

Persistent poverty in the early years – reflections on GUS findings

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- Policy context
- Why are we interested in *persistent* poverty?
- What can evidence about PP contribute to policy development/delivery?
- What else do we need to know?

Policy context

- Three complementary social policy frameworks:
 - Early intervention and prevention approach to tackling long term drivers of disadvantage and inequality
- Achieving Our Potential and Solidarity
- Child Poverty Act and strategy development

Why *persistent* poverty?

- Definition: living below 60% median income, for 3 out of 4 most recent years
- Poverty is complex and dynamic, not static
 - ‘Persistent’, ‘recurrent’ and ‘transient’ (Smith & Middleton 2007)
 - “Bumping along the runway and never taking off”
- Designing, refining and implementing policies according to better understanding of the evidence

Persistent poverty: GB picture

- **Who is in persistent poverty? (BHPS)**
 - Roughly 8% of GB population (2004-07) – and 10% of children
 - Identification of high risk groups:
 - Lone parent families, households with more/younger children, older people, people with disabilities
- **GUS:** lone parents, young parents, low work intensity, lower levels of parental education, social housing tenure, area deprivation

Implications for policy development & delivery

- Understanding high risk groups
- Understanding impacts on those experiencing poverty
- ... to focus attentions on those most in need
- ... to mitigate the most significant risks of growing up in poverty

Implications for policy development & delivery (2)

- (Immediate/most obvious) causes:
 - Unemployment
 - Poor quality/poorly paid employment
 - Lack of 'fit' between work opportunities and childcare provision
 - Difficult transitions into work
 - Complexities of tax credits and benefits – leading to under-claiming, disincentives to work, risk aversion.

Implications for policy development & delivery (3)

- **Immediate consequences for children (with potential long term impacts)**
- Associated with concerns over language development, general development, social/emotional/behavioural difficulties and multiple disadvantage
- Deprivation is complex and different types of disadvantage all related
- Not just about *income* poverty.... Different ways of looking at household resources

What else do we need to know?

- Persistent material deprivation
- Longer term impacts on children
- Transitions into/out of poverty/employment
- Impact of financial stress on families
- Impact of stigma
- ... and...?