

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