

Britain's poorest children: Severe and persistent poverty and social exclusion ^[1]

Author: Adelman, L., Middleton, S., & Ashworth, K.

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Abstract

The current Labour government has made a commitment to abolish child poverty in Britain by 2020. In its efforts to do so, a number of targets have been established and indicators of progress are being reviewed annually. However, tackling severe child poverty does not feature in these targets or indicators. In fact, although there is now a wealth of information about child poverty in Britain, very little is known about either the extent of severe child poverty or the children who are affected. As a result, we do not know whether different policy measures are required to move these children out of poverty. To try and fill this knowledge gap, Save the Children UK commissioned the Centre for Research in Social Policy to investigate severe child poverty. Two areas of particular importance were identified: material deprivation combined with low income as an indicator of severe poverty and the extent to which severe poverty persists over time. A number of conclusions were also reached with regard to the measurement of child poverty: - An important step forward for the analysis of child poverty would be the inclusion of deprivation-based measures of poverty in longitudinal surveys in order to understand the circumstances under which income becomes inadequate to provide necessities and, in turn, when income becomes adequate to do so. - Including child-based measures of poverty (and social exclusion) is crucial for an understanding of children's circumstances. Including children in the definition and measurement of these wherever possible and appropriate would lead to further advances in our understanding. - The study emphasises the multiple manifestations of poverty and social exclusion and, therefore, the need to ensure that these are measured in the same survey in order to understand these different manifestations and their inter-relationships. As a result, policy would be better informed.

Region: Europe ^[3]

Tags: poverty ^[4]

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