being held back by poverty and disadvantage;
- By 2020, we want to see:
 - families able to achieve all their ambitions for their children, knowing where to find the support and information they need and treated as partners whenever they engage with professionals;
 - children able to grow up free of the blight of child poverty, with child poverty halved by 2010 and eradicated by 2020;
 - children enjoying healthy lifestyles and outcomes, with the proportion of overweight and obese children back to year 2000 levels, and with excellent services for children and young people with physical and mental health problems;
 - all children with the social and emotional capabilities that they will need for a successful adult life; and
 - all children able to enjoy an active childhood, with safe places to play independently.

5. *Fair Society, Healthy Lives: Strategic Review of Health Inequalities in England Post 2010*

[Marmut Review] (February 2010)

On behalf of the Secretary of State for Health

This report identifies health inequalities challenge facing England, the evidence most relevant to underpinning future policy and action, claiming the link between social conditions and health is not a footnote to the ‘real’ concerns with health – health care and unhealthy behaviours – it should become the main focus.

- Reducing health inequalities will require action on six policy objectives:
 1. Give every child the best start in life
 2. Enable all children, young people and adults to maximize their capabilities and have control over their lives
 3. Create fair employment and good work for all
 4. Ensure health standards of living for all
 5. Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities
 6. Strengthen the role and impact of ill health prevention
- Since 2004/05 relative poverty has increased, with pensioner poverty, working-age poverty among childless adults and child

poverty is also increasing;

- In comparison with 11 EU countries, the UK has higher rates of poverty among lone parents, families with three or more children, and those aged 65 and over; and
- Particular groups are more likely to rely on state benefits, for example disabled people, those with caring responsibilities and the long-term unemployed. However, the system proves difficult to access for several disadvantaged groups and take-up can be low, for reasons including lack of information and awareness of the system. This varies according to ethnic group. Bangladeshis have particularly low levels of benefit receipt alongside the highest levels of poverty.

6. *The Foundation Years: Preventing poor children becoming poor adults (December 2010)*

Frank Field – HM Government

A ground-breaking document arguing for a wholesale new approach to eradicating poverty with a particular focus on non income related elements.

- Generate a broader debate about the nature and extent of poverty in the UK;
- Examine the case for reforms to poverty measures, in particular for the inclusion of non-financial elements;
- Explore how a child's home environment affects their chances of being ready to take full advantage of their schooling; and
- Recommend a potential action by government and other institutions to reduce poverty and enhance life chances for the least disadvantaged, consistent with the Government's fiscal strategy

7. *Effective classroom strategies for closing the gap in educational achievement for children and young people living in poverty, including white working-class boys (January 2011)*

Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services (C4EO)

This research review tells us what works in closing the gap in educational achievement for children and young people living in poverty, including white working-class boys. It summarises the best available evidence that will help service providers to improve services and, ultimately, outcomes for children, young people and their families.

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- One in four children in the UK grows up in poverty, and for these children the impact on their chances of education and life success is profound
- The attainment gap between children from rich and poor backgrounds is detectable at an early age (22 months) and widens throughout the education system, for example children from the lowest-income homes are half as likely to get five good GCSEs (General Certificates in Secondary Education) and go on to higher education
- White working-class pupils (particularly boys) are among the lowest performers in academic achievement
- Nevertheless, the link between poverty and attainment is a multi-racial phenomenon, with socio-economic gaps much greater than ethnic group differences



8. *Cycles of poverty, unemployment and low pay (February 2010)*

Joseph Rowntree Foundation

This paper summarises the findings of four projects about recurrent poverty and the low-pay/no-pay cycle. It examines relevant current UK policy and practice and suggests ways to create longer-lasting routes out of poverty.

- Incomes are dynamic, with households moving in and out of poverty over time, and policy and practice needs to reflect this
- About a fifth of poverty is 'recurrent', where people escape from poverty only temporarily
- Having a job, and the conditions of that job, relates strongly to recurrent poverty but other important factors included family change, qualifications, occupation, age and how the benefits system works
- The issue of people moving repeatedly between work and unemployment is an endemic problem in the UK and has risen by 60 per cent since 2006, mostly as a result of the recession
- Entering work cannot provide a sustainable route out of poverty if job security, low pay and lack of progression are not also addressed
- Poverty is often discussed in the media and in politics as a static concept, where a group of people are labelled permanently 'poor' and the rest are not. In fact, poverty is highly dynamic, reflecting the shifting nature of both individual income and

family change. When longer-term data is examined, it becomes clear that a majority rather than a minority of people in the UK experience at least a year below the relative poverty line during their lifetimes (DWP, 2009a). not only does the static depiction of poverty belie the evidence, it can also reinforce the stigmatising treatment of people with experience of poverty (Lister, 2005)

9. *Early Intervention: The Next Steps – an independent report to Her Majesty’s Government*

(January 2011)

Graham Allen MP

This report looks at the general approaches, and the specific policies and programmes, which help to give children aged 0–3 the social and emotional bedrock they need to reach their full potential; and to those which help older children become the good parents of tomorrow. The rationale is simple: many of the costly and damaging social problems in society are created because we are not giving children the right type of supporting their earliest years, when they should achieve their most rapid development. If we do not provide that help early enough, then it is often too late.

- Early Intervention to promote social and emotional development can significantly improve mental and physical health, educational attainment and employment opportunities. Early Intervention can also help to prevent criminal behaviour (especially violent behaviour), drug and alcohol misuse and teenage pregnancy;
- What parents do is more important than who they are. Especially in a child’s earliest years, the right kind of parenting is a bigger influence on their future than wealth, class, education or any other common social factor;
- Intervening later is more costly, and often cannot achieve the results that Early Intervention is able to deliver. However, there is currently very little expenditure on Early Intervention in comparison to later interventions. We need to redress this imbalance;

- (the report) makes a number of recommendations that are broadly aimed at making children genuinely ready for school as part of a new 0–5 Foundation Stage. In particular, it addresses the following issues:
 - Increasing awareness of what Early Intervention can achieve within central government and local areas among parents;
 - Increasing the effectiveness of staff such as teachers, social workers, nurses and doctors, and of existing policies and infrastructure;
 - Providing parents with the information and support they need to help their children;
 - Providing the data and measurement tools that we need to help identify those in need and to track progress; and
 - Creating the right financial freedoms for local areas to pool budgets and work across agencies to tackle problems.
- The importance of local rather than central institutions in providing the best universal and targeted Early Intervention services; and
- We need to work together, effectively, to reap the benefits that Early Intervention can bring; and this will require working differently, to higher standards, and with focused activity and a vigorous institutional champion.