



How can parents escape from recurrent poverty?

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Aims and Method

- Reasons for recurrent poverty among disadvantaged parents how they might be supported to help escape it
 - With a focus on childbearing and childrearing
- Quantitative analysis of Working for Families Fund data (12,248 parents)
- Qualitative analysis
 - Interviews - Parents (33): 31 WFF client; 32 women; 14 areas in Scotland
 - Focus Groups - Professionals (27)
 - Interviews - Professionals in managerial positions (3)



Main Findings

- Specific event/s or 'critical' moments leading into poverty – (especially new child or relationship breakdown plus job loss) leading to income reduction
- The majority of parents wanted to work (for financial and non-financial reasons) Quote
- Entering paid employment resulted in 1 of 3 outcomes:
 - Escaping poverty
 - Recurrent poverty
 - Entering a low-pay no-pay cycle – most of our sample
- Parents faced similar barriers to escaping poverty
 - Quantitative analysis: under 19 or over 45; more and younger children; low qualifications; longer unemployed
 - Qualitative analysis



Major barriers/issues faced

- Access to education or training
 - Financial support in general; higher education; childcare; open courses
- Increase supply of affordable & quality childcare Quote
- The benefit system:
 - Benefits 'run-on'
 - WTC and CWTC more responsive to disadvantage groups, but some systematic problems lead to debt
 - Procedure in general – faster benefit reestablishment; minimise errors; housing benefits.
- Holistic and individually tailored support

I think it's really important that both my children learn what is the right way to do things, that you work. My children think that everybody goes to college when they leave school because they've seen me studying on constantly. I want them to have those values that you work for a living and you earn money and you reach your potential, so I think it's important as a role model to them for them to see that.

(Rachel, lone parent with 2 children, unemployed)

[Back](#)



Basically it is not being able to say to the employer when I can start, what hours I can do, until you have childcare in place ... but you can't get childcare until you are working, so you just go round in circles.

(Jane, lone parent with 4 children, unemployed)

Back