The British Lone Parent Cohort and their Children 1991 to 2001

Alan Marsh and Sandra Vegeris

A report of research carried out by the Policy Studies Institute on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions
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The greatest debt is to 900 families who gave a great deal of their time and patiently answered our questions for a decade.
The Authors

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Sandra Vegeris is a Research Fellow at PSI.
# Glossary of terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dependent child</td>
<td>A child aged 16 or younger, or 17 or 18 and in full time education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Credit (FC) recipient (up to 1999)</td>
<td>Respondent (and/or partner) employed, working 16 or more hours per week, and receiving Family Credit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family unemployment</td>
<td>Refers to the work status of a family unit living in the same household where neither parent is working 16 or more hours per week (some were working 1-15 hours), similar to non-working</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time work</td>
<td>Work of 16 or more hours per week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hardship</td>
<td>A concept of deprivation that means going without commonly owned or accessed items or conditions of living</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lone parent family</td>
<td>A family with dependent children that is headed by one natural or adoptive parent only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternal employment</td>
<td>A mother doing paid work outside the home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never partnered</td>
<td>A single lone parent who has never lived with a partner ‘... as a couple’ for a period of a month or more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-working</td>
<td>Respondent (AND any partner) not working 16 or more hours per week (some were working 1-15 hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older children</td>
<td>Offspring of PRILIF parents who were 16 to 28 years of age in 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner</td>
<td>Refers to person with whom the respondent shared or shares a home, ‘... living together as a couple’, for one month or more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time work</td>
<td>Work of 1 to 15 hours per week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previously cohabiting</td>
<td>Lone parent in 1991, last partnership prior to 1991 was cohabitation (not legally married)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previously married</td>
<td>Lone parent in 1991, last partnership prior to 1991 was marriage (includes separation and divorce)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed</td>
<td>Respondent (and/or partner) self-employed and working 16 or more hours per week. May be receiving WFTC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single lone parent</td>
<td>A parent who has not lived as a couple at least one year prior to the birth of a child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stepfamily</td>
<td>A family which comprises a mother and father living together when one of these parents is not the natural or adopted parent of their child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WFTC recipient</td>
<td>Respondent (and/or partner) employed, working 16 or more hours per week and receiving Working Families’ Tax Credit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widow</td>
<td>Parent whose last partner died (whether married or cohabiting)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worklessness</td>
<td>The state of being without paid work, usually for a prolonged period of time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Younger children</td>
<td>Offspring of PRILIF parents who were 3 to 15 years of age in 2001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** Labels referring to marital and relationship status all relate to a respondent’s present or last relationship and so may differ from legal status. For example: a parent who was ‘previously cohabiting’ may be legally divorced or separated from an earlier marriage, preceding the last relationship.
A large number of tables appear in this report. The following conventions are used:

Figures in square brackets [ ] are based on fewer than 30 cases and should therefore be treated with caution.

- 0 denotes a true zero, no cases for this category
- * denotes a figure more than zero but less than 0.5 %
- - denotes that this category is not applicable

Tests of significance are at the five per cent level, and results are significant at this level unless otherwise stated.
Summary

The study

Introduction
This study investigates to what extent different pathways through lone parenthood may be associated with different outcomes for the children of lone-parent families.

The study began in 1991 as a nationally representative sample of lone parents. This 1991 cohort of lone parents was then tracked for ten years. During this time, some of them found new partners while others saw their children grow up, so they were not any longer representative of all lone parents. Instead they became a uniquely valuable longitudinal study of these families who began as lone parents in 1991 and then took differing paths.

The majority of the 1991 sample were re-interviewed in 1993, 94, 95, 96, 98 and again in 2001 when their children were included in the study. This report examines what happened to those families in the ten years between 1991 and 2001 and how a combination of their initial circumstances, and the changes that followed, were linked to the outcomes for the children.

The lone parent cohort
The study began in 1991 as part of a larger survey of low-income families (Marsh and McKay 1993). Of the original 940 lone parents interviewed in 1991, 548 or 58 per cent were interviewed in 2001, 71 per cent of whom had data for all seven interviews while most of the remainder lacked just one or two years of data.

By 2001, 541 children aged 11 to 28 were still resident in their parents’ households. Of these, 477 were interviewed: 237 children aged 11 to 15 filled in a self-completion questionnaire (93 per cent) while 240 older children were interviewed (84 per cent). A further 91 non-resident children age 16 to 28 were interviewed (26 per cent of those identified, 31 per cent of those traced).

The 2001 survey concentrated on the children. The parents’ questionnaire covered only the essential information about the main outcomes for the family as a whole in employment, education, family formation, housing, health and family well-being. This allowed time for the parents to provide information about each child aged three to 28 years old.
The combination of parents’ information, self-completion devices and CAPI interviews with children covered a range of important outcomes for the children: health, social behaviour and adjustment, attitudes and values, and, as appropriate, educational outcomes, housing, work and family formation.

**The approach to analysis**

The 1991 baseline survey was a nationally representative ‘stock’ sample of Britain’s lone parents and their children. This placed limitations on the interpretation of the longitudinal data gathered in the following ten years. For example, the story that unfolded for these families was connected to their position at the beginning of the study period, to their age and the age at which they became parents. Some were new to lone parenthood in 1991; others were on the point of leaving, for example. The amount of ‘exposure’ to lone parenthood among the parents and their children, therefore, varied greatly, to an extent that with a relatively small sample of 548 families cannot be entirely held constant in the analysis.

The analysis followed a cautious, descriptive and associative approach. This relied on establishing connections between the families’ circumstances in 1991, their later experiences, and the variation of outcomes among their children in 2001. The analysis, for parents and then for children, was to be structured around three clear themes:

- family formation: new partners, new children and children growing up;
- their experience of paid work; and
- changes in their material well-being.

**Part One – The parents**

**Family outcomes: children, partners and husbands**

**Partners**

By 2001, 34 per cent of the 1991 cohort had a new partner living with them and over half of these (59 per cent) were married. A further 17 per cent had a new partner since 1991 but were alone again in 2001. Thus, by 2001, half had lived with a partner since 1991 and nine per cent had never had a partner since the birth of their first child.

The main factors distinguishing those who had a new partner by 2001 from those alone were:

- being younger (more than anything);
- being single and never partnered in 1991, or being formerly married;
- having a new child since 1991; and
- entering work by 2001.

Among those with new partners, the main factor distinguishing those who married from those who cohabited was whether they had a new child together.
New children

Overall, 26 per cent had a new child since 1991, which is probably an underestimate given previous results on subsequent birth rates of the cohort (Finlayson et al. 2000). Still the figure averages to about 2.5 children each, which is higher than the national average of just under two children per family. A handful of stepchildren added to these numbers. Fewer than half (47 per cent) had only dependent children living with them by 2001; others had at least one grown up child (i.e., non-dependent) at home and 17 per cent had no child of any age living with them.

The arrival of new babies since 1991 was usually accompanied by the presence in the household of a new partner. But not all these partners stayed, so by 2001 just under half of those who had new babies were alone. However, 16 per cent of those who had no new partner living with them had a new child compared with one in four of those who had a resident partner and this rose to 36 per cent among those who still had such a partner in 2001.

Apart from the obvious association with new partnerships, the most common antecedents of having a new child were being younger and having one child in 1991. A number of key measures of social disadvantage, such as social tenancy and hardship were also associated with new births, both in terms of hardship in 1991 and subsequent difficulty. But these effects were strongly mediated by the effects of age. Initial hardship was associated with being a young lone parent in 1991 and subsequent hardship was as likely to be as much a short-lived outcome of new births as it was a cause. For example, 42 per cent of lone parents who began in 1991 out of work and who went on to live as a couple with someone, had a new baby before 2001. Only four per cent of lone parents who were in work in 1991 and who remained alone, had a new child. But these two starting positions were strongly characteristic of the youngest and the oldest lone parents in 1991, respectively.

Partners and children

Overall, 43 per cent of the 1991 cohort (excluding widows) were lone parents in 2001, 35 per cent were living as a couple and 22 per cent were without a resident partner, though a large minority of these still had non-dependent children living with them. Those most likely to continue as lone parents were those who began in 1991 as lone parents separated from cohabitation. Those most likely to be living alone were the formerly married, largely because they were already older in 1991 and had older children.

Child support

The proportion receiving child support payments fell from 29 per cent in 1991 to 17 per cent in 2001 though as many as 47 per cent received child support payments at some point between 1991 and 2001. Some of these new payments were ‘dowry maintenance’ paid by incoming partners who supported their new child prior to their own arrival in the household.

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1 Children are considered dependent if they are living at home and are either 16 years of age or younger or up to age 18 and attending full-time education.
Employment outcomes for parents

Entering work

The proportion of cohort members in work of 16 hours or more each week rose from 27 per cent in 1991 to 56 per cent in 2001. Though the proportion in work had more than doubled in ten years, it was a slow return to work – less than three per cent per year.

A further 17 per cent had had a job since 1991 but were out of work in 2001, often because they now had young children again. More than eight out of ten had had a job of some kind since 1991 and the majority of those out of work in 2001 had an earning partner.

Overall, lone parents’ persistence in work was high. For example, three-quarters of those in work in 1991 were in work in both 1996 and 2001. Nearly all those in better-paid jobs above their Family Credit threshold in 1991 remained in work over ten years.

Among new couples, over half (62 per cent) were dual earners even if they had had a new child together (53 per cent). Family unemployment (where neither parent was in work of 16 or more hours per week) was rare among the new couples (seven per cent).

The majority of lone parents who had jobs in 2001 had ‘reasonably good’ jobs – more than half in non-manual occupations. They continued to favour shorter hours, averaging 29 hours a week, though 42 per cent worked 35 hours a week or more. Shorter hours held down average earnings to £170 a week, or £5.72 an hour. Sixteen per cent earned more than £250 a week.

Main factors associated with paid work

Four key ‘social location’ variables were independently associated with being in work of 16 hours a week or more ten years later, whatever happened in the intervening years. These were:

• beginning in work of 16 hours a week or more;

• having lower high school qualifications or better;

• not living in a social tenancy in 1991; and

• starting the survey period under 40 years of age.

Believing that benefits should be available to people with jobs and mortgages and not reserved solely for the poor was also associated with work in 2001.

Between 1991 and 2001, three key measures of ‘life improvement’ were strongly associated with being in work in 2001, controlling for the initial social location variables:

• finding and keeping a new partner, even if they had to have more than one attempt at this;

• improving educational levels, though some of these will have been obtained in work; and

• obtaining some new child support payments, though these may well have come from incoming partners rather than the non-resident parents of the 1991 children.

Having a new child continued to exert some negative influence on entering work but its effects in most cases were temporary. More persisting was the association between hardship and remaining out of work, though cause and effect will be shared.
Work and benefits

Family Credit and later Working Families’ Tax Credit, played a strong role in assisting lone parents to get and keep paid work. Half of those working qualifying hours in 2001 that still had dependent children received WFTC in 2001, rising to three-quarters among those who still had no partner.

There was strong long-term continuity in benefit receipt. More than half (54 per cent) of those on Income Support in 1991 and who subsequently remained alone in 2001 remained on Income Support. More than a third of those on Family Credit in 1991 were receiving WFTC in 2001. In contrast, it was rare for any of the minority of lone parents who were beyond the scope of income-tested benefits in 1991 to receive such benefits in 2001.

Overall, lone parents on Income Support in 1991 had three common destinations in 2001: on Income Support (36 per cent), on WFTC (25 per cent) or as a member of a dual-earner couple (21 per cent). Only two per cent of out-of-work lone parents from 1991 had become independent of both income-tested benefits or tax credits and a partner in 2001.

Changes in family circumstances

Housing
Changes in housing tenure were rare and usually involved a move into owner occupation accompanied by a new partner.

Health
More than half (55 per cent) reported some long-term illness during the study period, though such illness was rarely reported at every interview (six per cent of those answering every interview). Most common were musculo-skeletal problems (especially bad backs), chest complaints or trouble with other internal organs, and mental problems, especially anxiety and depression. Poor health was associated with remaining alone.

Cigarette smoking fell from 54 to 45 per cent between 1991 and 2001 but remained far higher than among women of similar age. Smoking continued to be associated with hardship.

Hardship
Ownership of key domestic goods rose and by 2001: almost every family had a washing machine, freezer, video recorder, and a telephone whose ownership rose from 69 to 98 per cent in ten years. Car ownership doubled from 33 to 65 per cent though this improvement was strongly associated with the arrival of new partners.

The proportion that felt they managed well on their income doubled from 23 to 45 per cent. Difficulty with problem debts fell from 31 per cent in the period 1992 to 1994 to 19 per cent in the period 1999 to 2001. Entry to work was the factor most strongly associated with recovery from higher levels of hardship in 1991.

Those who reported financial difficulties in 1991 were three times more likely to report them in 2001 than those without such problems (32 versus 11 per cent). These continuities were stronger among those remaining out of work and claiming Income Support for most of the study period: 45 per cent of these who reported debts in 1994 reported a similar history of problem debt in 2001. The same proportion among those not reporting debt in 1994 was 18 per cent, despite their having remained on Income Support all or most of the time in between.
A minority managed on benefit. Compared to those on Income Support who reported frequent hardship, recipients who usually managed to avoid hardship were older. They were also more likely to be formerly married or widowed and to receive child support payments or disability benefits. They were more likely to have non-dependent children in the household and, most strikingly, were less likely to smoke.

**Family welfare in 2001**

More than four out of ten of the 1991 cohort remained lone parents living with dependent children in 2001. Less than half these continuing lone parents were in work.

About a quarter of the cohort were alone and the majority of these had paid jobs in 2001. The remainder had partners and most of these had jobs of their own too.

Two of these groups defined by children, partners and employment appeared to be in difficulty, comprising together about a third of the cohort. They had higher levels of ill-health and financial difficulty and continued in social accommodation. These were:

- continuing lone parents who began and ended the study period out of work; and
- out-of-work respondents who lived alone and who had particularly high levels of disability and long-term illness.

Contemplating the best and worst aspects of their time as lone parents, most stressed the rewards of having a period of parenthood unobstructed by a difficult relationship. This brought them a sense of independence and achievement. Most of the difficulties they encountered were financial. Others recalled the stress they felt when independence shaded into isolation and when they had to bear a lot of responsibility alone. Few mentioned problems with their children.

**Part Two – The children**

**Analysis approach**

The child level analysis reported in this part of the report aimed to use information about family background and key events in the most recent ten years to explain variation in select characteristics of a sample of children in 2001. This is not a comparative study, it does not seek to contrast children from families with a history of lone parenthood with other, more intact, families, nor does it seek to assess the ‘impact’ of lone parenthood per se. Rather, through taking a sample of children who are similar on one key characteristic – they all have a caring parent who was alone in 1991 - it seeks to assess to what extent variation in the children’s characteristics in 2001 can be attributed to characteristics of that parent, and key events which occurred in the family between 1991 and 2001.

A conceptual framework for analysing the child outcomes covered in this report is provided in three key themes:

- family structure;
- employment of the caring parent and employment status of the family unit in the case of families categorised as ‘stable couples’;
- experience of hardship.
Multivariate analysis, in the form of logistic regression, is used to test the robustness of observed patterns in the findings while controlling for other plausible influences from family characteristics and life events. The findings should be valued for their unique contribution to understanding the impact change and stability in family work, material well-being and family structure can make for children who share a history of belonging to a lone-parent family, many of whom entered the study from a position of disadvantage.

Child measures

The PRILIF sample of children is limited to those who were 18 years or younger in 1991, or who were born between 1991 and the last full parent interview in 1998. That is, those aged between three and 28 years at the time of interview in 2001.

The overwhelming majority of the 1101 children were the natural children of the lone parents interviewed in 1991. Only 20 were stepchildren, and two were adopted.

Overall, the children were evenly split between boys and girls, and had an average (median) age in 2001 of 16 years. Three-quarters of all the children, and practically all of the children aged under 16, were still living with the caring parent. Half (52 per cent) of the older children (16 to 28 years) were living away from home.

A wide range of measures are available about the children, but the analysis presented in this report focused on:

- physical well-being: general health, disability/illness, hospital admissions, alcohol consumption and smoking behaviour;
- adjustment and behaviour: truancy, trouble with the law, violence and vandalism and self-esteem;
- education: early school leaving, qualifications, attitude towards school performance;
- older children’s (16 to 28 years) work, benefit status, housing and family formation.

Parent partnership history

Differences in the PRILIF children were examined according to the partnership histories of their caring parents. This study used as its baseline a point in time when all households in 1991 were led by a single parent. During a decade of observation, some family structures changed. Many (45 per cent) of the children saw their parent join a couple relationship. Six in ten of these were still intact by the end of the study period. Still, more than half (55 per cent) of the children continued to be raised by a single parent. A parent partnership typology (Section 9.3), classifying family structures over the ten year period as either stable lone parent (60 per cent), stable couple (24 per cent) or short-term relationship (17 per cent), was used to differentiate the children.

In the PRILIF sample of children there was clear evidence to support previous research on family backgrounds, that the structures resulting from parent partnerships do make a difference for children. When there was variance observed between the three family structure categories, findings on children from backgrounds where the single parent had formed a stable couple union tended to be the most favourable. Most consistently, children from a background where the single parent entered into a short-term relationship and, to a lesser extent, children whose parent remained single during the study period, were found to be at a disadvantage. These findings reflect select measures in five broad areas: physical well-being, social adjustment, education, and work and household formation.
In multivariate analyses, while accounting for other possible influences, family structure after lone parenthood was identified as an important factor regarding:

- the incidence of hospital admissions among children aged three to ten years;
- alcohol consumption in youths;
- cigarette smoking among 13 to 15 year olds;
- truancy from school;
- vandalism among youths;
- trouble with the law among youths;
- young adult self-esteem;
- early school leaving;
- attitude towards school performance among youths.

For all of these indicators, the results for those children attached to a parent who entered into a short-term relationship were more negative when contrasted with children from a stable couple household. For some of these measures (hospital admissions, alcohol consumption in youths, youth vandalism, self-esteem, attitude towards school performance) children from a stable lone-parent background were at a disadvantage when compared to those with a parent who entered a stable couple relationship.

However, family structure over the previous decade did not appear to have any bearing on:

- children’s general health;
- the incidence of a disability or illness;
- reports of fighting in youths;
- attainment of advanced academic qualifications;
- work status and benefit receipt; nor
- early motherhood.

Generalisations from this research are limited, as the findings are associated with a unique sample of children, initially from single-parent families. Yet the findings concur with other sources of research into family structure and child development (see Rodgers and Pryor (1998) for example) that cite disadvantages for children from unconventional or divided families.

### Family history of work

The PRILIF children were distinguished according to the work status of the family unit over a ten-year period. The focus was on full-time work of 16 or more hours per week. In 1991, when all children were part of a lone-parent family, only 23 per cent of the children lived in working households. By 2001, factoring in both parents’ and partners’ work statuses, the proportion of children associated with a working family rose to 62 per cent.
A typology on family work history was derived, accounting for the work histories of the caring parent as well as a partner (where applicable). According to the typology, half the children (48 per cent) came from a background where parents worked for the majority of the research period (more than half of the timeframe), 28 per cent were associated with a family that worked for a short period (less than half of the timeframe), while the remaining 24 per cent of the children had family backgrounds distinguished by very little or no paid work.

The age of the child was a significant variable in the distribution of family work history – parent work participation rates increased as the children aged during the course of the ten-year study so that by 2001, the highest work rates were associated with parents of children in the eldest age category (16 to 28 year olds). In addition, children with parents who had entered a stable partnership were more likely to be associated with working households.

Among the youngest children, the research supported the common observation that children’s poor health is related to low levels of work. As a lone parent is usually the sole caregiver, the health of the children is associated with the parent’s ability to work. However, the direction of causation was not clear from the data, suggesting that a workless environment may also have contributed to the deterioration of the children’s health.

Family work status history was found to be an important distinguishing factor on a variety of child measures while controlling for other important influences in the household environment such as type of accommodation, parents’ education, family structure, experience of hardship and characteristics like family size and ethnicity.

As would be expected, the largest contrasts in the sample occurred between children with parents who worked for the majority of the ten-year period of study and children from families which worked very little or not at all. Compared to children from predominantly working households, 11 to 15 year olds from non-working households or with parents who worked for only a short period were:

- more likely to have been involved in a physical fight in the past month;
- more likely to report they had committed vandalism (only those from non-working families);
- more likely to report they had frequently truanted from school;
- more likely to have been in trouble with the law (only those from families that worked for a short period);
- more likely to have a negative attitude towards doing well in school.

But 11 to 15 year olds from non-working families were less likely to report having consumed alcohol in the past month.

There were also significant contrasts observed among the older children from different family work status backgrounds. Compared to children with parents who worked for the majority of the study period, 16 to 28 year olds from families that worked for a short period of the study were more likely to report they had truanted from school. More significant contrasts were found between older children from predominantly working families and those from predominantly non-working households. Compared to children with parents who worked for the majority of the study period, 16 to 28 year olds from non-working families were:
• less likely to score in the high range on a self-esteem index;
• more likely to finish school early, at or before age 16;
• more likely to be unemployed and seeking work;
• more likely to have received out-of-work benefits; and
• female children were more likely to have had children at a young age.

But children from predominantly non-working homes were less likely to have committed a driving or other offence (a possible explanation for this is that children from poorer, non-working backgrounds were probably less likely to have access to a car).

Among the older children (16 to 28 years), the work history of the family had greater impact on the children’s measures of schooling (leaving school early) and future work status. The fact that significant differences were found among the older children, many of whom were no longer living at home, and in latent measures such as work status and receipt of out-of-work support indicates just how enduring the effects of a non-working environment can be on children’s life chances.

Family work history was not found to be a significant factor in predicting child measures on:
• general health;
• the incidence of hospital admissions among young (three to ten year old) children;
• smoking behaviour;
• achievement of advanced academic qualifications.

History of hardship

The third analysis theme was families’ exposure to hardship during the study period. Hardship was defined as having a relatively low standard of living – going without essential items or not being able to manage family finances. On six observations during the 1990s the PRILIF families were measured on a hardship scale. Hardship was described on a seven-point continuum ranging from ‘no hardship’ to ‘severe hardship’. For the current analysis, a ‘history of hardship’ was derived by categorising the cumulative hardship scores of families over the six observations. The resulting hardship typology classified families as ‘low hardship’ where families predominantly experienced no hardship or only a low level of hardship on a few interviews; a ‘spell of moderate hardship’ where families experienced a low level of hardship throughout the study; and a ‘spell of severe hardship’ where families experienced continued severe hardship over most of the interviews. The hardship history indicator was limited to the 1991 to 1998 timeframe as no measure of hardship was taken during the 2001 interview.

According to the hardship typology, about half (48 per cent) of the children were classified with a ‘spell of moderate hardship’. The remaining half were evenly split between the ‘low hardship’ and ‘spell of severe hardship’ groups. Across the age ranges, the largest proportion of children were categorised in the ‘spell of moderate hardship’ group and this remained at about half. But relatively more of the younger children (under 16 years) fell into the ‘spell of severe hardship’ category. The finding that more of the older children had family backgrounds of very little exposure to hardship corresponds with the higher proportion of working families among these children.
Compared to findings on the parent partnership and work history typologies, family history of hardship was found to be a significant contributor on fewer of the child measures. Based on the hardship typology, children did not vary on measures of:

- physical well-being;
- disability or long-term illness;
- alcohol consumption in youths;
- truancy from school;
- trouble with the law;
- level of self-esteem in young adults;
- youth attitude towards doing well at school;
- work status and benefit receipt among older children;
- young motherhood.

On many of the measures there was little variation on the marginal proportions according to level of family hardship. For some measures where proportions did vary, numbers in some of the sub-groups were too small to make reliable analyses possible.

Still, through multivariate analyses, controlling for other probable influences, the children’s history of exposure to hardship was identified as a significant predictor for several of the measures. Compared to those who experienced little or no hardship, children from families with either a spell of moderate or severe hardship were:

- less likely to be admitted to hospital during the past year (aged three to ten years);
- more likely to have completed school at or before age 16; and
- less likely to have attained higher-level educational qualifications.

Compared to those who experienced little or no hardship, youths (11 to 15 years) from families that endured a spell of severe hardship were:

- less likely to report that they had smoked a cigarette in the past week;
- more likely to report they had intentionally damaged property in the past month;
- less likely to anticipate leaving school early.

Some of the results concerning children’s backgrounds on family experience of hardship go counter to expectations, particularly among children under age 16. Again this may be an artefact of the small sample size. Or perhaps there is a temporal explanation as the measures on the children were taken in 2001 and the record of hardship stopped three years previously in 1998, missing changes in family circumstances that may have occurred in the interim. Again, the reader is reminded about the limited generalisability of the PRILIF data set.

Significant findings on the older children suggest that a family’s level of living standards can have an impact on educational achievement. In the sample, those children who endured a spell of severe hardship during the 1990s were much more likely to finish school early and consequently attain a lower level of educational qualifications.
Part Three – Interpreting the findings for policy

Design considerations

The data from this study must be interpreted with care because:

- beginning with a nationally representative sample in 1991 meant that they were typically established lone-parent families. Duration in lone parenthood and in other outcomes linked to this will be longer than those of all families who have any experience of lone parenthood;

- widely varying ‘starting positions’ which placed young, single, never-partnered lone parents with a baby alongside older divorced lone parents with teenage children, shaped a good deal of what followed in the study;

- the interpretation of child outcomes is focused on the connection between lone parents’ backgrounds, the events of the ten years of the study, and the measures taken of their children in 2001. The intent is to explain the likely effects of changes in parents’ lives on their children, not to explain why lone parents’ children are the way they are;

- once stratified by age, the samples of children are quite small.

The parents

‘Single mothers’

The strength of public and policy concern with the disadvantaged position of single, never-partnered, lone parents and the growth in their numbers was not entirely borne out by the study. Much of their disadvantage was attached to their youth and having very young children. They were actually more likely than other lone parents to go on to make successful new families. Even the half of this group who found no new partner succeeded in establishing themselves as working lone parents. Formerly married lone parents by contrast, being older and generally better placed, were less likely to make new relationships.

New children

There was no evidence from the study that having new children reflected any conscious or unconscious strategy to build a workless lone-parent family that would become long-term clients of the State. Rather, new children were usually part of a strategy among young lone parents to renew their families with a new partner. In time, many of these unions became dual-earner couples. This course was common among those beginning with just one child from a former relationship. For the majority who took this course, it succeeded.

The conditional family

The survey gave considerable support to a view that the normative ties binding relationships – family formation and family income support – are loosening. Choice in each area is becoming more a matter of conditional judgement and this alone is a major force in sustaining the growth of lone parenthood.
Employment

The barriers to work that affected lone parents were slowly overcome. But once overcome, with the help of an improving labour market during the 1990s and more general and liberal in-work benefits, the transition from a life on Income Support to a working family was accomplished and rarely retraced. Once in work, hardship reduced. The sustainability of lone parents’ employment seemed higher than that typical of other low-paid workers. It suggests that the emphasis on policy, especially for the aims of active case management, should continue getting lone parents into work as soon as it is practical.

There was also clear evidence that improvement to skills and obtaining child support payments independently boosted a return to work and increased the labour market contribution that lone parents were making in 2001. This means that the aim of raising compliance with child support orders and encouraging voluntary income sharing between divided parents, is valuable in itself. This has become part of an integrated welfare-to-work strategy and one that benefits greatly from the new disregard of child support payments under Working Tax Credit rules.

The children

The effects of family changes

Just as things turned out better for 1991’s young, never-partnered lone parents than their initial positions foretold, so too was their children’s welfare in 2001. Policy concerns that focused on the growth of single lone parenthood may be softened by these parents’ evident capacity for recovery in forming new families with new partners and securing a place in the labour market.

Overall, positive child measures in 2001 were strongly associated with parents forming successful new families with new partners. These results were marginally better than those children whose parents continued without a new partner. But they were very significantly better than among the children of the 1991 lone parent cohort who had gone on to make new partnerships but then lose them again by 2001.

The effects of employment

Positive child measures in 2001 were associated with working families – both working couples and working lone parents. These measures were focused on positive educational and employment outcomes among the children of working families and lowered achievement among the children of workless households. No negative outcomes were significantly associated with lone parents being in work. These findings allow an optimistic view of policies that aim to increase lone parents’ labour market participation that a quite different set of results would have forbade. Had we found that, other things being equal, children of working households were more likely to get into trouble, truant, fail at school and later in work, and so on, then this study would have challenged policy in uncomfortable ways. But the study found the opposite.

The effects of hardship

The experience of hardship was far greater in workless households and so the analysis linking child measures with degrees of family hardship controlled for worklessness itself. Therefore, the analysis sought additional effects on child measures that might be due to hardship. Such an additional effect was found linking hardship to lowered educational attainment but other effects (other things, including work, being equal) were inconsistent. This indicates that policy would be correct in looking at worklessness and hardship together – addressing the labour market disadvantages associated with being out of work and unacceptably hard up as a single package.
Conclusions

The 1991 cohort of lone parents divided into two groups:

- a majority of about two-thirds who had a job or a partner and who were in better circumstances, on average;
- a minority of about a third of the 1991 lone parents who had no job and no partner in 2001 and who were in difficulty.

The disadvantaged minority with neither job nor partner was in turn made up of two groups:

- about a quarter of the 1991 sample had begun as out-of-work lone parents and remained in that state or had returned to it by 2001;
- one in ten were out of work and had no new partner, nor dependent children.

The continuing out-of-work lone parents still had all the markers for disadvantage they had carried throughout the study period: relying on benefits and social accommodation, financially worse off than other families, more prone to problem debt, and in poorer health, on average. Many had a new child, which is why they were still lone parents ten years on. Some had also seen their relationship with a new partner fail. Their joint lack of new partners and work was associated in turn with poor outcomes for their children.

Those still out of work and alone – had different problems. They were more likely to be ill. Their children too showed many of the negative child outcomes relative to the children of working families.

Quite a large proportion – almost a fifth of the 1991 sample – was made up of working lone parents in 2001. Some had had a new child but most entered the study as young lone parents, the majority of them out of work in 1991, and went on to make a success of a single parent life. Their family profile in terms of hardship and improved fortunes was almost as favourable as the profile for the new couples. The trajectories followed by these ‘working career lone parents’ – new mothers or not – were generally associated with positive measures among their children. Again, it was the paid work component of their trajectories that was the really positive aspect.

Those parents that fared best by 2001 belonged to working couples. For many of these families the transition over ten years was dramatic because, being younger, many had begun in 1991 as out-of-work, single, never-partnered lone parents. Despite the need to adjust to a stepparent, their children displayed a set of significantly positive measures in 2001. Things went much better for these children than in cases where new partners arrived and left again. The evidence suggests that any intervention that supports young stepparents and reduces early break-up of stepfamilies may be beneficial.

Work and welfare in lone-parent families

The study showed that a large minority of the 1991 lone parent cohort remained without either of the two main routes to improvement – without work and without a working partner. Worse still, some lone parents’ attempts to follow these routes had failed. The evidence of the study supports a social policy focused to provide better resources for long-term workless families, such as those begun by large rises in Child Benefit and Child Tax Credit, which will in the longer run promote work and abate hardship. This in turn will be associated with better outcomes for children. No one reading this study has a basis for opposing the main policy platform that work is the best form of welfare for lone parents and for their children.
1 The British Lone Parent Cohort and their Children

1.1 The study

This study has followed what began as a nationally-representative cohort of lone parents since 1991, interviewed as part of a larger study of low-income families with dependent children (Marsh and McKay, 1993). These 1991 lone-parent families were interviewed again in 1993, 94, 95, 96, 98 and in 2001. As time passed, they were no longer a representative sample of Britain’s lone parents. After ten years, the majority were not even lone parents anymore. The great majority of the cohort members began the study as lone mothers who had been separated from marriage or cohabitation or who had never lived with a partner since becoming a parent, though the sample included small numbers of lone fathers and widows. Ten years later, some had new partners, some had new children, while others had seen children grow up. There were other important changes as, for example, the majority established themselves in paid work. The first part of this report examines what happened to these families between 1991 and 2001.

In the last interview in 2001, the children were brought into the study. Children 11 years and older were interviewed and the parents also gave information about these children and about younger ones. The second part of the report examines how early circumstances and the changes that followed were linked to differences among the children. The study asks: How are measures of the children’s welfare related to the different pathways lone parents took over ten years?

1.2 Background

According to 2001 Census figures, almost a quarter of British children live with one resident parent, usually their mother. Research has shown that children brought up in lone-parent families do less well than the children of undivided families (for a summary of the literature citing over 200 studies, see Rodgers and Pryor, 1998). There is still uncertainty as to how much of this difference is caused by the special emotional and social circumstances of lone-parent families, especially the break-up of the parents’ relationship and the arrival of stepparents, and how much is caused by lone parents’ increased vulnerability to hardship and discouragement following divorce and separation, or following their direct entry to lone parenthood. The children of very poor couples do not do very well either. Then again, very poor couples are often former lone parents. In a more recent study of all families, nearly one in five low-income couples and, indeed, 16 per cent of all couples were former lone-parent families (Marsh and Perry 2003).
So what was likely to be important, and therefore became the main theme of this work, were the circumstances of poor families during a passage of time, rather than the parents’ relationship status at any one point.

Families enter lone parenthood at different points in their lives and in different circumstances. Some parents enter in their teens and twenties as single never-partnered lone parents while others become lone parents in their 30s and 40s as a result of separation and divorce. Many lone parents spend a long time relying solely on Income Support and living in social accommodation. But others get and keep paid work and remain owner-occupiers, for example. The most important question for policy now is this: accounting for their greater risks of hardship overall, what kinds of experience among lone-parent families are associated with what kinds of outcomes for their children?

This question is important because lone parents make up the largest group of working-age people in poverty and their numbers are unlikely to fall in the near future, though rates of teenage pregnancy and subsequent lone motherhood have fallen. The evidence from the first three waves of the British Families and Children Study (FACS) – see for example, Marsh and Rowlingson (2002) and Marsh and Perry (2003) – suggests that all the factors that produced a three-fold rise in lone parenthood over the past 25 years, from 500,000 to 1.6 million by 2001, are still at work. For example, the proportion of low-income couples with children who are cohabiting rather than married rose from 11 to 20 per cent in nine years between 1991 and 2000. It was 15 per cent among all families in 2001. Eleven per cent of low-income cohabiting couples split up in the single year between 1999 and 2000 compared with five per cent among low-income married couples. And half of low-income couples with children where the parents are aged 25 or younger are now cohabiting rather than married.

But even if the recent growth of lone parenthood slows, it is accepted that a large fraction of families will continue to be headed by one parent, usually their mother. As a result, much is now being done to try to improve their circumstances, especially to help them get and keep paid work. For policy, the most useful thing now is to discover what kinds of improvement or change are associated with more or less favourable outcomes for lone parents and their children? Is a new partner usually a benefit, for example? Or does the arrival of a stepfather lead to more difficulty? What follows the mother entering work, or of her obtaining child support payments? What are the long-term effects of the high rates of hardship observed among Britain’s lone parents in 1991? Altogether, what trajectories through childhood in lone-parent families and their varying circumstances over time are associated with better or worse outcomes for the children?
1.3 The lone parent cohort

1.3.1 The 1991 sample

The 1991 survey was part of a programme to test the effects of Family Credit, the forerunner of today’s system of tax credits that top-up the wages of low-to-moderate-income families in work. We sampled families with dependent children ‘in-range’ of Family Credit, whose income was up to 10 per cent above the point at which their entitlement to Family Credit ran out. This definition of ‘low-income’ captured less than a quarter of couples with children, but captured nine out of ten lone parents. Of itself, this difference said much about the policy concerns surrounding lone parenthood. Simply by sampling the remaining 10 per cent of lone parents (about 100 cases) we obtained the first fully representative field sample of lone parents in Britain.

When we first interviewed them in 1991, our representative sample of lone parents were typically young-to-middle-age mothers. Their average age was 31 and eight out of ten were between 25 and 45. They had, on average, 1.7 children – fewer than couples had – and their youngest was 10 years old. Twenty-nine per cent had a paid job working 16 or more hours a week, while a further seven per cent had part-time work of 1-15 hours. Thus the majority claimed Income Support. More than half were social tenants and about a quarter had never lived with a partner since becoming a parent.

1.3.2 1991 to 1995

The cohort was interviewed again in 1993, 1994 and 1995, using much the same questionnaire on each occasion. The response rates fell during this time, interviewing successively, 85, 73 and 63 per cent of the original 1991 sample.

1.3.3 The 1996/8 base

In 1996, special efforts were made to restore to the sample some of the 1991 respondents who had been lost, boosted by considerable investment in cohort management and incentive payments to respondents. These efforts were successful, increasing the response rate to 76 per cent of those seen in 1991. In 1998 the response rate remained good: 74 per cent of the original 1991 sample were interviewed. The proportion remaining lone parents in 1998 was 51 per cent; though another fifth of these (10 per cent of the 1991 sample as a whole) had formed new partnerships that had by then ended. The 49 per cent of the 1991 cohort who had left lone parenthood by 1998 were made up of:

- 30 per cent who had new partners by 1998;
- 19 per cent who had seen their children grow beyond dependent age, though half of these were still living at home.

Thus, in 1998, the sample was nicely balanced between those who had continued in lone parenthood or returned to it, and those who had new partners. The sample for the 2001 study included anyone who was interviewed in either the 1996 or 1998 surveys.

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2 It is important to note that the 1991 survey did not begin as the baseline survey for a longitudinal study of lone parents. Rather it was a sample designed to examine the effects of Family Credit, so it contained a booster sample of Family Credit recipients and deliberately under-sampled out-of-work families. Almost a third of the full sample were in paid work and not receiving in-work benefits, a third were receiving Family Credit, and a third were out of work.

3 Bradshaw and Millar’s 1989 sample was the first national survey of lone parents but was based on benefit records and did not include widows, for example (see Bradshaw and Millar 1991).
1.3.4 The design and method of the 2001 sample

The approach in 2001 was to find and interview as many of the 1991 lone parents as possible. Interviews with parents were abbreviated and, unlike the previous sweeps, interviews were not undertaken with new partners. Parent interviews did not repeat the very detailed accounts of movements in and out of work, nor obtain month-by-month records of benefits, family status, and family circumstances. This was because the primary focus of the 2001 interviews was on the children. We asked about all the children who were in the household in 1991 who were still 18 or younger at the time and so 28 or younger in 2001. There was relatively less detail collected about children born since 1998 who were three or younger in 2001. So the questionnaire focused on children aged three to 28 years of age.

For the children themselves, it was decided not to try to interview any younger than 11 years. Those aged 11 to 15 were asked to fill in a self-completion questionnaire. Since nearly all of them were still living at home, this meant that their answers were not seen or heard by a parent or stepparent. Older children (16 to 28 years) were interviewed face-to-face in the same manner as their parents, using the Computer Assisted Personal Interviews (CAPI) technique. As detailed in the next section, a lot of information was gathered from the parent about children’s circumstances and progress. In this way, older children we might fail to catch up with and interview in 2001 would still appear in the data set through information given instead by their parent.

1.4 The field questionnaire

The questionnaire materials comprised a main questionnaire administered directly to the respondent, and three different types of child questionnaires. Children aged 11-15 were given a self-completion questionnaire to fill in. The two questionnaires for children aged 16 or older were administered by the interviewer via CAPI and differed only in that those living in their parents’ households were not asked about the composition of their household.

For the parents, the questionnaire was substantially shorter than those administered in earlier sweeps. The earlier surveys were concerned with the effects of social security policy on lone parents’ opportunities to get and keep paid work and the effects on family welfare of differing work and benefit outcomes. The approach at this seventh survey was to capture all the most important aspects of their family and its social and economic destination arrived at in 2001. Thus, at the family level, questions were confined to the main outcomes for parents in the areas of:

- family formation – new children and new partners, child support payments;
- family health;
- use of social security benefits;
- recent education and training;
- paid work, hours and earnings;
- a brief account of family living standards;
- housing.
For each child over two years, parents gave an account of their:

- health, including hospital attendance;
- school achievement, including qualifications of older children;
- behaviour and adjustment, including truanting and exclusions, getting into trouble at school and elsewhere, and the parent’s version of the Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire;\(^4\)
- contact with their other parent;
- and for older children, their own family formation and work experiences.

For the children, the 11 to 15 year olds filled in a self-completion questionnaire covering:

- their leisure activities and friendship networks;
- experience of bullying or fighting;
- what they did with their money;
- smoking, drinking;
- their views about their schoolwork, teachers, family and friends;
- the child version of the Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire;
- their social attitudes and anxieties;
- their ambitions for education, work and for a family of their own.

The older children answered a CAPI questionnaire, including:

- their household (if they lived in their own home);
- their own children and their previous relationships;
- work, hours and earnings;
- use of benefits;
- housing;
- health, smoking;
- education, training including qualifications and difficulties with literacy and numeracy;
- living standards;
- contact with parents, siblings and step siblings;
- social attitudes and self-esteem.

\(^4\) Developed by the Institute of Psychiatry, the Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire is a research and diagnostic tool targeted to children aged four to 16 years. The instrument has been standardised on the British population and national norms are provided for identifying aberrant behaviours in children.
1.5 Survey administration

1.5.1 Parents

By 2001, it was three years since the previous wave of research but the panel had been kept up to date. Families received Christmas cards from PSI enclosing a change-of-address card; 158 of these were returned between 1996 and 2001. Efforts were made to trace lost respondents with the help of DSS records, as well as the usual methods employed by interviewers to track them down. The parents who had moved were allocated to other interviewers if they lived outside the local area. If they lived outside the area covered by any of the interviewers working on the survey, they were requested to carry out an interview by telephone (if a telephone number was available).

All respondents received a letter from PSI in advance of fieldwork, together with an account of the results from the research up to 1998. All respondents who completed the interview were given an incentive payment of £20 in the form of a Boots’ voucher.

1.5.2 Children

The children eligible for interview were identified during the interview with their parent and later approached only with their parent’s consent, even if they were adults themselves. The children selected were:

- between 11 and 28 years of age. Children over age 28 were excluded on the grounds that they were already adults when their parent was first interviewed in 1991;
- all natural, adopted and stepchildren currently resident in the respondent’s home; and
- all natural, adopted and stepchildren living elsewhere whom the respondents had cared for at least six months during the study period.

Again, the children aged 16+ who lived out of the household were allocated to other interviewers if they lived outside the local area and, if necessary and possible, were requested to carry out an interview by telephone. Parents gave information about their younger children.

All children taking part in the survey received a £10 W.H. Smith’s or Our Price voucher.

1.5.3 Fieldwork

The main fieldwork was carried out using Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI), by fully trained NOP interviewers. Where possible, interviewers who had worked on the previous surveys were again used for this wave. This continued the relationship that many interviewers and respondents had formed over the years.

All interviewers working on the survey were personally briefed prior to fieldwork and NOP personnel conducted these briefings alongside members of the PSI research team.

Coding of open-ended and ‘other specify’ responses was carried out by NOP’s in-house coding team. NOP supplied the final dataset used in analyses carried out by PSI.
1.6 Response rates

1.6.1 Response rates: adults

A total of 548 parent interviews were carried out over a fieldwork period stretching from 17th March to 17th July 2001. This number of achieved interviews represents a response rate of:

- 59 per cent of the original 941 respondents to the 1991 survey;
- 72 per cent of all those interviewed in 1996 or 1998 (98 had moved and were not traced, two had died, two were ill, and seven of the addresses had been demolished); and
- 84 per cent of the 1996-1998 respondents known to be resident in their identified addresses (27 refused to take part, 69 were not available and 11 had other reasons for declining an interview).

Table 1.1 Contact rate – main respondent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column percentages</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>% Original</th>
<th>% Effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Original issued sample</td>
<td>766</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of Scope:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moved</td>
<td>98</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Away/Ill/hospital</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dead</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House demolished/empty</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total out of scope</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective issued sample</td>
<td>657</td>
<td>85.8</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-contacts:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refusals</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>69</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insufficient response to questions</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total achieved interviews</td>
<td>548</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Taking a longer view of response rates, Table 1.2 shows that, unusually in longitudinal surveys of this kind, the majority of respondents to the final survey gave full interviews at each of the earlier waves of the study. All but ten per cent have data for at least five out of seven interviews.
Table 1.2  Cumulative interview record of 2001 respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interviewed in all seven sweeps</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All except 1998</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All except 1996</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All except 1995</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All except ‘95 and ‘98</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All except ‘95 and ‘96</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All except ‘94 and ‘95</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other combinations of three and four interviews</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>548</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.6.2  Response rates: children

A total of 238 interviews were carried out with children aged 11-15, a response rate of 90 per cent. Practically all of these interviews (237) were with children who were still living in the household (Table 1.3). Only nine 11-15 year old children were identified as living outside of the parental household; of these only one was successfully contacted and interviewed. (Of the remainder: one was a non-local address, two refused, and five were not available for other reasons).

Table 1.3  Contact rate – children aged 11-15 in household

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>% Effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Original issued sample</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-contacts:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refusals</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total achieved interviews</strong></td>
<td>237</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.4 illustrates that 240 interviews were carried out with children aged 16 or older inside the household (84 per cent of those identified as eligible children). Elsewhere, 91 interviews with children aged 16 years and older were carried out outside the household, who represented 31 per cent of those known to live at the addresses obtained for them and 25 per cent of all the children living elsewhere named by their parents (Table 1.5).

Table 1.4  Child aged 16+ in household

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>% Effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Original issued sample</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-contacts:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refusals</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total achieved interviews</strong></td>
<td>240</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 1.5  Child aged 16+ outside household

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>% Original</th>
<th>% Effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Original issued sample</td>
<td>358</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of scope</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No known address</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-local address</td>
<td>43</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total out of scope</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective issued sample</td>
<td>292</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-contacts:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refusals</td>
<td>41</td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>153</td>
<td></td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total achieved interviews</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We would have preferred to find more of the adult children no longer living at home. But these response rates represent a considerable achievement over a ten-year period, especially since there had been a three-year gap since the last interview. With respect to the older children, we had also gathered considerable information about their most important outcomes – education levels, work history, family formation, and so on – from their parents. These data would serve as proxy responses in the analyses.

### 1.7 Weighting for non-response

There were small differences between the social profile of the original 941 respondents in 1991 and the profile of the 1991 characteristics of the 548 respondents remaining in the sample in 2001. An analysis using chi-squared statistics (CHAID) was carried out to obtain optimal splits of independent variables (employment, benefit receipt and so on) to predict the 1991 respondent’s probability of response to the 2001 survey. The groups generated by this analysis are mutually exclusive. Response varies as much as possible between and across the groups identified as ‘weighting classes’. The inverse of the rate of attrition for ‘weighting class’ gives the actual weight for each respondent within each class. As a final adjustment, the weights were scaled so that the weighted number of interviews equalled the actual number achieved in 2001.

The 1991 variables analysed to generate the weighting classes included:

- Employment status.
- Receipt of Income Support.
- Receipt of Family Credit.
- Health over last 12 months.
- Any long-standing illness.
- Number of dependent children.
- Age of respondent.
- Age of youngest child.
These were used to form 11 distinct weighting classes, based on the terminal groups from the CHAID analysis. No group was split once it included fewer than 25 cases. Table 1.6 shows the distribution of these variables in 1991 and among the 2001 respondents before and after weighting.

Table 1.6 1991 characteristics of the original 1991 sample and the 2001 respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1991 Weighted for Family Credit booster sample</th>
<th>2001 Weighted only for Family Credit booster sample</th>
<th>2001 Weighted for Family Credit booster and non-response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age of respondent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 to 23</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 to 29</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 to 34</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 to 39</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 and older</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of dependent children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 or more</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age of youngest child</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-4 years</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-10 years</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15 years</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 or 17/18 and in full-time education</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health in 1991 was...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly good</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not good</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-standing illness/disability in ’91</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In work 24+ hours/week</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>In work 16-23 hours/week</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In work up to 15 hrs/week</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of work</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receives Family Credit</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receives Income Support</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>941</td>
<td>548</td>
<td>548</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.8 This report: approach and analysis

1.8.1 Part one - the 1991 lone parents in 2001

The representativeness of the sample

This lone parent cohort was sampled in 1991 as part of a study of low-income families. The lone parents among them became the longitudinal sample that was interviewed a further six times over the following ten years. In subsequent interviews, they were no longer representative of contemporary lone parents as they and their children were ten years older.

It is important to remember that the 1991 sample is a ‘cohort’ only in the sense that its members began the study in 1991 with a lot in common: they were nearly all young-to-middle-aged women bringing up children alone on a low income. They were not an ‘age-cohort’ like the National Child Development Study, who were all born in the same week. Nor were they an ‘event-cohort’ or a ‘flow-sample’ such as the sample of lone parents recently taken to evaluate the ONE experiment, who all claimed Income Support at the same time. The 1991 lone parent cohort is a representative ‘stock’ sample that went on to serve as a longitudinal study. This attribute gives the sample both strengths and limitations:

- Its principal strength it that it allows the analyst to say clearly what happened to ‘Britain’s lone parents’ as they were in 1991 and subsequently for ten years.

- Its main limitation is that cohort members entered the sample at very different points in their experience of lone parenthood. This applies particularly to three important initial characteristics:
  - The age at which they became a lone parent, for instance, some found themselves alone in their early 20s with a small baby while others were divorced women in their 40s whose youngest child was about to leave school.
  - The route they took into lone parenthood, whereby some had never had a partner since becoming a parent while others were formerly married or cohabiting, some of these more than once.
  - The time elapsed since they became lone parents.

- These three characteristics interact, so the value of representativeness in 1991 is traded against the fact that some of ‘... what happens to them...’ subsequently can have some rather obvious causes. By 2001, many would have left lone parenthood, for example, simply because their youngest child grew older and was no longer a dependent child. Others went on to have a new baby and typically these were younger women who might anyway be expected to add to their families. Thus, age and ageing itself can explain a lot of what happened to the sample.

By comparison, a ‘flow’ sample of lone parents all of whom became lone parents in the same month, might say more about the causes of key changes that followed, such as an early or later departure from lone parenthood itself. But it would not have begun as a representative sample of lone parents.

It follows that our stock sample of 1991 also had children who were nationally representative of the children of Britain’s lone parents in that year. In subsequent years they shared the fate of their parents in that they ceased to be nationally representative, as they too grew older. So the measures taken of them in 2001 tell us only what happened to this sample and how differences in these measures among the children are associated with events in their family lives over the intervening ten years. This knowledge of the processes involved is of great value, even if as a body of growing and grown-up children they are no longer representative of the children of contemporary lone parents in 2001.
The approach to analysis

Previous reports on the first six waves of interviews from 1991 to 1998 dealt solely with the cohort members’ lives as they unfolded over those seven years. The latest report (Finlayson et al. 2000) used ‘survival analysis’ to model the factors that predicted how soon lone parents left Income Support, left lone parenthood, had a new child, found a new partner and entered paid work. This analysis made full use of the month-by-month record of cohort member’s circumstances that had accumulated over the seven years of the study. For this reason, it was a precise analysis of the antecedents of important changes in lone parents’ lives, up to that point of change.

The 2001 survey had to abandon the month-by-month record in favour of a simpler record of cohort members’ circumstances when they were interviewed. This allowed time for respondents to tell us about their children. This means that the first part of the report will bring our respondents’ stories up to date. We will look again at the factors that ‘predict’ key aspects of their circumstances in 2001, using all the things we learned since first meeting them in 1991. The models we use here are simpler than the survival models used earlier, looking solely at whether or not cohort members had acquired children, partners and jobs, etc., or not. Also, the nature of a ‘stock’ sample means that baseline characteristics like route of entry to lone parenthood, parent age and age at first becoming a parent need to be taken into account.

Though lacking the precision in time of the earlier work, these simple logistic models have the advantage of allowing for more than one change. The end state in 2001 of, say, a lone parent being in paid work, may have been the outcome of one or more forays into the labour market, settling later into a longer-term job. So this report will analyse the antecedents of how cohort members settled in paid work, for example, or remained out of the labour market.

The analysis of lone parents’ destinations in 2001 will be presented in three themes:

Theme one: ‘Family Outcomes: children, partners and husbands’ is about family formation. The analysis asks what kind of lone parent in 1991 went on to add to their families with new children and new partners. It also looks at the record of child support payments accumulated over the study period and its likely importance.

Theme two: ‘Employment Outcomes for Parents’ concentrates on whether or not the 1991 cohort members were in paid work of 16 or more hours a week in 2001. It examines models that predict this outcome using information from the 1991 survey, from the subsequent surveys, and then in a single model combining entry characteristics with subsequent changes. The chapter then looks at a wider picture, combining information about cohort members’ entry to work and their use of benefits and tax credits.

Theme three: ‘Changes in Family Circumstances’ looks at changes in families’ health, their housing, and material circumstances, concentrating on their experience of hardship. The analysis examines in more detail their relation to the benefit system, especially their experiences of living on Income Support. It looks at these outcomes for families in differing positions, combining the preceding analysis of family formation and paid work to locate cohort members’ social locations in 2001. Cohort members occupying these different social locations varied widely in their relative fortunes.

This first part of the report ends with an account of how things have worked out for cohort members, supplied in their own words.
1.8.2 Part two: measures on the children

Associations and causes

The questionnaire established a range of ‘outcome measures’ for the children of the 1991 cohort, aged three to 28. This upper age limit was determined by their being a maximum of 18 years of age in 1991, or at the limit for the definition of a dependent child. Again, it needs to be stressed that these children of a 1991 stock sample of lone parents will have had a wide range of experience of life in a lone-parent family. A few will have gone the distance, being born to a single, never-partnered lone mother in the 1980s who remained single in 2001. Others will have had only a brief experience of lone parenthood, for example, when their mother split up with their father in 1990 and then re-partnered in 1992. At the same time, others will have no such experience, being born in 1994 as a child of a new couple. So this analysis takes the broadest possible view of the association between changes in lone-parent families and the ‘outcomes’ for children. At its broadest, we say only that these children, who may differ widely in their health, adjustment, qualifications, and so on, all had mothers who spent time as a lone parent. The analysis will seek to associate these differences between children with events in the lives of their mothers over a space of 10 years.

This level of analysis, and the great variation in the levels of ‘exposure to lone parenthood’ on the part of both mothers and their children, creates an analytical framework that is too imprecise to make strong claims for causal pathways. But to know, for example, that, other things being equal, lone mothers’ entry to paid work in the 1990s was associated with a range of child outcomes valued by policy: say, later school leaving, better qualifications, fewer early pregnancies, and so on, would suggest a pattern that supports a policy that encourages lone parents to enter work. If this approach seems cautious, it should be remembered that no other data set in Britain could address these questions in this way. To establish such connections would be a very great advance in a field of research where such connections are rarely established at all. This first report on the ‘child outcomes’ will, therefore, adopt this cautious, descriptive and associative approach.

If the limitations imposed by beginning with a stock sample, plus the sheer complexity of a data set that covers so many aspects of the families’ lives, were not reasons enough for caution, the relatively small sample size is another. It is true that lone parents are a relatively homogeneous group of people (young-to-middle-aged women on low incomes). Such homogeneity reduces the need for larger samples. But 548 cases are not many to ask to bear the weight of some very complex multivariate procedures. Inevitably, significant associations will arise in the data that have no obvious explanation in the real world but are spurious products of chance variations in the data. For this and other reasons, we need to impose a clear structure on the treatment of the data.

The net of analysis

If we are content to set down results that associate differences in lone parents’ lives with differences in their children’s characteristics, we find, nevertheless, that we have a new problem: There are too many measures on both sides of the equation. To the right we have about 20 ‘outcome measures’ of the children, some of which can mean different things at different age levels. To the left we have an almost endless range of measures of the lone-parent families in 1991 and literally endless permutations of changes in these circumstances over the course of 10 years. The pattern of association between a large array of family circumstances and change, on one side, and 20 outcome measures on the other, creates a net of lines of association. Any attempt to lay out to a reader’s inspection such a fine net of connections would be uninterpretable and wide open to all kinds of statistically significant associations which in practical terms might mean very little. For these reasons,
we need to simplify the explanatory measures and impose a structure on the analysis and upon the presentation of results. To do this we have chosen the same three themes that shaped the presentation of the parents' histories in the first part of the report:

- family structure – defined by the partnership history of the caring parent during the study period;
- work status – defined as the proportion of months between 1991 and 1998⁵ the caring parent was in employment of 16 or more hours per week; and
- experience of family hardship – defined as the degree of hardship the family experienced, measured on six separate occasions between 1991 and 1998.

Each theme is dealt with in succeeding chapters in the second part of this report. The same question is asked throughout: To what extent are variations in the measures taken of the cohort’s children in 2001 associated with initial differences in their family circumstances, their work status, and their family well-being in 1991 and with changes in these measures between 1991 and 1998.

The three themes explored in these chapters are expressed in the analysis as typologies. These typologies divided families according to whether or not they had and/or kept a partner during the ten years of the study, the time they spent in work, and the time spent in hardship. Each chapter explains how these typologies were created and what they might say about the families defined in these ways.

The report is concluded by a chapter exploring some of the likely implications for policy suggested by the findings of the study.

1.9 Summary

1.9.1 The study

This study investigates to what extent different pathways through lone parenthood may be associated with different outcomes for the children of lone-parent families.

The study followed a nationally representative cohort of lone parents interviewed in 1991, 93, 94, 95, 96, 98 and again in 2001 when their children were included in the study. This report examines what happened to those families in the ten years between 1991 and 2001 and how a combination of their initial circumstances and the changes that followed, were linked to the outcomes for the children.

1.9.2 The lone parent cohort

The study began in 1991 as part of a survey of low-income families. Of the original 940 lone parents in 1991, 548 or 58 per cent were interviewed in 2001, 71 per cent of whom had data for all seven interviews while most of the remainder lacked just one or two years of data.

Of the 541 children aged 11 to 28 still resident in their parents’ households in 2001, 477 were interviewed: 237 children aged 11 to 15 filled in a self-completion questionnaire (93 per cent) while 240 older children were interviewed (84 per cent). A further 91 non-resident children age 16 to 28 were interviewed (26 per cent of those identified, 31 per cent of those traced).

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⁵ The period 1991 to 1998, rather than 1991 to 2001, is chosen to try to make clearer the lagged effect of such associations between employment and other factors and the characteristics of children measured in 2001. This approach also avoids the problems that many of the 2001 measures were different.
The 2001 survey concentrated on the children. The parents’ questionnaire covered only the essential information about the main outcomes for the family as a whole in employment, education, family formation, housing, health and family well-being. This allowed time for the parents to provide information about each child aged three to 28 years old.

The combination of parents’ information, self-completion devices and CAPI interviews with children covered all the important outcomes for the children: health, social behaviour and adjustment, attitudes and values, and, as appropriate, educational outcomes, housing, work and family formation.

1.9.3 The approach to analysis

The 1991 baseline survey was a nationally-representative ‘stock’ sample of Britain’s lone parents and their children. This placed limitations on the interpretation of the longitudinal data gathered in the following ten years. For example, the story that unfolded for these families was connected to their position at the beginning of the study period, to their age and the age at which they became parents. Some were new to lone parenthood in 1991; others were on the point of leaving, for example. The amount of ‘exposure’ to lone parenthood among the parents and their children, therefore, varied greatly, to an extent that with a relatively small sample of 548 families cannot be entirely held constant in the analysis.

The analysis followed a cautious, descriptive and associative approach. This relied on establishing connections between the families’ circumstances in 1991, their later experiences, and the variation of outcomes among their children in 2001. The analysis, for parents and then for children, was to be structured around three clear themes:

- family formation: new partners, new children and children growing up;
- their experience of paid work; and
- changes in their material well-being.
Part One – The parents
2 Family outcomes: children, partners and husbands

This chapter tackles the first of our three themes analysing parents’ experiences between 1991 and 2001. Here we are concerned with family formation and change as new partners and new children arrived in the 1991 lone parents’ households. Later, some of these new partners departed and some of the older children passed the age – at least the official age – of dependence on their parents and some of these left home. We look at how these changes combine to change the profile of the lone-parent families by 2001. We also look at the sometimes problematic issue of child support or maintenance payments made by non-resident parents.

2.1 New partners

When we met them in 1991, our sample of lone parents had been lone parents for more than four years on average. This meant that very few were any longer likely to reconcile with an earlier partner. When we saw them in 1994, for example, just three per cent had got back together with an earlier partner while 12 per cent had a new one. This proportion with new partners rose steadily during the next seven years until by 2001 half the whole 1991 sample had ‘... lived as a couple with someone for a month or more... ’ at some point during the study period, as Figure 2.1 shows. It also shows that not all these new partners stayed. In 2001 just 34 per cent of 1991 lone parents were living with a partner or reconciled with an earlier one. Thus, nearly a third of new partnerships acquired during these ten years had not continued until 2001. Also, these figures take no account of lone parents in 1991 who may have had more than one relationship beforehand.

In earlier surveys, the majority of these new unions were cohabiting, but by 2001 more marriages had taken place and the majority of the continuing couples in 2001 (59 per cent) had married. Some of the intervening relationships had also involved marriage that ended before 2001. And these experiences had happened to lone parents who, in 1991, had had different marital histories up to that point. So what seems a simple matter of getting a new partner, or not, quickly adds up to some complicated relationship histories in ten years. Table 2.1 summarises these changes solely by comparing their position in 2001 with their position in 1991 by showing their prior marital status in 1991 – single, separated, divorced and so on – and their subsequent relationship status in 2001.
Overall, the proportion that had never lived as a couple with anyone fell from 24 per cent in 1991 to nine per cent in 2001. Those who began as ‘single never-partnered lone parents’ in 1991 were far more likely than others to go on to live with someone later – almost two-thirds of them had had a partner in ten years and more than half still had one in 2001. This is unsurprising since single lone parents are much younger than others. Those who, in 1991, had separated from cohabitation were the least likely to have a partner in 2001. A high proportion (72 per cent) of all those who had a partner before 1991 remained alone in 2001, even though some of them may have had a partner in the meantime and then returned to their 1991 status.

Table 2.1  Relationship status in 2001 by prior marital status in 1991

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status in 2001</th>
<th>Never partnered</th>
<th>Separated from cohabitation</th>
<th>Separated/Divorced</th>
<th>Widows</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never partnered</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated from cohabitation</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated/Divorced</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widows</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohabiting</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row percentages</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Bases (weighted)       | 128             | 113                          | 277                | 26     | 544   |
| Unweighted             | 104             | 100                          | 316                | 22     | 542   |

1 Unweighted bases total 542 and not 548 because six of the 1991 respondents gave insufficient data to estimate their prior relationship status at that time.
Whereas Table 2.1 compares their status in 2001 with their status in 1991, Table 2.2 provides a summary of what happened in between. Leaving aside whether cohort members married their new partners or not, Table 2.2 divides the sample into four groups who in ten years:

- remained without a partner throughout;
- gained and then lost at least one partner, remaining without one in 2001;
- gained and lost a partner and then gained and kept another one;
- gained only one partner and kept him.6

Overall, as Figure 2.1 suggests, the ratio of new partners retained to those no longer resident was about two-to-one. Of the three main groups of lone parents, those separated from cohabitation in 1991 had the fewest partners. The formerly married, in turn, were more likely to have had more than one new partner since 1991 before settling down again. But the proportion retaining their partners was similar for those separated from cohabitation and for the formerly married – approximately half.

Table 2.2  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partnership history</th>
<th>Status in 1991</th>
<th>Column percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Never partnered</td>
<td>Separated from cohabitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No partners 1991-2001</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One or more partner, who left</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One or more left, one stayed</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One partner arrived and stayed</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bases (weighted)</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.1.1 Factors associated with cohabitation, marriage or remaining alone

The small numbers of male lone parents and widows remaining in the sample were substantially less likely to find a new partner by 2001 than were other lone parents (Table 2.3). Otherwise, lone parents cohabiting or married in 2001 were distinguished from those remaining alone by:

- not having been ‘separated from cohabitation’ in 1991; that is, lone parents who began in 1991 as single, never-partnered or who were formerly married. These groups were more likely to have a partner in 2001 than those who had left cohabitation. This may be because cohabiting partnerships tend themselves to be second unions;
- being younger;
- having had a new child since 1991; and
- working 16 hours a week or more in 2001. (Table 2.3)

6 All but five new partners were men. Three unpartnered mothers were living with unrelated female friends.
Logistic regression analysis indicated that the negative influence of pre-1991 cohabitation and the positive influences of youth, work and new babies – were all associated with a greater likelihood of having a partner in 2001, independently of one another (see Appendix A, Table A.1). Controlling for other factors, the influence of youth remained the largest effect. The younger the mother was in 1991, the greater the probability that she would have a new partner by 2001.

### Table 2.3 Partnership histories by age, new children and work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cell percentages</th>
<th>Percent with a partner in 2001</th>
<th>Percent who had any partner since 1991</th>
<th>Unweighted bases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age in 2001</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-35</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-40</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-45</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-50</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 50</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Working 16 hours a week or more in 1991</strong></td>
<td>37</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Working fewer hours or none</strong></td>
<td>33</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Working 16 hours a week or more by 2001</strong></td>
<td>40</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Working fewer hours or none</strong></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Had new baby between 1991 and 2001</strong></td>
<td>48</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Had no new child</strong></td>
<td>29</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>In severe hardship(^1) in 1991</strong></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Not in severe hardship</strong></td>
<td>37</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Single, never-partnered lone parent in 1991</strong></td>
<td>43</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Former cohabitation</strong></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Former married</strong></td>
<td>36</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Widow</strong></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>All</strong></td>
<td>34</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>548</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\) The hardship scale features at several points in this report. Hardship, as the concept is used in this report, is defined as a low standard of living - going without essential items or not being able to manage family finances. A hardship index was devised for the original 1991 PRULIF survey of low-income families (Marsh and McKay 1993). The seven-point index (lowest=0, highest=6) was constructed from more than 60 items in the questionnaire. The hardship index combines markers for problem debts, the inability to afford essential items of household expenditure or social participation, unmet need and financial anxiety. The seven-point summary measure was constructed by adding one point for each ‘yes’ answer to the following questions:

- Does the family have:
  - Two or more problem debts?
  - Two or more items on the food list scored ‘unable to afford’
  - Three or more items on the clothing and leisure lists scored ‘unable to afford’?
  - Four or more items on the consumer durables list scored ‘unable to afford’?
  - Both the financial anxiety measures scored at the highest point (‘Always worried about money’ and ‘In deep financial trouble’)?
  - Both the questions asking for spontaneous estimates of items needed for adults and children named by respondent?

A score of zero signified the family was managing to avoid hardship while a threshold of three or more was used to distinguish families in severe hardship.
Other indicators were of themselves positively related to re-partnering, such as being better qualified or avoiding hardship, but these were subordinate to the effects of having paid work. It is worth noting that it was being in work in 2001 that favoured those who got and kept new partners (40 compared to 20 per cent). Whether the parent was working or not in 1991 made little difference to the family outcome in 2001.

At several points in this report we will encounter the counter-intuitive finding that having a new child and a new partner are, as you would expect, positively related, but having a new child is negatively related to entering work while getting a new partner is positively related to getting into work. The answer is that it depends on what point in her family history we were interviewing the mother. Getting and keeping a new partner was, as we shall see, all part of an upward and improving path for our 1991 lone mothers that included getting a job of their own. A new partnership or marriage was often associated with becoming a dual-earner couple, sooner or later. Among younger mothers, however, the new partnership was often accompanied by a new birth that temporarily placed them out of the labour market. We return to this topic later when we consider entry to work.

Among those who had a partner in 2001, a similar analysis was carried out to predict the rate of cohabitation rather than marriage. The only additional influence determining whether they married rather than cohabited was whether or not the 1991 lone parent had given birth to a new child. Thus, new children appear to signify marriage among former lone parents just as it does among other women having their first child.

It is interesting to note some of the factors that had no influence on whether or not lone parents found a new partner. For example, lone parents who reported violence in their last relationship (four out of ten of them did so) were only a little less likely to live with a new partner at all during the 10-year study period and it made no difference at all to whether they had a partner in 2001. This was true despite reports that three-quarters of those reporting such violence went on to say they were injured. In addition, there was no evidence to suggest that those who spent longer on Income Support from 1991 were less likely to get a new partner by 2001. But those who spent at least 12 months between 1992 and 2001 claiming Family Credit were more likely to find a partner (44 per cent compared with 30 per cent). This was true despite the theoretical disincentive effects upon finding a new partner that are attached to wage supplementation for lone parents. This is partly due to the fact that some of those who became single-earner couples claimed Family Credit as a couple and partly due to the fact that people rarely referred to the Family Credit rulebook when deciding who to live with. Becoming a couple whose earnings are above the qualifying level for Family Credit would be an incentive of itself.

2.2 New births

By 1996, 19 per cent of the 1991 lone parents interviewed in 2001 had had a new baby and this proportion grew to 21 per cent in 1998 and to 26 per cent in 2001. Most of these had had just one baby but nearly one in ten had had two or, rarely, three or four (Table 2.4).
Table 2.4  New babies in 1996, 1998 and 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of new births</th>
<th>1996</th>
<th>1998</th>
<th>2001</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three or four</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All those answering in 2001, n=548.

The figures provided in Table 2.4 are likely to be underestimates. Reporting on the 1996 and 1998 surveys, which interviewed respectively 704 and 694 respondents, Finlayson et al. (2000) found 24 per cent with new babies in 1996 and 25 per cent in 1998. Though weighted for non-response, it seems likely that the 2001 sample is missing a slightly higher proportion of the sample that made new lives with new partners and new children since 1996.

Also, the figures deal with births since 1991. At that point, the lone parents sampled then had been lone parents for about four years. Some will have had babies between first becoming lone parents and being interviewed in our baseline survey in 1991. Some of these new births will have been in the context of earlier relationships that included a resident partner, even a marriage. It is a weakness of the PRILIF data that we have no really detailed portrait of our lone parents’ previous relationships other than to determine what was the character of their last relationship, if they had one at all.

The net effect of these new births was to keep home family size - that is the number of resident children of any age - more or less constant (Table 2.5). Overall, though, total family size - the total number of their own and adopted children living anywhere - rose. In 1991, single never-partnered lone parents had about 1.5 children each, on average, and the formerly partnered and married, had about two. Higher birth rates among the single never-partnered lone parents narrowed this difference by 2001. But those who began the study period never having lived as a couple still ended it with fewer children than those who had lived with someone: 2.2 children compared with 2.6.

Table 2.5  Mean number of children in 1991 and 2001 by prior marital status in 1991

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status in 1991</th>
<th>Never partnered</th>
<th>Separated from cohabitation</th>
<th>Separated/Divorced</th>
<th>Widows</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resident children in 1991</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependent children in 1991</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resident children in 2001</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependent children in 2001</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total children reported by 2001</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Weighted base 128 113 277 26
Unweighted base 104 100 316 22
Almost half the 1991 sample (47 per cent) still had only dependent children in 2001; a quarter had both dependent and non-dependent children, 17 per cent had only non-dependent children and 12 per cent had no children at all living at home with them. Being younger with younger children, and being more likely to add to their families meanwhile, the 1991 single, never-partnered lone parents were twice as likely to have only dependent children in 2001 compared with the formerly married (Table 2.6).

**Table 2.6 Dependent, non-dependent and non-resident children in 2001 by prior marital status**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prior marital status in 1991</th>
<th>Separated from cohabitation</th>
<th>Separated from marriage/divorced</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Only dependent children</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependent and non-dependent</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only non-dependent</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No resident child</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unweighted base 104 100 316 521

*Base: All responding in 2001, except widows.*

By 2001, nearly half the lone parents who had a new baby since 1991 (48 per cent) also lived as a couple with a partner. The majority of these (69 per cent) were married. Since the proportion living as a couple in 2001 was smaller than the proportion living alone, the proportion of new couples with a child born since 1991 (37 per cent) was almost twice as large as the proportion among those living alone in 2001 (21 per cent). However, during the whole period between 1991 and 2001, there was a closer association between the arrival of new babies and the presence of co-resident partners, as Figure 2.2 illustrates. But not all the new partners stayed. The proportion of new couples with a new baby is fairly constant after 1993 at about one-third. But the proportion of new babies among those who were still couples in 2001 is much smaller and the proportion among those alone in previous years is much higher. This reflects both the departure of new partners, on the one hand, and other couples setting up home together after the birth of a new baby.

The relationship between new births and partnership histories is therefore complicated, especially among lone parents who lived as a couple with more than one partner during the study period. Table 2.7 provides a different summary of this relationship, showing new births to parents who had different partnership histories.

Those who had had no new partners living with them during the study period had the fewest new children – 16 per cent had a new baby. Compared with others they were very unlikely to have had two or more new children. Those who had had a partner were more likely to have had a new child, whether or not that partner was still with them in 2001.
Lone parents are likely to want to have a new child as part of establishing a new family with a new partner, even if that partnership later failed. In the 1994 survey, respondents – lone mothers and lone fathers alike – were asked whether they wanted a new child. Two per cent were pregnant when asked and 14 per cent said that they would like a new child, though most of these went on to say they would like to have a new partner too. By 2001, a quarter of those who wanted a new child had had one. So had 11 per cent of those who said definitely they did not want one. This means that half the new children born to the 2001 respondents were born to those who definitely said in 1991 that they did not want to add to their families. Two-thirds of those who desired another child in 1994 also had a partner in 2001 compared with fewer than half (43 per cent) of those who had a child they had not foreseen in 1994.

Table 2.7 New births by partnership history 1991-2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New births, 1991-2001</th>
<th>No partners, 1991-2001</th>
<th>One or more partners, who left</th>
<th>One or more partners left, one stayed</th>
<th>One partner arrived and stayed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or three</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Those who had a child between 1991 and 2001 but reported they had not lived with a partner, might have had the intention to provide a sibling for an only child. Table 2.8, on the other hand, shows that this was not so. The proportions of unpartnered cohort members who had a new child were very similar among those beginning with two or more children as began with one. Such an effect was, by contrast, highly visible among those who had had partners living with them during the study period.
Among those with a partner at all between 1991 and 2001, 53 per cent of those beginning with a single child had added to their families compared to 23 per cent of those beginning with two or more children.

Table 2.8  New births by partnership history 1991-2001 and initial family size in 1991

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New births 1991-2001</th>
<th>No partners</th>
<th>One child in ‘91</th>
<th>Two or more children in ‘91</th>
<th>One or more partners</th>
<th>One child in ‘91</th>
<th>Two or more children in ‘91</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>77</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or three</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>58</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.3 The main factors associated with new births

The last section showed that new births were associated with new partners, as you would expect. Table 2.9 lists ten other factors that were strongly associated with having a new child between 1991 and 2001. As we also saw above, beginning the study period with only one child raised the probability of having another, provided the parent also had a new partner. Overall, however, age was the most important factor. Half those under age 30 in 1991 went on to have a new child while almost none over age 40 did so.

For the remainder of the findings, it would be easy to go on to paint a picture of new births being associated with social disadvantage and hardship. The direct experience of hardship, both in 1991 and subsequently, was associated with a greater chance of new children. Those who made an application to the Social Fund were also much more likely to have a new child, but these measures of hardship are just as likely to be an outcome of adding to their families rather than somehow a cause. It is true, though, that lone parents beginning in 1991 as young single, never-partnered lone parents, in social accommodation and out of work were far more likely than others to go on to have another child. In fact, 85 per cent of those who did have another child began the study period out of work or working part-time. Nonetheless there was a strong interaction between this start and subsequent partnerships (Table 2.10).
Table 2.9  New births by entry characteristics in 1991 and post-1991 circumstances

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percent with new child</th>
<th>Unweighted Base</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1991-2001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age in 1991</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>under 25</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-30</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-35</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-40</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 40</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>513</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-white</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In work 16+ hrs 1991</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working 1-15 hrs 1991</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not working 1991</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single, never-partnered lone parent 1991</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated from cohabitation 1991</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formerly married 1991</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed 1991</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One dependent child 1991</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two dependent children 1991</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three or more dependent children 1991</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner occupier 1991</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social tenant 1991</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other tenures 1991</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No hardship 1991</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some hardship 1991</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severe hardship 1991</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"Women have the right to choose to be supported at home with their children, even if they have no husband or partner." (1991)  

|                                |                        |                 |
| Did not agree or undecided     | 18                     | 167             |
| In some hardship 3 consecutive years 1993-98 | 33                     | 228             |
| Avoided hardship 3 consecutive years 1993-98 | 22                     | 320             |
| Applied to the social fund 93-98 | 37                     | 211             |
| No application                 | 20                     | 337             |
Table 2.10 Percentage having a new child 1991-2001 by work status in 1991 and subsequent partnerships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Working 16 plus hours in 1991</th>
<th>Working 1-15 hours or out of work in 1991</th>
<th>Unweighted base</th>
<th>Weighted base</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New child</td>
<td>No new child</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lived with a partner 1991-2001</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remained alone</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Almost none of the small group who began in work and subsequently remained alone had a new child. By contrast, four out of ten of those who began out of work (or more rarely working 1-15 hours a week in 1991) and found a new partner at some point in the next ten years, had a new child.

Having new children was also associated with a belief held by the majority of lone parents in 1991 that lone parents have a right to choose to be supported by the state. They were asked:

‘Women have the right to choose to be supported by the state at home with their children, even if they have no husband or partner’.

Seven out of ten believed this in 1991 and 30 per cent of them went on to have a new child compared with 18 per cent who did not agree or were undecided.

But the impression given in Table 2.9 is to some extent false. In a logistic regression analysis, the dominant effects of age and partnerships removed from the equation all the significant antecedents attributable to initial social disadvantage in 1991 (see Appendix A, Table A.2). These included being out of work in 1991 and social tenancy, for example, and the attitude favouring the right to state support at home. The 1991 hardship measures no longer predicted subsequent births even when the subsequent measures of hardship were left out of the calculation. This emphasises that subsequent hardship and the applications for assistance that hardship triggers may be outcomes of new births among those remaining alone and out of work. The only other variable that was independent of the influence of youth and partners was starting the study period with only one dependent child.

This set of findings present an interesting challenge to a view that lone parents are prone to renew their lone parenthood by having successive children in order to remain clients of the State. Rather, the majority of new children turn out to be part of a more general strategy to form a new family with a new partner, even though in some cases this new union is delayed or fails entirely. Signs that new children among lone parents are the outcome of a set of social disadvantages and of the acceptance of continuing disadvantage are also false. Such signs appear true only because they are the initial characteristics of a young lone parent with, typically, a single child. They are the group who go on to find and usually keep a new partner and have new children with him.
2.4 Family outcomes

2.4.1 Children

The outcome of these changes between 1991 and 2001 is summarised in Table 2.11. The main outcome is that 43 per cent of the sample were still lone parents. That is, they were still bringing up dependent children and were not in a couple, although, as we know, some of them had had a partner since 1991 and were alone again in 2001. Those beginning in 1991 as lone parents separated from cohabitation were most likely to be lone parents in 2001 (63 per cent) since they were also the most likely to have gone against the overall trend and have new babies but short-lived unions with new partners. Those formerly married in 1991 were more likely to ‘age-out’ of lone parenthood and be found ‘alone’ on 2001, after seeing their youngest child pass dependent age. Thirty per cent were alone in this way, though some of them will have non-dependent children still living with them (see below). The 1991 single, never-partnered lone parents, by contrast, were more likely to have acquired a new partner and continue in a couple up to 2001, even though they too had new children.

Table 2.11 Family structure in 2001 by prior marital status in 1991

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prior marital status in 1991</th>
<th>Never partnered</th>
<th>Separated from cohabitation</th>
<th>Separated from marriage/divorced</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Still lone parent</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohabiting</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alone or living with non-dependent children</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unweighted Base 127 114 279 520

Base: All answering in 2001, except widows.

2.4.2 Partners and children

Finally in this chapter, we can combine the essential information in Tables 2.6 and 2.11 to produce a summary of the main outcomes for family formation among the 1991 lone parents, displayed in Figure 2.3. Whereas 22 per cent had neither partner nor dependent children living with them, just 14 per cent of the whole sample had ended up truly alone, living with neither children (dependent nor non-dependent) nor a partner. Among those remaining lone parents, the majority still had only dependent children. Most of the couples had children, though they were more likely to have non-dependent children living with them. In addition, incoming partners very rarely brought their own children with them. It was striking how few stepchildren had found their way into lone parents’ households – only 14 compared to over 900 of their own children still living at home in 2001.
2.5 Child support payments

The analysis in this section excludes widows who of course were not asked about child support payments.

Exactly one in three cohort members interviewed in 2001 said in 1991 that they were then receiving child support payments from a non-resident parent of their children. By 2001 this proportion had fallen to 17 per cent though it remained at 26 per cent among those who were still lone parents and 10 per cent among those who had a new partner.

This apparent picture of stability conceals a great deal of change year to year. Over the ten years of the study 47 per cent of the sample had received child support payments in one year or another. Some of these new payments were associated with new children and some of these did not continue because the lone parent in receipt of maintenance then got together as a couple with the new child’s father. Or another partner arrived, which is sometimes the signal for child support payments from the earlier partner to cease. It was not always possible to pinpoint in the data the exact sequence of such events. But the following summarises the main points:

- those least likely to receive child maintenance payments, especially new payments since 1991, were those who had a new child but were lone parents again by 2001;
- among the rest, having new children or finding partners, or both, made little difference to total receipt of child maintenance payments. But those who had a new child and were living as a couple in 2001 were more likely to have received new payments at some point since 1991. This hints at a new pattern of ‘dowry maintenance’ whereby the father of a new child supports the lone parent prior to moving in with her.

---

8 The figure among all lone parents interviewed in 1991 was 29 per cent.
Table 2.12 Receipt of child maintenance payments by new partners and new births 1991 to 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>New partner in 2001</th>
<th>No new partner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New child since 1991</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never received maintenance</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received in 1991 and later</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not in 1991 but received later</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No new child since 1991</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never received maintenance</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received in 1991 and later</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not in 1991 but received later</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted bases</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weighted bases</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>268</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.6 Summary

By 2001, 34 per cent of the 1991 cohort had a new partner living with them and over half of these (59 per cent) were married. A further 17 per cent had had a new partner since 1991 but were alone again in 2001. Thus, by 2001, half had lived with a partner since 1991 and nine per cent had never had a partner since the birth of their first child.

The main factor distinguishing those who had a new partner by 2001 from those alone were:
- being younger (more than anything);
- being single and never partnered in 1991, or being formerly married;
- having a new child since 1991; and
- entering work by 2001.

Among those with new partners, the main factor distinguishing those who married from those who cohabited was whether they had a new child together.

Overall, 26 per cent had a new child since 1991, which is probably an underestimate given previous results on birth rates of the cohort (Finlayson et al. 2000). Still the figure averages to about 2.5 children each, which is higher than the national average of just under two children per family. Only a handful of stepchildren added to these numbers. Fewer than half (47 per cent) had only dependent children living with them by 2001; others had at least one grown up child and 17 per cent had no child of any age living with them.

The arrival of new babies since 1991 was usually accompanied by the presence in the household of a new partner. But not all these partners stayed, so by 2001 just under half of those who had had new babies were alone. However, 16 per cent of those who had no new partner living with them had a new child compared with one in four of those who had a resident partner and this rose to 36 per cent among those who still had such a partner in 2001.

Apart from the obvious association with new partnerships, the most common antecedents of having a new child were being younger and having one child in 1991. A number of key measures of social
disadvantage, such as social tenancy and hardship, were also associated with new births, both in terms of hardship in 1991 and subsequent difficulty. But these effects were strongly mediated by the effects of age. Initial hardship was associated with being a young lone parent in 1991 and subsequent hardship was as likely to be as much a short-lived outcome of new births as it was a cause. For example, 42 per cent of lone parents who began in 1991 out of work and who went on to live as a couple with someone, had had a new baby before 2001. Only four per cent of lone parents who began in 1991 in work and who remained alone had had a new child. But these two starting positions were strongly characteristic of the youngest and the oldest lone parents in 1991, respectively.

Overall, 43 per cent of the 1991 cohort (excluding widows) were lone parents in 2001, 35 per cent were living as a couple and 22 per cent were without a resident partner, though a large minority of these still had grown-up children living with them. Those most likely to continue as lone parents were those who began in 1991 as lone parents separated from cohabitation. Those most likely to be living alone were the formerly married, largely because they were already older in 1991 and had older children.

The proportion receiving child support payments fell from 29 per cent in 1991 to 17 per cent in 2001 though as many as 47 per cent received child support payments at some point between 1991 and 2001. Some of these new payments were ‘dowry maintenance’ paid by incoming partners who supported their new child prior to their own arrival in the household.
3 Employment outcomes for parents

3.1 Progress to work by 2001

The proportion of cohort members in paid work of 16 or more hours each week rose from 27 per cent in 1991 to 56 per cent in 2001. Though doubled in ten years, it was a slow return to work – less than three per cent per year.\(^9\) (Figure 3.1). This was the net figure as more had had a job and returned to unemployment. The proportion that had a job of 16 or more hours a week at any point between 1999 and 2001 was 13 points higher at 69 per cent, indicating that the majority of those who went into work tended to stay there. Given the evidence of the last chapter that a quarter of the sample had new babies since 1991, this is a high rate of persistence in work. More had experience of ‘part-time’ working, especially in the earlier years of the study. More than eight out of ten spent a month or more working at least one hour a week by 2001.

**Figure 3.1 Net progress into work 1991-2001 (percentage in paid work)**

\(^9\) In 1991, the full sample of 940 lone parents interviewed then recorded 29 per cent work of 16 hours a week or more.
Lone parents who were out of work in 1991 accounted for most of the new births but they too made steady net progress into work (Figure 3.2). Those beginning out of work or working 1-15 hours a week in 1991 were more often found working 1-15 hours a week in subsequent years. Three-quarters of this group registered at least a month in work of any hours a week by 2001. But nearly half of them (47 per cent) were working 16 or more hours a week by 2001. This compares with more than eight out of ten of those beginning in such work and still found working 16 or more hours a week in 2001.

Figure 3.2 Net progress into work: lone parents not working 16 or more hours a week in 1991

Table 3.1 examines these movements in and out of work at the individual level. It shows as a proportion of the total interviewed at each of the last three interviews – 1996, 1998 and 2001 – those in work of 16 hours a week or more and those not. It does this separately for those beginning in such work in 1991 and those not. It supports the impression given in Figure 3.1 and Figure 3.2 that once in work there is not a great deal of movement out of work in the longer term. For example, consistently five per cent of those in work in 1991 were found out of work in any of the last three survey years. And they were not exactly the same five per cent. Only two per cent of the 2001 sample were in work in 1991 but out of work in both 1996 and 2001, for example.
Table 3.1  Change in individual employment status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status in 1991</th>
<th>Working 16 plus hours a week</th>
<th>Out of work or working 1-15 hrs a week</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Working 16+ hours per week</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of work, or working part-time</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unweighted base 412  319  731

Status in 1998
| Working 16+ hours per week | 24 | 26 | 50 |
| Out of work, or working part-time | 5 | 45 | 50 |
| All | 29 | 71 | 100 |

Unweighted base 406  309  725

Status in 2001
| Working 16+ hours per week | 22 | 34 | 56 |
| Out of work, or working part-time | 5 | 40 | 44 |
| All | 27 | 73 | 100 |

Unweighted base 315  233  548

Base: All lone parents interviewed in 2001.

Perhaps more striking is the kind of consistency shown in Table 3.2. Three-quarters of those in work in 1991 were in work in both 1996 and 2001, and nearly half (46 per cent) of those out of work in 1991 worked in neither 1996 nor 2001. But few of either group were in work in 1996 and out of work five years later (more than half of these had had new babies).

Table 3.2  Employment outcomes in 1996 and 2001 by employment status in 1991

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment outcomes</th>
<th>Employment in 1991</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Working 16 hours or more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working 16 plus hours a week in both 1996 and 2001</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working in 1996 but not 2001</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working in 2001 but not 1996</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working 1-15 hours or none in both years</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unweighted base 306  228

3.2 Dual earners

In the longer term, lone parents who found partners found working partners: 85 per cent of partners worked at least 16 hours a week in 2001 and most of these more than 30 hours. Just five per cent were unemployed and looking for work while the rest were disabled or retired.

Few couples had no work (seven per cent) or relied solely on the former lone parents’ job (eight per cent). Among the majority of new couples who had no new child, almost two-thirds (62 per cent) were dual-earner couples. Among those who had a new child, more than half (53 per cent) were dual earners (Table 3.3). Those with a new child who relied solely on their partners’ earnings tended to have had more than one new child and still had one under five years in 2001.

Table 3.3 Joint employment status in 2001 by new children: former lone mothers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Joint employment status in 2001 (working 16 hours a week or more)</th>
<th>Had new baby</th>
<th>New children</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neither works</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She works, he does not</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He works, she does not</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both work</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: 2001 respondents who had both a new partner and a new baby.

3.3 Occupation

Since so few lone parents are men, the ‘traditional’ manual occupations that are associated with relatively low wage earners are rare among the cohort (Table 3.4). Those who had manual jobs tended to work as cleaners or domestic staff, or as cooks or catering staff. Other jobs, though involving quite a lot of manual work, were coded under ‘personal service’ work, particularly care workers. Among the current and recent occupations of this cohort, the majority (53 per cent) were in non-manual occupations: a quarter had clerical, secretarial jobs or work in information-technology processes. Almost one in three had professional or managerial jobs, a lot of them in health and education and other local government employment. Thus, when lone parents do get jobs, they are more likely than not to get what most people think of as ‘good’ jobs.
Table 3.4  Occupational profile: current or most recent paid job

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Managers, senior professionals, supervisors</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionals: social workers, counsellors, nurses, teachers</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical, secretarial and IT staff</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal service, care workers, receptionists, hairdressers</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child minders</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail workers, sales assistants, counter staff, telesales</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooks, caterers, waitresses, hotel and bar staff</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleaners and domestic staff</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled manual workers, craftswomen, artists</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other manual workers, assembly storage and processes workers</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unweighted base 508

Base: all who had any job in past ten years: current or last job.

3.4  Hours and wages

Figures 3.3 and 3.4 show the distribution of hours worked by respondents employed in those years. Despite an increase in the proportions working more than 16 hours a week, the greater numbers in paid work in 2001 still favoured shorter working hours. The average was 29 hours a week compared with the 35 hours typically favoured by other full-time employees.

Figure 3.3  Distribution of hours worked in 1991

Table 3.5 includes all workers at any hours a week plus an additional two per cent who were not working in 2001 but who had had a job since 1998. Fewer than half (42 per cent) worked more than 35 hours a week and one in seven worked fewer than 16 hours a week. Short hours generally mean low wages and so the overall average take-home pay was £170 a week. This is partly the effect of short working hours because they were paid £5.72 an hour at after-tax rates. Nevertheless, a fifth of the sample of workers reported take-home pay rates of less than £4.00 an hour.

Table 3.5  
Hours and earnings: those in work in 2001 or who had a job since 1998

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship status of 1991 lone parents in 2001</th>
<th>Single, never partnered</th>
<th>Separated from cohabitation</th>
<th>Separated from marriage/divorced</th>
<th>Cohabiting</th>
<th>Married</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hours worked in present or last job since 1998</td>
<td>1-15 hours week = 27</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16-23 hours = 27</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24-30</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31-35</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More than 35 hours = 36</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average hours</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Continued
Table 3.5  Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wages in present or last job since 1998</th>
<th>Single, never partnered</th>
<th>Separated from cohabitation</th>
<th>Separated from marriage/divorced</th>
<th>Cohabiting</th>
<th>Married</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to £80 a week</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£80-150</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£151-200</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£201-250</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over £250 a week</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average wage per week</td>
<td>£167</td>
<td>£159</td>
<td>£194</td>
<td>£164</td>
<td>£150</td>
<td>£170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average pay per hour</td>
<td>£7.17</td>
<td>£5.50</td>
<td>£6.11</td>
<td>£5.78</td>
<td>£4.93</td>
<td>£5.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted bases</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>395</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Total includes five working widows not included elsewhere in the table.

3.5  Factors associated with work and entry to work

Earlier experience with this cohort of lone parents indicated there was a wide range of factors that influenced whether or not lone parents had a job and whether those beginning the study period out of work later moved into work. We last looked at this question in our report on the 1991-98 data (Finlayson et al., 2000) using a logistic version of survival analysis. This analysed the speed with which out-of-work lone parents in 1991 made their first entry to work by 1998 and, separately, analysed how quickly those in work in 1991 made their first exits from work.

In the 1998 analysis, among those beginning out of work, the duration of non-employment itself was important. In any given month between 1991 and 1998, the longer they had been out of work the less likely it was they would go into work the following month, other things being equal. And it was domestic circumstances that came to dominate their employment entry rates, particularly whether they had a partner, which sharply raised the likelihood of work, or whether they had very young children, which lowered it. By 1998, of course, having a young child meant having had a new one since 1991. Having a disabled child also slowed the rate of entry into work, so did being in hardship, though this again was more likely to be an outcome of remaining out of work rather than a cause. Claiming Income Support (that is, remaining out of work and having no partner) also pointed against an entry to full-time work but sharply raised the probability of trying part-time work of 15 hours a week or less even though a proportion of these earnings would be lost against the entitlement to benefit.

Among those beginning in work, duration was also important, the longer cohort members stayed in work the less likely they would leave. Those more likely to leave were those with new pregnancies and younger children or who began in 1991 as single, never-partnered lone parents.
In the 2001 survey, the former practice of collecting month-by-month accounts of employment activities that allowed the use of survival analysis was sacrificed to the need to spend as much time as possible talking about the children. So the analysis that follows looks mainly at whether parents were in work of 16 hours a week or more in 2001, or not. This analysis lacks the month-by-month precision of the 1998 survival analysis but has the advantage that cohort members who had perhaps only a short spell in work were not counted as workers.

Regarding work outcomes, there was a huge difference between those beginning in work in 1991 (81 per cent of whom had a job in 2001) and those out of work in 1991 (47 per cent of whom had a job in 2001). It makes sense, therefore, to continue to divide the sample in this way. Table 3.6 shows the proportion in work of 16 or more hours a week in 2001, separately for those beginning in such work in 1991 and those not, further divided by their patterns of family formation since 1991.

Table 3.6 begins to solve the apparent puzzle of why getting a partner is associated both with getting a job and getting a new child, but getting a new child reduces the chances of getting a job. First, it is true that having a new child reduces the proportion found in work in 2001, but not by much. Among the larger group beginning out of work in 2001, the difference is not statistically significant. Nor did it matter how many new children they had. Those having two or three new children were equally likely to be in work in 2001 compared to those having just one new child, which is a surprising finding.

### Table 3.6 Percent with a job in 2001: relationship between partners, births and work by initial employment status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cell percentages</th>
<th>Work status in 1991</th>
<th>Working 16 or</th>
<th>Working 1-15</th>
<th>Unweighted bases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>more hours</td>
<td>hours or none</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnership</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No new partner between 1991 and 2001</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One or more partners, all left by 2001</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or more partners, one stayed</td>
<td>(85)</td>
<td>(85)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One partner who stayed</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Births</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had new baby between 1991 and 2001</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had no new child</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lone parent in 2001</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had partner in 2001 and dependent children</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had partner and/or non-dependent children, or none</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>(56)</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alone, no partner no children</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>(33)</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td></td>
<td>81</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The great majority of those beginning in work remained in work except for those few whose new child was still young and those who were nearing, or more rarely had passed, retirement age. The one group who had still only a minority in work by 2001 were those who began out of work (or working 1-15 hours) in 1991 and who remained lone parents. This was especially true of those who had had a partner at some point since 1991 but had one no longer.

The remaining factors associated with being in work in 2001 are listed in two tables. The first, Table 3.7, lists the main ‘entry characteristics’ from 1991 that were associated with whether or not the lone parent was in work of 16 hours or more in 2001. The second, Table 3.8, looks at changes in their circumstances since.
Nearly all the variation in Tables 3.7 and 3.8 is associated with the net movement into work among the majority who began out of work or working 1-15 hours a week in 1991. Among the minority who were in work in 1991, the only combination of 1991 characteristics that lowered the proportion remaining in work by 2001 was having no qualifications and remaining unpartnered, especially remaining a lone parent. But two-thirds of these unqualified continuing lone parents who began in work in 1991 (n=70) still had jobs in 2001. The same combination of factors among those beginning out of work (n=69) yields only 23 per cent in work in 2001.

### Table 3.7  Percent in work in 2001: key 1991 entry conditions associated with work in 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prior marital status in 1991</th>
<th>Working 16 plus hours a week in 1991</th>
<th>Working 1-15 hours or none in 1991</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Unweighted bases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single, never-partnered lone parents</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated from cohabitation</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formerly married</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widows</td>
<td>(67)</td>
<td>(26)</td>
<td>(39)</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age in 1991</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 25</td>
<td>(73)</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22-29</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-40</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 40</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing tenure in 1991</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner occupier</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social tenant</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other tenures</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>(58)</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualifications in 1991</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A levels or higher</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>(76)</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational qualifications</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower school qualifications</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hardship</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No hardship in 1991</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One hardship score</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two hardship scores</td>
<td>(75)</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three or more</td>
<td>(67)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received child support payments</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received none</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work and benefit status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked, income above FC+25% level</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked eligible for FC, does not claim</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked and receives FC</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked too few hours or none</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposed the views that benefits should be reserved for the poorest (1991)</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Took a different view</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.8  Percent in work in 2001: key transition variables between 1991 and 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work status in 2001</th>
<th>Working 16 plus hours per week</th>
<th>Working 0-15 hours</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Unweighted bases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved educational level</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>106 67 173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not improve</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>209 166 375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtained new child support</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>45 37 82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not obtain new child support</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>270 196 466</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-term sick or disabled in three consecutive interviews 93-98</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>43 37 80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not report such illness</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>272 196 468</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reported caring for someone else, usually a child, because they were long-term sick or disabled in more than two interviews.</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>43 38 73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reported such caring in one or two interviews</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>68 55 123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not report such care</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>213 140 353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hardship¹</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little hardship 1991-1998</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>180 33 231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some hardship</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>114 117 231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severe hardship</td>
<td>(86)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>21 65 86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ For a full description of the calculation of this variable, see the next chapter.

Age itself was related to work in 2001 in a slightly curvilinear distribution. That is to say, the youngest and the oldest lone parents in 1991 were less likely to be in work in 2001 than those in the prime working years between 25 and 40. The youngest were more likely to have new babies while the oldest moved towards that steady withdrawal from the labour market that characterises most women over 50.

The four main factors associated with lone parents getting into work by 2001 were the same four factors that predicted whether they began the study in work or not in 1991. Workers, both in 1991 and 2001, were much more likely to be formerly-married owner-occupiers who had some education and received child support payments. Among those not formerly married, the single, never-partnered lone parents did better than those separated from cohabitation but this was because they were younger and were subsequently more likely to find and keep a partner.
One surprise in the analysis was the lasting association between lone parents’ initial attitudes towards work and benefits and their being in work or not in 2001. In 1991, and in subsequent years, respondents completed a multiple-choice questionnaire indicating their attitudes and values towards family formation, work and social security benefits. One combination of three of these questions answered in 1991 was significantly related to their employment status in 2001. Those who indicated that:

- they opposed the views that benefits should be reserved for the poorest; and
- people in work, or people with mortgages should be denied benefits, were significantly more likely to be in work.

What this combination of views appears to indicate most clearly is that they were open to the idea of in-work benefits. And lone parents depend heavily on in-work benefits, now tax credits, to ease their entry to paid work and to help them stay in such work. The study showed subsequently that, among those who had entered work by 2001 and remained without a partner, three-quarters had received in-work benefits or tax credits at some point since 1991.

Looking at the changes that occurred between 1991 and 2001 shown in Table 3.8, favourable changes in the four key factors associated with work in 1991 were equally linked with being in work in 2001. Those who improved their educational level, who (against the trend) managed to get new child support payments, who avoided serious illness or hardship, and who were not obliged to spend time caring for sick children, parents or partners, were all more likely to be found working 16 or more hours a week in 2001.

### 3.6 Logistic regression analysis of working or not working in 2001

The results reported in these next sections are presented cautiously. It is a lot to say on the basis of a sample of a few hundred people that characteristics that divided them in 1991 had an influence on whether or not they were in work of 16 hours a week or more ten years later. For these reasons, the results given have been simplified to a few clear contrasts such as being over or under 40 in 1991, for example, which have been shown consistently in this series of studies to influence whether or not lone parents are in paid work. This simplification was achieved through considerable experimentation and prior analysis, eliminating more complex selections of contrasting categories. For example, social tenancy is contrasted with all other types of accommodation, grouping together private tenancy and owner occupation. This was done because only social tenancy in 1991 was significantly related to work in 2001 among the full range of contrasts available. More complex categories are retained, on the other hand, not solely on the ground of statistical significance but when they had a particular contribution to make to the narrative of what happened to our cohort over the ten years.

#### 3.6.1 1991 background characteristics

**Prior work**

As other research has shown, the cohort members most likely to end the study period in work of 16 or more hours a week were those who were working those hours in 1991 (See Appendix A, Table A.3). The odds that a 1991 worker was a worker in 2001 were almost four times those of a non-worker having entered work. Other things being equal, among the 1991 factors known to influence paid work, almost everyone among the 27 per cent who had a job in 1991 could safely be predicted to have a job ten years later.
However, the contrast used in the analysis was not solely one that compared working 16 or more hours a week in 1991 to not working 16 or more hours a week. Working 1-15 hours per week was included as a separate category, contrasted in turn with not working any hours. The result was non-significant and even had a negative sign. The result speaks against the long-term benefit of a ‘mini-job’ leading to full-time employment later on, which was suggested both by Iacovou and Berthoud’s (2000) similar analysis of the British Household Panel Survey and PSI’s own analysis of the Families and Children Study.

Other circumstances in 1991
Being separated from cohabitation in 1991 compared to all other marital statuses in 1991, and the receipt of maintenance in 1991, were not significantly related to paid work in 2001. The greater significance levels lay with the positive benefit of having some educational qualifications, on the one hand, and with the negative association of being a social tenant in 1991 and, other things being equal, having avoided severe hardship in 1991. The contrast in later employment outcomes between those who entered the study as better qualified owner-occupiers or as hard-up council tenants is large and will not surprise many readers.

Attitudes
Interestingly, one other factor survived these controls on employment outcomes. Being opposed in 1991 to the views that benefits should be reserved for the poorest and that people in work or people with mortgages should be denied benefits raised the odds that respondents would be found in work ten years later. That such openness towards in-work benefits should make a contribution over such a long period is an unusual finding. Other attitudes more directly related to work, for example, saying that you should hang on to a job and that ‘... almost any job was better than being unemployed... ’ had no such influence.

Age
The effects of age are less straightforward than may be apparent. In 1991, the younger lone parents were more likely to be out of work. By 2001, the entry to work by the younger lone parents and some of the oldest lone parents leaving the labour market through retirement inverts this relationship so the direct association between age and employment outcomes is unclear. The younger ones are more likely to be in work in 2001, other things being equal. This is because the impact of the age of the youngest child in 1991 has now faded entirely. This left the older lone parents who have other barriers to work – health, for example – or age itself since many are near or past retirement age, less likely to be in work than those who were once the youngest but are now more in the prime working-age groups. The age at which a 1991 lone parent had her first child also failed to predict whether or not she would be in work in 2001. So if young parenthood was a labour market disadvantage it did not remain so, other things being equal.

It is worth mentioning at this point that if the above analysis is run without lone parents’ working history in 1991, the pattern of significant associations with their work status in 2001 does not change. That is to say, the influence of the 1991 characteristics on social tenancy, education, hardship and attitudes had already contributed to getting cohort members into work by 1991 and appears to contribute to the numbers in work over the next ten years from 27 to 56 per cent.
3.6.2 Key changes occurring between 1991 and 2001

Table A.4 reports the association between key changes in cohort members’ circumstances between 1991 and 2001 and their chances of being in paid work of 16 or more hours a week in 2001. The table suggests an interesting story that is significant for policy.

Family formation

The descriptive analysis named new births as a path out of the labour market, for a while at least, but new partners as a path towards increased participation even though partners and babies go together. This is reflected in the coefficients in Table A.4. There is, however, an interesting twist in that cohort members who had a new partner but were alone again in 2001 were even less likely to be in work than were those who remained alone throughout. Those who had a new partner in 2001 were much more likely to be in work (controlling for the presence of new babies and other factors) and this was true even of those who had had two or more new partners but were now settled with their latest one. The issue of new child support payments is also bound up in the cohort’s history of partnerships, new children and work. The model predicts that those who reported at one interview or another that they were receiving child support payments, when in 1991 they said they had none, were significantly more likely to be in work in 2001. But much of this is likely to be ‘dowry maintenance’ paid by incoming partners for a child born earlier and followed by their own arrival in the household.

Other key changes

The model aligned well with commonsense expectations by predicting that cohort members who had added to their educational and other qualifications since 1991 would be more likely to be in work in 2001. In contrast, those who had reported long-term illness at three or more interviews, or who had experienced hardship, even moderate levels of hardship as well as severe hardship, would be more likely to be out of work in 2001. The same was true of those who reported having to care for a sick child or another household member on two or more occasions between 1993 and 2001. However, neither the model nor commonsense would be able to ascertain whether new qualifications were added before or after an entry to work, since employers offer courses that earn certificates too, and poor health may, in some cases, be an outcome of persisting unemployment as well as a cause. On the other hand, the result suggests a division of fortunes among the cohort, where progress lead to progress for some, while others piled up problems.

3.6.3 Combined analysis

The analysis reported in Table A.5 enters into a single analysis all the initial conditions and changes experienced between 1991 and 2001. Stepwise elimination was used in order to show the effects of introducing the subsequent change variables over the 1991 background factors.

Among the 1991 background factors, beginning in work of 16 hours a week or more was associated with four key ‘social location’ variables:

- beginning in work of 16 hours a week or more;
- having educational qualifications;
- being younger; and
- the negative influence of being a social tenant in 1991.
This all makes good sense, though from a policy point of view the strong association with social tenancy may be worrying. What is it about being a social tenant that discourages lone parents from working? The zero-order relationship is highly significant with 43 per cent of 1991 social tenants in work in 2001 compared with 77 per cent of the 1991 owner-occupiers. Sheer social geography may play a part because social accommodation is less favourably located for access to the kinds of non-manual work that lone parents favour. Many were built to house male labour for large industrial enterprises whose demand for such labour then fell so dramatically in the 1980s. Lone parents are rarely suitable for the remaining manual jobs and the jobs they are suitable for are now at the end of an inconvenient journey.

The inclusion of the transition variables did nothing to re-instate the influence of having a part-time rather than a full-time job in 1991. Probably the ‘...part-time to full-time...’ transition happens too quickly to lone parents to show up as an independent influence over ten years. Lone parents remain on Income Support if they work less than 16 hours a week and during the study period surrendered all but £15 a week of their earnings. So they had a strong incentive to jump straight into work at 16 or more hours and in three-quarters of such moves, collect all the advantages associated with Family Credit at the same time. Women with partners did not face the same stepped system and were, therefore, more likely to phase their return to work.

Believing that benefits should not be restricted to the poorest families but be available to people with jobs and mortgages, showed the same long-term connection with being in work in 2001, controlling for many other factors. Thus, an apparent openness to in-work benefits was aligned with both a policy of encouraging lone parents into work through wage supplementation and with what lone parents actually do. This is the more intriguing since the more straightforward measure contrasting attitudes towards going to work versus staying at home did not show the same connection.

Key intervening factors
Four key measures of ‘life improvement’ were strongly associated with being in work in 2001, controlling for the initial social location variables:

- finding and keeping a new partner, even if they had had another partner meanwhile;
- improving educational levels;
- obtaining additional child support payments; and
- remaining in good health and avoiding long spells of illness.

Having a new child continued to exert some negative influence but it did not prevent lone parents finding work altogether, other things being equal (see also the zero-order differences in Table 3.6). New children could signal a temporary absence from the labour market. But after ten years of change, the net effect of forming a new family with a new partner was positive. As we said above, getting new child support payments was another sign of this kind of family improvement since it often pre-figured the providing non-resident parent later moving in. Overall, adding to the family, often as a dual-earner couple, is clearly part of a recovery route followed by a substantial proportion of the cohort.

It is also of policy interest that gaining new qualifications was strongly associated with being in work in 2001. This finding may be queried on the ground that improved educational qualifications can as often follow entry to work as precede it. On the other hand, improved qualifications ought also to reduce the drop-out rate from work. This rate was low, it is true, but the greater proportion of those who did drop out were among those who began with no qualifications at all and obtained none in the following ten years.
Again, independent of all these other associations, persistent illness remained strongly associated with not being in work in 2001. This can be as much an outcome of continued unemployment as its cause. It seems fair to say that continuing a life as a single parent without work will build up repeated experiences of hardship which will make a return to work that much harder.

3.6.4 Entry to work

The above analysis was repeated solely for the majority of lone parents who did not work in 1991 or those who began the study period working fewer than 16 hours a week. Table A.6 shows what factors were associated with having entered and, by 2001, remained in work of 16 or more hours a week. The results for all cohort members and for those out of work in 1991 are compared schematically in Table 3.9. The results were very similar, for three reasons:

- more than seven out of ten were out of work in 1991, so their outcomes will anyway have provided most of the covariance analysed in the preceding sections for all cohort members;
- the preceding analysis controlled for having a job in 1991; and
- this cohort began in 1991 as a stock sample rather than a flow sample.

Table 3.9 Summary of factors associated with a lone parent being in work by 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Background factors in 1991</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Part-time and non-workers only</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Worked 16 or more hours a week in 1991</td>
<td>+++</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic qualifications</td>
<td>+++</td>
<td>++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree or equivalent</td>
<td>+++</td>
<td>+++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social tenant</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Believed benefits should not be reserved for poor but that people in work and who had mortgages should get them too</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 40 in 1991</td>
<td>+++</td>
<td>+++</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key changes 1991-2001

| New births | — | — |
| One new partner by 2001, who stayed…. | +++ | ++ |
| New partners by 2001, the latest of whom stayed…. | +++ | +++ |
| Got new child support | + | |
| Improved qualifications | ++ | +++ |

Moderate hardship 1991-1998 | — | — |
Severe hardship 1991-1998 | — | — |

KEY: +++/— positive/negative association with working 16 or more hours a week in 2001, significant at P<0.001, ++/— at P<0.01, +/- at P<0.05.
3.7 Summary

The proportion of cohort members in work of 16 hours or more each week rose from 27 per cent in 1991 to 56 per cent in 2001. Though the proportion in work had more than doubled in ten years, it was a slow return to work – less than three per cent per year.

A further 17 per cent had had a job since 1991 but were out of work in 2001, often because they now had young children. More than eight out of ten had a job of some kind since 1991 and the majority of those out of work in 2001 had an earning partner.

Overall, lone parents’ persistence in work was high. For example, three-quarters of those in work in 1991 were in work in both 1996 and 2001. Nearly all those in better-paid jobs above their Family Credit threshold in 1991 remained in work over ten years.

Among new couples, over half (62 per cent) were dual earners even if they had had a new child together (53 per cent). Family unemployment (where neither parent was in work of 16 or more hours per week) was rare among the new couples (seven per cent).

The majority of lone parents who had jobs in 2001 had ‘reasonably good’ jobs – more than half in non-manual occupations. They continued to favour shorter hours, averaging 29 hours a week though 42 per cent worked 35 hours a week or more. Shorter hours held down average earnings to £170 a week, or £5.72 an hour. Sixteen per cent earned more than £250 a week.

Four key ‘social location’ variables were independently associated with being in work of 16 hours a week or more ten years later, whatever happened in the intervening years. These were:

- beginning in work of 16 hours a week or more;
- having lower high school qualifications or better;
- not living in a social tenancy in 1991; and
- starting the survey period under 40 years of age.

Believing that benefits should be available to people with jobs and mortgages and not reserved solely for the poor was also associated with work in 2001.

Between 1991 and 2001, three key measures of ‘life improvement’ were strongly associated with being in work in 2001, controlling for the initial social location variables:

- finding and keeping a new partner, even if they had to have more than one attempt at this;
- improving educational levels, though some of these will have been obtained in work; and
- obtaining some new child support payments, though these may well have come from incoming partners rather than the non-resident parents of the 1991 children.

Having a new child continued to exert some negative influence on entering work but its effects in most cases were temporary. More persisting was the association between hardship and remaining out of work, though cause and effect will be shared.
4 Work and benefits

This chapter returns to the original purpose of the PRILIF survey and looks at the relationship between work and claiming benefits, especially the role of Family Credit. During the period of the study there were significant changes in the benefit and tax regime, in summary:

In 1991: about 180,000 lone parents received Family Credit. The rules asked lone parents to work at least 24 hours a week to qualify for in-work benefit. Family Credit provided (in real terms) smaller amounts of in-work support than WFTC provides now, withdrew that support against new income at a higher rate (70 per cent compared to 55 per cent), offered no assistance with childcare and allowed £15 a week of child support payments to be retained before that too was withdrawn at 70 per cent. Support for childcare was introduced in 1996 as a disregard against eligible income for Family Credit, which meant that lone parents earning the smallest wages and qualifying for a maximum award could not benefit.

In 2001: more than half a million lone parents received WFTC, working 16 or more hours a week. The new tax credit provided much larger amounts of support that continued a much longer way up the income distribution. Larger amounts of support for childcare – 70 per cent of the amount paid up to £150 a week for two or more children in eligible forms of childcare – were paid as a premium and not a disregard so the lowest earners could benefit too. Any child support payments received from non-resident parents were ignored by the new system. Thus, at any given wage level, working lone parents became much better off than they were in 1991 and strikingly better off than non-working lone parents. A lone parent working relatively short hours – typically 25 hours a week – and receiving both WFTC and child support from an ex-spouse had an in-work income similar to that of single-earner couples.

4.1 Changes in the cohort overall: 1991-2001

In 1991, about half the minority of cohort members who were working were receiving Family Credit, though another eight per cent of the sample appeared eligible but were not claiming it. In 2001, 56 per cent of the sample worked hours above the post-1992 qualifying threshold of 16 or more hours each week and a third of them were receiving WFTC. Among those who still had a dependent child, 54 per cent were working the qualifying hours and, as in 1991, half were receiving tax credits (Table 4.1). Dual earning took the majority of the new couples beyond the scope of WFTC, though still a quarter of them received it. Many of the 2001 WFTC recipients were concentrated among those still alone with dependent children. Among these, three-quarters of those who worked qualifying hours received WFTC.
Table 4.1  Status for Working Families’ Tax Credit by family type in 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work and benefit status in 2001</th>
<th>Single, never partnered</th>
<th>Separated from marriage/cohabitation</th>
<th>Separated from marriage/divorced</th>
<th>Cohabiting</th>
<th>Married</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All 2001 respondents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working too few hours or none</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receiving Working Families’ Tax Credit</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working above WFTC income level</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted bases</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>547</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All 2001 respondents with a dependent child

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work and benefit status in 2001</th>
<th>Single, never partnered</th>
<th>Separated from marriage/cohabitation</th>
<th>Separated from marriage/divorced</th>
<th>Cohabiting</th>
<th>Married</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Working too few hours or none</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receiving Working Families’ Tax Credit</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working above WFTC income level</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted bases</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>315</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2 Changes in individual families 1991-2001

Table 4.2 shows the ‘benefit destinations’ of 1991 lone-parent families in 2001. The proportions of cohort members receiving IS/SA, WFTC, and any benefit for disabled people in 2001 are given for those beginning the survey period in one of four groups: out of work (or working part-time), receiving Family Credit, eligible non-claimants of Family Credit and moderate-income families. These figures are shown separately for all cohort members, for those with a partner in 2001 and those alone. Transitions at the individual level show some remarkable long-term consistencies.

4.2.1 Moderate-income families in 1991

Nearly all those who began in 1991 in work with earnings above the levels qualifying for Family Credit remained in that position ten years later (Table 4.11). They managed to stay well away from Income Support too and rarely claimed benefits for disabled people.

4.2.2 Eligible non-claimants of Family Credit in 1991

Eligible non-claimants of Family Credit in 1991 did almost as well. Intriguingly though, 13 per cent of them ended up on WFTC.
4.2.3 Those receiving Family Credit in 1991

Those receiving Family Credit in 1991 and who later found a partner also fared well in the sense that they had left both out-of-work benefits and the new tax credits behind them, though one in seven of them received a benefit for disabled people by 2001. In contrast, more than a third of 1991 Family Credit recipients who remained alone in 2001 were receiving WFTC and the majority of them claimed some kind of benefit or tax credit.

4.2.4 Out-of-work lone parents in 1991

The out-of-work lone parents in 1991 mostly received Income Support at that time. Ten years later, four out of ten of them still received Income Support or JSA and nearly all of these were concentrated among those who remained without a partner (55 per cent of whom were still on Income Support). A quarter had gone on to receive WFTC, partnered and un-partnered alike and 16 per cent received a benefit for disabled people. Thus, the great majority of them and nearly all those without a partner in 2001 remained within reach of the benefit and tax credit system.

Table 4.2 Receipt of benefits in 2001 by status for Family Credit in 1991: percent receiving each benefit or tax credit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work and Family Credit status in 1991</th>
<th>Moderate income&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Working too few hours or none</td>
<td>Eligible non-claimant of FC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner in 2001</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On IS/JSA</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On WFTC</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>8 [17]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On disability benefit&lt;sup&gt;3&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14 [0]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No partner in 2001</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On IS/JSA</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>15 [8]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On WFTC</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>35 [8]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On disability benefit</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12 [8]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All cohort members</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On IS/JSA</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>13 [8]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On WFTC</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>28 [8]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On disability benefit</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13 [8]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted bases</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>55 [8]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No partner</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>120 [8]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>175 [8]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>1</sup> Cell percentages are given because it is possible to receive disability benefits while receiving Income Support or JSA.

<sup>2</sup> Moderate-income families had a total liable income that lay between the point at which their entitlement to Family Credit ran out and a point 25 per cent above that value.

<sup>3</sup> Only respondents receiving a benefit for disabled people in their own right are included – an additional 11 families receive such benefits solely on behalf of their partner.
Those beginning the study period in 1991 out of work or working below the Family Credit qualifying hours have always been of special interest in this survey. Figure 4.1 presents an asymmetrical picture of the work-and-benefit/tax credit outcomes for this group in 1996, 1998 and 2001, looking first at those whose paths diverged by continuing to receive income-tested benefits, in or out of work, and second at those who left benefits for income self-sufficiency, alone or with a partner. Eighty-two per cent of the 1991 out-of-work cohort ended up in one of three destinations: on Income Support (36 per cent), on WFTC (25 per cent) or as a working member of a couple, usually as part of a dual-earner couple (21 per cent). The proportion receiving in-work benefits fell and then increased again in 2001 as the wider scope of WFTC captured more of the remaining workers who still had dependent children. Only two percent of those beginning in 1991 as out-of-work lone parents ended up ten years later as working lone parents who earned more than their entitlement threshold for WFTC.

4.3 Summary

Family Credit and later, Working Families’ Tax Credit, played a strong role in assisting lone parents to get and keep paid work. Half of those working qualifying hours in 2001 that still had dependent children received WFTC in 2001, rising to three-quarters among those who had no partner.

There was strong long-term continuity in benefit receipt. More than half (54 per cent) of those on Income Support in 1991, and who subsequently remained alone in 2001, remained on Income Support. More than a third of those on Family Credit in 1991 were receiving WFTC in 2001. In contrast it was rare for any of the minority of lone parents who were beyond the scope of income-tested benefits in 1991 to receive such benefits in 2001.

Overall, lone parents on Income Support in 1991 had three common destinations in 2001: on Income Support (36 per cent), on WFTC (25 per cent) or as a member of a dual-earner couple (21 per cent). Only two per cent of out-of-work lone parents from 1991 had become independent of both income-tested benefits or tax credits and a partner in 2001.
Figure 4.1  Destinations of 1991 lone parents on Income Support in 1996, 1998 and 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>On Income Support</th>
<th>On Family Credit</th>
<th>Not on Income Support or Family Credit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Out of work</td>
<td>Out of work</td>
<td>Out of work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time work</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>On Income Support in 1991 (n = 301)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Still lone parent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not on Income Support or Family Credit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No longer a lone parent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alone, no child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>On income-tested benefit?</th>
<th>Receiving income-tested benefit</th>
<th>Receiving no income-tested benefit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1996: 75%</td>
<td>1996: 25%</td>
<td>1996: 35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001: 61%</td>
<td>2001: 39%</td>
<td>2001: 31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5 Changes in family circumstances

This chapter looks at changes in various aspects of families’ circumstances and family welfare over the ten years of the study, especially aspects of their housing, health, and experience of hardship.

5.1 Housing

Housing tenure proved the most stable of all the important measures of family circumstances over time (Table 5.1). Almost the only movers between housing tenures (rather than between addresses) were those beginning in 1991 in the private rented sector or living with relatives and friends and those who began as social tenants in 1991 who met a partner, half of whom moved into owner-occupation. This at least is true of those who responded in 2001.

Table 5.1 Housing tenure in 1991 and 2001 by partnership status in 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tenure in 2001</th>
<th>Tenure in 1991</th>
<th>Column percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Owners</td>
<td>Social tenants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alone in 2001</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owners</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social tenants</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private &amp; other</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner in 2001</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owners</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social tenants</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private &amp; other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weighted base</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>56</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>70</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.2 Family health

By 2001, fewer than half the sample (49 per cent) could describe their health as ‘good’ while a third said it was ‘fairly good’ and 17 per cent said it was ‘not good’. Exactly a third said that they had some ‘long-standing illness, disability or infirmity’ and more than half of these said that their problem affected the kind of work they could do and limited their activities. These figures reflect some decline in health over ten years: in 1991, 13 per cent said their health was ‘not good’ and 17 per cent had reported any long-standing health problem.

The growth of long-standing health problems is charted in Figure 5.1 and shows that this growth is stronger among those who remained without a partner in 2001.

Figure 5.1 Percentage reporting a ‘long-term illness or disability’ by partnership status in 2001

Among those reporting long-standing health problems in 2001, a third said their problem began before they were 25 years old and half before they were 30. On the other hand, symptoms could be intermittent over the ten years of the study. Whereas 56 per cent of the 2001 respondents had said they had a long-standing problem in at least one of the seven PRLIF interviews, only four per cent had had such a problem in all seven. Among those responding to all seven interviews, these figures remain very similar: 55 and six per cent. These occurrences were more likely among older respondents; those over 40 in 1991 went on to record typically two or three episodes of long-standing difficulty while those under 25 in 1991 recorded typically one or none. This contributed something more to the understanding of why, by 2001, fewer of the older 1991 lone parents were in full-time work.

The kinds of long-standing problems reported in 2001 are listed in Table 5.2. Most common were musculo-skeletal problems (especially bad backs) chest complaints or trouble with other internal organs. Problems with mental health also featured, especially anxiety and depression.
The health problems of children are the subject of a later chapter but in addition to these, six per cent had a partner who had long-standing health problems and eight per cent of the 2001 respondents said they cared for someone (including partners) ‘... because they had a long-standing illness.’

Table 5.2 Types of long-standing health problems reported in 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Percent of problems</th>
<th>Percent of cases who reported any problem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Problems with back, arms, legs, feet, hands, joints etc.</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty in seeing</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty in hearing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skin conditions and allergies</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chest and breathing problems, asthma, bronchitis</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heart, blood pressure or circulation problems</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stomach, liver, kidney, gastric problems</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diabetes</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depression, bad nerves</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental illness, phobias</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epilepsy</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other mental health problems or learning difficulties</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unweighted base: 272, 149

Columns add to more than 100 per cent because respondents could give more than one answer.

Cigarette smoking has emerged as one of the major health hazards attached to lone parenthood (see Dorsett and Marsh, 1998). Whereas a quarter of young women in Britain smoke cigarettes regularly, in 1991 55 per cent of lone parents smoked (Marsh and McKay 1994). By 1999, the Families and Children Study (FACS) showed this figure had crept up to 56 per cent (Marsh et al. 2001) even though the proportion of young women smoking fell during the same period. Moreover, smoking was concentrated among the most disadvantaged lone parents. Eight out of ten lone parents living in social accommodation, receiving Income Support and having few qualifications, smoked cigarettes regularly.

By 1998, smokers in the sample were already showing a health deficit independently associated with their smoking. Compared to ex-smokers and never smokers, the smokers were more likely to say they got out of breath while walking with people their own age on level ground (21 vs 13 per cent) and were twice as likely to say this happened often (12 vs six per cent). These were women whose average age was still only 40 in 1998.

The contribution of smoking to increased scores on the hardship index is well documented (Marsh and McKay 1993, Dorsett and Marsh 1998). The simplest expression in these 2001 data is that half of those still smoking reported being in hardship for three consecutive interviews between 1993 and 1998 compared with 28 per cent among those who had never smoked.

In this cohort, for those interviewed in 2001, the proportion smoking fell from 54 per cent in 1991 to 45 per cent in 2001, consisting of 21 per cent of the smokers giving up and five per cent of the non-smokers resuming an earlier habit. In fact, a third of the non-smokers in 2001 were ex-smokers, so 64 per cent of the sample had smoked regularly at some point.

Since exceptionally high rates of smoking were associated with the greatest disadvantage, it was reasonable to suppose that abstinence and more especially giving up smoking over this ten-year
period might be associated with improving circumstances. This is only partly true. Those who were in work in both 1991 and 2001, for example, had relatively low rates of smoking by 2001 (31 per cent), a relatively high rate of giving up (ex-smokers among them were 43 per cent of ever smokers) and the highest rate of never-smokers: 51 per cent. But those who had moved into work over this period had proportions of smokers and ex-smokers close to the average. This has something to do with the interaction of new births and new partners (Table 5.3).

### Table 5.3 Smoking by partnership history and new children 1991-2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partnership history</th>
<th>Had a new child</th>
<th>Had no new child</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No partner</td>
<td>One or more, who left</td>
<td>One or more left, one stayed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smoker</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>91 (63)</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex-smoker</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9 (6)</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never smoke</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>0 (31)</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>36</td>
<td>47 (35)</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smoker</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>23 (13)</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex-smoker</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>30 (52)</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never smoke</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>226</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Smoking rates remained significantly higher among those who had a new child between 1991 and 2001, especially among the relatively small group who also had a record of multiple partnerships during the same time. Those who had had no child and no partner – who were about half the total responding in 2001 – had relatively lower rates of smoking though still much higher than women of similar age. As Marsh and Dorsett showed for the 1991–1998 data, one of the problems encountered by lone parents who might want to give up smoking is that they tend to meet and marry smokers.

### 5.3 Hardship

The detailed sequence of questions about debt and expenditure that made up the Index of Relative Hardship used in the first six surveys was omitted from the seventh in favour of time to include questions about children. But a few questions were included to indicate trends (Table 5.4).
The proportions counting washing machines, freezers, videos, telephones and central heating among their household goods rose, so that by 2001 almost all families had these items. Access to a car doubled from 33 to 65 per cent but from the same base access rose more strongly among those with partners in 2001 (to 90 per cent) than among those alone (50 per cent). The proportions able to say that they were managing well on their current income also doubled from 23 to 45 per cent and the proportion feeling they were in financial difficulty fell sharply from 22 to eight per cent.

**Table 5.4 Changes in selected hardship indicators: 1991/4 to 2001**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Does your household have …</th>
<th>1991</th>
<th>2001</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A washing machine</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fridge freezer or separate deep freeze</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video recorder</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone (including mobiles in 2001)</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central heating</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to a car or van</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Taking everything together, which of these phrases on this card describes how you and your family are managing these days …**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1991</th>
<th>2001</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We manage very well</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We manage quite well</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We get by alright</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We don't manage very well</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We have some financial difficulties</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We are in deep financial trouble</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Thinking back over the past two years, how often would you say you have had trouble with debts you have found hard to repay?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Almost all the time</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quite often</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only sometimes</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Difficulty with debts over the previous two years was slower to respond to improvement with 31 per cent finding difficulty with repayments between 1992 and 1994 compared with 19 per cent in 1999 to 2001. It is fair to add that many better-off families probably have such difficulty from time to time.

Recovery from financial difficulty was similar among those who found a partner compared with those who remained alone. But those who remained without a paid job had very similar levels of financial stress in 2001 as they had reported in the earlier years of the survey while those in work by 2001 had far fewer problems (Table 5.5).

At the individual level there were quite strong continuities in the persistence or absence of financial difficulties. Those who reported financial difficulties in 1991 were three times more likely to report them in 2001 (32 vs 11 per cent) than those without such problems. Those reporting a recent history...
of problem debt in 1991 were similarly more likely to report such a history in 2001 (22 vs eight per cent). These continuities were stronger among those remaining out of work and claiming Income Support for most of the study period: 45 per cent who reported debts in 1994 reported a similar history of problem debt in 2001. The same proportion among those not reporting debt in 1994 was 18 per cent despite their having remained on Income Support all or most the time in between.

Table 5.5 Financial difficulties in 1991/4 and 2001 by partnership and work status in 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial difficulty 2001</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trouble with debts 1992-94</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trouble with debts 1999-2001</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted bases</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>353</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>177</td>
<td>351</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>310</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>353</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This raises an interesting question of why a minority of lone-parent families had a history of remaining on Income Support but rarely reported financial difficulties. A sub-sample was identified who, by 1998, had:

- remained lone parents, though they may have had a partner at some point meanwhile;
- had reported receipt of Income Support at two or more of the six interviews.

This sub-sample was then divided into two groups according to whether they had reported any hardship at all:

- at least one fewer interview than they had reported receipt of Income Support; or
- at as many or at more interviews than they had reported receipt of Income Support.

In fact, the first, or ‘favoured’ group had reported hardship at 2.3 fewer interviews than they had reported receipt of IS while the ‘unfavoured’ group reported 0.45 interviews more. Table 5.6 shows some key differences between the two groups. The favoured compared to the unfavoured group:

- were older;
- were more likely to be formerly married or widowed;
- were more likely to receive child support payments;
- captured all the minority receiving disability benefits;
- had non-dependent children in the household; and, most strikingly
- were less likely to smoke, though still more likely to smoke compared with women of the same age nationally.
### Table 5.6  Key differences between frequent IS recipients reporting hardship and those reporting little or no hardship between 1991-98

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Favoured: claimed IS in two or more years but little or no hardship</th>
<th>Unfavoured: claimed IS in two or more years and in hardship at least as many years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Smoked cigarettes in 1991</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not smoke</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smoked cigarettes in 1998</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not smoke</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single, never-partnered lone parents in 1991</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated from cohabitation</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated from marriage</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received child support payments in 1991</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received none</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received disability benefit in 1991</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received none</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 25 years old in 1991</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-39</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 and older</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had non-dependent children in 1991</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had none</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had non-dependent children in 1996</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had none</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bases (Unweighted)</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Weighted)</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: 1991 respondents who were lone parents in both 1991 and 1998 and who were receiving Income Support at three or more interviews.

The favoured group were also slightly less likely to have worked 16 hours a week or more during the seven years covered by these data (26 versus 32 per cent) or to have made any excursion into work, even part-time (47 versus 50 per cent) but neither difference is statistically significant. Applications to the Social Fund were equally prevalent in the favoured and unfavoured groups. Such applications betray existing hardship and lead, in the majority of cases, to reduced income in future months to repay the loan. But the money is usually spent on things whose lack would be recorded as hardship by the index.
5.4 Summary

Changes in housing tenure were rare and usually involved a move into owner occupation accompanied by a new partner.

More than half (55 per cent) reported some long-term illness during the study period though such illness was rarely reported at every interview (six per cent of those answering every interview). Most common were musculo-skeletal problems (especially bad backs) chest complaints or trouble with other internal organs, and mental problems, especially anxiety and depression. Poor health was associated with remaining alone.

Cigarette smoking fell from 54 to 45 per cent between 1991 and 2001 but remained far higher than among women of similar age. Smoking continued to be associated with hardship.

Ownership of key domestic goods rose and by 2001 almost every family had a washing machine, freezer, video recorder, and a telephone whose ownership rose from 69 to 98 per cent in ten years. Car ownership doubled from 33 to 65 per cent though this improvement was strongly associated with the arrival of new partners.

The proportion that felt they managed well on their income doubled from 23 to 45 per cent. Difficulty with problem debts fell from 31 per cent in the period 1992 to 1994 to 19 per cent in the period 1999 to 2001. Entry to work was the factor most strongly associated with recovery from higher levels of hardship in 1991.

Those who reported financial difficulties in 1991 were three times more likely to report them in 2001 than those without such problems (32 vs 11 per cent). These continuities were stronger among those remaining out of work and claiming Income Support for most of the study period: 45 per cent of those who reported debts in 1994 reported a similar history of problem debt in 2001. The same proportion among those not reporting debt in 1994 was 18 per cent, despite their having remained on Income Support all or most of the time in between.

A minority managed on benefit. Compared to those on Income Support and who reported frequent hardship, those who usually managed to avoid hardship were older. They were also more likely to be formerly married or widowed and to receive child support payments or disability benefits. They were more likely to have non-dependent children in the household and, most strikingly, were less likely to smoke.
6 Combined destinations: fortunes and misfortunes

6.1 Partners, work and children

These chapters on parents’ outcomes have examined changes in three key areas: family change, moving into work and family well-being. More specifically, the key measures were:

- getting a partner, remaining a lone parent, or being alone in 2001 at least in the sense of having no dependent children in the household;
- moving into work of 16 hours a week or more; and
- keeping or shedding the key markers for disadvantage: hardship, social tenancy, poor health, and so on.

Figure 6.1 shows how the sample divided between eight categories that combine the key outcomes for family change and employment while Table 6.1 shows the distributions of these categories in 2001 divided by those who began in work in 1991 and those who began out of work or working fewer than 16 hours per week.
Figure 6.1  Key outcomes for family change and employment

Table 6.1  Key combined outcomes for family change and employment in 2001 by initial employment status in 1991

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Out of work in 1991</th>
<th>In work in 1991</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Out of work or working less than 16 hours a week in 2001</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Still lone parent</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alone</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependent children and partner</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No dependent children and partner</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In work 16 hours a week or more in 2001</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Still lone parent</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alone</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependent children and partner</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No dependent children and partner</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weighted base</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>548</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>548</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The continuities and departures charted in the previous chapters are very clear when brought together in these data. The majority of those who began and ended the study period out of work found no lasting partnership and tended to remain alone with their dependent children. Those who moved into work divided themselves evenly into those who had a new partner or those who continued alone. The majority of those in work at the start and end of the study period remained alone, though most of these no longer had dependent children.
6.2 Family well-being

Tables 6.2 and 6.3 take the eight summary categories shown in Figure 6.1 and provide a profile of each category according to the proportion of parents who were ill, received disability benefits or Income Support, were in financial difficulty, or were social tenants. Much that has been found important in the previous five chapters of this report is summarised in these tables. These are the main points:

- Cohort members who were not in paid work of 16 or more hours a week in 2001 were, on average, far more likely to report health problems, be in financial difficulty and live in social accommodation. Among these:
  - a fifth (nine per cent of all cohort members) had partners and were better off than others out of work, though still 19 per cent of them relied on Income Support in 2001 and almost half remained social tenants;
  - more than half (55 per cent) were continuing out-of-work lone parents who still had all the markers of disadvantage they had carried through the study period. Eighty-eight per cent still relied on Income Support ten years after entering the study period. This was, on average, 14 years after becoming lone parents. Three-quarters of them still lived in social accommodation; they were worse off than other families and more prone to problem debt and poorer health. Many had a new child but had seen a new relationship fail;
  - almost a quarter were out of work and had neither partner nor dependent children in 2001. This group had different problems. They were not under any greater financial stress than other families in the study, particularly since many of them had grown-up children contributing to their household. Instead they were ill and half were receiving a benefit for disabled people.

Table 6.2 Profile of disadvantaged outcomes by work and family destinations: cohort members out of work or working 1-15 hours a week in 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Still lone parent with dependent children</th>
<th>Relationship status in 2001</th>
<th>Partner, no dependent children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Relationship status in 2001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reported poor health in 2001</td>
<td>Reported a disability in 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>39</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>68</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>22</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>37</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>74</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>37</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>39</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>68</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>22</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>37</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>74</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>55</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>48</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unweighted bases 88 61 35 12
The narrow majority (56 per cent) of all cohort members who were in work in 2001 had an altogether better profile:

- Best off in the material sense were the smallest group (11 per cent of those in work) who had a partner but no longer had dependent children. None, for example, felt they were managing poorly on their domestic finances and only a handful had experienced problem debts over the previous two years. More though, about a third of them in fact, felt they had some long-term health problem which was probably associated with their age group.

- A third of the workers (18 per cent of the cohort) were dual-earner couples enjoying almost the same freedom from material and health problems.

- Those alone and in work (23 per cent of the workers) also prospered in the same way, though they had somewhat poorer health.

- The continuing lone parents in work were a little more prone to problem debt compared with other workers (though half as likely to experience such debt as the out-of-work lone parents). They had the same slightly less favourable health profile as those alone and in work, which is interesting in itself: 28 per cent of working lone parents said that they had some long-term health problem. So, for many, poor health was a barrier that was overcome. The only characteristic that really marks out working lone parents from other working cohort members is that they were twice as likely to have remained in social accommodation since 1991. Therefore, leaving social housing was mostly associated with joining a partner with better accommodation.

**Table 6.3 Profile of disadvantaged outcomes by work and family destinations: cohort members in work of 16 or more hours a week in 2001**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship status in 2001</th>
<th>Still lone parent with dependent children</th>
<th>Alone, no partner, no dependent children</th>
<th>Dependent children and partner</th>
<th>Partner, no dependent children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reported poor health in 2001</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reported a disability in 2001</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receiving disability benefit in 2001</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Were managing poorly in 2001</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had problem debts 1999-2001</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Were social tenants in 2001</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row percentages (among cohort members working 16 plus hrs in 2001)</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row percentages (among all cohort members in 2001)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted bases</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.3  The last word

All the 2001 respondents were asked the following open-ended question:

‘Thinking about the times you were bringing up children on your own, what were the best things for you and your children during this time? What were the worst things for you and your children during this time?’

About one in seven respondents could not think of a ‘best thing’ to report on their time as a lone parent, though half of these seemed to be saying there was actually nothing good to report (Table 6.4). The majority of those who answered the question spoke in warm terms about their children and the opportunity to develop a close relationship when they had them more to themselves. Many mothers in couples might speak in the same way about parenthood, of course, and our respondents had just been primed to think about their children having spent some time describing their children’s development to us. But lone parents were quick to point to the compensations of a close family life achieved without a partner in the home. Most of the remaining comments were about how they valued asserting their independence, personally and as a parent, and in some cases about the improvements associated with freedom from an oppressive relationship.

The ‘worse things’ cited were more varied but were dominated by financial problems mentioned by about four in ten of the 2001 respondents and comprising about a third of the total replies (Table 6.5). Other ‘worse things’ concerned the disadvantages attached to a more independent life in having to accept responsibility alone, the lack of support and feelings of loneliness that come from having no adult companion at home. Others complained of illness and stress.

For the purpose of this report, concerned primarily with the outcomes for children, it was interesting to note that no more than about one in ten spontaneously mentioned problems with their children among the worse things about bringing them up alone. Fewer still mentioned problems with their former partner.
Table 6.4  ‘Thinking about the times you were bringing up children on your own, what were the best things for you and your children during this time?’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percentage of responses</th>
<th>Percentage of cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closeness/close relationship/good relationship</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spending time/quality time with them</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing things together/being together</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>27.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being there for each other</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Going on holiday together</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being happy/having fun</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love and attention from children</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching them develop/grow up</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching their progress at school</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When they were babies</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No interference/having them to myself</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being independent/doing it all myself</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being healthy</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom from violence/safe environment</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a secure environment/financially</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No more arguing</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having more control/discipline</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a job</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help from Family Credit</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support of family/friends</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family stability</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Answers</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Responses</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>142.6*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Base = 548, all 2001 respondents, many of whom gave more than one reply.
Table 6.5  ‘Thinking about the times you were bringing up children on your own, what were the worst things for you and your children during this time?’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column percentages</th>
<th>Percentage of responses</th>
<th>Percentage of cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None/nothing</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of money/financial struggle</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>42.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No money to do things together</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No money to buy things they wanted</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor accommodation</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No car</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No social life</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No help or support</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have to cope on my own/my responsibility</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No-one to share worries</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having to make all the decisions</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolation/loneliness/being on my own</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interference from others (partner, family)</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems with childcare/babysitters</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bullying</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cannot spend enough time with the children</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coping with children’s behaviour</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teenage years/adolescence</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline/control of children</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No man/father figure</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coping with illness/disabilities</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having to work and run a home</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being tired all the time</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship with ex-partner</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex-partner’s influence on children</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Court/legal battles</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of close relative</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have to leave children while at work</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other answers</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Responses</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>141.9*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Base = 548: all 2001 respondents, many of whom gave more than one reply.
6.4 Summary

More than four out of ten of the 1991 cohort remained lone parents living with dependent children in 2001. Less than half these continuing lone parents were in work.

About a quarter of the cohort were alone and the majority of these had paid jobs in 2001. The remainder had partners, most of who were in work.

Two of these groups, defined by children, partners and employment appeared to be in difficulty, comprising together about a third of the cohort. They had higher levels of ill-health and financial difficulty and continued to live in social accommodation. These were:

- continuing lone parents who began and ended the study period out of work; and
- out-of-work respondents who lived alone and who had particularly high levels of disability and long-term illness.

Contemplating the best and worst aspects of their time as lone parents most emphasised the rewards of having a period of parenthood unobstructed by a difficult relationship. This brought them a sense of independence and achievement. Most of the difficulties they encountered were financial. Others recalled the stress they felt when independence shaded into isolation and when they had to bear a lot of responsibility alone. Few mentioned problems with their children.
Part Two – The children

The focus of the report shifts at this point to the children of the PRILIF parents. In 2001, the seventh time many of the families were visited, the thrust of the data collection was on describing the children – their health, behaviours and households. All parents and available children over age 10 were interviewed. The task was then to link the information about the children to the vast array of data collected during the 1990s about their parents and their households.

It is important to bear in mind that figures presented in this section will differ from those presented on similar topics reported for parent outcomes. This is because the statistics are presented at the child level of analysis.
7 Introduction to the analysis of child measures

7.1 Scope of the analysis

Part One of this report demonstrated that, over a decade of observation, a sample of lone parents became a more heterogeneous group than might be expected. From a start of similar demographic characteristics they diverged through the numerous life paths that were followed: Some entered work, some formed new partnerships, some lost partners, some had new babies. It goes without saying that their children also experienced these same life events from their own unique perspectives. The aim of this part of the report is to use family background, and information about key events in the most recent ten years, to explain variation in children’s characteristics measured in 2001.

The following chapters examine results on measures reported on the children.

From the outset it must be reiterated that this is not a comparative study. It was never the intention to assess these results next to measures for children from more traditional, intact families. Indeed, this research has been well documented elsewhere (for example Rodgers & Pryor, 1998). Where possible, the chapter does contain references to broadly comparable research statistics from other sources. However, as discussed in Section 7.2, such comparisons may not be entirely valid and need to be interpreted with caution.

First, the study concerns a unique sample of children who shared the common demographic label of being part of a lone-parent family. But after 1991 their stories diverge to the extent that they cannot be studied as one homogenous group by which the ‘impact’ of lone parenthood on children can be judged.

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10 It is assumed that even though many of the youngest children (3 to 10 years) were born after their respondent parent had entered a couple union, they were still part of a family that had undergone transition and their respondent parent was a former single parent.
Second, the purpose of this study cannot be comparative in nature because of the composition of its sample. The PRILIF sample contains children whose only common feature is that they have a parent who was alone in 1991, was selected for inclusion in the PRILIF survey and remained in that survey for the following 10 years. It is not, therefore, a nationally representative sample of children, nor is it representative of children living in lone-parent families as some children were living in a couple family at the time of interview in 2001, and indeed some of the younger children had never lived with a single parent – their mother having re-partnered after 1991 and before their birth.

This is an ambitious study. And it requires an assumption that the past has some direct role in determining the future. In order to maintain clarity it was also necessary to simplify past events. The study focuses on three key demographic markers in the family backgrounds – parent partnership patterns, family employment status, and exposure to hardship. The scope of the investigation is delineated by these three themes all of which are relevant to recent policy initiatives on families and their children.

As stated in the introductory chapter, the level of variation among childhood experiences makes it difficult to claim more than tenuous causal connections. But even with the data limitations, patterns of association can be suggested which warrant the attention of policy makers.

7.2 The child measures

The child measures consist for the most part of questions and multi-item scales developed for previous studies both in Britain and abroad. In all, parents were asked up to 100 separate questions about their children. Children 11 years and older were also asked many questions directly. In the effort to reduce missing data, parent and child interviewees were asked parallel questions on most topics. In cases where the child could not be interviewed, parent responses were substituted. Children’s answers, however, took precedence over their parents’ responses.11

Again, it must be reiterated that these measures were taken at one point in time and their use in this report serves as a fulcrum for comparing children from different types of family backgrounds, having been identified as lone-parent households in 1991.

The report includes a broad selection of the measures included in the surveys. Not all child measures were undertaken uniformly across all age groups. As Table 7.1 shows, different research questions involved different children, according to their age. Only two measures on health applied to all the children.

For each topic, where possible, reference is made to broadly comparable research statistics from other sources. These include emerging results from the 2001 Census, the nationally representative sample of children from the Families and Children Study (FACS) 2001, the Youth Cohort Studies and the Department of Health’s annual survey of drug use, smoking and drinking among young people (Boreham and Shaw 2002).

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11 Response rates were lowest for non-resident children. Refer to Section 1.6.2 for more detail on child response rates.
However, direct comparisons are not available for many measures, and where relevant statistics do exist they should be treated with caution. Differences in sampling, survey methodology and particularly question wording make direct comparisons between PRILIF measures and other large-scale surveys of children difficult to interpret. Such measures are quoted in order to provide context for the discussion of PRILIF results, that is, to give the reader a general idea of whether the overall measures for PRILIF children are around, above or below estimates of a ‘national average’. They cannot be used to validate the PRILIF measures, or to draw any sweeping conclusions about the ‘effect’ of lone parenthood. Based on family characteristics in 2001, (e.g., work status, parent education, tenancy, etc.) at least for the resident children, it is anticipated that the PRILIF measures would be more similar to children in families with backgrounds of comparable markers of disadvantage.

### Table 7.1 Child measures by age group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical well-being</th>
<th>3 to 10 years</th>
<th>11 to 15 years</th>
<th>16 to 28 years</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General health</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability/illness</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospital admissions</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol consumption</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smoking behaviour</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjustment and behaviour</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truancy (14-28 years)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trouble with the law</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth violence and vandalism</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finished school (or plans to finish) by age 16</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A level qualification or higher (18-28 years)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude towards school performance</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work and benefit status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefit status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household and family formation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young motherhood (18-28 years)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unweighted base: 170 241 690 1101

Base: All children (3 to 28 years) of 1991 lone parents interviewed in 2001.
Note: age groups in parentheses indicate the specific age range used in the analysis.
7.3 Analysis approach

The following chapters present general findings on the PRILIF children’s health and physical well-being, adjustment and behaviour, education and, for older children, work and benefit status, and household and family formation. Each topic area is introduced in turn and then a brief overview is provided of the distributions and key variations amongst the sample. These details on the measures should be referred to when interpreting the thematic results.

The analysis of child measures focuses on three main themes, seeking variation among the children according to their different family backgrounds – separately for family histories of parent partnering (Chapter 9), work status of the family unit (Chapter 10), and experience of hardship (Chapter 11).

Due to the sample size and the targeting of measures to specific age groups, it was not possible to combine themes in the analyses. In other words, the sample of children was not sufficient to allow for comparisons between children in single-parent working families and children in single-parent non-working families.

The thematic chapters follow a descriptive approach, contrasting results by different family backgrounds. However, this descriptive approach, though informative, does not account for many of the other factors that may be contributing to the findings. It is anticipated that family background variables, though found to be useful for distinguishing various groups, will not provide sufficient explanation in themselves. Further checks on the robustness of findings are, therefore, tested through multivariate analyses in the form of logistic regression modelling.

The logistic regression statistical technique permits us to examine the results within a broader context. It is used to ‘predict’ an outcome with two possibilities – such as being truant from school and not being truant – by taking into account certain characteristics about the cases in the sample. The statistical significance of each variable entered into the regression indicates whether that factor is associated with the outcome, independent of the other variables in the model. Technical details of the approach and model results are contained in Appendix A1.

The factors entered into regressions varied according to what child measure was being examined. In general, these fell into three categories – respondent characteristics, family characteristics and transition variables. A diagram depicting variables in these broad categories is presented in Figure 7.1.

Variables are classified into three groups:

- Respondent Characteristics – characteristics of the parent (birth age, education) and child (gender, age, education, health, work and marital status);
- Family Characteristics (size, ethnicity, accommodation); and
- Transition Variables – accounting for the families’ historical circumstances regarding family structure, work status and exposure to hardship.

It must be emphasised that the aim of the modelling exercise was to contribute to the robustness of descriptive results by lending statistical support (or lack of support) to findings reported in the contrasts. Variables entered into regressions are by no means exhaustive but they do represent a comprehensive set of factors that can realistically influence children’s life chances.

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12 Factor associations with a statistical confidence level of 90 per cent or greater are reported.
It must also be emphasised that the regression results are limited by the sample size and, therefore, generalisations are also limited. However, the findings should be valued for their unique contribution to understanding the impact family change in work, material well-being and family structure can make for children who share a history of belonging to a lone-parent family, many of whom began from a position of disadvantage.

### 7.4 Summary

The child level analysis reported in this part of the report aims to use information about family background and key events in the most recent ten years to explain variation in select characteristics of a sample of children in 2001. This is not a comparative study, it does not seek to contrast children from families with a history of lone parenthood with other, more intact, families, nor does it seek to assess the ‘impact’ of lone parenthood per se. Rather, through taking a sample of children who are similar on one key characteristic – they all have a caring parent who was alone in 1991 – it seeks to assess to what extent variation in the children’s characteristics in 2001 can be attributed to characteristics of that parent, and key events which occurred in the family between 1991 and 2001.
The chapter outlined a conceptual framework for analysing the child outcomes covered in this report. Discussions will focus on three key themes:

- family structure;
- employment of the caring parent and employment status of the family unit in the case of families categorised as ‘stable couples’; and
- experience of hardship.

Multivariate analysis in the form of logistic regression is used to test the robustness of observed patterns in the findings while controlling for other plausible influences from family characteristics and life events. The findings should be valued for their unique contribution to understanding the impact change and stability in family work, material well-being and family structure can make for children who share a history of belonging to a lone-parent family, many of whom entered the study from a position of disadvantage.
8 The children – general results

8.1 Introduction

This chapter begins by introducing the PRILIF children and giving a broad overview of their characteristics (Section 8.2) and those of their families (Section 8.3).

The remainder of the chapter then goes on to look, in turn, at selected child measures, each chosen for their policy relevance. These are organised into five broad categories:

• physical well-being (Section 8.4);
• adjustment and behaviour (Section 8.5);
• education (Section 8.6); and
• employment, household and family formation of older children (Section 8.7).

8.2 Characteristics of the children

The 548 parents in the study had a total of 1101 children within the target age range of three and 28 years in 2001.13 The overwhelming majority (99 per cent) were natural born children. Only a few cases were stepchildren (20 cases) or adopted children (two cases).

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13 The child age range was limited by the scope of years covered by the explanatory information in the study (1991 to 1998) when the bulk of data on parents and family circumstances was collected. It was determined that this data would lend little explanatory value to a child who was born after 1998 (under age three in 2001) nor for a child who in 1991 was over age 18 (non-dependent) and consequently older than 28 years in 2001. Within the total 2001 child sample 17 per cent fell out of this range; nine per cent were under age three and eight per cent were over 28 years. This sample excludes two children who were deceased.
Overall, the average (median) age of the children in the sample was 16 years, as the distribution of children was weighted more heavily towards those in the 16 to 28 year age range. Over half of the children fell into this upper age category, which reflects the ageing of the sample over ten years (Table 8.1). The children were evenly split between boys and girls but there were slightly more girls (54 per cent) among the three to ten year age group. Three-quarters (75 per cent) of the children still lived with the respondent parent. (Only two per cent were living with their other parent.) Practically all children (99 per cent) under sixteen years of age were residing with their parent. Half (52 per cent) of the older children (16 to 28 years) were living away from home.

Table 8.1 Child characteristics by age group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child age group</th>
<th>3 to 10 years</th>
<th>11 to 15 years</th>
<th>16 plus years resident</th>
<th>16 plus years non-resident</th>
<th>All (row per cent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average age (median)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>female</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>male</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in household</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not in household</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All (row per cent)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>1101</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All children (3 to 28 years) of 1991 lone parents interviewed in 2001.

8.3 Family characteristics of different age groups

Table 8.2 reports family characteristics of the children according to the child age groups. This shows that almost all (96 per cent) children had a female caring parent. The proportion attached to a lone father was highest amongst the older children (aged 16 or more in 2001). This fits with other research in the FACS series, which demonstrated that lone fathers typically had older children than lone mothers (Marsh and Perry 2003).

14 Child age groups were designated according to the parent and child questionnaires. Thus it is meaningful to refer to the three age groups separately. Data vary according to the age groups with more information collected on the non-resident 16 to 28 year olds. Parents and 11 plus year olds were asked some identical questions. In families where parents and children both supplied answers, the child’s response took precedence. All information on three to 10 year olds was supplied by the parent.
The youngest children (between three and ten years) were associated, understandably, with the youngest mothers (half were under age 35 in 2001) who also tended to be single, never-partnered parents in 1991. As pointed out in Chapter 2, these were the parents who tended to re-partner during the study period and to have babies. Consequently these children who were born during the study period tended to be the youngest in their families. Two-thirds of the three to ten year olds lived in a social tenancy, the highest rate among all child age groups.

The 11 to 15 year age group were distinguished as having the highest rate of young mothers at time of birth – a third of their parents entered parenthood at or before age 21 and the majority (89 per cent) of their parents were under age 45 in 2001. Close to a third (30 per cent) of their parents were single, never partnered prior to 1991. Half of the 11 to 15 year age group lived in a social tenancy in 2001.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child age group</th>
<th>3 to 10 years</th>
<th>11 to 15 years</th>
<th>16 to 28 years resident</th>
<th>16 to 28 years non-resident</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender of caring parent</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parent age at birth of first child</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up to 21 years</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 to 30 years</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 plus years</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parent age 2001</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up to 35 years</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 to 45 years</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 45 years</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Birth order</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First born *</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle born</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last born</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lone Parent Type 1991</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previously married</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previously cohabitating</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never partnered</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnic Group</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian *</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parent educational qualifications 2001</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic university</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic secondary</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No qualifications</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maintenance 1991</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tenure 2001</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner occupier</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social tenant</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private tenant or other</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unweighted base</strong></td>
<td>170</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>1101</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All children (3 to 28 years) of 1991 lone parents interviewed in 2001.

There were few differences regarding the family backgrounds of resident and non-resident children aged 16 to 28 years. The indicators, where they did differ, reflected the older age of the non-resident cohort as parents in this group tended to be older (64 per cent were over age 45 in 2001). Compared
to those under age 16, this group of children was much more likely to have experienced family dissolution, as 90 per cent of the parents had been with a partner prior to 1991. Consequently, children in these families were the most likely group to have received child maintenance. These children were also the most likely to have parents who owned their accommodation. Non-resident older children had parents with the lowest educational qualifications, close to a third (30 per cent) of whom possessed no qualifications.

### 8.4 Physical well-being

Child health is an important issue because poor health and disability act as barriers to many life chances. A mother’s employment opportunities are restricted when she needs to care for a persistently sick or disabled child. Likewise, poor health and disability affect the work chances of young adults. Earlier in this study, taking both parent and child illness together, it was found that half of PRILIF families had a limiting illness or disability which restricted adult employment prospects (Finlayson et al. 1999). A number of factors were associated with the presence of long-term illness or disability: age, employment status, smoking behaviour, the presence of severe hardship and a history of marital violence.

Four physical well-being outcomes are examined in this chapter: health status and the incidence of disability and long-term sickness among all the PRILIF children; and admissions to hospital for children under age 11; alcohol consumption in youths; and smoking behaviour for youths and young adults.

#### 8.4.1 General health and disability

Parents were asked about the condition of their child’s health over the past year:

“I would now like to ask you about [child name]’s health. Over the last 12 months would you say his/her health has been good, fairly good or not good?”

and whether their child had a long-standing illness or disability:

“Does [child name] have any long-standing illness or disability? By long-standing I mean anything that has troubled them over a period of time or that is likely to affect them over a period of time”

Older children were asked about their own health using questions with similar wording. Data on general health was available for children of all ages.

Table 8.3 shows that 78 per cent of all children were reported to be in good health. A minority (five per cent) were identified with poor (‘not good’) health. These proportions were similar for both male and female children and there was little variance across the age groups. Any differences were not statistically significant.
Table 8.3  Child health by age and residency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>3 to 10 years</th>
<th>11 to 15 years</th>
<th>16 plus resident</th>
<th>16 plus non-resident</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly good</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not good</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Illness/Disability</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unweighted base 170 241 354 336 1101

Base: All children (3 to 28 years) of 1991 lone parents interviewed in 2001.

Additionally, 18 per cent (191 cases) of the children were identified with a disability or long-standing illness. Male and female children were equally as likely to be reported with a condition. Long-standing disability/illness was most prevalent among the youth group (ages 11 to 15) where 22 per cent were reported to have a health condition. Those 16-28 year olds who were living with their parents had the lowest reported rates of illness or disability (13 per cent) and also the highest rate of good health (81 per cent).

By far, the most common health condition was ‘asthma or other difficulties with breathing’, which accounted for half of all disabilities reported. The next most common illness was skin conditions or skin allergies, suffered by one in six of children with a health problem. A further one in seven of the cases were affected with either learning difficulties or problems with limbs/back/neck. Other conditions were not as prevalent, each being identified among less than ten per cent of the cases.

Among the resident children identified with a disability, a third attended school less regularly; 43 per cent required more care than a healthy child would and half (51 per cent) of the cases impinged on their parents’ availability for full-time work. Indeed, in 1998, only 30 per cent of resident children identified with a disability or illness had a full-time working parent compared to 47 per cent of the resident children who were free of these kinds of problems.

Reports on general health may be compared to data reported in the 2001 Census, which was collected around the same time as the PRILIF interviews. These show that for the population as a whole:

- only one per cent of 3-9 year olds and 10-15 year olds had their health described as ‘not good’;
- four per cent of 3-9 year olds, five per cent of 10-15 year olds and six per cent of 16-29 year olds had a limiting long-term illness.

Comparable figures from the Families and Children Survey 2001 nationally representative sample of all children are:

- three per cent of 3-10 year olds and four per cent of 11-15 year olds had their health described as ‘not good’;
- 17 per cent of 3-10 year olds and 11-15 year olds were reported to have a limiting long-term illness.
Contrasts between the figures may be due to differences in question wording or data collection approaches. For example, the Census was completed by head of household rather than individuals themselves. Still the greater rate of disability/illness among some age groups in the PRILIF sample of children alludes to a background of greater disadvantage than that for the ‘average’ child.

8.4.2 Hospital admissions

Only parents of three to ten year olds were asked about the incidence of hospital admissions. This measure served as an indicator for the occurrence of a more serious illness or more often, a harmful accident:

‘Has your child been in hospital as an in-patient, overnight or longer, for treatment or tests in the past 12 months?’

Table 8.4 shows that, altogether, one in seven (14 per cent) of the younger children had been admitted to hospital a year prior to the 2001 interview. Female children (18 per cent) were more likely to be admitted than were male children (10 per cent).

Table 8.4 Child hospitalisation by gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>3 to 10 year olds</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospital visit in last 12 months</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td></td>
<td>84</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All children (3 to 10 years) of 1991 lone parents interviewed in 2001.

Hospital admission was more common among children under the age of five (39 per cent), and was associated with the child’s general health: Hospitalised children were three times more likely to be in poor health and four times more likely to be identified with a disability or long-term illness.

8.4.3 Alcohol consumption

Young people (aged 11-15) were asked:

‘How many times in the last four weeks have you had an alcoholic drink?’

Table 8.5 shows that, in total, 35 per cent of PRILIF children had drunk an alcoholic drink at least once in the last four weeks. However, only five per cent indicated regular drinking by reporting they had had an alcoholic drink ‘several times’ over that period. Unsurprisingly, prevalence of drinking increased with age: only 39 per cent of 14 year olds reported having one or more alcoholic drinks in the last four weeks, but this rose to 75 per cent for those aged 15.
Table 8.5  Alcohol consumption among 11 to 15 year olds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alcohollic drink in last 4 weeks</th>
<th>Age 11</th>
<th>Age 12</th>
<th>Age 13</th>
<th>Age 14</th>
<th>Age 15</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>[80]</td>
<td>[85]</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once or twice</td>
<td>[20]</td>
<td>[13]</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Several times</td>
<td>[0]</td>
<td>[2]</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unweighted base 19 36 53 43 53 204


Males were more likely than females to report they had consumed alcohol, particularly at the younger end of the age range. But by age 14 to 15, the incidence of drinking among male and female children became more similar.

Boreham and Shaw (2002) report that, overall, 42 per cent of their nationally representative sample of 11-15 year olds in England had last had an alcoholic drink within the last four weeks. This figure was similar for boys and girls. This is somewhat higher than the prevalence for PRILIF children, a difference that may be due to differences in data collection. Alternatively, it may accounted for in the higher concentration of disadvantage among the PRILIF sample compared to the general population of children (refer to Sections 10.4.4 and 11.4.4).

8.4.4  Smoking behaviour

Children aged 11-15 were asked:

‘Have you ever tried a cigarette, even if it was only a single puff?’ and

‘How many cigarettes did you smoke in the last 7 days? If you didn’t smoke any write zero.’

Older children (16-28 years) were asked:

‘Do you smoke cigarettes at all?’

The youngest smoker among the PRILIF sample was 13 years of age and over one-quarter (27 per cent) of the over 12 year olds said they smoked. Smoking behaviour increased with age. It stayed below half during the teen years, starting at nine per cent at age 13, rising to 26 per cent at age 14 but steadily increasing to 44 per cent by age 19. Half of the young adults in their 20s said they smoked. Among this age group, this behaviour was slightly more common for females (37 per cent) than for males (34 per cent).

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15 The “Drug use, smoking and drinking among young people in Britain” survey reported by Boreham and Shaw (2002) is a self completion survey administered to pupils in a school setting. It would seem reasonable to assume that this method may produce slightly higher reported rates of drinking than the PRILIF face-to-face interview conducted in the child’s home.
### Table 8.6 Smoking by age group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child smokes</th>
<th>11 to 15 years</th>
<th>16 plus resident</th>
<th>16 plus non-resident</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unweighted base: 208, 274, 143, 625


Note: Smoking for 11 to 15 years olds means the youth indicated they smoked at least one cigarette in the past seven days. Smoking for 16 plus years olds means the person responded ‘yes’ to ‘Do you smoke cigarettes at all?’.

Children’s smoking was clearly linked to their parents’ smoking behaviour16 (Table 8.7). In this analysis, those children over age 16 who did not currently smoke but who used to smoke regularly were also included in the smoking group. Offspring were more likely to smoke if their parent smoked (overall, 62 per cent of child smokers had a parent who smoked compared to 46 per cent of non-smokers) and this was found to be statistically significant (chi square = 13.76, p<.02). The highest incidence of smoking was 60 per cent, among young adults in their 20s who had a parent who smoked.

### Table 8.7 Parent and child smoking by age group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent smokes</th>
<th>11 to 15 years</th>
<th>16 plus resident</th>
<th>16 plus non-resident</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unweighted base: 30, 174, 103, 171, 85, 58, 218, 403


Note: Parent smoking behaviour dates from 1998, the most recent data available.

According to Boreham and Shaw (2002) the overall proportion of 11-15 year olds who smoked regularly was 10 per cent, with an additional eight per cent smoking occasionally. This suggests that there is a slightly higher incidence of smoking among the PRILIF young people, four percentage points, overall. However, the data are not strictly comparable as Boreham and Shaw reported on young people who were ‘regular’ cigarette smokers while the PRILIF data is based on young people who indicated they had smoked at least one cigarette in the past seven days.

Smoking among the 11 to 15 age group was higher among girls (16 per cent) than boys (12 per cent). This was also the case for the national sample where the proportion of girls who smoked was three percentage points higher than the proportion of boys (11 compared to eight per cent).

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16 As measured in 1998 with the question: ‘Do you smoke cigarettes at all nowadays?’.
8.5 Measures of social adjustment

Much of the literature on divorce and family reformation focuses on the impact of these life events on the child’s behaviour and subsequent adjustment. Four measures of social behaviour collected in the PRILIF survey are reported here:

- truancy;
- trouble with the law;
- violent behaviours among youths; and
- self-esteem in young adults.

8.5.1 Truancy

Truant behaviour was defined as ‘missing classes without an excuse’. It was measured differently among the two older child age groups.

Older children (16 to 28 years) were asked:

‘School pupils do not always attend every class they should and stay out of school instead. Did/do you ever do this at school?’ and if the answer was ‘yes’: ‘Did you do this frequently or only occasionally?’

Eleven to 15 year olds were asked:

‘In the past year, have you ever skipped school without an excuse?’ with responses choices: ‘never’, ‘once or twice’, ‘several times’, ‘often’.

Parents of 11-15 year olds were asked if, over the past year, they had been contacted by their child’s school regarding truant behaviour. Parents’ responses were used in cases where the child did not respond but this was rare (seven per cent of cases). Thus, truancy among 11 to 15 year olds reflects a shorter time period (one year) than truancy among those over the age of 16.

Overall, two in five children admitted ever truanting. But skipping classes was rare among adolescents (11 to 13 years) and most common by the middle teen years with two-thirds of the 16 year olds reporting they had skipped classes. This reflects the findings of a recent national survey of problem behaviour among young people, which reported that 41 per cent of girls and 38 per cent of boys in Year 11 said they had truanted in the previous year, compared to only seven per cent and 11 per cent respectively in Year 7 (Beinhart et al. 2002).

The analysis of truant behaviour focuses on the more frequent truant – those who said they had skipped classes several times or often – among children aged 11 to 28 years. Overall, older children (both resident and non-resident) were twice as likely to fall into this category than the 11 to 15 year olds (compare 15 and six per cent). Refer to Table 8.8. But the non-resident older children were the most likely to be (or have been) a frequent truant, 21 per cent said they often missed classes. This may be partly attributable to the older age of this group.
Table 8.8  Truancy in young people

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In the past year have you skipped school without an excuse?</th>
<th>11 to 15 years</th>
<th>16 plus resident</th>
<th>16 plus non-resident</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Several times</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once or twice</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

School pupils do not attend every class they should and stay out of school instead.

Do (did) you ever do this?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unweighted base 241 231 148


8.5.2 Trouble with the law

Being in trouble with the law was reported for children aged 11 to 28 years. Different questions were posed to the parents of 11 to 15 year olds (these questions were not included in the questionnaire for 11-15 year olds themselves) and 16 to 28 year age groups.

Parents of 11 to 15 year olds were asked:

‘In the past 12 months has [child name] ever been in trouble with the police?’

Older children were asked:

‘Have you ever been convicted of any motoring offence?’ and ‘Have you ever been convicted of any other offence (other than a motoring offence)?’

The incidence of driving offences was combined with the incidence of other offences, as the number of cases in the separate categories was too low.

Overall, one in ten (11 per cent) of the children in the sample had been in trouble with the law, though boys (15 per cent) were over twice as likely to get into trouble than were girls (six per cent). Not surprisingly, higher proportions of young adults over age 20 said they had been convicted of a driving or some other offence – one in five (21 per cent).

As reported in Table 8.9, only seven per cent of children aged 11 to 15 years had been in trouble with the police. Eleven per cent of resident older children reported committing a driving or other offence, seven percentage points lower than the rate reported by non-resident older children.
Table 8.9 Trouble with the law

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age 16 plus</th>
<th>11 to 15 years</th>
<th>16 plus non-resident</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>years</td>
<td>11 to 15 years</td>
<td>16 plus non-resident</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the past 12 months has your child ever been in trouble with the police?
Yes | 7 | - | -
No | 93 | - | -

Have you ever been convicted of a motoring offence or any other offence?
Yes | - | 11 | 18
No | - | 89 | 82

Unweighted base | 241 | 231 | 148


8.5.3 Youth violence

Youths (11 to 15 years) were asked about the incidence of fighting and vandalism:

‘In the past month have you had a fight with someone that involved hitting, punching or kicking?’ and ‘In the past year, have you deliberately broken or damaged property that didn’t belong to you?’

Parents were asked if their child’s school had ever contacted them in the past year regarding trouble with fighting or vandalism. These answers were substituted for cases when the child did not respond (seven per cent) but, for the most part, data reflect a time period of one month for reports of fighting and one year for reports of vandalism.

Overall, similar proportions of 11 to 15 year olds (about one in four) reported having been involved in a fight in the past month or deliberately damaging property in the past year. These behaviours were much more common among boys than girls. Boys were twice as likely to be in a physical fight and half again as likely to commit vandalism.

Table 8.10 Incidence of youth violence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age 16 plus</th>
<th>11 to 15 year olds</th>
<th>16 plus non-resident</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>years</td>
<td>11 to 15 years</td>
<td>16 plus non-resident</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the past month have you had a fight with someone that involved hitting, punching or kicking?
Yes | 28 | 15 | 22
No | 72 | 86 | 78

In the past year, have you deliberately broken property that didn’t belong to you?
Yes | 32 | 21 | 25
No | 68 | 79 | 75

Unweighted base | 122 | 119 | 241

8.5.4 Self-esteem

Both resident and non-resident older children were asked to respond to a series of 12 statements about their self-concept and personal worth to which they were asked to respond their level of agreement on a five-point scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree:

- On the whole I am satisfied with myself.
- At times I feel I am no good at all.
- I feel I have a number of good qualities.
- I am able to do things as well as most people.
- I feel I do not have much to be proud of.
- I certainly feel useless at times.
- I feel I am a person of worth, equal with others.
- I wish I could have more respect for myself.
- In all, I’m inclined to think I am a failure.
- I take a positive attitude to myself.
- I feel that usually I can trust other people.
- I make new friends easily.
- I make new friends easily.

Ratings on the items were summed to form a self-esteem score. A lower score indicated a higher level of self-esteem. In the sample, total scores ranged from 12 to 50 and averaged (median) at 25 points. For the purpose of classifying the more extreme groups in the distribution of self-esteem scores, the top and bottom quintiles in the range were used to define those respondents with relatively high and relatively low levels of self-esteem.

Table 8.11 displays these groups next to various respondent and family characteristics. On the whole, differences between groups were quite small for those classified with relatively higher and lower levels of self-esteem. But some distinctions can be made.

Respondents with a higher level of self-esteem tended to be male, older (over age 24); to be in full-time employment; to be married; free from disability or long-term illness; to have stayed in school beyond age 16; and they did not receive Jobseeker’s Allowance or Income Support. The reverse was not necessarily true for respondents who had the lowest scores on self-esteem: They tended to be female; to live away from their natural parent; to be seeking work or caring for someone; to not be married; to be an early school leaver; and to have received out-of-work benefits.

The largest differences were found between those with and without a disability/illness and those respondents who did and did not receive out-of-work benefits. Respondents who were free from disability/illness were more than twice as likely to score in the high self-esteem category than those with a disability/illness (compare 22 to 10 per cent). Likewise, receipt of benefits was associated with low self-esteem. The proportion scoring in the low self-esteem group was 12 percentage points higher than the cohort who did not receive benefits. This finding suggests a link between indicators of disadvantage and low self concept.

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17 Respondents indicated their level of agreement for each of the 12 statements on a five-point scale, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Ratings on items were summed to form a self-esteem score. Possible scores ranged from 12 to 60 with the lower scores indicating a higher level of self-esteem. The self-esteem scale has been used extensively in other research at PSI and has proved to be a highly reliable measure (Cronbach’s alpha = 0.81).
### Table 8.11 Contrasts between levels of self-esteem by select characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>High self-esteem</th>
<th>Low self-esteem</th>
<th>Unweighted base</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Residency</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In household</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not in household</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age group</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 to 20</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 to 24</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 to 28</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Offspring employment status</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full time</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking work</td>
<td>[13]</td>
<td>[26]</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other/carer</td>
<td>[20]</td>
<td>[33]</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Offspring marital status</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>[27]</td>
<td>[0]</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohabiting</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Offspring has a child</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Disability/illness</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Early school leaver</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Offspring received IS/JSA</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>351</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Base: All children (16 to 28 years) of 1991 lone parents interviewed in 2001.*

*Note: High and low self-esteem groups were defined by the top and bottom quintiles in the distribution of scores.*

#### 8.6 Measures of education

This section examines the characteristics associated with the lower and upper bounds of educational attainment, early school leavers and achievers of higher educational qualifications. Within the youth sample, the report examines attitudes towards school performance. Responses for 11 to 15 year olds were supplied by the child only but for those children aged 16 to 28 years, parent answers were substituted in cases where the child did not respond.
8.6.1 Early school leaving

Early school leaving was measured in two ways: Older children were asked about the age at which they completed full-time education. Youths were asked whether or not they planned to leave school by age 16. Overall, there was a vast difference between the intentions of the youth sample and the actions of the older children. Four in ten (42 per cent) 16 to 28 year olds left school by age 16. But only one in six (17 per cent) youths (age 11 to 15) said they planned to leave school by age 16. There may be generational differences at play here or, more likely, this discrepancy may reveal a contrast between intentions and behaviour. Certainly the younger age group were more optimistic about their educational prospects.

Table 8.12 Early school leaving – intentions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child finished school or plans to finish school by age 16</th>
<th>11 to 15 years</th>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>16 plus resident</th>
<th>16 plus non-resident</th>
<th>All 16 plus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>42</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>58</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>690</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bases: For 11 to 15 year olds: All who responded to the youth survey in 2001. For 16 plus years: All who have finished formal education and with parents who responded in 2001.

According to the nationally representative Youth Cohort Study, in 2002, 71 per cent of all 16 year olds remained in full-time education with a further nine per cent in other Government supported training. This proportion had risen steadily over the last decade from 58 per cent in 1991, and was highest among children from managerial or other non-manual social groups (around 80 per cent) and lowest among children with parents working in unskilled occupations.

8.6.2 Advanced educational qualifications

Four out of ten (41 per cent) resident children aged 16 years and older were attending school full-time. In contrast, the majority of non-resident children had completed their schooling (87 per cent). This is partly attributable to age differences between the two cohorts, as non-resident 16 to 28 year olds were, on average, three years older than the resident cohort.

Among those children who had finished their formal school training, a fifth had no academic qualifications. A higher proportion of non-resident children (25 per cent) fell into this category, compared to resident 16 to 28 year olds (15 per cent). The majority (58 per cent) of children finished school with a GCSE (or equivalent) qualification. About a fifth (19 per cent) attained an advanced qualification (A level) or better. However, there were still children attending higher education and if these are taken into account the proportion that attained advanced qualifications increased to 26 per cent. This proportion was the same for both resident and non-resident children.

---

18 Parents were also asked about the age at which their child finished school and about their child’s academic and vocational qualifications. This information served as proxy data when the child could not be interviewed.
Table 8.13 Early school leaving and educational qualifications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>16 plus resident</th>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>All 16 plus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>16 plus</td>
<td>non-resident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest level of academic achievement among those who have finished full-time education</td>
<td></td>
<td>16 plus</td>
<td>non-resident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCSE grade D-G</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCSE grade A-C</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCE A level</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First degree</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher degree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other academic</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of these</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>291</td>
<td>484</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Advanced academic qualifications (including those still in school)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>16 plus</th>
<th>non-resident</th>
<th>All 16 plus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>74</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unweighted base

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>16 plus</th>
<th>non-resident</th>
<th>All 16 plus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>213</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>531</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Compared to national, broadly comparable, statistics, the PRILIF sample had a lower level of academic qualifications overall. Data from the 2001 Census reported 18 per cent of all 16-29 year olds held their highest qualification at Level 3 (e.g., A levels\(^{19}\)) and 20 per cent had Level 4/5 qualifications (post secondary degree or higher\(^{20}\)). This indicates that 38 per cent of the general 16 to 29 year population possessed A level or higher qualifications. This is substantially higher than that reported for the PRILIF sample (26 per cent). In older adults the levels of qualifications are even higher. DFES estimates from Labour Force Survey in 2000 reckon that 28 per cent of working age adults had a Level 4 or above qualification while a further 19 per cent had a Level 3.

8.6.3 Attitude towards school performance

Youths were asked:

‘How much does it mean to you to do well at school?’

They were subsequently asked:

‘How much does it mean to your parents that you do well in school?’

Responses to these questions are displayed in Table 8.14. Altogether, doing well at school was important (a great deal/quite a lot) to 85 per cent of 11 to 15 year olds. The remaining 15 per cent were not as keen about performing well in school. This attitude varied slightly by age and gender, with more children (61 per cent) at the younger end of the age range (11 to 13 years) reporting that school meant ‘a great deal to them’ compared to the 14 to 15 year age cohort (43 per cent).

\(^{19}\) Level 3 = 2+ A levels, 4+ AS levels, Higher School Certificate, NVQ level 3, Advanced GNVQ or equivalents.

\(^{20}\) Level 4/5 = First degree, higher degree, NVQ levels 4 and 5 or equivalent.
Youths also reported, from their perception, how important performing well at school was to their parents. As reported in Table 8.14, taken together, almost all (99 per cent) the children felt their parents placed a lot or a great deal of importance on school work. This perception did not vary by the age or gender of the child. Clearly the children who felt less strongly about their school performance were not being influenced by the perception of their parents’ attitudes.

**Table 8.14  Youth and parent attitudes towards school performance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Column percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11 to 13 years</td>
<td>14 to 15 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much does it mean to you to do well at school?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A great deal</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quite a lot</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A bit but not very much</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very little</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much does it mean to your parents that you do well at school?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A great deal</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quite a lot</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A bit but not very much</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very little</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**8.7 Measures among the older children**

This section presents measures on work and household formation among the older offspring; those aged 16 to 28 years in 2001. The children are described according to their employment status in 2001 and by their history of out-of-work and in-work support. Measures on household formation include marital status, tenure type and parenthood.

**8.7.1 Employment status of 17 to 28 year olds**

Labour market participation among 17 to 28 year olds varied by age, residency and marital status. Table 8.15 displays employment by residency status. Non-resident offspring are further divided into singles and couples. Those in household tended to be younger on average (20 years) compared to non-resident offspring (23 years). It is not surprising then that fewer resident offspring were employed and more were in full-time education. However, there was little difference in the proportions available and seeking work (about one in ten). Non-resident respondents in a couple relationship had the highest rate of employment (65 per cent). They were also more likely to be caring for a child than single non-resident offspring (compare 14 to eight per cent).
Table 8.15  Employment status of older children by family unit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Older child work status</th>
<th>Resident</th>
<th>Non-resident</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Couple</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working 16 plus hours</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working 1-15 hours</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed &amp; seeking work</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time education</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training scheme</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking after family</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sick or disabled</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work status among those available for work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working 16 plus hours</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking work</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All children (16 to 28 years) of 1991 lone parents interviewed in 2001
Note: For non-resident children, single includes separated and divorced. Couple responses do not include partner employment status. There were 30 cases for which the child residency status was unavailable.

Males were slightly more likely to be working full time (60 per cent) than were females (53 per cent). One in five females were in full-time education compared to one in six males. The full-time employment rate rose with age, from just under half (45 per cent) for those under 21 years to three-quarters (74 per cent) for 25 to 28 year olds. One-third of the 17 to 19 year olds were still attending school full time.

Table 8.15 also displays the proportion of 17 to 28 year olds who were unemployed and seeking work amongst those who were economically active (available for work). This analysis excluded those who were in full-time education, or working less than 16 hours, or with caring responsibilities or those who were sick or disabled. The working and non-working groups were of a similar age, averaging 22 and 21 years respectively.

Overall, 16 per cent of economically active young adults in the sample were reported to be seeking work in 2001. A smaller proportion of resident children were available for employment as more were in full-time education. However, the rate of unemployment varied little by child residency status, ranging from 17 per cent among resident older children to 15 and 14 per cent respectively among single and couple non-residents. There were proportionately more males (19 per cent) seeking employment than females (11 per cent).

According to the Census, in 2001, 72 per cent of those aged 16-29 were economically active: 49 per cent working 30 or more hours a week as an employee or self employed, five per cent unemployed and looking for work, the remainder were in full-time education (but also economically active) or part-time work (29 hours a week or less). The 28 per cent who were economically inactive included 17 per cent who were full-time students (and not otherwise economically active), six per cent who were looking after home/family and two per cent who were permanently sick or disabled.
8.7.2 History of work benefit and tax credit receipt

Older children (17 to 28 years) were asked about their current and previous receipt of out-of-work and in-work benefits. This information was not asked of the parent so this analysis is based on a smaller number of older child cases.

As reported in Table 8.16, four out of ten (42 per cent) 17 to 28 year olds were receiving or had previously received Income Support or Jobseeker’s Allowance by 2001. Overall, the proportion that had ever received JSA was double that for those who had ever received IS (compare 34 and 18 per cent). The proportion of non-resident children reporting they had ever received any out-of-work benefit was close to double the rate reported by resident children. This was most likely due to the fact that non-resident children were older on average with a corresponding higher rate of economic activity. Females (45 per cent) were also more likely than males (40 per cent) to receive these non-working benefits, however, this was linked to parenthood (refer to Section 10.3) and the difference disappeared when there were no dependent children in the household.

Receipt of Working Families’ Tax Credit was understandably low, given the small proportion of children with children of their own. Non-resident children who lived with a partner were more likely to have children and this explains why a higher percentage of this group had ever received WFTC – 18 per cent compared to three per cent among single non-resident children.

Table 8.16 Benefit and tax credit receipt among older children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Column percentages</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resident</td>
<td>Non-resident</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Couple</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receipt of JSA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ever</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receipt of IS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ever</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any out-of-work benefit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ever</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receipt of WFTC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ever</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>351</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


8.7.3 Family and household formation

This section focuses on the older, non-resident offspring (16 to 28 years) and their partnering, tenure and parenting characteristics.

Among the resident older offspring, 98 per cent were single (never married) while the remaining two per cent were cohabiting with a partner in their parents’ homes. This is not surprising since the average (median) age of this group was 18 years. The analysis on partnering behaviour, therefore, concentrates on non-resident older children where there was considerably more variation in marital status. The median age of this cohort was 23 years in 2001.
About half of the non-resident offspring were identified as single (never married or cohabiting) and those who lived as a couple were twice as likely to be cohabiting than married. One in six of the children had married. As Table 8.17 shows, males were less likely to live as a couple and females were slightly more likely to have married. As would be expected, marital status also varied by age group. The oldest offspring (25 to 28 years) were much more likely to be living as a couple, the larger portion of which (42 per cent) were cohabiting. The rate of cohabitation was high relative to marriage though this decreased with age. Children in the youngest age group (16 to 20 years) were seven times more likely to be cohabiting than married. Only three per cent of the sample were previously married.

Table 8.17  Characteristics of older non-resident offspring by marital status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Single</th>
<th>Cohabiting</th>
<th>Married</th>
<th>Separated/divorced</th>
<th>Unweighted base</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 to 20 years</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 to 24</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 to 28</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-working*</td>
<td>[56]</td>
<td>[38]</td>
<td>[6]</td>
<td>[0]</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>finished age by 16</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A level plus</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>329</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Available for work but not working, includes part-time workers.

Although numbers are low, working older children were more likely to be living as a couple than were the non-working cohort (compare 51 to 44 per cent). Marital status also varied according to child’s educational qualifications. Substantially more early school leavers (by age 16) had a partner compared to those who achieved advanced level qualifications or better (compare 54 to 34 per cent). Still the rate of cohabitation was over three times the rate of marriage for lower and higher educated children alike.

8.7.4 Tenure

With an average (median) age of 23 years, it would be expected that the home ownership rate among non-resident older offspring would be lower than the general national rate in 2001. Overall, 31 per cent owned their accommodation, 45 per cent rented privately or by some other arrangement and one quarter (24 per cent) lived in social housing. Table 8.18 displays tenure type by work status for single and partnered older children. Non-working households, whether single or couples, were twice as likely to be living in a social tenancy compared to working households. Private rental arrangements did not differ according to employment status. However, home ownership was much more prevalent when there was a full-time worker, especially in couple households.
Table 8.18  Tenure by older child employment status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Social tenant</th>
<th>Private tenant and other</th>
<th>Unweighted base</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working full-time</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnered</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working full-time</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


8.7.5 Young motherhood

One-third (77 cases) of daughters had children of their own. The youngest mother was 18 years of age in 2001. Two-thirds of the mothers had only one child. The birth age of mothers ranged from 16 to 27, but 80 per cent had had their first child by age 21. This is lower than the national average, which is why we refer to this analysis as ‘young motherhood’.

Table 8.19 shows characteristics of mother and non-mother offspring who were 18 years or older in 2001. Given that the average (median) age of the two groups is very similar (23 years for mothers and 22 years for non-mothers) reasonable comparisons may be drawn between them.

First, mothers were far less likely to be working. Forty-five per cent were working outside the home (combining full- and part-time employment rates) which was two-thirds the rate among non-mothers. The difference appears to be taken up by the proportion of mothers who were caring for their families, 45 per cent. Mothers were also twice as likely to have received out-of-work benefit (43 per cent) compared to non-mothers (23 per cent).

Mothers were two-thirds less likely to be studying towards qualifications or skills – seven per cent versus 22 per cent among non-mothers. Among those who left school, mothers held fewer educational qualifications than non-mothers. Half left school by the age of 16 compared to one in three of the non-mothers. Non-mothers were three times more likely to have continued their education to A level qualifications or beyond.

Mothers were more likely to have been married – one-third were married or previously married compared to only eight per cent of non-mothers. Still, over a third of mothers were single, never married and, when combined with those who were previously married, the rate of lone parenthood among mothers was close to half (47 per cent). Rates of cohabitation were similar for the two groups at about one in four.

Mothers were far more likely to be living away from their parents’ home – only 11 per cent lived with their parent compared to 40 per cent of non-mothers. Given the high rate of lone parenthood among these mothers, it is not surprising that they were three times as likely to be social tenants than were other non-resident daughters who tended to rent privately. The rate of owner occupation was similar for the two groups at close to 30 per cent.

21 Twenty-seven of the non-resident males were fathers. Twenty-five of these were either married or cohabiting.

22 There were only seven resident daughters, that is, living with their natural parent.
Table 8.19  Characteristics of young mothers and non-mothers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mother</th>
<th>Non-mother</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Median age</strong></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employment status</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full time</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part time</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking work</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education/training</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring for child/other</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marital status</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohabiting</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previously married</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early school leaver</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced or better</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tenure</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social tenant</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private tenant and other</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unweighted base</strong></td>
<td>77</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


8.8 Summary

The PRILIF sample of children is limited to those who were 18 years or younger in 1991, or who were born between 1991 and the last full parent interview in 1998. That is, those aged between three and 28 years at the time of interview in 2001.

The overwhelming majority of the 1101 children were the natural children of the lone parents interviewed in 1991. Only 20 were stepchildren, and two were adopted.

Overall, the children were evenly split between boys and girls, and had an average (median) age of 16 years. Three-quarters of all the children, and practically all of the children aged under 16, were still living with the caring parent. Half (52 per cent) of the older children (16 to 28 years) were living away from home.

A wide range of measures is available about the children, but the analysis presented in this report focused on:

- physical well-being: general health, disability/illness, hospital admissions, alcohol consumption and smoking behaviour;

- adjustment and behaviour: truancy, trouble with the law, violence and vandalism and self-esteem;

- education: early school leaving, qualifications, attitude towards school performance; and

- older children’s work, benefit status, housing and family formation.
9 Family structure

9.1 Introduction

All children in the PRILF sample shared the experience of living in a household with a history of lone parenthood. During a decade of observation, the family structure for many children did not change, as their parents remained single. But others saw their biological parent re-partner so that by the end of the ten-year study their household configuration had evolved into a two-parent structure. This chapter is about the different partnership paths followed by lone parents and how these experiences may have influenced their children. It applies the partnership typology introduced in Section 9.3 – which identifies children through the parents’ partnership patterns as being stable lone parents, stable couples or those with short-term partners. The aim was to see if there are any systematic differences in children from lone-parent families that can be attributable to particular family structures that evolved over a ten-year period after 1991.

The chapter begins with a brief overview of the research on children raised in different family structures. Section 9.3 introduces the parent partnership typology to be used in analyses. Section 9.4 then groups the children on the basis of the parent partnership typology and reviews this distribution by age groups. Sections 9.6 to 9.9 then describe the various child observations on health, behaviour, education, work and household formation according to the three partnership categories. The analysis follows a descriptive approach. We used logistic regression modelling to test for observed differences between the groups while accounting for other factors, which may influence the measures.23 Details on the models are contained in Appendix B. The reader is advised to refer to Chapter 8 for further explanations on the child measures.

9.2 Family structure and children

While the ranking of alternative parental family structures on the performance of their children goes beyond the scope of this research, it is important to consider findings on children who experienced some of their formative years in a single parent family (for summaries see: Acock and Demo (1994); Burghes (1994); Ford & Millar (1998); Furstenberg & Cherlin (1991); McLanahan (1997); Rodgers & Pryor (1998); Rodriguez Sumaza (2001)). In a review of over 200 British, American, Australian and New Zealand studies spanning over 50 years, Rodgers and Pryor (1998) found a clear link between

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23 The ‘stable couple’ category was used as the reference group. Those family structures which proved to be statistically important (and the level of significance) are labelled in the tables with asterisks.
non-intact families and disadvantaged outcomes for children. Children from alternative family forms were more likely to experience poverty and this poverty tended to follow them into adulthood. They exhibited more psychological and behavioural problems; they performed less well in school; they engaged in more smoking, drinking and drug abuse; they left school and home sooner and they became parents at an earlier age. In short, the experience of life in a one-parent home is linked to poorer life chances.

These findings challenge the demographic trend away from the conventional two-parent family – a trend that is often a choice at the individual parent level. Increasingly larger proportions of children are spending part of their lives in a lone-parent household. Currently in Britain, nearly one in every four families with children is led by a single biological parent, being the mother in over 90 per cent of the cases. In recent decades this has been attributed to the rise in divorce rates and the increase in never-married mothers (Rowlingson, 2001).

Yet, as alternative family forms are becoming increasingly common, and consequently less stigmatised, there is a body of evidence which questions the negative child findings associated with the non-traditional family (Cooksey (1997); Duncan and Brooks-Gunn (2001); Joshi et al. (1999); Smith et al. (1997)). In a developmental study of children from various family living arrangements, Joshi et al. (1999) identified family income poverty as the key factor contributing to negative child behaviour and poor educational outcomes.

Family fluidity and the blurring of boundaries between family forms may partly account for findings that link family resources rather than family structures in connection with child disadvantage. Increasingly more two-parent families are formed when one or both members of the new couple has a history of lone parenthood. This family re-configuration when children acquire a third, unrelated parent as their biological parent re-partners is also referred to as the ‘stepfamily’. Currently, about one in ten children live in a stepfamily. During the 1990s the duration for a lone parent to remain a lone parent averaged four and a half to five years, depending on whether the mother had been previously married or not (Rowlingson & McKay, 2001). Thus it would be expected that a substantial portion of the PRILIF children would have experienced life with a stepparent.

Family stability, in terms of little family disruption, has also been identified as an important factor in the nurturing of children. Family dissolution and then re-partnering and the re-arranging of households add stress to the demands of growing up. In their review, Rodgers and Prior (1998) identified a need for more empirical evidence on the effects of these multiple transitions on child development. Some studies suggest that multiple family transitions can contribute to negative outcomes for children (Ermisch & Francesconi (2001); Joshi et al. (1999)). Regarding the PRILIF sample, as three-quarters of the lone parents had been part of a couple union prior to 1991, those children whose parent entered into another failed relationship during the study period would have undergone a greater degree of family disruption than those whose parents remained with a new partner or those whose parents did not re-partner. It is, therefore, important in the current study to single out the children of parents who had experienced a short-term partner after 1991.

9.3 Family structure in the PRILIF sample – parent partnership typology

Longitudinal month-by-month accounts supplied by respondents were used to derive categories on partnership histories. The typology was derived from reports covering an 83-month period between 1991 and 1998. There was no data on partnership (except how respondents became a lone parent) prior to 1991 nor between the period autumn 1998 to spring 2001. The main criterion applied was the
From the outset of the study in 1991, the caring parents had been lone parents for an average of four years. Almost all these parents were female (96 per cent). Figure 9.1 describes the resulting parent partnership typology. Through an analysis of the month by month partner status of the parent it was found that most (60 per cent) parents remained single during the 1991 to 1998 period while 24 per cent entered a couple relationship which, for most, lasted into the next decade. The remaining parents, a 17 per cent minority, were classified as neither lone parent nor couple. Although many of this group spent a substantial proportion of the study period as a lone parent, it was felt that the family experience of a ‘failed relationship’ was unique and warranted a separate category – short-term partner(s).

### Table 9.1 Parent partnership typologies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stable lone parent</td>
<td>Caring parent was predominantly a single parent during the course of the study. The majority (94 per cent) never partnered while the remaining few acquired a partner towards the end of the study period (1998 or 2001).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stable couple</td>
<td>Caring parent was predominantly with a partner, and only one partner, during the course of the study. The average (mean-) proportion of time with a partner was 47 per cent or 39 months. Ninety per cent were still with their partner in 2001.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short-term partner(s)</td>
<td>Caring parent was with one or more partners during the course of the study and this partnership did not last. The average (mean) amount of time with a partner was 16 months or proportionately, 19 per cent of the time. A minority of this group (15 per cent) had more than one partner who left.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9.1 defines the partnership typologies on some key demographic characteristics. In sum, relative to the other groups, the category of stable lone parents is distinguished with having an older caring parent (half were over age 44 in 2001) and consequently, older children (one in five had only non-dependent-aged children). They also were most likely to hold some academic qualification (57 per cent). Despite this, stable lone parents were no more likely to be working full time in 2001 than parents who had had a short-term partner(s) and they were less likely to be working than parents who had formed a stable partnership. Half of stable lone-parent families lived in a social tenancy in 2001, similar to those involved in a short-term partnership but 20 per cent higher than parents who became part of a couple. Their health was more similar to that of parents who entered a stable couple relationship.

The stable couple group can be distinguished as being younger than the majority, one-third of which were a single, never married parent at the start of the study. They also tended to have the largest and the youngest families (a third had three or more dependent-aged children in 2001). This finding reflects the pattern of new births being associated with parents who had partnered during the course of the study (refer to Section 2.4). Stable couple parents were just as likely to hold academic qualifications as parents classified as having a short-term partner(s) but they were the group most
likely to be working full time in 2001, 65 per cent, ten percentage points higher than the other partnership groups. Stable couples were also the group most likely to own their accommodation (63 per cent).

Finally, the minority (one in six) of families classified as having had short-term partner(s) is distinguished as being younger than average with a higher rate of a being previously married before 1991 (59 per cent). In 2001, they had the highest rate of vocational qualifications (29 per cent) although the proportion with academic qualifications did not differ from parents in the stable couple group. Slightly more than half (55 per cent) of this group worked full time in 2001. Families who were classified into the short-term partner(s) group were just as likely to own their accommodation as to be a social tenant (47 per cent). They were also the most likely group to report an illness or disability on at least three consecutive interviews.
Table 9.1  Family characteristics by parent partnership typology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Stable lone parent</th>
<th>Stable couple</th>
<th>Short-term partner(s)</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average age (median) 2001</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lone parent type 1991</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single, never married</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated from marriage</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated from cohabitation</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of dependent children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in household 2001</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>22</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>38</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 plus</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent work/benefit status 1991</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working 16 plus</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working 16 plus &amp; FC</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working 0-15 hours</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working 0-15 hours &amp; IS</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent work/benefit status 2001</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working 16 plus</td>
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<td>49</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working 16 plus &amp; WFTC</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working 0-15 hours</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working 0-15 hours &amp; IS</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age completed full-time education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 16 or younger</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over age 16</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualifications 2001</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic university</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic secondary</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No qualifications</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing tenure 2001</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner occupier</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social tenant</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private tenant or other</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received maintenance 1991</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ill or disabled on 3 consecutive interviews 1991-2001</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>27</td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>331</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>548</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9.4 Parent partnership histories and the PRILIF children

This study on children takes the single-parent family as its starting point. Therefore, all children in the sample have histories of non-conventional households.

The two-parent family was the dominant earlier configuration. Prior to 1991, the vast majority (78 per cent) of children living in the PRILIF households at the time had parents who were part of a couple union before becoming a lone parent. This implies that many of the children in our study had lived with their second parent. Still one in five children had been living with only a single parent up to that point in time. Among those who lived in a couple household, most parents were previously married (71 per cent) while the remaining were either cohabiting (25 per cent) or widowed (four per cent). But, as the years unfolded, the children’s backgrounds diversified with further family reconfigurations. Together, the children’s experiences serve as a reminder of just how convoluted family life can be and how complex a task it is for the researcher to disentangle.

While, at the family level, six in ten families were classified as stable lone parent, at the child level this dropped to 55 per cent (refer to Table 9.2). During the 1990s, approaching half (45 per cent) of the children experienced a third parental figure (or stepparent) in their household. While most of these unions persisted, 41 per cent did not. Altogether, one in five children experienced at least one additional parental figure in the household but for only a short term. Overall, according to the typology, most children experienced stability in terms of their parental configuration – eight in ten either remained alone with their parent and siblings (55 per cent) or gained an additional parent who stayed (26 per cent).

But the distribution of PRILIF children over the three partnership groups varied considerably according to the age group of the child (refer to Table 9.2). Children aged three to ten years in 2001 were the least likely to be associated with a stable lone parent background (35 per cent). This is because these children arrived during the course of the study and the majority of new births occurred within a couple union (refer to Chapter 2). The younger children (under age 16 in 2001) tended to have younger mothers who were more likely to form a union during the study period. This helps to explain the higher rate of short-term partners among these children compared to those 16 years and older. Children in the 11 to 15 year range were just as likely to belong to the stable lone parent group as to the other partnership groups combined. About equal proportions of 11 to 15 year olds (one in four) belonged to either a stable couple or a short-term partner family.

### Table 9.2 Parental partnership history by child age groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>3 to 10 years</th>
<th>11 to 15 years</th>
<th>16 to 28 years</th>
<th>16 to 28 years</th>
<th>All children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stable lone parent</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stable couple</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short-term partner</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>1101</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All natural born, adopted and stepchildren, aged 3 to 28 years, of lone parents interviewed in 2001.

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24 The child age ranges correspond to specific questionnaires. Some child measures were only asked of a limited age range. Refer to Table 7.1 for a summary of the measures by child age group.
The majority (65 per cent) of children in the oldest age category (16 to 28 years), regardless of whether they were living with their caring parent or not in 2001, were associated with a stable lone-parent household. This was higher than for the other child age groups. Sixteen to 28 year olds also had the highest rate of ‘stability’ in their lives, when combining the proportions coming from a stable couple or a stable lone parent background (85 to 87 per cent). In the survey, time in a lone-parent household was directly gauged among the older children (16 to 28 years) who were asked how many years they had spent living with just one parent up to the age of 18.25 In the sample, average (median) time reported living with just one parent was 12 years, reflecting the fact that two-thirds of these children were classified with a stable lone parent background in the typology. The average (median) amount of time reported by 16 to 28 year olds associated with a stable lone parent background was 14 years and by those where the caring parent experienced a short-term partner it was 13 years. These figures contrast with the average of seven years reported by 16 to 28 year olds classified with a stable couple background. The different durations of time living in a lone-parent family reported by children from the different family structures lend credibility to the partnership categories, at least for this group of older children.

Just as it is important to bear in mind that children of different age groups varied compositionally regarding their parents’ partnership histories, it is also necessary to reflect on what the different family structures might mean to children at different stages in life. This is largely due to the fact that the children entered the study at different points in their lives. For instance, a predominantly stable couple family during the 1990s would most likely mean something different to a child who was born into the household during that decade (the majority of three to ten year olds in the study) compared to children in the older age categories. It is quite possible that to these younger children, a two-parent family is the only home life they know, although they may be aware of their siblings’ other lives. Likewise, children in the youngest age band whose parent experienced a short-term relationship may not have much recollection of the experience.

On the other hand, most of the child measures concentrate on those children who were in their parents’ households in 1991. At that time, the median age for children in the middle age group was three while the median age among the eldest child group was ten years. These two age groups would have a better recollection and awareness of what went on in their parents’ personal lives. Given their age, the eldest group would also be most aware of any family breakdown prior to the start of the study and any transitions that occurred during the 1990s. Testimonials on these different experiences are diverse (Dunn and Deater-Deckard 2001) providing a range of understandings on family dissolution. But in the review by Rodgers and Pryor (1998) the age at which parents separated was not found to be important for future child outcomes.

Despite these different perspectives in the evolution of family life, the intention for the analysis was to ascertain if children do vary systematically according to their different family partnership histories. Whenever possible, figures for the different age groups will be presented separately in order to detect any within age differences that may not show in the aggregate data.

9.5 Child measures

The next sections report on the specific child measures analysed according to the children’s parent partnership histories during the 1990s. These are grouped into four broad categories: physical well-being, social adjustment, education, and measure among the older children.

25 Data were not available from the parents regarding the amount of time their older children spent in a single-parent household. Therefore, this analysis is based on the 375 respondents to the older child survey.
9.6 Measures on physical well-being

This section compares a variety of health measures – general health, disability or long term illness, hospital admissions, alcohol consumption and smoking behaviour – according to the relationship histories of the children’s parents.

9.6.1 General health

Overall, children’s general health in 2001 differed very little according to the relationship history of their caring parent (refer to Table 9.3). That is to say, a child’s health condition appeared to have no bearing on whether or not the parent formed a partnership or not, and vice versa. Variation is primarily noted between the evaluation of ‘good’ and ‘fairly good’ health. This is difficult to interpret because, even if the rating of health presents a certain order, it cannot be assumed that the ‘fairly good’ category is half-way between ‘good’ and ‘not good’. For this reason we refer to the incidence of poor or ‘not good’ health within the groups. Altogether, the proportion of children who were rated with ‘poor health’ ranged from four to seven per cent across all three parent partnership categories. This deviated very little from the figure of six per cent for all children in the sample.

In order to capture possible effects of family structure on health at different stages of child development, Table 9.3 also breaks down reports on general health by the four child age categories – three to ten years, 11 to 15 years, resident 16 to 28 years, and non-resident 16 to 28 years. As the figures show, the quality of health did vary slightly within the 16 to 28 year age range where more children from stable lone-parent backgrounds (both resident and non-resident) reported poorer health than those from the other family backgrounds. However, the finding was not statistically significant.
Table 9.3 General health by parent partnership history

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General health</th>
<th>Stable lone parent</th>
<th>Stable couple</th>
<th>Short-term partner(s)</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly good</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not good</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>614</td>
<td>302</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>1101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 to 10 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly good</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not good</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 to 15 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly good</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not good</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 to 28 years (resident)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly good</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not good</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>354</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 to 28 years (non-resident)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly good</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not good</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


9.6.2 Disability or illness

Taking all children together, the proportion reported to have a disability or long-term illness varied little according to their parents’ partnership histories (refer to Table 9.4). The incidence of a disability/illness varied by four percentage points across the different parent partnership typologies, with fewer children from a short-term partner household reported to have a health condition. However, this difference was not statistically significant according to the multivariate model.
Table 9.4  Disability or long-term illness by parent partnership history

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disability or illness</th>
<th>Stable lone parent</th>
<th>Stable couple</th>
<th>Short-term partner(s)</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>614</td>
<td>302</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>1101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 to 10 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 to 15 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 to 28 years (resident)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>354</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 to 28 years (non-resident)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


There was some variation in the incidence of a health condition within the child age groups. Overall, 11 to 15 year olds were the most likely to be reported with a disability or illness and this was most prevalent among children in a stable lone-parent household – 27 per cent compared to 18 per cent for all children. It is not clear why this was the case, as the ranking of specific illnesses did not differ among these children. Also, children in the other age groups who had a stable lone-parent background did not appear any more likely to have a health condition. This finding may be an artefact of the particular sample. From the multivariate analysis, factors identified as contributing to the likelihood that the younger children were reported to have a disability/illness were the work history of the family (Section 10.4.2), the type of housing they were living in and their parents’ level of education. Refer to Table B.2 for the model specification.

9.6.3 Hospital admissions

Parental partnership history did seem to make a difference regarding hospital admissions among children aged three to ten years. As Table 9.5 shows, children who lived in a stable couple environment were about a third as likely to be hospitalised in the last 12 months. About one in five children in this age category from stable lone-parent and short-term partner families were admitted overnight to hospital in the past year, compared to only seven per cent of the children from stable couple households. This supports the findings summarised previously by Rodgers and Prior (1998)
who found children in two-parent households were consistently less likely to have required medical treatment. According to logistic regression analysis, compared to stable couple families, young children from stable lone-parent households were six times more likely to be admitted to hospital in the past year. Similarly, but to a less extent, children from short-term partner families were four times more likely to be hospitalised, compared to stable couple families. Refer to Table B.3 for the full model specification. Not surprisingly, child’s health condition also figured prominently in the model. Children with a disability were six times more likely to be admitted to hospital overnight compared to ‘healthy’ children.

Table 9.5 Hospitalisation by parent partnership history

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child has been in hospital in last 12 months</th>
<th>Stable lone parent</th>
<th>Stable couple</th>
<th>Short-term partner(s)</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>20 ***</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19 ***</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: Children aged three to 10 years with parents who responded in 2001. Significance: *** < or = 1%, ** < or = 5%, * < or = 10%. Refer to Appendix B for full models.

9.6.4 Alcohol consumption in youths

Table 9.6 shows the incidence of drinking alcohol reported by children aged 11 to 15 years divided by their parents’ partnership histories. Children from a stable couple background were the least likely to report they had had an alcoholic beverage in the past month (21 per cent). Reports of drinking alcohol were 17 and 22 percentage points higher among youths from stable lone-parent and short-term partner families respectively. Multivariate analysis confirmed parent partnership history as a significant predictor of underage drinking in this sample (refer to Table B.4 for details on the model). Compared to a stable couple environment, children associated with a stable lone-parent or a short-term partner family were both six times more likely to have consumed alcohol over the past four weeks. Other factors identified to be significant in predicting drinking in youths were the family work history (refer to Section 10.4.4) and the type of family accommodation.

Table 9.6 Alcohol consumption in youth by parent partnership history

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>11 to 15 year olds</th>
<th>Stable lone parent</th>
<th>Stable couple</th>
<th>Short-term partner(s)</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>63 ***</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>57 ***</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once or twice</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Several times</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: Children who responded to the youth survey in 2001. Significance: *** < or = 1%, ** < or = 5%, * < or = 10%. Refer to Appendix B for full models.
### 9.6.5 Smoking behaviour

Table 9.7 looks separately at youths (13 to 15 years)\(^{26}\) and older children (16 to 28 years), who were asked about their smoking behaviour in a slightly different manner. The figures reveal that the incidence of smoking behaviour for stable lone-parent and stable couple families was more similar among the younger people than in the older children. Among the younger age group, children from a short-term partner family were twice as likely to report they had smoked than the other family groups – compare 33 to 16 per cent. Among the older group, the reported rate of smoking in children from a short-term partner background was still higher than the other family groups, but not to the same degree as in the younger children. Children whose parent entered a stable couple relationship were the least likely to have smoked.

According to the regression analyses, parent partnership history was a significant factor for the younger group only. In the sample, 13 to 15 year olds whose parent had a short-term relationship were identified as four times more likely to smoke compared to those living in a stable couple household. Refer to Tables B.5 and B.6. Children with stable lone-parent backgrounds were no more likely to smoke than those of stable couple families. The parents’ smoking behaviour and a history of hardship (Section 11.4.5) were also significant factors in the model.

#### Table 9.7 Smoking behaviour by parent partnership history

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Stable lone parent</th>
<th>Stable couple</th>
<th>Short-term partner(s)</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Has smoked at least 1 cigarette in the past week</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>33 **</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Has ever smoked cigarettes regularly</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>375</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: Children who responded to the youth or older child surveys in 2001.
Significance: \(* * * < or = 1\% \), \(* * < or = 5\% \), \(* < or = 10\% \).

### 9.7 Measures of social adjustment

This section reports measures on truancy, trouble with the law and youth violence for children of different parent partnership patterns.

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\(^{26}\) Eleven and 12 year olds were excluded from this analysis because there were no cases of smoking reported in this age group.
9.7.1 Truancy behaviour

Turning first to truancy behaviour, children with a parent who had a short-term relationship during the study period stood out from the rest of their cohort as being most likely to truant. This finding was consistent for both age cohorts. As reported in Chapter 8, truancy was rare among the 11 to 13 year age group and reports of truancy were highest during the middle teen years. This accounts for the differences in rates between the two age cohorts.

Multivariate analysis on the combined age groups verified the role of family structure in predicting truancy behaviour. Children from a family in which the caring parent had a short-term relationship were identified as being three times more likely to report they had truanted compared to those from a stable couple background. There were no differences in the truancy behaviour of children from stable lone-parent and stable couple families. Family work history (refer to Section 10.5.1) and family size were also significant factors. The full model is available in Tables B.7 and B.8.

Table 9.8 Reports of truancy by parent partnership history

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Truancy</th>
<th>Stable lone parent</th>
<th>Stable couple</th>
<th>Short-term partner(s)</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child (13-15 yrs) frequently missed school without an excuse</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18 **</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child (16-28 yrs) frequently missed school without an excuse</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>33 ***</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>375</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significance: *** ≤ 1%, ** ≤ 5%, * ≤ 10%. Refer to Appendix B for full models.

9.7.2 Trouble with the law

The group of children with parents who had short-term partnerships also figured more prominently in regards to being in trouble with the law. Parents were asked if their child (11 to 15 years) had ever been in trouble with the police. Although the incidence of this was rare among this age group (18 cases), half of these cases occurred among children whose parent experienced a short-term relationship. The largest contrast was with children from ‘stable couple’ households (compare 14 to one per cent). Children (16 to 28 years) themselves reported on any driving or other offences. Together, these infractions were slightly more prevalent among those with parents who experienced short-term partners (17 per cent) than those belonging to the other partnership typologies (13 per cent).

In multivariate analyses, parent partnership history was a significant factor for the 11 to 15 year old cohort but not for the older children. In the sample, youths from families where the parent had experienced a short-term partner were 11 times more likely than those from stable couple families to be involved with the law. Family work history (Section 10.5.2) also figured in the model (refer to Tables B.9 and B.10).
Table 9.9  Trouble with the law by parent partnership history

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trouble with the law</th>
<th>Stable lone parent</th>
<th>Stable couple</th>
<th>Short-term partner(s)</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(11 to 28 years)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child (11-15 years)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>has been in trouble</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with the police</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14 **</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child (16-28 years)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>has been charged</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with a driving/other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>offence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>375</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significance: *** = or < 1%, ** = or < 5%, * = or < 10%. Refer to Appendix B for full models.

9.7.3  Youth violence

The combined parent and child (11 to 15 years) responses to reports of fighting and vandalism varied little across parent partnership groups (Table 9.10). In both cases, the incidence of violence was slightly lower among children with stable couple backgrounds. The incidence of fighting was two to four percentage points lower among this group while the incidence of reported vandalism was six to nine percentage points lower.

The multivariate models revealed family structure as a significant factor in predicting vandalism but not fighting behaviour. Compared to youths from a stable couple family, those from either a stable lone parent or a short-term partner background in the sample were approximately three times more likely to have committed vandalism in the previous month. Family work history (Section 10.5.3) was also a significantly related to vandalism. Tables B.11 and B.12 contain details on the models.

Table 9.10  Violence committed by youths by parent partnership history

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Youth violence</th>
<th>Stable lone parent</th>
<th>Stable couple</th>
<th>Short-term partner(s)</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(11 to 15 years)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fighting in past month</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vandalism in past month</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>26 **</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>29 **</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significance: *** = or < 1%, ** = or < 5%, * = or < 10%. Refer to Appendix B for full models.
9.7.4 Self-esteem

Table 9.11 displays the distribution of self-esteem reported by children (16 to 28 years) according to parent partnership typologies. Self-esteem scores were divided into three ranges (refer to Section 8.5.4 for an explanation on how these were derived). The figures show a clear ranking among the family groups. Children with a stable couple background were the most likely group to score in the high range of self-esteem, 46 per cent compared to 38 and 26 per cent respectively scored by children from stable lone-parent and short-term partner backgrounds.

Both low and high self-esteem were modelled using logistic regression analysis and family structure was identified as a significant factor for predicting high self-esteem only. These models are available in Tables B.13 and B.14. In the sample, children from a stable couple family were three times more likely and children from a stable lone-parent family were twice as likely to score in the high range of the self-esteem scale, compared to children whose parent had experienced a short-term partner. Family work status (Section 10.7.4) and the parent’s level of education were also significant factors in the model.

### Table 9.11 Self-esteem among older children by parent partnership history

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of self-esteem (16 to 28 years)</th>
<th>Stable lone parent</th>
<th>Stable couple</th>
<th>Short-term partner(s)</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>38 *</td>
<td>46 ***</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>375</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bases: All who responded to the older child survey.
Significance: *** < or = 1%, ** < or = 5%, * < or = 10%. Refer to Appendix B for full models.

9.8 Measures of education

Three measures on education – the incidence of early school leaving, rates of advanced academic qualifications and attitudes towards school performance – are reported in this section.

9.8.1 Early school leavers

Family structure was a significant factor in analyses on early school leaving (at or before age 16). As Table 9.12 shows, substantially more children of parents who experienced a short-term partner reported they had left school early (16 to 28 year olds) or that they intended to (11 to 15 year olds). Among the younger age cohort, children with a stable lone-parent background were also more likely than those from a stable couple family to anticipate leaving school by age 16, however, this contrast was not found to be statistically significant.

According to the regression models, among the 11 to 15 years olds in the sample, children from short-term partner families were six times more likely to say that they planned to leave school early, compared to those with a stable couple background. Similarly, in the older cohort, those who did leave school by age 16 were twice as likely to be from a family where the parent was involved in a short-term relationship compared to those with a stable couple background. Family history of hardship (Section 11.6.1), family work history (Section 10.6.1), parent’s level of education and family size were also significantly related to early school leaving. Refer to Tables B.15 and B.16.
### Table 9.12 Early school leaving by parent partnership history

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Early school leaving</th>
<th>Stable lone parent</th>
<th>Stable couple</th>
<th>Short-term partner(s)</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child (11-15 yrs) plans to finish school at or before age 16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>32 ***</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child (16-28 yrs) finished school at or before age 16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>27 **</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>677</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Bases:** For 11 to 15 year olds: All who responded to the youth survey in 2001. For 16 plus years: All who have finished formal education and with parents who responded in 2001. **Significance:** *** ≤ 1%, ** ≤ 5%, * ≤ 10%. Refer to Appendix B for full models.

#### 9.8.2 Advanced academic qualifications

Older children (19 to 28 years), and, in their absence, their parents, were asked about their highest level of educational attainment. Table 9.12 lists those who achieved advanced academic qualifications (A level or higher). Again, children from families where the parent experienced a short-term relationship were distinguished from the other groups, in this case with having a lower incidence of advanced qualifications (18 per cent). This was six to ten percentage points lower than for children associated with stable lone-parent or stable couple backgrounds. However, this contrast was not found to be statistically significant in the multivariate model. Factors contributing to the likelihood that children in the sample attained higher academic qualifications were the history of hardship (Section 11.6.2), parents’ level of education and the age of the parent at birth. Refer to Table B.17 for the model specification.

### Table 9.13 Advanced academic qualifications by parent partnership history

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advanced academic qualifications (19 to 28 years)</th>
<th>Stable lone parent</th>
<th>Stable couple</th>
<th>Short-term partner(s)</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>560</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Bases:** All with parents who responded in 2001.
9.8.3 Youth attitudes towards school performance

Parent partnership history was a significant factor in predicting children’s attitudes towards school performance. Children associated with a stable couple household were far more likely than the other groups to hold a positive view on school achievement (refer to Table 9.14). Youths (11 to 15 years) were asked ‘How much does it mean to you to do well at school?’ Among the partnership groups, almost all the children (95 per cent) from a stable couple family reported that doing well meant ‘a great deal’ or ‘quite a lot’. In contrast, children from families where the parent experienced a short-term partner had the poorest attitude towards school performance with 71 per cent saying that doing well mattered ‘quite a lot’ or ‘a great deal’.

According to a regression analysis of the sample, family structure was found to bear the greatest weight in predicting youth attitudes towards school performance, with both a stable lone-parent and a short-term partner background contributing a negative influence. Family work status (Section 10.8.3) and family size were also identified as significant factors. Refer to Table B.18.

Table 9.14 Youth attitude towards school performance by parent partnership history

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude towards school (11 to 15 years)</th>
<th>Stable lone parent</th>
<th>Stable couple</th>
<th>Short-term partner(s)</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How much does it mean to you to do well at school?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A great deal</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quite a lot</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A bit but not much</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very little</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>88 **</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quite a lot/a great deal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A bit/very little</td>
<td>12 **</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>29 ***</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unweighted base: 98 63 43 204

Bases: For 11 to 15 year olds: All who responded to the youth survey in 2001. For 16 plus years: All who have finished formal education and with parents who responded in 2001.

Significance: *** < or = 1%, ** < or = 5%, * < or = 10%. Refer to Appendix B for full models.

9.9 Measures among older children

This section reports on contrasts in older child work and benefits status and in household formation according to the different parent partnership typologies. In 2001, the average (median) age for this cohort was 21 years. Age varied only slightly according to parent partnership groups with children from stable lone-parent families being slightly older (22 years) on average than those with parents who had a short-term partner (21 years) or those from a stable couple background (20 years).
9.9.1 Work and benefit receipt

The employment status of older children (17 to 28 years) did appear to vary according to their parent’s partnership histories (refer to Table 9.15). The rate of employment (any hours) among children whose parent had had a short-term relationship was 11 percentage points lower than for the other groups (compare 47 to 58 per cent). In contrast, more of this group were reported to be ‘looking after the home or family’ – 12 per cent compared to nine and five per cent in the other groups. Children from stable couple backgrounds were more likely to be attending full-time education or a training scheme. One in four of these children were reported to be in education or training compared to a rate of one in five in the other two parent partnership categories.

Table 9.15 Employment status among older children by parent partnership history

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Older child work status</th>
<th>Stable lone parent</th>
<th>Stable couple</th>
<th>Short-term partner(s)</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Working 16 plus hours</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working 1-15 hours</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed &amp; seeking work</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time education</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training scheme</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking after family</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sick or disabled</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>617</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work status among those available for work</th>
<th>Stable lone parent</th>
<th>Stable couple</th>
<th>Short-term partner(s)</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Working 16 plus hours</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking work</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>441</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9.15 also contrasts the percentage of working to non-working among older children (17 to 28 years) who were available for work (economically active). The proportion available for work was about equal, at about two-thirds, for each of the partnership typologies. The figures confirm the lower rate of employment among children from families where the parent experienced a short-term partnership. Overall, four in five (83 per cent) of the cohort were working 16 or more hours per week in 2001. The rate of employment ranged from 76 per cent among those from short-term partner backgrounds to 86 per cent among those with stable lone-parent backgrounds. However, multivariate analysis did not identify this contrast as statistically significant. Rather, the family work history (Section 10.7.1) and level of education of both the parent and the child were identified as more important contributing factors. Refer to Table B.19 for the model specification.

27 The information supplied by the parent was used for cases where the child did not respond.

28 The analysis did not include those who were in full-time education, or working less than 16 hours, or with caring responsibilities or those who were sick or disabled.
The receipt of benefits or tax credits did not differ according to the parents’ partnership patterns during the study period (refer to Table 9.16). The incidence of ever receiving Working Families’ Tax Credit was rare, only six per cent overall, and this did not vary by parent partnership group. Reports of ever receiving out-of-work benefits were higher, about one in three had ever received Jobseeker’s Allowance and about one in six had ever received Income Support. However, these rates only varied slightly across parent partnership groups and were lowest among those who had stable couple family backgrounds. But this difference was not statistically significant. The family history of work (Section 10.7.1), child’s level of education and family ethnicity were significant factors identified in a regression analysis. Refer to Table B.20 for details.

**Table 9.16  Benefit and tax credit receipt by parent partnership history**  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Stable lone parent</th>
<th>Stable couple</th>
<th>Short-term partner(s)</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Receipt of JSA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ever</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receipt of IS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ever</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any out-of-work benefit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ever</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receipt of WFTC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ever</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Unweighted base      | 230                | 96            | 49                    | 375  |

Base: Respondents to the older child survey.

### 9.9.2 Family and household formation

Table 9.17 displays the marital status and tenure reported for older non-resident children. The average (median) age of this group in 2001 was 22 years. In this cohort, the children of stable lone parents tended to be older (median=24) while the children of stable couples were younger, on average (median=21). Children of parents with a short-term partner fell in-between at 23 years. Comparing groups, children of stable couples, despite being the youngest age group, were also the most likely to be in a couple relationship – 55 per cent compared to 48 per cent among children from a stable lone parent background and 43 per cent among children whose parent experienced a short-term partner. Numbers are small, but the trend reported in Table 9.17 does suggest a link between the partnering patterns of parents and those of their children.

Table 9.17 also reports the type of tenure reported for non-resident older children. Overall, about a third (31 per cent) were owner occupiers in 2001. But this appeared to vary according to the parent partnership history of the children. Despite being of a similar age, children from a short-term partner background were a third less likely than those with a stable lone parent history to own their accommodation. But when marital status was taken into account, family structure was not found to be a significant predictor of home ownership among young adults. Other factors found to be significant were the age, education and work status of the child and the education of the parent. Refer to Table B.21 for details on the model.
Table 9.17 Household formation by parent partnership history

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital status</th>
<th>Stable lone parent</th>
<th>Stable couple</th>
<th>Short-term partner(s)</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single (never married)</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohabiting</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previously married</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tenure</th>
<th>Owner occupier</th>
<th>Social tenant</th>
<th>Private tenant/other</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Owner occupier</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social tenant</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private tenant/other</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Young motherhood</th>
<th>Female children (18-28 years)</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-mother</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Unweighted base  | 211                           | 83 | 42  | 336 |

Bases: For marital status and tenure: All non-resident 16 to 28 year olds with parents who responded in 2001. For young motherhood: female children aged 18 to 28 years.

Table 9.17 also reports on the incidence of young motherhood among 18 to 28 year olds. This analysis contrasted all female children in this age range who did and did not have children. As discussed in Chapter 8, the majority (80 per cent) of these mothers had their first child by age 21. In contrast to non-mothers, they experienced a higher percentage of markers associated with disadvantage: lower educational qualifications, a lower rate of employment and a higher rate of social tenancy. A third of these mothers were single parents.

The rate of young motherhood was lowest among daughters from a stable couple background, at 22 per cent, compared to 34 and 35 per cent in daughters from the other parent partnership groups. But this contrast was not identified as statistically significant in multivariate modelling. Other factors such as family work history (Section 10.7.2) and child age and level of education were identified as being more important. Refer to Table B.21 for details on the model.

9.10 Summary

This chapter examined differences in the PRILIF children according to the partnership histories of their caring parents. This study used, as its baseline, a point in time when all households were led by a single parent. During a decade of observation, some family structures changed as many (45 per cent) of the children saw their parent join a couple relationship, six in ten of which were still intact by the end of the study period. Still, more than half (55 per cent) of the children continued to be raised by a single parent. The parent partnership typology (Section 9.3), classifying family structures over the ten year period as stable lone-parent, stable couple or short-term relationship, was used to differentiate the children on a variety of measures.
In the PRILIF sample of children there was clear evidence to support previous claims that family background, in terms of the structures resulting from parent partnerships, does make a difference for children. When there was variance observed between the three family structure categories, findings on children from backgrounds where the single parent had formed a stable couple union tended to be most favourable. Most consistently, children from a background where the single parent entered into a short-term relationship and, to a lesser extent, children whose parent remained single during the study period, were found to be at a disadvantage. These findings reflect select measures in five broad areas: physical well-being, social adjustment, education, and work and household formation.

In multivariate analyses, while accounting for other possible influences, family structure after lone parenthood was identified as an important factor regarding:

- the incidence of hospital admissions among children aged three to ten years;
- alcohol consumption in youths;
- cigarette smoking among under 16 year olds;
- truancy from school;
- vandalism among youths;
- trouble with the law among youths;
- young adult self-esteem;
- early school leaving; and
- attitude towards school performance among youths.

For all of these indicators, the results for those children attached to a parent who entered into a short-term relationship were more negative when contrasted with children from a stable couple household. For some of these measures (hospital admissions, alcohol consumption in youths, youth vandalism, self-esteem, attitude towards school performance) children from a stable lone-parent background were at a disadvantage when compared to those with parents who entered a stable couple relationship.

However, family structure over the previous decade did not appear to have any bearing on:

- children’s general health;
- the incidence of a disability or illness;
- reports of fighting in youths;
- attainment of advanced academic qualifications;
- work status and benefit receipt; nor
- early motherhood.

Generalisations from this research are limited as the findings are associated with a unique sample of children, initially from single-parent families. Yet, the findings concur with other sources of research into family structure and child development (see Rodgers and Pryor 1998 for example) which cite disadvantages for children from unconventional or divided families. The research also brings further evidence to suggest that multiple family transitions in the form of multiple partners can lead to negative outcomes for the children.
10 Family work history

10.1 Introduction

This chapter investigates differences among the PRILIF children according to their families’ work participation over the ten year period (1991-2001).

At the start of the study, the majority of households were non-working: only one in four of the lone parents were in work of 16 or more hours per week in 1991. Over the course of 10 years, as the families aged, a substantial number of parents moved into work. By 2001, the proportion of respondents in work had more than doubled to 56 per cent. But, comparatively speaking, employment in the PRILIF households was sustained at a low rate.29 The majority of children in the sample would have experienced a non-working home environment and reliance on state support.

Thus the work status of the families diverged over the 10 years of the study and it is this variation in work and how it reflects on the children that we are interested in exploring. Through our observations, we were able to trace levels of work participation among parents and their partners (where applicable). The intention then was to see if the children can be distinguished by the amount of time their parents spent in work during the past decade.

The chapter starts with a brief overview of policy initiatives encouraging lone parents (and mothers) into work along with research evidence on household work status and child development. In Section 10.3, records of work participation among the PRILIF parents (and their partners) are used to derive a typology of family work history. The distributions of the children according to these work history categories are then described for different age ranges.

The remaining four sections of the chapter analyse the measures on children to see if family backgrounds on work made a difference. The analysis follows a descriptive approach. We used logistic regression modelling to test the observed differences between groups while accounting for other factors that may influence the measures.30 Details on the models are contained in Appendix B. The reader is advised to refer to Chapter 9 for further details on the child measures.

29 The study term included a period of recession during the first years of the 1990s and no doubt the poor economic climate had an impact on parents’ employment rates.

30 The ‘work for more than 49% of the study period’ category was used as the reference group. Those work history groups which proved to be statistically important (and the level of significance) are labelled in the tables with asterisks.
10.2 Working and non-working families

It is commonly accepted that working and non-working parents provide their children with different life chances. For the most part, children of working families are given the advantages of a higher standard of living and more choices in life, while children from non-working households are more prone to poverty and the struggle to alleviate it. Furthermore, the advantages and disadvantages of the different nurturing environments are said to follow the children into adulthood, suggesting an inter-generational transfer of opportunity (Berthoud 1983).

The rise in child poverty in recent years is closely related to the rise in the number of children living in non-working households (Gregg et al., 1999). Traditionally, lone-parent families are correlated with low work rates and, consequently, poverty – both defined as lower incomes and fewer material assets. According to Households Below Average Income (DWP 2002), proportionately more lone-parent families fall below the low-income threshold\(^31\) than any other family group. Compared to all families with dependent children, lone-parent families endure higher rates of hardship – with a poorer standard of living accommodation, more unmanageable debt, fewer material goods and less opportunity for social participation (Vegeris and Perry 2003).

Tackling the high concentrations of worklessness in lone-parent families is an important policy issue. During the 1990s, there was a fundamental shift away from solely supporting a lone mother who was caring for her children at home towards promoting lone mothers into work (Ford and Millar, 1998). Currently lone mothers are encouraged to work through work welfare programmes like the New Deal for Lone Parents, the Personal Advisor scheme and Working Tax Credit (formerly Working Families’ Tax Credit). This shift in policy direction is manifest in the recent Government target that projects 70 per cent of lone parents into full-time work by 2010 (Opportunity for all 2001). The emphasis on mothers’ work also extends to out-of-work couples where partners are encouraged into work through the New Deal for Partners.

A study of work in lone-parent families necessitates consideration of working mothers.\(^32\) It is accepted that a working home environment is better for child development but it is not entirely clear how maternal employment factors into the equation. Working mothers are faced with the moral dilemma: ‘What is more important for you, having money to spend on your children or having time to spend with your children?’ (Dean, 2001). This work-life balance is central to the decision to go out to work. Lone mother’s patterns on movement into work are contrasted with that of mothers in couples (Kasparova et al. 2003). Because they are usually the sole care givers, lone mothers are more likely to wait until their youngest child is of school age before joining the labour market. Proportionately more lone mothers have earnings that qualify them for in-work support. This is because when working mothers in couples enter work they are likely to be contributing to a dual-earner family. In addition, when lone mothers enter work they are more likely to work longer hours (more than 15 hours per week) than mothers in couples.

To date, there is no conclusive evidence on what are the short and longer-term impacts on the children of working lone mothers. Much of the literature on the impact of maternal employment on child development relates to children in couple families (partly because it is rarer for a lone mother to be in work). Also, there is greater emphasis on the pre-school years, a time when it is estimated the child needs more parental contact (see Belsky, 2001, for example). Most of the research has been

\(^{31}\) Low-income was defined as ‘below 60 per cent of median national income’.

\(^{32}\) Non-working lone fathers comprise only four per cent of all non-working lone parents (Marsh and Perry, 2003).
conducted on large longitudinal data sets such as the Birth Cohort surveys and the British Household Panel surveys in Britain and the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY) in the United States. Much of the empirical evidence out of the NLSY studies concentrated on the shorter-term effects of working mothers of pre-school children. Yet others debate the trade-offs between reduced parental time (and control) and the longer-term benefits of more family income (Duncan and Brooks-Gunn (2001); Ermisch and Francesconi (2001); Joshi and Verropoulou (2000)). It is clear that more research on the family effect of maternal employment is needed, particularly the longer-term impact on more mature children.

10.3 Work history in the PRILIF sample – work typology

As reported in Chapter 3, the employment rate of parents grew continuously throughout the 1990s. Between 1991 and 2001, full-time work participation more than doubled from 25 to 56 per cent of the parents working 16 or more hours per week. The majority of parents who entered work remained employed.

However, from the household perspective, the overall rate of any employment accumulated over the course of the study was higher as some parents entered work but for various reasons (e.g., new babies) they were no longer employed in 2001. Other parents re-partnered and their partners were working. In deriving a measure of family work history, it was considered important to represent short-term work experiences as well as the work participation of partners.

Through the longitudinal data set, detailed accounts of respondents’ employment status were available. The vectors covered an 83 month period between 1991 and 1998. There was no data on work status prior to 1991 nor between the period Autumn 1998 to Spring 2001. The main criterion applied was the ‘proportion of time’ the caring parent indicated she was in work of 16 or more hours a week. The resulting categories were compared to the respondents’ work status in 2001 and were found to be quite stable.

A first analysis separated those respondents who did not work (but may have worked one to 15 hours) during the 83 month period from those who did. The latter group were then classified according to the number of months they were employed for 16 or more hours per week. Due to the low number of cases, it was only feasible to divide this group into two subgroups, those working more than half of the study period compared to those working less than half of the time. The resulting respondent work typology is defined in Figure 10.1.

From the resulting analysis, about half (48 per cent) of the parents worked (16 or more hours a week) for more than half of the study period. Most of these parents had a job for the majority of the period and three-quarters were still employed full time in 2001. The remaining parents were split between those who did not work (or worked fewer than 16 hours) – 27 per cent – and those who worked less than half of the study period (26 per cent).
Figure 10.1  Respondent work typology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never worked (27 per cent)</td>
<td>Caring parent worked zero hours or fewer than 16 hours throughout the 1991 to 1998 period. One in four was working 16 or more hours in 2001.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked less than 50 per cent (26 per cent)</td>
<td>Caring parent worked 16 or more hours for less than 50 per cent of the study period. Average (mean) amount of time in work was 17 months or 21 per cent of the time. Just under half (48 per cent) were working 16 or more hours in 2001.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked more than 49 per cent (48 per cent)</td>
<td>Caring parent worked 16 or more hours for at least 50 per cent of the study period. Average (mean) amount of time in work was 72 months or 87 per cent of the time. Just over three-quarters (78 per cent) were working 16 or more hours in 2001.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10.3.1  Employment status of the family unit

Because work is an important factor contributing to the quality of home life, it is important to account for the employment status of the family unit among those parents who were with partners during the study. For parents who re-partnered, an examination of the child measures solely through the work status of the caring parent may not be sufficient (or entirely valid), and work status of the family unit that includes the partners' employment (if applicable) may provide a more accurate view of the influences of work on children.

The partnership typology classifies one in four parents as being in a couple relationship for most of the study (refer to Section 9.3). To derive a typology of work based on the employment status of the family unit we examined the partner employment status (where applicable) over six interviews between 1993 and 2001. The majority of partners were working 16 or more hours at the time of each interview, ranging from 50 per cent to 88 per cent. The resulting work history of the family unit work typology is defined in Figure 10.2.

Figure 10.2  Family unit work typology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never worked (23 per cent)</td>
<td>Neither caring parent nor partner (if applicable) worked 16 or more hours per week throughout the 1991 to 1998 period. Only one in four were full-time working households in 2001.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked less than 50 per cent (26 per cent)</td>
<td>Caring parent worked 16 or more hours per week for less than 50 per cent of the study period. Average (mean) amount of time in work (26 was 17 months or 21 per cent of the time. Partner (if applicable) was reported to be employed 16 or more hours per week on less than three interviews. Just over half (57 per cent) were full-time working households in 2001.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked more than 49 per cent (51 per cent)</td>
<td>Caring parent worked 16 or more hours for at least 50 per cent of the study period. Average (mean) amount of time in work was 72 months or 87 per cent of the time. Partner (if applicable) was reported to be employed 16 or more hours per week on more than two interviews. The vast majority of the cases (85 per cent) were full-time working households in 2001.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When taking partner work status into account, the proportions allocated to the three work history categories shifted only slightly, as the proportion allocated to the group which worked for the majority of the study period grew by only three percentage points. This is because the majority of parents in the study were not involved in a long-term relationship. The effect of the ‘family unit typology’ is therefore only evident in households where a partner was present for a substantial period of time.

A cross-tabulation of work status by partnership status, with the adjusted work status of the family unit for ‘stable couples’, is shown in Table 10.1. Among ‘stable couples’, inclusion of the partner work status has substantially shifted the proportions of families in work. For this group, it increased membership in the highest work category by 16 percentage points (from 50 to 66 per cent) and correspondingly decreased the magnitude of the ‘never worked’ category to less than 10 per cent.

### Table 10.1 Partnership by work status – family level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stable lone parent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never worked</td>
<td>31.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked less than 50% of period</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked more than 49% of period</td>
<td>45.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>331.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All lone parents interviewed in 2001.

Table 10.2 considers some key demographic characteristics according to the different family unit work history typologies, revealing some sharp contrasts. Parents classified as ‘never worked’ were, for the most part, distinguished by indicators of disadvantage: They possessed the lowest level of academic qualifications – about half (48 per cent) had no qualifications. They were also the least likely to have been previously married (34 per cent) and consequently, only 14 per cent were receiving child maintenance in 1991 (compared to 41 per cent among those parents who worked for the majority of the research period).

These ‘markers for disadvantage’ carried through to the most current measures in 2001: Seventy per cent of the ’never worked’ households lived in a social tenancy in 2001, nearly three times the rate when a parent worked for a majority of the past decade. They were also in poorer health – four in ten reported an illness or disability on at least three consecutive interviews, twice the rate reported by those who worked for the majority of the time.

In contrast, those families classified as working the majority of the research period (more than 49 per cent) largely had the advantage. They were more mature and they had older children (freeing up time for work). The majority (62 per cent) had been previously married and had received child maintenance (41 per cent). They had the highest rate of schooling beyond age 16 and the highest level of educational qualifications. They were in better health. Most (70 per cent) owned their accommodation.

According to the indicators listed in Table 10.2, families with histories of lower rates of work participation (less than half of the study period in full-time employment) were, for the most part, better off than those who ‘never worked’ but worse off than those with longer work histories. Overall, they had the largest number of dependent children still in the household in 2001, 67 per cent had two or more dependent children. In common with parents of longer work histories, they had a higher rate of secondary and university academic qualifications (59 per cent).
Table 10.2  Family characteristics of different family unit work typologies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Never worked</th>
<th>Worked less than 50% of period</th>
<th>Worked more than 49% of period</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average age (median) 2001</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lone parent type 1991</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single, never married</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previously married</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previously cohabitating</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number dependent children in household 2001</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 plus</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent work/benefit status 1991</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working 16 plus</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working 16 plus &amp; FC</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working 0-15 hours</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working 0-15 hours &amp; IS</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent work/benefit status 2001</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working 16 plus</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working 16 plus &amp; WFTC</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working 0-15 hours</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working 0-15 hours &amp; IS</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age completed full-time education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 16 or younger</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over age 16</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualifications 2001</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic university</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic secondary</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No qualifications</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing tenure 2001</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner occupier</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social tenant</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private tenant or other</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received maintenance 1991</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ill or disabled on 3 consecutive interviews 1991-2001</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unweighted base 70 105 373 548

However, proportionately more of these families with low rates of work participation received in-work support in 2001, indicating lower wages from employment. Of those who worked, approximately half received WFTC in 2001 compared to approximately a quarter of those with longer work histories. Disadvantage was also indicated by the higher proportion of these families who lived in social accommodation in 2001 (62 per cent) compared to parents who worked for the majority of the research period (25 per cent). Poor health may also have contributed to their lower rate of work as three in ten reported an illness or disability on at least three consecutive interviews.

10.3.2 Family work history and the PRILIF children

In 1991, when the average age of the children was ten years, only a minority (23 per cent) lived in full-time\(^{33}\) working households. A further nine per cent had a mother who worked one to 15 hours. As explained in Chapter 3, the rate of full-time employment among PRILIF parents gradually rose each year of the research study until half of the parents were working in 1998. Still, 45 per cent of the children had a non-working parent in 1998.

Age of the children did make a difference for mother’s work status.\(^{34}\) Figure 10.3 shows the parents’ steady flow into full-time work over the six interviews. It also shows that the older children (16 to 28 years in 2001) were more likely to have a mother in full-time employment during each of the years. Starting in 1991, one-third of these children had a parent in full-time employment. This was when the average age of a child in this older age group was 11 years. By 1998, when the children averaged 18 years of age, the maternal rate of employment was 53 per cent. In contrast, children under age 16 were less likely to have a working mother during the research period. In 1991, 12 per cent of these children had a working mother, a time when the oldest children of this group were of pre-school age. By 1998 only 34 per cent of the children in the two younger age groups had a mother who was employed full time. This corresponded with average child ages of ten and four in the respective age groups. Thus, mothers did return to work but the rate of maternal employment depended on their children’s ages.

This analysis reveals that a substantial portion of the children had a working mother, especially in the later stages of the research. These findings correspond to the observation that mother’s employment partly hinges on the age of the youngest dependent child. Particularly among single parents, work participation rates rise as the youngest child turns school age (Marsh and Perry 2003).

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\(^{33}\) Full time is defined as 16 hours or more per week.

\(^{34}\) Throughout the study the majority of lone parent fathers were in full-time employment. By 1998 only one respondent father was not working.
Table 10.3 describes the work history typologies by the child age groups. As stated in Section 10.3.1, the analysis focuses on the work history of the family unit, however, work history of the caring parent is included in the table in order to show how history of work shifts once the partners’ work status is taken into account for children of various age ranges.

Looking first at the right hand column in Table 10.3, distributions on categories of work history for the caring parent and for the family unit differed only marginally for all children combined. The proportion of children belonging to families which worked for more than half of the study period increased by only four percentage points when the partner’s work history is taken into account, from 44 to 48 per cent. This can be explained by differences in the instances of parents partnering (or re-partnering) across the different age groups.

As reported in Chapter 2, the highest rates of partnering occurred among parents with children aged three to 10 years, followed by those with children in the 11 to 15 age range. This change in family
structure corresponds to shifts in distributions across the different work typologies for these child age groups. The largest contrasts are seen among three to 10 year olds where the proportion classified into a household that worked for more than half of the study period shifts 14 percentage points, from 28 to 42 per cent, taking partner’s work status into account. Similarly, but to a lesser extent, five per cent more 11 to 15 year olds were classified as being part of a household where a parent worked for the majority of the study period once the partner’s work was taken into consideration.

Fewer parents of the older children (16 to 28 years) joined a partner during the 1990s and consequently, distributions across the work history typologies were quite similar for this age range. In addition, the older mothers of this child cohort were also more likely to be employed so that the addition of a working partner did not affect the family work status. Because the older child cohort constitutes half of the PRILIF child sample, the similarities observed between the two work history typologies reflect in the overall proportions – the right hand column in Table 10.3.

To summarise, proportions of children falling into the different family work history categories differed by child age groups. The largest proportion of children in each age group were associated with a family which worked for the majority of the study period, however, this was highest amongst the oldest children, aged 16 years or more. A substantial proportion of children were associated with a family that ‘never worked’ – 24 per cent overall – and this proportion varied little across the child age groups.

10.4 Physical well-being

This section compares a variety of health measures – general health, disability or long-term illness, hospital admissions, alcohol consumption and smoking behaviour – according to the work history of the family unit.

10.4.1 General health

Children’s health is generally associated with family work status. Table 10.4 shows reports of children’s health. The figures on all children suggest slightly better child health among the families that worked for the majority of the research period – 81 per cent of the children were reported to be in ‘good’ health and this was six to eight percentage points higher than reports of ‘good’ health for the lesser working groups.

The most important child age range in this analysis is probably the three to ten year olds who would have required the most care during the 1990s. The number of cases was small but the figures do suggest the youngest children from working families were reported to be healthier – 66 per cent of children from households that ‘never worked’ were classified in ‘good’ health as opposed to 87 per cent of those from households that were in work for the majority of the study. Reports of ‘not good’ health were also higher for children from families of little or no work.
### Table 10.4 General health by work history of the family unit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General health</th>
<th>Never worked</th>
<th>Worked less than 50% of period</th>
<th>Worked more than 49% of period</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly good</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not good</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>707</td>
<td>1101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 to 10 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly good</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not good</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 to 15 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly good</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not good</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 to 28 years (resident)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly good</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not good</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>354</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 to 28 years (non-resident)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly good</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not good</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### 10.4.2 Disability or illness

As with poor health, child disability and long-term illness is generally associated with family work status. Overall, in the PRILIF sample, there was a higher rate of disability/illness among children with family histories of little or no work, for whom the proportion who were ill/disabled was six to seven percentage points higher than those reported for children from predominantly working families (Table 10.5).

Reports of child disability/illness remained relatively higher for children with backgrounds of little or no work for children in the lower two age ranges. Among three to 10 year olds the incidence of a health condition was about two to three times higher among children from family backgrounds of little or no work. Likewise, reports of a health condition among 11 to 15 year olds from a background of little or no work were about double the rates reported for children from a predominantly working background. The association between low levels of work and childhood illness was supported in a multivariate analysis on children aged three to 15 years.
Table 10.5 Disability or long-term illness by work history of the family unit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disability or illness</th>
<th>Never worked</th>
<th>Worked less than 50% of period</th>
<th>Worked more than 49% of period</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>707</td>
<td>1101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 to 10 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>23 ***</td>
<td>28 ***</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 to 15 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>31 ***</td>
<td>28 ***</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 to 28 years (resident)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>354</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 to 28 years (non-resident)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significance: *** < or = 1%, ** < or = 5%, * < or = 10%. Refer to Appendix B for full models.

This finding is supported in other research on work and children’s health (Vegeris and Perry 2003). But, although there is a reliable connection between family poor health and low work participation, it is not clear which factor in the sequence of events usually follows from the other - that is, if a non-working environment contributed to the deterioration of health or if the care of a family member with poor health did not make work possible. From the multivariate analysis, other factors linked to the likelihood that younger children (three to 15 years) had a disability/illness were the type of family accommodation and their parents’ level of education. Refer to Table B.2 for the model specification.

10.4.3 Hospital admissions

Table 10.6 shows that young children from a non-working family were the most likely to be admitted to hospital, particularly contrasted with children from homes in which the parent worked for the majority of the study period (compare 21 to eight per cent). However, the number of cases in the sample is small, and this finding was not found to be statistically significant when accounting for other factors in a multivariate analysis. Factors identified as more important to the likelihood that a child was admitted to hospital for an overnight stay were the families’ experience of hardship (Section 11.4.3), the type of family accommodation in 2001 and the presence of a health condition in the child. Refer to Table B.3 for the model specification.
Table 10.6  Hospitalisation in young children by work history of the family unit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child has been in hospital in last 12 months</th>
<th>Worked less than 50% of period</th>
<th>Worked more than 49% of period</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: 3 to 10 year old children of parents who responded in 2001.

10.4.4  Alcohol consumption

Table 10.7 displays figures on reports of drinking alcohol among 11 to 15 year olds. According to the regression results, youths from non-working families were significantly less likely to have reported they had an alcoholic beverage in the past month. Compared to children from a family with a parent who worked full time for the majority of the study period, children from a non-working household were three times less likely to have reported drinking alcohol. But the drinking behaviour of children from families that worked for a shorter duration of the study (less than 50 per cent) did not significantly differ from that of children from predominantly working families. The parent partnership history (refer to Section 9.4) and the type of family accommodation were also significant factors in the model (refer to Table B.4). For this sample, the fact that family backgrounds of little work and living in a social tenancy acted as negative influences suggests that drinking in youths is associated with a more affluent lifestyle.

Table 10.7  Alcohol consumption in youth by work history of the family unit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>11 to 15 year olds</th>
<th>Never worked</th>
<th>Worked less than 50% of period</th>
<th>Worked more than 49% of period</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How many times in the past four weeks have you had an alcoholic drink?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>78***</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once or twice</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Several times</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: Children who responded to the youth survey.
Significance: *** < or = 1%, ** < or = 5%, * < or = 10%. Refer to Appendix B for full models.

10.4.5  Smoking behaviour

The incidence of cigarette smoking by children with different family work histories varied according to the two age groups presented in Table 10.8.
Table 10.8 Smoking behaviour by work history of the family unit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Worked less than 50% of period</th>
<th>Worked more than 49% of period</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never worked</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has smoked at least one cigarette in the past week</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has ever smoked cigarettes regularly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bases: For 13 to 15 year olds: Those who responded to the youth survey. For 16 plus years: Those who responded to the older child survey.

Those aged 13 to 15 years\textsuperscript{35} from households with a history of no work were less likely to report they had smoked compared to those from the two working groups. This finding corresponds with that reported on drinking in youths (Section 10.4.4) where it was suggested that access to money may contribute to the behaviour.

On the other hand, older children (16 to 28 years) from a workless family background were more likely to report smoking behaviour (compare 54 per cent to 40 to 41 per cent among older children from working families). But the number of cases in these groups was small. According to multivariate analyses, carried out separately on the two age groups in the sample, family work history was not significantly related to cigarette smoking. The analysis identified partnership history (Section 10.4.5) and the family history of hardship (Section 11.4.5) as significant factors. Having a parent who smoked also increased the chances that the child would take up smoking. Analysis of the sample revealed that if a parent smoked, a child was two times more likely to do so. Details on the models are in Tables B.5 and B.6.

10.5 Measures of social adjustment

This section reports measures on truancy, trouble with the law and youth violence for children according to the family work typology.

10.5.1 Truancy behaviour

Table 10.9 reports the incidence of truant behaviour, meaning ‘missing classes without excuse’, separately for the 11 to 15 year old and the 16 to 28 year old age groups. The reader should bear in mind that reports on the younger children reflect their recent behaviour over the past year (including the parents’ answers in cases where the child did not respond) while results on 16 to 28 year olds are

\textsuperscript{35} No 11 or 12 year olds reported they had smoked.
retrospective responses on whether the individual ever missed classes and did this frequently. Truancy behaviour did increase with the age of the child (refer to Section 8.5.1) but the wording of the question, covering a shorter time span for the younger children, can partly explain why reports of truancy were twice as high among the older age group overall.

Truancy did vary according to the work history of the family, occurring less frequently among children from families that were in full-time employment for a greater part of the 1990s (working more than 49 per cent of the study period). Compared to children associated with the highest level of working parent, children aged 11 to 15 years, both from non-working households and those from families where a parent worked for a shorter period, were statistically more likely to report they had skipped classes over the past year. Among the 16 to 28 year olds, only the group of children with a parent who worked for less than half of the study period were identified as more likely to truant compared to children with parents who worked for a longer period of time. It is not entirely clear why the results differed by child age groups. However, the number of cases is small in the sample of 16 to 28 year olds from families where the parent(s) remained without work during the study period. Refer to Tables B.7 and B.8 for logistic regression models.

Table 10.9  Reports of truancy by work history of the family unit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Truancy</th>
<th>Never worked</th>
<th>Worked less than 50% of period</th>
<th>Worked more than 49% of period</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child (11-15 yrs) frequently missed school without an excuse</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>5 **</td>
<td>15 ***</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child (16-28 yrs) frequently missed school without an excuse</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>20 ***</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>375</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bases: For 11 to 15 year olds: All with parents who responded in 2001. For 16 plus years: All who responded to the older child survey.

Significance: *** < or = 1%, ** < or = 5%, * < or = 10%. Refer to Appendix B for full models.

10.5.2  Trouble with the law

The results are reported in Table 10.10 broken down by the work history of the family unit. As in reports on truant behaviour, the older age group were twice as likely to report an offence and this is likely to be due to the longer time period covered by the question posed to 16 to 28 year olds.36

The results suggest that the work history of the family did make a difference regarding involvement with the law. Among the youth sample, the likelihood of being in trouble with the police was far greater for children from families that worked for a relatively short period over the study. Yet, among

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36 Information on being in trouble with the police was collected in a different way according to the age group of the child (see Section 9.7.2).
the older children, reports of a legal offence were significantly less frequent among those from a family with a history of no work but more frequent among children from families that had worked. Among the 11 to 15 year olds, partnership history (refer to 9.7.2) was also significantly related to trouble with the police. Among the older children, additional factors associated with the likelihood of committing an offence were family size, the child’s gender and the parent’s birth age and level of education. Refer to Tables B.9 and B.10 for details.

### Table 10.10 Trouble with the law by work history of the family unit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family work history</th>
<th>Never worked</th>
<th>Worked less than 50% of period</th>
<th>Worked more than 49% of period</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child (11-15 yrs) has been in trouble with the police</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16 ***</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child (16-28 yrs) has been charged with a driving/other offence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>8 *</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>375</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bases: For 11 to 15 year olds: All with parents who responded in 2001. For 16 plus years: All who responded to the older child survey.

Significance: *** < or = 1%, ** < or = 5%, * < or = 10%. Refer to Appendix B for full models.

The results concerning the different work histories are not consistent with the age groups. But the differences need to be interpreted according to the different contexts evoked by the questions addressed to children of different ages. Over the recent year, youths from families with a history of a relatively short period of work were the most likely to be reported to have been in trouble with the police.

For older children, the results suggest that children from working families were more likely to commit an offence. It is not clear whether answering ‘yes’ to the question referred to a driving offence or some other offence. It could be that fewer older children from non-working families (and by implication, less affluent families), had access to a car so they had less opportunity to commit a driving offence. In addition, given the small sample size (36 cases) the findings should be treated with caution.

### 10.5.3 Youth violence

Table 10.11 combines responses from parents and children (11 to 15 years) regarding the incidence of fighting and vandalism.  

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37 The questions posed to children and to parents covered a different timeframe. Children were asked about their behaviour over the past month while parents were asked if their child’s school had contacted them about their child being involved in fighting or vandalism at any time over the past year. The majority of the responses were supplied by the children (93 per cent) and, therefore, reflect a one-month time period.
Table 10.11 Violence committed by youths by work history of the family unit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Youth violence (11 to 15 years)</th>
<th>Never worked</th>
<th>Worked less than 50% of period</th>
<th>Worked more than 49% of period</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fighting in past month</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>26 **</td>
<td>26 *</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vandalism in past month</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>20 *</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significance: *** < or = 1%, ** < or = 5%, * < or = 10%. Refer to Appendix B for full models.

Both anti-social behaviours were associated with the amount of time a family was in work during the 1990s. Children from families with low levels of work were more likely to be associated with reports of fighting behaviour. Multivariate analysis identified a child from a family with a history of no work (or very little work) as three times more likely to have been involved in a fight compared to children from homes where the parent worked for most of the study period. The association between children from a family that had worked for a short period (less than half of the study period) was not as strong. They were identified as being two times more likely to be involved in a fight, compared to children from families that had worked for a majority of the time. The results suggest that a working household created an environment where children were less compelled to resort to physical fighting. Results from the logistic regression model are presented in Table B.11. The results also identified male children as being more likely to report they had been involved in a fight.

Vandalism was defined as ‘deliberately breaking or damaging property that didn’t belong to you’. But this form of violence was not found to be more prevalent among children from families that had experienced low levels of work. Rather, multivariate results identified children from non-working backgrounds as less likely to have reported they had committed vandalism. And despite the higher incidence of vandalism reported among children with parents who had worked less than half of the study period (refer to Table 10.11), this was not statistically significant when other variables were taken into account. According to the model (reported in Table B.12), there were several other factors contributing to the likelihood of vandalism in youths: parent partnership history (Section 9.7.3), history of hardship (Section 11.5.3), type of current accommodation, parent’s level of education and family size.

10.5.4 Self-esteem

Self-esteem was measured among the older children (16 to 28 years) by way of an 11-item scale. Scores were divided into thirds identifying high, moderate and low levels of self-esteem (refer to Section 8.5.4 for an explanation on how these were derived). Results reported by work history of the family unit show a clear distinction between children from working and non-working families (Table 10.12). Older children from families with a history of no work were far less likely to score in the high range of self-esteem. This finding was supported by logistic regression analysis. Other factors associated with the likelihood of displaying a higher level of self-esteem in the sample were parent partnership history (Section 9.7.4) and parent’s level of education. Figures in Table 10.12 also report...
a higher incidence of scores in the ‘low self-esteem’ range among children with histories of no work. However, this finding was not statistically significant. Refer to Tables B.13 and B.14 for model specifications.

Table 10.12  Self-esteem among older children by work history of the family unit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of self-esteem</th>
<th>Never worked</th>
<th>Worked less than 50% of period</th>
<th>Worked more than 49% of period</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>22 *</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>375</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bases: All who responded to the older child survey.
Significance: *** < or = 1%, ** < or = 5%, * < or = 10%. Refer to Appendix B for full models.

10.6 Education

This section examines the association between different backgrounds on family work status and various measures on education – early school leaving among 16 to 28 year olds and the intention to leave school early among 11 to 15 year olds; and the attainment of higher educational qualifications among the older children. Within the youth sample, it then goes on to examine attitudes towards school performance.

10.6.1 Early school leavers

Among youths (11 to 15 years), reports on early school leaving reflect the child’s intention to finish school by age 16. Among the older children (16 to 28 years), these reports account for the actual experience of leaving school at or before age 16.

Figures in Table 10.13 suggest that these responses on early school leaving did vary according to the families’ history of work. Among 11 to 15 year olds, those with parents who worked for the majority of the study period were the least likely to report they intended to finish school by age 16 – 12 per cent compared to the 17 and 25 per cent reported by children belonging to the other work groups. However, when other variables were taken into consideration, this difference between groups was not significant.

In the sample of children aged 16 to 28 years, those with parents who worked for the majority of the study period were also the least likely to finish school early, at a rate of 36 per cent, substantially less than children whose parents worked for a short period (46 per cent) and significantly less than those from a family background of little or no work (54 per cent). The figures suggest that children from working households are more likely to remain in school.

Family partnership history (Section 9.8.1), family history of hardship (Section 11.6.1), parent’s level of education and family size were predictive factors in the regression models for both age groups. Additionally, family ethnicity and age of the birth parent were significantly related to early school leaving among the 16 to 28 year olds. Refer to Tables B.15 and B.16.
Table 10.13 Early school leaving by work history of the family unit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Early school leaving</th>
<th>Never worked</th>
<th>Worked less than 50% of period</th>
<th>Worked more than 49% of period</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child (11-15 yrs) plans to finish school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>at or before age 16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child (16-28 yrs) finished school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>at or before age 16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>54 *</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>485</td>
<td>677</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bases: For 11 to 15 year olds: All who responded to the youth survey. For 16 plus years: All who have finished formal education and with parents who responded in 2001.

Significance: *** or = 1%, ** or = 5%, * or = 10%. Refer to Appendix B for full models.

10.6.2 Advanced academic qualifications

Information on the highest educational qualification was supplied by both the older child and, in their absence, the parent.

Overall, one in four children possessed an A level qualification or better\(^{38}\) but the rate of attainment varied across family work history groups. As shown in Table 10.14, those with parents who were in work for the majority of the previous decade were more than twice as likely to possess an advanced academic qualification – compare 36 to 13 and 15 per cent. This finding corresponds with that reported in Section 10.6.1 where older children from families where the parents were in work for the longest period of time were the least likely to finish school by age 16. However, the difference was not found to be statistically significant when accounting for other factors such as the parents’ level of education (refer to Table B.17 for the model specification).

In the sample, children with a parent who possessed an advanced qualification were three times more likely to do the same for themselves. History of family hardship (Section 11.6.2) and the birth age of the parent were also found to be significant predictors for advanced academic attainment.

\(^{38}\) This analysis includes those children who were still in full-time education, after completion of an A level or equivalent qualification.
Table 10.14 Advanced educational qualifications by work history of the family unit  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advanced academic qualifications</th>
<th>Never worked</th>
<th>Worked less than 50% of period</th>
<th>Worked more than 49% of period</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>560</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


10.6.3 Youth attitudes towards school performance

The level of work in the family background also made a difference to youths’ attitudes towards school performance. Eleven to 15 year olds were asked ‘How much does it mean to you to do well at school?’.

The majority (86 per cent) of children responded ‘a great deal’ or ‘quite a lot’. But school performance mattered most to those children from families where parents worked for the majority of the study period, where 94 per cent had a positive attitude, compared to 78 and 80 per cent in the other groups (Table 10.15). This difference was statistically significant, confirming the role parents’ work has in stimulating a positive environment for children’s attitudes towards learning. Parent partnership history (Section 9.4) and family size were also important contributing factors. Refer to Table B.18.

Table 10.15 Youth attitude towards school performance by work history of the family unit  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude towards school (11 to 15 years)</th>
<th>Never worked</th>
<th>Worked less than 50% of period</th>
<th>Worked more than 49% of period</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How much does it mean to you to do well at school?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A great deal</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quite a lot</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A bit but not much</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very little</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quite a lot/a great deal</td>
<td>80 *</td>
<td>78 **</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A bit/very little</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bases: All who responded to the youth survey.
Significance: *** < or = 1%, ** < or = 5%, * < or = 10%. Refer to Appendix B for full models.
10.7 Measures among the older children

This section reports on measures of work and benefits status and describes household formation among older children, according to the different family work histories. The majority of this sample were comprised of non-resident older children who, in 2001, had a median age of 23 years. There were slightly more females (56 per cent) than males (44 per cent). The age and gender composition did not differ among the work typology groups.

10.7.1 Work and benefit receipt

Table 10.16 displays the employment status for children aged 17 to 28 years, broken down by family history of work. The figures show some correspondence between parents’ work history and child’s current status with a lower rate of employment (50 per cent) and a higher rate of unemployment (20 per cent) among children from households with a history of little or no work. The lowest rate of unemployment (six per cent) was among children with parents who worked for the longest period during the study. These children also displayed the highest rate of school attendance (24 per cent) which corroborates with the findings on educational attainment reported in Sections 10.6.1 and 10.6.2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Older child work status</th>
<th>Never worked</th>
<th>Worked less than 50% of period</th>
<th>Worked more than 49% of period</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Working 16 plus hours</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working 1-15 hours</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed &amp; seeking work</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time education</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training scheme</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking after family</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sick or disabled</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>617</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Working 16 plus hours</th>
<th>Seeking work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work status among those available for work</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>27 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>315</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significance: *** < or = 1%, ** < or = 5%, * < or = 10%. Refer to Appendix B for full models.

An analysis of employment rates for only those children who were available for work (economically active) also confirmed the role of family work on children’s future work. Regression analysis

---

The analysis did not include those who were in full-time education, or working less than 16 hours, or with caring responsibilities or those who were sick or disabled.
identified family work history to be a significant factor in predicting children’s likelihood of employment in 2001. Compared to children from families that were in work for the majority of the study period, those who had backgrounds of little or no work were three times more likely to be seeking work. Other factors related to being out-of-work among children were the parent’s and child’s level of education, parent birth age and child gender. Refer to Table B.19 for details.

Only those children who responded to the older child survey were asked about their receipt of benefits or tax credits. Out-of-work benefit receipt did vary according to the family’s work history but the receipt of WFTC did not (refer to Table 10.17). The results may not be robust due to the small number of cases associated with the ‘never worked’ group. In the sample, substantially more children from family backgrounds of little or no work had ever received an out-of-work benefit (63 per cent), contrasted with children from backgrounds of both lesser (38 per cent) or more (36 per cent) rates of work. Half of the older children associated with non-working households had ever received Jobseeker’s Allowance while a quarter had ever received Income Support. These proportions were more than 50 per cent higher than those reported for the other family work history groups. According to regression results, children from a family background of little or no work were three times more likely to have received an out-of-work benefit by 2001, compared to children with parents who worked for the majority of the study period. The parent’s and child’s levels of education and ethnicity were also important factors in the model (refer to Table B.20).

### Table 10.17 Benefit and tax credit receipt by work history of the family unit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Never worked</th>
<th>Worked less than 50% of period</th>
<th>Worked more than 49% of period</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Receipt of JSA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ever</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receipt of IS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ever</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any out-of-work benefit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ever</td>
<td><strong>63</strong>*</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receipt of WFTC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ever</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td><strong>36</strong></td>
<td>65</td>
<td><strong>274</strong></td>
<td><strong>375</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Bases:** 17 to 28 year olds who responded to the older child survey.

**Significance:** *** < or = 1%, ** < or = 5%, * < or = 10%. Refer to Appendix B for full models.

### 10.7.2 Family and household formation

Table 10.18 reports marital status and tenure information for non-resident older children. Again, the number of cases available for analysis was low for the group of children associated with non-working households (n = 41) so results may not be robust. Children with parents who worked for the majority of the study period were the most likely to be single (58 per cent). In contrast, a similar proportion (63
per cent) of children with a family background of little or no work were, or had been, involved in a partnership. These data suggest that, despite being of a similar age, children from different family work backgrounds were perhaps at a different stage in the life process in 2001. Information on child tenure also reveals that children from family backgrounds of little or no work had the highest rate of social tenancy (38 per cent) which was nearly twice that of children with parents who worked for the majority of the study period (20 per cent). But the rate of home ownership did not differ to the same extent.

Table 10.18 also reports the incidence of young motherhood among female children between the ages of 18 and 28 years. The analysis refers to young motherhood because the median age of the birth mother at time of birth was 19 years. Although the number of cases was small for those with a history of little or no work, the data suggest that daughters with a family background of little work were more likely to have children early in life. Women in this group were twice as likely to have children, compared to those from families where the parent was in work for a greater part of the study - compare 46 to 24 per cent. The relationship between young motherhood and family work history was upheld in a regression analysis. Other significant factors in the model were age and education of the child, birth age of the parent, and family size. Refer to Table B.22 for details.

### Table 10.18 Household formation by work history of the family unit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital status</th>
<th>Never worked</th>
<th>Worked less than 50% of period</th>
<th>Worked more than 49% of period</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single (never married)</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohabiting</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previously married</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social tenant</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private tenant/other</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Young motherhood          |              |                                 |                                |       |
| Female children (18-28 years) |            |                                 |                                |       |
| Mother                    | 46 **        | 37                              | 24                             | 32    |
| Non-mother                | 54           | 63                              | 76                             | 68    |
| Unweighted base           | 34           | 46                              | 200                            | 280   |

**Bases:** For marital status and tenure: All non-resident 16 to 28 year olds with parents who responded in 2001. For young motherhood: Female children aged 18 to 28 years.

**Significance:** *** $< o_r = 1\%$, ** $< o_r = 5\%$, * $< o_r = 10\%$. Refer to Appendix B for full models.

### 10.8 Summary

In this chapter, the PRILIF children were distinguished according to the work status of the family unit over a ten year period. The focus was on full-time work of 16 or more hours per week. In 1991, when all children were part of a lone-parent family, only 23 per cent of the children lived in working
households. By 2001, factoring in both parents’ and partners’ work status, the proportion of children associated with a working family rose to 62 per cent.

A typology on family work history was derived, accounting for the work histories of the caring parent as well as a partner (where applicable). According to the typology, half the children (48 per cent) came from a background where parents worked for the majority of the research period (more than half of the timeframe), 28 per cent were associated with a family that worked for a short period (less than half of the timeframe), while the remaining 24 per cent of the children had family backgrounds distinguished by very little or no work.

The age of the child was a significant variable in the distribution of family work history – parent work participation rates increased as the children aged during the course of the ten year study so that by 2001, the highest work rates were associated with parents of children in the eldest age category (16 to 28 year olds). In addition, children with parents who had entered a stable partnership were more likely to be associated with working households.

Among the youngest children, the research supported the common observation that children’s poor health is related to low levels of work. As a lone parent is usually the sole care giver, it stands to reason that the health of the children is associated with the parent’s ability to work. However, the direction of causation was not clear from the data, suggesting that a workless environment may also have contributed to the deterioration of the children’s health.

Family work status history was found to be an important distinguishing factor on a variety of child measures while controlling for other important influences in the household environment such as type of accommodation, parents’ education, family structure, experience of hardship and characteristics like family size and ethnicity.

As would be expected, the largest contrasts in the sample occurred between children with parents who worked for the majority of the 10 year period of study and children from families which worked very little or not at all. Compared to children from predominantly working households, 11 to 15 year olds from non-working households or with parents who worked for only a short period were:

- more likely to have been involved in a physical fight in the past month;
- more likely to report they had committed vandalism (only those from non-working families);
- more likely to report they had frequently truanted from school;
- more likely to have been in trouble with the law (only those from families that worked for a short period);
- more likely to have a negative attitude towards doing well in school.

But 11 to 15 year olds from non-working families were less likely to report having consumed alcohol in the past month.

There were also significant contrasts observed among the older children from different family work status backgrounds. Compared to children with parents who worked for the majority of the study period, 16 to 28 year olds from families that worked for a short period of the study were more likely to report they had truanted from school. More significant contrasts were found between older children from predominantly working families and those from predominantly non-working households. Compared to children with parents who worked for the majority of the study period, 16 to 28 year olds from non-working families were:
• less likely to score in the high range on a self-esteem index;
• more likely to finish school early, at or before age 16;
• more likely to be unemployed and seeking work;
• more likely to have received out-of-work benefits; and
• female children were more likely to have had children at a young age.

But children from predominantly non-working homes were less likely to have committed a driving or other offence (a possible explanation for this is that children from poorer, non-working backgrounds were probably less likely to have access to a car).

Among the older children, the work history of the family was observed to have a greater impact on the children’s measures of schooling (leaving school early) and future work status. The fact that significant differences were found among the older children, many of whom were no longer living at home, and in latent measures such as work status and receipt of out-of-work support indicates just how enduring the effects of a non-working environment can be on children’s life chances.

Family work history was not found to be a significant factor in predicting child measures on:
• general health;
• the incidence of hospital admissions among young children;
• smoking behaviour;
• achievement of advanced academic qualifications.
11 History of family hardship

11.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the living standards in the children’s home environments. A hardship index is used to summarise a variety of indicators on poor living standards – access to food and material goods, measures of debt and need. Living conditions improved for many families during the research period. When first interviewed in 1991, six in ten families were in hardship and by 1998 (the most recent measure) this proportion had dropped to four in ten families. The improvement corresponds with the ageing of the sample and increased employment and partnering rates. Still, hardship was a serious issue for the PRILIF parents and their children. Child measures are analysed according to the level of cumulative hardship their families endured during the study period.

The chapter starts with a brief overview of research into living standards followed by an outline on the derivation of the hardship typology used to analyse the child measures. Section 11.3 defines family background characteristics and the distribution of different child age ranges on the hardship typology. Sections 11.4 to 11.7 analyse the child measures according to family backgrounds on hardship. As in the previous chapters, the analysis follows a descriptive approach. We used logistic regression modelling to test for observed differences between the groups while accounting for other factors that may influence the measures. Details on the models are contained in Appendix B. The reader is advised to refer to Chapter 8 for further explanations on the child measures.

11.2 Hardship and living standards

There is a distinction in the empirical literature between ‘income living standards’ and ‘asset living standards’. The Households Below Average Income (DWP 2002) series of research report the former approach. The research promotes household disposable income as a proxy for household living standards. Given that the quantity and quality of our material comforts and social participation are mainly acquired through monetary means, this assumption seems valid. HBAI monitors proportions of different demographic groups on low income (defined as ‘below 60 per cent of national median income’). Low income is currently one of the official measures for monitoring poverty in British families with children (Opportunity for all 2002).

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40 The ‘low hardship’ category was used as the reference group. Those hardship groups which proved to be statistically important (and the level of significance) are labelled in the tables with asterisks.
The PRILIF hardship index represents the ‘assets’ approach to monitoring living standards, although disposable income is indirectly monitored through measures on debt and financial anxiety. The focus is on expenditure of monetary and other resources. This approach comes from a long tradition of measurement refined in the Breadline Britain surveys (Mack and Lansley 1985) on deprivation; the Poverty and Social Exclusion survey (Gordon et al. 2000) on what constitutes necessities in modern life; and more recently at the Policy Studies Institute, through the Families and Children Study (FACS) Hardship Index (Vegeris and Perry 2003) on relative deprivation, problem housing and financial trouble.

The authors of the FACS report compared the HBAI and hardship approaches to living standards on a 2001 cross-sectional sample of families. The correspondence between the measures was good. Eighty-two per cent of families in severe hardship (the most extreme level of hardship) were also found to fall below the low-income threshold.

Measures on living standards distinguish different demographic groups. All approaches are unanimous in identifying a disproportionately high number of lone-parent families with poor living standards. For example, HBAI reports that the risk of being in low income for children from single parent families was over twice that for children in couple families. In the FACS series, the proportion of lone-parent families substantially reduced from 70 per cent in 1999 to 58 per cent in 2001. Still, the proportions were relatively large. In 2001, the risk of being in hardship was over 50 per cent greater for lone-parent households, compared to couples with children (Vegeris and Perry 2003).

Probably one of the most important mediating forces on children’s futures is poverty and the experience of hardship that poverty brings. It is increasingly asserted that the lack of means and resources within single-parent families are what limit the children’s potential (Duncan and Brooks-Gunn (2001); Ely et al. (2000); Joshi et al. (1999); Rodriguez Sumaza (2001)). It is the high concentration of economic disadvantage within these household environments that identifies poor outcomes with children from lone-parent families. Children from low-income couple families are also associated with poor outcomes (Vegeris and Perry 2003).

The PRILIF sample of children provides the opportunity to explore differences in children who, as a group, come from backgrounds of relatively poor living standards and to see if their varied exposure to hardship has any bearing on the measured outcomes.

11.3 History of hardship in the PRILIF sample – hardship typology

Hardship, as the concept is used in this report, is defined as a low standard of living – going without essential items or not being able to manage family finances. The hardship index was devised for the original 1991 PRILIF survey of low-income families (Marsh and McKay 1993). A seven-point range of severity of hardship (lowest=0, highest=6) was constructed from more than 60 items in the questionnaire. The hardship index combines markers for problem debts, the inability to afford essential items of household expenditure or social participation, unmet need and financial anxiety. The seven-point summary measure was constructed by adding one point for each ‘yes’ answer to the following questions:
Does the family have:

- Two or more problem debts?  
- Two or more items on the food list scored ‘unable to afford’?
- Three or more items on the clothing and leisure lists scored ‘unable to afford’?
- Four or more items on the consumer durables list scored ‘unable to afford’?
- Both the financial anxiety measures scored at the highest point (‘Always worried about money’ and ‘In deep financial trouble’)?
- Both the questions asking for spontaneous estimates of items needed for adults and children named by respondent?

A score of zero signified the family was managing to avoid hardship while a threshold of three or more was used to distinguish families in severe hardship.

### 11.3.1 Hardship typology

Measures on hardship were collected during the six interviews between 1991 and 1998. Unlike partnership and work status, longitudinal data on hardship is limited to the six observations. Thus a hardship typology was created differently.

In order to gauge the degree of hardship a family endured over the research period, each raw score (ranging from 0 to 6) on hardship was summed to derive a ‘cumulative hardship score’. These ranged from 0 to 29. From these scores, three substantive groups were defined (refer to Figure 11.1):

- low hardship meaning the family managed to predominantly avoid hardship during the study;
- a spell of moderate hardship meaning the family endured low levels of hardship averaging out to about two problems per interview measure; and
- a spell of severe hardship meaning the family measured with three or more problems on about half of the interviews.

The largest group in the typology were those who experienced a spell of moderate hardship (46 per cent). About a third of the families were classified with a low level of hardship and about one in five (22 per cent) were classified with a spell in severe hardship.

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41 A problem debt occurs when the respondent fails to keep up with a specified schedule of repayment, including personal debts to friends and family that might be thought due but have little prospect of repayment at the time of interview.
Figure 11.1 Hardship typology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Typology</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low hardship</td>
<td>Caring parent measured very low on the cumulative hardship scale. Over half (57 per cent) experienced no hardship over all six observations. The remaining 43 per cent experienced zero hardship on five out of six observations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(32 per cent)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spell of moderate hardship (46 per cent)</td>
<td>Caring parent measured in some hardship (score of one or two) on most observations. Average (median) score on the cumulative index was seven, or about two problems per interview measure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spell of severe hardship (22 per cent)</td>
<td>Caring parent measured in some degree of hardship (at least one problem) on all six observations. Eighty per cent scored in severe hardship (score of three or more) on at least three observations. Average (median) score on the cumulative index was fifteen, or about three problems per interview measure.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The hardship typology assumes that those families categorised with low hardship would have experienced the most favourable living conditions over the study period and would be the best off. Those who experienced a spell of severe hardship are considered to be the worst off families having endured persistent hardship. Table 11.1 describes the hardship groups on key demographic characteristics of the caring parent. As would be expected, the largest contrasts were between parents in the low hardship group and those who experienced a spell of severe hardship.

Nearly all of the markers for parents with a history of severe hardship are also indicators of poverty. They were younger than average, with larger families and younger children (39 per cent had three or more dependent age children living with them in 2001). They were the most likely group to have been previously cohabiting, nearly twice the rate of the other groups. They were half as likely to be receiving maintenance in 1991 compared to parents with a background of low hardship (compare 21 to 42 per cent). Two-thirds were residing in a social tenancy, four times the rate of those parents in the low hardship category.
Table 11.1  Family characteristics of different hardship history typologies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spell of hardship</th>
<th>Low level hardship</th>
<th>Spell of moderate hardship</th>
<th>Spell of severe hardship</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average age (median) 2001</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lone parent type 1991</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single, never married</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previously married</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previously cohabitating</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of dependent children in household 2001</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 plus</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent work/benefit status 1991</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working 16 plus</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working 16 plus &amp; FC</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working 0-15 hours</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working 0-15 hours &amp; IS</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent work/benefit status 2001</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working 16 plus</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working 16 plus &amp; WFTC</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working 0-15 hours</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working 0-15 hours &amp; IS</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age completed full-time education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 16 or younger</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over age 16</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualifications 2001</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic university</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic secondary</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No qualifications</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing tenure 2001</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner occupier</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social tenant</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private tenant or other</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received maintenance 1991</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ill or disabled on 3 consecutive interviews 1991-2001</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>548</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Most telling were their educational and work characteristics. Most of these parents completed their education by age 16 (88 per cent) and one in three (36 per cent) still had no educational qualifications by 2001. When first interviewed in 1991, only six per cent of these parents were in full-time
employment. After ten years, the employment rate for parents who endured a spell of severe hardship increased to only 35 per cent – substantially lower than the sample as a whole. Their health condition over the study period, however, was not reported to be much worse than that of parents in the other hardship groups. This suggests that there were other factors at play that restricted their work participation.

Understandably, parents categorised with a history of low hardship possessed the most favourable demographic profile. They were older on average and they also had the oldest children. They were most likely to have been previously married and consequently a relatively high proportion of them received child maintenance in 1991 (42 per cent). Three-quarters owned their homes. They possessed the highest level of educational qualifications (only 15 per cent had no qualifications) and they had the highest rates of work participation both in 1999 and 2001. Approaching half (48 per cent) were working full time in 1999, twice the average rate at the time. By 2001, the employment rate for parents who experienced low hardship rose to 76 per cent. The relative affluence of this group of respondents was also evident in the figures shown for receipt of Family Credit and Working Families’ Tax Credit. The vast majority of workers in both 1999 and 2001 did not receive in-work support.

The middle group in the hardship typology of respondents possessed characteristics in between the other two groups. This group fills the gap between the two extremes of hardship and helps to support hardship as a continuum of living standards. Close to half (46 per cent) of the PRILIF parents fell into this category and so their demographic profile is most similar to the sample overall. Like parents with a background of severe hardship, those with a spell of moderate hardship were younger, on average, and they had younger children. On the other hand, their rates of marriage and cohabitation, prior to 1991, were more similar to those of parents from a background of low hardship but substantially fewer received child maintenance in 1991 (24 compared to 42 per cent). Their housing tenure in 2001 was split more evenly between ownership (40 per cent) and social tenancy (54 per cent). Work participation rates for parents who experienced a moderate spell of hardship substantially improved from 18 per cent in 1991 to 54 per cent in 2001. But, compared to parents with little or no hardship, a larger proportion of the workers were receiving in-work support in either year.

The relationship between family work history and history of hardship among the PRILIF parents is depicted in Table 11.2. The figures confirm that those who ‘never worked’ were the worst off with four in ten falling into the ‘spell of severe hardship’ category and only 14 per cent in the ‘low hardship’ category. In contrast, half (49 per cent) of those families that were in work for the majority of the study period were classified as ‘low hardship’ while only one in ten fell into the ‘spell of severe hardship’ category. The majority of families that worked for less than half of the study period were susceptible to a spell of some hardship (84 per cent). In this way they most resembled the families who ‘never worked’. However, the kind of hardship they experienced was most likely to be at the moderate level.

### Table 11.2 Family work history by hardship groups – family level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hardship typology</th>
<th>Never worked</th>
<th>Worked less than 50% of period</th>
<th>Worked more than 49% of period</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low hardship</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spell of moderate hardship</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spell of severe hardship</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>357</td>
<td>548</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All lone parents interviewed in 2001.
Table 11.3 shows the distribution of parent partnership history on the hardship typology. According to the figures, most families experienced some hardship but those classified as stable couples were likely to have experienced the best standard of living during the study period – 40 per cent had little or no hardship and this was eight to 16 percentage points higher than that for the other partnership groups. Families classified into the short-term partner(s) category were the most likely to have experienced a spell of hardship (76 per cent). Proportions experiencing a ‘spell of severe hardship’ were similar for the stable lone parent and short-term partner(s) groups, at around one in four families. The stable lone-parent group was the most evenly distributed across the three hardship groups, demonstrating the diversity of living circumstances within the family type.

### Table 11.3 Parent partnership by hardship groups – family level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent partnership typology</th>
<th>Stable lone parent</th>
<th>Stable couple</th>
<th>Short-term partner(s)</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low hardship</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spell of moderate hardship</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spell of severe hardship</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unweighted base 331 134 83 548

Base: All lone parents interviewed in 2001.

### 11.3.2 Family history of hardship and the PRILIF children

At the first interview, the hardship index placed nearly a third (30 per cent) of the 2001 sample of children in severe hardship. By 1998, the most recent year the measure was recorded, this proportion halved to 14 per cent. Although the rate of poor living standards did not persist, during the course of the study, one in five (22 per cent) of the children were associated with families who were in severe hardship on at least two consecutive interviews after 1991. Some of the children were not living in their family homes for the entire duration of the measure, but the family level of hardship would still be germane to the kinds of resources and help available to them.

The hardship typology identified a higher proportion of children with exposure to hardship than at the family level of analysis (refer to Table 11.4). Overall, close to three-quarters (73 per cent) of the children came from a background of at least some hardship. Equal proportions, about one in four, had a background of either low hardship or severe hardship.

### Table 11.4 Hardship history by child age groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hardship typology</th>
<th>3 to 10 years</th>
<th>11 to 15 years</th>
<th>16 to 28 years resident</th>
<th>16 to 28 years non-resident</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low level hardship</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spell of moderate hardship</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spell of severe hardship</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unweighted base 170 241 354 336 1101

Base: All natural born, adopted and stepchildren, aged 3 to 28 years, of lone parents interviewed in 2001.
The distribution of hardship by child age ranges varied only slightly. Exposure to hardship was more common in the younger half of the age cohort. Rates of exposure to any hardship for children in the three to 15 year age range were six to nine percentage points higher than that observed for the older children. Eleven to 15 year olds were the most likely group to have a background of severe hardship (32 per cent) while resident 16 to 28 year olds were the least likely to (21 per cent). Variance in exposure to hardship across the different age ranges is likely to be related to the age and work status of the parents.

11.4 Physical well-being

11.4.1 General health

As Table 11.5 shows, reports on the children’s health varied little according to their exposure to hardship. For all children combined, reports of ‘good health’ ranged from 77 to 79 per cent while reports of ‘not good’ health ranged from five to six per cent.

For the most part, the sample showed little association between children’s health and their history of hardship. The figures suggest that the level of hardship in the children’s pasts had no bearing on their quality of health. Likewise, the children’s health had little or no impact on the families’ living conditions.

There was little variation on reports of health according to hardship within the different age ranges. Among the resident children, those born during the course of the study showed the biggest contrasts, but this was not in the expected direction. More three to ten year olds with a background of severe hardship were reported in ‘good’ health and this was eight percentage points higher than those from families of low hardship. It is not clear why this was so but it may be related to figures on hospital admissions reported in Section 11.4.3. However, the differences were small, as was the sample size.
Table 11.5  General health by history of hardship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General health</th>
<th>Low level hardship</th>
<th>Spell of moderate hardship</th>
<th>Spell of severe hardship</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly good</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not good</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>405</td>
<td>489</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>1101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 to 10 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly good</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not good</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 to 15 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly good</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not good</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 to 28 years (resident)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly good</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not good</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>354</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 to 28 years (non-resident)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly good</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not good</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


11.4.2 Disability or illness

Analysis of the Families and Children Study (FACS) showed a higher concentration of hardship in families where children are reported to have a health condition, particularly in lone-parent families (Vegeris and Perry 2003).

Figures in Table 11.6 go in the direction of this observation. Overall, reports of a child disability or illness were four percentage points higher in families that had experienced a spell of either moderate or severe hardship (compare 19 to 15 per cent). But this was not consistently the case across the separate child age groups. The largest contrast was found within the 11 to 15 year age range where children had the highest rate of disability overall. In this cohort, children with spells of moderate or severe hardship were twice as likely to be reported with a disability/illness. But this contrast was not found to be statistically significant. Rather, from the multivariate analysis, factors contributing to the likelihood that the younger children (three to 11 years) were reported to have a disability/illness were the work history of the family (Section 10.4.2), the type of housing they were living in and their parents’ level of education. Refer to Table B.2 for the model specification.
### Table 11.6 Disability or long-term illness by history of hardship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disability or illness</th>
<th>Low level hardship</th>
<th>Spell of moderate hardship</th>
<th>Spell of severe hardship</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>405</td>
<td>489</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>1101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 to 10 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 to 15 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 to 28 years (resident)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>354</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 to 28 years (non-resident)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


#### 11.4.3 Hospital admissions

Table 11.7 shows that, unexpectedly, children in families who experienced spells of either moderate or severe hardship were less likely to be admitted to hospital in the previous year than those children with backgrounds of little or no hardship.

### Table 11.7 Hospitalisation by history of hardship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child has been in hospital in last 12 months</th>
<th>Low level hardship</th>
<th>Spell of moderate hardship</th>
<th>Spell of severe hardship</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10 **</td>
<td>18 *</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Significance: *** < or = 1%, ** < or = 5%, * < or = 10%. Refer to Appendix B for full models.
According to the multivariate analysis, compared to families with a history of little or no hardship, children who lived in a household that had a moderate spell of hardship during the 1990s were close to four times less likely to be admitted to hospital overnight; children from a household that had experienced a period of severe hardship were three times less likely to be admitted to hospital. It is not clear why this was the case. Due to the small sample size these results may not be robust.

Other factors that were statistically linked to the likelihood that a child was admitted to hospital for an overnight stay were the type of family accommodation in 2001 and the presence of a health condition in the child. Children in the sample with a disability or illness were six times more likely to be admitted to hospital overnight compared to ‘healthy’ children. Refer to Table B.3 for the model specification.

### 11.4.4 Alcohol consumption among youths

Reports of drinking behaviour were lowest among children with backgrounds of severe hardship (25 per cent) and highest among those associated with a spell of moderate hardship (40 per cent). Refer to Table 11.8. Although not found to be statistically significant, the lower rate of drinking reported by children with a spell of severe hardship could be linked to the findings on work history reported in Section 10.4.4. Children from non-working backgrounds were statistically less likely to have reported having had an alcoholic beverage compared to those from predominantly working households. Together, these findings suggest that drinking in youths may be related to having the resources to access alcohol. Children from a social tenancy were also identified as less likely to have consumed alcohol. Refer to Table B.4 for the regression results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>11 to 15 year olds</th>
<th>Low level hardship</th>
<th>Spell of moderate hardship</th>
<th>Spell of severe hardship</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How many times in the past four weeks have you had an alcoholic drink?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once or twice</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Several times</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### 11.4.5 Smoking behaviour

Table 11.9 reports the distribution of cigarette smoking separately for youths (13 to 15 years) and older children (16 to 28 years).
Table 11.9  Smoking behaviour by history of hardship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spell of</th>
<th>Spell of</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low level hardship</td>
<td>moderate hardship</td>
<td>severe hardship</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 to 15 years</td>
<td>Has smoked at least one cigarette in the past week</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>11 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 to 28 years</td>
<td>Has ever smoked cigarettes regularly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: Children who responded to the youth or older child surveys in 2001.
Significance: *** < or = 1%, ** < or = 5%, * < or = 10%. Refer to Appendix B for full models.

Among the older children, family exposure to hardship had no bearing on smoking behaviour. Across the three groups about four in ten reported they had ever smoked. But among the youth sample, the level of hardship made a difference. Rates of smoking were much lower among children from families that had a spell of severe hardship. According to regression results, youths from families who had experienced a severe spell of hardship during the 1990s were three times less likely to report cigarette smoking, compared to those who endured little or no hardship. Although the sample was small and the confidence level of the relationship was low, the finding relates to that reported on alcohol consumption in Section 11.4.4. Children with backgrounds of severe hardship were probably less likely to have had the resources to access cigarettes. Multivariate analysis also identified parent partnership history (Section 9.6.5) as an important factor in smoking in youths. In addition, analysis of the sample revealed that if a parent smoked, a child was two times more likely to do so. Models are presented in Tables B.5 and B.6.

11.5  Measures of social adjustment

11.5.1  Truancy behaviour

Truancy (missing classes without an excuse) is reported separately for the 11 to 15 year old and the 16 to 28 year old age groups in Table 11.10. Reports on the younger children reflect their recent behaviour over the past year (including the parents’ answers in cases where the child did not respond) while results on 16 to 28 year olds are retrospective answers on whether the individual ever missed classes and did this frequently. Also, truancy behaviour did increase with the age of the child (refer to Section 8.5.1) but the wording of the question, covering a shorter time span for the younger children, can partly explain why reports of truancy are twice as high among the older age group overall.
Table 11.10 Reports of truancy by history of hardship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Truancy</th>
<th>Low level hardship</th>
<th>Spell of moderate hardship</th>
<th>Spell of severe hardship</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child (11-15 yrs) frequently missed school without an excuse</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child (16-28 yrs) frequently missed school without an excuse</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>375</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bases: For 11 to 15 year olds: all with parents who responded in 2001. For 16 plus years: all who responded to the older child survey.

Truant behaviour varied by no more than five percentage points across the three hardship groups. For 11 to 15 year olds, the rate of truancy was slightly lower among children with a history of severe hardship yet, for this same group among the 16 to 28 year olds, reports of truancy were slightly higher. However, the number of cases in the sample of older children with a history of severe hardship was low (n=44).

The results from Table 11.11 reveal that reports on trouble with the law according to the family’s history of hardship varied more among the younger children, showing children who experienced a spell of hardship to be more likely to have been involved with the police over the previous year. Among the older children, the likelihood of committing an offence was only slightly higher among those from families that experienced a spell of severe hardship, and the number of cases was low for this group.
Table 11.11 Trouble with the law by history of hardship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trouble with the law</th>
<th>Low level hardship</th>
<th>Spell of moderate hardship</th>
<th>Spell of severe hardship</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child (11-15 yrs) has been in trouble with the police</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child (16-28 yrs) has been charged with a driving or other offence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>375</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bases: For 11 to 15 year olds: all with parents who responded in 2001. For 16 plus years: all who responded to the older child survey.

Family history of hardship was not a significant factor in the statistical models on reports of trouble with the law (refer to Tables B.9 and B.10). Parent partnership history (Section 9.7.2) and the work history of the family unit (Section 10.5.2) were both significantly associated with the sample of 11 to 15 year olds. Among the 16 to 28 year olds, work history of the family unit, parent’s birth age and level of education, family size and child gender were significant predictors on the likelihood of being in trouble with the law.

11.5.3 Youth violence

Results on youth violence reflect combined responses from parents and children (11 to 15 years) regarding reports on fighting and vandalism are presented in Table 11.12.

Reports on fighting during the past month were highest among children who had experienced a spell of moderate hardship during the study period, being nine percentage points higher compared to children associated with the other hardship groups. Reports on fighting did not appear to differ between those children who experienced little hardship and those who experienced a spell of severe hardship. But the association between family history of hardship and fighting in youths was not statistically significant according to multivariate analyses, taking other factors into account (refer to Table B.11). Rather, the work history of the family unit (Section 9.7.3) and the gender of the child were identified as important contributing factors.

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42 Further details about these measures can be found in Section 8.5.3.
Family history of hardship appeared to have more of an impact on vandalism committed by 11 to 15 year olds in the sample. As shown in Table 11.12, one in three children from families with a relatively low standard of living, those who had experienced a spell of severe hardship, reported they had intentionally damaged property. This was significantly higher than reports from children in the other hardship groups. According to regression results, this group of children were three times more likely to report they had vandalised property compared to children with a history of little hardship (refer to Table B.12). Other significant contributing factors in the model were parent partnership history (Section 9.7.3), work history of the family unit (Section 10.5.3), type of current accommodation, parents’ level of education and family size.

### 11.5.4 Self-esteem

Table 11.13 reports self-esteem by family history of hardship. An explanation of the measure is supplied in Section 8.5.4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of self-esteem</th>
<th>Low level hardship</th>
<th>Spell of moderate hardship</th>
<th>Spell of severe hardship</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>375</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bases: All who responded to the older child survey.

A higher proportion of older children from homes that experienced a low level of hardship scored in the high self-esteem range. Alternatively, children who had a background of severe hardship during the study period were more likely to score in the low self-esteem range. However, these results may not be robust due to the small number of cases available for analysis. Additionally, the findings did not hold when other factors were considered in a multivariate analysis. Parent partnership history (Section...
9.7.4), work history of the family unit (Section 10.5.4) and the parent’s level of education figured more prominently in the model (refer to Tables B.13 and B.14).

11.6 Measures of education

This section examines three measures on education – the incidence of early school leaving, attainment of advanced qualifications and attitudes towards school performance – according to the hardship history typology. Details of the measures themselves can be found in Chapter 8.

11.6.1 Early school leavers

Figures in Table 11.14 report results on early school leaving. In the sample, the amount of family hardship endured over the study period was significantly related to children’s decisions to leave school early, however, the results for the two age groups are somewhat contradictory. Among the 11 to 15 year olds, those with a history of severe hardship were the least likely to report they intended to finish school by age 16 – compare 10 per cent to rates of 16 and 22 per cent reported by children in the other hardship categories. But while experience of severe hardship among 11 to 15 year olds was related to plans for staying on in school, a history of hardship was associated with finishing school at an early age among the 16 to 28 year olds in the sample. The lowest rate of early school leaving (30 per cent) occurred among those 16 to 28 year olds with histories of little or no hardship and this rate was 16 to 21 percentage points lower than that reported by the other hardship groups.

One possible explanation for the differences found between the two age groups might be the different perspectives represented in the responses, i.e., the intention to do something among 11 to 15 year olds versus the actual event among the 16 to 28 year olds. The differences may also be an artefact of the sample or due to the hardship measure itself.

Other significant predictors of early school leaving were parent partnership history (Section 9.8.1), family work history (Section 10.6.1), parent’s level of education and family size and family ethnicity. Refer to Tables B.15 and B.16.

Table 11.14 Early school leaving by history of hardship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Early school leaving</th>
<th>Low level hardship</th>
<th>Spell of moderate hardship</th>
<th>Spell of severe hardship</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child (11-15 yrs) plans to finish school at or before age 16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10 ***</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child (16-28 yrs) finished school at or before age 16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>46 *</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>677</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Bases:** For 11 to 15 year olds: All who responded to the youth survey in 2001. For 16 plus years: All who have finished formal education and with parents who responded in 2001.

**Significance:** *** < or = 1%, ** < or = 5%, * < or = 10%. Refer to Appendix B for full models.
11.6.2 **Advanced academic qualifications**

Children and, in their absence, parents were asked to report their highest level of academic qualification. This analysis is limited to children aged 19 and over. Reports of advanced qualifications (A level or higher) are displayed in Table 11.15. The figures show a clear link between level of education and level of family hardship, suggesting that the more severe the experience of hardship the less likely that children continued on to attain further educational qualifications. Approaching half (46 per cent) of the children from households that experienced little hardship attained advanced qualifications. This was twice the rate of those children who experienced a spell of moderate hardship (21 per cent) and substantially higher than the proportion reported for children whose families experienced a spell of severe hardship (eight per cent).

**Table 11.15  Advanced educational qualifications by history of hardship**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advanced academic qualifications</th>
<th>Low level hardship</th>
<th>Spell of moderate hardship</th>
<th>Spell of severe hardship</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>21 **</td>
<td>8 ***</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>560</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All 19 to 28 year olds with parents who responded in 2001.
Significance: ** ** or = 1%, ** or = 5%, * or = 10%. Refer to Appendix B for full models.

Other factors contributing to the likelihood that children in the sample attained higher academic qualifications were the parents’ level of education and the age of the parent at birth. Refer to Table B.17 for the model specification.

11.6.3 **Youth attitudes towards school performance**

A third measure of education to be analysed according to family history of hardship is the children’s attitude towards school performance, captured in the question, ‘How much does it mean to you to do well at school?’. Results are reported in Table 11.16. There was little variance among children from different backgrounds of hardship with proportions reporting that doing well meant ‘a great deal’ or ‘quite a lot’ differing by no more than three percentage points. Regression modelling revealed parent partnership history (Section 9.8.3), family work history (Section 10.6.3) and family size to be more important factors affecting children’s attitudes towards school. Refer to Table B.18 for the model.
Table 11.16  Youth attitudes towards school performance by history of hardship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude towards school</th>
<th>Low level hardship</th>
<th>Spell of moderate hardship</th>
<th>Spell of severe hardship</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How much does it mean to you to do well at school?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A great deal</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quite a lot</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A bit but not much</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very little</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quite a lot/a great deal</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A bit/very little</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: Respondents to the youth survey.

11.7 Measures among older children

This section reports contrasts among older children (16 to 28 years) regarding work and benefits status and household formation according to their family experience of hardship. The majority of this sample were comprised of non-resident older children who, in 2001, had a median age of 23 years and were comprised of slightly more females (56 per cent) than males (44 per cent). The age and gender composition did not differ among the hardship typology groups.

11.7.1 Work and benefit receipt

Information on employment status of the older children was collected both through the children, and, in their absence, their parents. This measure varied only slightly according to the family history of hardship (Table 11.17). Higher rates of unemployment were found among those children who had a history of moderate or severe hardship. But the proportion working full time was only six percentage points lower among those with a history of severe hardship (51 per cent) compared to children in the other hardship groups (57 per cent).

Among the economically active, children from families who had experienced a spell of severe hardship were also the most likely to be ‘unemployed and seeking work’ (22 per cent). This was double the rate of those children from families that had experienced little or no hardship during the study period. But this difference was not found to be statistically significant when other variables were taken into consideration. A regression analysis identified family work history (Section 10.7.1), child level of education and family ethnicity as more important predictors in the sample. Refer to Table B.19.

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43 The analysis did not include those who were in full-time education, or working less than 16 hours, or with caring responsibilities or those who were sick or disabled.
Family history of hardship was also not statistically related to the receipt of benefits or tax credits. As the figures in Table 11.18 show, children from families that had experienced a spell of severe hardship were more likely to have received any out-of-work benefit (48 per cent) compared to the other hardship groups (41 per cent). This higher proportion was evident in the receipt of Income Support for this group. But other factors proved to be more important in a predictive model on out-of-work benefit receipt. Regression analysis on the sample identified family work history (Section 10.7.1), child’s level of education and family ethnicity as factors related to receipt of out-of-work benefits. Refer to Table B.20 for model details.

This information was collected through the older child survey only with a sample size of 375 cases.
Table 11.18 Benefit and tax credit receipt among older children by history of hardship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Low level hardship</th>
<th>Spell of moderate hardship</th>
<th>Spell of severe hardship</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Receipt of JSA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ever</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receipt of IS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ever</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any out-of-work benefit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ever</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receipt of WFTC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ever</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>375</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: Respondents to the older child survey.

11.7.2 Family and household formation

Marital status and tenure information is reported for non-resident children in Table 11.19. Those children with a background of little or no hardship were the most likely to be single at the time of the survey (60 per cent), contrasted with 46 per cent among those whose families had experienced a spell of moderate hardship and substantially higher than the 35 per cent of children from a history of severe hardship. This finding parallels that reported in Section 10.7.2 regarding family work status where children associated with parents who worked for the majority of the study period were least likely to be with a partner. Together, these findings suggest that children from more advantaged backgrounds perhaps delay partnering in order to pursue other interests (like education).

Results on the tenure of the older non-resident children varied slightly according to history of family hardship. Despite belonging to a similar age group, children with a history of severe hardship were both less likely to be homeowners and more likely to be social tenants than children from backgrounds of less hardship. These findings support the notion of intergenerational transfer of disadvantage, however, the results were not found to be statistically significant. Refer to Table B.21 for details.
### Table 11.19 Household formation by history of hardship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Low level hardship</th>
<th>Spell of moderate hardship</th>
<th>Spell of severe hardship</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marital status</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single (never married)</td>
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<td>35</td>
<td>48</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cohabiting</td>
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<td>42</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previously married</td>
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<td><strong>Tenure</strong></td>
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<td>Owner</td>
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<td>Social tenant</td>
<td>21</td>
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<td>31</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private tenant/other</td>
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<td>44</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unweighted base</strong></td>
<td>141</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Young motherhood**

|                      |                    |                           |                          |      |
| Female children (18-28 years) |      |                           |                          |      |
| Mother               | 23                 | 35                        | 44                       | 32   |
| Non-mother           | 77                 | 65                        | 57                       | 68   |
| **Unweighted base**  | 132                | 113                       | 35                       | 280  |

**Bases:** For marital status and tenure: All non-resident 16 to 28 year olds with parents who responded in 2001. For young motherhood: Female children aged 18 to 28 years.

Results on young motherhood need to be treated with caution due to the low number of cases reported for the ‘spell of severe hardship’ category. Despite this, there is evidence to suggest that young motherhood was a more frequent phenomenon among the most disadvantaged women. Daughters with a family history of severe hardship were almost twice as likely to have children early compared to those with a history of little or no hardship (compare 44 to 23 per cent). The rate of early motherhood was also higher among those women from a background of moderate hardship, compared to those with little or no hardship. But these findings were not statistically significant. In the sample, characteristics such as parent work history (Section 10.7.2), age and education of the child, birth age of the parent, and family size were found to be the more important predictors of young motherhood. Refer to Table B.22 for details.

### 11.8 Summary

This chapter distinguished measures on the children according to their family’s exposure to hardship during the study period. Hardship was defined as having a relatively low standard of living – going without essential items or not being able to manage family finances. Across six observations during the 1990s, the PRLIF families were measured on a hardship scale. Hardship was described on a seven-point continuum ranging from ‘no hardship’ to ‘severe hardship’. For the current analysis, a ‘history of hardship’ was derived by categorising the cumulative hardship scores of families over the six observations. The resulting hardship typology classified families as ‘low hardship’ where families predominantly experienced no hardship or only a low level of hardship on a few interviews; a ‘spell of moderate hardship’ where families experienced a low level of hardship throughout the study; and a ‘spell of severe hardship’ where families experienced continued severe hardship over most of the interviews. The hardship history indicator was limited to the 1991 to 1998 timeframe as no measure of hardship was taken during the 2001 interview.
According to the hardship typology, about half (48 per cent) of the children were classified with a ‘spell of moderate hardship’. The remaining half were evenly split between the ‘low hardship’ and ‘spell of severe hardship’ groups. Across the age ranges the largest proportion of children were categorised in the ‘spell of moderate hardship’ group and this remained at about half. But relatively more of the younger children (under 16 years) fell into the ‘spell of severe hardship’ category. The finding that more of the older children had family backgrounds of very little exposure to hardship corresponds with the higher proportion of working families among these children.

Compared to findings on the parent partnership and work history typologies, family history of hardship was found to be a significant contributor on fewer of the child measures. Based on the hardship typology, children did not vary on measures of:

- physical well-being;
- disability or long-term illness;
- alcohol consumption in youths;
- truancy from school;
- trouble with the law;
- level of self-esteem in young adults;
- youth attitude towards doing well at school;
- work status and benefit receipt among older children;
- young motherhood.

On many of the measures there was little variation on the marginal proportions according to level of family hardship. For some measures where proportions did vary, numbers in some of the sub-groups were too small to make reliable analyses possible.

Still, through multivariate analyses, controlling for other probable influences, the children’s history of exposure to hardship was identified as a significant predictor for several of the measures. Compared to those who experienced little or no hardship, children from families with either a spell of moderate or severe hardship were:

- less likely to be admitted to hospital during the past year (aged three to ten years);
- more likely to have completed school at or before age 16; and
- less likely to have attained higher level educational qualifications.

Compared to those who experienced little or no hardship, youths (11 to 15 years) from families that endured a spell of severe hardship were:

- less likely to report that they had smoked a cigarette in the past week;
- more likely to report they had intentionally damaged property in the past month; and
- less likely to anticipate leaving school early.
Some of the results concerning children’s backgrounds on family experience of hardship go counter to expectations, particularly among children under age 16. Again, this may be an artefact of the small sample size. Or perhaps there is a temporal explanation as the measures on the children were taken in 2001 and the record of hardship ended three years previous in 1998, missing changes in family circumstances that may have occurred in the interim. Again, the reader is reminded about the limited generalisability of the PRILIF data set.

Significant findings on the older children suggest that a family’s level of living standards can have an impact on educational achievement. In the sample, those children who endured a spell of severe hardship during the 1990s were much more likely to finish school early, and consequently attain a lower level of educational qualifications.
Part Three – Interpreting the findings for policy
12 Interpreting the findings for policy

12.1 Introduction

This report has shown an improving story for the majority of the 1991 cohort of lone parents. Over the ten years of the study, a third found partners. New lives were begun with new families and, sometimes, new children. The vast majority of those who began the study in work, ended it in work. Others joined them in work, so that by 2001 more than half had paid jobs, working 16 or more hours a week. As a result, the majority experienced an improved standard of living as hardship receded.

But for a large minority – at least a third of the 1991 cohort – misfortune persisted and repeated. False starts, typically new relationships that failed, led back to positions of hardship and disadvantage that reduced the well-being and life chances of lone parents and children together.

This chapter examines our findings for parents and children together in light of current social policy towards Britain’s low-income families.

12.2 Interpretation and the survey design

It is important to remember that this is a sample of families, almost all of whom in 1991 would be called poor in surveys covering the general population (see for example Ermisch et al., 2001). Yet some of the differences we measured among both parents and children were large. Some of the differences between the poor and the poorest have been as impressive and important as the differences commonly observed in other studies of poverty outcomes between the poor and everyone else. This provides new scope for targeting policy towards the minority of lone parents who find greatest difficulty in escaping the disadvantages that confront them.

Throughout the report we have discussed problems of interpretation arising from the nature of this sample:

- For parents, how do we interpret the policy significance of the changes experienced by the cohort, given that they varied so much in their starting positions in 1991?
- For children, how do we interpret the connection between their parents’ starting positions, and changes in these conditions, and variation among the children?
The members of this 1991 cohort became lone parents during the 1980s; a period when lone-parent families were rising fastest as a proportion of all British families. Although they are thought of as a very homogeneous group, the lone parents differed hugely in some aspects because they had not all become lone parents at the same time or at the same age. Thus, they had a widely varying experience of its membership. Some were young, single women with their first infant child. Others were older, divorced women with their youngest child in the last year of school. Thus, these age-related ‘initial conditions’ measured when they were sampled for this survey, shaped much of what followed.

For these reasons, change over the following ten years was slow – slower than the pace of change you would see in a ‘flow’ sample of women who all became lone parents at the same time. Our 1991 cohort, by contrast, inched into work – less than three per cent a year. They acquired partners slowly too – five per cent a year – and parted from a third of these. More than four out of ten were still lone parents ten years later, partly through the birth of new children.

Problems for interpretation arise from characteristics of the initial lone-parent sample: They were typically ‘established’ lone-parent families. A nationally representative sample selects few of those who pass quickly through lone parenthood, moving from one relationship to another, or who reconcile with their husband or partner after a short separation. Beginning with an established sample of a relatively homogeneous group of women who shared a special characteristic like lone parenthood, preconditioned the survey to go on to show, over the following ten years, just how well established they were. This means that the impression of long duration as lone parents, of years on Income Support, and so on, are probably longer than those that would be typical of all parents who spend time as lone parents.

This analysis is in one sense unusual. The main focus of research interest was the relationship between the parents’ experiences and the child measures. The importance for policy lies in the variation in measures of family circumstances, and of changes in these circumstances over ten years, connected to differences among their children. We did not ask: ‘How healthy, successful or well adjusted are the children of lone parents and what causes this?’ But rather: ‘What are the key aspects of lone-parent families and what are the key events in their lives, over ten years, that are associated with favourable or unfavourable characteristics in their children?’ We asked: ‘What trajectories through childhood in lone-parent families, and their varying circumstances over time, are associated with better or worse measures of the children?’

There were 548 families in the study. It bears repeating that, for many of the analyses on the children, the need to stratify the sample by age resulted in quite small sample sizes.

### 12.3 The parents

This section looks at the findings in relation to three major policy concerns that also confronted the study in 1991:

- the growth of single never-partnered lone parenthood;
- the birth of new children; and
- the low rate of employment among lone parents.

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45 It is interesting to compare these figures with those from a ‘flow’ sample of lone parents taken to evaluate the outcomes of the ONE programme, who all claimed benefit in the same two months in 2000. Only 18 months later seven per cent had a partner, usually their old one returning, and 35 per cent had a job (Kasparova and Marsh, 2002).
12.3.1 Family outcomes

What happened to the ‘single mothers’

At the beginning of the study, a good deal of policy concern centred on single, never-partnered lone parents whose numbers had grown throughout the 1980s until they comprised a quarter of those sampled for this study (Rowlingson and McKay, 1998). This growth surprised many because of the increased availability of contraception and safe abortion services. This suggested that entry to lone parenthood for single, never-partnered women followed an increasingly elective route. As Rowlingson and McKay pointed out, single lone motherhood is the outcome, in part at least, of a sequence of decision-making: unprotected sex followed by pregnancy is then followed in turn by decisions to carry the child to term, to keep the baby rather than offer it for adoption, then to bring up the child alone. Of course, the true degree of volition exercised by each woman at each stage varied; some may have had little choice or felt they had none. But, by the 1980s, the stigma and the social constraint attached to illegitimacy and lone parenthood had receded. It is worth adding that now, a dozen years later, it seems almost to have vanished.

Given that a social safety net was well established by the 1980s, there was growing concern that a route had opened up that beckoned young women, typically those who had poor career prospects, to begin families alone. There was public concern that some of these women would choose to remain long-term clients of the benefit system. They would raise a generation of fatherless children in workless households in social accommodation who would repeat their parent’s cycle of misfortune.

But according to the results of this study, the course taken by single, never-partnered PRILIF parents differed little from the others. They shared equally in the improvements found by the majority. Fewer than half of them were still lone parents by 2001. Over half were working 16 or more hours a week. Being younger, they were actually more likely to meet, live with, or marry a partner than those who were previously married. Certainly, other types of lone parents fared worse. It was those who had entered lone parenthood after cohabiting who were more likely to have another failed relationship subsequently or to remain alone throughout. Some of the single, never-partnered lone parents also followed this course between 1991 and 2001 – cohabiting then returning to lone parenthood later.

The broad conclusion, though, was that young, single, never-partnered lone parents had as much or more capacity for recovery and for making successful new families as the other groups, including those who, in 1991, seemed much better placed. Both their initial misfortune, and their later resilience, was most likely due to their youth.

Formerly partnered lone parents

Three-quarters of the 1991 cohort were separated (from marriage or cohabitation) or divorced lone parents, about a quarter of the sample had not been married to their last partner. At the outset of the study they had been lone parents for an average of more than five years. They were better off than the single never-married lone parents, especially the formerly married among them. They were more likely to be homeowners, more likely to have paid jobs, and less prone to hardship. Half remained alone throughout the next ten years. Only a quarter of them had a new partner in 2001 while the remaining quarter remained alone, some having had a failed relationship in between.

This outcome suggests a highly conditional view of partnership and re-marriage that has developed among previously partnered lone parents. They said as much at several points in the study when asked to comment on why they continued alone: they valued their independence and, besides, they had met no one they liked enough to enter a relationship with.
12.3.2 New children

The complicating factor in this story was new births among the younger lone parents. An important finding from earlier PRILIF research was that those who hoped for new children hoped for a new partner too. Almost no one said they wanted a new child alone. There was no sign of a conscious choice to add to families while remaining a lone parent. And for many of the parents, things worked out well: new partners and new children arrived, though not always in that order, and they remained in their new families in 2001. For others, however, new children were sometimes unexpected or more often became part of what turned out to be a false start, as new partners became the fathers of new children but then moved on.

For some families this became a tangled story. But it became clear from year to year that we were watching the outcome of biology rather than misfortune. Whereas it seemed earlier in the study that having new children was uncomfortably characteristic of lone parents in the poorest circumstances, this was a false reading. Those who had the new children tended to be the younger lone parents in the sample, often with one child, who wanted to re-start their lives with a new partner and a new child together – to renew their lives and complete their families at the same time. Their initial disadvantage and hardship was explained by their youth and by their distance from the labour market at the time. In a substantial proportion of cases, higher rates of hardship between 1991 and 1998 were associated with the failure of a new relationship. But the majority of mothers with new children were in a stable union by 2001, and often as part of a dual-earner couple.

Overall then, the subsequent family formation of the 1991 cohort of lone parents told a positive story. It challenges once and for all the media-fed stereotype of lone parents having successive children by feckless fathers in order to remain full-time dependants of the State.

12.3.3 The conditional family

The implications for policy in these findings are frankly few – there are limits to the reach of social policy into people’s private lives. Except perhaps these findings might encourage acceptance of what is happening to British families in these decades framing the millennium. It is easy to idealise the past when it seemed, for earlier generations, decisions about forming relationships, family formation and family income security were indistinguishably part of the same field of vision. Now these fields are drifting apart. Increasingly, decisions about partnerships, about children, and about material issues like work, are made as though they barely affected one other. Decisions that in the past were hardly decisions at all – to grow up and have a family of your own which was yours for life – are far more conditional upon the good behaviour of everyone involved. It is worth recalling that four out of ten of our cohort who had a partner before 1991, said that they had experienced violence in the last year of their relationship. Three-quarters of these (27 per cent of the formerly partnered) said they had been injured. The violence probably isn’t new. The unwillingness to put up with it, even though they had children to support, is new.

This conditionality of decision-making in British family life is reflected in the continued growth in lone parenthood. In 1991, 18 per cent of all families were headed by a single parent; according to the 2001 Census, a quarter of all British families are now single-parent families. As the discussion in this section unfolds below, it becomes clear that this conditionality in family relationships is often well placed. Lone parents who accepted partners with attractive prospects fared well. Those whose judgement, it turned out, could have been more conditional, fared poorly. It is a judgement that our cohort members themselves were aware of. When asked to say why they remained alone, many lone parents mentioned their wariness about the possible impact of new partnerships on their children.
12.3.4 Progress to employment

The barriers to work faced by lone parents have been well documented at successive stages of this study as well as in other research. Among those remaining lone parents in 2001, their poor start in 1991 of low educational qualifications, the geographical disadvantages of social tenancy, recurrent ill-health of parents and children, and the discouragement of hardship, all accumulated to keep the majority of them out of work. Their need to care for pre-school children was a priority renewed for some by the arrival of new children. No finding illustrated these barriers more clearly than the slow pace of entry to work over the ten years. Among those beginning out of work in 1991, fewer than half had a job of 16 hours a week or more ten years later.

On the other hand, this slow pace was also a deliberate one. This strategy had its strengths and these too became familiar over the study period. For example, once in work, lone parents remained in work. Exceptions to this rule tended to be temporary or associated with new babies. So many of the 1991 workers remained workers that the analysis of factors associated with being in work in 2001, once controlled for initial employment status, was simply a study of entry to work.

Some of the long-term effects of initial labour market disadvantage were impressive, especially the lack of basic education and continued social tenancy. But the positive impact of improved education and the receipt of child support payments, both at the outset and subsequently, were equally impressive. This was particularly true for mothers who began out of work and remained lone parents. The policy implications of this are clear and important. When income is shared between divided parents, the opportunities to work and receive additional in-work benefits are also shared. The subsequent reduction in hardship and improved family well-being were equally obvious and compelling.

Subsequent analysis on the Families and Children Study (Kasparova et al., 2003) confirms the strong connection between increases in in-work benefits, or tax credits as they are now called, and improved rates of employment among lone parents and other low-income families. More liberal treatment of child support payments in the tax credit rules is also implicated in more lone parents working by 2001. Compared to the 1991 figure of 29 per cent in work, the FACS data report 46 per cent of lone parents in work of 16 or more hours a week. It is true that today’s lone parents face a much better labour market than the deepening recession that confronted this 1991 cohort. But the accumulated evidence of this and other studies supports a conclusion that making work pay has been effective.

12.4 The children

This section reviews the findings from the children of the 1991 cohort by following the format established throughout this report. We assess the significance of the findings connecting 1991 lone parents’ subsequent family formation to the child measures taken in 2001. We then do the same for the parents’ employment histories and for their family welfare during the study period between 1991 and 2001. The analysis contrasted children along selected measures in five broad areas: physical well-being, social adjustment, education, and among older children, their work and household formation.

12.4.1 Child measures and family changes

The literature told us to expect strong connections between the stability of parents’ relationships and the measures we took of the children. But this literature was based, for the most part, on studies of the general population of families that contrasted lone-parent families, stepfamilies and intact families. What should we expect among the lone-parent families that began our study period in the midst of an unorthodox history, who had either suffered disruption already or who had never been part of a
couple family? Would there be further variation in the child measures we could associate with important differences among the families? We found that there were. And this in itself is a valuable finding.

The analysis contrasted the measures taken of children of three kinds of family defined by the 1991 cohort’s passage through the following ten years:

- stable lone parents, who lived with no new partner (55 per cent46);
- stable couples, who ended the study period as part of a couple in 2001 (26 per cent); and
- short-term relationships (19 per cent).

Findings on children from backgrounds where the single parent had formed a stable couple union tended to be most favourable. Most consistently, children from a background where the single parent entered into a short-term relationship and, to a lesser extent, children whose parent remained single during the study period, were found to be at a disadvantage. Thus, the fortunes of the children tended to follow the relative fortunes of their parents. In particular, children from families moving through short-term adult relationships were more likely to be admitted to hospital as small children, to drink and smoke as older children, to truant and commit vandalism, take a discouraged view of school and leave early and to have lower self-esteem. We were at pains throughout this analysis to point out the fragility of findings based on small age-banded samples. But the pattern was fairly consistent and aligned well with other research pertaining to outcomes contrasting children from different family structures.

On the other hand, the children of lone parents who went on to form stable couples did not seem to vary on several of the measures. These included important factors such as health, educational qualifications, employment and benefit receipt, and, most significantly perhaps, early motherhood.47 Continuing lone parenthood and, worse it seems, serial re-partnering is associated both with disadvantage among adults and poorer results among their children. It was significant that these findings held true, independently of many other family characteristics. These findings give strong support to policies such as Sure Start that concentrate on the children of low-income families in poorer areas. The emphasis of policy is correct in that it aims to improve childhood experiences through service delivery to children in the most disadvantaged wards.

### 12.4.2 Child measures and parents’ employment

This issue of the impact of parents’ employment on the children was the most difficult part of the study to untangle but in many ways, the most important. Government departments can do little about people’s choice of partners, except to make it possible for single parents to have an acceptable life alone with their children and so perhaps avoid less promising or risky unions. In contrast, lone parents have been at the centre of the welfare-to-work programmes of successive administrations, combining wage supplementation through Family Credit followed by WFTC and active case management through New Deal and Jobcentre Plus. The current target is to raise the proportion in work (including part-time workers) from 50 to 70 per cent (Opportunity for all 2002). This seems uncontroversial given all the evidence favouring children in working households over children in non-working households.

46 That is 55 per cent of children, not of families.

47 It was still too early to determine whether there was any connection between cohort members’ different paths through lone parenthood and the incidence of lone motherhood among their daughters - we had only 28 cases of these.
Yet there are trade-offs involved with being away from the children. Some negative child outcomes, truancy and antisocial behaviour, for example, may occur in families where adolescent children are left to themselves while their only resident parent is out at work.

In 1991, less than a quarter of the cohort’s children (23 per cent) lived in working households, but this rose to 62 per cent by 2001. Some were the children of continuing lone parents, others had a new working stepfather in their household while others again were the children of a dual-earner couple. This analysis contrasted the children of families:

- who had a working parent for more than half the study period (usually most or all of that time) (48 per cent of children);
- whose parent or parents had had smaller amounts of work (28 per cent); and
- who had lived all or nearly all of this period in a non-working household (24 per cent).

The role of parents’ work in the children’s measures can be difficult to interpret. Continuing non-employment is so closely linked to disadvantages in the home like ill-health/disability, social tenancy, poor education, and hardship. All of these had to be held constant in the comparison of the child measures between the children of working and non-working households. Another obvious control factor was the age of the child, since parents’ economic activity increased as children grew older.

Among the youngest children of non-working families, poor health was more common than among working families. This though, is as likely to be a cause of their parent remaining out of work, as it is an effect.

Among the adolescent children aged 11 to 15, children from non-working households were more likely to truant, get into fights and into trouble with the police, and have a negative attitude towards doing well at school. But they were actually less likely to drink alcohol.

Among the older children, aged 16 to 28, some significant social markers of disadvantage were associated with non-working households. These children were more likely to have truanted and left school early and to lack self-esteem. They were more likely to be unemployed themselves as adults and to have received out-of-work benefits. The girls were more likely to have had a child relatively early in life. Again we do not claim to have demonstrated a causal relationship between parents’ work histories and child outcomes. But the consistency, controlling for other background factors, of the relationship between non-working households and lowered academic ambition and achievement and reduced involvement in the labour market by their children in early adulthood, is persuasive.

Perhaps more persuasive from a policy point of view is the simple finding that the children of lone mothers who worked did not appear to suffer. Their measures did not depart in a negative way from children of non-working households, except that the younger ones drank more. However, it does not necessarily follow that if current policy succeeds in raising the proportion of lone parents in work that this will have no costs in terms of child outcomes. It remains possible that non-working households include a lot of lone parents who know their children well and judge that by going to work it would actually make things more difficult for them. But the findings from this study allow an optimistic view of policies that encourage lone parents into work. Had we found that, other things being equal, the children of working households were more likely to get into trouble, truant, fail at school and later in work, and so on, then this study would have challenged policy in uncomfortable ways. But it found the opposite.

Interpreting the findings for policy
12.4.3 Children and hardship

The third set of analyses on the children focused on family hardship. This is an outcome measure which we know from earlier analyses of PRILIF is connected to a whole range of family and labour market disadvantages that characterise families for whom things are not going well, whose story was anything but an improving one.

Again we used a typology approach, classifying families as ‘low hardship’ where families predominantly experienced no hardship or only a low level of hardship on a few interviews (26 per cent); a ‘spell of moderate hardship’ where families experienced a low level of hardship throughout the study (48 per cent); and a ‘spell of severe hardship’ where families experienced continued severe hardship over most of the interviews (26 per cent).48

As one might expect, the incidence of hardship was higher among workless households. For example, those who failed to get into work by 1998 were twice as likely to have begun the study in severe hardship and nearly three times more likely to have done so in two consecutive years. So it might follow that the experience of severe hardship would be associated with a very similar set of child measures as those associated with worklessness. One key area associated with families’ living standards was educational achievement. Children from families who had a spell of severe hardship during the 1990s compared with those experiencing none, were much more likely to finish school early and later attain a lower level of educational qualifications. Proportionately more of these children went on to experience unemployment in adulthood, though this finding was not statistically significant.

Beyond this, the findings associated with hardship were not consistent. Controlling for other factors, children from families experiencing hardship were more likely to commit vandalism but less likely to smoke, for example. The younger ones in hardship were less likely to contemplate leaving school early but the older ones were more likely to actually have left school early. Otherwise, the degree of hardship experienced did not discriminate among children who may or may not have drunk alcohol, had differing levels of self-esteem, poorer or better attitudes towards school, or ended up either in work or on benefits later on. Nor were they more or less likely to become young mothers.

None of this means that hardship is unimportant. The analysis controlled for the families’ working status, which indirectly controlled for the incomes of families. So this analysis was looking for the extra effect of hardship on variation in the child measures, not the gross effect. And there was indeed an extra effect associated with lowered educational attainment, on top of that already accounted for by worklessness. These findings, taken together, broadly justify a policy that takes worklessness and hardship as a package.

12.5 Conclusions

We have called this a story of improvement because for two-thirds of the 1991 families it was. These improvements were associated with remaining in work, which most of the 1991 workers managed to do, or with entering work, which a significant minority of the remainder managed too. Other improvements were associated, in the longer run, with getting a partner and, especially, with getting both a job and a partner. More got jobs than got partners but those continuing alone benefited a lot from remaining in or entering work. During the 1990s, lone parents were encouraged to work outside

48 The hardship history indicator was limited to the 1991 to 1998 timeframe as no measure of hardship was taken during the 2001 interview and was anyway expected to have a lagged effect.
the home by both an improving labour market, which found more openings for people looking for short hours and flexible work, and by increased incentives from in-work tax credits. It may be possible to take a conditional view of this story in that almost no member of the cohort who began out of work ended up entirely independent in the sense of being without support from the State or a partner. Just two per cent ended up without a partner but also supporting themselves entirely from their work at salary levels beyond eligibility for tax credits.

We can take a broad sweep of our conclusion from the findings of this study by returning to the summary analysis introduced in Chapter 6 which identified families for whom things had turned out better or worse. We add to this our findings from the children’s measures. The 1991 cohort divided first into two groups:

- a majority of about two-thirds who had a job or a partner and who were in better circumstances, on average; and

- a minority of about a third of the 1991 lone parents who had no job and no partner in 2001 and who were in difficulty.

Among the latter group were two sub-categories, with neither job nor partner in 2001. Some of these had seen new relationships fail and, more rarely, seen new jobs fail too:

- about a quarter of the 1991 sample had begun as out-of-work lone parents and remained in that state or had returned to it by 2001. It was rare for a parent to begin the study in work and end up as an out-of-work lone parent; and

- one in ten were out of work and had neither partner nor dependent child.

### 12.5.1 Out of work

**Continuing out-of-work lone parents**

As we showed in Chapter 6, one distinct group of parents – the continuing out-of-work lone parents – still had all the markers of disadvantage they had carried throughout the study period: relying on benefits and social accommodation, financially worse off than other families, more prone to problem debt, and in poorer health, on average. Many had had a new child, which is why they were still lone parents ten years on. Some also saw their relationship with a new partner fail. Their joint lack of new partners and work was associated, in turn, with poor outcomes for their children. In one way or another they shared family characteristics and went through family changes that were associated with almost all the negative child outcomes measured in the study.

**Out of work and alone**

The second group – those out of work and alone – had different problems. They were no longer under any greater financial stress than other families in the study. The majority were ill. Their children too showed many of the negative child outcomes relative to the children of working families.

### 12.5.2 Work or working partners

The second group of parents – the ‘work-or-partner’ group – also comprised two distinct categories, in their cases simply according to whether they had a partner or not. This alone suggested that work was the main driver for family improvement, even though not all of the outcomes for children were positive.
Working lone parents
Quite a large proportion – almost a fifth of the 1991 sample – was made up of working lone parents in 2001. Some had had a new child but most had just begun as young lone parents, the majority of them out of work in 1991, and went on to make a success of a single-parent life. Their family profile in terms of hardship and improved fortunes was almost as favourable as the profile for the new couples. This was true even though half remained in social accommodation and relied heavily on in-work benefits. The trajectories followed by these ‘working career lone parents’ – new mothers or not – were generally associated with positive measures among their children. Again, it was the paid work component of their trajectories that was the really positive aspect.

Working couples
Those that did best were those who found a new partner and stayed with him because so many of them became dual-earner couples by 2001. For many of these families the transition over ten years was dramatic because, being younger, many had begun in 1991 as an out-of-work, single, never-partnered lone parent. Despite the need to adjust to a stepparent, their children showed up with a set of significantly positive measures in 2001. This would not have been everyone’s prediction: there is a good deal of literature and there are a lot of Victorian novels that suggest things go better if no stepparent appears on the scene. If he arrives and stays, and especially if he arrives and stays in work, as nearly all did, then things generally go well for the children. They go much better than in cases where he arrived and left again. The evidence from the study suggests that interventions that support young stepparents and reduce break-up of stepfamilies may be beneficial. Indeed, more research is needed in this area since we do not know whether some stepfamilies are already inherently damaging to their children for reasons not measured in this survey, which of course was always primarily concerned with issues of work and benefits.

12.5.3 Work and welfare in lone-parent families
The study showed that a large minority of the 1991 lone-parent cohort remained without either of the routes to improvement summarised in this section – without work or a working partner. Or worse, some lone parents’ attempts to follow these routes failed. The evidence of the study suggests that a social policy focused to provide better resources for long-term workless families, such as those begun by large rises in Child Benefit and Child Tax Credit will, in the longer run, promote work and abate hardship. This in turn will be associated with better outcomes for children. No one reading this study has a basis for opposing the main policy platform that work is the best form of welfare for lone parents and their children. It was equally evident that the stability of the family also added to the welfare of the family.

12.6 Summary

12.6.1 Design considerations
These data must be interpreted with care because:

• beginning with a nationally representative sample in 1991 meant that they were typically established lone-parent families. Duration in lone parenthood and in other outcomes linked to this will be longer than those of all families who have any experience of lone parenthood;

• widely varying ‘starting positions’ which placed young, single, never-partnered lone parents with a baby alongside older divorced lone parents with teenage children shaped a good deal of what followed in the study;
the interpretation of child outcomes is focused on the connection between lone parents’ backgrounds, the events of the ten years of the study, and the measures taken of their children in 2001. The intent is to explain the likely effects of changes in parents’ lives on their children, not to explain why lone parents’ children are the way they are;

once stratified by age, the samples of children are quite small.

12.6.2 The parents

‘Single mothers’
The strength of public and policy concern with the disadvantaged position of single, never-partnered, lone parents and the growth in their numbers was not entirely borne out by the study. Much of their disadvantage was attached to their youth and having very young children. They were actually more likely than other lone parents to go on to make successful new families. Even the half of this group who found no new partner succeeded in establishing themselves as working lone parents. Formerly married lone parents by contrast, being older and generally better placed, were less likely to make new relationships.

New children
There was no evidence from the study that having new children reflected any conscious or unconscious strategy to build a workless lone-parent family that would become long-term clients of the State. Rather, new children were usually part of a strategy among young lone parents to renew their families with a new partner. In time, many of these unions became dual-earner couples. This course was common among those beginning with just one child from a former relationship. For the majority who took this course it succeeded.

The conditional family
The survey gave considerable support to a view that the normative ties binding relationships – family formation and family income support – are loosening. Choice in each area is becoming more a matter of conditional judgement and this alone is a major force in sustaining the growth of lone parenthood.

Employment
The barriers to work that affected lone parents were slowly overcome. But once overcome, with the help of an improving labour market during the 1990s and more generous and liberal in-work benefits, the transition from a life on Income Support to a working family was accomplished and rarely retraced. Once in work, hardship reduced. The sustainability of lone parents’ employment seemed higher than that typical of other low-paid workers. It suggests that the emphasis on policy, especially for the aims of active case management, should continue getting lone parents into work as soon as it is practical.

There was also clear evidence that improvement to skills and obtaining child support payments independently boosted a return to work and increased the labour market contribution that lone parents were making in 2001. This means that the aim of raising compliance with child support orders and encouraging voluntary income sharing between divided parents, is valuable in itself. This has become part of an integrated welfare-to-work strategy and one that benefits greatly from the new disregard of child support payments under Working Tax Credit rules.
12.6.3 The children

The effects of family changes

Just as things turned out better for 1991’s young, never-partnered lone parents than their initial positions foretold, so too was their children’s welfare in 2001. Policy concerns that focused on the growth of single lone parenthood may be softened by these parents’ evident capacity for recovery in forming new families with new partners and securing a place in the labour market.

Overall, positive child measures in 2001 were strongly associated with forming successful new families with new partners. These results were marginally better than those for children whose parents continued without a new partner. But they were very significantly better than among the children of the 1991 lone-parent cohort who had gone on to make new partnerships but then lose them again by 2001.

The effects of employment

Positive child measures in 2001 were associated with working families - both working couples and working lone parents. These measures were focused on positive educational and employment outcomes among the children of working families and lowered achievement among the children of workless households. No negative outcomes were significantly associated with lone parents being in. These findings allow an optimistic view of policies aiming to increase lone parents’ labour market participation that a quite different set of results would have forbade. Had we found that, other things being equal, the children of working households were more likely to get into trouble, truant, fail at school and later in work, and so on, then this study would have challenged policy in uncomfortable ways. But it found the opposite.

The effects of hardship

The experience of hardship was far greater in workless households and so the analysis linking child measures with degrees of family hardship controlled for worklessness itself. Therefore, the analysis sought additional effects on child measures that might be due to hardship. Such an additional effect was found linking hardship to lowered educational attainment but other effects (other things, including work, being equal) were inconsistent. This indicates that policy would be correct in looking at worklessness and hardship together - that is, addressing the labour market disadvantages associated with being out of work and being unacceptably hard up in a single package.

12.6.4 Conclusions

The 1991 cohort divided into two groups:

- a majority of about two-thirds who had a job or a partner and who were in better circumstances, on average; and

- a minority of about a third of the 1991 lone parents who had no job and no partner in 2001 and who were in difficulty.

The disadvantaged minority with neither job nor partner was, in turn, made up of two groups:

- about a quarter of the 1991 sample had begun as out-of-work lone parents and remained in that state or had returned to it by 2001; and

- one in ten were out-of-work and alone.
The continuing out-of-work lone parents still had all the markers for disadvantage they had carried throughout the study period: relying on benefits and social accommodation, financially worse off than other families, more prone to problem debt, and in poorer health, on average. Many had had a new child, which is why they were still lone parents ten years on. Some had also seen their new relationship with a new partner fail. Their joint lack of new partners and work was associated, in turn, with poor outcomes for their children. Those still out of work and alone – had different problems. They were more likely to be ill. Their children too showed many of the negative child outcomes relative to the children of working families.

Quite a large proportion – almost a fifth of the 1991 sample – was made up of working lone parents in 2001. Some had had a new child but most entered the study as young lone parents, the majority of them out of work in 1991, and went on to make a success of a single-parent life. Their family profile in terms of hardship and improved fortunes was almost as favourable as the profile for the new couples. The trajectories followed by these ‘working career lone parents’ – new mothers or not – were generally associated with positive measures among their children. Again, it was the paid work component of their trajectories that was the really positive aspect.

Those parents that fared better belonged to working couples. For many of these families the transition over ten years was dramatic because, being younger, many had begun in 1991 as out-of-work, single never-partnered lone parents. Despite the need to adjust to a stepparent, their children displayed a set of significantly positive measures in 2001. Things went much better for these children than in cases where new partners arrived and left again. The evidence suggests that any intervention that supports young stepparents and reduces early break-up of stepfamilies may be beneficial.

**Work and welfare in lone-parent families**

The study showed that a large minority of the 1991 lone-parent cohort remained without either of the routes to improvement – without work or without a working partner. Worse still, some lone parents’ attempts to follow these routes failed. The evidence of the study supports a social policy focused to provide better resources for long-term workless families, such as those begun by large rises in Child Benefit and Child Tax Credit will, in the longer run, promote work and abate hardship. This, in turn, will be associated with better outcomes for children. No one reading this study has a basis for opposing the main policy platform that work is the best form of welfare for lone parents and for their children.
## Appendix A

### Logistic regression tables – parent analyses

#### A.1 List of variables

**1991 Entry variables**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>WORK2001,</td>
<td>Worked 16 or more hours a week in 2001</td>
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<tr>
<td>RSEXs,</td>
<td>Sex of respondent</td>
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<tr>
<td>AGEPAR2,</td>
<td>First became a parent aged 19 or younger</td>
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<tr>
<td>PTIM E91A,</td>
<td>Worked 1-15 hours a week in 1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FTIM E91A,</td>
<td>Worked 16 or more hours a week in 1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXCOHAB,</td>
<td>Lone parent in 1991 whose last relationship was cohabitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXMAR,</td>
<td>Married to last partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WIDOW,</td>
<td>Last partner died</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCTEN91,</td>
<td>Social tenant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDER5,</td>
<td>Had a child under five years old in 1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDER40,</td>
<td>Aged under 40 years old in 1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOQUAL91,</td>
<td>Had basic educational qualifications in 1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIQUAL91,</td>
<td>Had A levels or better but no degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEGREE91,</td>
<td>Had degree or equivalents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAINT91,</td>
<td>Received child support payments</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOM EHD91,</td>
<td>Scored 1 or 2 on the hardship scale</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEVHD91,</td>
<td>In severe hardship – scored 3 or more.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ANTIW2,</td>
<td>Believed that benefits should not be restricted solely to the poorest families and that people with jobs and mortgages should receive them too</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CARE91,</td>
<td>Had caring duties for other household member(s)</td>
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1991-2001 Transition variables

INTOWORK, Worked 1-15 hours a week or none in 1991 but worked 16 or more hours a week in 2001
BIRTHBL2, Had new child since 1991
MORED01, Got new educational or vocational qualifications since 1991
GOTMAIN, Obtained child support payments at some point between 1993 and 2001 having reported none in 1991
ILL3, Reported having some ‘long-standing’ health problem at three or more consecutive interviews between 1993 and 2001
LEFT, Lived with new (or reconciled) partner at some point between 1993 and 2001 but had no partner when interviewed in 2001
GOSTAY, Lived with new (or reconciled) partner at some point between 1993 and 2001, who left, but had new partner when interviewed in 2001
STAY, Lived with new (or reconciled) when interviewed in 2001.
CARE1, Had caring duties for other household member at one interview between 1993 and 2001
CARE2, Had caring duties for other household member at two or more interview between 1993 and 2001

Table A.1 Logistic regression analysis of likelihood of having a partner in 2001

Reference case was a 1991 single, never-partnered lone mother who had had her first child after the age of 19 and had not had another child after 1991. She had no academic or vocational qualifications and no paid work at any hours in 1991. Her youngest child was over five in 1991 and she herself was over 40. She received no child support payments in 1991 and none since. She experienced no hardship in 1991. She had acquired no new educational qualifications since 1991. She had not reported a long-standing disability or illness in three consecutive interviews and had not had any caring duties throughout the study period. She had not entered work by 2001.

Variables in the equation

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Variable(s) removed on step 8: CARE1.
Variable(s) removed on step 9: GOTMAIN.
Variable(s) removed on step 10: SOMEHD91.
Variable(s) removed on step 11: HIQUAL91.
Variable(s) removed on step 12: CARE91.
Variable(s) removed on step 13: CARE2.
Variable(s) removed on step 14: MORED01.
PSUEDO-RSQUARED FOR FINAL MODEL
COX AND SNELL  \( r = 0.16 \)
NAGELKERKE  \( r = 0.23 \)

Table A.2  Logistic regression analysis of likelihood of a 1991 lone parent having a new baby between 1991 and 2001

Reference case was a 1991 single, never-partnered lone mother who had had her first child after the age of 19 and had had no partner since 1991. She had no academic or vocational qualifications and no paid work at any hours in 1991. Her youngest child was over five in 1991 and she herself was over 40. She received no child support payments in 1991 and none since. She experienced no hardship in 1991. She had acquired no new educational qualifications since 1991. She had reported a long-standing disability or illness in three consecutive interviews and had not had any caring duties throughout the study period. She had not entered work by 2001.

Variables in the equation

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PSUEDO-RSQUARED FOR FINAL MODEL
COX AND SNELL \( r=0.18 \)
NAGELKERKE \( r=0.26 \)

Table A.3  Logistic regression analysis of likelihood of a 1991 lone parent being in paid work of 16 or more hours a week by 2001

1991 Entry variables only
Reference case was a 1991 single, never-partnered lone mother who had had her first child after the age of 19. She had no academic or vocational qualifications and no paid work at any hours in 1991. Her youngest child was over five in 1991 and she herself was over 40. She received no child support payments in 1991. She experienced no hardship in 1991 or only moderate levels of hardship. She did not believe in 1991 that benefits should not be restricted solely to the poorest families and that people with jobs and mortgages should receive them too.

Variables in the equation

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Variable(s) entered on step 1: RSEX, AGEPAR2, FTIME91A, FTIME91A, EXCOHAB, SOCTEN91, UNDER5, UNDER40, LOQUAL91, HIQUAL91, DEGREE91, MAINT91, SEVHD91, ANTIW2, CARE91.

Variable(s) removed on step 2: RSEX5.
Variable(s) removed on step 3: UNDER5.
Variable(s) removed on step 4: PTIME91A.
Variable(s) removed on step 5: CARE91.
Variable(s) removed on step 6: MAINT91.
Variable(s) removed on step 7: AGEPAR2.
PSUEDO-RSQUARED FOR FINAL MODEL
COX AND SNELL \( r=0.20 \)
NAGELKERKE \( r=0.26 \)
Table A.4  Logistic regression analysis of likelihood of a 1991 lone parent being in paid work of 16 or more hours a week by 2001

1991-2001 Transition variables only
Reference case had had no partner since 1991. She had no academic or vocational qualifications and no paid work at any hours in 1991. She received no child support payments in 1991 and none since. She experienced no hardship in 1991. She had acquired no new educational qualifications since 1991. She had not reported a long-standing disability or illness in three consecutive interviews but had not had any caring duties throughout the study period.

Variables in the equation

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Variable(s) entered on step 1: MORED01, GOTMAIN, ILL3, LEFT, GOSTAY, STAY, CARE1, CARE2.

PSUEDO-RSQUARED FOR FINAL MODEL
COX AND SNELL  /r=0.13
NAGELKERKE  /r=0.18

Table A.5  Logistic regression analysis of likelihood of a 1991 lone parent being in paid work of 16 or more hours a week by 2001

1991 Entry variables and 1991-2001 Transition variables
Reference case was a 1991 single, never-partnered lone mother who had had her first child after the age of 19. She had no academic or vocational qualifications and no paid work at any hours in 1991. Her youngest child was over five in 1991 and she herself was over 40. She received no child support payments in 1991. She experienced no hardship in 1991 or only moderate levels of hardship. She did not believe in 1991 that benefits should not be restricted solely to the poorest families and that people with jobs and mortgages should receive them too.

She had had no partner since 1991. She had no academic or vocational qualifications and no paid work at any hours in 1991. She received no child support payments in 1991 and none since. She experienced no hardship in 1991. She had acquired no new educational qualifications since 1991. She had not reported a long-standing disability or illness in three consecutive interviews but had not had any caring duties throughout the study period.
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Variable(s) entered on step 1: RSEX, AGEPAR2, FTIME91A, FTIM91A, EXCOHAB, SOCTEN91, UNDERS, UNDERS40, LOQUAL91, HIQUAL91, DEGREE91, MAINT91, SEVHD91, ANTW2, CARE91, BIRTHBL2, MORED01, GOTMAIN, ILL3, LEFT, GOSTAY, STAY, CARE1, CARE2.

Variable(s) removed on step 2: RSEX.
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Variable(s) removed on step 10: AGEPAR2.
Variable(s) removed on step 11: MAINT91.

PSUEDO-RSQUARED FOR FINAL MODEL
COX AND SNELL \( r^2 = 0.29 \)
NAGELKERKE \( r^2 = 0.39 \)

Table A.6 Logistic regression analysis of likelihood of an out-of-work 1991 lone parent being in paid work of 16 or more hours a week by 2001

Reference case was a 1991 single never-partnered lone mother who had had her first child after the age of 19. She had no academic or vocational qualifications and no paid work at any hours in 1991. Her youngest child was over 5 in 1991 and she herself was over 40. She received no child support payments in 1991. She experienced no hardship in 1991 or only moderate levels of hardship. She did not believe in 1991 that benefits should not be restricted solely to the poorest families and that people with jobs and mortgages should receive them too.

She had had no partner since 1991. She had no academic or vocational qualifications and no paid work at any hours in 1991. She received no child support payments in 1991 and none since. She experienced no hardship in 1991. She had acquired no new educational qualifications since 1991. She had not reported a long-standing disability or illness in three consecutive interviews but had not had any caring duties throughout the study period.
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PSUEDO-RSQUARED FOR FINAL MODEL
COX AND SNELL  /r=0.28
NAGELKERKE  /r=0.38
# Appendix B

Logistic regression tables – child analyses

## Table B.1  Key to variables entered in analyses

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<td><strong>12.6.4.2 Family structure variables</strong></td>
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<td>parent remained a lone parent</td>
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<tr>
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<td>parent became part of a couple</td>
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<td>parent experienced a short-term partnership</td>
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<td>parent(s) worked full-time for less than half of the study period</td>
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<td>parent(s) worked full-time for more than half of the study period</td>
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<td>MODHARD</td>
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Continued
Table B.1  Continued

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Analyses were run on SPSS using the logistic regression procedure and the ‘enter’ method.

Table B.2  Model for report of disability or illness among children three to 15 years

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a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: SATBLP, SHTPART, NEVWORK, WKLT50, SEVHARD, MODHARD, SOCIAL01, PRIV01, NOED, ADVANCED, NONWH, SIZONE, CSEX.

Model summary

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Table B.3  Model for hospital admissions among children three to ten years

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<sup>a</sup> Variable(s) entered on step 1: STABLP, SHTPART, NEVWORK, WKLT50, SEVHARD, MODHARD, SOCIAL01, PRIV01, NOED, ADVANCED, NONWH, FIRSTB, CSEX, CDISAB.

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Table B.4  Model for alcohol consumption among 11 to 15 year olds

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<sup>a</sup> Variable(s) entered on step 1: STABLP, SHTPART, NEVWORK, WKLT50, SEVHARD, MODHARD, SOCIAL01, PRIV01, NOED, ADVANCED, NONWH, SIZONE, CSEX.

Model summary

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*a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: STABLP, SHTPART, NEVWORK, WKL50, SEVHARD, MODHARD, SOCIAL01, PRIV01, NOED, NONWH, SIZONE, CSEX, SM OKE91.*

#### Model summary

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### Table B.6  Model for cigarette smoking among 16 to 28 year olds

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*a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: STABLP, SHTPART, NEVWORK, WKL50, SEVHARD, MODHARD, BIRTH21, BIRTH35, NOED, ADVANCED, NONWH, SIZONE, CSEX, SM OKE91.*

#### Model summary

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Table B.7  Model for truancy among 11 to 15 year olds

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a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: STABLP, SHTPART, NEVWORK, WKL50, SEVHARD, MODHARD, SOCIAL01, PRIV01, NOED, ADVANED, NONWH, FIRSTB, CSEX.

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Table B.8  Model for truancy among 16 to 28 year olds

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a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: STABLP, SHTPART, NEVWORK, WKLT50, SEVHARD, MODHARD, SOCIAL01, PRIV01, NOED, ADVANED, NONWH, FIRSTB, CSEX.

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Table B.10  Model for trouble with the law among 16 to 28 year olds

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a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: STABLP, SHTPART, NEVWORK, WKLT50, SEVHARD, MODHARD, BIRTH21, BIRTH35, NOED, ADVANED, NONWH, FIRSTB, CSEX.

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Table B.11  Model for fighting among 11 to 15 year olds

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Table B.12  Model for vandalism committed by 11 to 15 year olds

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### Table B.13  Model for high self-esteem among 16 to 28 year olds

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*a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: STABLP, STABCP, NEWWORK, WKLT50, SEVHARD, MODHARD, BIRTH21, BIRTH35, NOED, ADVANCED, NONWH, FIRSTB, CSEX, CDISAB, CED16.*

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### Table B.14  Model for low self-esteem among 16 to 28 year olds

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*a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: STABLP, SHTPART, NEWWORK, WKLT50, SEVHARD, MODHARD, BIRTH21, BIRTH35, NOED, ADVANCED, NONWH, FIRSTB, CSEX, CDISAB.*

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a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: STABLP, SHTPART, NEWWORK, WKLT50, SEVHARD, MODHARD, SOCIAL01, PRIV01, NOED, ADVANCED, NONWH, FIRSTB, CSEX.

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### Table B.16  Model for leaving school by age 16 reported by 16 to 28 year olds

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a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: STABCP, SHTPART, NEWWORK, WKLT50, SEVHARD, MODHARD, BIRTH21, BIRTH35, NOED, ADVANCED, NONWH, FIRSTB, CSEX.

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### Table B.17  Model for advanced academic qualifications among 19 to 28 year olds

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a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: STABCP, SHTPART, NEWWORK, WKL50, SEVHARD, MODHARD, BIRTH21, BIRTH35, NOED, ADVANCED, NONWH, SIZONE, CSEX.

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### Table B.18  Model for poor attitude towards school performance among 11 to 15 year olds

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a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: STABLP, SHTPART, NEWWORK, WKL50, SEVHARD, MODHARD, SOCIAL01, PRIV01, NOED, ADVANCED, NONWH, FIRSTB, CSEX.

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a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: STABLP, SHTPART, NEVWORK, WKL50, SEVHARD, MODHARD, NOED, ADVANED, NONWH, SIZONE, CSEX, CED16.

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References


Hobcraft, J. Intergenerational and Life-course transmission of Social Exclusion: Influences of Childhood Poverty, Family Disruption, and Contact with the Police. in Persistent Poverty and Lifetime Inequality: the Evidence. Centre for the Analysis of Social Exclusion and HM Treasury.


## Other research reports available

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