

# **Lone parents and poverty in the UK: work and welfare**

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# Outline

1. Lone parents in the UK
2. Policy targets and provisions
3. Poverty, well-being and paid work

## Lone parents in the UK, 2009

- 2.0 million families
- 1.8 million women
- 3.2 million children
- 26% of all families with children

# UK Poverty, 2007/8

all individuals 13.7m	23% of the population
pensioners 2.0m	18% of pensioners
working age adults 7.7m	21% of working age adults
children 4.0m	31% of children
children, couple 2.4m	25% of children, couple
children, lone-parent 1.6m	52% of children, lone parent

Poverty: income below 60% of median net disposable household income after housing costs

Source: Households below average income, <http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/hbai.asp>

## Policy: two key targets

1. By 2020, 'end child poverty'
2. By 2010, 70 per cent of lone parents in employment

These are seen as closely linked - increase parental employment in order to reduce child poverty

But also – 'work is good for you'

**“Work is good for you:** people who work are better-off financially, better-off in terms of their health and well-being, their self-esteem, and future prospects for themselves and their families. Work promotes choice and independence for people, supports our society and increases community cohesion. ...

Work is also good for society as a whole. Both economic prosperity and fairness dictate that everyone who can work should be expected to do so, especially where people would otherwise be seeking to be supported through taxpayers’ money.”

# Policy measures

1. Employment requirements
2. Welfare to work support
3. Making work pay
4. Improving childcare provision
5. 'Family-friendly' employment

# Policy progress

1. Reaching large numbers of lone parents
  - About 65,000 on NDLP at any one time; over 1 million with tax credits; one-third using formal childcare
2. Child poverty
  - Target is 1.7 million in 2010/11, currently at 2.9 million
3. Lone parent employment
  - Reached 57% in about 2004/5, still at that level

# Poverty, well-being and paid work

1. Finding work
2. Finding care
3. Escaping poverty
4. Managing insecurity

## Next?

1. Child Poverty Bill
2. Incremental policy change – eg tax credits
3. More lone parents with work requirements
4. 2010 General Election ....