

# **ALL PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP ON HEALTH IN ALL POLICIES**

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**Inquiry: Child Poverty and Health – the Impact  
of the Welfare Reform and Work Bill 2015-2016**

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**Oral Evidence Panels  
Wednesday 20 January 2016  
Committee Room 21  
House of Commons**

# STRUCTURE OF THIS BRIEF

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The questions, and the order in which they are presented, are intended only as a guide.

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**Oral evidence panels, Wednesday 20 January 2016, 1400-1700  
in Committee Room 21 – House of Commons, SW1A 0AA**

**Panel one: Statutory agencies – 1415-1600**

Department for Education (tbc)

**Panel two: Child poverty organisations – 1515-1600**

**Child Poverty Action Group**

[Alison Garnham](#)

Chief Executive

**Children's Society**

[Sam Royston](#)

Head of Policy and Public Affairs

**Panel three: Professional bodies and academics – 1615-1700**

**Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health**

[Dr Ingrid Wolfe](#)

Consultant in Children's Public Health Medicine & Director of the Evelina London Child Health Partnership, Clinical Senior Lecturer in Public Health, King's College London, Chair of the British Association for Child and Adolescent Public Health

**London School of Economics**

[Dr Kitty Stewart](#)

Associate Professor, Department of Social Policy, Research Associate, Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion, LSE (CASE)

**University of Liverpool**

[Dr David Taylor-Robinson](#)

Senior Clinical Lecturer in Public Health, University of Liverpool

[Benjamin Barr](#)

NIHR Research Fellow, Public Health and Policy, University of Liverpool

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## Witnesses

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### **Alison Garnham, Chief Executive, Child Poverty Action Group**



The Child Poverty Action Group Child Poverty Action Group is the leading national charity working to end poverty among children, young people and families in the UK.

Alison worked for many years as a welfare rights adviser and for a number of women's organisations and local voluntary sector organisations before, in 1989, joining CPAG (for the first time) where she co-authored a number of publications about the Child Support Act. She written about lone parenthood and child poverty, including an edition of Poverty: the Facts.

Alison has also been a Senior Lecturer in Social Policy at the University of North London (now London Metropolitan University) and also an Honorary Research Fellow. Alison was for nine years a member of the Social Security Advisory Committee and an Honorary Officer of the End Child Poverty Campaign.

### **Sam Royston, Head of Policy and Public Affairs, The Children's Society**



The Children's Society is a national charity that runs local projects, helping children and young people when they are at their most vulnerable, and have nowhere left to turn. It also campaigns for changes to laws affecting children and young people. Its supporters around the country fund our services and join our campaigns to show children and young people they are on their side.

Sam Royston is the Children's Society's expert on the UK benefit system and welfare reform. He leads on child poverty and early years policy work.

### **Dr Ingrid Wolfe, Consultant in children's public health medicine, Director of the Evelina London Child Health Partnership, Clinical Senior Lecturer in Public Health at King's College London, Chair British Association for Child and Adolescent Public Health**



Evelina London Children's Healthcare is part of Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust. It is the second largest provider of children's services in London. The Evelina's vision is to be a world leading centre of life-changing care for children, young people and their families.

Dr Ingrid Wolfe is qualified in both children's medicine (paediatrics) and public health. As Director of the Evelina London Child Health Partnership, she is leading the development and evaluation of a new model of children's everyday healthcare in south London. Her academic work at King's College focuses on children's health services and policy in the UK and other European countries. As Chair of BACAPH, Dr Wolfe is leading work to set out a blueprint to meet the health and wellbeing needs of children and young people now and in the future.

**Dr Kitty Stewart, Associate Professor, Department of Social Policy, London School of Economics**



Dr Stewart's research interests include child poverty and disadvantage, international comparisons of policy and outcomes relating to poverty and inequality, and employment trajectories for low skilled workers. She recently headed an international comparative project funded by the Nuffield Foundation looking at the quality and accessibility of early education and childcare in different countries, and a project funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation reviewing the literature on whether household income has a causal impact on children's outcomes.

She is a research associate at the Centre for the Analysis of Social Exclusion (CASE) and currently part of the Social Policy in a Cold Climate project team, tracking policy, spending and outcomes under recession and austerity.

**Dr David Taylor Robinson, Senior Clinical Lecturer in Public Health, University of Liverpool**



Dr Taylor-Robinson is a Senior Clinical Lecturer in Public Health and Honorary Consultant in Public Health at Alder Hey Children's Hospital.

His research focuses on improving child health and reducing health inequalities. From 2009 – 2014 Dr Taylor-Robinson was funded by the MRC on a Population Health Scientist Fellowship, and then a Centenary Award. Prior to this he was a Clinical Lecturer in Public Health and a Specialist Registrar on the Mersey Deanery Public Health Training scheme. He originally trained in paediatrics at Alder Hey in Liverpool, following two years of clinical practice in Australia, and subsequently worked as a research fellow at the Liverpool School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

**Benjamin Barr, NIHR Research Fellow, University of Liverpool**



Ben Barr studied anthropology as an undergraduate at University College London, trained as a nurse and undertook post graduate studies in public health and epidemiology at the London School of hygiene and Tropical Medicine and the University of Liverpool.

After a number of years working on humanitarian and infectious disease control programmes in post-conflict countries, he returned to work in applied public health in the UK for the Health Protection Agency and the NHS. He is passionate about making a difference to the health of the most disadvantaged. He was awarded an NIHR doctoral fellowship in 2010 and has a part-time Consultant in Public Health post with NHS Blackburn with Darwen. His research is investigating factors influencing employment of people with common mental health problems and how employment support can be improved.

**NB: Statutory agencies.** The All Party Parliamentary Group invited the Department for Work and Pensions and Department of Health to provide oral and written evidence, but they declined to do so. The Department for Education has made a written submission of evidence to the inquiry.

## Background and scope of inquiry

### About the All Party Parliamentary Group on Health in All Policies

[The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Health in All Policies](#) was set up to explore consideration of the effects of all national public policy on the health of the populations of the UK – particularly on health inequalities between different population groups. It aims to provide a discussion forum for parliamentarians and to act as a source of well-evidenced and independent information on key social, health and public health issues.

### Scope of the Inquiry

The impact of poverty on children's physical and mental health and wellbeing is well documented. Poverty can not only limit a child's future life chances, impacting on their educational attainment and future employment prospects, but can also reduce their healthy life expectancy.<sup>1,2</sup>

The All Party Parliamentary Group on Health in all Policies is conducting an Inquiry into child poverty and health and wellbeing (including inequalities), focused in particular on the impact of the Welfare Reform and Work Bill 2015-2016 [currently being debated in Parliament](#).

In addition to making provisions related to the duty of the Secretary of State to report to Parliament on progress on achieving full employment, apprenticeship targets and the Troubled Families programme, it proposes changes to reporting of child poverty and repeals almost all of the *Child Poverty Act 2010*. It makes provision for changes to welfare benefits, tax credits and social housing levels. The rationale behind these changes is to help realise the £12 billion welfare savings identified by the Government.

### Steering questions:

Q: What is the relationship between child poverty and child health, including inequalities?

Q: If carried through, what will be the impact of the welfare reforms on:

- Levels of child poverty in England (and inequalities)
- Children's health and wellbeing (including mental health and wellbeing)
- The future life-chances of children

The APPG seeks to consider, in particular, the following elements of the reforms including:

1. **Universal Credit and Tax Credits:** *The Universal Credit (Work Allowance) Amendment Regulations 2015* will amend the Universal Credit Regulations 2013 by altering the amount of earned income deducted from the maximum universal credit, so a work allowance applies only if the claimant, or either partner in a couple, is responsible for a child or qualifying young person or has limited work capability;
- **Measurement and reporting of child poverty:** the Bill will repeal most of the *Child Poverty Act 2010* and replace the existing child poverty (including income) targets with new measures. It will also repeal the Government's duty to meet the 2020/21 targets for a reduction in child poverty;
- **The benefits cap and benefits freeze:** The cap placed on benefits is to be lowered

<sup>1</sup> The Marmot Review, *Strategic Review of Health inequalities in England Post 2010*, February 2010, <http://bit.ly/1hs5CeE>

<sup>2</sup> UCL Institute of Health Equity, *The Impact of the Economic Downturn and Policy Changes on Health Inequalities in London*, June 2012, <http://bit.ly/1P31bYu>

to £23k for families in London (from £26k) and to £20k for families living outside of London. Benefits and tax credits (including child tax credits) will be held at the 2015-16 level for four years;

- **The child benefit cap:** For new claimants from April 2017, the amount of child tax credit families will be entitled to receive will be limited to the first two children;
- **Impact on vulnerable groups:** For example lone parents or children with disabilities;
- **Social housing.** Social housing rents are to be reduced by 1% each year to 2020.

We would also welcome views on what, if any, mitigation the introduction of the new National Living Wage will offer.

## RELEVANT PAPERS

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Bill documents, Welfare Reform and Work Bill 2015-16 (<http://bit.ly/1UU4i8o>)

Department for Work and Pensions, Welfare Reform and Work Bill 2015-16, Explanatory Notes, (<http://bit.ly/1Rp3EhW>)

House of Commons Library, Briefing Paper, July 2015, (<http://bit.ly/1XZihdV>)

Department for Work and Pensions, Impact Assessment of Social Rent Reductions, September 2015, (<http://bit.ly/1iNyhA5>)

Impact Assessment for the benefit cap, July 2015, (<http://bit.ly/1myNDe9>)

Impact Assessment of the change in conditionality for responsible carers on Universal Credit, July 2015, (<http://bit.ly/1JrurZD>)

Impact Assessment to remove the ESA Work-Related Activity Component and the UC Limited Capability for Work Element for new claims, July 2015, (<http://bit.ly/1OKiFWI>)

Impact Assessment of the Benefit rate freeze, July 2015, (<http://bit.ly/1UtgT9Y>)

Impact Assessment of Tax Credits and Universal Credit, changes to Child Element and Family Element, July 2015, (<http://bit.ly/1JVi2bj>)

Department for Work and Pensions, Memorandum to the Joint Committee on Human Rights, The Welfare Reform and Work Bill 2015, (<http://bit.ly/1OKkcvl>)

Public Bill Committee, Welfare Reform and Work Bill 2015-16, Written Evidence, (<http://bit.ly/1OKkN0q>)

The Marmot Review, Strategic Review of Health Inequalities in England Post 2010, February 2010, <http://bit.ly/1hs5CeE>

UCL Institute of Health Equity, The Impact of the Economic Downturn and Policy Changes on Health Inequalities in London, June 2012, <http://bit.ly/1P31bYu>

The 1001 Critical Days: The Importance of the Conception to Age Two Period – A Cross Party Manifesto, October 2013, (<http://bit.ly/1CB6BX6>)

## Section 1: Child poverty and life chances

### Summary

- The Bill removes the four child poverty targets set out in the Child Poverty Act 2010 and the Government's duty to meet the targets
- The Secretary of State must report annually on children in workless households and the educational attainment of children in England at the end of Key Stage 4
- The remit and name of the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission is changed so that it become the Social Mobility Commission
- Most other duties and provisions in the Child Poverty Act 2010 are removed
- During the last Parliament, Ministers called for improved measures of child poverty that would better reflect the causes of poverty
- The 2015 Conservative Manifesto included a commitment to work to eliminate child poverty and to introduce better measures that recognise its root causes

### Suggested questions

1. Do the proposed new measures constitute, on their own, a full measure of child poverty, health and wellbeing and life chances in the UK?
2. Are measures of relative and absolute income poverty, and of material deprivation, necessary to give a clear picture of child poverty in the UK?
3. Is reporting on a measure solely focused on children in workless households sufficient to address the effects of childhood poverty or to address childhood life chances?
4. What, if any, are likely to be the impacts of this on children living in poverty and material deprivation, including children living in low income working families?
5. Should the duty on local authorities to produce a child poverty needs assessment and to work collaboratively to eradicate child poverty be retained? How might this impact on the transfer to local authorities of responsibility for 0-5 years (and 5-19 years)?
6. What will be the impact of the Bill on the ability of local councils to provide integrated support or to influence the quality of early years and education provision?
7. Should the provision to develop a national strategy for tackling child poverty be retained? What has been the impact of this provision on addressing child poverty and child health?
8. Should the Bill include provision to publish a life chances strategy that addresses all ages across the life-course, including early years, and maps a path towards progress?
9. Could these provisions leave the Bill open to legal challenge under [Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010](#)? Or under any international legal duties to which the UK is signatory?
10. What will be the impact of these provisions on existing inequalities?

## Section 2: The benefits cap

### Summary

- Benefit cap to be reduced from £26,000 per year (£18,200 for single people) to £23,000 in Greater London (£15,410 for single people) and £20,000 (£13,400 for single people) to be phased in from April 2016
- The link between the level of the cap and average earnings is to be broken
- The new cap levels will be subject to review at least once in each Parliament
- Funding for Discretionary Housing Payments will be £800m over the next five years (currently £125m in 2015-16)
- Will extend to England, Wales and Scotland

1. What will be the impact of the benefit cap on child poverty and child health, including on families with disabled and severely disabled children, e.g. the ability of households to meet their basic needs, to afford suitable housing, to enter the labour market?
2. What will be the impact on child poverty and child health of the removal of the link between the lowering of the benefit cap and national median earnings?
3. Should any change to the benefit cap be subject to parliamentary scrutiny before the Secretary of State's decision is made, including the impact on child poverty and health?
4. What criteria should the yearly benefit cap review process undertaken by the Secretary of State include?
5. What will be the impact of the benefit cap on the provision of suitable emergency and short-term accommodation – and the impact of this on child poverty and child health?
6. How will the removal of automatic entitlement to Housing Benefit for under 21 year olds impact on the financial stability of, and health of, children and young people?
7. To what extent might the increased minimum wage mitigate for those in work the impact of household benefit cuts?
8. Could all parents receiving out of work benefits choose to work if they wanted to?
9. Does the transition into work necessarily lift families out of poverty?
10. Does income poverty have a negative effect on children, whether their parents are in work or not?
11. Could these provisions leave the Bill open to legal challenge under [Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010](#)? Or under any international legal duties to which the UK is signatory?
12. What will be the impact of these provisions on existing inequalities?

### Section 3: Four year benefits freeze

#### Summary

- Most working-age benefits and tax credits to be frozen at 2015-16 rates for four years
- Pensioner benefits, disability benefits, disabled child and adult elements of tax credits, and statutory payments such as Statutory Maternity Pay unaffected
- Forecast to save £4 billion a year by 2020-21

1. What do you think will be the cumulative effect of cuts to work allowances and the four year working age benefits freeze on child poverty and child health?
2. How will this impact on disadvantaged and vulnerable, marginalised groups, e.g. homeless families, lone parents, children with disabilities and BME communities?
3. Should there be an annual review process that considers the impact of inflation and the national economic situation?
4. What will be the impact of this policy on parents of children in the private and rented sector, including in-work claimants?
5. What will be the impact of these provisions on existing inequalities?
6. Could these provisions leave the Bill open to legal challenge under [Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010](#)? Or under any international legal duties to which the UK is signatory?

## Section 4: Tax credits and Universal Credit

### Summary

- Changes to means-tested support for children, as part of wider Summer Budget 2015 package of changes to tax credits and Universal Credit saving £5.8 billion a year by 2020-21
- Child element in tax credits and Universal Credit to be limited to 2 children for new claims and births after April 2017
- Protection for families already getting support for third and subsequent children born before April 2017, and for other “exceptional circumstances”
- Family element in tax credits and Universal Credit to be abolished for new claims from 2017
- Together with equivalent changes to Housing Benefit, measures in the Bill save
- £2 billion an year by 2020-21, but IFS estimates long-run savings of £5 billion
- At April 2015, 900,000 families (590,000 in work) received tax credits for three or more children

1. What will be the impact on child poverty and health of the proposed two child limit on receipt of the child element of tax credits for children born after 5 April 2017, and on the child element of Universal Credit for families making a new claim (whether or not the child is born before April 2017)?
2. Are there any particular implications for disadvantaged groups, e.g.:
  - Families with disabled parents or children?
  - Parents affected by disability?
  - Bereaved families?
  - Families fleeing domestic violence?
  - Families experiencing breakdown?
  - Other vulnerable or marginalised groups?
3. The Universal Credit (Work Allowance) Amendment Regulations 2015 will amend the Universal Credit Regulations 2013 by altering the amount of earned income deducted from the maximum amount of universal credit under the Welfare Reform Act 2012.
 

A work allowance (the amount of earned income excluded from the 65% taper) will only apply if the claimant, or either partner in a couple, is responsible for a child or qualifying young person or has limited capability for work.

What will be the impact on child poverty and health of these Regulations, which will come into force on 11th April 2016, including on existing inequalities?
4. Could these provisions leave the Bill open to legal challenge under [Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010](#)? Or under any international legal duties to which the UK is signatory?

## Section 5: Abolition of ESA Work-Related Activity Component

### Summary

- At November 2014, 492,000 Employment Support Allowance (ESA) claimants were in the “Work-Related Activity Group” (WRAG)
- ESA for claimants in the WRAG is to be reduced to JSA rates for new claims from April 2017
- Affected claimants will receive up to £1,500 a year less than under current rules
- ESA claimants in the Support Group unaffected
- Corresponding changes to UC – abolition of the “limited capability for work” element
- Savings of £640 million a year expected by 2020-21

1. Is there a link between disability, long-term conditions, poverty, child poverty and child health?
2. What will be the impact of the freeze on main rates of ESA and the ESA Work Related Activity component and the lower rate disabled child addition in Universal Credit?
3. How will this impact on levels of poverty and health experienced by disabled people, disabled children, and other children and their families?
4. How will this impact on their ability to return to, or remain in, employment or education? Will it provide an incentive for those with ESA to enter the work market?
5. Will reducing ESA lead to displaced expenditure in other areas of the system, e.g. GPs, community health services or inpatient mental health services?
6. What will be the impact of the proposal to lower by nearly £30 per week the level of ESA available to future claimants placed in the Work-Related Activity Group?
7. To what extent has the work programme been successful to date in addressing the problems faced by jobseekers who face more serious obstacles to finding a job?
8. What will be the impact of these provisions on existing inequalities?
9. Could these provisions leave the Bill open to legal challenge under [Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010](#)? Or under any international legal duties to which the UK is signatory?

## Section 6: Conditionality for 'responsible carers' in Universal Credit

### Summary

- Lone parents and other “responsible carers” in receipt of UC are not currently subject to “work preparation” requirements until their youngest child reaches 3, and do not have to be available for and look for work until the youngest child reaches 5
- Bill reduces the age thresholds for work preparation to 2, and for full work-related requirements to 3
- Government emphasises additional support for childcare, including the increase in free childcare for working parents of 3-4 year olds from 15 to 30 hours a week from September 2017

1. What will be the impact on child poverty and health of the Bill's provisions to lower the age of the youngest child that a carer is expected to begin work related activity at?
2. Are the proposed childcare provisions suitable for lone parents and other responsible carers seeking work? What will be the impact of this on child poverty and child health?
3. Is the proposed increased provision of free childcare for 3-4 year olds for working parents adequately funded? What might be the impact of increased conditionality on vulnerable families?
4. What will be the impact of these provisions on existing inequalities?
5. Could these provisions leave the Bill open to legal challenge under [Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010](#)? Or under any international legal duties to which the UK is signatory?

## Section 7: Reduction in social housing rents

### Summary

- Social housing rents will be reduced by 1% each year up to 2020
- Resulting in a 12% reduction in average rent levels by 2020-12 compared with current forecasts
- Will reduce social landlords' rental income by £2.5bn in today's prices
- OBR predicts that 14,000 fewer affordable homes will be built over the period
- Extends to England and Wales but will only apply in England

1. What will be the impacts of an annual 1% reduction on child poverty and health?
2. What will be the impacts on building and provision of social housing?
3. What will be the impacts on the ability of social landlords to support tenants and residents into employment and training?
4. What will be the impact on suitable Statutory Homeless Temporary Accommodation, e.g. hostels, sheltered housing or extra care housing if not exempted on:
  - Families with disabled parents or children?
  - Parents affected by disability?
  - Bereaved families?
  - Families fleeing domestic violence?
  - Families experiencing breakdown?
  - Other vulnerable or marginalised groups?
5. What will be the impact on child poverty and child health of proposals to require social housing tenants earning over £40,000 in London and £30,000 out of London, to pay near market rents from 2017/18?
6. What will be the impact of these provisions on existing inequalities?
7. Could these provisions leave the Bill open to legal challenge under [Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010](#)? Or under any international legal duties to which the UK is signatory?

## **Section 8: Relationship between child poverty, child health and wellbeing, and inequalities**

1. Is good early child development a predictor of good health? What are the causal factors of health inequalities and persisting social inequalities in early child development?
2. What is the relationship between these inequalities and relative and absolute income poverty, material deprivation and child poverty?
3. What is the impact of child poverty on child health and wellbeing?
4. What has been the impact of austerity and Government policy on tax and benefits on relative and absolute income poverty, material deprivation, child poverty and child health and wellbeing, including early child development? Are the trends encouraging?
5. What do you think will be the impact of the Welfare Reform Bill on relative and absolute income poverty, material deprivation and child poverty on child health and wellbeing?
6. What are the societal and economic costs of health inequalities, and of child poverty and poor child health and wellbeing?
7. How well does the UK perform in measures and outcomes of child health well-being by comparison with other countries? What approaches have other countries made to protect children from child poverty and poor child health and wellbeing?
8. Given that it is now the case in England that a majority of people below the poverty line are in households where at least one adult is in work, will the Bill improve this situation?
9. To what extent does there exist a joined up approach to address these issues across all government departments? To what extent is there a joined up approach locally?
10. What specific recommendations would you make to address these inequalities in the life course and to address child poverty and child health?