

## **100 Questions: identifying research priorities for poverty prevention and reduction**

These 100 research questions would, if answered, help to reduce or prevent poverty.

The list includes questions across a number of important themes, including attitudes, education, family, employment, health, wellbeing, inclusion, markets, housing, taxes, inequality and power.

The questions were identified in an exercise run by JRF and the Centre for Science and Policy at the University of Cambridge, involving 45 participants from government, non-governmental organisations, academia and research.

### **Attitudes towards poverty**

1. To what extent does stigma contribute to the experience of living in poverty in the UK, and what could be done to address this?
2. How do images of people in poverty influence policy debates in different countries?
3. What are the levels of awareness and understanding of the importance and effects of poverty among public service professionals (for example, psychiatrists, judges, youth workers, civil servants, teachers, doctors)?
4. What blocks are there to challenging institutional discrimination towards people in poverty?
5. To what extent do public and political discourses (in the media, for example) shape public attitudes to people living in poverty, and to what extent is it the other way round?
6. To what extent are attitudes towards people in poverty affected by the language and stereotyping used by politicians of the day, and how does this vary geographically?

7. What values, frames and narratives are associated with greater support for tackling poverty, and why?
8. What can be learned from interventions devised to challenge negative attitudes of other kinds (for example, racism, smoking, homophobia) that could be helpful for the design of interventions aiming to tackle negative attitudes towards people in poverty?
9. What evidence is there about the existence, nature and effectiveness of interventions designed to tackle negative attitudes towards people in poverty (targeting, for example, politicians, other elites, the media and specific groups of the general public)?
10. Do certain experiences (such as schooling or voluntary work) shape people's support for poverty reduction?
11. Do more affluent groups in society feel that they are entitled to the share of income and wealth they currently have, and if so, why?

### **Education and family**

1. To what extent do families (including extended families) provide the first line of defence against individual poverty, and what are the limits and geographical variations of this support?
2. How can childcare be provided so that it is both affordable for parents and of high quality, with a proven positive long-term impact on child outcomes?
3. What evidence is there that youth work can have a positive impact on outcomes for young people in poverty?
4. If services for looked-after children were developed from scratch, so that their specific focus was on eliminating poverty, how would they be different, and what can be learned from other countries?
5. How, why and where have poverty rates among minority ethnic groups changed?

6. What are the most effective interventions for reducing the social gap in educational outcomes?
7. What works to radically improve the quality of underperforming schools in deprived areas?
8. What are the most effective methods of increasing involvement and support for the education of children among their parents or guardians?
9. What works in reducing the negative impact of growing up in poverty on a child's life chances?
10. Why is there a weaker link between family disadvantage and child outcomes for some children, families and communities (for example, among some minority ethnic groups)?
11. What are the key mechanisms through which poverty is translated into poorer life chances for children?

## **Employment**

1. What explains variation in wages as a share of GDP internationally?
2. What can countries do to combat low pay without causing unemployment in sectors that cannot move abroad?
3. Why are wages still low for traditionally 'women's' work?
4. What are the most effective and viable mechanisms for shifting responsibility from state to employer for reducing poverty?
5. How effective is the Living Wage at reducing poverty?
6. How could targeting and incentivising payment of the Living Wage make it more effective at reducing household poverty?
7. Is there evidence that different models of business or ownership are more inclusive to disadvantaged groups?

8. How can people be helped to progress out of low-paid employment into better-paid jobs (considering the roles of governments, employers and employees)?

9. How can policy incentivise the creation of high-quality jobs for people at risk of poverty?

10. What is an effective skills-based employment system for poverty reduction?

11. How can a coherent and effective system of back-to-work interventions for those furthest from the labour market be created?

12. What are the longer-term changing dimensions of employment, and what impact will these have on UK poverty?

13. What does effective worker representation look like for reducing poverty?

14. Compared with unemployment, what are the longer-term effects of underemployment and short-term, low-paid employment on later wages, employment and poverty?

15. Does setting up as self-employed or in a small business help to reduce poverty?

16. Is there evidence from other countries of mainstream initiatives that have effectively reduced the number of young people (aged 18-25) not in employment or training, and that have successfully reduced poverty in this group?

### **Health, wellbeing and inclusion**

1. What is the nature and extent of poverty among those who do not or cannot access the safety net when they need it?

2. What are the health risks associated with poor-quality work (low paid, insecure, poorly regulated etc) for individuals or households in poverty?

3. What are the causal connections and intersections between poverty and wider social problems (such as homelessness, substance misuse, mental and physical ill health)?
4. What initiatives or assets can help people manage the experience of remaining in poverty?
5. What is an acceptable standard of living for people who are disabled/sick in a way that makes paid employment impossible?
6. What are the factors (local, global and other) that affect the ability of people in poverty to have a healthy diet?
7. How is poverty related to being a victim or perpetrator of crime or violence, and how can such risks be mitigated?
8. What are the causal links between poverty and low subjective wellbeing (including isolation and loneliness)?
9. What are the positive and negative impacts of digital technologies on poverty?
10. What are the implications of changing demography for people in poverty?

### **Markets, service and the cost of living**

1. What transport measures and interventions have the greatest negative/positive impact on poverty?
2. What is the impact of up-front charging in public services on people in poverty?
3. What interventions have been shown to improve the extent to which people living in poverty benefit from services, and why?
4. In which services could there be benefits from universalism in tackling poverty, and what are the trade-offs?

5. Does universalism build solidarity and make it easier to justify public expenditure on anti-poverty measures?
6. How can essential goods and services provided by the private and regulated sectors become affordable, accessible and inclusive to people in poverty?
7. How do environmental and social regulations or obligations affect prices for those in poverty?
8. How can consumer markets be made to work better for people in poverty?
9. How can better contracting within the delivery of publicly funded services lead to improved outcomes for people in poverty?
10. What are the most effective ways to improve the quality, affordability and choice of food on sale in disadvantaged areas?

### **Place and housing**

1. What is the effect of housing-related welfare changes on people and places in poverty?
2. What can be done to ensure that enough homes are provided with sufficient security of tenure and at rent levels that will address the needs of those in poverty?
3. How can local authorities and other stakeholders integrate anti-poverty work into their approaches to housing, regeneration and economic development?
4. Are there examples of localities in the UK where poverty has significantly reduced/been reversed in the last 20 years, what caused this and was it sustained?
5. What evidence is there of successful community development practice in addressing poverty in the UK?

6. What are the possible solutions to poverty in parts of the country that have been in decline for a long time (often places that were formerly industrialised that have not recovered)?
7. What are the most effective classes of intervention able to be implemented by devolved administrations?
8. How can access to opportunities be improved in isolated or disconnected areas that can reduce persistent poverty?

### **Tax, benefits and inequality**

1. What would be the impacts on poverty of different models of more contributory benefit schemes?
2. How can the effect on poverty of issues of diversity, such as ethnicity, disability, age, gender, sexual orientation or religion, be better understood and addressed?
3. What relevance does inequality in the top half of the income distribution have for the reduction of poverty?
4. The claim is often made that high personal and business taxation leads to disinvestment – for example, people and businesses leaving the UK for lower tax regimes. Taking into account international experience and evidence, how robust is this claim?
5. Would different policy conclusions be reached about reducing poverty if there were a focus on individuals and lifetimes rather than households and snapshots?
6. What could be the relative contribution of income, consumption and asset taxation to a successful anti-poverty strategy?
7. What is the relative importance of security of resources to people living in poverty, and what contribution could the tax/benefit system make?

8. What is the most effective balance between supply-side and demand-side interventions in meeting additional needs and costs (for example, in the provision of childcare)?
9. If the primary objective of Universal Credit were to tackle poverty, what changes would need to be made?
10. How can the social security system become more focused on achieving beneficial long-term outcomes for individuals?
11. What would be the impact on different individuals or households of being paid benefits in a restrictive way (for example, direct payment or benefit cards)?
12. What might social mobility look like if relative poverty were eradicated without addressing inequality in the top half of the redistribution?

### **Policy, power and agency**

1. What forms of institutional structures, processes and reforms enable people living in poverty to hold state and non-state actors to account?
2. Where are there effective examples of the redistribution of power within (labour or consumer) markets, and why are they effective?
3. What are the barriers to political participation (including, but not restricted to, voting) for people in poverty, and how are they best overcome?
4. What are the (political) barriers to implementing anti-poverty policies based on existing (and extensive) evidence?
5. To what extent do different ideologies within the governing institutions of the UK, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales shape poverty-reduction initiatives?
6. How can decision-makers and decision-making processes be made more responsive to the needs of people experiencing poverty?



7. In what ways can people experiencing poverty develop, deliver and evaluate policy and practice?
8. What is the quality of service received by people in poverty from professionals (such as teachers or GPs) and what are the effects of this?
9. Which poverty campaigns have been most successful at reducing poverty, and what can be learned from them?
10. What is the relative scope and capacity of different levels of government to affect poverty?

### **The bigger picture**

1. What are the most cost-effective interventions to prevent poverty over the life course?
2. What differentiates the effects of poverty on men and women in terms of the impact on both their own quality of life and that of their families?
3. Considering how much money has been spent on poverty alleviation, why has it not had more of an effect?
4. What are the costs of poverty to the individual, society and the economy, and who benefits most from reducing those costs?
5. Who benefits from poverty, and how?
6. What evidence is there that economic growth reduces poverty overall, and under what circumstances?
7. What are the current structural economic drivers of poverty?
8. What cost-effective measures would ensure that those who escape poverty stay out of poverty?

9. What are the dynamics of how people experience poverty through their life-course – for example, moving in and out of poverty, versus brief spells, versus living in poverty for a long time – and why?
10. Who is at risk of poverty in the UK, and why?
11. What are the implications of deep and/or widespread poverty for democracy?
12. What is the role of organisations outside central governments in tackling poverty, and how do they do it?