

The Foundation Years: preventing poor children becoming poor adults

The report of the Independent Review on Poverty and Life Chances

Frank Field



Contents

Acknowledgements	3
Introduction and Recommendations	5
Chapter 1 A Personal Commentary	11
Chapter 2 Poverty and Life Chances	27
Chapter 3 The Influences on Children's Life Chances	37
Chapter 4 Building Foundation Years Services	53
Chapter 5 A New Framework for Measuring Poverty and Life Chances	71
Chapter 6 Overview of the Consultation Process and Summary of Formal Submissions	85
Annex A Life Chances Indicators – Recommended Measures	93
Annex B Options for a new Measure of Service Quality	95
Annex C Consultation Details	98
Annex D Frank Field's Public Statements	104

Acknowledgements

As the bulk of the Review's work has been undertaken by the Review team I want to place on record my thanks to them. Ann Chinner, as Review Team Lead, and Stephen Balchin, Lotta Gustafsson, Danielle Mason, Tim Crosier and Tim Weedon, as Policy Advisors, have worked on the following report. Jonathan Portes, the Cabinet Office's Chief Economist, has overseen the work of the Review. It is hard to think that the Review could have been better served from across Whitehall. Patrick White from my House of Commons' Office has linked my work in the House with the work of the Review and played a key role in shaping my commentary. Jill Hendey, my secretary, has typed the notes I took of all our evidence sessions and the records I made of the findings from the research reports I have read. I am extremely grateful to this team who has made working on the Review a pleasure as we set about our task of reshaping an anti-poverty strategy that will be effective during the 21st century.

I wish also to thank the team of Senior Officials from the Department for Work and Pensions, Department for Education, Department of Health, HM Treasury, Government Equalities Office and Department for Communities and Local Government who played a key part acting as valuable sounding boards for this Review, and of course all the academics, charities, practitioners, stakeholders and individuals who we have met and who submitted their evidence.

Introduction and Recommendations

Introduction

Frank Field was commissioned by the Prime Minister in June 2010 to provide an independent review on poverty and life chances by the end of the year. The aim of the review is to:

- generate a broader debate about the nature and extent of poverty in the UK;
- examine the case for reforms to poverty measures, in particular for the inclusion of non-financial elements;
- explore how a child's home environment affects their chances of being ready to take full advantage of their schooling; and
- recommend potential action by government and other institutions to reduce poverty and enhance life chances for the least advantaged, consistent with the Government's fiscal strategy.

Review findings

The question the Review found itself asking was how we can prevent poor children from becoming poor adults. The Review has concluded that the UK needs to address the issue of child poverty in a fundamentally different way if it is to make a real change to children's life chances as adults.

We have found overwhelming evidence that children's life chances are most heavily predicated on their development in the first five years of life. It is family background, parental education, good parenting and the opportunities for learning and development in those crucial years that together matter more to children than money, in

determining whether their potential is realised in adult life. The things that matter most are a healthy pregnancy; good maternal mental health; secure bonding with the child; love and responsiveness of parents along with clear boundaries, as well as opportunities for a child's cognitive, language and social and emotional development. Good services matter too: health services, Children's Centres and high quality childcare.

Later interventions to help poorly performing children can be effective but, in general, the most effective and cost-effective way to help and support young families is in the earliest years of a child's life.

By the age of three, a baby's brain is 80% formed and his or her experiences before then shape the way the brain has grown and developed. That is not to say, of course, it is all over by then, but ability profiles at that age are highly predictive of profiles at school entry. By school age, there are very wide variations in children's abilities and the evidence is clear that children from poorer backgrounds do worse cognitively and behaviourally than those from more affluent homes. Schools do not effectively close that gap; children who arrive in the bottom range of ability tend to stay there.

There is a range of services to support parents and children in those early years. But, GPs, midwives, health visitors, hospital services, Children's Centres and private and voluntary sector nurseries together provide fragmented services that are neither well understood nor easily accessed by all of those who might benefit most.

The current poverty measure that is most commonly referred to is the 60% median income measure. The previous government pledged to halve child poverty by 2010-11 and eradicate it by 2020. Its policies and programmes to achieve this ambitious target included very heavy investment in income transfers through tax credits, support to parents through its New Deal programme to help lone parents into work, and early years services, including the Sure Start Programme for under fives in the most deprived areas.

There has been significant improvement in building early years service provision over the last ten years. High quality, professionally led, childcare programmes to support parents, and some intensive programmes are well evidenced to show they can be cost effective. But, current services are also very variable and there is generally both a lack of clear evidence of what works for poorer children and insufficient attention to developing the evidence base.

Progress was made towards meeting the financial poverty targets in the early stages of the strategy, but it has become increasingly clear that not only has the 2010/11 target not been met but it would require very large amounts of new money to meet the 2020 target. Such a strategy is not sustainable in the longer run, particularly as we strive to reduce the budget deficit. But even if money were not a constraint there is a clear case to be made for developing an alternative strategy to abolish child poverty. This is what the Review sets out to address.

It is this strategy which offers the prospect of preventing poor children from becoming poor adults. The evidence about the importance of the pre school years to children's life chances as adults points strongly to an alternative approach that focuses on directing government policy and spending to developing children's capabilities in the early years. A shift of focus is needed towards providing high quality, integrated services aimed at supporting parents and improving the abilities of our poorest children during the period when it is most effective to do so. Their prospects of going on to gain better qualifications and sustainable employment will be greatly enhanced. The aim is to change the distribution of income by changing the position which children from poor

backgrounds will be able to gain on merit in the income hierarchy.

Overarching recommendations

There are two overarching recommendations.

- To prevent poor children from becoming poor adults the Review proposes establishing a set of Life Chances Indicators that measure how successful we are as a country in making more equal life's outcomes for all children.

Nothing can be achieved without working with parents. All our recommendations are about enabling parents to achieve the aspirations that they have for their children.

- To drive this policy the Review proposes establishing the 'Foundation Years' covering the period from the womb to five. The Foundation Years should become the first pillar of a new tripartite education system: the Foundation Years leading to school years leading to further, higher and continuing education.

Recommendations

The Foundation Years

1. The Review recommends that government, national and local, should give greater prominence to the earliest years in life, from pregnancy to age five, adopting the term Foundation Years. This is for several reasons: to increase public understanding of how babies and young children develop and what is important to ensure their healthy progress in this crucial period; to make clear the package of support needed both for children and parents in those early years; to establish the Foundation Years as of equal status and importance in the public mind to primary and secondary school years; and to ensure that child development and services during those years are as well understood.

2. The Review recommends that the Government gradually moves funding to the early years, and that this funding is weighted toward the most disadvantaged children as we build the evidence base of effective programmes. The Fairness Premium, introduced in the 2010 Spending Review, should begin in pregnancy.

3. No longer should governments automatically increase benefits for children but in each financial year consider whether the life chances of poorer children will be increased more by transferring any benefit increases into building the Foundation Years.

4. The increased funding should be targeted at those factors we know matter most in the early years: high quality and consistent support for parents during pregnancy, and in the early years, support for better parenting; support for a good home learning environment; and, high quality childcare.

5. Government should start now to develop a long term strategy, to increase the life chances of poorer children by narrowing the gaps in outcomes between poorer and richer children in the Foundation Years. This will prove the most cost effective way of addressing inequalities in adult life outcomes. We hope that the Government's social mobility strategy, to be published in the New Year, will reflect this recommendation.

6. The strategy should include a commitment that all disadvantaged children should have access to affordable full-time, graduate-led childcare from age two. This is essential to support parents returning to work as well as child development.

7. The Review has focussed on the early years, but recognises that important changes can and do take place later in children's lives and that investment in the early years will not be fully effective unless it is followed up with high quality services for those who need them most later in childhood. The Review therefore recommends that the Government extends the life chances approach to later stages in childhood.

Foundation Years service delivery

8. Sure Start Children's Centres should re-focus on their original purpose and identify, reach and provide targeted help to the most disadvantaged families. New Sure Start contracts should include conditions that reward Centres for reaching out effectively and improving the outcomes of the most disadvantaged children.

9. Local Authorities should open up the commissioning of Children's Centres, or services within them, to service providers from all sectors to allow any sector, or combination of sectors,

to bid for contracts. They should ensure services within Children's Centres do not replicate existing provision from private, voluntary and independent groups but should signpost to those groups, or share Centres' space. This should encourage mutuals and community groups to bid and help ensure that efficiencies are made. Non-working parents should spend one nursery session with their children. The pattern of provision that has been developed in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland in order to meet local needs of the most vulnerable children should act as a template to those providers in England who have successfully won contracts.

10. Local Authorities should aim to make Children's Centres a hub of the local community. They should maintain some universal services so that Centres are welcoming, inclusive, socially mixed and non-stigmatising, but aim to target services towards those who can benefit from them most. They should look at how they could site birth registrations in Centres, provide naming ceremonies, child benefit forms and other benefit advice. Children's Centres should ensure all new parents are encouraged to take advantage of a parenting course. Midwives and health visitors should work closely with Centres and ensure a consistency of service is provided, with continuity between the more medical pre birth services and increasingly educational post natal work. Children's Centres should seek to include parents' representation on their governance and decision-making bodies.

11. Local Authorities should consider joining with surrounding authorities to establish Poverty and Life Chances Commissions to drive policy in their localities like the Liverpool City Region has pioneered.

12. The Department for Education, in conjunction with Children's Centres, should develop a model for professional development in early years settings, looking to increase graduate-led pre school provision, which mirrors the model for schools. The Department should also continue to look for ways to encourage good teachers and early years professionals to teach in schools and work in Children's Centres in deprived areas, through schemes such as Teach First and New Leaders in Early Years.

13. Local Authorities should pool data and track the children most in need in their areas. A Local Authority should understand where the children who are most deprived are, and how their services impact upon them. Central Government should review legislation that prevents Local Authorities using existing data to identify and support families who are most in need with the intention of making use of data by Local Authorities easier, and provide a template for successful data sharing which respects data privacy issues. In particular, Department for Work and Pensions should ensure that new legislation on the Universal Credit allows Local Authorities to use data to identify families most in need.

14. Local Authorities should ensure use of services which have a strong evidence base, and that new services are robustly evaluated. Central Government should make a long term commitment to enable and support the bringing together of evidence around interventions, learning from examples such as the National Institute for Clinical Excellence and the Washington State Institute. We understand this will be covered in more detail by the Graham Allen Review on early intervention.

15. Ofsted ratings for childcare and schools in disadvantaged areas compared with more affluent areas should be included as one of the Department for Education's indicators in its Business Plan and government policy should aim to close the gap. Ofsted should continue to report on schools and childcare settings' engagement with parents. This is a particularly key area, for which settings should consistently be held to account.

16. The initiatives for the wider society should be taken up by the Behavioural Insight Team based in the Cabinet Office. This Review recommends that it leads, along with key Departments, an examination of how parenting and nurturing skills can be promoted throughout society.

17. A Cabinet Minister should be appointed for the Foundation Years, at the next re-shuffle.

Continuing Foundation Years progress in narrowing attainment gaps

18. The Department for Education should ensure schools are held to account for reducing

the attainment gap in the same way they are for improving overall attainment. Where a school has a persistent or increasing attainment gap, this should have a significant bearing on the inspection for the school, ultimately this should be a major factor in a decision on whether the school is judged inadequate.

19. The Department for Education should continue to publish and promote clear evidence on what is successful in encouraging parental engagement in their children's learning.

20. The Department for Education should ensure that parenting and life skills are reflected in the curriculum, from primary school to GCSE level. This should culminate in a cross-curricular qualification in parenting at GCSE level which will be awarded if pupils have completed particular modules in a number of GCSE subjects. The Manchester Academy is currently developing a pilot scheme which could be used as a basis for this GCSE.

New measures of poverty and life chances

21. The Review recommends a new suite of measures to run alongside the existing financial poverty measures. The new measures will inform and drive policy, as well as spending decisions aimed at narrowing the outcome gaps between children from low and higher income families. The Review's primary measurement recommendation is that the Government adopts a new set of Life Chances Indicators. These indicators will measure annual progress at a national level on a range of factors in young children which we know to be predictive of children's future outcomes, and will be created using national survey data.

22. Existing local data should be made available to parents and used anonymously to enable the creation of Local Life Chances Indicators which can be compared with the national measure. In order to make this local data as useful as possible, information collected by health visitors during the age two health check, which this Review recommends should be mandatory, and information collected as part of the Early Years Foundation Stage (following the results of Dame Clare Tickell's review) should be as similar as possible to the information used to create the national measure.

23. The Government should develop and publish annually a measure of 'service quality' which captures whether children, and in particular children in low income families, have suitable access to high quality services.

24. This Review is about ensuring that the life chances of the very poorest children are enhanced. We suggest that a new measure of severe poverty should be developed. This will focus attention on prolonged material and financial deprivation and we recommend the Government begins to develop a strategy specifically to help the most disadvantaged children.



Chapter 1

A Personal Commentary

Summary:

- *The Foundation Years* demands a broadening of the attack on child poverty. In doing so it questions the almost universal assumption over the last hundred years that increases in income alone will automatically lead to social progress. Over the post-war period we have experienced a considerable increase in the real incomes and yet we still find that too many children now start school who are unable to make the most of their school lives. It is from this group that tomorrow's unemployed and low paid will be overwhelmingly drawn.
- Why should this be so? *The Foundation Years* argues that the exclusive concern of the adult world about how financial poverty affects children's life chances has prevented a more comprehensive understanding of why life's race is already determined for most poor children before they even begin their first day at school. The single purpose behind all of our recommendations is to break that cycle and prevent poor children from becoming poor adults.
- Children need nurturing far longer than any other species and the quality of this nurturing has a major impact on how well children develop and then fulfil their potential. This task is not primarily one that belongs to the state. We imperil the country's future if we forget that it is the aspirations and actions of parents which are critical to how well their children prosper.
- To achieve an historic shift in how our society combats poverty this report argues for the adoption of a set of Life Chances Indicators. The Indicators will measure the effectiveness of the Foundation Years in helping parents steadily increase the opportunities that will open up for their children, particularly for the most disadvantaged. These Indicators should become the driver of policy and it should run alongside the traditional financial definitions so as to mount a more effective attack on poverty and disadvantage.
- The task of equalising life chances cannot be fully accomplished during a child's earliest years, although these years, previously ignored in terms of their decisive influence in determining a child's life chances, are fundamental. That is why in addition, we advocate that over time the Government should look at establishing a similar set of Indicators to measure progress in widening life chances for poorer children at the age of ten, and then again at the end of their secondary schooling.
- The Foundation Years brings together all of the current services for children, from the womb until they go to school. The aim is that the Foundation Years will become, for the first time, an equal part of a new tripartite education system: the Foundation Years leading to the school years, leading in turn to further, higher and continuing education.
- Each year the Government should consider whether the life chances of poorer children are best enhanced by increasing child tax credit payments so that, at a very minimum, the numbers of poor children do not grow, or whether it would be more advantageous for poorer children to spend, in some years, all or part of this sum in building up the Foundation Years.

The Prime Minister asked me in June 2010 to head an Independent Review on Poverty and Life Chances. His aims for the Review were to:

- generate a broader debate about the nature and extent of poverty in the UK;
- examine the case for reforms to poverty measures, in particular for the inclusion of non-financial elements;
- explore how a child's home environment affects their chances of being ready to take full advantage of their schooling; and,
- recommend potential action by government and other institutions to reduce poverty and enhance life chances for the least advantaged, consistent with the Government's fiscal strategy.

Two progress reports were submitted on 28 July and 13 September 2010. This is the final report which the Prime Minister requested should be submitted to him by Christmas of this year.

The evidence and analysis underpinning the Review are set out in Chapters 2 to 6, and the Review's specific recommendations are included in each of those chapters and pulled together in the Introduction. However, in this Chapter, I would like to set out my own personal perspective on some of the broader issues covered by the Review.

Introduction

The Review reflects how my ideas on combating poverty have developed over the last four decades – the first decade spent at the Child Poverty Action Group, and the three subsequent decades representing Birkenhead in the House of Commons – as this forms the basis for all of the recommendations that follow. I consider how governments have traditionally gone about trying to tackle child poverty, how this approach was brought to its zenith in the 2010 Child Poverty Act, and why I doubted the adequacy of the approach laid down in that Act. I have increasingly come to view poverty as a much more subtle enemy than purely lack of money, and I have similarly become increasingly concerned about how the poverty that parents endure is all too often visited on their children to the degree that they continue to be poor as they enter adulthood.

The second section of this commentary widens out the traditional debate to look at the drivers of this inter-generational poverty which chapter 3 reviews in detail. It is specifically concerned with the body of research showing that, while income is still important, it is not the exclusive or necessarily the dominant cause of poverty being handed on from one generation to another. The fact that non income factors, such as the home learning environment and quality of childcare, are so important in deciding the fate of children has led us to construct a set of Life Chances Indicators.

The Review proposes that the country's efforts to make the life chances of all children more equal should be brought to bear through what we have called the Foundation Years. This is the subject matter of the third section. The fourth section outlines how the Foundation Years can best be delivered. The final section comments on the revolution that is waiting to happen.

1. A traditional anti-poverty strategy

Child poverty targets

The Prime Minister specifically requested the Review to consider how home circumstances impact on children's life chances, and in particular how this home background determines a child's readiness for school. This provided a particular focus for the Review. The basis for the report's recommendations on how poverty is defined, and how these definitions might be expanded, also arises from the Child Poverty Act, 2010, which set out four measures of child poverty:

1. **Relative low income:** children in households below 60 per cent of median income;
2. **Absolute low income:** children in households below 60 per cent of 2010/11 median income up rated in line with inflation;
3. **Combined low income and material deprivation:** children in households below 70 per cent of median income together with as yet an undefined material deprivation index; and,
4. **Persistent low income:** to be defined by 2014.

The classical approach to defining poverty, which the 2010 Act enshrines in law, has its roots firmly based in the Charles Booth and Seebohm Rowntree tradition that has dominated poverty studies for 120 years. Rowntree, who gave precision to this approach, was specifically concerned with determining what sum of money would allow families to achieve a minimum standard of living. Families below this level of income were deemed to be poor; above it they were not. In calculating the number of poor families, Rowntree made a distinction between those households who simply did not have enough money to meet his minimum living standard, and so ward off poverty, and those families whose income could achieve this standard but who decided to spend part of their income in other ways.

Advantages and disadvantages of this approach

Keeping hold of Rowntree's approach to defining poverty in money terms only, gives rise to some important advantages, but these do come with a number of distinct drawbacks.

a) the advantages

The 2010 Act was the culmination of one of the most audacious and welcomed initiatives of the last Labour Government. The press reported that when the then Prime Minister, Tony Blair, announced in March 1999 that the Government's goal was the abolition of child poverty by 2020, his audience at Toynbee Hall was taken by surprise. A surprise it may have been, but the speech gave form and direction to the Government's anti-child poverty strategy. The announcement instantly transformed the ranking on the political agenda of the issue of poverty in a rich society. How best to abolish child poverty became a topic of high political importance – a ranking that it had not held since the Attlee Government. Few other post war political initiatives have had such an enduring impact on the political debate and on policy.

This heightened political importance of countering child poverty was thankfully matched by action.

Since 1999, £134 billion has been redistributed to families through the tax credit mechanism alone¹. This tax credit initiative was accompanied by the government placing an increasing emphasis on work being the main route out of poverty.

The political consensus that emerged following the Toynbee Hall speech resulted, a decade later, in all of the political parties voting through the 2010 Child Poverty Act. Why, therefore, was I the only Member of Parliament to caution against the Act?

b) the drawbacks

While welcoming the Government's continued determination to counter child poverty, I believed that the results of this strategy were more modest than taxpayers hoped for, especially considering the huge sums invested in the approach. More worrying still, the stubbornly obstinate number of children in poverty showed that this strategy had stalled even before the recession. I further believed that the Act was in danger of closing down a debate on alternative means of reaching the goal when a wider debate on alternative strategies was precisely what was most needed.

• Modest Results

I did not express my concerns about the Bill because I had in any way changed the importance I place on combating poverty. It was, rather, that I no longer believed that the strategy of concentrating on income transfers could achieve the goal of abolishing child poverty by 2020, even on the crude financial measure. The data the Government publish in *Households Below Average Income* strengthened my concerns.

The Government faced formidable difficulties in making progress towards the 2020 goal. The number of children in poverty almost doubled during the 1979 to 1996-97 period, before beginning to plateau. There was even a down side to the fast growing economy that the newly elected Labour Government inherited. While real incomes since 1997 rose rapidly, so too did the median income by which the Government wished poverty to be measured. The Government, in

¹ HMRC Child and working tax credit statistics finalised annual awards 2008/9, Table 1.1; HMRC WFTC Summary Statistics Feb 2003, Table 1 and 2.

attempting to reduce the number of children in poverty, was, as it were, walking up a descending escalator. Even so there were important falls in the number of children in poverty during the Labour years, but considering the vast sums expended, the overall reduction was modest: from 3.4 million to 2.8 million in ten years, a net fall of only 0.6 million².

• **A stalled strategy**

The outcomes of spending huge sums becomes that bit more worrying when we consider the progress being made each year since 1998 in reducing poverty. From 2004-05 the effectiveness of child tax credits in reducing child poverty had not merely stalled, but in some years ground was actually lost.

The results are even more disappointing if we consider the poverty data after the payment of housing costs. The percentage of children in

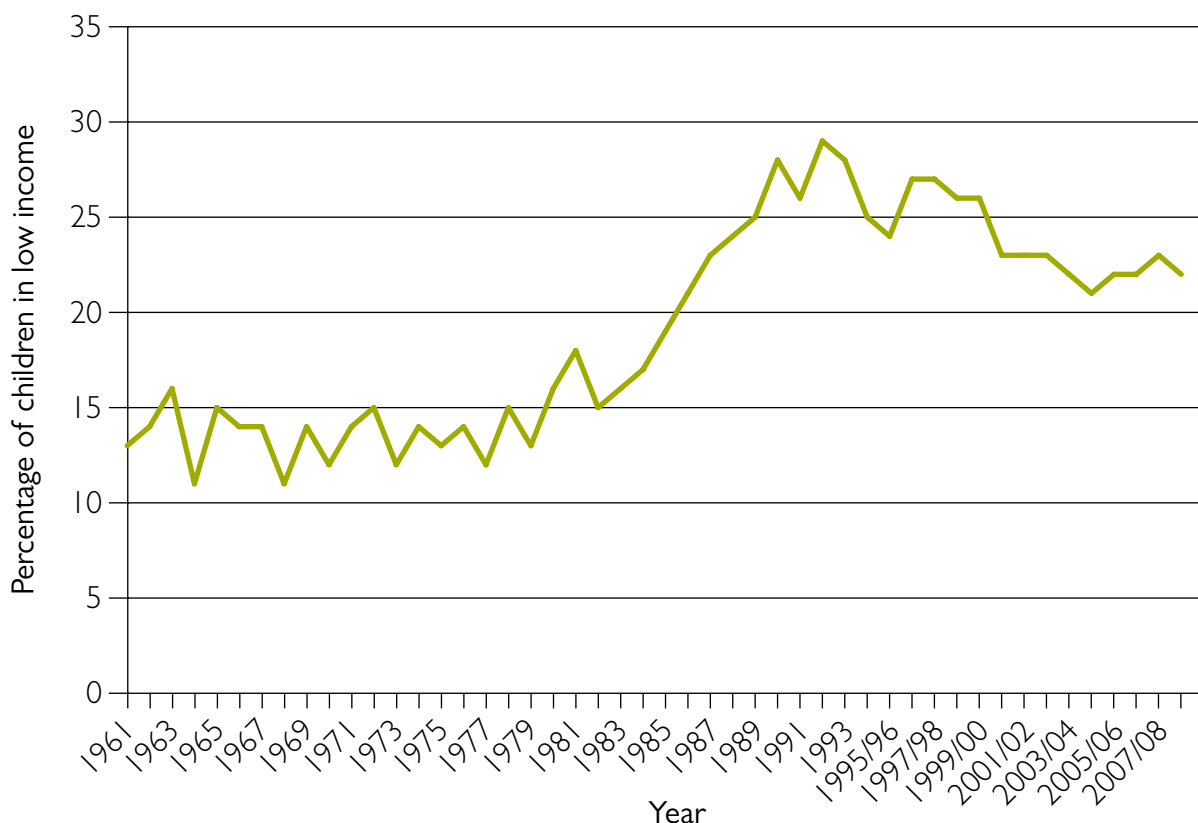
poverty in 1998-99 stood at 34 per cent falling to 28 per cent in 2004-05. The percentage then rose in the following three years to peak at 31 per cent in 2007-08, before falling back to 30 per cent in the following year³.

In a number of documents published in the lead up to the 2010 Act the previous Government, to its credit, recognised that the anti-poverty strategy had in fact stalled – although it did not use this term – but it came as near as it could do by giving notice of its search for programmes it might run alongside its tax credit strategy. However the 2010 Act does bind governments’ hands in unforeseen ways.

• **Restricting the debate**

One result of the 2010 Child Poverty Act has been to straitjacket our understanding of poverty to one particular financial manifestation along the lines Rowntree set out in his 1901 report.

Figure 1.1 Percentage of children in households with income below 60 per cent of contemporary equivalised median income, before housing costs



Sources: 1961-1993, Great Britain, Analysis of Family Expenditure Survey by the Institute for Fiscal Studies; 1994/95 – 1997/98, Great Britain, Households Below Average Income; 1998/99 – 2008/09, United Kingdom, Households Below Average Income.

2 Households Below Average Income 2008/09, Department for Work and Pensions.

3 Households Below Average Income 2008/09, Department for Work and Pensions.

Of course the present poverty line has been much revised to match rising incomes, but it is this income measure which not only drives media interest, and thereby the broad understanding voters have of what the Government is trying to achieve on their behalf, but, perhaps more importantly, it also drives government policy in a single direction which is in danger of becoming counterproductive.

The anti-poverty agenda is driven along a single track of hunting down families who live below this line and then marking up a success as a family is moved across the line, no matter how marginal is the advance in their income. It does little to concentrate on those children who endure persistent poverty. Worse still, this approach has prevented a much more comprehensive strategy emerging on how best, in the longer run, to counter child poverty in a way that prevents poor children from becoming poor adults.

That search for an alternative, and more effective means of eliminating child poverty, becomes ever more urgent. No one can believe that a similar increase in expenditure will be available for a similar programme of income transfers over the coming decade, when politics will inevitably be about cutting the budget deficit. To meet the 2010 target by tax credit payments alone would have required an additional injection of £4 to £5 billion per annum. To meet a target of cutting child poverty to 5 per cent of all children by 2020 a further £37 billion per annum in tax credit transfers is required. To cut the total to 10 per cent of all children would require £19 billion transfer, which although it amounts only to 1.3 per cent of GDP, is an unthinkable sum in current conditions⁴.

Can anyone seriously maintain that sums of these sizes will be forthcoming over the decade, to 2020? Simply to prevent child poverty worsening over the next two years, the Coalition Government is spending an additional £3.7 billion in income transfers⁵.

There is a further major consideration. Who believes that this £3.7 billion, to consider just the latest example of benefit increases, is going to improve significantly the life chances of children, and particularly the poorest, compared to spending this sum in developing those family services directly aimed at increasing life chances of poor children?

I have met on visits to different parts of the country large numbers of parents anxious to know how they can better advance the long term interests of their children. But as this report argues, a modern definition of poverty must take into account those children whose parents remain disengaged from their responsibilities. Tesco's reported, in the survey they undertook for the Review in one of their east London stores, on what their staff defined as poverty in modern Britain, and how best the Review could cut the supply routes to adult poverty. Tesco's employees conclusions were a million miles away from the classical Rowntree approach.

The staff reported on the changing pattern of stealing. Children were now far less inclined to steal sweets. Instead, the targets were sandwiches, to assuage their hunger, and clean underwear which they also lacked. Does anyone any longer believe that this modern face of neglect will be countered by simple increases in child tax credits?

Asking parents at, for example, the Fox Hollies Children's Centre in Birmingham whether, over a few years, the money to increase child tax credits would be better spent on extending the work of their Children's Centre produced clear support for such a strategy.

II. The Life Chances Indicators

I had a further consideration that went beyond the arbitrariness of the definitions put forward in the Bill, and the falling impact of the fiscal redistribution strategy.

4 Brewer, M., Browne, J., Joyce, R. and Sutherland, H. (2009) *Micro-simulating child poverty in 2010 and 2020*, IFS, and Brewer, M., Browne, J., Joyce, R. and Sutherland, H. (2009) *Micro-simulating child poverty in 2010 and 2020 – an update*, IFS

5 *Coalition Budget (2010) and Spending Review (2010)*, HM Treasury.

I no longer believe that the poverty endured by all too many children can simply be measured by their parents' lack of income. Something more fundamental than the scarcity of money is adversely dominating the lives of these children.

Since 1969 I have witnessed a growing indifference from some parents to meeting the most basic needs of children, and particularly younger children, those who are least able to fend for themselves. I have also observed how the home life of a minority but, worryingly, a growing minority of children, fails to express an unconditional commitment to the successful nurturing of children.

Why do these observations matter? The most disturbing pieces of research that I have read for this Review is a handful of studies⁶ showing that the successes individuals achieve during their adult life can be predicted by the level of cognitive and non-cognitive skills they already possess on their first day at school. These differences in skill levels have been noted after as little as 22 months of life, and are shown to widen within the toddler population by the age of five⁷. These skill levels are related to the class, or as it is now more commonly spoken of, the income of their parents. The findings also worryingly show that the brightest five year olds from poorer homes are overtaken by the progress of their less gifted but richer peers by the time they are ten.

So how do I square these findings – that directly relate the level of income of parents to the success of their children – with my belief that money does not produce the transforming effect we need to counter child poverty at this time?

The answer, paradoxically, comes from the very studies that show how early on life's race is now determined for most children. These studies have not used class or income as a road block to further analysis. They try to hold class and income constant and examine the other forces at work that govern a child's life chances.

Once this approach is adopted we find that income is not the only factor that matters, and that it is

not even the main one. Even if the money were available to lift all children out of income poverty in the short term, it is far from clear that this move would in itself close the achievement gap.

These studies show that there is much more beyond just improving short-term family incomes in determining the life chances of poor children. A healthy pregnancy, positive but authoritative parenting, high quality childcare, a positive approach to learning at home and an improvement in parents' qualifications together, can transform children's life chances, and trump class background and parental income. A child growing up in a family with these attributes, even if the family is poor, has every chance of succeeding in life. Other research has shown that the simple fact of a mother or father being interested in their children's education alone increases a child's chances of moving out of poverty as an adult by 25 percentage points⁸.

Analysis of the Millennium Cohort Study commissioned by the Review from Bristol University showed that the key drivers we propose to include in our set of Life Chances Indicators – positive and authoritative parenting, the home learning environment, and other home and family related factors, measured at the age of 3 – are indeed predictive of children's readiness for school and later life outcomes. Most importantly, narrowing the gap on each of the key drivers was found to predict virtually all of the difference in children's outcomes at age 5.

At the moment poor children are much less likely on average to benefit from these advantages. But with the right support from government, the voluntary sector, and society as a whole, this doesn't always have to be true. If we can ensure that parents from poor families know how best to extend the life opportunities of their children (the advantages that many middle class and rich families take for granted and which a significant number of working class parents achieve) then – even if we cannot end income poverty in the short term – we can break this intergenerational cycle

6 e.g. Feinstein, L. (2003) *How early can we predict future education achievement*, LSE Centre Piece Summer 2003.

7 Feinstein, L. (2003) *Inequality in the Early Cognitive Development of Children in the Early 1970 Cohort*. *Economica*, vol 70, pp73-97.

8 Blanden, J. (2006) *'Bucking the trend': What enables those who are disadvantaged in childhood to succeed later in life?*, DWP Working Paper No.31

of disadvantage. We can ensure that poor children don't inevitably take their poverty into adulthood.

Some children from families on low incomes have consistently done well but these examples are few and their experience is not common for the whole group. This is not, however, universally true in the UK. Chinese children from poor families as a group do better than all other non-poor children (except non-poor Chinese children). Growing up in an ethnically Chinese family in England is enough to overcome all of the disadvantages of being poor. This surely has much to do with parental aspirations and attitudes. It would be a betrayal of all our children if we were to say that what this group already achieves cannot be achieved by all British children.

So the research material that has disturbed me most also sounds the clearest note of hope. And it is this research work that has served as the launch pad for our set of Life Chances Indicators. This small clutch of studies shows those home attributes that need to be universalised if we are to prevent life's wheel of fortune consistently spinning against the interests of poorer children as a class. The universalism of these attributes is the sole aim of what the report calls the Foundation Years. The success of the Foundation Years in narrowing the range of children's abilities by three and between three and five will be measured by the Life Chances Indicators. The Review advocates that the Government adopt these Indicators and use them to drive Foundation Years policy. These new Life Chances Indicators should run alongside the definitions laid out in the 2010 Child Poverty Act.

These Indicators are crucial to widening the existing narrow debate and over-emphasis on income levels. This is not a semantic point. The existing poverty measurements take a snapshot of income to see how many families have an income at or below 60 per cent of median income. The Life Chances Indicators, on the other hand, are essentially about how well we are achieving what would become the primary goal of cutting the entry route that all too many poor children inexorably tread into adult poverty.

The Indicators will be a means by which the Government reports annually to the electorate on how well its intention of raising the cognitive and non-cognitive skills of poorer children is working

out in practice. The purpose of the Indicators is not to sideline the goal of abolishing child poverty; it is rather to set out an alternative and broader strategy to achieve this goal.

The success of this approach will be to change over the longer term the distribution of income. This will not be achieved through a primary emphasis on income redistribution. This goal of changing the distribution of income will be achieved by ensuring that poorer children in the future have the range of abilities necessary to secure better paid, higher skilled jobs.

The Indicators will work by capturing the level of development of three and five year old children by reviewing their cognitive, physical and emotional development. They will then tell us how successful we have been in narrowing the range of abilities over those two years of life which currently starts to be presented by children at the age of three.

Here the Foundation Years strategy comes into play. The simple aim of the Foundation Years will be to narrow this range in abilities so that each year the least advantaged children will close the gap on their more able peers rather than allow their more able peers to establish even greater advantages. To achieve this goal will require a testing of some of the 1940s welfare state's sacred cows.

III. The Foundation Years

The Life Chances Indicators will both measure the effectiveness and drive reform of all programmes directed under the new Foundation Years strategy in which the role of parents is central. With the exception of midwives, currently few people are able to identify how governments and the community formally support families with children under five. By establishing the Foundation Years – which will encapsulate all early years policy – the Government will be providing parents with a clear guide by which to navigate their way around what will become a series of connected and coordinated forms of support.

The Foundation Years will become the essential first part of a new tripartite system of education: the Foundation Years, leading into the School Years, leading into Further, Higher and Continuing Education.

Establishing the Foundation Years will further help the Government to communicate to the country that it intends to make a decisive move in transforming the life chances of poorer children. The Government will be publicly recognising the significance of this period of life as the base for future life achievements and should at the next reshuffle appoint a minister who attends Cabinet specifically responsible for driving this policy across Government.

Shaping the Foundation Years

In the report *The impact of parental involvement*⁹, Professor Charles Desforges and his colleague, Alberto Abouchaar, wrote in the following terms about how to provide the very best start in life for all, but particularly the poorest children.

“We seem to know as much in principle about how parental involvement and its impact on pupil achievement as Newton knew about the physics of motion in the seventeenth century. What we seem to lack is the ‘engineering science’ that helps us put our knowledge into practice. By 1650 Newton knew in theory how to put a missile on the moon. It took more than 300 years to learn how to do this in practice. The scientists who did this used Newton’s physics with modern engineering knowledge. We must not wait three hundred years to promote stellar advances in pupils’ achievement. We need urgently to learn how to apply the knowledge we already have in the field.”

A central assumption of the Foundation Years is that the great driving force for deciding the future of children is their parents. No policy designed to break through the glass ceiling that is firmly in place over the heads of all too many children can succeed without parents. The very best governments, communities and families can do is to support parents to enable them to be even more effective agents of change for their children. But communities and governments do have other roles they must play if we are radically to improve the life chances of poorer children.

Rupturing a good parenting tradition

Geoffrey Gorer, the sociologist, noted in the early 1950s that the spread of a tough love style of parenting had been the agent that changed England from a centuries long tradition of brutality into what was remarked upon by visitors to these shores in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as one of the most peaceful European nations¹⁰. The tough love tradition of parenting did more than turn England into what was until recently a peaceful self governing kingdom.

Research published much more recently on different kinds of parenting shows that the style most beneficial to a child’s emotional and intellectual development is this particular style of nurturing¹¹. But that tough love tradition has recently been in retreat.

There are a number of reasons why Britain is witnessing a rupturing in its once strong parenting tradition. Very few sets of secular ideas are not revised or replaced by succeeding generations, and the growth of a ‘tough love’ approach was bound to inspire detractors as a wider movement took hold questioning established hierarchies, whether those hierarchies were within families, or society more widely.

Post-war housing policy has also enjoyed more than a walk-on role. Mega developments, sweeping up communities, shaking them around, and scattering them onto new estates, often on the periphery of the towns where they had long established roots, also played a major part in the break-up of the extended, matriarchal family hierarchy and in so doing destroyed the support that this informal network provided for couples as they began the process of starting a family.

Other powerful forces were also at work. Our country’s de-industrialisation destroyed more than the work ethic in many families and communities. The major means by which many males were socialised into the wider society was lost as was their role as breadwinners. Bob Rowthorn and

9 Desforges, C. with Aboucher, A. (2003) *The impact of parental involvement, parental support and family education on pupil achievement and adjustment. A literature review*, DfES Research Report 433.

10 Gorer, G. (1955) *Exploring English Character*, Criterion Books, New York.

11 O’Connor, T. and Scott, S. (2007) *Parenting and Outcomes for Children*, JRF.

David Webster reported to the Review their work establishing a link from the 1980s between a decline in male employment and the growth of single parent families. Their thesis supports my contention that governments should have put much more of their energy in getting young males into work, rather than over-zealously pressurising single mothers to enter the labour market.

The story does not end here. Norman Dennis reminded the Review that communities have insisted from time immemorial that men who beget children should be made to support those children and the children's mother, usually by marriage. In a fit of what at best can be charitably described as absent mindedness, or of not wishing to cause a fuss, a whole number of governments forgot that one of its primary duties in safeguarding the wellbeing of children is to enforce the father's financial responsibility. Children have been the clear losers and it has not gone unnoticed by them.

The wish to be good parents

Some time ago, I asked to meet a group of 15 year old pupils in one of Birkenhead's most challenged schools – so that I could talk to them about their school contracts¹². I asked each of them to list for me which six outcomes they most wanted to gain for themselves from attending school.

Their replies both shocked and delighted me. Without exception, all of these young citizens stated that they wanted their school to be a safe place, to help teach them what was involved in building long-term friendships and to equip them with the necessary skills to gain a good job. Most surprisingly, all of the pupils listed as one as their remaining requests the wish to be taught how to be good parents.

After talking with this group of young people the head teacher remarked that perhaps 10 out of the group of 25 had rarely, if ever, known their parent or for their parents to put their needs before their own. Yet none of these young people judged their

parents – they phrased their request as wishing to know how to be good parents. Some of the group were scruffy, their clothes washed less often than those of other children, and apart from school dinners they had no certainty when they would next be fed. Where they would sleep that night was similarly equally problematic for some of that group. Would they gain entrance when they went home, or would tonight again be spent on the floor of a friend's home? These young, vulnerable but eager constituents, battle against home circumstances that would probably have broken me, and yet they prioritised the need to know how to be good parents, not simply better parents than the ones they had inherited.

Sometime later I went to visit the new Manchester Academy. I again met a group of 15 year old pupils to whom I set the same task. All of the pupils similarly wanted to know how to become good parents as one of the six responsibilities they wished their school to fulfil. Here is the basis for our key recommendation that we should seek ways of teaching parenting and life skills through the existing national curriculum with appropriate modules being available for study through a range of existing subjects. The Manchester Academy is preparing a pilot along these lines.

Compare the current belief that parenting is taught by a process of osmosis with the care the State takes in educating parents who wish to adopt. Six major areas of study have to be undertaken and this is the training of adults who want to care for children¹³!

Raising knowledge about parenting skills within the school curriculum is the first critical move to change the direction of the tide from what has been the long retreat from the tough love style of parenting.

Richard Layard and John Coleman stressed to the Review that those skills in parenting and life skills need to be developed and not dismissed as being soft; they have important hard edged outcomes. If we are truly to bring about a once in a generation cultural shift we will need to think

12 Field, F. (2003) *Neighbours from Hell*, Politicos. London

13 Department for Children Schools and Families (July 2005) *Adoption guidance: Adoption and Children Act 2002, Chapter 3: Preparing, assessing and approving prospective adopters.*

at every level of society how all of us can support individuals, families and communities giving greater value to, and then active support emphasising the importance of parenting.

A second place in life's natural journey where society can emphasise the importance the whole society attaches to parenting could be in ante natal and post natal classes. These courses should be expanded from the all too common concentration on the birth process to a revision of the GCSE material covering child development and the practice by which parents can widen the life chances of their children.

Peter Bottomley's 5* parenting initiative, which he submitted to the Review, and which has been developed by the Tranmere Community Project, an entrepreneurial community based body for young people in Birkenhead, is something the Government should look at to enact. Achieving one star involves getting children up, washed, dressed, fed and to school on time, and so on. Following this work I have asked the Tranmere Community Project to produce two further short guides on being a five star parent during the first month of a baby's life and then during the remaining first year.

In addition to building their children's self confidence, the guide cites reading, however complex the material, to children as one of the most important activities parents can undertake in increasing their skills to advance their children's life chances. And while reading is only one part of the home environment's influence, I believe that a virtuous circle can be built – and not only by improving the bonding with children that takes place when reading with them, and the confidence parents themselves gain – from this first move in building up a more favourable home environment for all children (see Chapter 4).

The 5* parenting initiative rests on the assumption which is backed up by the evidence submitted to this Review. Parents have told the Review how they would welcome and often need a clear guide to the best practice that is rooted in the collective wisdom of the community.

These initiatives for the wider society should be taken up by the Behavioural Insight Team based

in the Cabinet Office. This Review recommends that it reports on spreading as widely as possible at every level of society the best practices on nurturing and parenting. I would particularly like to see this 'Nudge Group' report on how Mumsnet, an extraordinary, but largely middle class initiative, can be spread to all parents.

Given a fair wind we may be at one of those rare moments when a decisive change could occur in both the nation's attitude to the great responsibilities of parenting and in the resolve of individual parents. Knowing that each set of activities behind being a five star parent comes from the distillation of the community's collective wisdom will embolden many parents to practice the good parenting guide and so help create a snowball effect that changes the whole climate of opinion.

The Big Society

While this report calls for an extension of the little society – the younger sister of the Big Society – there are definite roles for the latter. Here are two which are aimed at countering the particular pressures parents face from the media – both from television and from advertising, and particularly where they overlap.

The BBC plays an outstanding role in producing, commissioning and relaying children's programmes. The work it buys in from some companies are of the first order. But the BBC could go further and adopt the proposal Professor Seaton made to the Review, and which I endorse, by kite-marking those children's programmes which are most beneficial to parents in the development of language in their children. Such a move would cost very little, would be an enormous help to parents, and might well, hopefully, spread to other media. It might also help change the views of commissioning agents on the value of extending first class children's television which has shrunk markedly in recent years.

Marketing plays an important role in family life for good or ill. The marketing industry is regulated by the Advertising Standards Authority and marketers must prepare advertisements with due sense of responsibility, ensuring that consumers do not feel under inappropriate pressure to buy products.

The Review by Professor David Buckingham for the previous government stressed the impact of the commercial world on children's wellbeing¹⁴. Parents feel under pressure, believing that advertising does play a part in adversely affecting their children's taste and choices. This is not an issue on which we deliberately sought views but I would hope that the Ministerial Taskforce on Childhood and Families will consider this further.

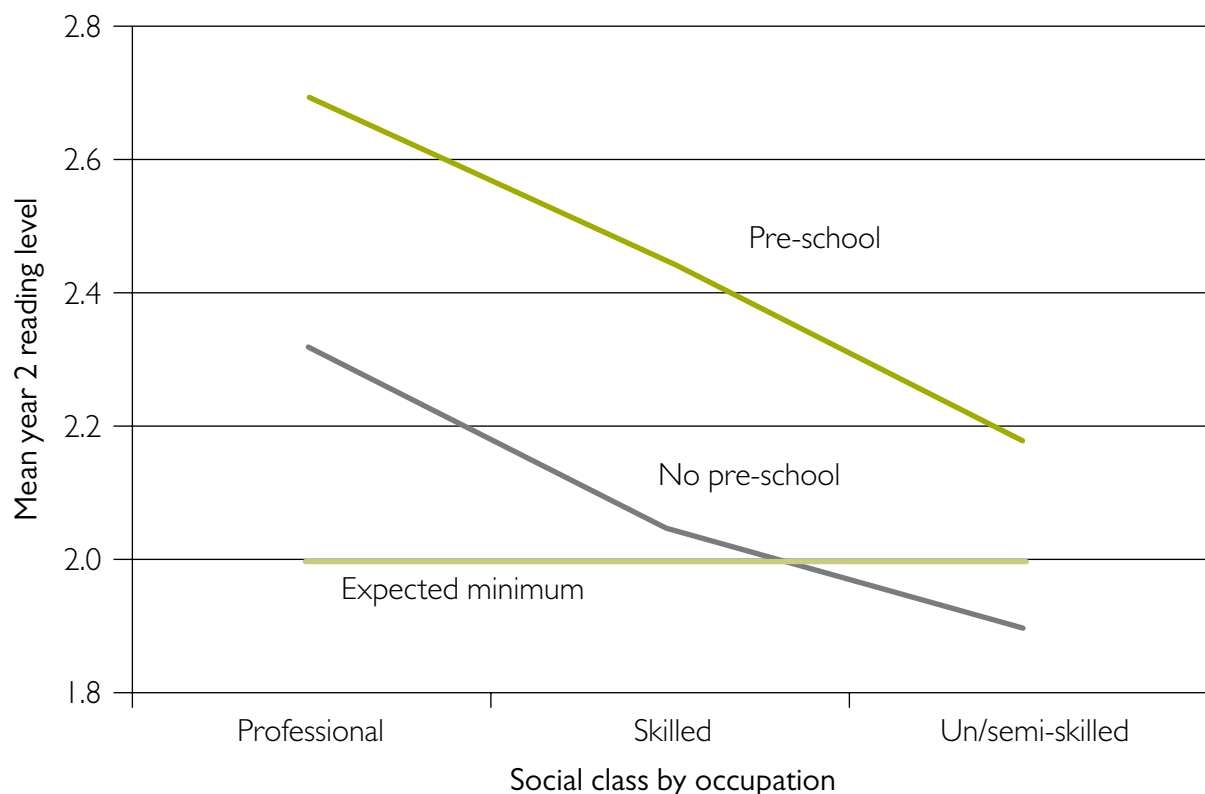
IV. Delivering the Foundation Years

Professor Marmot, in evidence to the Review, stressed the urgency of closing the gap – indicating that the Foundation Years was the best period to make significant improvements in life chances for many children. So too did the Oxford University research group who produce EPPE.

The last Government provided some free pre-school education for all three and four year old children. They did so on the basis of evidence showing that a high quality pre-school education for children at age three and four has a positive effect on a child's skills, but also that this provision has most effect on enhancing the abilities of the poorest children. We also know that the higher the quality of this provision, the longer its impact can be seen on a poor child's education trajectory.

Professor Edward Melhuish's research starkly illustrates the impact of nursery education on the skill levels of young children. This is illustrated in Figure 1.2. The abilities of all children rise but there is no narrowing of the gap in the skills possessed between rich and poor children, which has already been established by the time they reach pre-school.

Figure 1.2 The effect of pre-school on the reading age of 7 year olds



Source: Melhuish, E. (2010) *Policy Exchange presentation*.

¹⁴ Buckingham, D. (2009) *The Impact of the Commercial World on Children's Wellbeing*, DCMS and DCSF.

Here is one of a number of issues that need debating following this Review's publication. What is the right mix of universal and selective services in the Foundation Years, if the goal is to narrow the range of abilities children have as they step into school? Should nursery education for all three to four year olds remain universal? Or should it become more selective along the lines of the Coalition Government's offer of nursery education for the poorest two year olds? Would a more selective approach ensure that poorer children become more equal to other children by the time they are five, instead of seeing, as at present, the skills of all children rise but in equal proportion, so that the class difference remain along the old contour lines?

One of our recommendations is that the Fairness Premium should begin for the most vulnerable mothers when they first register with the NHS as pregnant. In one of our interim reports to the Prime Minister, the Review requested that the Fairness Premium begin earlier than the original proposal of starting at age 5 and we are pleased that this idea has been adopted. As life inequalities have already clearly diverged by age 22 months, the Premium, which should be delivered in terms of services, needs to begin earlier if we are to change the inequalities in life to best effect.

Ann Coffey MP in her submission noted the lower take up of pre-school amongst families not in work. She also drew attention to the importance of parents being involved with their child in the nursery so that the teaching methods present there can be reflected at home. Tackling both these issues should be part of the new Foundation Years strategy.

Sure Start Children's Centres

I do not believe that we can make the Foundation Years the success they must become without Sure Start. But the concept of the Sure Start Children's Centre needs radical reform. To focus Sure Start's resources on narrowing those differences in children's abilities necessitates turning what has become today's Sure Start model upside down, reverting to the original vision that David Blunkett gave it of providing greatest help to the most disadvantaged. However reform must avoid the risk of Sure Start becoming simply a service for poorer families.

Vision

Decreasing class-based differences with which children currently arrive at school should be put at the centre of every Sure Start Children's Centre contract and the contract should clearly link payments to outcomes against this benchmark.

I asked the headmaster of Bidston Avenue Primary School in Birkenhead if he and his staff would list the skills they believe all children should possess as they start school. The list showed how Sure Start has to concentrate on the outcomes of its work. The skills the head listed as those which a significant number of children lack when they start school are: to sit still and listen; to be aware of other children; to understand the word no, and the borders it sets for behaviour, and equally to understand the word stop, and that such a phrase might be used to prevent danger; to be potty trained and able to go to the loo; to recognise their own name; to speak to an adult to ask for needs; to be able to take off their coat and tie up laces; to talk in sentences; and, to open and enjoy a book.

It will be impossible to narrow class-based differences in abilities by the age of five if Sure Start does not reach and work consistently with the most vulnerable children in its catchment area. Contracts should be based on making contact with a growing number of children in their area and particularly those most vulnerable children, and to undertake sustained work with these families. Overall budgets should of course depend on the vulnerable child population in the areas centres serve.

I do not believe these twin goals, of greater coverage and sustained work with the poorest families, which are of course linked, will be advanced without the governance of Sure Start being fundamentally changed.

Governance

With Local Authorities becoming strategy setting bodies, the contracts for Sure Start centres should be opened to competition. I would hope the large children's charities such as Barnardos, Save the Children and 4Children, which already have a big stake in Sure Start, are joined by schools, GP practices, housing associations and local voluntary bodies in the bidding process for Sure

Start contracts. I would also hope some Sure Start staff will likewise bid either as small mutuals, co-operatives or as new social enterprises. We recommend that the Cabinet Office Unit which is supporting the growth of the Big Society has an objective to encourage these new organisations. Contracts should also allow for the buying in of services – such as those available from Home Start. Buying in services from such organisations with a track record of working with and alongside the most disadvantaged families will help Sure Start fulfil its primary objective of focusing on the least advantaged families.

On every visit the Review has carried out I have asked parents how they would change their Sure Start. All parents without exception praised Sure Start. All parents, however, and equally without exception, said that if they were running ‘their’ centres there would be activities after 15.30, at weekends and especially during the school holidays. Some parents noticed how their children lost skills during school holidays, and particularly the long summer break. They were all in favour of sensibly staging holidays throughout the school years. Here are a number of issues which will need to be addressed if more progress is to be made during the school years in improving the life chances of poor children.

The best way of achieving these changes is for parents with children in the Foundation Years to become involved in the new governance of Sure Start Mark II, and by taking seats on the Board. The pathfinding work of the Rose Hill Sure Start Children’s Centre in Oxford could be adopted as a model for future governance.

Working practices

Sure Start should aim to become centres of world renown, breaking down the rigid division between paid professional help and volunteers. Health Visitors must become the key workers, undertaking the complex work needed to engage and support the most vulnerable families. They also need to build up teams of other professional workers to oversee a new cadre of volunteers to gain access to the homes where children are currently not being reached. The model developed

at the Fox Hollies Children’s Centre in Birmingham of Health Visitors, other trained workers plus a core of volunteers could be usefully followed. Similarly, midwives should be encouraged to build up a small volunteer team to support mothers wishing to breast feed, who will be at the end of the telephone to help breast feeding mothers at any time during the day or night. We saw how well Family Links’ nurturing programme was already being taught at the Pegasus Primary School in Oxford and this is a model to follow.

The quality of pre-school facilities varies widely but, in general, the services are worse in the poorest areas. One of the new responsibilities Sure Start needs to embrace is the training of Foundation Year staff in co-operation with local colleges and universities. The lack of male staff is an equally pressing issue needing to be addressed.

A targeted universal service

The danger as Sure Start returns to its original purpose is that it ceases to be seen as a non-stigmatising universal service. It is crucial therefore that Sure Start Mark II has a number of services that all families will want to use, which build communities, cost little, but also offer a potentially good yield in volunteers for the wider Sure Start goals.

For example, at relatively low or no cost, four common universal services could from now onwards be run from Sure Start:

Sure Start could start registering births. Transferring birth registrations to Sure Start would again ensure that all parents in a local community came through the Sure Start doors. Likewise, applications for child benefit could be run through Sure Start.

Some time ago I proposed a Bill which would establish initiation services – the welcoming of the child into the wider community – to be run by churches alongside baptisms, or to be run by local communities themselves. This idea has been taken up but so far on a very limited scale. Sure Start could now seek to offer these ceremonies run by volunteers, like those who act as Sure Start ambassadors, as one of their community-based activities.

A fourth common service could revolve around the staging pre natal and post natal classes for the NHS. One of the reasons we found why poorer parents report their non-attendance at ante natal classes is the difficulty in reaching those classes by public transport. Placing such classes at the heart of the community will make life easier for parents wishing to learn.

The best way to beat child poverty

I believe that the Government should adopt a different perspective when deciding whether to increase child benefit, make additions to the child element of the tax credit system, or adding to the budgets of schools, or further, higher and continuing education. I believe that before any further announcements are made on increasing benefit rates for children, or additional funds that might be allocated to the other two parts of what will become a tripartite education system, the Government should debate carefully whether it would not be better, in that year, to divert these funds to building the Foundation Years. By far the biggest gains to taxpayers in terms of educational advance over the next few years will come from such a switch in the focus of funding.

Transferring monies from benefit increases into the Foundation Years could open the Government to criticism, with a crude campaign charging the Government with turning its back on achieving the 2020 target of abolishing child poverty. The reverse, of course, would be the truth in that the Government would in reality be seizing an opportunity to develop a different strategy to achieve this very goal, particularly as the traditional approach has so clearly stalled. I propose therefore that the Government publishes annually the sums necessary to prevent current child poverty deteriorating – it raised Child Tax Credits in each of its first two financial statements so as to achieve this objective – showing that these sums have been transferred to fund the development of the Foundation Years thereby growing an alternative strategy to abolishing child poverty.

V. The revolution waiting to happen

The impact of how well parents nurture their children goes far beyond the range of abilities their children possess and how well these talents may be developed. The impact goes even beyond forming the basis of a more peaceful and self governing society. The success of parents in nurturing their children helps to determine the overall prosperity of the country.

Reforms in improving the educational outcomes of children have not kept pace with the demands our economy now puts on its labour force. Britain's destiny, now more than ever, is dependent on our success as a trading nation and to prosper our country needs to be a leader in the value added stakes. That this continual improvement in taking our skills upmarket has not happened, or at least not at a fast enough rate, has left large numbers of young adults unqualified for jobs paying good wages.

This Review locates this failure to ensure the country has an adequate skills base not, paradoxically, in the school system, but during those years before children go to school. To ensure that the other two pillars of education – schools and further, higher and continual education – can carry out their task well, it is crucial for a government to act as did during the last Coalition administration, when it put the Butler Act onto the statute book, thereby kick starting another wave of upward social mobility. A similar decisive move is now called for in establishing the Foundation Years as the first of three pillars of our education system.

There are considerable grounds for optimism. Trends in the wider society are moving in a direction that supports the thrust of this Review's proposals. The work that Geoff Dench submitted to the Review looks at what mothers themselves think or do, rather than having their view distorted by interest groups. The circumstances that made them most happy and contented are having a husband or partner in work so that they can combine their work and their family responsibilities

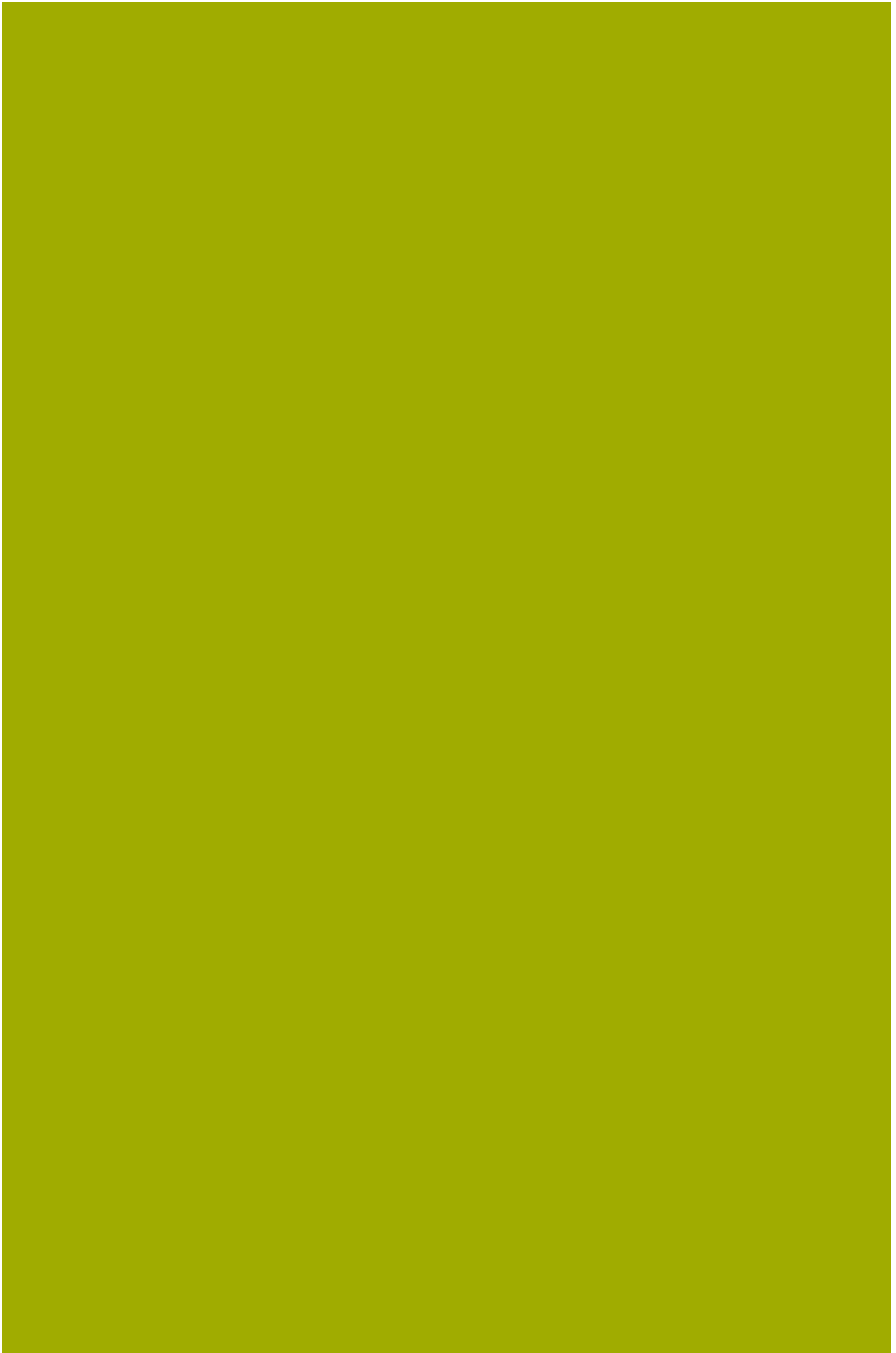
in a pattern that gives primacy to their families. This model that favours the best nurturing of children is quietly advancing. Dench's research, like that of Rowthorn and Webster, points to the importance of male employment rates to family formation and stability. Most families do not escape poverty from working unless one member of the household works full-time.

The Review's recommendations on improving life chances of poorer children signal another revolution waiting to happen. I have been struck in talking to parents how the aspirations they had as teenagers for the children of the families they hoped one day to bring up are all too quickly grounded once they become parents. As the research submitted by Insite shows, expectations all too quickly fall below aspirations. All of our recommendations are aimed at enhancing the power parents will have in ensuring that those expectations are clearly tied to a parent's original aspirations.

The beginnings of a sea change in the debate to which this report on Poverty and Life Chances contributes is a further ground for optimism. The electorate is now somewhat jaundiced about the prospect of being asked to fund further huge fiscal redistribution, especially as the gains so far have been so modest both in terms of combating poverty and, more importantly, of seeing these sums translated into social progress. I, similarly, sense a wish to move from a strategy that alleviates financial poverty, however admirable, to one which is seen to tackle its root causes. Hence voters, I believe, will quickly register their support for the life chances approach that is the backbone of this report.

The institutional reforms we propose should themselves begin a cultural revolution that will bring in its train significant social change. A society that reacts generously to the collective endeavour to improve the life chances of children will reap the benefits similar to those observed by Geoffrey Gorer as proven child rearing practices take hold of the nation's imagination.

A last, but by no means least, reason for optimism. I believe there will be an almost unlimited number of mothers and fathers who seize the opportunity offered by this Review for them to become life-enablers for their children and to do so with a degree of enthusiasm that matches that noticeable loveable quality possessed by very young children themselves.



Chapter 2

Poverty and Life Chances

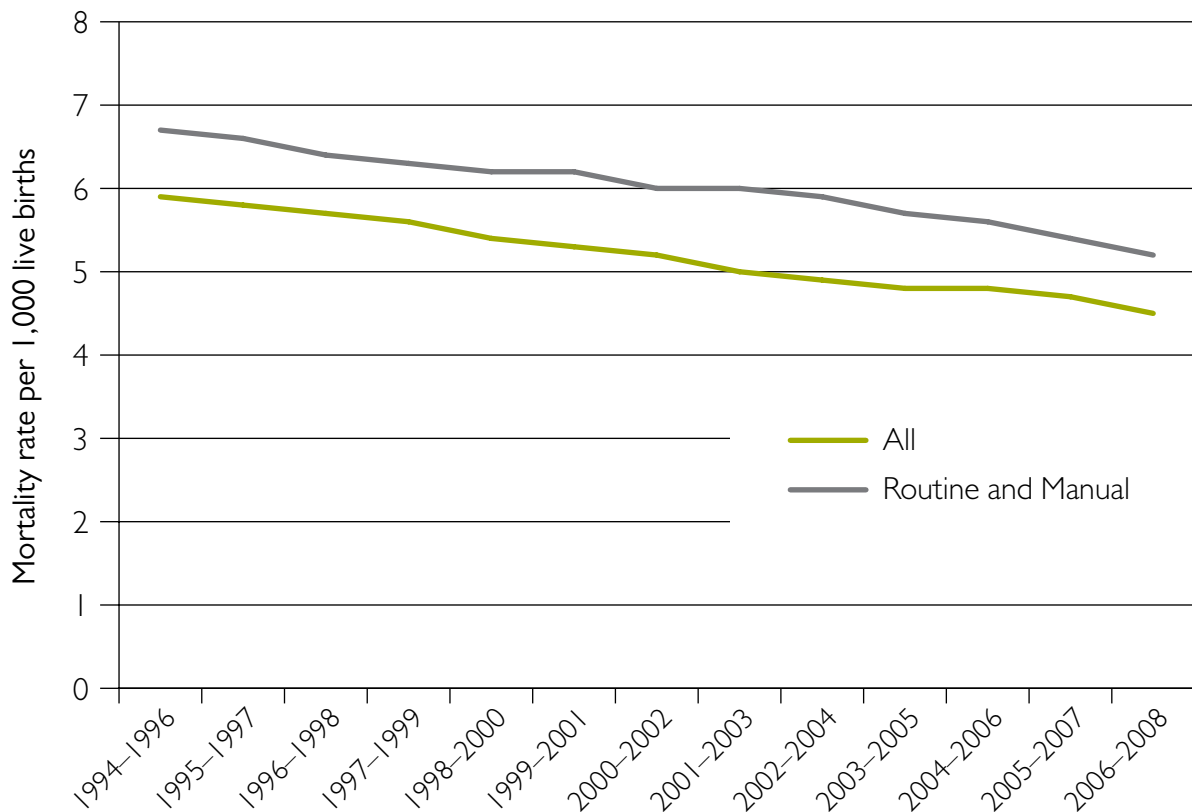
This chapter illustrates the poor outcomes experienced by children from low income families and presents the social and economic case for tackling child poverty and improving life chances. It argues

that a greater emphasis needs to be placed on life chances in order to ensure that today's poor children do not grow up to be poor themselves, having to raise their own children in poverty.

Summary:

- Poverty blights the life chances of children from low income families, putting them at higher risk of a range of poor outcomes when compared to their more affluent peers.
- The consequences of poverty such as increased ill health, unemployment and criminal activity are expensive for the state. The public service cost of child poverty has been estimated to be somewhere between £10 and £20 billion a year.
- The current approach to monitoring progress towards tackling child poverty has incentivised a strategy that is heavily focused on reducing child poverty rates in the short term through income transfers.
- However, the evidence shows that increased income does not automatically protect poor children against the high risk that they will end up in poverty themselves as adults. To do this, it is necessary to shift the focus of the child poverty strategy so that it also addresses the factors that affect life chances, with the ultimate aim of achieving a programme of childhood interventions which can overcome the influence of income and social class.
- This report will set out a broader approach to tackling child poverty which focuses on improving the life chances of poor children.

Figure 2.1 Three year average infant mortality rates per 1,000 live births by profession of father



Source: ONS Health Statistics Quarterly.

The adverse effects of poverty

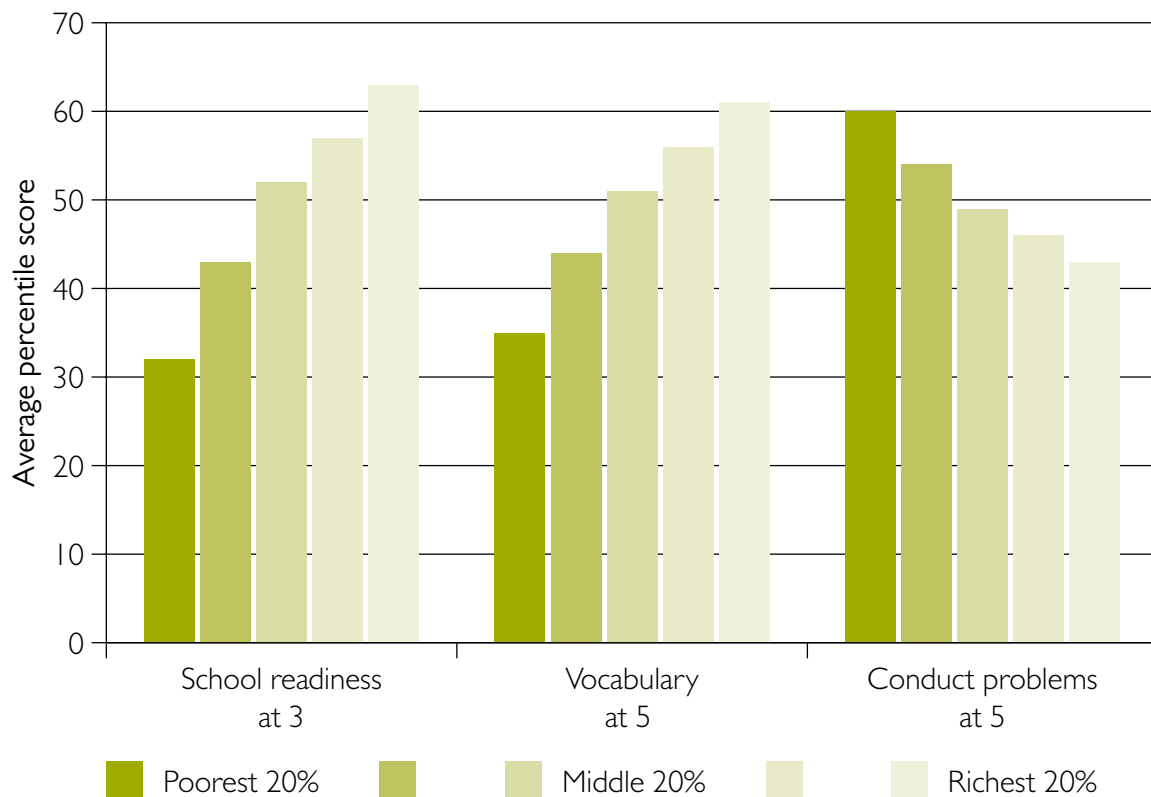
2.1 Children from low income families in the UK often grow up to be poor adults. However poverty is measured, whether by family income, socio-economic status, or educational attainment, poverty blights the life chances of children. Compared to other children, those from households with low income or lower socio-economic status are: more likely to suffer infant mortality; more likely to have pre school conduct and behavioural problems; more likely to experience bullying and take part in risky behaviours as teenagers; less likely to do well at school; less likely to stay on at school after 16; and more likely to grow up to be poor themselves. This is illustrated by the data presented in this chapter.

2.2 Figure 2.1 shows that children whose fathers have routine or manual professions have a higher than average risk of infant mortality. Figures

2.2 and 2.3 show that the poorest 20% of children are more likely to display conduct problems at age five, and that those from families in the lowest socio-economic quintile are more likely to engage in risky behaviours such as smoking, anti-social behaviour and playing truant (although there is no socio-economic gradient for drinking). Finally, the data presented in Figures 2.4 and 2.5 show that children from the poorest households have lower GCSE attainment rates and are less likely to stay on in school after 16 than other children (although the relationship between family income and staying on after 16 is weaker now than in previous years).

2.3 As illustrated by Figures 2.1 to 2.6, gaps in outcomes and achievement between poorer children and their peers are observable from an early age and remain throughout childhood. In general then, family income and social class, over which a child has no control, are highly predictive

Figure 2.2 Mean child outcome scores by income (ages three and five)



Source: Waldfogel, J. and Washbrook, E. (2008) *Early years policy*, Sutton Trust.

of childhood development and, ultimately, adult outcomes. This needs to change. Can interventions trump class and income in determining the life chances of poorer children? We believe they can.

2.4 The Review has been asked to examine the best ways to reduce poverty and increase life chances for the most disadvantaged, taking into account the current fiscal circumstances. We will argue that the best way to improve life chances is to shift the emphasis of the child poverty strategy towards investment in early years provision. This approach is more financially sustainable than the current one, but it is also more effective, and we would be making this recommendation even if the Government did not have to grapple with a record budget deficit.

The economic case

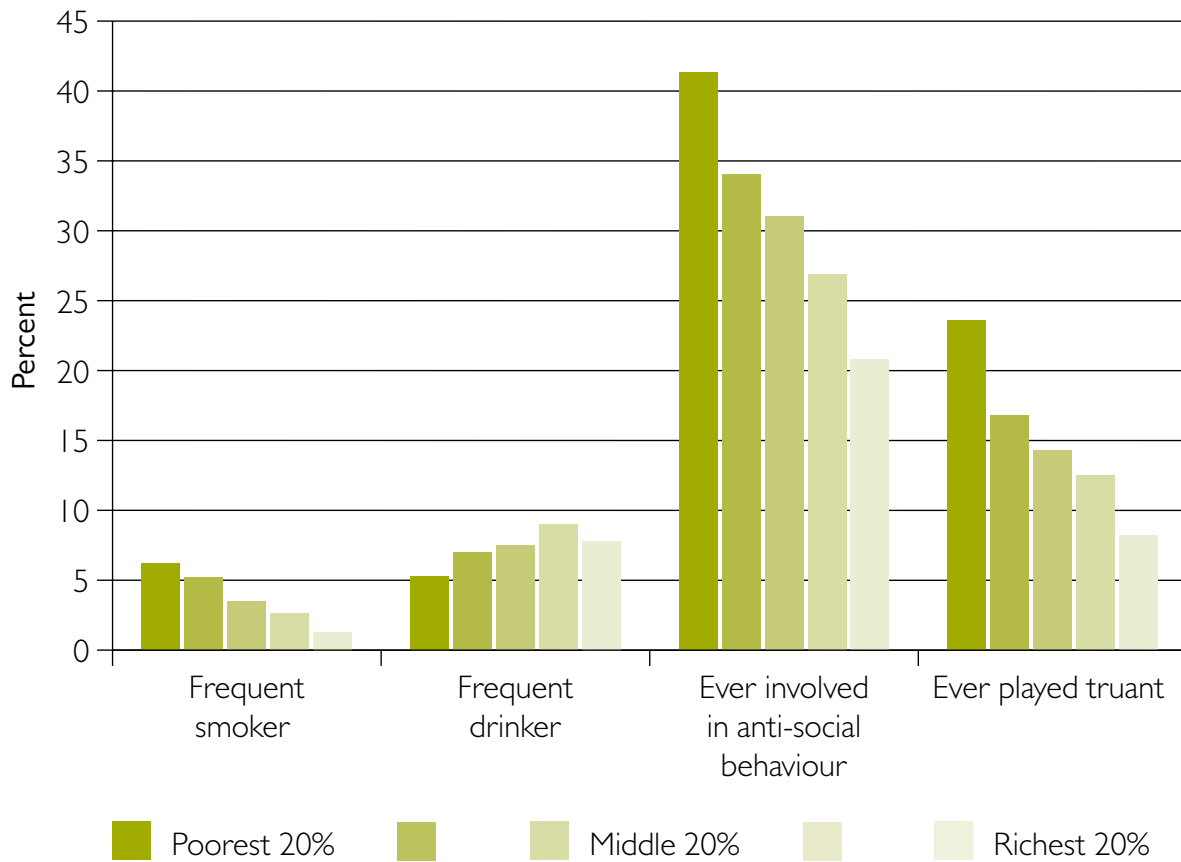
2.5 Child poverty is not just a question of fairness. Many of the consequences of poverty such as unemployment, ill health, and criminal activity are expensive for the state. A 2008 JRF report estimated that the additional cost to public services of these consequences was between £11.6 and £20.7 billion in 2006/07. This means there is a strong economic case for reducing the causes of poverty by revolutionising the life chances of poor children¹.

Tackling child poverty

2.6 In 1999, the previous Government pledged to eradicate child poverty by 2020, as measured by relative income. The 20 year time frame set for this goal reflects the fact that if the eradication of child poverty is to be sustainable, it requires

¹ Bramley, G. and Watkins, D. (2008) *The Public Service Cost of Child Poverty*, JRF.

Figure 2.3 Young person attitudes and behaviours by socio-economic status (age 14)



Source: Chowdry, Crawford and Goodman (2010) *Drivers and Barriers to Educational Success: Evidence from the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England*, Institute for Fiscal Studies Research Report No DCSF-RR102.

governments to intervene in the intergenerational transfer of disadvantage and reduce the number of children growing up to be poor, not simply to increase benefits to the levels of the poverty threshold. Indeed, crucial to the initial vision were improved employment opportunities for low income parents, the expansion of early years service provision for poorer children and the utilisation of the education system as a means of improving social mobility².

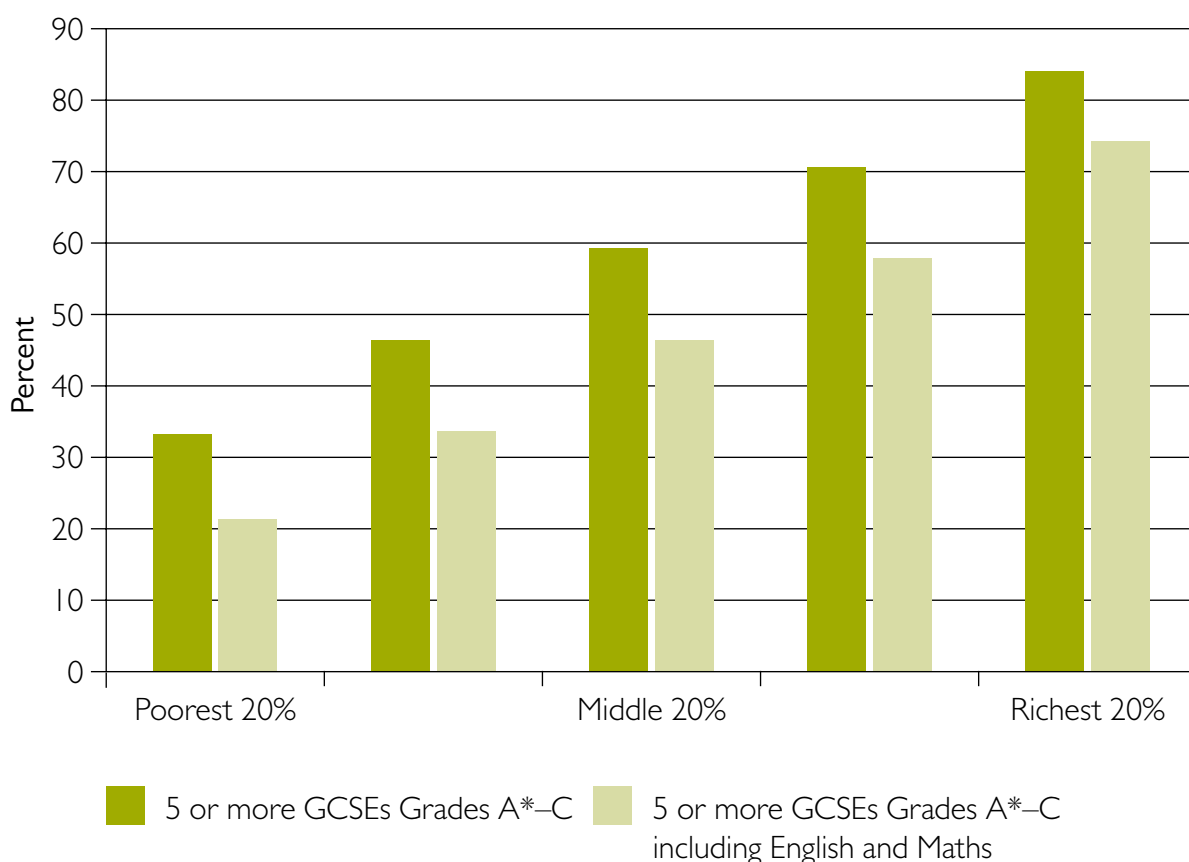
2.7 To monitor progress towards their long term goal, the previous government chose to measure income poverty rates year on year. The Review has concluded that using current child

poverty rates to measure progress towards the long term goal of eradication has undermined the ability of policy makers to take a long term, sustainable approach. It exerted pressure to have an impact on income in the short term, so that the figures could be seen to be moving in the right direction. For any given pound available for tackling child poverty, the incentive provided by the monitoring framework was to invest in policies with the largest short term effects on income, which are generally increases in benefits and tax credits for families with children.

2.8 This policy approach was initially effective in increasing the incomes of low income families in

² Tony Blair's Beveridge Lecture at Toynbee Hall, London (18/03/1999).

Figure 2.4 Children's GCSE threshold attainment by parental income



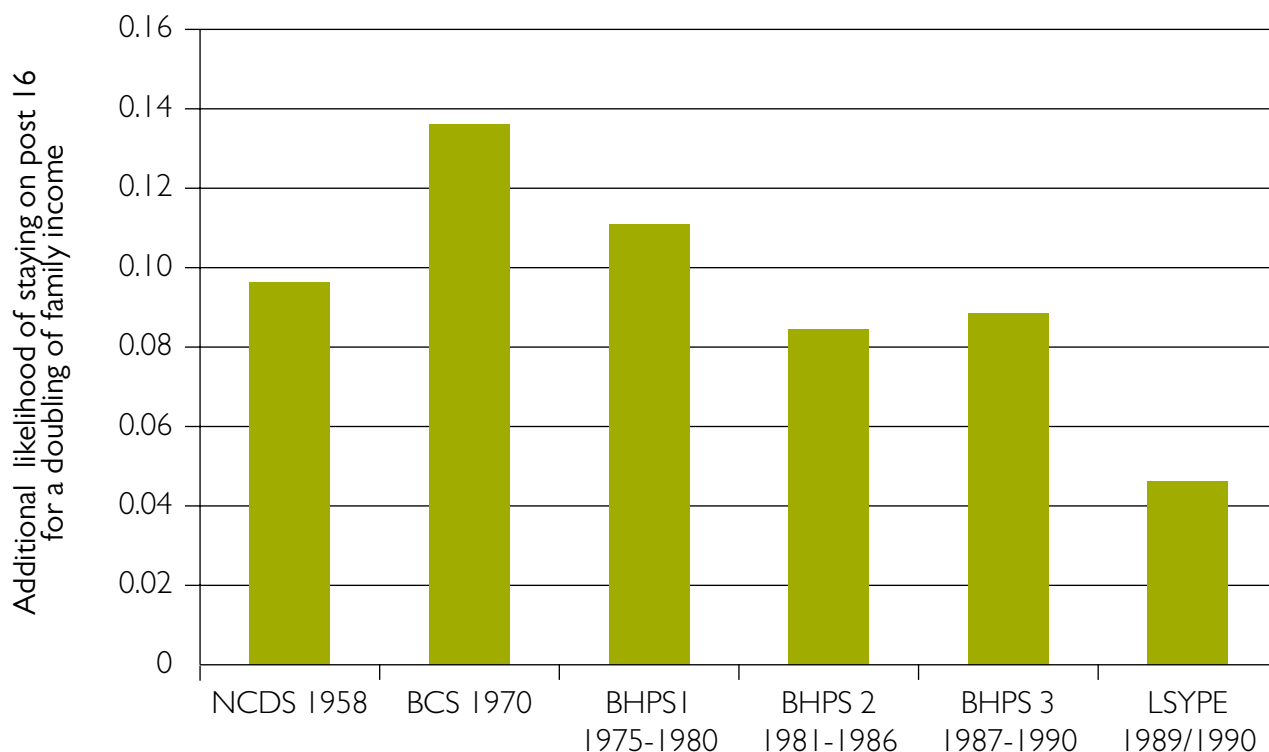
Source: Chowdry, Crawford and Goodman (2010) *Drivers and Barriers to Educational Success: Evidence from the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England*, Institute for Fiscal Studies Research Report No DCSF-RR102.

the short term³, as can be seen in Figure 2.7. Child Poverty rates in the UK had increased substantially over the previous 20 years. When records began in the early 1960s child poverty stood at 13%. Rates remained fairly stable throughout the 1970s, before rising steeply between 1979 and the early 1990s. They then levelled off until around the turn of the century, when, subsequent to the announcement of the new target, child poverty began to fall. However, this decline since 2000 stalled in around 2005, as less money was invested in income transfers relative to previous years, so that the proportion of children in the UK living in poor households remains high by European standards, as shown in Figure 2.8.

2.9 Moreover, the data we present in Chapter 3 provides compelling evidence that a focus on income alone is insufficient to tackle the adverse effects of childhood poverty on future life chances. Among the factors that drive the difference in outcomes between poorer children and their more affluent peers, income is arguably less significant than some other factors, such as parenting and the learning environment in the home. This means that the income transfer approach incentivised by the current monitoring framework is not at the present time the most effective way to tackle child poverty.

³ Brewer, M., Browne, J., Joyce, R. and Sibieta, L. (2010) *Child Poverty in the UK since 1998-99: Lessons from the Past Decade* IFS Working Paper 10/23.

Figure 2.5 Relationship between family income and staying on in education post 16 across cohorts



Source: Gregg, P. and Macmillan, L. (2010) "Family income, education and cognitive ability in the next generation: exploring income gradients in education and test scores for current cohorts of youth" in *Longitudinal and Life Course Studies*, 2010 Volume 1 Issue 3 pp 259–280.

2.10 The income transfer approach is also costly. In 2009, the Institute for Fiscal Studies analysed the cost of meeting the child poverty targets through tax and benefit transfers alone. They estimated that it would cost about £19 billion to meet the headline 2020 target, which is to reduce child poverty, as measured by the 60% of median income threshold, to below 10%⁴.

2.11 Finally, it is clear that a strategy that addresses poverty by transferring income in the short term is less sustainable than one which aims to reduce the 'supply' of poor families by reducing the chances that poor children will end up in poverty in adulthood.

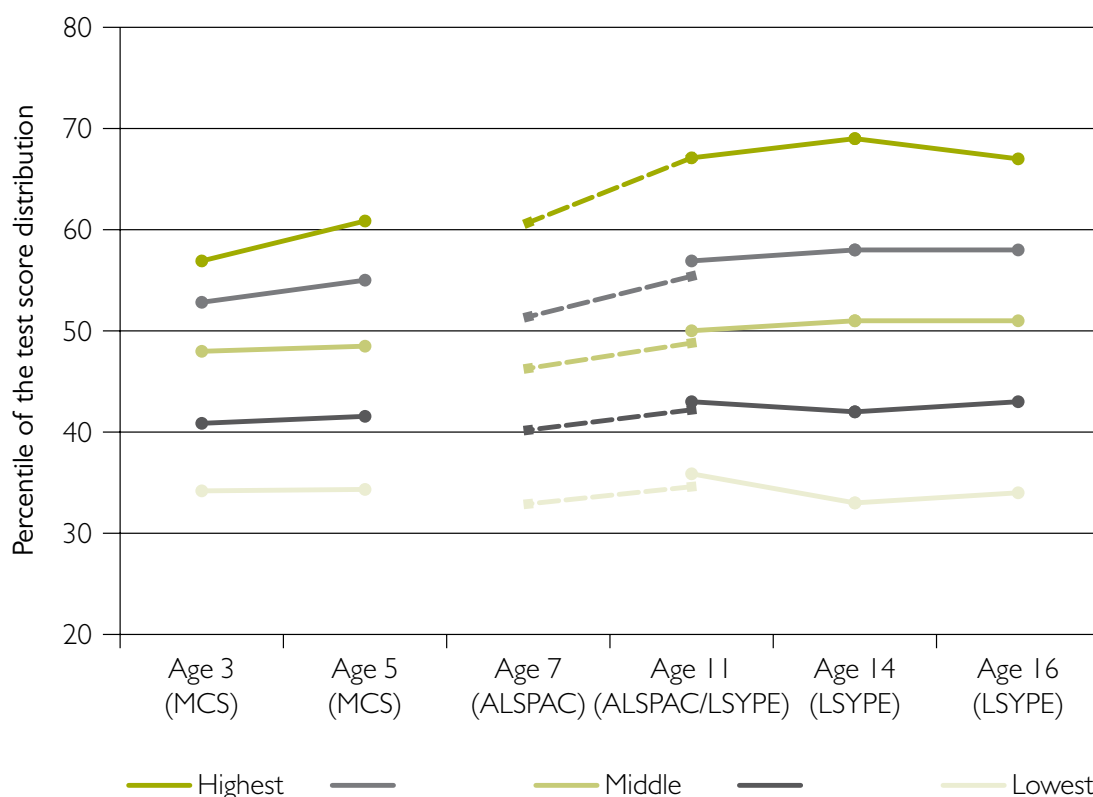
2.12 In light of this evidence we believe that the child poverty measurement framework needs to be revised. The existing incentives to focus so heavily on income transfers need to change because improving the life chances of poor children also requires intervention in parenting, the home learning environment, and other childhood factors.

Future life chances and current living standards

2.13 There is, of course, a role for adequate income. Children in low income families often miss out on activities and experiences that are a

⁴ Brewer, M., Browne, J., Joyce, R. and Sutherland, H. (2009) *Micro-simulating child poverty in 2010 and 2020*, IFS, and Brewer, M., Browne, J., Joyce, R. and Sutherland, H. (2009) *Micro-simulating child poverty in 2010 and 2020 – an update*, IFS.

Figure 2.6 Educational outcomes by socio-economic position, across surveys and ages



Notes: We use our data to divide the population of children into fifths, ranked according to a constructed measure of socio-economic position which is based on their parents' income, social class, housing tenure, and a self-reported measure of financial difficulties. We then chart the average cognitive test scores of these children from the ages of 3 through to 16.

The dotted lines in the middle segment of Figure 2.6, covering ages 7 to 11, reflect that this sample is derived from ALSPAC data, which is a sample of children from the Avon area, rather than a national sample, and as such are not directly comparable to the other datasets used.

Source: Gregg, P. and Goodman, A. (2010) *Children's Educational Outcomes: the role of attitudes and behaviours, from early childhood to late adolescence*, Centre for Market and Public Organisation, University of Bristol and Institute for Fiscal Studies.

key part of the social and emotional development of most other children, and some families still find themselves unable to afford essentials such as school uniforms and adequate housing⁵.

Research has shown that increasing the income of these families is an effective way to tackle these problems⁶.

2.14 The Review's recommendations are intended to prevent the intergenerational transfer of poverty, with the aim that future generations of children will not have to experience such financial

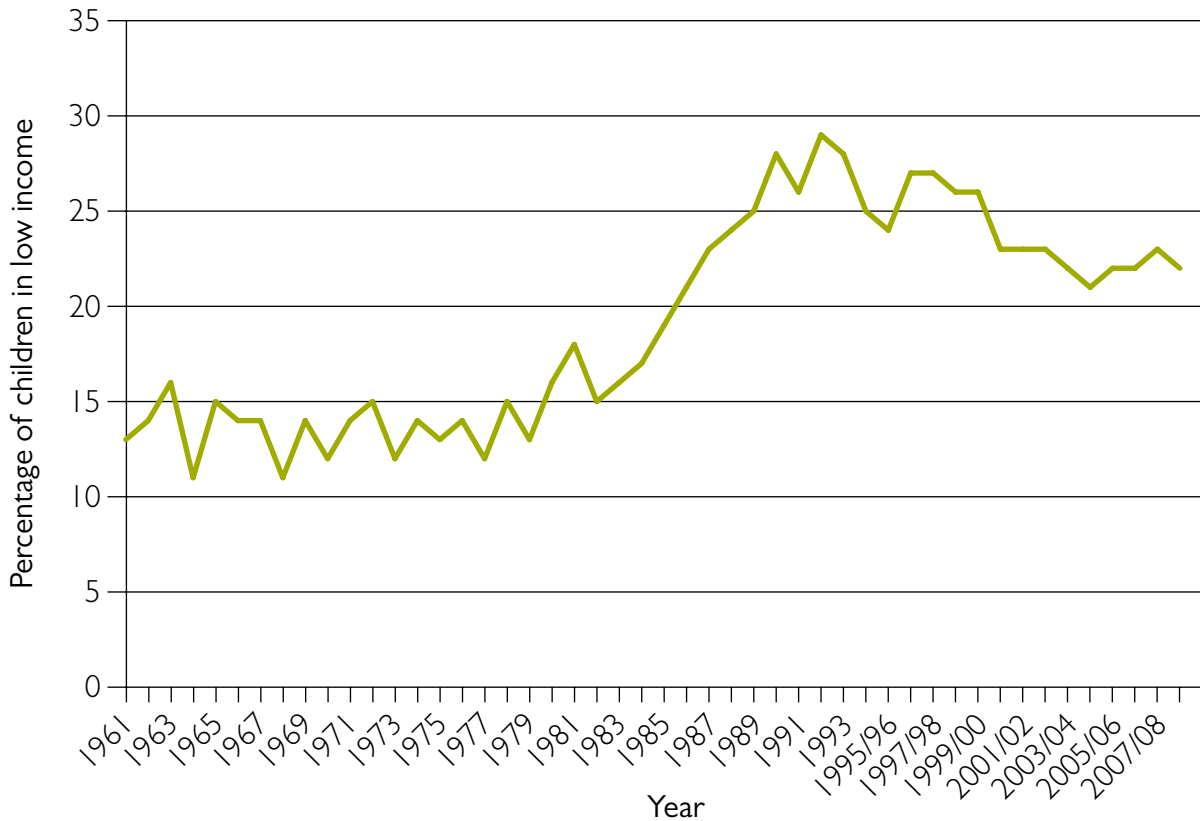
and material deprivation. We believe one of the ultimate outcomes of the change in emphasis that we are recommending will be that someone's place in the income distribution as an adult will be less influenced by their childhood family income and more a reflection of the development of their individual potential.

2.15 However, for some children, it is not just a lack of income which affects their life chances, it is a chaotic family life, lack of stability, upheaval or the focus on someone else's needs. Children in

5 Ridge, T. (2009) *Living with poverty: A review of the literature on children's and families' experiences of poverty*, DWP.

6 Waldfogel, J (2010) *Britain's War on Poverty*, Russell Sage Foundation.

Figure 2.7 Percentage of children in households with income below 60% contemporary equivalised median income, before housing costs, 1961–2008/09



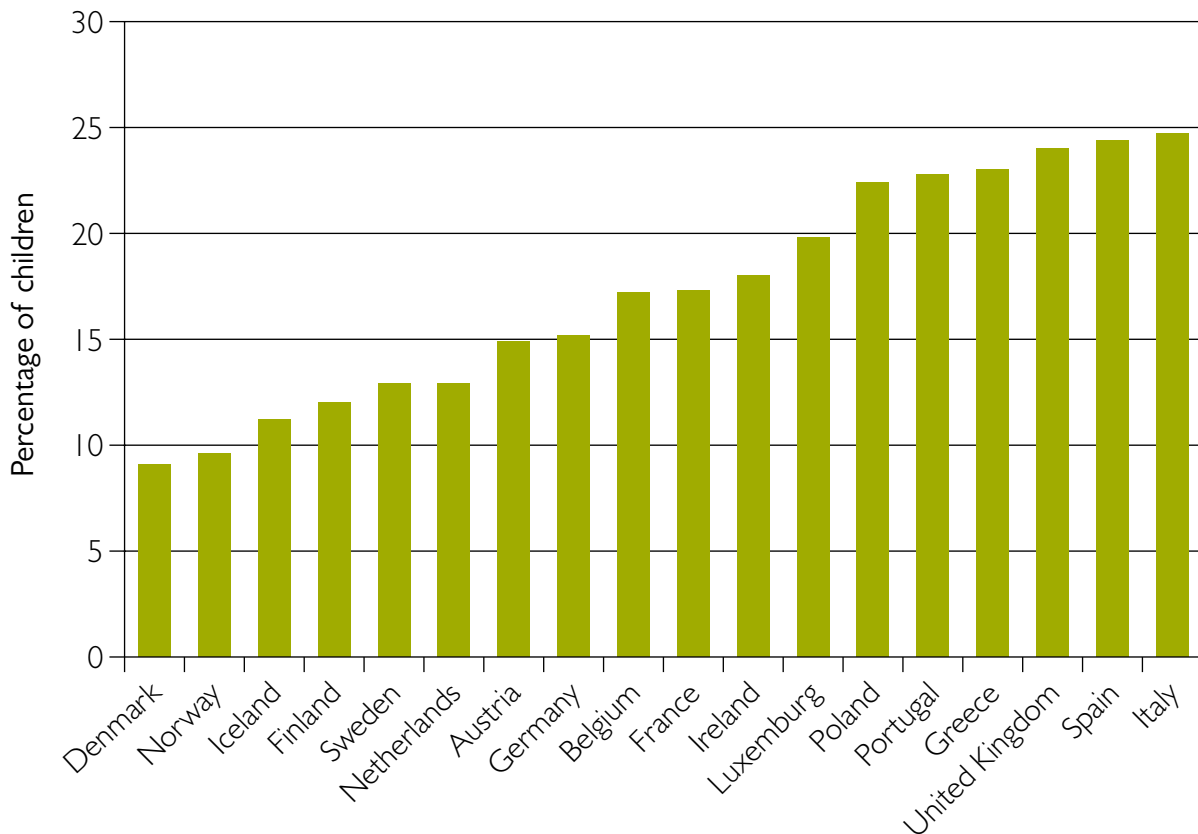
Sources: 1961–1993, Great Britain, Analysis of Family Expenditure Survey by the Institute for Fiscal Studies; 1994/95 – 1997/98, Great Britain, Households Below Average Income; 1998/99 – 2008/09, United Kingdom, Households Below Average Income.

care, young carers, children living with a disabled parent and children living in households with drug or alcohol misuse or domestic violence all have experiences or responsibilities that will blight their childhood and make it more difficult for them to focus on their education and achieve good outcomes. These children need additional support but, given the short timescales under which the Review has been completed, it has not been possible to focus individually on groups of children with specific, intensive needs. The Review would urge the Government to continue to develop policies and invest in services which support these children.

2.16 For other families, support is needed to improve the quality of relationships in the home and ensure that the children grow up with a model of positive and nurturing parenting which they can pass on to their own children.

2.17 It will not be easy to overcome all these issues and create a society where no child is condemned to a life in poverty. But there is a growing body of interventions which have been shown to have an impact on the factors in childhood that most effect life chances. If the right combinations of such interventions are made available to children across the UK growing up in poverty and disadvantage, it should be possible to protect them against the adverse affects of poverty and ultimately achieve a society where family income is not the overriding predictor of future outcomes.

Figure 2.8 Percentage of children (under 18 years) below 60% of median equivalised income after social transfers in European countries, 2008

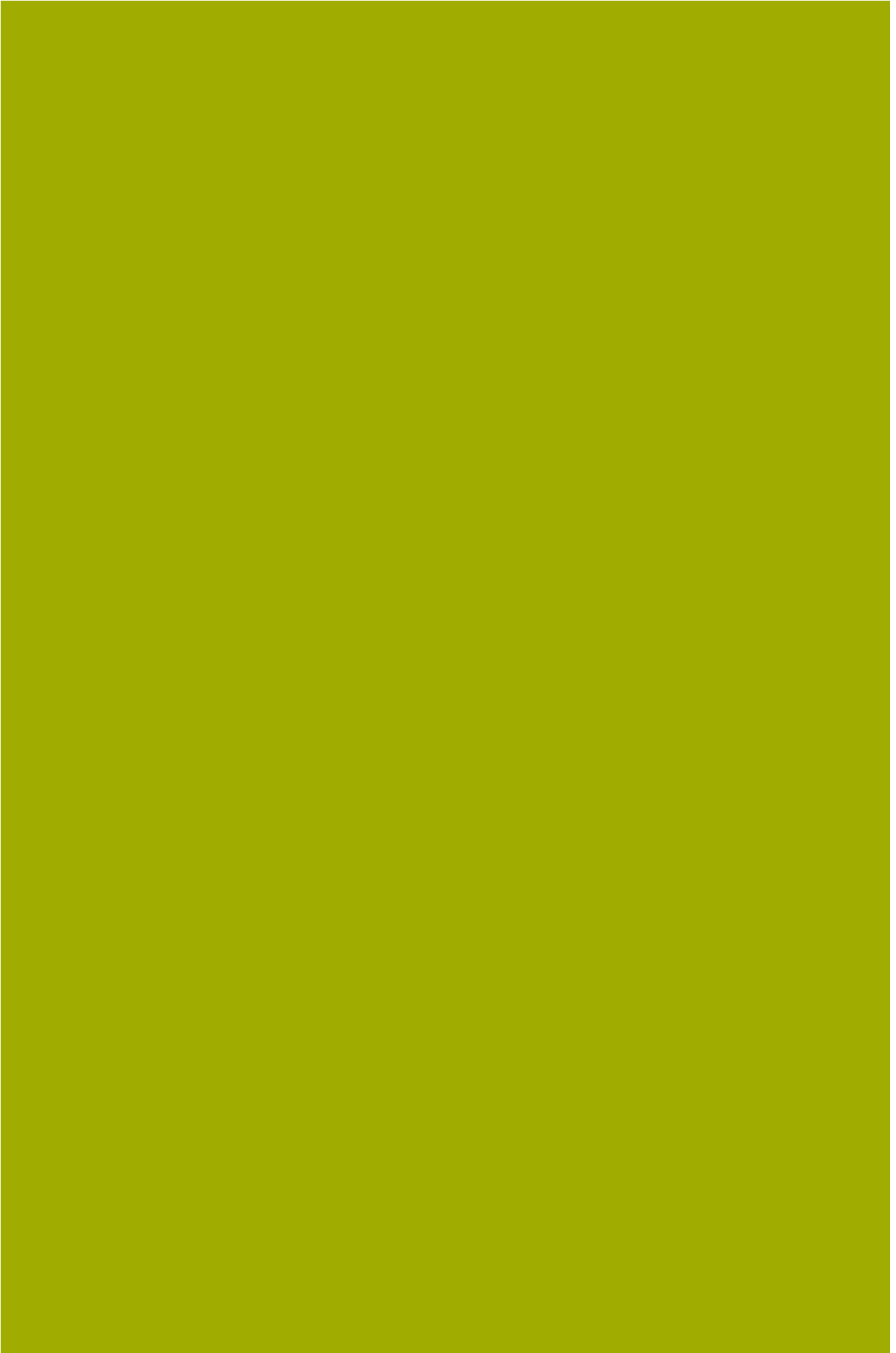


Source: Eurostat.

Note: 2008 data for France and UK is provisional.

2.18 The rest of the report sets out an approach to tackling child poverty which focuses on improving the life chances of poor children:

- In Chapter 3 we identify the factors that are most significant in determining the life chances of poor children.
- In Chapter 4 we describe the structures and interventions at a national and local level that we think can enable a 'life chances' approach.
- In Chapter 5 we propose a new measurement framework which will incentivise policy makers to address the factors that drive life chances, as well as to tackle low income and poor living standards in the here and now.



Chapter 3

The Influences on Children's Life Chances

This chapter sets out evidence on the most important drivers of children's life chances, starting in pregnancy and the early years. The Review makes the case for investment in the early years, in particular to support

parents in their parenting role, to reduce inequalities in outcomes. As children develop, Government also needs to continue to invest in the most disadvantaged older children.

Summary:

- Nobody would doubt the fact that parents play the most significant role in influencing their children's futures and the evidence backs up this instinctive belief. There is a weight of evidence which shows that a combination of positive parenting, a good home learning environment and parents' qualifications can transform children's life chances, and are more important to outcomes than class background and parental income.
- Pregnancy and the first five years of life shape children's life chances – the associations between cognitive development at age five and later educational outcomes are very strong. During the earliest years, it is primarily parents who shape their children's outcomes – a healthy pregnancy, good mental health, the way that they parent and whether the home environment is educational. "What parents do is more important than who parents are". Institutions such as health services, Children's Centres and childcare in particular also have an impact as do family background factors, such as the parents' level of education.
- It is in the early years that the socio-economic gaps in outcomes appear. Already by age three there are large and systematic differences between children from lower and higher income families and these gaps persist throughout childhood, as later attainment tends to be heavily influenced by early development.
- Later in childhood, parents continue to impact on their children's outcomes and their aspirations for their children start to rub off on the children themselves. Children's own attainment, social and emotional development and aspirations also have a significant impact on their future attainment. High achieving children reinforce the achievements that are formed by their background. For low achieving children the opposite is true as by this stage they do not have the resources to grow their achievements in a similar way. Schools can have an impact, albeit a smaller one, especially where good leadership and teaching provides an environment for poor children to thrive, but it has generally been found very difficult to undo the disadvantages carved out in the earliest years.

Determinants of life chances through the life course

3.1 Chapter 2 outlined this Review's recommended approach to reducing child poverty and inequality in life chances. This chapter looks at the factors which determine a child's life chances, starting from conception. In order to improve poorer children's chances of good outcomes we need to understand the factors that lead to inequality throughout childhood and analyse the drivers that will enable us to reduce this inequality.

3.2 The factors influencing children's outcomes change over the life course but the consistent factor throughout is the role of parents and families. Figure 3.1 shows how these factors change over the course of childhood and the remainder of the chapter will pick out the key themes and discuss them in turn.

3.3 One of the key questions that we would like to be able to answer in this Review is which factors are causal in driving children's outcomes. The data available on children and young people's outcomes do not generally allow for strict causality to be determined but this chapter will set out robust associations which have been found using detailed longitudinal analysis, controlling for a large number of factors. There is now a significant consensus amongst academics and professionals that factors in the home environment – positive parenting, the home learning environment and parents' level of education – are the most important.

The importance of the early years

3.4 A large number of studies, from the UK and elsewhere, have shown clearly how important the early years (from pregnancy until the age of five) are for a child's future life chances. Longitudinal

studies find that outcomes in the early years have a strong relationship with later life outcomes. Some poor children escape their parents' fate, but this is by no means the typical experience of poor children as a group. An analysis of the 1970 cohort study, for example, shows that only 18% of children who were in the bottom 25% in early development scores at age five achieved an A Level or higher, compared to nearly 60% of those who were in the top 25% (see Figure 3.2)¹.

3.5 Analysis of outcomes in the UK education system shows that around 55% of children who are in the bottom 20% at age seven (Key Stage 1), remain there at age 16 (Key Stage 4) and less than 20% of them move into the top 60%². This shows that children who perform badly at the start of school tend to perform badly throughout and that a good start in life is hugely important to later educational attainment.

3.6 Statistics on early child outcomes show that poorer children systematically do worse on both cognitive and behavioural outcomes at both age three and age five³ (see Figure 2.2). By age five, children from better off families who had low cognitive ability at age two have almost caught up with high ability children from poorer families⁴. This means that poorer children tend to be less ready for school and less ready to take advantage of the resources invested in the universal education system.

3.7 Later on in childhood, earlier attainment has been shown to play a big role in affecting outcomes, making substantial changes much more difficult to achieve. By age 11, attainment at age seven (Key Stage 1 results) explains over 60% of the gap in attainment between the poorest and the richest and the pattern is very similar at ages 14 and 16⁵ (see Figure 3.5).

1 Feinstein, L. (2003) *How early can we predict future education achievement*, LSE CentrePiece Summer 2003.

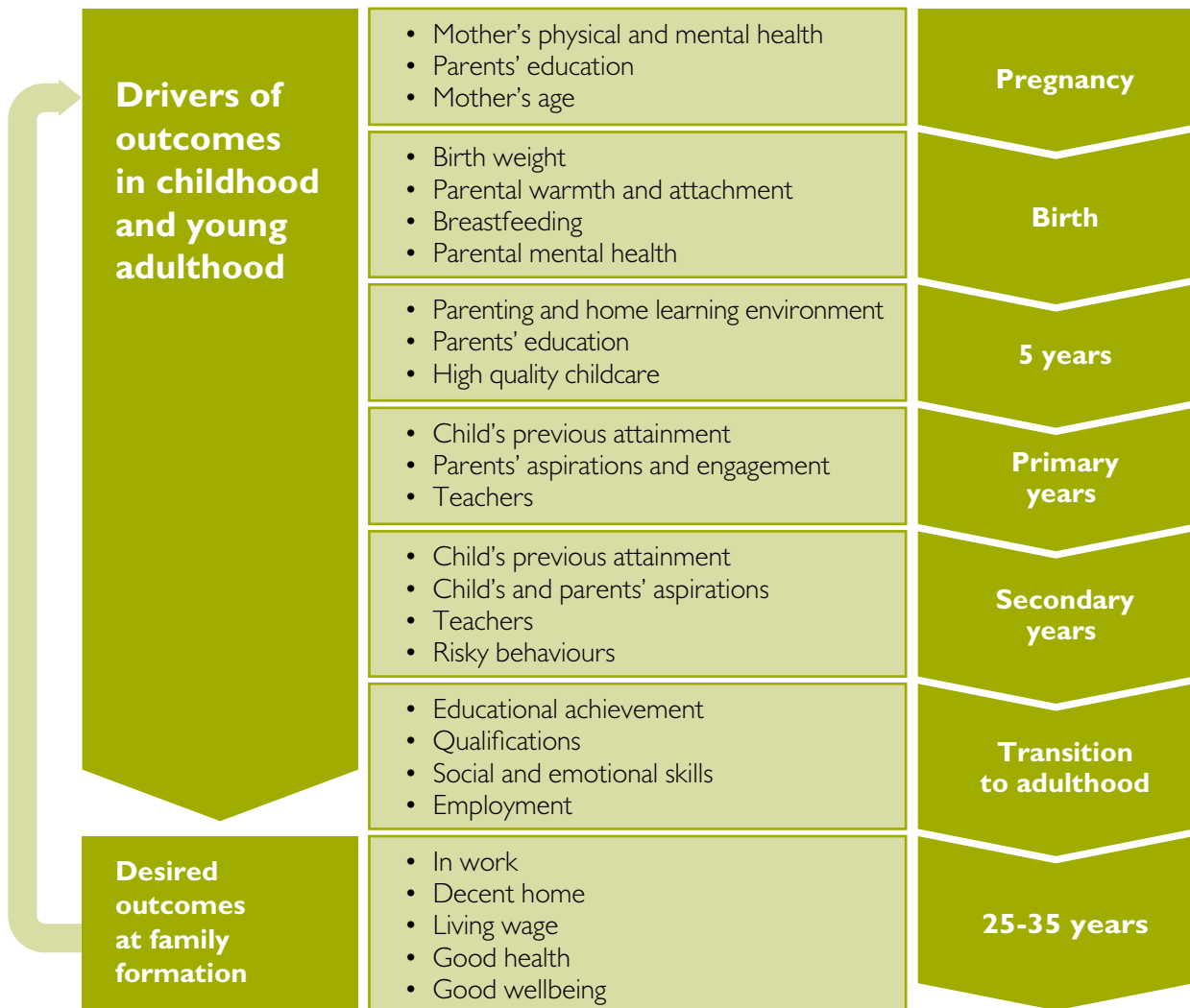
2 Department for Education internal analysis of the National Pupil Database.

3 E.g. Waldfogel, J. and Washbrook E. (2008) *Early Years Policy*, The Sutton Trust and Hobcraft, J. and Kiernan, K. (2010) *Predictive factors from age 3 and infancy for poor childhood outcomes at age 5: evidence from the Millennium Cohort Study*, University of York.

4 Feinstein, L. (2003) *Inequality in the Early Cognitive Development of British Children in the 1970 Cohort*, *Economica*, p73-97.

5 Gregg, P. and Goodman, A. (2010) *Children's Educational Outcomes: the role of attitudes and behaviours, from early childhood to late adolescence*, Centre for Market and Public Organisation (CMPO), University of Bristol and Institute for Fiscal Studies.

Figure 3.1 The key drivers of life chances throughout childhood



Source: Review team synthesis of research findings.

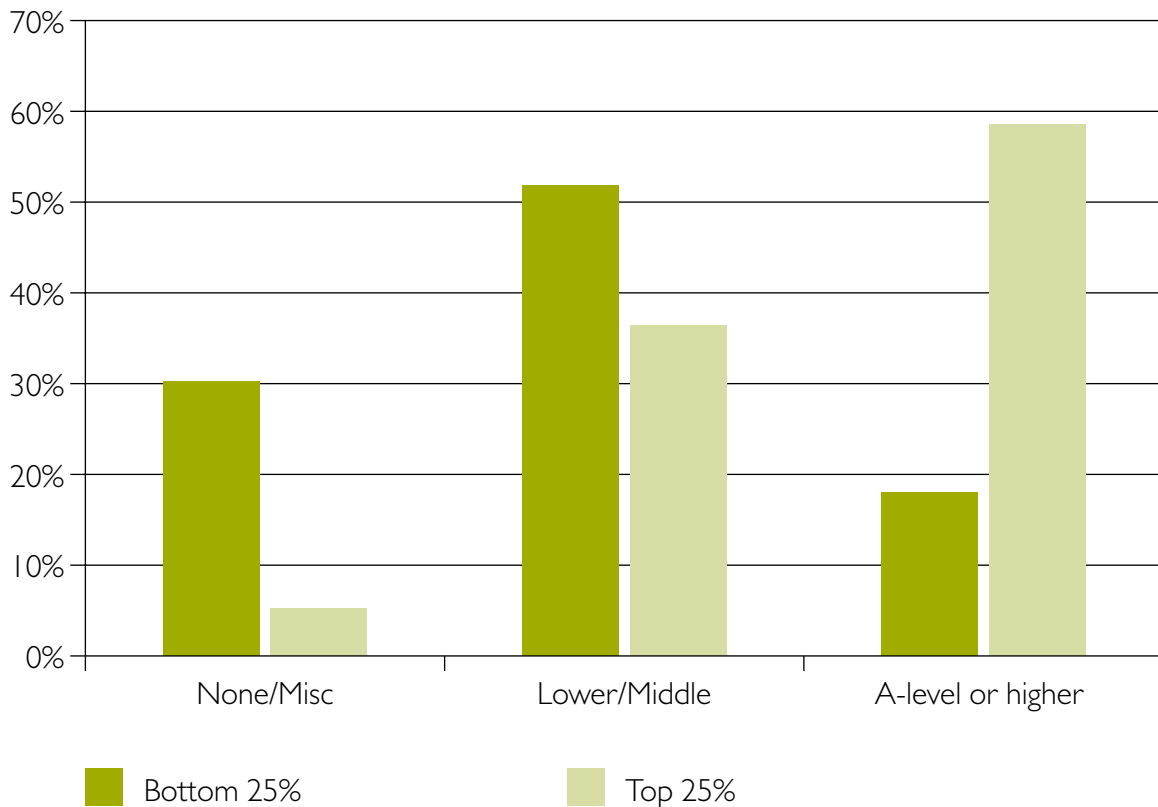
3.8 Life chances begin to be determined in pregnancy. A healthy pregnancy and a strong emotional bond (known as attachment) between parents and the baby in the first few months can place a child on the road to success. A healthy pregnancy – without smoking, with a healthy diet and with good mental health – is more likely to lead to a healthy birth weight which in turn contributes to better health later in life⁶. In the first few months, post natal depression in particular can make it very difficult for mothers to bond with

their babies and this can have adverse long term consequences. Breastfeeding protects the baby by boosting its immune system and providing a good opportunity for bonding between mother and baby. Statistics show that lower income mothers are less likely to breastfeed, however, one study found that those low income mothers who breastfed for 6-12 months had the highest scores of any group on quality of parenting interactions at age five⁷.

6 The Marmot Review (2010) *Fair Society, Healthy Lives*.

7 Gutman et al (2009) *Nurturing Parenting Capability: The Early Years*, The Institute of Education, London.

Figure 3.2 Percentage of 26-year-olds attaining educational and vocational qualifications by position in early development scores at age five



Source: Feinstein (2003).

3.9 Studies in the United States, which have been put in place to look at the impact of childcare on disadvantaged children's outcomes later in life, have also revealed some very encouraging results. The STAR project (a randomised control trial) revisited children who are now adults and looked at their labour market outcomes. The research found that children who attended high quality childcare were earning more, on average, than those who did not. This applied even for children whose performance in relation to others had deteriorated during the school years. A pupil who achieved a typical improvement for a five-year old with a good teacher (moving from the average to the 60th percentile during a kindergarten year), could expect, for example, to make \$1,000 more a year at the age of 27 than a pupil who did not

improve. They concluded that this is partly due to the social skills these children learned in the kindergarten years⁸.

3.10 Investing in children and families before school would also enable the Government to put taxpayers' investment in primary and secondary education to much better effect. Most skills developed in early life stay with children into later life and are self-reinforcing. Greater equality of school readiness would make teaching, particularly in the first few years of primary school, easier and more productive. Overall, this means that it is highly productive to invest in disadvantaged young children – there is no trade-off between the equity and the efficiency of investment for this group of children⁹.

8 Chetty, R. (2010) *How does your kindergarten classroom affect your earnings? Evidence from the STAR project*, Harvard.

9 Cunha, F. And Heckman, J. (2010) *Investing in our young people*, IZA.

3.11 The early years have a profound importance for later outcomes. Achieving greater equality of outcomes at ages three and five would enable more children to get off to a good start in life and to take full advantage of their schooling. Increasing the awareness of the importance of the first five years in life is a key aim of this Review. Government needs to send strong messages to parents, local government and the private and voluntary sectors that this period in education has to be taken as seriously, if not more so, than any other.

What are the key factors influencing outcomes in the early years?

3.12 What is it that affects how well a child does when they start school? The research highlights these key themes: parents, childcare and family background and income. Parents, above all, are the main influence on their children's outcomes in the early years. The early attachment to the baby, parental warmth and boundary-setting and providing a home environment where learning is important, have been shown to be the key factors influencing a child's life chances and they can be more important than income or class background (see Box 3.1). As the authors of the Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) study conclude: "what parents do is more important than who parents are"¹⁰. This conclusion was backed up in a comprehensive review of the evidence on parenting¹¹.

Parents

3.13 A good start from conception, and as a baby, can improve a child's life chances. Becoming a parent should be a life changing event but not all parents realise the immediate impact this will have on them and, in turn, they have on their new

baby. The development of a baby's brain is affected by the attachment to their parents and analysis of neglected children's brains has shown that their brain growth is significantly reduced¹². Where babies are often left to cry, their cortisol levels are increased and this can lead to a permanent increase in stress hormones later in life, which can impact on mental health. Supporting parents during this difficult transition period is crucial to improving outcomes for young children. Further details are set out in Chapter 4.

Box 3.1: Bucking the trend

Research looking at children who do well despite difficult circumstances has illustrated clearly the impact that parents have. Several reports looking at the 1958 and 1970 cohort studies have shown that disadvantaged children who did well were more likely have a good relationship with their parents and have parents who were involved with their education¹³. Blanden found that children from disadvantaged backgrounds who had been read to on a daily basis at age five, and whose parents had been very interested in their child's education at age ten, were less likely to be living in poverty at age 30. She found that the effect of parents' interest was independent of the effect of parents being more educated. For boys, having a father with little or no interest in their education reduced their chances of moving out of poverty as adults by 25 percentage points. For girls, the impact of having a *mother* with little or no interest in their education reduced the chance by a similar amount¹⁴.

10 Sylva, K. et al (2004) *The Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) Project: Findings from Pre-school to end of Key Stage 1*, SureStart.

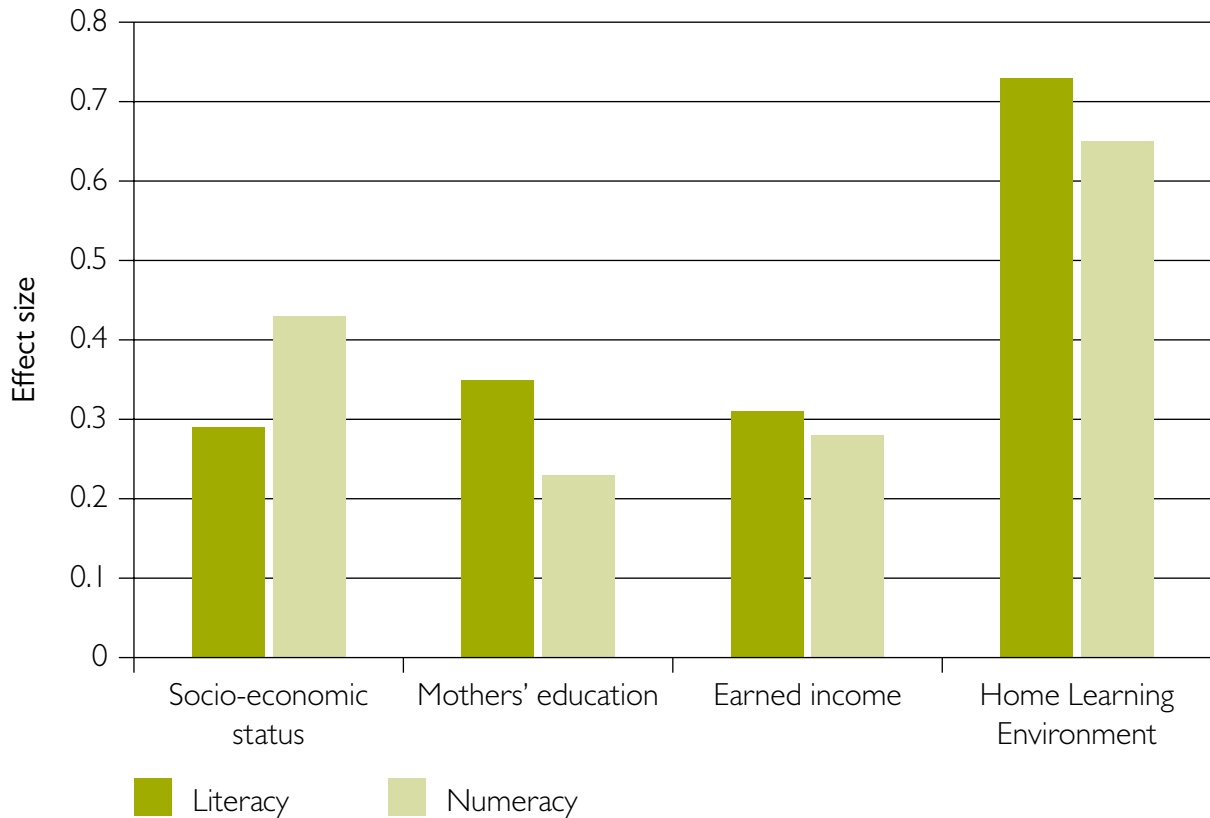
11 Desforges, C. (2003) *The Impact of Parental Involvement, Parental Support and Family Education on Pupil Achievement and Adjustment: A literature review*, DfES Research Report 433.

12 Perry, B. (2002) *Childhood experience and the expression of genetic potential: what childhood neglect tells us about nature and nurture*. *Brain and Mind* 3: 79–100.

13 e.g. Pilling, D. (1990) *Escape from disadvantage*, London: The Falmer Press and Schoon, I., and Parsons, S. (2002) *Competence in the face of adversity: the influence of early family environment and long-term consequences*, *Children & Society*, 16: 260–272.

14 Blanden, J. (2006) 'Bucking the trend': *What enables those who are disadvantaged in childhood to succeed later in life?*, DWP Working Paper No.31.

Figure 3.3 Effect sizes for socio-economic status, mother's education, income and home learning environment on age five outcomes



Source: Melhuish et al (2008) 'Effects of the Home Learning Environment and Preschool Center Experience upon Literacy and Numeracy Development in Early Primary School', *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 64, No.1.

Note: Home Learning Environment: bottom 10% compared with top 10%.

3.14 Research has highlighted the home learning environment as the single most important behavioural factor influencing children's outcomes at age three and five¹⁵. The home learning environment is a term used to describe activities in the home such as talking and reading to children, singing songs and nursery rhymes and learning through simple activities and play. This has been studied in depth in the EPPE study and has been shown to contribute significantly to both cognitive and non-cognitive development. The presence

of books and toys in a household has significant and large associations with child IQ, Key Stage 1 attainment and self esteem and can account for between 5% and 12% of the gap in development between the richest and the poorest children at age five. EPPE showed an effect of the early home learning environment on age five outcomes over and above parental background factors such as socio-economic status, maternal education and family income¹⁶.

15 For example: Gregg, P. and Goodman, A. (2010) *Children's Educational Outcomes: the role of attitudes and behaviours, from early childhood to late adolescence*, CMPO, University of Bristol and Institute for Fiscal Studies.

16 Sylva, K. et al (2004) *The Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) Project: Findings from Pre-school to end of Key Stage I*, SureStart.

Box 3.2: Home learning environment and ethnicity

The fact that children from some ethnic minority groups do exceptionally well has led to questions about whether there are clues in their home environment that could explain their attainment. For example, poor Chinese children (as measured by Free School Meals eligibility) do better at GCSEs than any other group except Chinese pupils who are not poor. This means that being a Chinese child in England appears to be enough to overcome all the disadvantages associated with being poor. It is unlikely that this reflects a pure genetic effect (see paragraph 3.15) and there is some evidence that differences in parental aspirations and the home learning environment could be the key to the success of Chinese children. Given the small numbers of Chinese children who live in England, statistically robust findings on the reasons behind their success are not available.

Evidence from EPPE suggests that children from disadvantaged Indian and Bangladeshi families have better home learning environments than comparable White families and analysis has shown that parents' aspirations for their children to continue in full-time education is significantly higher among all minority groups than among White British parents¹⁷.

Further research in this area would be instructive to discover more about the diversity of parenting and home learning environments that promote high attainment.

3.15 There is a very strong correlation between parental education levels (in particular the mother's level of education) and early child outcomes but overall it does not contradict the EPPE finding that it is more important what parents do than who they are. A recent study found that parental education explained 16% of the gap in cognitive development between the poorest and the richest children at age three¹⁸. One study concludes that the differences between the outcomes of children of less and more educated parents are the single biggest driver of the observed deficits of poor children in general, but that it is not clear exactly what the transmission mechanism is. The differences could reflect three processes: genetic traits; innate traits which are associated with educational success may be positively correlated with other innate skills such as parenting ability; or more educated parents may have greater knowledge and ability as parents¹⁹. More recent work looking at the intergenerational transmission of cognitive development showed that parental *cognitive ability* explained 16% of the gap in cognitive development between the richest and the poorest children after controlling for a very large number of environmental factors. The report did not find a significant association between parental cognitive ability and parenting behaviours, however, suggesting some genetic link between the cognitive abilities of parents and children²⁰. In addition, evaluations of family literacy projects in the UK have found that children make greater progress when their parents participate in learning activities²¹.

3.16 Positive parenting has been shown to have a positive impact on children. Positive parenting involves parents setting clear boundaries and routines for children as well as being responsive and warm towards the child. Waldfogel and

17 Johnson, P. et al (2008) *Early years, life chances and equality: a literature review*, Equality and Human Rights Commission.

18 Gregg, P. and Goodman, A. (2010) *Children's Educational Outcomes: the role of attitudes and behaviours, from early childhood to late adolescence*, CMPO, University of Bristol and Institute for Fiscal Studies.

19 Gregg et al. (2008) *Understanding the relationship between parental income and multiple child outcomes: a decomposition analysis*, CMPO working paper 08/193.

20 Crawford, C. Goodman, A. and Joyce, R. (2010) *Explaining the socio-economic gradient in child outcomes: the intergenerational transmission of cognitive skills*. Institute for Fiscal Studies, London.

21 Sabates, R. (2008) *The Impact of Lifelong Learning on Poverty Reduction: IFLL Public Value Paper*. National Institute of Continuing Adult Education.

Washbrook conclude that parenting behaviours play a significant role even after controlling for a varied set of demographic characteristics and other policy-relevant mechanisms and this conclusion is consistent between the United States and the UK²². As set out in Chapter 4, parenting programmes such as Triple P have shown that positive parenting can lead to reductions in child problem behaviour.

3.17 Fathers' interest and involvement in their children's learning is statistically associated with better educational outcomes (higher attainment as well as more positive attitudes and better behaviour) even when controlling for a wide variety of other influencing factors. A number of studies both from the United States and the UK have shown that father involvement has an independent effect from mother involvement and effects have been demonstrated both for younger children and for later educational outcomes²³.

3.18 There is a complex relationship between parenting and poverty. Poor parenting exists across the income distribution, but tends to have less of an impact on better off children where other factors provide greater protection against poor outcomes. However, stress and conflict can disrupt parenting²⁴ and a lack of money or debt is one of the major sources of stress for poorer families. One study showed that a reduction in income and worsening mental health tend to lead to a reduction in parenting capacity. Increases in income, however, did not necessarily improve parenting capacity²⁵.

3.19 A breakdown in the parents' relationship or significant ongoing conflict in the home (whether

or not this leads to a relationship breakdown) can have a negative impact on child outcomes. This can be through the direct effects of conflict and indirectly through a reduction in parenting capacity. Children react in many different ways, becoming aggressive, anxious or withdrawn, which in turn can have an impact on behaviour, mental health and educational achievement. However, these negative impacts are not evident for all children of separated parents and research has highlighted that the nature of parental conflict, parenting quality and the number of changes in family structure can play a role in how children are able to handle conflict²⁶.

3.20 Parental mental health can have a long term impact on children's outcomes and surveys show that poorer mothers are more likely to suffer from, for example, post-natal depression. Mental health has in particular been found to impact on children's behavioural outcomes at age three and these in turn impact on cognitive outcomes at age five, leading to longer term impacts²⁷. Another study which looked at the impact of mental health on parenting found that it had a negative impact on the quality of parenting interactions and the quality of communication between mother and child at age five²⁸.

3.21 There is a strong relationship between different aspects of parenting and parents' health and well-being and their children's outcomes. Policies to improve poorer children's outcomes are more likely to be successful if they target a wide range of issues – such as parents' education, positive parenting, relationships and the home learning environment as well as physical and mental health.

22 Waldfogel, J. and Washbrook E. (2009) *Income-related gaps in school readiness in the U.S. and U.K.* APPAM Fall Research Conference.

23 Asmussen, K. and Weizel, K. (2010) *Evaluating the Evidence: Fathers, Families and Children*, King's College London, National Academy of Parenting Research.

24 Katz et al. (2007) *The relationship between parenting and poverty*, JRF, York.

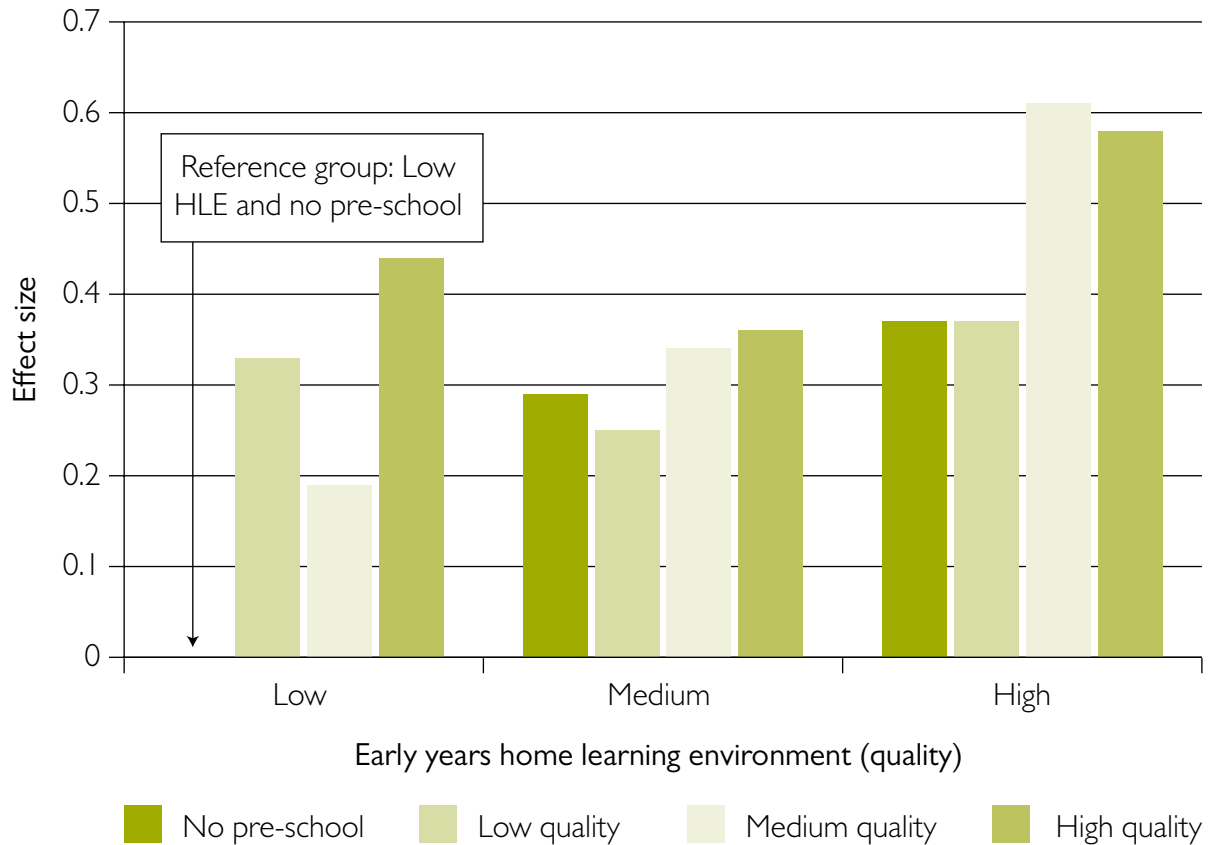
25 Waylen A., Stewart-Brown S. (2010) *Factors influencing parenting in early childhood: a prospective longitudinal study focusing on change*. *Child Care Health and Development*; 36: 198-207.

26 See for example: Coleman, L and Glenn, F (2009) *When Couples Part: Understanding the consequences for adults and children*. One Plus One, London

27 Hobcraft, J. and Kiernan, K. (2010) *Predictive factors from age 3 and infancy for poor childhood outcomes at age 5: evidence from the Millennium Cohort Study*, University of York.

28 Gutman et al (2009) *Nurturing Parenting Capability: The Early Years*, The Institute of Education, London.

Figure 3.4 The combined impact of pre-school quality and early years home learning environment on age 11 English



Source: Source: Sylva et al (2008) EPPE 3-11: Final Report from the Primary Phase: Pre-school, School and Family Influences on Children's Development During Key Stage 2 (Age 7-11) DCSF-RR061.

Childcare and early education

3.22 Attendance at early education has also been shown to have a big effect on cognitive outcomes in childhood. The duration of early education (in terms of the total number of years, rather than the number of hours per day) also has an independent impact and children who have attended for longer do better²⁹. These effects persist far into childhood. By age 11, children who attended early education perform significantly better in Key Stage 2 Maths and English, as well as on behavioural outcomes. The *quality* of early education also

continues to impact on Key Stage 2 attainment and behavioural outcomes³⁰. Overall, combining a good early years home learning environment with high quality early education has the most positive effect on children at age 11.

3.23 The quality of early education matters. Children who benefited from good quality early education experiences were on average four to six months ahead in terms of cognitive development at school entry than those who did not. Those children who experienced a long duration (more than two years from the age of two onwards)

29 Sammons, P. et al (2004) *EPPE: tech paper 8a/b, Measuring the impact of pre-school on children's cognitive progress over the pre-school period*. Institute of Education.

30 Sylva et al (2008) *EPPE 3-11: Final Report from the Primary Phase: Pre-school, School and Family Influences on Children's Development During Key Stage 2 (Age 7-11)* DCSF-RR061.

as well as high quality early education were around three months further ahead in terms of cognitive development. Staff qualifications and training are the key driver of quality, with warm interactive relationships, graduate or teacher led early education and a high proportion of qualified teachers as staff, showing the best results³¹.

3.24 Another advantage of attending childcare is that qualified and experienced staff may be able to pick up signs of behavioural problems or slower language or cognitive development earlier on, and either provide additional support to the child and their parents to make a difference to outcomes before they start school or help to broker access to wider support services. This could change the child's trajectory between the ages of three and five and so determine how well they do at school. This role will be considered further through the Tickell review of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

3.25 The EPPE study, in addition, has shown that disadvantaged children do better in settings with children from different social backgrounds (measured in terms of mothers' education levels)³². Other studies have also found a positive impact on behaviour of mixing children from households where one or more parent is in work with children from workless households³³.

Family background and income

3.26 Research consistently finds that some basic family background factors – particularly the number of siblings, the age of the mother at the birth of the first child and fathers' employment – have some role in explaining the gap in attainment between the

richest and the poorest children. For example, one study shows that these background factors explain about 25% of the gap in attainment between the richest and the poorest three-year-olds³⁴.

3.27 The causal impact of income on outcomes is hotly debated. The evidence is limited, with stronger direct evidence from the United States which may not be transferable to the UK. The effect of income itself on child outcomes is relatively small, and smaller than factors such as ethnicity, gender and characteristics of the parents. One review of the evidence concludes: "It would take large financial transfers to overcome the disadvantages associated with certain characteristics"³⁵. However, the impact of changes in income is greater for those on low incomes and may be greater in the early years. There are several studies – mostly American – showing a modest impact on reading and maths skills from income transfers³⁶.

3.28 One study notes that, although a fairly large change in income is needed to make a small difference to educational outcomes – more than is realistic through income transfers – when there is wide income inequality already, income alone may still explain large differences in educational outcomes across the income distribution³⁷.

3.29 Generally parental employment is seen as the best route out of income poverty. The main reason is that it provides income to lift the family out of poverty, but employment can also improve mental health, self esteem and access to social networks. But usually, escaping poverty requires having a parent in full time work and that

31 Sylva, K. et al (2004) *The Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) Project: Findings from Pre-school to end of Key Stage 1*, SureStart.

32 Sylva et al (2008) EPPE 3-11: *Final Report from the Primary Phase: Pre-school, School and Family Influences on Children's Development During Key Stage 2 (Age 7-11)* DCSF-RR061.

33 Mathers, S. and Sylva, K. (2007) *National evaluation of the Neighbourhood Nurseries Initiative: The relationship between quality and children's behavioural development*, Research Report SSU/2007/FR/022.

34 Gregg, P. and Goodman, A. (2010) *Children's Educational Outcomes: the role of attitudes and behaviours, from early childhood to late adolescence*, CMPO, University of Bristol and Institute for Fiscal Studies.

35 Blow et al (2002) *How Important is Income in Determining Children's Outcomes? A Methodology Review of Econometric Approaches?* IFS www.ifs.org.uk/docs/methodology.pdf.

36 A \$1000 increase in family income raised Maths and Reading scores by 6% of a standard deviation. Dahl, G. and Lochner, L. (2008) *The Impact of Family Income on Child Achievement*. Institute for Research on Poverty, Discussion Paper no. 1361-09.

37 Blanden, J. and Gregg, P. (2004) *Family Income and Educational Attainment: A Review of Approaches and Evidence for Britain*. CMPO Working Paper Series No 04/101.

goal is easier to achieve if there are two parents in the household. As set out in paragraph 3.26, whether the father is employed has been shown to impact on the gap in cognitive development between richer and poorer children at age three (it accounts for about one third of the family background effects). The evidence on the effect of maternal employment on child outcomes in the early years is more complex and has been widely researched. Research has generally found small effects of early maternal employment and negative effects are insignificant if the mother goes back to work after the child is 18 months old³⁸, works part-time or flexibly and where the child is in high quality childcare during her working hours. There are also significant benefits of maternal employment later in childhood which can counterbalance the effects in the very early years.

What are the key factors affecting outcomes later in childhood?

3.30 This Review focuses on the crucial importance of the early years but this is not to say that there are no important effects on outcomes later on in childhood. The following section provides a very short summary of literature on outcomes for school-age children. Chapter 5 presents a new set of Life Chances Indicators for pre school children. We hope that the evidence presented below will ultimately form the basis of similar indicators for children of school age.

Parents

3.31 Parents' impact on their children's outcomes continues as children grow older. Their involvement in children's learning is crucial and several studies have found a strong relationship

between parents' hopes that their children will go to university and educational attainment. Research found that parental attitudes and behaviours explained 20% of the gap in attainment between the poorest and the richest children at age 11 (not controlling for prior ability) and that the mothers' hopes for university had the single biggest impact³⁹.

3.32 A literature review⁴⁰ found that most parents have high aspirations for young children but these change as children grow older because of economic constraints, children's abilities and the availability of opportunities. They also found that aspirations are stronger predictors of attainment for young people from more disadvantaged backgrounds than for better off children and that higher parental aspirations can lessen the effects of socio economic disadvantage.

3.33 Parental mental health and psychological well-being also continues to have an impact on children. Research has shown that the mother's perception of whether she has control over her own life or actions is significantly associated with cognitive, non-cognitive and health outcomes at age eight to ten. For example, it explains around 20% of the income gradient in behaviour outcomes and over 7% of the income gradient in Key Stage 1 results⁴¹. The greater level of anxiety and depression, and greater tendency towards harsh discipline in lower income families are associated particularly with poorer child self-esteem and greater behavioural issues.

Child level factors

3.34 Attainment earlier in childhood has a significant impact on later childhood attainment. One study found that prior attainment (measured at age seven) explained over 60% of the gap in

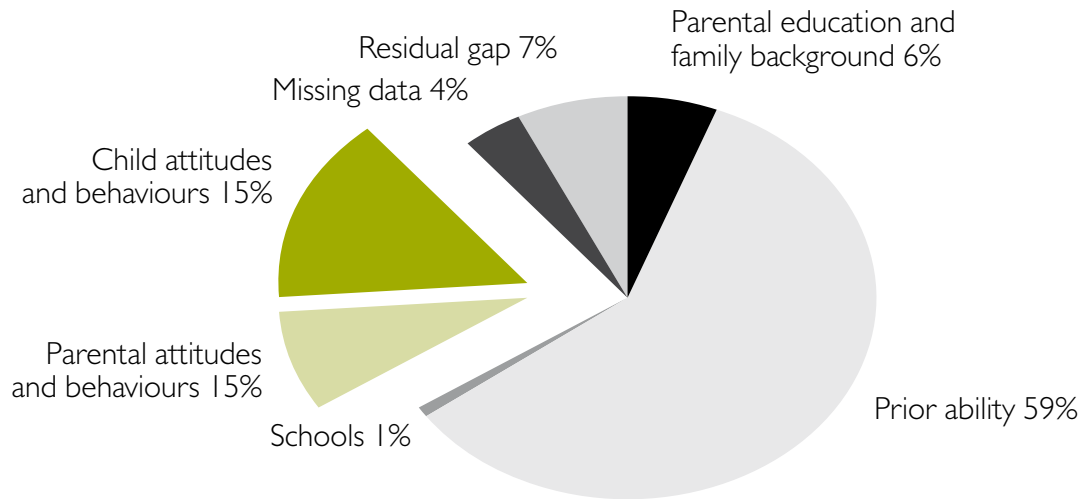
38 Recent research from the USA has concluded that the overall effect of 1st year maternal employment is neutral. It finds that full time employment does have significant and negative direct effects on later child cognitive outcomes (compared with not working in the first year) but that those effects are counterbalanced by positive indirect effects (use of centre-based childcare and increased maternal sensitivity). Brooks-Gunn, J. et al (2010) 'Discussion and Conclusions' Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development 75(2): 96-113.

39 Gregg, P. and Goodman, A. (2010) *Children's Educational Outcomes: the role of attitudes and behaviours, from early childhood to late adolescence*, CMPO, University of Bristol and Institute for Fiscal Studies.

40 Gutman, L.M. and Akerman, R. (2008) *Determinants of Aspirations*. Centre for Research on the Wider Benefits of Learning Research Report 27. London. Institute of Education.

41 Gregg et al. (2008) *Understanding the relationship between parental income and multiple child outcomes: a decomposition analysis*, CMPO working paper 08/193.

Figure 3.5 Explaining the gap between children from families in the bottom and top 20% of the income distribution at age 16: a decomposition analysis



Source: Gregg and Goodman (2010).

attainment between the poorest and the richest at age 11, emphasising the importance of closing gaps in attainment at an earlier stage. The same applies at age 16 as shown in Figure 3.5. This extremely strong relationship between attainment at different ages is confirmed in a number of studies⁴².

3.35 As children grow older, their own attitudes and behaviours also start to have an impact on their attainment (see Figure 3.5). This includes factors relating to aspirations for further education and enjoyment of school. Self esteem also has an impact on attainment – for example belief in their own ability at age 14 has a significant impact on attainment at age 16 and losing belief in their own ability between the ages of 14 and 16 leads to a small increase in risky behaviour⁴³.

Institutions

3.36 Most studies also find that schools, and in particular teachers, have an impact on the gap in attainment between the richest and the poorest. One study showed that around 10% of the variation in Key Stage 2 pupil attainment in English (and 7% for Maths) was attributable to differences between schools⁴⁴ and another found that schools explained around 6% of the gap in attainment at Key Stage 2 between the richest and the poorest when controlling for prior attainment⁴⁵. A similar pattern has been found for non-cognitive outcomes, illustrating that the impact schools are having is consistent across all schools⁴⁶.

42 Gregg and Goodman (2010) *Children's Educational Outcomes: the role of attitudes and behaviours, from early childhood to late adolescence*, CMPO and Vignoles A. and Meschi E. (2010) *The determinants of non-cognitive and cognitive schooling outcomes: A report to the Department for Children Schools and Families*. CEE Special Report 004.

43 A one standard deviation increase in a young person's belief in their own ability at age 14 is associated with a 0.244 standard deviation increase in Key Stage 4 test scores (equivalent to around 38 GCSE points). Chowdry et al. (2009), *Drivers and Barriers to Educational Success – Evidence from the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England*. DCSF-RR102.

44 Gutman, L. and Feinstein, L. (2008) *Children's Well-Being in Primary School: Pupil and School Effects*. WBL Research Report No. 25, Institute of Education.

45 Gregg and Goodman (2010) *Children's Educational Outcomes: the role of attitudes and behaviours, from early childhood to late adolescence*, CMPO.

46 Variations in changes in non-attainment outcomes between the ages of 14 and 16 (e.g. enjoyment of school, bullying and depression) were found to be almost entirely due to differences within schools rather than between schools. Vignoles A. and Meschi E. (2010) *The determinants of non-cognitive and cognitive schooling outcomes*. CEE Special Report 004.

3.37 A key finding on the impact of schools is that teaching quality in particular matters. The evidence from the STAR project set out in paragraph 3.9 demonstrates the importance of being taught by a good teacher in the early years. Teaching quality was a significant predictor of progress in both reading and mathematics over Key Stage 2. Analysis of the attainment of older children showed that being taught by a high quality (top 25%) rather than low quality (bottom 25%) teacher added 0.425 of a GCSE grade per subject⁴⁷.

3.38 Analysis of outcomes in UK schools shows that the vast majority – over 80% – of secondary schools whose intake at age 11 are in the bottom 20% of performance are still in the bottom 20% of GCSE results, illustrating that only a small minority of secondary schools manage to shift the performance of their students during these years. The picture among primary schools is more mixed, although nearly half of primary schools with a school average Foundation Stage Profile score in the bottom 20% remain there at Key Stage 2⁴⁸.

What matters during the transition to adulthood?

3.39 Cognitive development in the early years has a strong predictive power for later life outcomes and this relationship gets stronger during childhood. Cognitive development at age 11 matters for both employment and wage levels in adult life as well as having an impact on health outcomes.

3.40 Once you reach the labour market, there are clear economic advantages to qualifications – higher qualifications carry higher returns and academic qualifications earn more than their vocational counterparts (except in the case of

postgraduate qualifications where vocational qualifications such as accountancy earn higher returns than PhDs). For example: Five A*-Cs at GCSE carry a wage return of around 10% and a first degree carries a return of between 25 and 30%⁴⁹.

3.41 The type of skills demanded in the labour market is and has been changing from manual skills to abilities in communication and self-management. This indicates that social and emotional skills are becoming more important. Research has confirmed that some non-cognitive skills – in particular attentiveness and the belief that your own action can make a difference – are almost as important as cognitive skills for achieving minimal educational qualifications by age 26⁵⁰.

3.42 This combination of a high degree of correlation between parents and children's educational outcomes (as outlined in paragraph 3.15), the large gaps in attainment between richer and poorer children (as shown in Chapter 2) and the big wage returns to higher qualifications, reinforce inequality of outcomes across generations. These are the driving forces behind the, by international standards, low levels of social mobility in the UK in terms of education, income and social class.

Recommendations

3.43 Given the evidence set out in this chapter, this Review recommends that the Government should give greater prominence to the earliest years in life, adopting the term 'Foundation Years' to increase: the profile of this crucial life stage; improve the public's understanding of what is important for babies and young children; and to describe the package of support for child development in that period. The Foundation Years should be as important in the public

47 Burgess et al (2009) *Do teachers matter? Measuring the variation in teacher effectiveness in England*, Bristol, CMPO.

48 Department for Education internal analysis of the National Pupil Database.

49 Jenkins et al (2007) *The Returns to Qualifications in England, Updating the Evidence Base on Level 2 and Level 3 Vocational Qualifications*. CEE Discussion Paper no. 89.

50 Feinstein, L. (2000), *The relative importance of academic, psychological and behavioural attributes developed in childhood*. London School of Economics.

mind as the primary and secondary school years and development during those years as well understood. A reduction in the inequality of outcomes during the early years should be an absolute priority. Chapter 4 outlines some practical steps that the Government could take towards achieving better outcomes for the most disadvantaged children and Chapter 5 sets out how we could measure outcomes in these years.

3.44 The Review recommends that the Government gradually moves funding to the early years and that this funding is weighted towards the most disadvantaged children. There should be a continued and increased Fairness Premium for the Foundation Years (building on the Fairness Premium and Early Intervention Grant introduced in the 2010 Spending Review⁵⁷), which should start in pregnancy. The Review would see this premium as enabling Sure Start Children's Centres to pay for specific additional services for low income families.

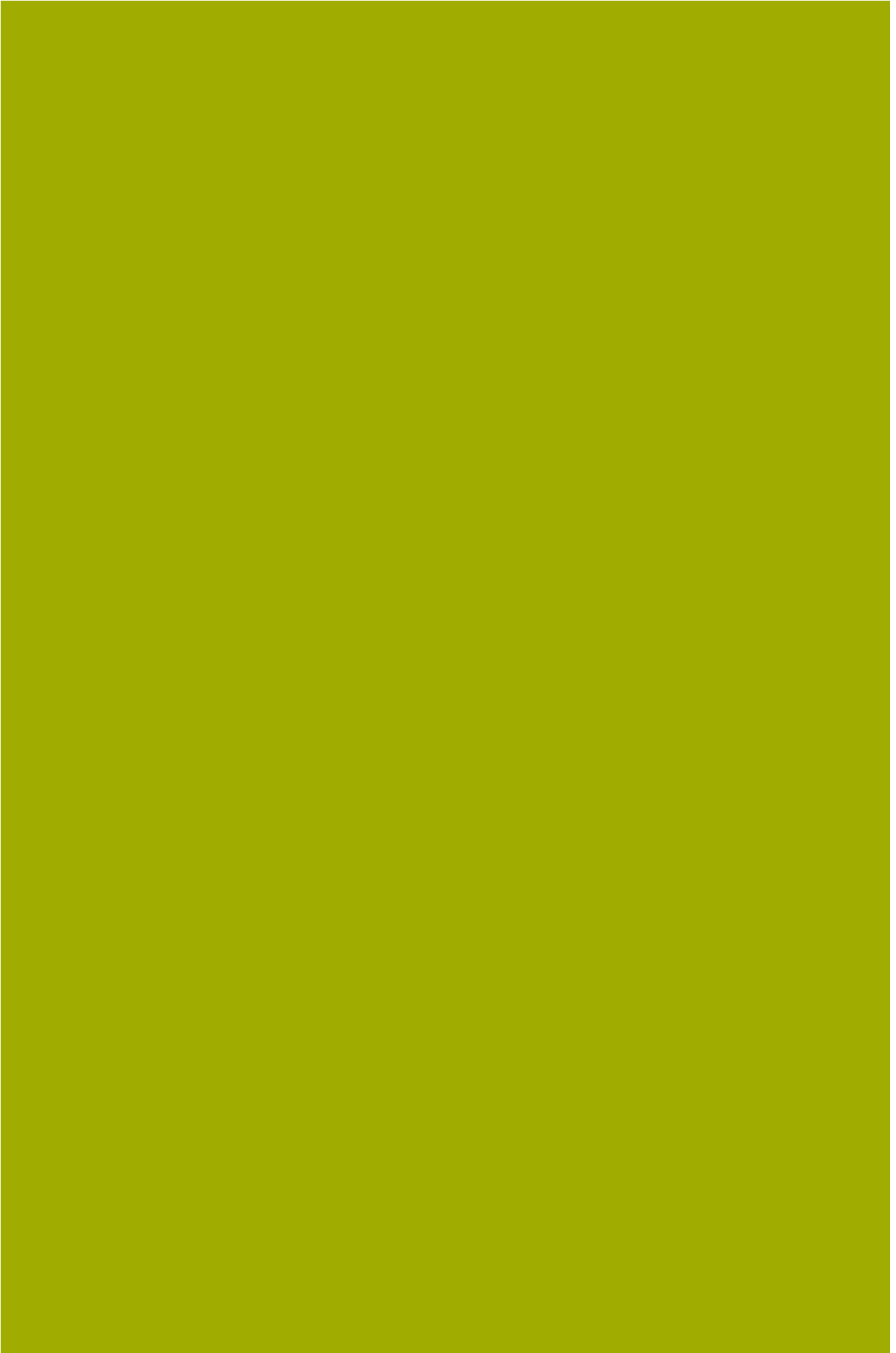
3.45 The Review supports a sustainable approach to reducing child poverty. To this end, we recommend that for every Budget, the Government calculates what it would cost, in terms of income transfers, to ensure that the child poverty rate does not increase, and there should be a public debate about the best way to invest this amount of money in improving life chances. If the evidence shows that this money would have a larger impact on child poverty if it were invested in Foundation Years services rather than income transfers, then Government should consider this as an option.

3.46 This increased funding should be targeted at those factors that we know matter in the early years – high quality and consistent support during pregnancy and in the early years, support for parents regarding parenting and the home learning environment and early education. Chapter 4 explains the Review's vision for the Foundation Years in more detail and sets out what the increased funding should be used on.

3.47 These recommendations will be challenging in the short term, but the Government should have a long term ambition to narrow the gaps in outcomes between poorer and richer children by age five, because that is the most cost-effective way of addressing inequalities in life chances. There is no time to waste in beginning this new offensive in fighting poverty.

3.48 The Review believes that, in the long run, all disadvantaged children must have access to affordable full time, graduate led early education from age two. This is essential to support parents returning to work as well as child development. If high quality early education is only available part time, parents may have to supplement it with lower quality, cheaper childcare or choose not to return to work.

3.49 While this Review has focused on the early years, it recognises that important changes can and do take place later in children's lives and that investment in the early years will not be fully effective unless it is followed up with high quality services for those who need them most later in childhood. The Review therefore recommends that the Government extends the life chances approach to later stages in childhood.



Chapter 4

Building Foundation Years Services

This chapter looks at what Government (both central and local) voluntary sector and community bodies can do to ensure that disadvantaged children get the best start in life, and to minimise the chances of them being poor in adulthood. It goes through:

- A. Briefly where we are now – including both the current system and evidence around effectiveness.
- B. Where we want to be, a vision for the future, with practical steps that central and local Government and providers can take over the coming years.

Summary:

- Chapter 3 set out the importance of the early years in a child's development, including parenting and the home learning environment. Given the importance of the early years Government, both local and national, should see these Foundation Years becoming as important as primary and secondary education, and treat their provision accordingly.
- Evidence suggests that there are services which can make a real difference – changing the trajectory of where children are heading:
 - Children in Sure Start areas show better behaviour and greater independence, partly because of improved parenting and home learning environments.
 - Programmes – such as Family Intervention Services – can save money by preventing the need for more intensive help.
 - The EPPE study found that pre-school helps to reduce the disadvantage children from some social groups experience.
- But currently services on the ground are very variable and so are the results. Too often there's little understanding of the outcomes achieved or whether they reach the families that need them most. The evidence base shows interventions can improve parenting and life chances, but does not always give us a clear idea of the best way of doing this.

Summary (continued):

- Poor families, who have most to gain, get the worst deal from public services: Ofsted reports show schools and childcare in deprived areas are of a lower standard than in affluent areas. This needs to change if we are to reduce poverty in the long term.
- What parents do is the most important factor in children's development. Services need to be better at engaging parents and building on their strengths. More opportunities to learn parenting skills should be provided, including through the school curriculum.
- The Review recommends formalising the package of support from conception to age five as the Foundation Years – with a Cabinet Minister sited jointly in the Department for Education and Department of Health to take responsibility for this approach. The Foundation Years should be:
 - Universal: with Sure Start Children's Centres providing support for all parents and a gateway for those that need more help.
 - Providing help for those that need it most: with increased funding for families who would benefit most, a targeted home visiting service and services in deprived areas brought up to the standard of those in more affluent areas.
 - Involving the community: improving the capacity of local parents to help each other, and ensuring local voluntary groups have the chance to run services.
 - Evidence based: with services which make a difference and a good understanding of whether services are getting to the children that need them most.

4.1 There is a range of evidence on what has a favourable impact on parenting styles and early years development for children. It shows that there are interventions which can make a difference to children's life chances. This is consistent with the picture that practitioners and academics have given us in discussion.

4.2 In addition, evidence from other countries suggests that there is scope for making significant improvements in both parenting and children's outcomes:

- The Harlem Children's Zone – where one evaluation found "the effects are big enough to close the black-white achievement gap in mathematics"¹.
- The two countries at the top of the UNICEF League Tables for Child Wellbeing – Sweden and the Netherlands – give priority to investment in the early years and improving parenting: in Sweden 98% of maternity clinics offer parenting education; in the Netherlands parenting support is offered to all families².

4.3 Running through all the recommendations are two principles:

- Parents have to be partners in the education system from their child's conception through to eighteen. What parents do in the home is more important than what schools do, so it is vital that early years services, nurseries, schools and other professionals involve parents and build on their strengths.
- Society needs to take service provision from conception to age five as seriously as it does compulsory education. Chapter 3 showed that less than one in five children who were in the bottom quartile in early development scores at age five achieved an A Level or higher, and that parental involvement in a child's education is key and starts during the early years.

1 Dobbie and Fryer, (2009), *Are High Quality Schools Enough to Close the Achievement Gap? Evidence From A Social Experiment in Harlem*, NBER Working Paper 15473 www.nber.org/papers/w15473 (pg 1).

2 Hosking, Walsh and Pillai, (2010), *International experiences of early intervention for children, young people and their families*, Wave Trust commissioned by C4EO.

What the Review has not covered

4.4 Given the evidence set out in Chapters 2 and 3, that in principle interventions in the early years can be most cost effective, and their influence is felt throughout the life course, the Review has concentrated on ways of improving children's attainment in the early years.

4.5 There are a number of areas of overlap with other work and ongoing reviews that have been commissioned by the Government. In these cases this report has not gone into detail.

- Those children who need the most intensive support or care. Professor Eileen Munro is conducting a review of the child protection system, with a focus on strengthening the social work profession to put them into a better position to make well-informed judgements³.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework – which is the subject of a review led by Dame Clare Tickell. This review is looking at how best early years settings can support young children's learning, development and welfare to help give all children the best start in life⁴.
- Evidence of what works with specific interventions, how we disseminate this, and funding mechanisms which help local bodies to commission preventative interventions – which the Graham Allen led Early Intervention review is covering.
- Wider issues of social mobility – where Alan Milburn is providing an annual independent review of Government effectiveness.

A – The current situation and evidence on effectiveness

Key Points:

- There is evidence that interventions can make a difference in improving parenting, the home learning environment, and improving children's attainment, for example:
 - Triple P has been shown to lead to positive changes in parenting and reductions in child problem behaviour.
 - Children in Sure Start areas have been shown to have improved behaviour and greater independence partly because of better parenting and home learning environment.
 - There is strong evidence to suggest, as set out in chapter 3, that high quality childcare leads to better outcomes, especially for disadvantaged children.
- There is a strong case for universal services which are not stigmatising and which improve awareness of early development through the whole population. In countries such as Sweden and the Netherlands parenting support is offered to almost all parents.
- But there are many times when more specific help is needed. The evidence points to the most effective interventions being intensive, focused on specific populations and include both parents and children. Details matter: programmes which look similar often have very different levels of success. Although services targeted at specific groups can be more effective they risk stigmatising some groups and reducing take up.

3 More background on the Munro Review of Child Protection is at www.education.gov.uk/munroreview/background.shtml.

4 Terms of reference of the Review of the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework are on the web: <http://www.education.gov.uk/consultations/downloadableDocs/Sarah%20Tether%20Letter.pdf>.

- The evidence is not as strong as we would like: much is based on studies from the United States; a lot of British evidence is based on ‘softer’ indicators such as whether participants have said they found a course useful, rather than changes in behaviour or outcomes. Services are very variable, and too often there is little understanding of how well the system delivers for the poorest children.
- Those that need most help get the worst deal from the system. We have already noted that good quality early years settings can have the most benefit for the poorest children, but they are least likely to go to them and for many reasons the poorest children get the worst experience in school.

Overview of the evidence base

4.6 There is a range of evidence on what is effective, with several bodies collating evidence on what works, including the Washington State Institute and the What Works Clearing House in the United States; and in the UK the Dartington Social Research Unit, the Institute of Effective Education in York, and C4EO (The Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children’s and Young People’s Services). Several overarching messages come through including that the most effective programmes are:

- Targeted at specific populations
- Intensive
- Voluntary
- Maintain fidelity to the original model
- Work with both parents and children

4.7 However, it is difficult to give a good overall picture of the evidence and give a clear answer to the question “what works best?” There are a number of reasons for this:

- Much of the evidence is taken from the United States. Although this provides pointers to good practice, evidence does not necessarily read across to the UK.
- Programmes which look similar to a non-expert can be very different in how successful they are. There are programmes of all types which either do not work, or have relatively modest results⁵. So commissioners of services have to be careful to understand whether evidence is really robust, or alternatively to evaluate programmes when they are in place.
- Judgements can be based on different criteria, or impacts on different outcomes. For example, the Promising Practice website ranks one programme as ‘proven’ as there is robust evidence it makes a difference; however, the Washington State Institute analysis shows that it is not cost effective, as it does not make enough difference to specific outcomes to justify the expenditure.

4.8 The Graham Allen review of Early Intervention is looking in more detail at:

- models of good practice, what works around early intervention and how these could best be supported and disseminated; and
- new and innovative funding mechanisms, including non-government money, which would ensure long term stability and funding of Early Intervention programmes and policies.

Services disadvantaged children receive

4.9 Disadvantaged children often get worse services than children of better off parents, or children in more affluent areas.

4.10 The children who would benefit most from good quality early education and childcare are least likely to receive it. This reflects a number of issues:

- As Ofsted note in their 2009-10 annual report “The quality of provision is lower in areas of high deprivation; the more deprived the area, the

5 Examples of different programmes of a similar type are in, Aos et al (2004) *Benefits and Costs of Prevention and Early Intervention Programmes for Youth*, Washington State Institute for Public Policy.

lower the proportion of good and outstanding providers. Just over half (52%) of childminders in the most deprived areas are good or outstanding, compared with 71% in the least deprived areas”⁶. In particular, childminders and childcare providers work better in partnership with parents in advantaged areas than in disadvantaged ones.

- Take-up is lower for disadvantaged children. This partly reflects cost, but even take up of the free entitlement is lower: for the 15 hours of free early education places for three or four year olds, 79% of children in families with an annual income under £10,000 receive some free entitlement, compared with 87% for all children at this age and 97% of children in families with annual income over £45,000⁷.

4.11 Schools then often provide worse teaching to disadvantaged pupils. There are a number of reasons for this: it is harder to recruit good teachers to challenging schools in deprived areas and low income parents often find it harder to engage with their children’s learning or with the school. There can be a downward spiral with low ability groups receiving poorer teaching resulting in low attainment, low expectation and poor motivation⁸. Many teachers find it easier to teach well-behaved children and so engage more with them.

4.12 What parents do in the home is at least as important as early years and school education. Schools and early years settings can encourage parents to provide a better home learning environment, but again schools serving the most deprived pupils are around half as likely to be judged good or outstanding for the quality of their

parental engagement as schools with the least deprived pupils. The Ofsted submission to the review said “more remains to be done to convince some schools that parental engagement is central to their core purpose of raising attainment”.

Recent developments

4.13 There has been a recent increase in the level of activity and interest in services around early years, including with Sure Start Children’s Centres originally announced in 1998 – sited in the most deprived communities. The National Roll out of Sure Start occurred between 2006 and 2010, bringing the total number of centres from 800 to around 3,500. The Children, Schools and Families Select Committee said:

“The unambiguous belief of those who work in the sector is that Children’s Centres are bearing fruit in a way that is demonstrated by the experiences of individual families who use them. However, there is also a proper and necessary awareness that evidence about outcomes must be collected more systematically and rigorously – a process hampered in many areas by lack of data. In particular, information that would allow Children’s Centres to be assessed for value for money is still more difficult to come by than it should be, although work in this area is progressing.”⁹

4.14 Early assessments of Sure Start programmes showed mixed results, but the more recent evaluations of fully established programmes show more positive effects, with similar positive effects for all children from a range of backgrounds (for example workless households and teenage mothers)¹⁰.

6 Ofsted Annual report for 2009-10, November 2010.

7 Smith et al, (2010). *Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents*, Natcen, DfE Research Report DFE_054.

8 Department for Children, Schools and Families (2009), *Deprivation and Education, the evidence on pupils in England, Foundation State to Key Stage 4*.

9 House of Commons, Children, Schools and Families Committee (March 2010) *Sure Start Children’s Centres, Fifth Report of Session 2009-10* www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmselect/cmchilsch/130/130i.pdf.

10 Melhuish et al (2008) *Effects of fully-established Sure Start Local Programmes on 3-year-old children and their families living in England: a quasi experimental observational study*. The Lancet Vol 372.

4.15 There is an increasing range of specific programmes aimed at disadvantaged families with young children which demonstrate that improvements can be made to the home learning environment, parenting, and child outcomes more widely. Some of these, such as Family Nurse Partnerships¹¹ and the Triple P and Incredible Years parenting programmes have rigorous evidence bases. Others are showing promising results, although do not yet have the sort of rigorous evidence base that is preferable.

Challenges in delivery

4.16 Most of the services that support parents and early years development are commissioned by local bodies, whether Local Authorities, Primary Care Trusts (and soon GPs) or schools.

4.17 Despite analysis suggesting that early years programmes can save money, a number of practical problems are often identified which prevent these services being provided. A recent report by DEMOS¹² identified:

- a lack of clear evidence, and poor understanding of the evidence by commissioners;
- the long timescales involved in seeing returns, which is a poor incentive to commission preventative work; and
- silo based local budgeting, with benefits from investment often going to a different local budget from the one which would commission the preventative service.

4.18 It is important to also note limitations in the capacity of many services. In several areas, for example, the caseloads health visitors carry mean they are entirely focused on safeguarding and many parents cannot expect more than a brief visit. The Review has also heard that the two year health review does not happen for many children due to limits on capacity. Given these challenges we welcome the commitment to an additional 4,200 health visitors from the Government and would encourage join up between health visitors and other professionals – such as early years

practitioners – to help reach and provide support for all children. The social work profession also faces similar capacity challenges, which the Munro review is looking at in more detail.

B – Where do we want to be – a vision for the future

Key Points:

This section sets out principles for the Foundation Years, including specific actions:

A single service – the Foundation Years should provide coherent support. Specifically:

- A Cabinet Minister for the Foundation Years.
- Children's Centres should expand the range of services they provide to include, for example, birth registration and benefit advice.
- Local areas should consider setting up local child poverty and life chances commissions to investigate, co-ordinate and tackle local issues.

A universal service from which all parents can be comfortable asking for support.

- Sure Start Children's Centres and associated networks should provide a first port of call for Foundation Years services for all parents.

Providing most help for those that need it most – with a long term aim that schools and childcare in deprived areas are at least as good as those in affluent areas.

- The principle of the Fairness Premium should be extended to the Foundation Years.

11 Nurse Family Partnerships were developed in the United States, and are being piloted in the UK as Family Nurse Partnerships.

12 Sodha and Margo (2010) *Ex curricula* Demos.

Builds on parental success – as what parents do is the biggest influence on children. Specifically:

- Childcare and schools should engage all parents with their children's learning.
- Department for Education should ensure that parenting and life skills are taught in schools through the curriculum.

Building capacity in the community – recognising that informal networks are important sources of support for parents, and strongly influence the way they parent.

- Local Authorities should ensure that private, voluntary and independent providers are able to bid to run Children's Centres and services within them.
- Foundation Years staff should actively encourage local parents groups and other networks, and facilitate their creation and sustainability.

Professionally led – as professionals in, for example, childcare, and Family Nurse Partnerships make a real difference to outcomes. Specifically:

- Department for Education, in conjunction with Children's Centres, should sponsor train and develop the Foundation Years workforce.

Underpinned by evidence – using methods which we know make improvements.

- Local Authorities should pool data to understand whether disadvantaged children are benefiting from key services.

Accountable – so the public have the information to hold specific services, Local Authorities and Central Government to account.

- Information on progress of three and five year olds should be collected to show the impact of Children's Centres and Local Authority services.

4.19 This section sets out the Review's ambitions for the Foundation Years, and some more short and medium term steps central and local government can take to make progress.

4.20 Both central and local government are looking hard at their existing spend in light of the fiscal situation. Even without the fiscal constraints it will inevitably take several years to build up capacity. Nevertheless, it is useful to set out what an ideal service might look like to inform the steps we are able to take now.

What Foundation Years services might look like from parents' point of view

4.21 What are our ambitions for the Foundation Years services? This section looks at some longer term ambitions.

4.22 The review sees Foundation Years services encompassing:

- Maternity units and midwifery services providing support and advice to pregnant women.
- Children's Centres providing centre based support including: parenting courses, stay and play, relationship support for parents, speech therapy and other support for children, as well as providing wider support as a one stop centre for a range of parent centred services including: skills advice, birth registration, advice on benefits, debt and other issues.
- A home visiting service – made up of both trained health visitors and outreach workers, providing home based support for parents unable to get to centres or for those who need more intensive support.
- Wider voluntary support networks – which are promoted by Children's Centres and others.

Box 4.1: The Foundation Years Service

To start we might think about what the Foundation Years would ideally look like from the point of view of a family – let us call them Ella and John – going through the challenge of raising a young child on a low income. Ella is not in work and John is in a low paid job, this is their first child, and they do not have a large family support network nearby (Ella's parents live a couple of hours away, and John has fallen out with his parents).

On finding out she's pregnant Ella goes to her GP surgery where she's referred to the midwife. She sees the midwife eight or nine times through her pregnancy, with John also invited along to the visits where Ella is comfortable. The midwife tells Ella and John about the early years Fairness Premium, which allows families on a low income to access a package of additional services, including early education and childcare which gives Ella and John time away from caring, free books, etc. The midwife also explains that they would like to share some selected information with the Children's Centre so that services can run more smoothly, which Ella agrees to (she thought this happened anyway).

The midwife books Ella and John onto a local 'Preparation for Parenthood' ante-natal group, which includes the opportunity to meet other parents and learn about the importance of early attachment and caring for a new baby. The group is held at the local Children's Centre where they can meet their health visitor - and the parents are shown around the Centre and the facilities. The staff talk to the parents about its range of services, make sure they feel welcome, and let them know what services they are entitled to and what is paid for.

Some ante-natal classes are held in other premises, but someone from the Children's Centre comes along to introduce themselves. Ella and John are also introduced to their health visitor at this session. (For people who miss the ante-natal class there are other opportunities to meet up with the health visitor and key Children's Centre staff.)

The prospective parents are talked through the main routes of support:

- The Children's Centre, which provides a hub which most services can either be accessed from, or signposted to. Many appointments are either at the Children's Centre or the local GPs surgery.
- A health visitor, with the midwife, who provide expert guidance on caring for a new baby and helping them make the transition to parenthood along with a team of professional workers and volunteers. The team is focused on people who have problems attending the Children's Centre, or families who may need extra support. The team has good links with the local GPs' surgeries and the Children's Centre. Each family gets the chance to build up a relationship with the health visitor and their team.
- Voluntary support which supplements the formal support and provides either less formal help, or, with supervision, support for parents statutory services cannot get to. This will take different forms in different local areas, but Children's Centres and health visitors help to build up capacity in the sector.

The most important people for Ella and John are their friends and family. The ante-natal group builds friendships so they meet outside the formal group and support each other. The same group is also invited to follow up meetings, including on breastfeeding. A volunteer from a local parents' group comes along to encourage the future parents to meet regularly. There is also a volunteer community parent scheme, which provides low level support to new parents (supplementing health visitors).

Ella gives birth in a local hospital.

A health visitor comes to see Ella, John and Aiden soon after the birth at their home. The health visitor books the visit for a time when John can make it. She talks Ella through some tips for continuing to breastfeed. Ella has found it difficult but wants to keep trying as she knows how important it is for her baby. The health visitor puts her in touch with a local peer support group, and visits regularly over the next couple of weeks to support the family. The health visitor encourages Ella and John to go back to their 'Preparation for Parenthood' group which is continuing until all the babies are six weeks old. They think they may then join the positive parenting course run by the Children's Centre. (All parents are asked whether they want to go on one of these, but the health visitor makes more effort with young parents, or parents in more challenging circumstances.)

Ella and John register the birth at the local Children's Centre. After the registration, a family benefits advisor, based in the centre, checks whether they need any help with child benefit or other forms, and checks they know about the service facilities and parenting courses.

They discuss again the importance of early attachment and talking to young children. Ella and John are struggling with the additional work of bringing up Aiden. The Health visitor notes this and makes sure they are visited every month to check they are OK: that feeding is going OK, and to keep encouraging them to play with Aiden. The health visitor visits become less frequent when they notice that Ella and John are coping better and regularly going to the Children's Centre (so Centre based services can provide more of the support).

The Children's Centre staff talk to Ella and John around Aiden's first birthday (and around subsequent birthdays) about what the second year may be like, and what new challenges they are likely to face. The health visiting team review all children before their first birthday and are on hand if needed in between.

The family move house when Aiden is one and a half, moving out of the catchment area of the local Children's Centre. The Local Authority collects Housing Benefit records, and Children's Centre attendance records are part of its data system. It uses these to identify that the family has moved. Someone from the health visiting team goes to see them and invites them to their nearest Children's Centre and helps make sure support is as seamless as possible.

The Children's Centre regularly consults the parents on what it offers, while giving them a simple overview on the evidence behind different elements of what it does.

From age two Aiden gets a free early education place for 15 hours a week. (There is some free early education for children younger than two who key workers think will benefit from it.) Ella is encouraged to use some of that time to start working towards a qualification. The staff at the nursery support Aiden's learning through play. They invite Ella and John to spend a couple of hours in the nursery every couple of months to see what the nursery staff are doing and discuss what the parents can do to help their children. Ella has always struggled with reading and so has not read to Aiden: the nursery staff discuss this with her, encourage her to sign up to an adult skills course and show her how she can tell stories to Aiden using picture books.

There is a cafe in the Centre which is run as a local social enterprise. Ella volunteers at this for two mornings a week while Aiden is in childcare. She gets to know more people from volunteering and feels more comfortable about applying for work as Aiden gets older. Some other parents volunteer with the stay and play services and the crèche (although these services remain professionally led). A small number of parents gain qualifications through the work they do volunteering.

At two and a half Aiden has a development check with a health visitor. This looks at his health, cognitive and social and emotional development. It is used to provide pointers where development is not as strong as it should be. The information is also aggregated up and used to understand how children in the area as a whole are progressing, feeding into the overall assessment of the Children's Centre (and the part of their payment that is related to results).

At the development check the health visitor notes that Aiden's speech is not developing as fast as would normally be expected. The health visitor uses part of the Fairness Premium for Aiden to access one session a week with a speech therapist, and – with Ella and John's agreement – speaks with staff at Aiden's nursery about how they can help support Aiden's language development.

As Ella gets more confident she volunteers as a community parent providing support and information to other new parents in the community.

As Aiden approaches school age, the family gets invited to look round the local primary school and are talked through the changes. The Children's Centre knows that the school will be conducting Aiden's development check when he starts school and that the results will help determine the Children's Centre's budget. The Children's Centre and school have good relations and pass on information so that the school knows how Aiden has been doing up to that point.

4.23 Given the sort of services we want parents to receive, what are the principles of the Foundation Years service:

- A single service – different branches of Government working together in a coherent way.
- Universal – a service all parents can look to for some support.
- Provides most help for those that need it most – to close gaps in attainment.
- Builds on parenting successes – as what parents do is the biggest single influence on children.
- Builds capacity in the community – recognising that informal networks are important sources of support for parents and strongly influence the way they parent.

- Professionally led – professionals in, for example, childcare, make a real difference to outcomes.
- Underpinned by evidence – using methods which we know make real improvements.
- Accountable – so the public have the information to hold specific services, Local Authorities and central government to account.

4.24 Although the work of the review has been centred around Foundation Years services, many of these principles – for example: providing most help to those who need it most, engaging with parents, and building capacity in the community – are important through all ages.

4.25 **A single service: The Foundation Years** – parents' first engagement with public services in pregnancy is often through doctors and midwives. The health service is often seen as something separate from education and early years separate from primary school. In the Foundation Years this cannot be the case: parents should be able to build up relationships with key workers who work across transitions, with funding also reflecting coherent needs. To the parent this should appear to be one single public service. This also means increasingly co-locating services so that parents can easily find the support they need. For example, parents could register a birth, automatically apply for child benefit, and discuss wider support in the same place.

4.26 **Actions on providing a single universal service include:**

- Cabinet Minister for Foundation Years sited jointly in the Department for Education and the Department of Health.
- Local areas should consider setting up local child poverty and life chances commissions to investigate reform and drive the issue locally.
- Department of Health should work with health visitors to ensure a consistency of service and 'handover' between more medical pre-birth services and increasingly educational post birth

work, for example early years practitioners and school staff.

- Local Authorities should look at how they could site birth registration in local Children's Centres. Children's Centres should look to provide naming or welcoming ceremonies, or signposting to community groups such as faith groups who provide these services.
- Children's Centres should provide child benefit forms and other benefit advice¹³.

4.27 **Universal** – providing help to all parents, building a widely based culture of understanding of good parenting. Foundation Years services should be seen as core government provision in the same way hospitals and schools are. Without a universal approach it is hard to change the overall culture of parenting. Parenting courses would be offered as routine to new parents¹⁴, and should be seen as something normal to do, rather than remedial, or something only for low income families. There should also be clear first points of contact for parents within services, for example in Children's Centres, the health visitor led home visiting service and childcare settings. These individuals should link in with other services and wider community networks.

4.28 **Actions on a universal service include:**

- Despite current financial pressures central and local government should aim to provide universal support, potentially by making savings through part time Centres, clusters of Centres making efficiencies on administration and management, and making best use of different buildings.

4.29 **Provide additional support for those who need it most** – universal services alone will not close the gap between disadvantaged and less disadvantaged children. To narrow the gap it is vital that funding and wider resources are aimed at the areas and individuals most in need. The Fairness Premium and local authority funding are a start,

¹³ Sunderland Council is piloting a project to share registration data and make child benefit more automatic.

¹⁴ Only 2% of parents in the UK had completed a parenting course, in Sweden 98% of maternity clinics offer parenting courses to first time parents. From Sanders et al (2009) *Designing effective interventions for working parents: a survey of parents in the UK workforce*.

but, as set out in Chapter 3, the review would want to see the principle of the Fairness Premium extended throughout the Foundation Years (building on the Early Intervention Grant) with more money going to those providers that teach children from the most deprived backgrounds, and deprived parents able to access a wider range of services. One long term aim should be that schools, childcare, and Children's Centres in deprived areas achieve, on average, at least as good Ofsted ratings as facilities in more affluent areas.

4.30 **Actions on providing additional support for those who need it most include:**

- Department for Education and Local Authorities to ensure that Sure Start Children's Centres identify, reach and provide most help to most disadvantaged families. New Sure Start contracts should include conditions that reward Centres for reaching out effectively to the most disadvantaged.
- Ofsted ratings for childcare and schools in disadvantaged areas compared to more affluent areas should be included as one of the Department for Education's indicators in its Business Plan and Government policy should aim to close the gap.
- Department for Education to ensure that schools are held to account for reducing the attainment gap in the same way they are for improving attainment¹⁵. Where a school has a persistent or increasing attainment gap, this should have a significant bearing on the inspection outcome for the school, and ultimately this should be a major factor in a decision on whether the school is judged inadequate.
- Department for Education should continue to look for ways to encourage good teachers to teach in schools and work in Children's Centres

in deprived areas, including through schemes such as Teach First and New Leaders in Early Years – a new programme starting in a number of disadvantaged areas.

4.31 **Builds on parental success** – what parents do is the single biggest influence on children's attainment; therefore services should aim to engage and support parents, building parents' own strengths in dealing with problems, not add to their worries. Services need to welcome all parents and carers, including fathers, and grandparents. We have been told that services often assume that the mother is the main or only carer. There are examples of changing the way invitations are phrased leading to a significant increase in the proportion of fathers coming to, say, a health visitor appointment. Children's Centres and home visitors should encourage parents to come to parenting courses as a matter of course throughout the first three years of life.

4.32 The review recommends that parenting and family relationships are given greater prominence on the school curriculum, with pupils able to obtain a cross-curricular qualification at GCSE level in parenting from relevant modules in other subjects. This should start from primary school age, exploring friendships, families and what's important for babies. Later, the emphasis should shift towards the complexities of relationships, pressures, and mental health, how to build and maintain stable relationships and considering how parents can best support children's development. In secondary school, there should also be a focus on other life skills, such as budgeting and Information and Communication Technology (ICT). The content should be evidence-based and should introduce children to the basis for the life chances indicators (see Chapter 5) and how parents are best placed to support their children.

¹⁵ This review has taken place while the Government has been devolving more power to local decision makers. Given that it is not always clear how some recommendations should be implemented, but here the basic principle is that narrowing the gap, and helping the most disadvantaged pupils should be as important as attainment when reviewing school performance.

Box 4.2: Approaches involving family learning

Washington State Institute found that many of the most successful programmes involved both parents and children. There are a number of examples of programmes in the UK which involve both children and parents.

Family Learning normally refers to learning within a household, where children and families learn together. This can involve a number of different approaches, including: Family Learning classes giving parents an understanding of what is happening in their children's school and how they can help; and parents working with children when they are both improving their literacy and numeracy. All of the approaches help to build confidence in parents and make them better able to engage with their children's learning.

For example: the Families and Schools Together programme involves eight weekly sessions which children and parents take part in together. There are structured activities to build the parent child bond and social connections. The approach is designed to enhance the child's functioning in school, in the community, and at home. After the eight weekly sessions, the parents graduate and are supported to set their own agenda for monthly family group meetings.

will be awarded if pupils have completed particular modules in a number of GCSE subjects. The Manchester Academy is currently developing a pilot scheme which could be used as the basis for this GCSE.

- Schools should engage parents on an ongoing basis (engagement needs to be ongoing, rather than once a term at parents' evenings), with increased use of home-school agreements to encourage schools, parents and pupils to discuss their goals.
- Department for Education continues to publish and promote clear evidence on what is successful in encouraging parental engagement in their children's learning.
- Ofsted continues to report on schools and childcare engagement with parents – this is a particularly key area – which settings should be held to account for.
- More widely there's a challenge to improve awareness of parenting across the country. The Cabinet Office Behavioural Insight team should lead, along with key Departments, an examination of how parenting and nurturing skills can be best promoted throughout society.

4.34 Build capacity in the community – a key part of support for families comes from friends. Groups such as the National Childbirth Trust can be very successful in bringing parents together to share their experiences. Children's Centres can signpost to these groups, but also help build the capacity of parents to set up their own groups, or share their experiences with other parents. (There is the potential for Community Organisers to help with this if it is identified as a local priority, Children's Centres should be ready to work with them.) As part of this Children's Centres should increasingly commission out specific services or provide a platform for voluntary and community groups which can show some evidence of their impact, such as Home Start.

4.33 Actions on building on parental success include:

- Local Authorities should ensure all new parents have early access to a parenting course, and the health visitor offers to sign them up as a matter of routine, initially targeting this on those most likely to benefit.
- Department for Education should ensure that parenting and life skills are reflected in the curriculum, from primary school to GCSE level. This should culminate in a cross-curricular qualification in parenting at GCSE level which

Box 4.3: Community Parents

Community Parents is a home based parent support programme, where volunteer local parents are trained and offer information and guidance to other parents in the area. Different versions are being piloted or run in several areas. They offer information and support around issues such as behavioural problems, setting a routine and sleep problems; as well as wider issues such as budgeting and housing.

The scheme helps build the confidence of volunteers, with some training which can lead to recognised qualifications. It also provides useful low level support for families who need it and can help to strengthen informal local networks. Volunteer programmes can also help provide support which is clearly seen as independent from the state.

While there are obviously limits on the problems volunteers can be expected to deal with, these schemes provide a useful way of providing low level support while also building community links.

4.35 Actions on building capacity in the community include:

- Local Authorities ensuring that services provided by Children's Centres do not replicate existing provision from private, voluntary and independent groups – instead they signpost to those groups, or may provide Centre space.
- Local Authorities to open up commissioning of Children's Centres, or services within them, to private voluntary and independent groups.
- Ensure Children's Centres signpost to services provided by other community groups and encourage those groups to use Children's Centre space.

4.36 Professionally led – the evidence from several sources suggests that professional leadership, whether through early years professions and qualified teachers in early years setting, or nurses in Family Nurse Partnerships,

are key in ensuring good outcomes. The Review's ambition would be to staff the Foundation Years as professionally as we now staff schools, with childcare settings which are graduate-led. There would be clear recruitment entry points for early years as there are now for schools. Children's Centres can play a key role in facilitating and driving this improvement across the sector.

4.37 Building on the announcements that the Government recently made around the teaching profession, the Review, welcomes the start of a similar programme for early years and hopes that the Government will build further on the 'New Leaders in Early Years' programme. Children's Centres should act as centres of professional development, providing formal and informal training (mirroring teaching schools). This will help build local networks and sharing of best practice. In order to attract high calibre people to these professions, there also need to be clear professional development routes, both for new and existing staff. The Early Years Professional Status has gone a long way towards achieving this, but more needs to be done to provide a route to management and leadership in the sector.

4.38 In the longer term, if an improved professional development framework and increased importance given to the early years does not on its own drive an increase in graduates in childcare settings, the Government should consider subsidising graduate led settings to ensure that the Review's ambition is achieved and the quality and status of Foundation Years provision shows the necessary improvement.

4.39 Actions on professional leadership:

- Department for Education, in conjunction with Children's Centres, should develop a model for professional development in early years settings which mirrors the one for schools.

4.40 Underpinned by strong evidence – both of what works and a good understanding of the local population. There are examples both in the United States and of Local Authorities in the UK focusing on evidence based policies. Of course, there will be times when there is not evidence on which to base approaches, in these cases high quality evaluations must assess whether what is

being done is effective, value for money and worth repeating.

4.41 As well as using evidence based policies Local Authorities also need a better understanding of which children use their services, and which families are not benefiting from early years services. Legislation can make sharing data between services difficult – but it is not impossible – several Local Authorities have been able to overcome this challenge.

Box 4.4: Islington and data pooling

Islington has created a single data set from administrative systems including birth records from the Primary Care Trust, children registered at Children's Centres, school pupil data, and Council Tax and Housing Benefit records. This resource allows much better understanding of which families are most deprived, and whether they are using local services.

This resource has:

- enabled targeted outreach in specific housing estates;
- identified black and minority ethnic groups who are not using Children's Centres, leading to home language speakers being used to encourage families to come to Centres;
- enabled targeting of specific support for workless families, which has then led to an increase in Children's Centre use by workless families; and
- promoted more integrated services through shared intelligence.

Data Protection Act requirements in relation to the use of pooled data were met through use of service user consents and a common Fair Processing Notice across all services. This was adequate for the majority of data sources used.

4.42 Actions for pooling data include:

- Local Authorities, together with the new local child poverty and life chances commissions should pool data and track the children most in need in their area. A Local Authority should be able to understand where the children who are most in need are, and how their services are impacting.
- The Government should review legislation which prevents Local Authorities using existing data to identify and support families who are most in need with the intention of making use of data by Local Authorities easier; and promote a template for successful data pooling whilst respecting data privacy issues. In particular:
- Central Government should ensure that new legislation on the Universal Credit allows Local Authorities to use data to identify families most in need.
- Department of Health should look at what data from hospitals and doctors can be shared so as to guarantee better targeting of children in need.

4.43 Actions on building a strong evidence base include:

- The Government should make a long term commitment to enabling and supporting the bringing together of evidence, learning from examples such as the National Institute for Clinical Excellence and the Washington State Institute – this will be covered in more detail as part of the Graham Allen led review on early intervention.
- Local Authorities should either commission services which have strong evidence bases, or ensure new interventions are evaluated robustly.

4.44 **Accountable** – we should expect to build information to understand outcomes that Children's Centres and local services together achieve and to hold these services accountable. The review recognises the importance of local decision making, but wants to ensure that parents can see whether local services are improving and how services compare with services in similar local authorities. It is also important to have this data to facilitate increased payment by results. This calls for

some common information being available across different areas. Specifically we think parents should expect to be able to:

- compare services within a Local Authority over time;
- compare Local Authorities with similar authorities elsewhere; and
- compare settings where this is feasible (given some childcare settings will look after very small numbers of children this will not always be possible).

4.45 Other countries have measured school readiness, for example through the Early Development Instrument (EDI)¹⁶ developed in Canada – Ontario uses the EDI as one of its key indicators of progress towards reducing poverty. The Department for Education will be publishing data on school readiness at age five broken down by local authority¹⁷.

4.46 The review believes that the objective in making the Foundation Years an instrument for equalising life chances of young children cannot be achieved without development data check at age five being compared with child development data around age two and a half (under the broad headings of the life chances measure in Chapter 5). This could be collected at the two and a half year health checks, or at the start of free early education for three and four year olds. Chapter 5 sets out some more detail on aligning local data collection with the national measure.

4.47 The Tickell review of the Early Years Foundation Stage is looking in more detail at the practicality of what an early years practitioner-led development check at ages 24-36 months and/or age five would involve, and Dame Clare Tickell will be making recommendations on this. But this review recommends making any development checks at 24-36 months and a half and five mandatory – with the aim of understanding how well services are improving children's outcomes.

4.48 Inspection of early years' settings should be as rigorous as inspection of primary and secondary schools. Despite financial pressures Ofsted needs to continue to inspect early years 'settings, pull together lessons from the better settings, and challenge those that need to improve. This is key to understanding whether disadvantaged children are receiving good provision. If Ofsted is approaching inspection in a more risk based way the Review recommends that it targets schools and childcare settings serving deprived communities, or where Free School Meals pupils are falling behind.

16 A brief description of the Early Development Instrument is at: <http://www.councilecd.ca/internationaledi/09.%20The%20EDI%20-%20A%20Brief%20Description.pdf>

17 Set out in the DfE Business Plan.



Chapter 5

A New Framework for Measuring Poverty and Life Chances

This chapter sets out a new framework for measuring poverty and life chances, including our headline recommendation for a set of Life Chances Indicators and

new measures of public service quality and severe child poverty. These measures are intended to complement the Government's existing indicators.

Summary:

- A major limitation of the existing child poverty measures is that they have incentivised a policy response focused largely on income transfers. This approach has stalled in recent years and is financially unsustainable. A more effective approach is to use a set of measures that will incentivise a focus on improving children's life chances, and ultimately break the transmission of intergenerational disadvantage.
- Based on the evidence reviewed in Chapter 3, we have identified a small set of key factors in the early years which are predictive of children's future outcomes. These include child, parent and environmental factors. We propose a number of valid and reliable indicators with which to measure these factors, which will together form the new Life Chances Indicators.
- The Government's existing child poverty measures have been designed to capture income and living standards. We believe that they need supplementing to ensure that Government poverty measures recognise the role that high quality public services can play in alleviating poverty.
- We also believe that Government should monitor the impact of policy on the very poorest children who experience prolonged financial and material deprivation.

Focusing on life chances

5.1 The Review's primary measurement recommendation is that the Government adopts a new set of Life Chances Indicators. These indicators are intended to measure annual progress¹ at a national level on a range of factors that are predictive of children's future outcomes and which are based on the evidence set out in Chapter 3. If these indicators show improvements for each new cohort of children from low income families, then we can expect their future outcomes in adulthood will also be better. Short term progress on the Life Chances Indicators will be aligned with long term progress on tackling the effects of child poverty, and this will improve the incentives for policy makers to invest in long term solutions.

5.2 There are currently four measures used by Government to monitor child poverty which are included in the Child Poverty Act. All four are designed to capture different aspects of insufficient financial resources, identified either through low income or poor material living standards. We agree that over the course of a generation we should aim to reduce the number of children living in poverty according to these measures.

5.3 However, as discussed in Chapter 2, these measures have incentivised a policy response focused largely on income transfer which is financially unsustainable. A more effective approach is to use a set of measures that will incentivise investment in policy that will improve life chances and pay a higher dividend for taxpayers. Such an approach, which ultimately aims to reduce the transmission of intergenerational disadvantage, is more sustainable than one which addresses poverty using year-by-year income transfer.

i A new set of Life Chances Indicators

5.4 The aims of the Life Chances Indicators are to:

- incentivise policy-makers to focus policy and investment on improving the future life chances

of children, particularly those from low income households;

- enable regular, national level monitoring of the gap in life chances between children from low income households and the average of all children; and
- provide a clear message to service providers and parents about the things that matter most for improving children's school readiness and future life chances.

5.5 Chapter 3 of this Review identifies factors that occur in the early years that are strongly predictive of children's school readiness and their outcomes in later life. In particular, this evidence shows that while income has a direct effect on children's outcomes, this effect is small when other drivers are taken into account and indeed much of the effect of income is transmitted (or mediated) through other factors. These include: child factors, such as cognitive (including language and communication) development; parent factors, such as positive parenting; and environmental factors, such as quality of nursery care.

Selecting the Life Chances Indicators

5.6 We want to measure how these factors change over time in a way that can be easily presented and understood. One way to do this would be to create a single index of life chances. However, we do not think it would be methodologically appropriate to combine all these factors into a single index. It would also result in a complex measure which would run contrary to the Coalition Government's commitment to transparency of information. Instead, we have identified a small set of key predictive factors for inclusion in a set of Life Chances Indicators. Each indicator will be presented separately, and together they will provide a tool for monitoring the impact of policy on the key factors that influence life chances.

5.7 The criteria below were used to assess the evidence and determine which factors would be measured and included in the set of indicators:

¹ We envisage that the annual progress review required under the Child Poverty Act would be a sensible place for these annual results to be published, but

this is subject to factors such as when in the year the indicators become available.

- strength of prediction between the factor in question and readiness for school at age five as well as outcomes in later life for children from poor households (while controlling for all other factors);
- magnitude of impact on readiness for school and later life outcomes among children from poor households that results from varying the factor in question (holding all other factors constant);
- extent to which the factor in question acts as a headline indicator and 'pulls' or 'corals' a range of other factors; and
- potential for the factor to be influenced by policy, in both the short and longer term.

5.8 We also reviewed measures and frameworks on children's life chances used by academic and think tank organisations, as well as the governments of other developed countries.² Of particular interest to the Review were the Canadian Early Development Instrument (CEDI) and the Australian Early Development Index (based on the CEDI), which both assess and publicly report on five domains of children's development for all children aged four or five. Other countries also provide checks on children's early health, development and readiness for school, such as through New Zealand's Well Child programme, Finland's Well Child Clinics and Germany's paediatric assessments, although the results of these are not reported to a public audience. These have broadly informed our approach to measurement.

5.9 Following our assessment of the evidence and initial shortlisting of key drivers, the Review commissioned external analysis of the Millennium Cohort Study to assess whether the selected drivers were suitable for measuring life chances. The findings from this analysis by the University of Bristol are summarised in Box 5.1 and show that all of the key drivers have some predictive power in explaining the gap in children's school readiness between those from low income households and the average. Furthermore, modeling shows that narrowing the gap on each of the key drivers

predicts virtually all of the difference in children's outcomes at age five.

5.10 Table 5.1 sets out the factors that the Review recommends be included in the new set of Life Chances Indicators, taking into account the criteria set out above and the external analysis carried out by the University of Bristol.

Table 5.1 Factors to be covered by the new set of Life Chances Indicators

Child factors	Parent factors	Environmental factors
Cognitive (including language and communication) development at around age three	Home learning environment Positive parenting Maternal mental health	Quality of nursery care
Behavioural and social and emotional development at around age three	Mother's age at birth of first child Mother's educational qualifications	
Physical development at around age three		

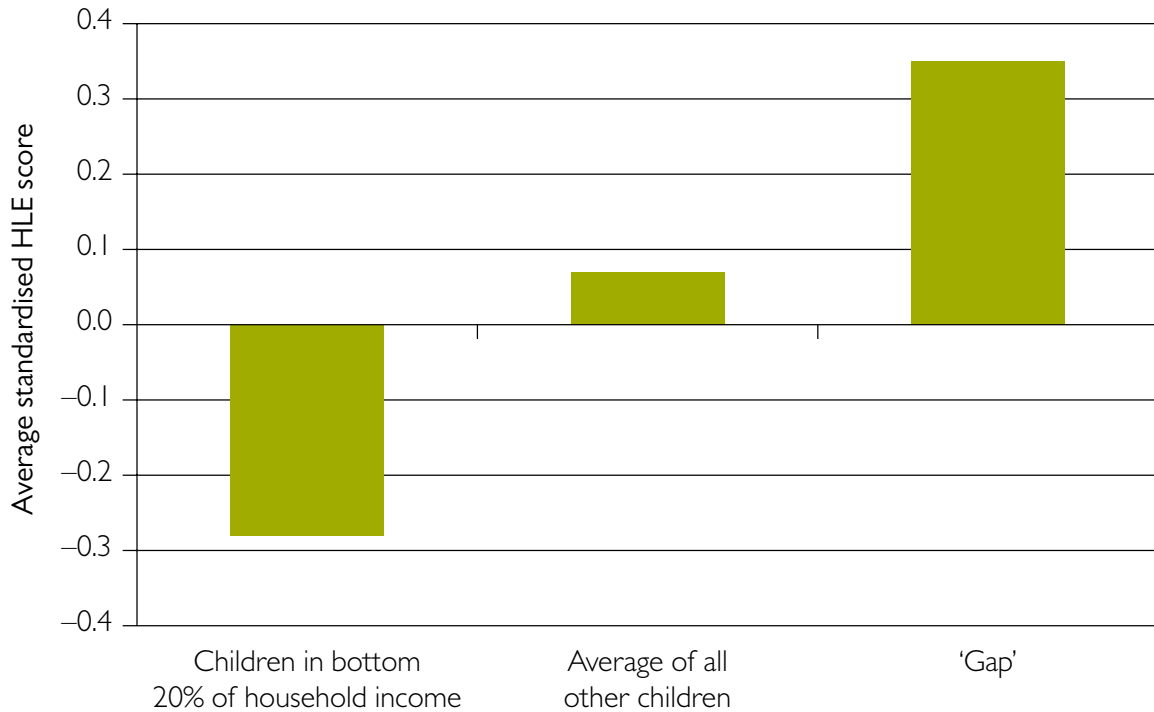
5.11 These factors have all been measured and analysed before, and we propose that existing methodologies are employed to create the indicators. Below is an example of a method that can be used to measure one of the factors in Table 5.1, the home learning environment.

Example: Measuring home learning environment

5.12 The Millennium Cohort Study includes a valid measure of the home learning environment for children aged around three years old. This measure includes a set of questions that asks about

² Canada, Netherlands, France, Germany, United States of America, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Australia, New Zealand

Figure 5.1 Graphical presentation of the home learning environment Life Chances Indicator for children in low income households and the average for all other children



Data source: Millenium Cohort Study

the frequency with which respondents and their child(ren) engage in the following six activities that are important for creating a good home learning environment:

- reading to their child;
- taking their child to the library;
- helping their child learn the alphabet;
- teaching their child numbers or counting;
- teaching their child songs, poems or nursery rhymes; and
- painting or drawing at home.

5.13 Respondents are first asked if they undertake each activity with their child(ren) and, if so, are then asked how frequently they engage in each activity. This is recorded on the following scales: reading from 'not at all (0) to every day (5)'; library from 'not at all (0) to 'once a week (4)'; other four items from 'not at all (0) to '7 times a week/constantly (7)'. The scores for each question are standardized to have a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1, summed together and

then re-standardized to produce a single overall score with mean 0 and standard deviation 1.

Presenting the Life Chances Indicators

5.14 Figure 5.1 shows how the results of the home learning environment indicator discussed above could be presented. It shows the average standardised home learning environment score for children in low income households and the average for all other children, as well as the 'gap' between these groups. The indicator would be monitored over time, with success demonstrated by a narrowing of the gap between children from low income households and all other children.

5.15 All the factors in Table 5.1 can be quantified using indicators which can be presented in a similar way. The majority of these indicators are similar in nature to the home learning environment indicator, in that they are based on survey questions and/or observations. Recommended indicators for each factor, which have been shown to be valid and reliable measures in a UK context, are presented in Annex A.

Box 5.1 Analysis by the University of Bristol on the predictive factors of children's outcomes

To help inform our selection of factors for inclusion in the Life Chances Indicators, we commissioned the University of Bristol to conduct quantitative analysis using the Millennium Cohort Study – a nationally representative survey of around 19,000 children born in the UK in 2000/01. This study tracks children through their early childhood years and covers a range of topics, including: children's cognitive and behavioural development and health; parenting; parents' socio-demographic characteristics; income and poverty; as well as other factors.

The aim of the analysis was to:

- test the extent to which the key drivers we identified from the literature explain the gap in children's cognitive, behavioural, social and emotional, and health outcomes between those from low income households and the average at age five; and
- model the extent to which varying the key drivers results in narrowing of the gap in children's outcomes at age five, between those from low income households and the average.

Findings

Overall, the analysis found that the key drivers – such as home learning environment, mother's educational qualifications, positive parenting, maternal mental health and mother's age at birth of first child – as well as demographic and family characteristics, explain a significant proportion of the variance in children's cognitive, behavioural, social and emotional, and general health outcomes at age five (between 34% and 43%). While the majority of variance remains unexplained, these proportions are comparable with similar types of analyses conducted in this area.

All of the key drivers were found to have some predictive power, although no single group could explain the gap in any of the outcomes at age five on its own. There were, however, some differences in the relative importance of drivers across different outcomes. For example, parental education and home learning environment emerged as relatively strong predictors of children's cognitive outcomes, while parental sensitivity (an aspect of positive parenting) and maternal mental health were strong predictors of children's behavioural, social and emotional outcomes.

Varying the key drivers so that children from low income households had levels comparable with the average for all children was found to predict virtually all of the difference in children's outcomes at age five. No single driver was found to predict these gaps, rather, it was a result of the cumulative effect of varying all the key drivers. While these findings are based on correlation and therefore should not be interpreted as causation, the vast and diverse body of evidence showing similar findings to these gives us reason to think that many of these connections are causal.

The findings from the analysis are reported in the following paper, which is available on the Review website: Washbrook, E. (2010) Early environments and child outcomes. University of Bristol. Analysis commissioned by the Independent Review on Poverty and Life Chances. www.independent.gov.uk/povertyreview

Collecting the life chances data

5.16 The easiest way to collect the data needed for the indicators would be to add the necessary questions to a nationally representative survey which already measures household income on an annual basis, and which has a suitably large sample of pre school children. The survey needs to collect income because of the need to measure the ‘income gap’ for each indicator.

5.17 However, we recognise that space for additional questions in existing surveys is scarce, and that large new sets of questions cannot be added to surveys without affecting the quality of all the data that is collected, unless existing questions are removed³. If removing existing questions from an existing income survey is not possible, the Government could consider commissioning a new annual survey of pre school children and their parents to collect this data. A new survey of children and families would be a valuable resource for monitoring the success of the life chances approach and other new family policy.

ii Aligning national and local measures

Using a national measure to influence local decision making

5.18 The Coalition Government is committed to increasing devolution of policy and spending decisions to the local level, and to reducing the number of centrally defined measures which are imposed on local authorities. We recognise that this presents a challenge for the Review when developing child poverty and life chances measures: the existing measures and the child poverty strategy are both defined in legislation at a national level, but many of the levers available for tackling child poverty (particularly when taking a life chances approach) are increasingly controlled locally and not subject to central targets.

5.19 Acknowledging this challenge, we have proposed a national measure of life chances which we believe can drive policy in two ways. First, the publication of the nine indicators provides

local authorities with a set of nine factors which they know they need to address if they want to improve the life chances of poor children. Second, the measure provides an incentive for national government and policy makers to reinforce this message and encourage local partners to act to improve life chances, because without this kind of cooperation the national measures will not improve.

The role of local information

5.20 We believe that requiring all local authorities to carry out a survey in order to create local level Life Chances Indicators would place an unnecessary burden on them. However, we also believe that local level data on life chances can play a crucial role in driving progress, because local services are so crucial to making the Foundation Years a reality.

5.21 Fortunately, there is a wealth of local data which is already collected for administrative or professional purposes and which could be used to create a slimmed down version of the Life Chances Indicators for every Local Authority, without placing any additional data collection burdens on local government. For example, the Government aims to have every family visited by a health visitor when their child is around two and a half (this visit is referred to here as the “age two health check”). Health visitors gather information on the child’s health and development which allows them to diagnose any physical, cognitive or behavioural problems the child is experiencing and identify any particular support they think the child or the parents should be getting. Some of this information is similar to the development data that would be used to create the national Life Chances Indicators.

5.22 The age two health checks are not the only circumstance in which local bodies already collect data about children’s life chances. The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile currently checks children’s development (social and emotional as well as cognitive) when they start school. A review of the

3 This is because increasing the length of a survey affects the quality of responses, and the number of people who are willing to take part.

Early Years Foundation Stage is currently being carried out by Dame Clare Tickell. We would support any recommendation from this review for checks of children's development, particularly between 24 and 36 months and at age five, and we would support the joining up of the first of these with the existing age two health check. In addition, any checks at age five should complement these earlier checks.

5.23 In line with the Government's new approach to transparency and accountability, we recommend that this kind of data, which is already gathered locally for other purposes, but which provides information on children's life chances, should be made publicly available so that slimmed down Local Life Chances Indicators can be created for every local authority. Such data could also be used to create indicators for other geographies, such as city regions or local neighbourhoods.

5.24 In order to make the Local Life Chances Indicators as useful as possible, we recommend that wherever appropriate without compromising its primary use, information collected locally is comparable to the data collected at the national level. So, for example, if the Early Years Foundation Stage review were to recommend checks at age five to assess children's cognitive development, the relevant teams within Government should work together to ensure that this locally collected measure of cognitive development is comparable to the measure of cognitive development included in the national survey for the Life Chances Indicators.

5.25 Table 5.2 provides an example of how data collected at the local level, in this case as part of the age two health checks, could be used to create Local Life Chances Indicators which would map across to the national Life Chances Indicators.

Table 5.2 Example of making local and national data comparable, to enable the creation of Local Life Chances Indicators

Factor that will be measured for national Life Chances Indicators	Information needed to create Local Life Chances Indicators	Potential concerns about using age two health check to collect information	Potential solutions (these would require further consideration by the Government)
Cognitive development	Level of cognitive development.	Health visitors do not have enough time to collect from every child the comprehensive cognitive development data that will be collected for the national survey.	If necessary, health visitors could collect a sub-set of the same data.
Physical development	Level of physical development.	Health visitors do not have enough time to collect from every child the comprehensive physical development data that will be collected for the national survey.	If necessary, health visitors could collect a sub-set of the same data.

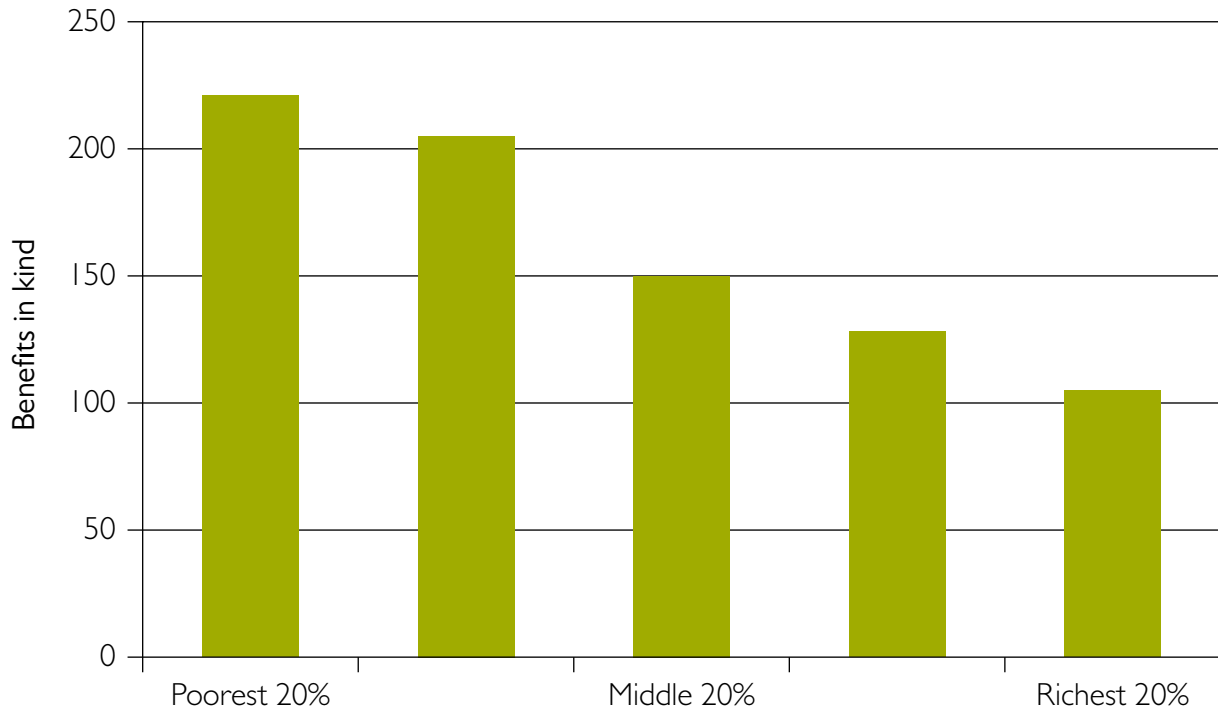
Table 5.2 Example of making local and national data comparable, to enable the creation of Local Life Chances Indicators (continued)

Factor that will be measured for national Life Chances Indicators	Information needed to create Local Life Chances Indicators	Potential concerns about using age two health check to collect information	Potential solutions (these would require further consideration by the Government)
Social, emotional and behavioural development	Level of social, emotional and behavioural development.	Health visitors do not have enough time to collect from every child the comprehensive data that will be collected for the national survey.	If necessary, health visitors could collect a sub-set of the same data.
Home learning environment (HLE)	Quality of HLE.	<p>HLE should not be covered in the age two health check because it is not related to health.</p> <p>Health visitors do not have enough time to assess HLE in detail for every child.</p>	<p>Good HLE appears to have a direct impact on development, so it is entirely appropriate for it to be covered.</p> <p>Health visitors could ask a sub set of the wider set of HLE questions, such as those about learning activities undertaken with the child.</p>
Positive parenting	Level of warmth and responsiveness. Extent of boundary setting and routine.	Parents will feel they are being tested and this could undermine the role of the health visitor.	<p>Health visitors could use the least intrusive questions from the survey, for example, questions about bedtimes, mealtimes and TV watching.</p> <p>Or health visitors could assess parenting by observation, provided a suitably objective approach could be developed.</p>
Mother's age	Already collected.		
Mother's qualifications	Highest qualification gained by mother.	Mother will feel she is being judged and this could undermine the role of the health visitor.	Health visitors might be able to raise this question in the context of skills development or returning to work.

Table 5.2 Example of making local and national data comparable, to enable the creation of Local Life Chances Indicators (continued)

Factor that will be measured for national Life Chances Indicators	Information needed to create Local Life Chances Indicators	Potential concerns about using age two health check to collect information	Potential solutions (these would require further consideration by the Government)
Maternal mental health	Maternal mental health.	Mother will feel she is being judged/tested and this could undermine the role of the health visitor.	<p>Health visitors could use their judgement to decide if questions on mental health are inappropriate.</p> <p>If this is the case, health visitors could assess mental health by observation, provided a suitably objective approach could be developed.</p>
Quality of nursery care	Quality of nursery care.	Quality of nursery care should not be covered in the age two health check because it is not related to health.	<p>Ideally, health visitors would have time to engage with families about the quality of nursery care available. If this is not feasible then it might be possible for them to collect just the name of the provider. Information on the quality of the provider (for example, from Ofsted) could then be linked in later, during the creation of the Local Life Chances Indicators.</p>
Income/poverty	Whether the child is in poverty/low-income for the purposes of the indicators.	Discussion of income is inappropriate during a health check. Parents will feel they are being judged and this could undermine the role of the health visitor.	To avoid direct discussion of income, the health visitor could ask instead whether the household receives any means tested benefits, which would provide some information about the household's financial status in a less intrusive way.

Figure 5.2 Household consumption of benefits in kind (measured by expenditure on public services) by net equivalised income quintile (£ per week, 2010/11)



Source: Annex B of the October 2010 Spending Review.

Note: the analysis covers around two thirds of resource DEL expenditure consisting of many of the services delivered by: The Department of Health; The Department for Education; The Department for Work and Pensions; The Department for Communities and Local Government; The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills; The Department for Transport; The Department for Energy and Climate Change; Local Government; The Ministry of Justice; and The Department for Culture, Media and Sport. It excludes the Devolved Administrations.

5.26 The combination of the national Life Chances Indicators, with data from universal health and development checks (the age two health checks and potential Early Years Foundation Stage checks at ages two and five) would together provide an invaluable source of information with which to evaluate the success of the Foundation Years. These sources of local data could also be used to ensure that providers are accountable for the resources that are invested in them. Chapter 4 discusses in more detail ways in which accountability might be improved.

5.27 If local level measures are widely adopted by stakeholders, and if they prove to be suitably robust and comprehensive in coming years, and able to meaningfully cover all nine of the factors which are covered by the national Life Chances

Indicators, then there will be no need to continue collecting national life chances data through a survey. It will be possible just to aggregate up the local level data. However, a national survey measure will be necessary in the short term at least. This original national measure will provide a benchmark in terms of design and quality which any future aggregated measure should have to meet. It is crucial to have this quality benchmark, because local data collected for non-survey purposes can be different in nature, and less objective, than survey data. In the meantime, if some but not all of the nine indicators can be created robustly using local level data, the Review would encourage that this local data is linked in to the survey data, rather than collected again through the national survey.

5.28 We hope that in time the national and local Life Chances Indicators will be supplemented by detailed qualitative information, collected by researchers and academics who are interested in how a life chances approach works in practice, and the effect that it can have on individual families and children.

iii Other measures

5.29 So far the report has argued that in future there should be a much greater emphasis on improving the long term life chances of poorer children. The Life Chances Indicators will drive progress towards this new approach. In addition to adopting the new indicators, we think there are two other ways in which the Government's current monitoring framework could be improved:

- It should capture the impact of service quality on living standards.
- It should provide information on what is happening to the living standards of the very poorest children.

Service quality

5.30 It is obvious that the quality of life of all children is influenced by the quality of the public services available to them. This is especially true for poorer children, because they tend to have greater need of these kinds of services (for example, children from poorer households are more likely to experience ill health and therefore need access to health services).

5.31 Figure 5.2 presents consumption of public services by household income quintile, and reveals the relative importance of public services to the lives of poorer families. Research evidence emphasises the impact that public services have on the experiences of some children currently growing up in low income families. For example: lack of flexible high quality childcare can prevent

their parents from moving into work; lack of subsidised local transport can prevent them from taking part in after-school clubs and social activities if they have no access to private transport; and poor policing and neighbourhood management can leave them with no safe place to play⁴.

5.32 The Review recommends that the Government develops a measure of service quality which is published annually and is taken into consideration when the Government is assessing and developing child poverty strategy. The new measure should meet these two key requirements:

- It should capture improvements in public services for children from low income families. This will rebalance the incentives created by the current income measures, and ensure that investment in public services is recognised as one appropriate policy response to child poverty.
- It should show how the quality of services available to children from low income families compares with the quality of the services available to their more affluent peers.

5.33 Measurement of the quality and availability of services is known to be methodologically difficult, and we recommend that the Government consults with internal and external experts to take this recommendation forward. However, to provide some guidance on the kind of measure that is envisaged and how it might be developed, we present two possible options for a service quality measure which initial consultation has suggested are conceptually feasible (see Annex B). If the Government accepts this recommendation it will need to build one of these options into a working measure, or develop an alternative. In doing so, it should consider the following:

5.34 First, how to ensure that the new measure meets the key requirements set out in paragraph 5.32.

4 Ridge, T. (2009) *Living with poverty: A review of the literature on children's and families' experiences of poverty*, DWP.

5.35 Second, which service areas should be captured by the new measure. We recommend that early years, primary and secondary education and health services are all captured. Other service areas which we think could be included in the measure are: crime and policing, housing, leisure and play facilities and quality of local environment. There are also services which do not affect children directly, but which can have an indirect effect, for example, adult health services. It will be necessary to decide whether these service areas should also be included.

5.36 Third, what data to use to measure quality of, and access to, public services. There are a number of aspects of service that could be measured:

- Individual perception of services: for example, a survey could be used to ask households to rate the quality of the services they have access to on a scale from 1 to 10. This would allow the measure to capture both access and quality.
- Take-up of provision: the measure could utilise information about whether or not people actually take-up particular services, which is an empirical indication of whether they are accessible. For example, it would be possible to use data on the take-up of the free childcare available for three and four years olds. It would be necessary to take into account that some households do not take up a service because they do not need it: a family should not be classed as poor if they do not take up their free childcare place because they choose to have private childcare instead.
- Area level administrative data: for example, we could use the crime rates in a household's local area as a measure of the quality of service they receive in terms of policing and community support. Other examples might be road accident incidences or access to green spaces.

- Quality assessment data: for example, the Ofsted assessment of the local school, or data on hospital quality.
- Geographical distance to quality services: for services where it is reasonable to assume that proximity is the primary access issue, the distance from a person's home to the nearest good quality provision could be measured⁵.

5.37 Over the longer term, a robust service quality measure could be combined with one of the income measures, to produce a multi-dimensional measure that covers both a family's ability to purchase market goods and services, and the quality of the non-market goods and services it is able to access; a genuine multidimensional 'quality of life' measure.

Severe poverty

5.38 One of the primary messages of this report, supported by the evidence we present, is that increased income, on its own, is insufficient to improve the life chances of poor children. Our focus has therefore been on developing measures which will incentivise policy that does not focus so heavily on income. The Life Chances Indicators and service quality measure are non-financial measures which are intended to do this.

5.39 However, the Review also wants to recognise the importance of ensuring that children do not experience severe financial and material poverty while they are growing up.

5.40 It has not been possible within the timescale of the Review to develop a poverty measure which we think captures these 'severely poor' children in a robust way, but we do want to suggest that the Government considers ways in which the impact of child poverty policy on these poorest children can be monitored. This should ensure that policy makers are not incentivised to overlook these children, and focus instead on those who are nearer to the poverty line (and therefore can be lifted over the threshold at less expense).

5 If geographical measures are used, it might be necessary to take into account whether families have access to a private vehicle.

5.41 In making this suggestion, we would advise against developing a measure which defines severe poverty using a 40% of median income poverty threshold. Both government analysis and external evidence has revealed that households recorded as being right at the bottom of the income scale (and thus below 40% median income) tend to have living standards equating to income still below 60% of median income but above 40%⁶. This suggests that a 40% threshold would result in a measure that was not robust and did not capture with sufficient accuracy those children who were suffering from the severest material poverty.

Recommendations

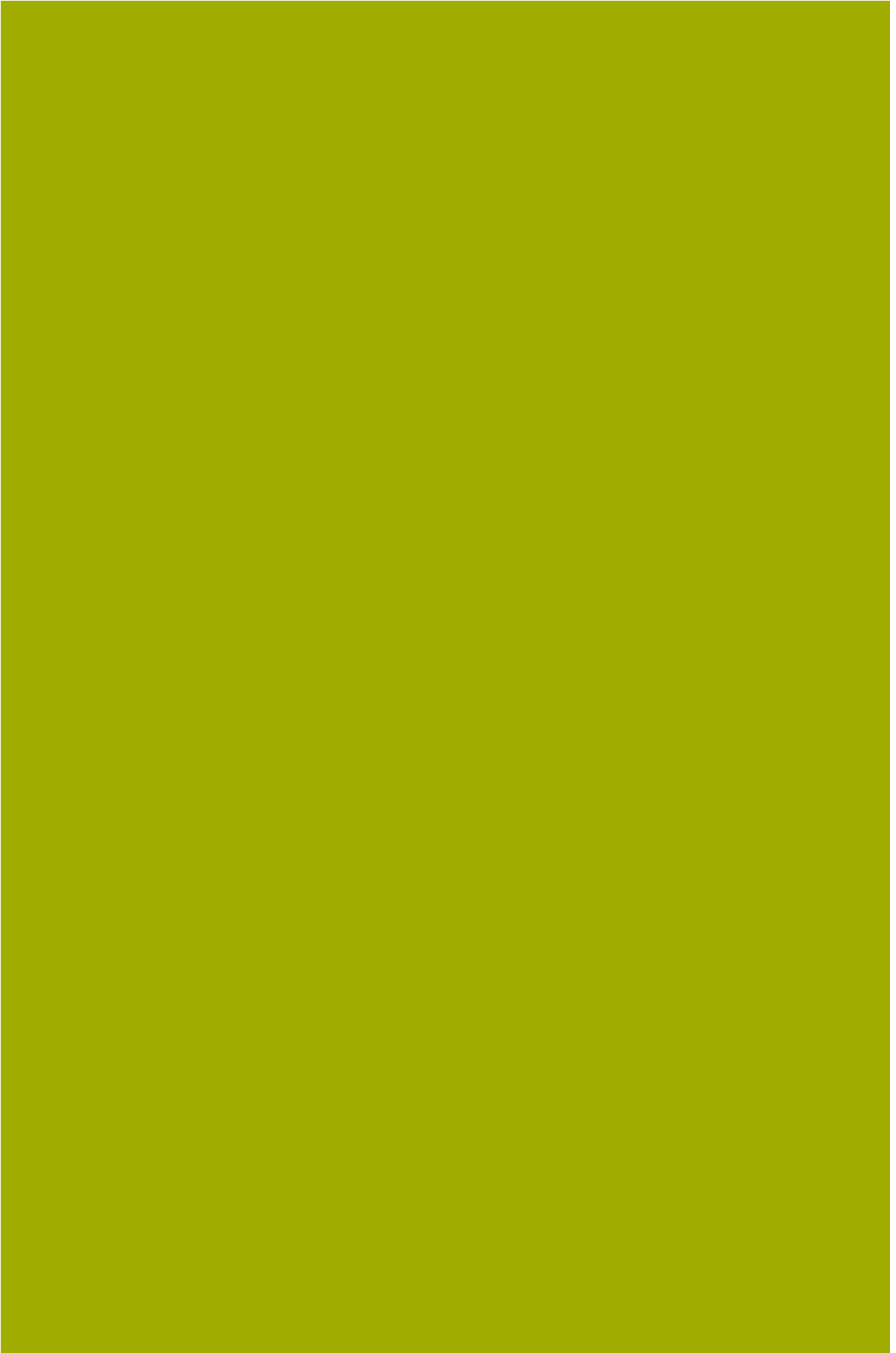
5.42 The Review's primary measurement recommendation is that the Government adopts a new set of Life Chances Indicators. These indicators will measure annual progress at a national level on a range of factors which we know to be predictive of future outcomes, and will be created using national survey data.

5.43 Existing local data should be collated and made publicly available to enable the creation of Local Life Chances Indicators which can be compared with the national measure. In order to make this local data as useful as possible, information collected by health visitors during the age two health check, and any information collected as part of the Early Years Foundation Stage (following the results of Dame Clare Tickell's review) should be as similar as possible to the information used to create the national measure.

5.44 The Government should develop and publish annually a measure of 'service quality' which captures whether children, and in particular children in low income families, have suitable access to high quality public services.

5.45 Given the importance of ensuring that children do not experience prolonged material and financial deprivation the Government should consider ways in which the impact of child poverty policy on these very poorest children can be monitored.

6 Brewer, M., O'Dea, C., Paull, G. and Sibieta, L. (2009) *The living standards of families with children reporting low incomes*, Department for Work and Pensions Research Report NO 577, DWP.



Chapter 6

Overview of the Consultation Process and Summary of Formal Submissions

This chapter provides an overview of the consultation process that the Review undertook and a summary

of the predominant themes that were put forward through formal consultation responses.

Summary:

- Frank Field and the Review team met with a wide range of stakeholders who contributed views and evidence that fed into the Review. There were, in addition, 210 formal written submissions made to the Review.
- Key points highlighted by the formal submissions:
 - Parenting (especially quality of parent-child relationships and parental engagement) and the home learning environment were the aspects of early childhood most often cited as having the greatest influences on positive outcomes and good life chances.
 - There was consensus that the home learning environment is central to supporting all forms of a child's development.
 - Increased early years support that helps parents to understand child development and offers a broad range of parenting advice is crucial.
 - There is a need for a more holistic 'family approach' to both the design and delivery of services and the measurement of child poverty.
 - Early years services for children and parents must be more effectively integrated and coordinated.
 - Schools must do more to engage with parents to encourage them to support learning at home.
 - Measures of child poverty could be enhanced by supplementing income measures with a range of carefully selected parent, child and environmental indicators.
 - Income is an important determinant of outcomes for children, especially due to its interrelationships with other key determinants of outcomes.
 - Parental employment is a key route out of poverty.
 - Quality and stability of housing is important. Overcrowding can contribute significantly to negative outcomes for children.

The consultation process

6.1 Throughout the course of the Review we have consulted with a range of stakeholders, including poverty experts, delivery organisations, charities, think tanks, lobby groups and parents and children about their views and experiences. The aim of the consultation process was to ensure that the Review and the recommendations we have delivered were informed by as wide a range of views and evidence as possible.

6.2 The consultation process consisted of:

- Stakeholder meetings, seminars, workshops and evidence sessions.
- An invitation to submit formal responses to a set of consultation questions, as well as any other relevant supporting documents.
- Visits to children's centres, schools and charities.
- Attendance at external conferences and seminars by Frank Field and members of the Review team.

6.3 The overall consultation process ran from mid-June right up until the final development of recommendations in November. We were delighted with the large number of responses to the Review consultation, with a total of 463 responses received.

6.4 Formal responses to the consultation questions were accepted from 14 July 2010 to 1 October 2010. A set of nine consultation questions was developed by the Review team which aimed to focus on the issues that we considered to be at the heart of the Review. Respondents were also invited to include additional relevant views or information not covered by the questions. In order to ensure that the questions were circulated widely, they were: hosted on the Review website (with text boxes to allow for electronic submission); sent to an extensive Government database of contacts relevant to the Review's terms of reference; and provided directly to members of the public who had contacted Frank Field about the Review. Submissions were accepted via the website, via email and by post. Responses that did not conform to the consultation question framework and additional relevant documents were also accepted.

6.5 The Centre for Social Justice (CSJ) made a major effort to assist with the consultation process. They circulated our questions to members of the CSJ Alliance (a network of charities and social enterprises), with 31 organisations submitting responses. We are very grateful to the CSJ for their dedication in collating such a large number of responses and for assisting with the analysis of these submissions. No other piece of evidence placed such emphasis on the importance of looking at the causes of poverty as well as trying to alleviate current poverty.

6.6 Submissions from the CSJ Alliance emphasised the role of the family and relationships as being key determinants of positive outcomes. Structure and stability of the family, emotional stability of the parents, parenting skills, quality of adult and child relationships, inter-adult relationships and positive adult role models were all identified as crucial factors. Love and affection in a committed family setting was by far the single aspect of early childhood most often cited as having the greatest influence.

6.7 179 written responses (including 29 from members of public) were submitted directly to Frank Field and the Review team, which, combined with the CSJ Alliance submissions, resulted in a total of 210 formal responses. A list of respondents is provided in Appendix C. We have not disclosed names of private individuals. A significant number of members of the public also contributed their views through letters concerning the Review that were sent to Frank Field (a total of 253 letters were received). We very much appreciate that so many people took the time to get in touch with their views on so many important issues. All correspondence was read and all consultation submissions were analysed by members of the Review team and were considered as part of the evidence process that fed into the final report.

6.8 Frank Field and the Review team also held over 100 sessions, including meetings, seminars and workshops, with organisations and prominent individuals who contributed evidence and views to the Review. Frank Field and members of the team also attended a range of relevant external conferences and seminars, and made visits to children's centres, schools and charities across the country.

6.9 We are very grateful to everyone who took part in the consultation process in all its forms. All the evidence that we have gathered has played a crucial role in helping us to develop our final recommendations. A list of organisations that have contributed to the consultation process is provided in Annex C.

Summary of written evidence submitted to the Review

6.10 We have summarised below the predominant themes and views for each consultation question that came out strongly from analysis of all written consultation evidence.

Which aspects of children's early years are the most important determinants of positive outcomes and good life chances?

6.11 Respondents contributed a wide range of views to this question. Many highlighted the importance of strong parent and child relationships. Key factors put forward were the quality of engagement between parent and child, the forming of strong attachments and the demonstration of love, care and affection from the earliest days of a child's life, which can be crucial to the child developing emotional strength and resilience. Parental style was viewed as being central to positive outcomes, with provision of love and warmth and the setting of rules and routines seen to be optimal. Parenting skills, knowledge and aspirations also have a significant impact. Parental mental health and emotional stability of the parents was suggested by many as a key factor in determining outcomes for the child.

6.12 Household income was viewed by a significant number of respondents as being an important determinant of children's outcomes, especially due to its interrelationships with other key determinants of positive outcomes.

6.13 The importance for the child of good quality early years services, including pre-school education, nursery care and health services, was emphasised by many respondents. There was agreement that social, emotional and cognitive development (particularly language ability) is vital and that the home learning environment is central to supporting all forms of child development.

Several respondents also cited the impact of nutrition, with low-income groups tending to have less healthy diets.

6.14 The quality and stability of housing was also mentioned as an important factor, with overcrowding in particular viewed as contributing significantly to negative outcomes.

What single aspect of early childhood has the greatest influence?

6.15 The home learning environment and parenting were the aspects most often cited by respondents as having the greatest influence. Many focused in particular on parent-child relationships (encompassing the range of aspects mentioned in paragraph 6.11). The third most cited factor was household income. It was often noted that it is difficult to pick out any one single aspect, but that the focus should be on a number of related factors.

How can early years support, from parents, children's services and the community best deliver positive outcomes for the most disadvantaged children and their families?

6.16 Several respondents indicated that assisting parents with understanding child development and providing a breadth of parenting advice are two of the most crucial aspects of early years support. Support that leads to improvements in parent-child interactions and helps parents to cope with the pressures of parenting was viewed as especially important. Others also indicated that parents require increased support in understanding the behaviours that lead to better outcomes for children, which could be delivered through Sure Start Children's Centres and/or Family Nurse Partnerships. It was highlighted that strategies that develop parenting and basic skills of families when children are young can have significant positive impacts on long-term educational outcomes.

6.17 A large number of respondents emphasised the importance of a 'family approach' to services, with a shift from frontline services centred on the individual to family focussed services required. More effectively integrated (and indeed better co-ordinated) support services were also seen to be crucial. Many viewed Sure Start Children's

Centres as the most effective mechanisms for delivering such ‘joined-up’ support, which should offer a full range of services to both parents (including supporting adult learning and basic skills as well as employment services) and children. These services must be rigorously targeted on meeting the needs of parents and children, and be developed in partnership with families, rather than being imposed upon them. Many respondents believed that services must do much more to effectively engage parents who have traditionally been harder to reach. A number of submissions also emphasised that children’s services need to be more ‘father-friendly’. The continuation of universal services was widely cited as being vital, especially to prevent stigmatisation and enable ‘social mixing’. Health visitors were highlighted as a welcoming and non-stigmatising service, with some respondents praising them as being particularly effective at reaching those that need them the most, though others suggested that more could be done.

6.18 Several respondents noted “mistrust of services” as being an issue and that families tend to trust voluntary services more than statutory ones (and indeed that government should take this into account when commissioning services).

6.19 Strategies centred on education and employment, especially in terms of improving the skills of parents, were viewed by several respondents as fundamental to poverty reduction. Indeed, many submissions emphasised that parental employment is a key route out of poverty.

6.20 Respondents also highlighted the importance of early interventions. Many stressed that interventions must have a strong theoretical evidence base and the importance of looking at interventions that work first on a smaller scale. The fact that interventions need to be sustained to be effective was also emphasised. Early identification of need, especially from the parents’ perspective, is also seen to be important.

6.21 Mentoring was suggested in several submissions as an effective method to help prevent families reaching crisis point.

In what ways do family and the home environment affect children’s life chances?

6.22 Many respondents believed parents to be the most significant influence on their children’s lives, with effective parenting being central to nurturing resilience. Damaging parental conflict was noted as being a major cause of child adjustment difficulties. Fractured, unstable or unloving families were viewed to have a serious negative impact on a child’s life chances, as they can damage a child’s self-esteem, trust and ability to form positive relationships and to have clear aspirations. Respondents also pointed out that bad parental examples and poor life choices are often passed down from one generation to the next.

6.23 A significant number of respondents emphasised that the home learning environment can be more powerful than socio-economic background, and that a strong home learning environment can go a long way towards countering the effects of poverty.

6.24 Respondents also noted that poor housing conditions negatively affect health and educational attainment. Overcrowded living spaces can cause children to feel stressed from an early age; make it difficult for them to find space to do homework; and can also have significant negative impacts on a child’s health.

What role can the Government play in supporting parents to ensure children grow up in a home environment which allows them to get the most out of their schooling?

6.25 Many respondents commented on schools engaging with families. Several recommended that schools focus their efforts on engaging parents to support learning at home. However, it was indicated that more remains to be done to convince some schools that parental engagement is central to the core purpose of raising achievement. Others suggested that extended services should be provided within schools that encourage parent and child learning together. It was widely noted that primary and secondary schools need to do more to ensure that relationships with parents are maintained as children get older.

6.26 A number of respondents suggested that parenting should be taught as part of the curriculum in schools. It was proposed that pupils should be taught about relationships and child development in particular. Others noted that parents' own negative experiences of the education system can affect their ability and desire to work together with their child's school, and that this issue should be addressed.

What role do family earnings and income play in children's outcomes and life chances?

6.27 Many respondents believed family earnings and income to be important determinants of children's outcomes and life chances. The majority indicated that it is not necessarily income poverty itself that is damaging, but its interrelationships with other determinants of positive outcomes.

6.28 An example put forward in many submissions was the fact that low income can have a negative psychological impact on parents, including the fact that they may feel that they have failed to provide their children with a decent upbringing. A number of respondents also emphasised that income-stressed parents anxious about money, with insecure jobs and unsocial hours, have a much reduced capacity to spend quality time with their children. Low income can further undermine parenting capacity due to its damaging impact on mental and physical health.

6.29 It was also emphasised that low income can have a range of negative impacts on a child's wellbeing. Several responses noted that children are very aware of poverty from an early age, and that this can negatively affect their attitudes, behaviours and feeling of control over their lives, as well as cause them to have lower aspirations. For example, children do less well in terms of educational attainment when they have less belief in the idea that their actions can have an effect. Material poverty, which can for example prevent a child from going on a school trip, can also lead to social exclusion.

6.30 Similarly, other respondents indicated that the negative impact comes predominantly from the fact that earning and income often determine quality of living conditions, the home learning environment, health, diet and access to activities.

What constitutes child poverty in modern Britain?

6.31 The majority of respondents agreed that whilst low income is clearly important, there is a need to consider a broader range of issues that constitute child poverty, such as:

- a child lacking the love, attention and support needed for positive development;
- failure to fulfil a child's normative physical, social, emotional and psychological development needs;
- exclusion from activities that are essential for development, such as social interactions and play;
- barriers that prevent children from reaching their full potential and which negatively impact their life chances/ experiences as an adult;
- poverty of aspiration;
- material deprivation; and
- a child being unlikely to achieve the standards of health, housing, access to services, safety and education enjoyed by those living in households above 60% median income.

How can our measures of child poverty be reformed to better focus policy development and investment on delivering positive outcomes and improved life chances for children?

6.32 A large number of respondents commented that concentrating on income alone is too simplistic as most vulnerable families experience complex deprivation made up of a range of needs and difficulties. Some suggested looking beyond income to social and educational opportunity. Many respondents emphasised that a more holistic, 'family approach' to measurement is required.

6.33 Several respondents strongly felt that the four measures set out in the Child Poverty Act should remain the headline measures, but indicated that there is scope for developing additional indicators to sit below these targets and cover a broader range of issues. Some suggested supplementing income measures with wellbeing measures and indicators that take external factors into account.

6.34 Several respondents thought that it would be useful to have measures of severe and persistent poverty and also a measure that focuses on availability and quality of services. Others suggested using a measure based on minimum income standards.

6.35 Additional suggested improvements included: measures that both more effectively take account of the local context and can be broken down and used locally; an 'after housing costs' poverty measure; and a focus on raising awareness of key issues in the public mindset.

What are the strong predictors of children's life chances which might be included in any new measure of child poverty?

6.36 Predictors suggested include:

- Parental education
- Parental employment
- Mother's age at birth of child
- Poor nutrition during pregnancy
- Maternal health
- Parents' mental health
- Parenting skills
- Parenting behaviour
- Family structure and stability
- Parental involvement in childcare/education
- Level of father's involvement
- Child's psychological well-being
- Child's cognitive development
- Child's social development
- Child's quality of diet
- Aspirations (both parent and child)
- Access to good pre-school education
- Access to childcare
- Use of Sure Start Children's Centres
- Quality and suitability of housing

- Quality of neighbourhood
- Access to play facilities
- Level of community involvement
- Relative and absolute low income

Additional views:

6.37 There was broad consensus that the early years (age zero to three in particular) are crucial and that interventions early in a child's life are most effective in improving outcomes and life chances. However, a number of responses stressed that it is important not to focus entirely on the early years. Early interventions after age five are also crucial, especially at key transition points.

6.38 There was also general agreement that schools are not currently breaking the link between poverty and poor life chances and do not narrow the outcomes gap as children get older.

6.39 Several respondents stressed the importance of increased investment in early years services and that there should be a reversal of the current system of spending more money on the education of children the older they get. It was suggested that a long-term strategy is required to redirect resources into early intervention investment.

6.40 A number of responses indicated that there is a beneficial impact of a child growing up in a family that operates as part of a wider network (extended family, community, church etc).

6.41 The importance of not underestimating the impact of the significant reduction in the number of unskilled jobs in certain areas of the country was stressed by a number of submissions.

6.42 Many respondents also pointed out that disability remains one of the most significant indicators of greater chances of living in poverty.

6.43 A number of respondents believed a lack of positive role models for children to be a significant problem.



Annex A: Life Chances Indicators – Recommended Measures

Table A.1

Factors	Key elements	Recommended measures
Child		
Cognitive development at age three	Language and communication development, problem solving skills and school readiness	British Ability Scales (in particular the naming vocabulary and picture similarities sub-scales) Bracken School Readiness Assessment
Behavioural, social and emotional development at age three	Emotional health, behavioural and conduct problems, hyperactivity, peer relationships and positive behaviour	Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire for three to four year olds
Physical development at age three	Body mass index (BMI) and general health of child	Height and weight to calculate BMI Parental rating of child's general health
Parent		
Home learning environment	Activities that parents undertake with their child(ren) which have a positive effect on their development, such as reading with their child, teaching songs and nursery rhymes, painting and drawing, playing with letters and numbers, visiting the library, teaching the alphabet and numbers, and creating regular opportunities for them to play with their friends at home	Home Learning Index from the Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) study
Maternal mental health	General measure of mental health that enables identification of significant levels of distress or impaired function associated with common mental disorders, such as anxiety and depression	Short Form 12 or Kessler 6

Factors	Key elements	Recommended measures
Positive parenting	Warmth of parent-child relationship (including parent's affection, praise and empathy with their child as well as child's openness, affection and feeling towards parent) and control of parent over child (including parental discipline and the extent to which the child obeys parental requests)	Pianta child-parent relationship scale Millennium Cohort Study authoritative parenting measures
Mother's educational qualifications	Educational, school, vocational or other qualifications	Standard UK educational, school, vocational or other qualifications that allow for categorisation into the National Qualifications Framework and Qualifications and Credit Framework levels
Mother's age at birth of first child		Age in years and months
Environment		
Quality of nursery care	Quality of nursery care centres covering: aspects of the setting (both facilities and human resources); the educational and care processes which children experience every day; and the outcomes or the longer term consequences of the education and care the child receives	Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS)

Annex B: Options for a New Measure of Service Quality

1. Here we propose two possible frameworks for a service quality measure, which could be taken forward by the Government.

- Option 1: A multi-dimensional service quality index, which combines individual level survey data, usage data and area level administrative data to produce an individual level index of service quality.
- Option 2: A 'service deprivation' measure, to mirror the existing material deprivation measure, based on people's perception of whether they have 'sufficient' access to services of 'sufficient' quality.

Option 1: multi-dimensional service quality index

2. This measure would use a methodology similar to that used to create the Index of Multiple Deprivation, which – at an area level – combines a range of different numerical measures for a given area into a single number. For example, it combines numerical data on housing conditions, air quality and road traffic accidents to create a 'Living Environment Deprivation' score for every Census Super Output Area in the country. Seven such scores are then weighted and combined to create an overall Multiple Deprivation score. In the case of the multi-dimensional service quality index, we would expect the numerical measures combined in the index to capture:

- Individual perception of services: for example, a survey could be used to ask households to rate the quality of the services they have access to on a scale from 1 to 10. This would allow the measure to capture both access and quality.

- Take-up of provision: the index could use information about whether or not people actually take-up particular services, which is an empirical indication of whether they are accessible. For example, it would be possible to use data on the take-up of the free childcare available for three and four years olds. It would be necessary to take into account that some households do not take up a service because they do not need it: a family should not be classed as poor if they do not take up their free childcare place because they choose to have private childcare instead.
- Area level administrative data: for example, we could use the crime rates in a household's local area as a measure of the quality of service they receive in terms of policing and community support. Other examples might be road accident incidence or access to green spaces.
- Quality assessment data: for example, the Ofsted assessment of the local school, or data on hospital quality.
- Geographical distance to quality services: for services where it is reasonable to assume that proximity is the primary access issue, the distance from a person's home to the nearest good quality provision could be measured.

3. The choice of measures would be based on relevance and availability and would also have to take into account the suitability of the measure to be combined with others in a multi-dimensional index. Exactly how the different measures chosen would be combined together would depend on conceptual choices about which factors are most important, as well as statistical requirements.

For example, there may be more area level measures available than individual level measures, but the individual level factors might be given a larger weighting to reflect the fact that they are considered more important.

4. The primary advantage of this option is that it could potentially take advantage of lots of existing administrative data, and combine it with a relatively small amount of household level data collected via a survey to create an individual level index.

5. The disadvantage is that the methodology for creating the index from the individual measures would have to be developed from scratch, and it may prove that the available data sources are not well suited to being combined in this way into an index. It is only after the data has been collated and analysed that it is possible to know whether a coherent index can be created.

Option 2: 'service deprivation' measure

6. This measure would address the issue of capturing quality and accessibility by using a methodology similar to that used to create the existing 'material deprivation' measure used by government.

7. Briefly, that measure is created by asking survey respondents whether their household owns each of a list of 21 goods/services. The list is initially developed using focus group and survey data. A list is derived of the types of goods and services that people think are 'necessary' for people to have in order to fully participate in contemporary society. Analysis is then used to ensure that the list contains a wide enough range of items to be able to distinguish between households with different degrees of material deprivation. The list is then included in a household survey, and households are asked whether they own each item. If a household does not own a given item on the list, they are asked whether that is because they cannot afford it, or because they do not want it. Every item on the list is allocated a score: the more people in the population have that item, the higher the score.

A household's total material deprivation score is the sum of the score of every item which they lack because they cannot afford it. Anyone with a score above a given threshold is defined as experiencing material deprivation.

8. The material deprivation method does not measure simply whether a household owns a given item; it also asks, if an item is not owned, whether this is due to being unable to afford it. It should be possible to take a similar approach to services, asking first whether the person has a good doctor/school/childcare provider which they use, and if not, whether that is because they do not want that particular service, or because they are unable to access it (perhaps providing a list of possible reasons why they are unable to access it, such as distance, language or opening hours).

9. The material deprivation measure also provides a possible method for choosing which services should be included in the list; they should reflect the types of services that people in the general population think are 'necessary' for everyone to have, and they should allow for sufficient distinction between those who have good access to quality services and those who do not.

10. The issue of quality might be harder to address, as this method relies on the respondent to assess quality. This can be problematic because assessment of quality can be affected by previous experience. So people who are used to low quality services might be satisfied with provision which would not be considered sufficient by people who are accustomed to higher quality. However, a similar problem exists and has been managed for the material deprivation measure, which relies on the respondent to assess whether or not they can afford an item, which is obviously subject to their assumptions about what other things it is necessary to spend money on. One way to address this might be to *define* the items on the list as quality services. For example, 'a secondary school' would not be a good enough measure, because almost all children will have access to some school. A better item might be 'the school of your choice'.

11. The major benefit of this measure would be the existence of a similar measure that has already been developed, and which could be used as a starting point for the development of the methodology, although clearly this would have to be refined to capture this different aspect of poverty.

12. The major disadvantage is that it would require new survey data, at a time when the Government is spending less money on surveys. There would need to be strong cross-government support for some of the increasingly limited survey space available to be allocated to this measure.

Annex C: Consultation Details

List of organisations who provided formal submissions to the consultation:

58i

4Children

A4e

Accord Group (including Ashram Housing Association)

Action for Children

Action for Prisoners' Families

Advertising Standards Authority

All Party Parliamentary Group on Sure Start

All Souls Clubhouse

Amber

Aquila Way

ARK Schools

Arts and Drama Intervention at Thornhill School

ASDAN

Assessment in Care

Association of School and College Leaders

Association of Teachers and Lecturers

Balsall Heath Forum

Barnardo's

Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council

BBC Children in Need

Birkbeck, University of London, Institute for the Study of Children, Families & Social Issues

Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council

Blackpool Council

Blue Sky Development & Regeneration

Booktrust

Bradford and West Yorkshire Methodist Housing Limited

Bristol Community Family Trust

British Embassy, Berlin

British Embassy, Paris

British Embassy, Stockholm (submission covering Denmark and Finland)

British Embassy, The Hague

British Embassy, Washington

British High Commission, Canberra

British High Commission, Wellington

C4EO (the Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children's and Young People's Services)

Capacity

CARE

Centre for Public Scrutiny

Contact a Family

Child Poverty Action Group

Children's Food Campaign

Children's Voices in Family Law

Children's Workforce Development Council

Christians Against Poverty

Croydon Jubilee Church
 Church of England
 Citizens Advice Bureau
 City & Guilds Centre for Skills Development
 City Life Education and Action for Refugees
 Coram
 Daycare Trust
 Disability Alliance
 DWP Social Inclusion Advisory Group
 Early Excellence
 Economic and Social Research Council
 EDEN Openshaw: The Salvation Army
 e-Learning Foundation
 End Child Poverty
 Energy Action Scotland
 Equality and Human Rights Commission
 Every Child a Chance Trust
 Every Disabled Child Matters
 Faculty of Public Health
 Families Need Fathers
 Family Action
 Family and Parenting Institute
 Family Friends
 Family Links
 Family Matters York
 FPWP Hibiscus (the Female Prisoners Welfare Project)
 Greater London Authority
 Gingerbread
 Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Achievement Service
 Haringey Council
 Independent Academies Association
 Institute for Fiscal Studies
 IntoUniversity
 Institute of Economic Affairs
 Joseph Rowntree Foundation
 Kent County Council
 Kids Company
 King's Arms Project
 King's College, Institute of Psychiatry
 Kinship Care Alliance
 Kirklees Council
 Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
 Liverpool City Region Partnership
 Local Government Improvement and Development
 London Borough of Tower Hamlets
 London Borough of Waltham Forest
 London Councils
 London Early Years Foundation
 London South Bank University, Weeks Centre for Social and Policy Research
 Loughborough University, Department of Social Sciences
 Luton Borough Council
 Making Every Adult Matter
 MAPS Volunteer Centre Sutton
 Medicash
 Motorvations Project Ltd
 National Childbirth Trust
 National Children's Bureau
 National Family Intervention Strategy Board
 National Heart Forum
 National Housing Federation
 Newcastle University, School of Geography, Politics and Sociology
 New Policy Institute
 National Institute for Adult Continuing Education (NIACE)

North Staffs YMCA
Ofsted
One Plus One
Parent and Child Empowerment Organisation
Parenting UK
Parentline Plus
Peers Early Education Partnership (PEEP)
Portsmouth City Council
Poverty Alliance
Royal Association of Disability Rights (RADAR)
Reflex
Relate
Relationships Foundation
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health and Imperial College London
Safe Ground
Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
Save the Children
School Food Trust
School-Home Support
Sheffield Hallam University, Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research
Shelter
Skills Funding Agency
Social Fund Commissioner
Southampton Anti-Poverty Network
Southampton City Council
South London & Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust
Southwark Council
St George's Crypt
St Giles Trust
Stoke Speaks Out
Straight Talking
Surrey County Council Early Years and Childcare Service
Swedish Ministry of Health and Social Affairs
The 999 Club
The Association of Charity Officers
The Attlee Foundation
The British Youth Council
The Campaign for National Universal Inheritance
The Children's Society
The Family Holiday Association
The Fostering Network
The Foyer Federation
The Living Well Trust
The Place 2 Be
The Poverty Truth Commission (Scotland)
The Prince's Foundation for Children & the Arts
The Prince's Trust
The Prison Reform Trust
The Safety Zone Community Project
The Source Young People's Charity
Trafford Borough Council
Tranmere Community Project
Tyne Gateway (North Tyneside Council & South Tyneside Council Childhood Poverty Innovation Pilot)
UNICEF UK
UNITE (Community Practitioner's & Health Visitor's Association)
University of Bath, Department of Social and Political Sciences
University of Bradford
University of Central Lancashire, Faculty of Education
University of Leeds, School of Sociology and Social Policy

University of Liverpool, Centre for The Study of The Child, The Family and The Law

University of Manchester, The Cathie Marsh Centre for Census and Survey Research

University of Oxford, Centre for Research into Parenting and Children

University of Oxford, Department of Social Policy and Social Work

University of York, Department of Social Policy and Social Work

U-Too Community Business Ltd

West Chadsmoor Family Centre

What Makes You Tick

The Wilderness Foundation

Wirral Partnership Homes

Women Like Us

Youth Justice Board for England and Wales

YoungMinds

YWCA England & Wales

Zacchaeus 2000 Trust

List of organisations that met with or spoke to Frank Field and the Review team during the consultation process:

4Children

Action for Children

A National Voice

ATD Fourth World

Barnardo's

Bidston Avenue Primary School, Birkenhead

Birkbeck, University of London, Institute for the Study of Children, Families & Social Issues

Blackpool Local Authority

Centre for Social Justice

Child Poverty Action Group

Church Action on Poverty

City Hall

Columbia University, School of Social Work

Contact a Family

Coram

Croydon Local Authority

Dartington Social Research Unit Daycare Trust

Demos

End Child Poverty Coalition

Equality and Human Rights Commission

Every Child a Chance Trust

Every Disabled Child Matter

Families United

Family Action

Family and Parenting Institute

Family Links

Family Rights Group

Fatherhood Institute

Fostering Network

Gingerbread

Grandparents Plus

Halton Housing Trust (on behalf of the Chartered Institute of Housing North West Branch)

Heriot Watt University, School of the Built Environment

Ican

Impetus

Institute of Child Health

Institute of Education, University of London

Institute for Fiscal Studies

Institute for Social and Economic Research, University of Essex

Islington Local Authority

Joseph Rowntree Foundation

Liverpool City Council

Local Government Improvement and Development

London Councils

London School of Economics and Political Science, Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion

Loughborough University, Centre for Research in Social Policy

Marriage Care

Mental Health Alliance

Mental Health Foundation

National Centre for Social Research

National Childbirth Trust

National Childminding Association

National Children's Bureau

National Day Nurseries Association

National Family Intervention Strategy Board

National Literacy Trust

New York University

NSPCC

Ofsted

One Plus One

Parenting UK

Parentline Plus

Relate

Review of Early Years Foundation Stage

Salford Local Authority

Save the Children

Serco

Shelter

Synergy Research and Consulting

Tesco

The Big Issue

The Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services

The Children's Commissioner for England

The Children's Society

The Cross-Party Group on Drug and Alcohol Treatment and Harm Reduction

The Family and Parenting Institute

The Innovation Unit

The Manchester Academy

The Marmot Review

The Prince's Charities

The Prince's Trust

Together for Children

Toynbee Hall

Turning Point

UNICEF

Unite/Community Practitioners and Health Visitors Association National Professional Committee

University College London, Global Health Equity Group

University of Birmingham, Institute of Applied Social Studies

University of Bristol, Centre for Market and Public Organisation

University of Bristol, Centre for the Study of Poverty and Social Justice

University of Bristol, Department of Social Medicine

University of Oxford, Department of Education

University of Oxford, Faculty of Linguistics, Philology and Phonetics

University of Oxford, Social Disadvantage Research Centre

University of Warwick, Health Sciences Research Institute

University of Westminster

University of York, Social Policy Research Unit

Urban Bishop's Panel

Voice

Frank Field and the Review team also met with a range of officials and Ministers from relevant Government departments.

List of visits and seminars attended by Frank Field and the Review team:

Visits

4Children, Knowsley
 Barnardo's Children's Centre, Birmingham
 Bidston and St James Children's Centre, Birkenhead
 Birkenhead & Tranmere Children's Centre
 Cherry Fold Primary School, Burnley
 Family Links – The Nurturing Programme
 Family Nurse Partnership, Birkenhead
 Heasandford Primary School, Burnley
 ICE Wirral, Birkenhead
 Insite, Birkenhead
 Jubilee Children's Centre, Ealing
 Liverpool Kensington Children's Centre, Liverpool
 Oxford Parenting Infant Project (OXPIP)
 Oxford University
 Rock Ferry Children's Centre, Birkenhead
 The Chai Centre, Children's Centre, Burnley
 The Prince's Trust Charities, Burnley

Seminars

Centre for Social Justice presentation delivered by Professor Matt Sanders, founder of the Triple P - Positive Parenting Programme
 Demos event: 'Proof Positive? Evidence-based practice in children's services'
 Family and Parenting Institute conference: 'Family Policy and the New Government'
 IFS conference: 'Reducing child poverty, and improving children's life chances'
 National Institute of Adult Continuing Education event: 'Families know how: ask the family'
 New Philanthropy Capital seminar: 'Scaling up charitable approaches to early intervention'
 Parenting UK policy round table: 'Teaching Parenting in Schools – a GCSE in Parenting?'
 Policy Exchange seminar: 'The Child Poverty Target: Towards an Index of Life Chances?'
 The Private Equity Foundation Conference 2010: 'Intervening before it's too late'

Annex D: Frank Field's Public Statements

Poverty Measures

Date	Publication or lecture host
18 th October 2010	Policy Exchange
14 th October 2010	Canterbury University
23 rd September 2010	Nursery World
16 th September 2010	Haileybury School
13 th September 2010	2 nd Progress Report to the Prime Minister
7 th September 2010	IFS conference
28 th July 2010	1 st Progress Report to the Prime Minister
3 rd July 2010	The Guardian
29 th June 2010	The Guardian
23 rd June 2010	Attlee Foundation Lecture
11 th June 2010	The Times
5 th June 2010	The Telegraph

Public Finance

Date	Publication or lecture host
15 th October 2010	The Guardian
15 th October 2010	The Financial Times
4 th October 2010	The Guardian
12 th September 2010	The Independent on Sunday
11 th September 2010	The Times
8 th September 2010	The Financial Times
1 st August 2010	The Sunday Times
20 th June 2010	The Sunday Express

Parenting and Employment

Date	Publication or lecture host
8 th November 2010	The Guardian
2 nd November 2010	BBC Radio 4's Today Programme
18 th October 2010	Policy Exchange
12 th October 2010	Liverpool Echo
30 th September 2010	The Telegraph
10 th August 2010	Daily Mail
1 st August 2010	The Sunday Times
13 th July 2010	The Times
23 rd June 2010	Attlee Foundation Lecture
11 th June 2010	The Times

Foundation Years

Date	Publication or lecture host
14 th October 2010	Canterbury University
30 th September 2010	The Telegraph
17 th September 2010	Press Association
16 th September 2010	Haileybury School
8 th September 2010	The Sun
8 th September 2010	Liverpool Echo
7 th September 2010	IFS conference
28 th July 2010	1 st Progress Report to the Prime Minister

Schools

Date	Publication or lecture host
2 nd December 2010	Prospect
8 th November 2010	The Guardian
2 nd November 2010	BBC Radio 4's Today Programme
31 st October 2010	The Observer
12 th October 2010	BBC Radio 4's Woman's Hour
11 th September 2010	The Times
24 th September 2010	TES
16 th September 2010	Haileybury School
8 th September 2010	The Telegraph
16 th August 2010	The Independent
8 th August 2010	The News of the World
1 st August 2010	The Sunday Times

Sure Start Children's Centres

Date	Publication or lecture host
14 th October 2010	BBC Daily Politics
30 th September 2010	The Telegraph
11 th September 2010	The Times
15 th August 2010	The Sunday Times

Cabinet Office
22 Whitehall
London SW1A 2WH

Publication date: December 2010

© Crown copyright 2010

You may re-use this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence.

To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/
or write to the Information Policy Team,
The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU,
or e-mail: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This document/publication can also be viewed on our website at www.frankfield.co.uk

Any enquiries regarding this document/publication should be sent to us at:

fieldf@parliament.uk

The material used in this publication is constituted from 75% post consumer waste and 25% virgin fibre.

Ref: 403244 / 1210