

CONSERVATIVE MANIFESTO - KEY THEMES ON CHILD POVERTY

1. Tackling worklessness is essential for eliminating child poverty by 2020:

- tackle welfare dependency through new single Welfare to Work Programme & increased benefit conditionality
- extension to flexible working

Focus on **early intervention** to support the most disadvantaged and dysfunctional families:

- 'health advisors' commitment
- school reform programme & pupil premium
- preventing NEETS & youth unemployment
- financial support for married couples
- tackle drivers of poverty – family breakdown

Improve service delivery, outcomes & efficiency by expanding the role of third and voluntary sector and payment by results

2. Mapping the route to 2020:

Work remains main route out of poverty:

- Achieve **parental employment** rates and which are amongst the best in Europe
- Remove constraints to work by promoting childcare and flexible working
- Radically reduce in-work poverty

Transform the life chances of children from disadvantaged backgrounds:

- Investment in early years development to stop initial gaps emerging
- Narrow the gaps in school outcomes
- Better transitions to adulthood
- Support for all families, with intensive support for those with greatest needs

Achieve **excellence in delivery**: as it is intensive, personalised services that will provide families with the right support

3. Manifesto themes build on analysis of poverty and its causes by the Centre for Social Justice

Five Pathways to Poverty

- According to the Centre for Social Justice (CSJ), there are five poverty "drivers": family breakdown; welfare dependency; educational failure; addiction to drugs and alcohol; and serious personal debt, which are all interrelated:
- “As this report shows, children from a broken home are twice as likely to have behavioural problems, perform worse at school, become sexually active at a younger age, suffer depression and turn to drugs, smoking and heavy drinking.” (Breakdown Britain 2006, p.15)
- Greater focus on severe poverty and criticism of reliance on relative poverty:
- The CSJ estimates there are one million more people living in "severe poverty" (defined as earning 40 per cent of median income) than in 1997. It is also critical of the relative poverty measure, based on a single threshold of 60% of median household income, which it says has led to a “narrow and arbitrary policy process,” which has “prioritised shifting those just below the poverty line to just above it”. (Breakdown Britain, 2006, p.18)