

Chapter two: Developing our understanding

Introduction

1. Chapter one described the progress we have made in promoting opportunities for all. Previous *Opportunity for all* reports have considered issues relating to vulnerable groups. In this chapter we explore in greater depth the problems faced by three particular groups.
 - Large families (paragraphs 3–64) have perhaps not conventionally been considered a vulnerable group, but the risk of low income increases with family size. Improving our understanding of the interrelated factors contributing to this increased risk will be important for our child poverty strategy.
 - In this, the European Year of Disabled People, the second section of the chapter (paragraphs 65–179) focuses on issues faced by disabled people. Households containing a disabled child or adult are more likely to suffer low income. And disabled people may face particular barriers to work, access to services and participation in society.
 - The final section of the chapter (paragraphs 180–256) presents some of the research evidence about outcomes for ethnic minority groups. Whilst some stark inequalities remain between ethnic minority groups and their White counterparts, there are also interesting differences between ethnic minority groups.
2. The problems faced by these groups are not mutually exclusive. Where relevant our analysis draws out the interrelated problems of these and other groups. Each section of the chapter presents an analysis of relevant research evidence, discusses how our strategy described in Chapter one relates to the group in question and identifies how our understanding of the issues might be strengthened. In the conclusions section of this chapter (paragraphs 257–260) we explain that hearing your views is an important aspect of improving our understanding.

Large families

Introduction

3. We aim to halve child poverty by 2010 and eradicate it by 2020. Low income is associated with a lack of opportunities to live secure and fulfilling lives. Work is the best route out of low income. Research supports our emphasis on labour market policies, showing that movements into work or an increase in earnings due to progression account for around two-thirds of movements out of low income¹. But some groups may find it more difficult to work or may still suffer in-work low income. Likewise, certain groups are vulnerable to risk factors that are associated with poor outcomes and social exclusion.

4. Children who live in lone parent families, ethnic minority groups, households with a disabled adult or disabled child, workless households and some couple families with no second earners are at greater risk of low income. These risk factors are not mutually exclusive. Family size is also important. Half of all poor children live in families with three or more dependent children.
5. This section presents an analysis of the characteristics of large families and the risk factors they face that are associated with poverty and social exclusion. Whilst there is a wealth of research investigating outcomes of poverty for children, research that investigates the specific role of family size is limited.
6. The analysis presented here synthesises recent evidence. However, our understanding of the interaction between family size, personal characteristics, low income, work status and child outcomes is at an early stage.

Definition

7. Several risk factors increase with family size. There is no official definition of when a family becomes large and the cut off line is arbitrary. Unless otherwise stated, in this chapter we use the term large families to mean those with three or more dependent children.

Family characteristics

8. The make-up of families in Great Britain today is arguably more complex than it was 50 years ago. Like other family types, being a large family is not a steady state. During its lifecycle a family may go through a number of transitions. For example, a family headed by a couple may break up and go through a period of lone parenthood, and the lone parent may later re-partner.
9. Likewise a family grows in size as children join it (through birth, adoption or re-partnering). A large family will later become a small family as children grow up. The length of time children spend in any one family type will vary – some children may spend their entire childhood in one family type, others may experience several. These potential family transitions should be kept in mind when considering the analysis presented.

10. The number of children living in large families represents a significant minority of all children. Chart 2.1 shows that in 2003, whilst large families constituted only 17 per cent of all families, 31 per cent of all children lived in large families.

Family type and composition

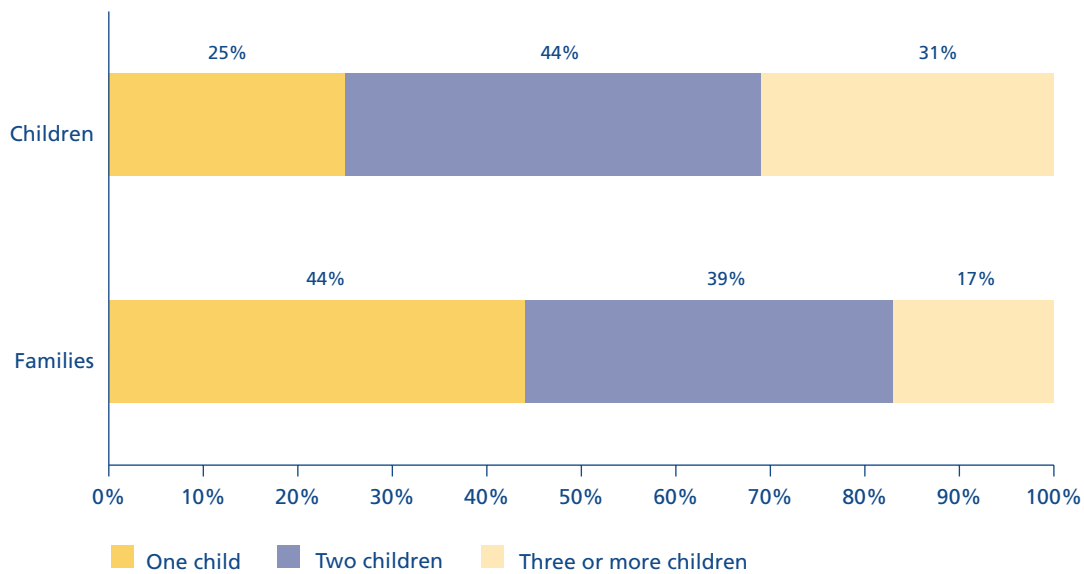
11. Economic and social outcomes, such as performance in the labour market, are often associated with family type and composition. Differences in family composition, for example the number of children and the age of the youngest child, are associated with marital status.

12. Research evidence provides a comparison of differences in family type and composition by family size.

13. The majority of mothers with large families are in their 30s. Few mothers of large families are younger than 25 or older than 45. These patterns reflect the growth of larger families over time, followed by their return to smaller family status as dependent children grow up².

- Around 60 per cent of mothers in large families fall into the 30–39 age range, compared with 45 per cent of smaller families.

Chart 2.1: Percentage of children and families by family size (Great Britain)



Source: Child Benefit administrative data, February 2003, Department for Work and Pensions.

- Only 1 per cent of mothers of large families were under 25 compared with 8 per cent of mothers of small families.
 - 7 per cent of mothers of large families were aged 45 or over compared with 18 per cent of mothers of smaller families.
14. Overall, lone parents have fewer children than couples, and cohabiting couples tend to have fewer children than married couples³.
- Whilst 50 per cent of lone parents have one child compared with only 38 per cent of couples, similar proportions of lone parents and couples have three or more children – 17 per cent compared with 19 per cent (Table 2.1).
 - However, given that more than seven out of ten of all families are headed by a couple, children in large families are more likely to be headed by a couple than a lone parent.
15. Among lone mothers, larger families are more prevalent among those separated or divorced from marriage than among those separated from cohabitation, single never partnered or widowed⁴.
- Large families represent 22 per cent of separated or divorced from marriage lone parent families compared with 15 per cent of those separated from cohabitation, 13 per cent of those single never partnered and 18 per cent of those widowed.
16. Larger families are more prevalent among married couples than cohabiting couples. Large families are also more prevalent among re-partnered couples than couples who are both parents of the eldest child⁵.
- Large families represent 35 per cent of married re-partnered couples and 25 per cent of cohabiting re-partnered couples compared with 19 per cent of couples overall.
17. Importantly for labour market outcomes, large families are more likely to contain a child under school age⁶.
- Around half of large families compared with 37 per cent of smaller families have a child under school age. Approximately a further four out of ten large families had a youngest child aged between 5 and 10, compared with around three out of ten small families (Table 2.2).

Table 2.1: Percentage of lone parent and couple families by number of dependent children (Great Britain)

	Lone parents	Couples
Number of dependent children		
One	50	38
Two	33	44
Three	13	14
Four or more	4	5

Source: Table 2.10, Marsh A and Perry J, 2003, *Family Change 1999 to 2001*, Department for Work and Pensions Research Report No 180, Corporate Document Services. Data relate to 2001.

Note: Column percentages may not sum to 100 owing to rounding.

Table 2.2: Percentage of large and small families by age of their youngest child (Great Britain)

	Small family	Large family
Age of youngest child		
0–4 years	37	51
5–10 years	29	38
11–15 years	25	10
16–18 years	9	0

Source: Table 2.3, Willitts M and Swales K, 2003, *Characteristics of Large Families*, Department for Work and Pensions In-house Report No 118. Data relate to 2001.

Note: Column percentages may not sum to 100 owing to rounding.

Ethnicity

18. Around three per cent of children in Great Britain live in Pakistani and Bangladeshi families. These children are more likely to live in a large family than children from other ethnic minority groups and their White counterparts.

Issues specific to ethnic minority groups are explored later in this chapter (paragraphs 180–256). However, where relevant the large families analysis in this section also presents breakdowns by ethnic group.

Education, qualifications and skills

Children

19. Chapter one explained the importance of obtaining good educational qualifications during childhood and adolescence to enhance future labour market activity and lifetime earnings.
20. Parents with large families are more likely to report their children as performing below average in English and mathematics. In English 19 per cent of children in families of four or more children were reported by parents as performing below average, compared with 13 per cent of all children. In mathematics the figure was 17 per cent compared with 12 per cent⁷. However, this analysis is based on self-reported data and does not control for other factors, such as social class and parental qualifications, that may influence educational outcomes for children.
21. Our strategy to raise educational standards among children and young people described in Chapter one should improve performance, regardless of family size.

Adult skills

22. Mothers in large families were slightly more likely to have left school at age 16 or under – 59 per cent compared with 54 per cent of those in smaller families. Although this difference is small, the qualifications and skill levels of parents in large families will be a key determinant of their labour market activity, earnings and consequent risk of low income.
23. Chapter one described the importance of enhancing adult basic skills and encouraging learning to equip people to find and retain jobs and progress in work. These programmes should help parents regardless of the size of their family.

Labour market activity

Workless households

24. Parents of large families are less likely to be in work, although the situation has improved since 1997. Table 2.3 details the differences for lone parent and couple families.
25. There are clear associations between lack of work and low income. Furthermore, experience of a spell in a workless household during childhood is associated with negative outcomes both during childhood and subsequently in adulthood⁸. A stable economy and our active labour market policies have helped

people move into work. Between 1997 and 2003, the number of children living in a household where no one works has fallen by 350,000. Table 2.3 shows a breakdown of rates of worklessness by family type and size. It also shows the number of children in each group.

26. Firstly, we can make a number of observations comparing family types in a given year (2003).

- Lone parent families have a greater risk of worklessness than couple families – 43 per cent compared with 5 per cent. Children in lone parent families account for around seven out of ten of children in workless households. Chapter one described our strategy to help lone parents move into work.

- Among both couple and lone parent families, large families have a greater risk of worklessness than small families. There are 700,000 children in large workless families accounting for around four out of ten of all children in workless households.

- In proportionate terms, the difference between worklessness rates for large and small couple families is greater than the difference between the rates for large and small lone parent families. The worklessness rate among large couple families is more than double the rate among small couple families, whereas the rate among large lone parent families is around one-and-a-half times greater than the rate among small lone parent families.

Table 2.3: Percentage of families with children aged under 16 in workless households by family type and family size, and number of children affected (Great Britain)

	Workless families		Number of children	
	1997	2003	1997	2003
Lone parent families	50%	43%	1,290,000	1,200,000
Small lone parent families	47%	40%	810,000	760,000
Large lone parent families	71%	66%	480,000	430,000
Couple families	7%	5%	790,000	530,000
Small couple families	6%	4%	370,000	270,000
Large couple families	14%	10%	420,000	270,000
All families	16%	14%	2,080,000	1,730,000

Source: Labour Force Survey, spring quarters.

Note: Percentages are rounded to the nearest per cent. Numbers are rounded to the nearest 10,000.

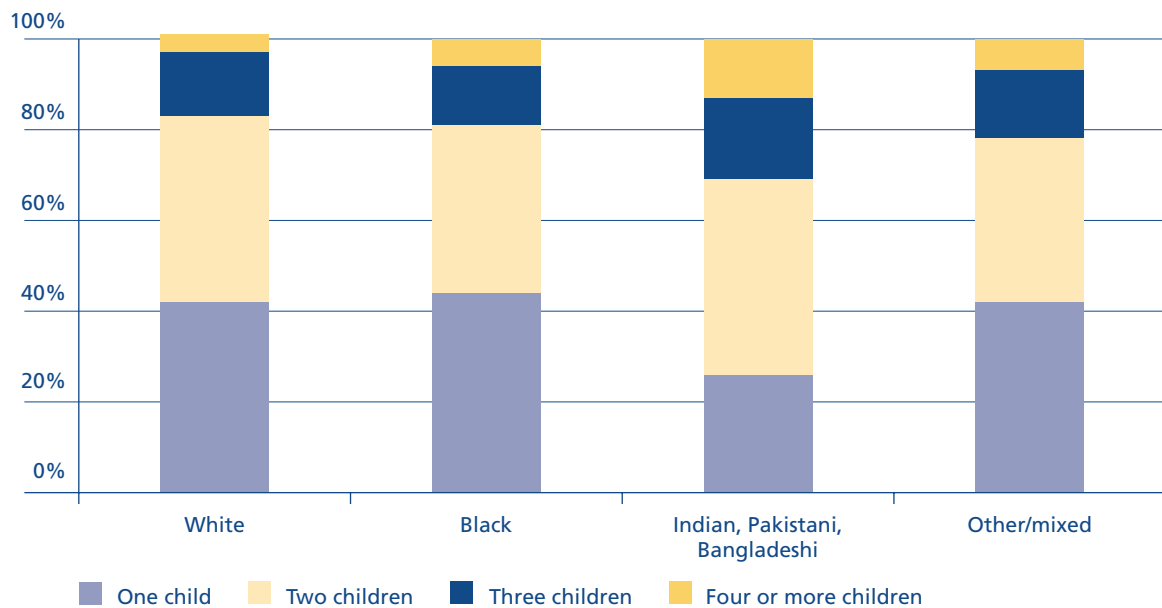
27. Secondly, we can look at changes between 1997 and 2003⁹.
- There have been falls in worklessness for all these family types.
 - In proportionate terms, the reduction in worklessness among couple families has been greater than the fall among lone parent families.
 - The proportionate fall in the worklessness rate for large lone parent families is around half the fall for small lone parent families. Among couples there is little difference in these reductions between small and large families.
28. The fact that worklessness rates have fallen for both large and small families is encouraging. But large families still have a greater risk of worklessness. This difference in worklessness rates between large and small families is likely to be related to a range of factors.
- Large families are particularly prevalent among some ethnic minority groups that may face particular barriers to work.
 - Large families are more likely than smaller families to have a youngest child below school age.
 - Childcare arrangements are likely to be more complicated and more costly for larger families, particularly those with a wide range of ages of children.
 - For lone parent families in particular, mothers of large families are more likely to have been out of work for longer periods of time, making the move into work even more difficult. Chapter one described our strategy to help lone parents move into work.
29. In a model that examined significant factors that explain movements into work of 16 hours a week or more, family size was not found to be significant. For lone parents some of the factors that were shown to play a significant role in explaining movements into work were the age of the lone parent, age of the youngest child, re-partnering, and not having a long-term illness or disability¹⁰.
30. For couples, the same research found that health-related factors, such as having neither a disabled child nor a partner with poor health, were significantly associated with movements into work. Again, family size was not an independent factor. Issues relating to disability and ill health are discussed later in this chapter.

Ethnic groups, family size and worklessness

- 31. Some people from ethnic minority backgrounds may face particular barriers to work, for example if English is not their first language (issues relating to ethnic minority groups are discussed later in the chapter). And large families are more prevalent in some cultures.

In Great Britain, 31 per cent of Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Indian families have three or more children compared with 18 per cent of White families. The difference is even more obvious when looking at families of four or more children – these families form 13 per cent of Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi families but only 4 per cent of White families (Chart 2.2).

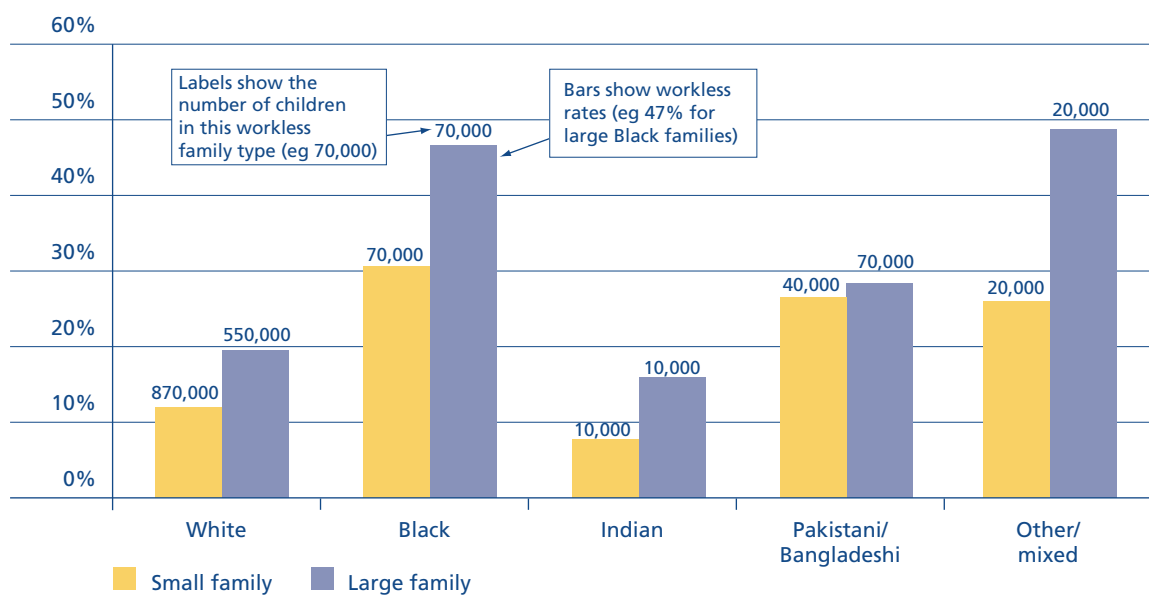
Chart 2.2: Comparison of family size composition by ethnic group (Great Britain)



Source: Willitts M and Swales K, 2003, *Characteristics of Large Families*, Department for Work and Pensions In-house Research Report No 118. Data are for 2001.

32. Chart 2.3 shows that the correlation between large family size and worklessness holds for all ethnic groups, though the difference for Pakistani and Bangladeshi families is not significant. This suggests that factors other than family size are key determinants for work status for this group. Worklessness rates are particularly high for large Black families and families of mixed or other ethnic origin, both with a worklessness rate of around 50 per cent.
33. The largest proportional difference between worklessness rates among small and large families is in those of Indian origin and mixed or other ethnic origin, for whom the worklessness rate of large families is around double that of small families. However, worklessness rates among Indian families are lower than for any other group.
34. For all other groups, apart from Pakistani and Bangladeshi families, the worklessness rate among large families is more than one-and-a-half times that of small families. Among Pakistani and Bangladeshi families, though there is little difference in worklessness rates between large and small families, the number of children affected by worklessness in large families is almost double the number in small families. This reflects the high occurrence of large families among this ethnic group.

Chart 2.3: Children in workless households by ethnic group and family size (Great Britain)



Source: Labour Force Survey, spring 2002 and spring 2003 combined.

Work search and childcare

- 35. We know that large families are more likely to have younger children. Parents may want to spend more time caring for young children, and those who do work need access to flexible and affordable childcare. Among all lone parent families the most commonly cited reasons for not looking for work were the desire to avoid spending too much time away from their children, the cost and availability of childcare, and health considerations. Couples also cited a desire to spend more time with their children, and concerns with family members' health. Childcare was less of an issue, partly because there were two adults to share caring responsibilities¹¹.
- 36. These reasons do not change for large families (Table 2.4). However, for mothers who were not working, the desire not to

- spend more time apart from their children was reported more often among large families than among small ones – 52 per cent compared with 42 per cent. This probably reflects the fact that large families are more likely to have younger children.
- 37. Among non-working mothers there were no significant differences between large and small families in responses relating to childcare. However, among mothers working 1 to 15 hours a week, in addition to stating that they did not want to spend more time away from their children, large family respondents were more likely to report the cost (though not the availability) of childcare as a reason for not seeking work of 16 hours or more than their small family counterparts – 12 per cent compared with 9 per cent¹².

Table 2.4: Reasons why mothers do not work 16 hours or more a week

	Small family		Large family	
	Not working	Working 1–15 hours	Not working	Working 1–15 hours
Don't want to spend more time apart from children	42	38	52	47
Cannot afford childcare	13	9	14	12
No childcare available	11	7	11	5

Source: Willitts M and Swales K, 2003, *Characteristics of Large Families*, Department for Work and Pensions In-house Research Report No 118. Data are from Family and Children Survey, 2001.

Note: Other reasons are also reported as reasons for not working. Parents were able to report several reasons.

38. The factors that increase the risk of worklessness among large families are also important in terms of work search for those not working. Among non-working lone parents the proportion reporting that they are looking for work decreases with family size. Whilst 22 per cent of non-working lone parents had large families, large families formed only 17 per cent of the group of non-working lone parents who were looking for work. There is less of a difference among couple families – 38 per cent of workless couples had large families, whilst 36 per cent of those who were seeking work had large families¹³.
39. Childcare arrangements may be more complicated for large families. Larger families, especially those containing children of a range of ages, may need to use a variety of childcare. Mothers in large families are reported as being noticeably more likely to confine their work to school hours. This might be to avoid the need to organise complicated childcare, or because of high costs or lifestyle choices. Older children in large families are more likely to be involved in childcare (16 per cent compared with 4 per cent for smaller families) – partly because the age range that is likely to be present in large families makes this possible¹⁴.
40. However, evidence suggests that large families do not appear to use different forms of childcare from smaller families and they are no more likely to use informal care. Large families are common among the Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities. For reasons other than family size, parents in Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities tend to prefer to use family members for childcare. Research shows that the extent to which parents use informal care depends on a number of factors including household structure, employment status, ethnicity and income level. The age of the child has a strong influence on the type of childcare that parents choose for their children¹⁵.
41. The Spending Review 2002 inter-departmental childcare review provided clear evidence of the benefits to children, their families and communities when quality childcare is delivered alongside early education, family support and health services, and when there are good quality early interventions for disadvantaged children.
42. Access to good quality, affordable childcare enables parents to work, train and study, confident that their children are in a safe and stimulating environment.
43. Our extension (from April 2003) of eligibility to the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit through the Home Childcarers Scheme will allow families to access financial support for childcare within the home. This will be of particular benefit to, among others, larger families.

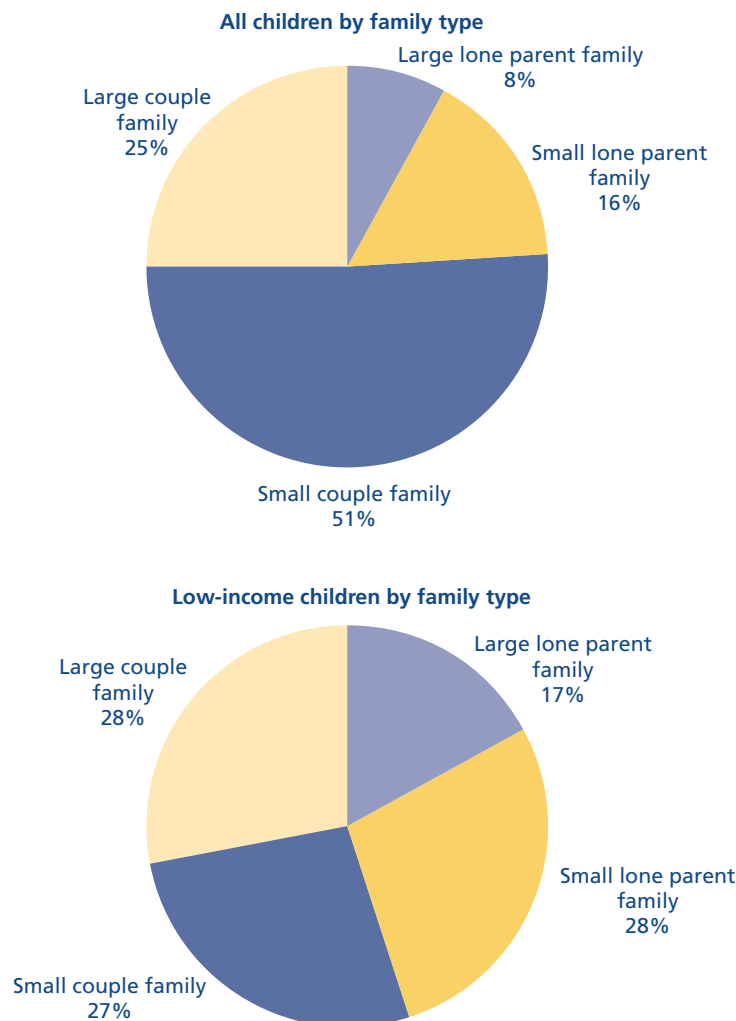
Low income and hardship

Low income

- 44. Lack of work is associated with low income. Given the greater prevalence of worklessness among large families, it is perhaps not surprising that children in large families suffer a disproportionate risk of low income. Chart 2.4 shows the

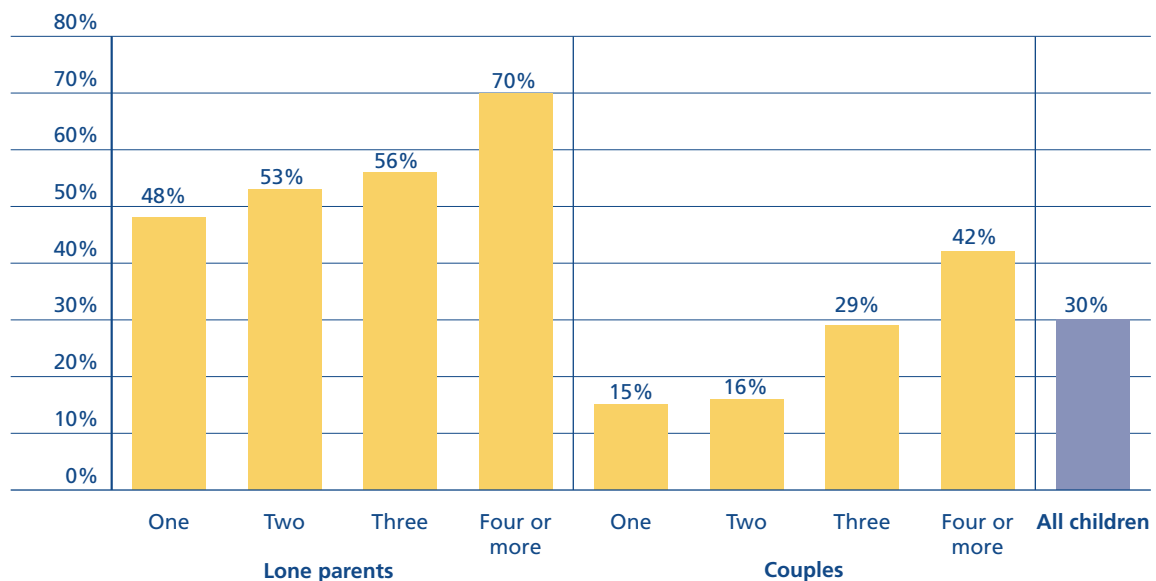
composition of the low-income group of children by family size and type compared with the population of all children in Great Britain¹⁶. Around 1.7 million children in large families live in low-income households. So large families account for almost a half of all children in low income, even though they account for around a third of all children¹⁷.

Chart 2.4: Comparison of the family types of all children with those in low income (Great Britain)



Source: Households Below Average Income 2001/02, Department for Work and Pensions.

Chart 2.5: Risk of low income for children by family type and size (Great Britain)



Source: Households Below Average Income 2001/02, Department for Work and Pensions.

Notes: 1. Low-income threshold is 60 per cent of median equivalised household disposable income.

2. After housing costs figures are shown here, though a similar pattern is evident before housing costs.

45. Chart 2.5 shows that the risk of low income increases with family size.

- Children in lone parent households suffer a disproportionate risk of low income regardless of the number of siblings, but the risk increases with family size.
- For children in couple households the risk also increases with family size, but those living in households with one or two children experience a below-average risk of low income¹⁸.

Low income and work status

46. Research shows that an increase in labour market earnings accounts for around two-thirds of exits from low income¹⁹.

The same research found family size to be a significant factor associated with both the length of low-income spells and the time between spells. Having fewer dependent children was found to be associated with shorter low-income spells and longer periods between spells. (Other significant factors were the age of family members, level of qualifications, work status and the length of time since the last spell of low income.)

47. We have also seen that children in large families account for almost a half of children in low income. And around half of the children in low income live in workless households. Table 2.5 explores the relationship between work, low income and family size in more detail.

Table 2.5: Compositional breakdowns of low-income group and population of children by family characteristics and work status (Great Britain)

	Percentage of children	
	Low-income group	All children
Small families	55	67
<i>of which</i>		
Lone parent full time	1	4
Lone parent part time	5	4
Lone parent not working	21	8
Couple one or more self-employed	6	8
Couple both full time	0	10
Couple one full time, one part time	3	17
Couple one full time, one not working	6	11
Couple one or more part time	4	2
Couple both not working	7	3
Large families	45	33
<i>of which</i>		
Lone parent full time or part time	3	2
Lone parent not working	14	6
Couple one or more both self-employed	4	4
Couple both full time	0	3
Couple one full time, one part time	2	6
Couple one full time, one not working	7	7
Couple one or more part time	4	2
Couple both not working	10	3
All children (millions)	3.8	12.8

Source: Family Resources Survey 2001/02.

Notes: 1. The estimate for 'large family, couple one or more part time' is based on a small number of households.

2. Figures may not sum, owing to rounding.

3. Low-income group is defined using 60 per cent of median threshold, after housing costs.

48. The detailed breakdown in Table 2.5 reveals that among both couple and lone parent families, whether large or small, lack of work is a key determinant of low income. Relatively few children in low income live with working lone parents. For couples the interactions between the number of workers in the household, the hours worked and the level of earnings will be more complex. Virtually no children in the low-income group have two full-time workers in a couple²⁰. Furthermore there are relatively few children in couple households with a second part-time earner in low income.

Hardship

49. Low income is associated with hardship, which captures the impact of low income on a range of living standards. The hardship measure used here is defined by an index that combines nine hardship factors relating to problems with accommodation, money management and debt problems, and material deprivation (problems affording essential items such as food or clothing)²¹. The index summarises the nine factors into a single score ranging from zero to nine. Those with a score of zero do not suffer hardship, those with a score of one or two suffer moderate hardship and those with a score of three or more (up to a maximum of nine) suffer severe hardship²².

50. Given the greater risk of low income for larger families, it is not surprising that they are also more likely to suffer hardship. Hardship increases with family size for both couple and lone parent families.

51. In 2001, around half of all large families suffered hardship, compared with around a quarter of small families. Whilst for both small and large families the majority of those in hardship suffered moderate hardship, around 14 per cent of those in large families suffered severe hardship compared with 6 per cent in small families.

52. For any given family size lone parents suffered a greater risk of hardship than couples – with 90 per cent of lone parents with four or more children suffering hardship compared with 64 per cent of couples. This mirrors the pattern seen in the low-income figures²³.

Financial support

53. Chapter one explained the system of financial support for families with children. Child Benefit is paid to all families with children. Larger families receive more Child Benefit than smaller families, though the amount paid in respect of the first child is greater than the amount paid in respect of subsequent children. Recent research has argued that ‘first-child bias’ in our system of financial support leads to the United Kingdom (UK) performing less favourably for large families in a league table comparison of 22 advanced countries²⁴.
54. The Child Tax Credit provides targeted support for qualifying families with children, and is not linked to work status. The family element – a single entitlement for all qualifying families regardless of size – is available for nine out of ten families with children. The family element is doubled for families with a child under the age of one. Each qualifying family is also entitled to an amount for each child in the family through the child element of the Child Tax Credit. The maximum entitlement is £1,445 a year for each child, which is tapered according to family income.
55. The National Minimum Wage and tax credits are making work pay (see Chapter one). Wages do not reflect the size of an employee’s family – for example the wages of two lone parents, one having one child and the other three children, in similar jobs, are unlikely to vary significantly. However, the tax credits are responsive to family size. The following case studies illustrate this.

Case studies: Tax credits for lone parents with one child and three children²⁵

Simon Brown is a lone parent with one child. Simon works full time earning an annual gross income of £13,000. Under the new tax credits the family will now have an annual net income of £14,000 (weekly income of £265), including £710 of Working Tax Credit and £1,990 of Child Tax Credit.

Paula Green is a lone parent with three children. Paula works full time earning an annual gross income of £13,000. Under the new tax credits she will now have an annual net income of £18,000 (weekly income of £345), including £710 of Working Tax Credit and £4,880 of Child Tax Credit.

Note: These calculations assume no support for childcare costs. Awards would be higher if a claim were made for eligible childcare costs.

Housing

56. Families with fewer than three children are more likely to own their home outright or with a mortgage than larger families (70 per cent compared with 61 per cent). Large families are more likely to live in social housing than small families (31 per cent compared with 22 per cent). Furthermore, large families are more likely to live in overcrowded accommodation than smaller families, and social tenants fare worst²⁶. Pakistani and Bangladeshi households are more likely to live in overcrowded conditions, partly reflecting the prevalence of large families among this ethnic group.

57. Chapter one described our commitments on housing and in particular our target to bring all social housing up to a set standard of decency by 2010. Large families will benefit from these policies.

Fuel poverty

58. The incidence of fuel poverty among households containing children in England stood at around three per cent in 2001, whilst the overall figure for the whole population was around eight per cent. Within this, for households with a lone parent the incidence of fuel poverty stands at 8.7 per cent, which is slightly higher than the overall average.
59. Whilst these figures do not specifically break down fuel poverty by family size, the finding for lone parents suggests that fuel poverty might not be any more of a problem for large families than it is for others. Chapter one outlined our fuel poverty strategy.

For the future

60. This section has explored the characteristics of large families – who have perhaps not been traditionally identified as vulnerable. We have highlighted the elevated risk of worklessness, low income and hardship faced by children in large families relative to smaller families.
61. Of course, not all large families will suffer poverty and social exclusion. Our analysis suggests that it is not necessarily family size *per se* that disadvantages large

families, but the interaction between a range of characteristics. In addition the practical constraints associated with juggling working life and family life may be magnified for larger families.

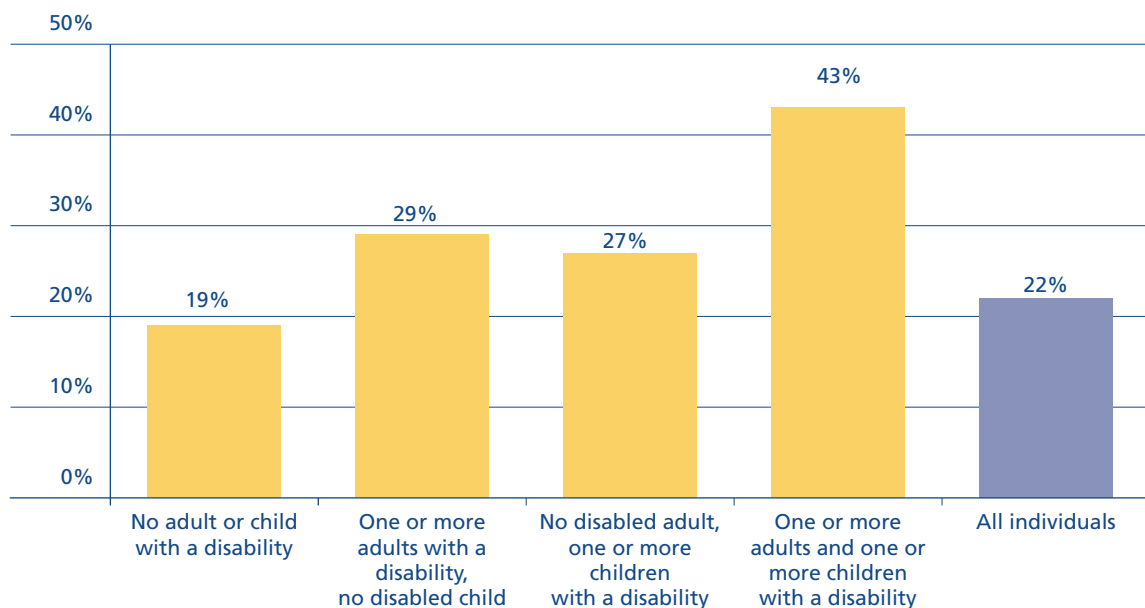
62. Many of our mainstream policies, such as our education policies and our financial support strategies, will help large families.
63. The Child Poverty Review, which was announced in Budget 2003, will set out what further action is required to halve child poverty by 2010 and eradicate it by 2020. It aims to ensure the welfare system and the range of public services work together to avoid the waste and poor outcomes that still occur all too often. Among the specific issues it will look at are:
- increasing employment opportunities;
 - improving the effectiveness with which current investment in public services tackles material deprivation;
 - improving life chances; and
 - dealing with the crisis points that families often face, all with an eye to the particular issues facing families in deprived areas.
64. Our understanding of issues relating to larger families is at an early stage and further work is needed to consider the complex interactions between family size and other factors. We would welcome your views.

Disabled people

Introduction

- 65. There are about 8.6 million disabled people in Great Britain – one in seven of the population²⁷. Around one in five people of working age in the UK report that they have a disability (about 6.9 million people)²⁸ and there are estimated to be around 110,000 severely disabled children under the age of 16 in Great Britain²⁹.
- 66. Some disabled people may have difficulties accessing services – including services specifically for disabled people as well as services for the whole population. And they may face prejudice or discrimination.
- 67. Disabled people and their families are more likely than non-disabled people to be in low-income households (Chart 2.6). Disabled people are less likely to be employed or to have higher level qualifications, and are more likely to live in a household where no one is in work. They may also have higher living costs as a consequence of their health problem or disability.
- 68. These disadvantages can lead to a high risk of poverty and social exclusion.
- 69. Our understanding of disability issues is developing all the time. This section examines the evidence and outlines how current policies support disabled people and their carers. We would welcome your views.

Chart 2.6: Risk of being in low income for all individuals, by whether their household contains a person with a disability (Great Britain)



Source: Households Below Average Income 2001/02, Department for Work and Pensions.

Background

70. The word 'disabled' means different things to different people. It can be used to cover a wide range of longstanding physical or mental health problems and impairments. Some people who fall within the scope of this chapter might not consider themselves disabled. And only a minority of disabled people fit the common perception of a disabled person as someone who has a visual or hearing impairment or who uses a wheelchair.
71. There are a number of different definitions of 'disability' relating to specific purposes. For example the Disability Discrimination Act uses a different definition to those used to define entitlement to disability benefits. In this section the word disability is used as shorthand for the definition appropriate to the issue under discussion.
72. The issues faced by disabled people will vary, depending on the disabilities they have, on their circumstances and on their personal aims and ambitions.
73. Improving civil rights and enabling people to use those rights will impact on a broad range of disabled people, allowing them to participate more fully in society. To achieve this we need awareness and understanding as well as the law. That is why we have also been engaged in media campaigns to raise public awareness of disability and to improve the public's understanding of the barriers faced by disabled people.
74. Other issues are important to certain groups of disabled people.
75. Of the 6.9 million disabled people of working age, almost half are currently in employment³⁰. Many of these will be eligible for help relating to their employment or to enable them to live a full life outside work.
76. A million of the disabled people who are out of work say they would like to work. Many others are fully capable of working, and are willing and expect to work if they are given the right support. It is only a minority of disabled people for whom work is not currently an option.
77. We must provide opportunities for work for those who want and are able to work, and training and encouragement for those who may be able to work in the future. We must also provide support for those who are not in a position to work.
78. Disabled children will need appropriate education services, in addition to support for themselves and their families so they can enjoy everyday life, whilst the concerns of disabled people over pension age may focus more on care issues than on work or education services.

Rights and inclusion

79. We must ensure that disabled people are given the civil rights necessary to enable them to participate fully in society. The Disability Discrimination Act was passed in 1995 (with more rights due to become law in 2004). Its provisions include the requirement for service providers and employers to make 'reasonable adjustments'.
80. To feel socially included, disabled people also need to be able to access work and social activities. We have brought into force a range of regulations covering rail vehicles and public service vehicles to improve accessibility for disabled passengers, including a responsibility to provide reasonable assistance to disabled people. And we are working to ensure that disabled people are able to access public spaces³¹.
81. But legislation is not enough – we must make sure disabled people are aware of their rights and are able to secure them. It is also important that we provide everyone (including employers, service providers and public bodies) with the information and support required to help them meet their responsibilities.
82. The Disability Rights Commission is an independent body set up by the Government to help disabled people establish their rights. It can provide assistance to achieve solutions without going through the courts or employment tribunals. It also provides information to

employers and service providers on their legal responsibilities. For example, it provides guidance and publishes advice on how employers and service providers may meet the requirement to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people, and a third of calls to its helpline are from employers or service providers. The adjustments can often be relatively straightforward, such as a service provider moving fixtures or fittings, or an employer allowing a disabled employee to work flexible hours.

83. We know that adults with some types of disability, particularly mental health problems, are less likely to be able to access everyday goods and services or take part in community activities. Many live without the support mechanisms that many people with other types of disability rely on – for example, people with some types of mental health problem are over three times as likely to live on their own³². The issue of access to services is part of a Social Exclusion Unit project on mental health and social exclusion³³.

Financial and social services support

84. Disabled people may be eligible for a wide range of government support, both financial and otherwise.
85. Disability Living Allowance and Attendance Allowance are non-income-related benefits designed to contribute towards the extra costs faced by severely

disabled adults and children. Many disabled people both in and out of work are eligible. Over 3.8 million people receive one of these benefits³⁴.

86. We are providing substantial financial support for families of disabled children. We have significantly increased the Disabled Child Premium in income-related benefits. And since April 2003 the child elements of the Child Tax Credit have amounted to £3,600 a year for a disabled child or £4,465 a year for a severely disabled child, benefiting almost 100,000 families in July 2003.
87. Incapacity benefits help disabled people who are out of work, whilst the disabled worker and enhanced disabled adult elements of the Working Tax Credit help those in work.
88. Increasing levels of benefits will not help people unless the benefits are claimed, and we are taking steps to ensure people claim those that they are entitled to. In particular, the Department for Work and Pensions is taking steps to improve the take-up of Disability Living Allowance and Attendance Allowance in a carefully directed way by working closely with partners, such as local authorities and welfare rights organisations, who can identify potential claimants to disability benefits.
89. In addition, we are working with local councils to provide a wide variety of support. Direct payments – cash payments made in lieu of social service provisions to individuals who have been assessed as needing services – can also offer an alternative way for care to be delivered.
90. Direct payments provide individuals with the opportunity to exercise greater choice and control over their lives, and enable them to make their own decisions about how their care is delivered. This gives them the freedom to engage with society and their own communities. For example, this can be through the employment of a personal assistant, giving them the flexibility and confidence to return to work or to be taken to the local church or temple instead of to a traditional day care centre.
91. The Direct Payments Development Fund was announced in October 2002, to encourage investment in direct payments support services. Over the next three financial years (2003/04–2005/06) £9 million is being targeted at national, regional and local voluntary organisations, in partnership with local councils, to enable them to play a significant role in the development and promotion of direct payments. And regulations that came into force on 8 April 2003 now place a duty on councils to make direct payments to individuals who may be eligible.

Education, qualifications and skills

92. Extending opportunities to disabled children must begin early. Disabled children, like all children, need to have their achievements recognised and rewarded. They also need to be stretched and to have high expectations of what they can achieve. A lack of skills and qualifications is likely to increase the risk of social exclusion and labour market disadvantage in later life. To achieve their potential, children's needs must be identified early and appropriate steps taken to enable them to access education and make good progress.
93. The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act, which came into force in 2002, extends the scope of the Disability Discrimination Act to cover education. As a result, disabled children and adults seeking access to education now have rights against discrimination.

Early years education

94. Evidence suggests that children with special needs have traditionally been identified too late. This has had a negative effect on both personal development and educational attainment. We attach great importance to early intervention to meet children's needs. The *Special Educational Needs Code of Practice* covers identification, assessment and provision in early education settings³⁵.

95. All providers of government-funded early education are required to have regard to the Code. Each provider of early years education is required to have a Special Educational Needs policy and a member of staff with responsibility for it and for co-ordinating services for children with Special Educational Needs. These providers are supported by a network of Area Special Educational Needs co-ordinators, who give advice and guidance and act as a channel to further external support.
96. In addition, we are promoting improved collaboration between professionals working in education, health and social services when meeting the needs of disabled children aged under 3. A £13 million Early Support Pilot Programme has been established to help carry forward the principles and to give practical help.

School-age education

97. About 17 per cent of school-age children are identified as having Special Educational Needs of some kind. Most of these children attend mainstream schools – only 1.1 per cent of all pupils attend special schools³⁶.
98. The most appropriate school for each child will depend on individual circumstances, but there is a presumption in law that children with Special Educational Needs will be taught in mainstream schools where this is compatible with their parents' wishes and the efficient education of other children.

But a special school placement will be more appropriate for some children. Both the severity and the type of disability will affect the choice. For example, many deaf people particularly value the chance to be schooled with other deaf people with whom they can communicate easily and who have had similar experiences – which can mean either a special school or a group within a mainstream school³⁷.

99. Adjustments may be necessary in both special and mainstream schools to improve accessibility for disabled pupils. These can include:
- improvements to the physical environment such as ramps, accessible toilets and colour schemes;
 - improvements to the curriculum, such as specialist information and communication technology; and
 - for children with long-term medical conditions who are treated as disabled under the Disability Discrimination Act, the consideration of assistance to overcome further problems such as catching up on missed work through absence associated with their disability.
100. In mainstream schools in particular, disabled pupils may have difficulties with after-school activities, both formal school-based opportunities and informal activities such as playing with friends.

Exclusion from these can lower a child's immediate quality of life, and may also reinforce feelings of separateness and inability. The duties of schools and local education authorities under the Disability Discrimination Act include after-school activities.

101. Special schools often focus on particular needs and have specialist facilities. But the catchment areas of some special schools are large, and a child's school friends may live some distance away. This, with issues around access to transport, can make after-school socialising with fellow pupils difficult for some children.
102. The choice between mainstream and special schools may also affect a child's sense of belonging. Some disabled people say that they felt 'different' at mainstream schools but at a special school they met people like them, with shared experiences (though of course some special schools have pupils with a variety of disabilities of varying severity). But providing this community of disabled people may increase feelings of separateness, both for the members of that community and for the wider world, whilst educating children with and without disabilities together enables them to get to know each other and can reduce prejudice. It also allows a child to show themselves and others that they can participate equally with non-disabled people³⁸.

Positive experiences of mainstream schools

"...all the girls in my class, they couldn't do enough for me and they just treated me like one of us..."
(Female, 32, mobility impairment, Wales)

"...although it can be difficult I like to meet up with hearing friends from school and we have a good time..."
(Female, 55, profoundly deaf, South West England)

Positive experiences of special schools

"Deaf school was better. Why? I met other children, we all had the same interest, the same language, the same experiences. Communication, there was no communication problems..."
(Female, 37, profoundly deaf, South West England)

"At new school there were still mickey-takers because kids are kids, but it wasn't so bad because everyone there was more or less in the same boat..."
(Male, 26, learning disability, Hampshire)³⁹

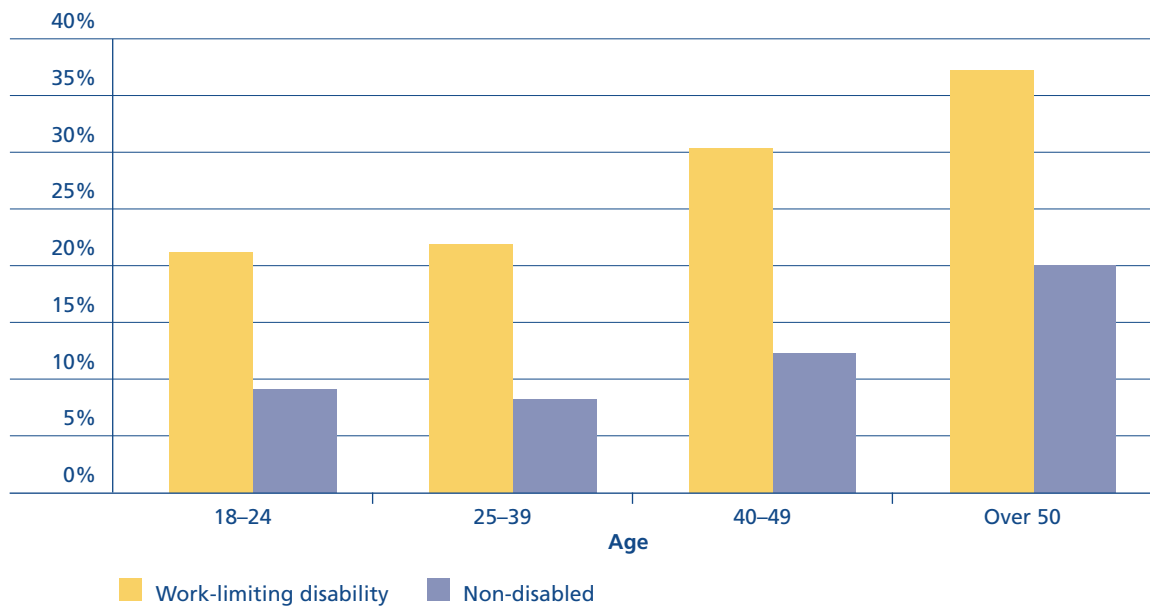
103. We believe there is a place for both special schools and mainstream schools in the education of children with Special Educational Needs. Special and mainstream schools are encouraged to work in partnership so that all children feel included and have their needs met appropriately.

Post-compulsory schooling

104. There have been many improvements in education for disabled people in recent years. Many of those with the 'double disadvantage' of being disabled and lacking formal qualifications completed their schooling some years ago. However, as Charts 2.7 and 2.8 show, people with a work-limiting disability are still more likely than non-disabled people to have no qualifications and are less likely to achieve qualifications equivalent to A level or above.

105. Overall, disabled people of working age are over twice as likely to have no qualifications. And disabled people are half as likely to have continued studying as non-disabled people⁴⁰.

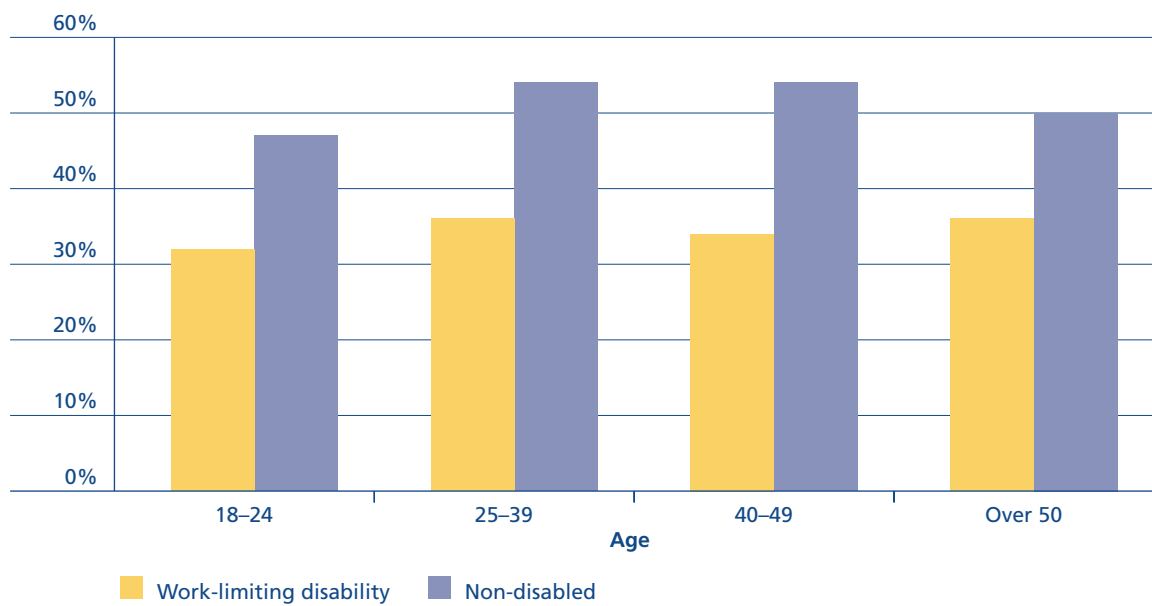
Chart 2.7: Percentage of working-age people with no qualifications by age and disability (United Kingdom)



Source: Labour Force Survey, spring 2003.

- Notes: 1. 'Non-disabled' consists of those who report neither a work-limiting disability nor a Disability Discrimination Act disability.
 2. 'Work-limiting disability' means a health problem or disability, expected to last for more than a year, that limits the kind or amount of paid work the person can do.

Chart 2.8: Percentage of working-age people with a qualification equivalent to A level or above by age and disability (United Kingdom)



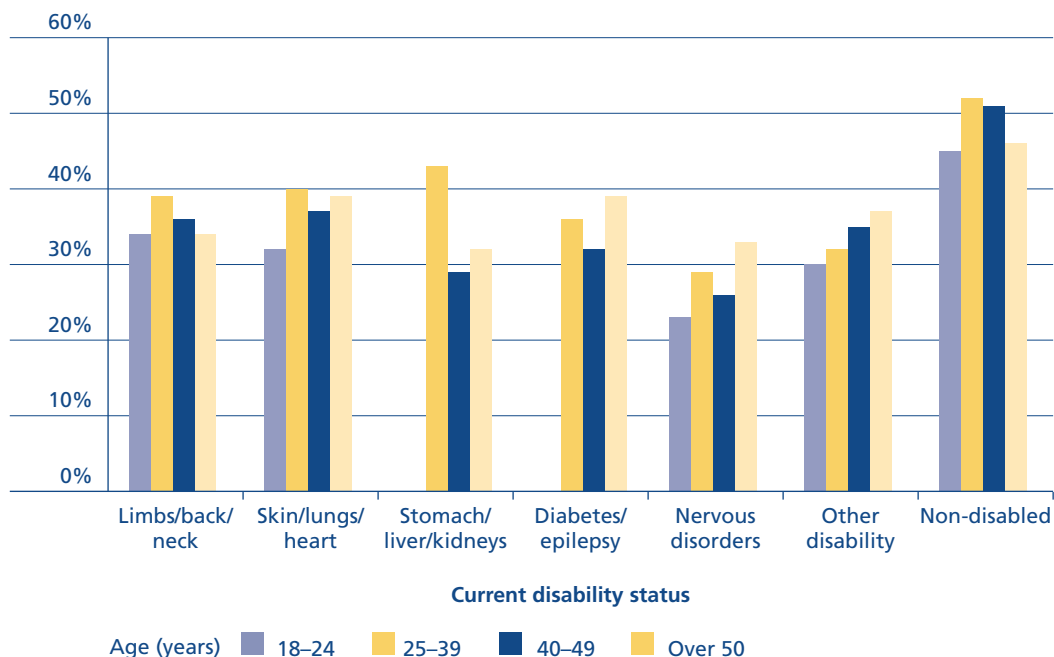
Source: Labour Force Survey, spring 2003.

- Notes:
1. 'Non-disabled' consists of those who report neither a work-limiting disability nor a Disability Discrimination Act disability.
 2. 'Work-limiting disability' means a health problem or disability, expected to last for more than a year, that limits the kind or amount of paid work the person can do.

106. The barriers to education will depend partly on the type of disability. Chart 2.9 shows that disabled people in each impairment group are less likely than their non-disabled counterparts to have an A level or equivalent. This is not only because of barriers to education – the chart includes those who became

disabled after completing their education, and low educational achievement leading to low income or worklessness has been linked to increased chances of poor health and disability⁴¹. However, the pattern holds for all ages, which implies that barriers to education are a large part of the problem.

Chart 2.9: Percentage of working-age people with a qualification equivalent to A level or above by disability type (United Kingdom)



Source: Labour Force Survey, spring 2003.

- Notes:
1. The disabled categories consist of people with a work-limiting disability.
 2. 'Non-disabled' consists of those who report neither a work-limiting disability nor a Disability Discrimination Act disability.
 3. Those with seeing/hearing/speech impairments and learning difficulties are included in the 'other disability' group. 'Limbs' includes impairments to arms, hands, legs or feet. 'Nervous disorders' includes depression, bad nerves, anxiety, mental illness, phobias, panics or other nervous disorders.
 4. For some groups the 18-24 percentage is not shown, owing to small sample size.

107. In some groups, notably people with nervous disorders⁴², there are higher levels of qualifications among people in older age groups. This may be partly because of those in older groups who became disabled after completing their education.
108. It is clear that, whilst raising attainment and improving social outcomes for children will be important to improve their future outcomes, we must also provide tailored help to young disabled people making the often difficult transition to adulthood.
109. We must also ensure that opportunities for lifelong learning are maintained for disabled people.
111. Under Connexions, vulnerable young people will no longer be passed between different professionals without any co-ordination. Central to this is a Connexions personal adviser available to give advice and guidance and help young people identify barriers to learning and find solutions. If necessary, advisers broker access to specialist support services. They work in a range of different settings including schools, colleges, one-stop shops and community centres, and on an outreach basis. The Connexions service also conducts assessments of educational and training needs in year 11 for young people with disabilities who plan to leave school at 16 and go into further education or training.

Young adults

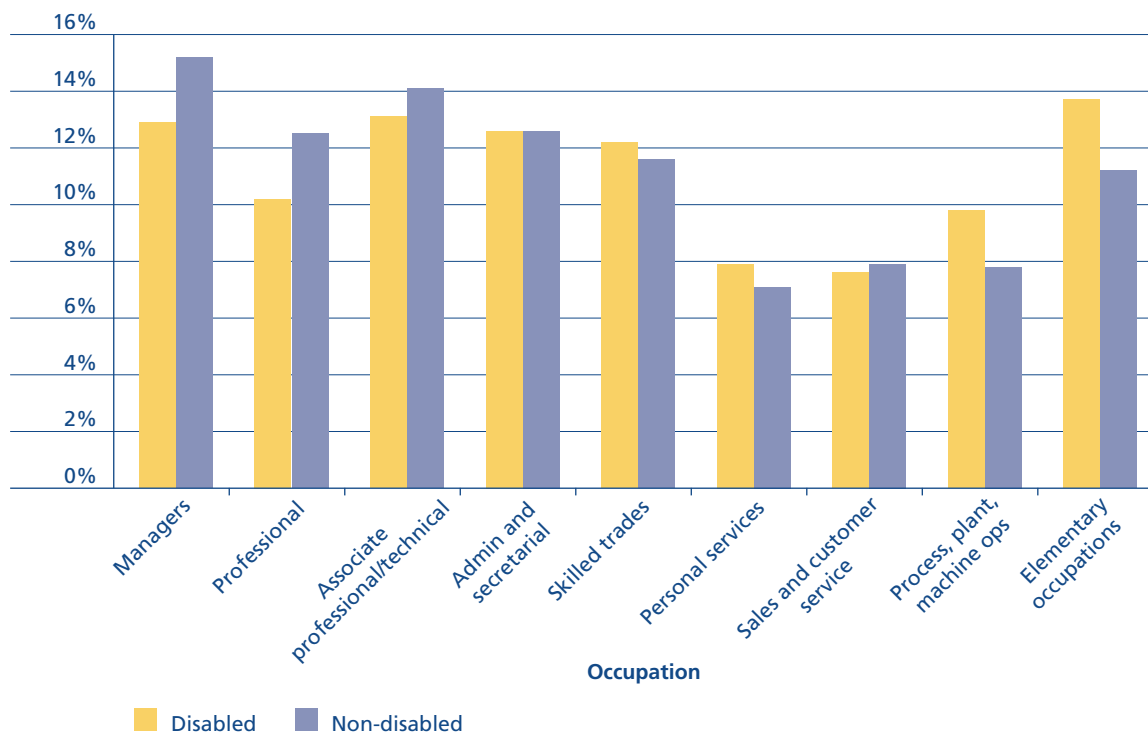
110. The Connexions service provides support to young adults aged 13–19. For young people with disabilities, support may be provided (where necessary) until a person's 25th birthday. Connexions has a particular role to play in making a real difference to the way in which support is given to the most vulnerable young people in our society, including disabled people. This involves bringing together all those organisations and bodies that are delivering services to provide a coherent, holistic, multi-agency package and one that is clearly focused on the needs of the individual.
112. Extending employment opportunities to more disabled people will not just improve their lives – enabling them to use their abilities will also benefit society. Around half of working-age disabled people are already employed, including over 40 per cent of the 5.5 million who report that their disability limits the kind or amount of work that they can do⁴³. And many more are willing and able to work and train. Fifteen per cent of those currently 'economically inactive' say they would like a job, and a further four per cent are unemployed⁴⁴.

Work and disability

113. Those in work tell us that it benefits them financially and, more importantly, that it gives them a feeling of self-worth and independence. Work can also provide a social network that helps prevent social isolation. Many disabled people report that with employer support they are able to have a 'typical working life'⁴⁵. And their employers gain employees who are committed and productive.

114. Whilst some disabled people are limited in their work by their disability, Charts 2.10 and 2.11 confirm that a wide variety of jobs are done by disabled people, and whilst disabled people are a little more likely to work part time, the majority work full time.

Chart 2.10: Employment by occupational group (United Kingdom)



Source: Labour Force Survey, spring 2003.

- Notes:
1. 'Disabled' consists of those who report either a work-limiting disability or a Disability Discrimination Act disability.
 2. 'Non-disabled' consists of those who report neither a work-limiting disability nor a Disability Discrimination Act disability.

Chart 2.11: Distribution of disabled and non-disabled workers by hours worked (United Kingdom)



Source: Labour Force Survey, spring 2003.

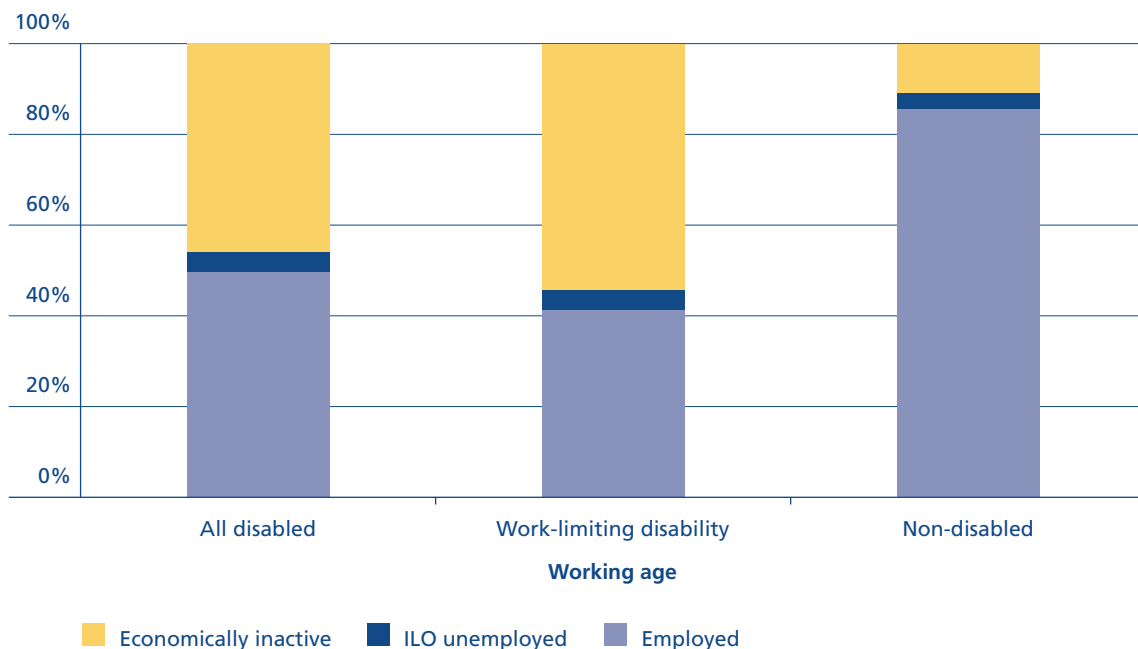
- Notes:
1. 'Disabled' consists of those who report either a work-limiting disability or a Disability Discrimination Act disability.
 2. 'Non-disabled' consists of those who report neither a work-limiting disability nor a Disability Discrimination Act disability.

115. But currently disabled people of working age are around seven times as likely as non-disabled people to be out of work and claiming benefits. Over half of working-age people with a work-limiting disability are inactive compared with 11 per cent of non-disabled people (Chart 2.12).

116. A particular group of interest are those in receipt of incapacity benefits, who by definition are not in work or are working

only a few hours a week. There are 2.8 million people of working age on incapacity-related benefits in Great Britain⁴⁶. Of the million out-of-work disabled people who say they would like a job, well over three-quarters of a million are in receipt of incapacity benefits, and 90 per cent of people moving on to incapacity benefits say they expect to work again. Many do not have severe health conditions or disabilities, so a return to work should be possible⁴⁷.

Chart 2.12: Employment status of working-age people by disability (United Kingdom)



Source: Labour Force Survey, spring 2003.

- Notes:
1. 'All disabled' consists of people with a work-limiting disability or a Disability Discrimination Act disability.
 2. 'Non-disabled' consists of those who report neither a work-limiting disability nor a Disability Discrimination Act disability.
 3. 'ILO' is the International Labour Organization. ILO unemployed includes adults who are under state pension age and not working, but are available and have been actively seeking work in the last four weeks.

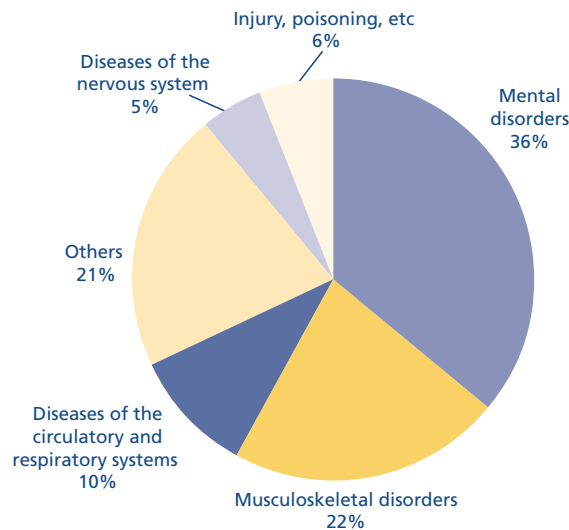
117. In reality, 40 per cent of those moving on to an incapacity benefit are still claiming a year later, and once they have been in receipt of an incapacity benefit for a year, only one in five return to work within five years. The longer a person is out of work, the more likely their skills are to become obsolete, the more their health is likely to decline, the further they move from the labour market, and the harder it will be to make the transition back to work. Conversely, a return to work can enhance well-being and improve long-term recovery for many⁴⁸.

118. Chart 2.13 shows the main conditions reported by those in receipt of incapacity benefits.

119. Although there are many distinctions to be drawn between different groups with disability and ill health, many of the issues involved in gaining work are common to many groups.

120. Disabled people who are out of work may underestimate their own abilities and may lack self-esteem. They may face extra costs in employment, for example if

Chart 2.13: Diagnosis category of those in receipt of incapacity benefits (Great Britain)



Source: Department for Work and Pensions, February 2003.

Note: Diagnosis group is taken from ICD10 published by the World Health Organization.

public transport is inaccessible they may have to take taxis to work. This, together with concerns about possible discrimination, can discourage a disabled person from seeking to join the labour market⁴⁹. And some people, including employers, discriminate against or are prejudiced against disabled people.

121. Disabled people who are looking for work face a higher risk of unemployment than non-disabled people. Of people employed or looking for employment, ten per cent of people with a work-limiting disability are unemployed compared with four per cent of non-disabled people. The rate varies with the type of disability – it is 22 per cent for those with learning difficulties or nervous disorders⁵⁰. Clearly, as with non-disabled people and people with other types of health problem or disability, not all jobs will be suitable for all people with learning difficulties or mental health problems. But disabled people in these groups will be highly suitable for a variety of meaningful and sustainable work.
122. We are tackling these interrelated problems from two angles – creating an active welfare system and strengthening the rights of disabled people.

Active labour market policies

123. We have seen that, for those moving on to incapacity benefits, the number expecting to return to work is much higher than those who actually do return.
124. For some people health issues make a move to work difficult. But there are many other obstacles that can push people away from the labour market. And when the disabled person has other labour market disadvantages this can reinforce the feeling that they will not be able to get a job, or would face discrimination in the workplace if they did find employment.
125. The substantial rise in the number of people on incapacity benefits, especially between 1979 and the mid-1990s, emphasises that this is not just about health. The ageing population is one cause – older people are more likely to have health problems – and as less stigma is attached to ill health and disability, people may be more willing to accept disability benefits. But it is also connected with economic factors such as industrial restructuring, and with administrative changes that made incapacity benefits seem more attractive to some people than unemployment benefit. Historically, no active labour market help was provided to those on incapacity benefits.
126. Some communities have high levels of incapacity benefit recipients. These have often been affected by the restructuring of industry in the 1980s and 1990s and subsequent high unemployment, which meant many drifted away from the labour market and on to incapacity benefits. These areas also have higher than expected levels of incapacity benefit receipt among younger people, despite recent economic improvements.

127. Attitudes are important. We have said that disabled people may have doubts about their own abilities. Traditionally, people receiving unemployment benefit are required to look for work, whilst those on incapacity benefits are not. A medical test is used to decide who is eligible for an incapacity benefit. This may lead to some people feeling that they are not expected to work because they would not be able to do a job. In some cases people worry that if they try to find work they will have their disability payment taken away. However, the reality is that people are eligible for incapacity benefits when their health problem means it is unreasonable to require them to seek work, not when work becomes impossible for them. Different jobs require different abilities, and the degree of employability is determined by many things other than an individual's degree of disability.
128. Many disabled people are in the older age groups. Those between 50 and state pension age are three times as likely to report a disability as those aged 18–24⁵¹. Older people can find it harder to get new jobs than those in younger age groups, and it is especially easy for older disabled people to drift into seeing themselves as retired.
129. All this suggests that encouraging disabled people to apply for jobs and supporting them to find and keep a job can work. Paragraphs 130–136 detail a few of the main programmes.
130. New Deal for Disabled People is our main initiative to support people on incapacity benefits back into work. The aim is to achieve lasting paid employment for disabled people. A network of public, private and voluntary sector Job Brokers across Great Britain provide support and services to individuals who want to work and are in receipt of a disability or health-related benefit.
131. Job Brokers tailor their services to meet the needs of individual customers and work closely with providers of training and other services where the customer needs additional help. Job Brokers work with local employers to identify their needs, match these with their customers' skills, and support the customer in their first six months of employment.
132. Since New Deal for Disabled People began, over 50,000 people have registered with a Job Broker and over 16,500 have found work through the programme.
133. Access to Work helps disabled people move into or stay in jobs by removing barriers to work associated with their disability, and encourages employers to recruit and retain disabled people by offering practical support. It helps towards the additional employment costs resulting from disability, for example help with the costs of travelling to work, adaptations to premises, special equipment or the cost of providing human support in the workplace. The programme helped almost 33,000 people during 2002/03⁵².

134. WORKSTEP enables disabled people who face more complex barriers to work to take up employment, either in supported factories and businesses operating within the programme or in mainstream employment. There are currently around 21,500 supported employees on the programme⁵³.
135. In addition, the Department for Work and Pensions and the Department of Health are jointly running the Job Retention and Rehabilitation Pilots Project. This will offer help to employed and self-employed people at risk of losing their job early owing to ill health or disability. It should provide evidence about what is most effective in helping people retain their employment.

Case study – Sue Venables

Sue is 32, has spinal muscular atrophy, uses a powered wheelchair, needs a ventilator to breathe and requires 24-hour care from her personal assistants.

In May 2002, Sue contacted Viv Hartley, disability employment adviser at Mexborough Jobcentre, for help in becoming self-employed, setting up a wheelchair access website called *Can I Get In?* Sue wanted to put together a directory of accessible businesses so other wheelchair users could look at the list, read about the places and know they could definitely get in.

Viv suggested Work Based Learning for Adults with EMAGO, a local training organisation. When Sue completed her course Viv sent an application for Disabled Person's Tax Credit (now part of Working Tax Credit). Sue also contacted Access To Work who were able to fund specialist equipment and a support worker.

136. Those in receipt of incapacity benefits already attend work-focused interviews, though these are infrequent (up to three years apart). From October 2003 we will be piloting a new approach in seven areas⁵⁴, providing:
- early, frequent support to those on incapacity benefits from skilled personal advisers. From day one these advisers will be able to offer clients a wide range of opportunities to meet their needs;
 - direct access to a range of comprehensive specialist programmes, including joint programmes with the National Health Service (NHS) to mitigate the impact of health on a return to work. These joint programmes will combine support to find jobs from Jobcentre Plus personal advisers with health-focused rehabilitation delivered in collaboration with the NHS. The key focus of these short programmes will be to help

those with conditions such as depression, back pain and heart disease to understand the impact that their condition has and to increase their confidence to work or train and lead as normal a life as possible;

- clear financial incentives to work. We will establish a simple Return to Work Credit to help all those moving off an incapacity benefit and into employment, paid at £40 a week for 52 weeks where annual earnings will be less than £15,000. Advisers will also be able to make discretionary awards of up to £300 to clients for clothes or equipment that could help improve their chances of getting a job; and
- for all those who have to move to Jobseeker's Allowance from Incapacity Benefit, access to an adviser with specialist skills in drawing up appropriate jobseeking goals. They will be automatically referred to the tailored help available through the relevant New Deal without having to wait for up to 18 months.

137. Our aim is to create a better framework of support for people in the early stages of their claim for incapacity benefits to ensure the focus is on what people can do. We need to help people realise expectations of a return to work and provide ongoing support. We will build on the current framework of support, but have shaped new requirements in the light of research into work-focused interviews for this group.

138. Some disabled people who do not feel ready to enter the labour market full time may be in a position to begin preparing themselves for full-time work. This may be through training, work experience or part-time (perhaps voluntary) work. To assist these people we have increased the earnings disregard on income-related benefits and introduced permitted work rules. These measures allow people (subject to earnings and time limits) to work as part of a treatment programme or supported work⁵⁵, or to work for fewer than 16 hours a week, while still being treated as not capable of work for the purposes of incapacity benefits. We have also introduced new linking rules on incapacity benefits so people can try work, knowing they can return to the same benefit if necessary. Of approximately 400,000 disabled people who get a job each year, about a third did not say they wanted a job a year earlier.

139. This sort of flexibility may be particularly important for those whose disability is short term or intermittent, as it will allow them to keep in touch with the labour market and work when they are able. These people form a significant part of the disabled population. One study found that of those reporting a limiting disability in a given year, only three-quarters were in a long spell of limiting disability (not including those with a recurrent condition). Just one in ten people with mental health problems were still disabled six years after the onset, though many more had repeat spells⁵⁶.

140. And of course disabled people are entitled to the general help that is available to all out-of-work people. They can choose to have early access to any New Deals that they are eligible for. And policies such as the Job Grant, Action Teams for Jobs, and the Working Tax Credit (which includes extra help for disabled workers), although not specific to disabled people, are relevant to some of the issues that disabled people may face (see Chapter one).

141. These policies, together with in-work disability benefits, help to ensure that disabled people are more likely to be financially better off in work, and that those who are out of work will have a visible incentive to start work. They also emphasise that many disabled people are employed and many more have the potential to work.

Rights and attitudes

142. Many disabled people are concerned that employers will discriminate against them, and this may discourage them from seeking a job whether or not those concerns are justified. The attitude of other people to disability is often reported as a major barrier to disabled people seeking work⁵⁷. And there may be other barriers for those who are working. Employers may be reluctant to make

adaptations to enable disabled people to contribute to the best of their ability. They may also give them less stretching tasks or lower grade work, and the issue of prejudice in promotion is an issue in the same way as prejudice in hiring.

143. People who are also members of other disadvantaged groups often felt that they had faced compounded disadvantage, as employers discriminated against them on grounds of disability and their ethnicity, age, gender or sexuality⁵⁸.

144. The Disability Discrimination Act includes specific provision to protect disabled people from discrimination in the field of employment. In fact, more than half of the Disability Discrimination Act related telephone calls received by the Disability Rights Commission helpline are about employment⁵⁹.

145. As with other aspects of disabled rights, the law must work in parallel with raising awareness and understanding. Even well-meaning people can present barriers through ignorance – for example, offering guaranteed interviews to disabled applicants may not be sufficient without support (such as an interpreter or easy-to-read application forms) that will enable disabled people to take up this opportunity.

146. The best employers fully recognise that people with managed health conditions and disabilities can and do make a major contribution to their businesses. Such employers ensure they have procedures to retain employees who fall ill or become injured, and have occupational health expertise available to them. They ensure their recruitment processes are free of discrimination, and use the Access to Work programme to help offset any additional employment costs. Many belong to the Employers Forum for Disability, which has produced guidance material on the business case for employing disabled people as it affects retention, recruitment and ongoing employment, and in relation to different disabilities and conditions.

147. Employers in some sectors such as call centres are operating collective recruitment schemes aimed specifically at attracting disabled people.

148. Our **indicator of progress** on the employment rates of disadvantaged groups shows that, since 1998, the employment rate for disabled people has increased by 5.6 percentage points, whilst the overall employment rate rose by 1.6 percentage points. The policies we have described should contribute to further improvements in this indicator.

Support for those who are not working

149. We recognise that some disabled people will not be in a position to work. Our earlier section on financial and social services support covers some of the

support available to some disabled people both in and out of work. We also introduced the Disability Income Guarantee in April 2001 through the enhanced disability premium. This is payable in the income-related benefits to the most severely disabled people aged under 60 on the lowest incomes, in addition to the disability premium. It is helping around 133,000 of the poorest severely disabled people aged under 60, currently ensuring an income of at least £146.55 a week for a single person aged 25 or over, £192.45 a week for a couple, and an extra £16.60 a week for each disabled child.

Older people

150. The likelihood of a person having a disability increases with age. Only 10 per cent of those aged 16–44 report a limiting longstanding illness, disability or infirmity compared with 41 per cent of those aged over 65. Within this, some types of disability are more likely to appear in later life than others. Diseases of the musculoskeletal system are nearly five times as common among people aged over 65 as among 16–44-year-olds, but for disorders of the nervous system the difference is only 1.7 times⁶⁰.

151. Those who suffered disadvantage earlier in life may not have had the opportunity to build up pensions and savings, and we have seen that a disability increases the likelihood of labour market disadvantage. Also, older people with a disability may require more assistance than their non-disabled peers.

152. The need for extra financial support was discussed earlier in this chapter. We also provide help so that people can continue living in their own homes. One of our **indicators of progress** shows that between 1998/99 and 2001/02 the percentage of older households receiving intensive home care increased by over a quarter.

Friends, family and carers

153. The impact of a disability can go beyond the disabled person. Statistics show that, compared with a household with no disabled members, a household with at least one disabled adult is 50 per cent more likely to have a low income, and one with a disabled child is 20 per cent more likely⁶¹. A household with a disabled child and a disabled adult is twice as likely to have a low income. These figures cover income only, so the total will include disability benefits but there is no deduction for any extra disability-related costs. (Extra disability-related costs can take many forms, for example equipment such as screen readers for computers, or higher costs for such things as heating, diet or laundry as a result of a disability.)

154. The increased risk of low income is related to the higher rate of worklessness among households with a disabled member. This in turn is related to the need of some disabled people for extra care, as well as the lower employment rate among disabled people.

155. We have mentioned some of the increases in benefits and tax credits, in particular those relating to disabled children.

156. Overall, 5.2 million people in England and Wales provide unpaid care for a friend or relative, of which 1.6 million also have a full-time job⁶². The challenges of caring for a disabled adult or child can put a strain on family life.

157. Our emphasis is on helping the family as a whole. A substantial package of measures to help more than 300,000 carers has been implemented as part of the National Strategy for Carers. Over £500 million is being spent providing extra support for carers in the first three years of implementation. Changes include increases in the carer premium in income-related benefits, and changes to the Carer's Allowance (increasing the earnings limit, removing the upper age limit on claims, and allowing the entitlement to continue for up to eight weeks after the death of the disabled person).

158. Many local councils spend large sums on carers – for example on breaks services, which give carers a break from caring of a few hours or a few days. In 2003/04 we will provide a further £100 million through the Carers Grant to help councils support carers in England. This will enable them to provide carers with a wider range of services.

Childcare

159. The need for childcare can be a barrier for any parent considering work, but where a child is disabled it may be harder to find suitable childcare, or childcare may be so expensive there is little financial incentive to work. This is clearly a particular problem for lone parents of a disabled child, or where both parents are working.
160. We are working with our partner organisations to ensure that children with disabilities and/or special needs benefit from the continued expansion of childcare. Local authorities have been provided with more resources, and clearer guidance on the effective approaches to creating inclusive childcare provision. We have also extended the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit to those who use approved childcare in their own homes, which will be of particular benefit to parents with disabled children (among others).
161. We will be using the Early Support Pilot Programme to model innovative and good practice approaches. It will fund demonstration projects that seek to improve the early identification, intervention, co-ordination and effectiveness of services for very young disabled children.

Young carers

162. When the carer is a child or young adult there are specific issues to consider. It is estimated that 150,000 people aged under 18 provide unpaid care to someone with a disability or health problem, and 24,000 of these provide 20 or more hours of care a week⁶³.
163. These young carers are at risk of social exclusion in the short term, as they may have less free time to socialise and to take part in activities. Without support, their education may also suffer, either because they have less time to concentrate on homework or in some cases because their attendance at school is limited by the need to provide care.
164. We have said that young carers should not be expected to carry inappropriate levels of caring which have an adverse impact on their development and life chances. That is why we have prioritised services for young carers through our Quality Protects programme to improve children's social services, and the National Strategy for Carers, *Caring about Carers*⁶⁴.
165. *Social Inclusion: Pupil Support guidance on pupil attendance* includes guidance on supporting young carers and suggests ways of linking to social services and local voluntary organisations⁶⁵. It requires councils to identify children with additional family burdens and to provide services that are geared up to ensure these children's education and general development do not suffer. And young carers' needs are specifically highlighted in the *Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families* – Government statutory guidance for social services⁶⁶.

166. The Connexions service will particularly benefit vulnerable young people such as young carers. And 20 per cent of the Carers Grant is earmarked for children's services. In addition, we are supporting several specific projects, such as the development of over 100 young carer projects where young carers can go for advice, information and support, or leisure.

Other issues

167. Some disabled people face particular issues because of the interaction of their disability with other characteristics.
168. Disabled people whose first language is not English may face particular barriers to services for disabled people. Information for disabled people may be available only in English, and it may use difficult technical or medical terms. But many documents, such as benefits leaflets, are now available in several languages.
169. Evidence suggests that different ethnic groups have different attitudes to disability, and that the perceived stigma of disability is stronger in some communities. There can also be cultural barriers to accessing services for disabled people. For example, some people may prefer to attend groups restricted to their own sex or own cultural group, and there may not be a suitable support group in their area. Or there may be resistance to help from outside the family or

community. These issues can increase the risk of social exclusion, and possibly lead to an increased likelihood of a disabled person being looked after within the home rather than encouraged to become independent⁶⁷.

170. Disability organisations are often crucial in informing people of existing services and helping and encouraging disabled people to access them. This may be of particular benefit for those facing specific barriers to accessing services. We support work to help minority groups with disabilities – for example through the European Year of Disabled People project grant scheme, which combines money from the UK Government with money from the European Commission. This supports a wide range of projects, for example the Asian People with Disabilities Alliance's publication *A Booklet to Raise Awareness of Asian Disability within the Asian Community*.

For the future

171. Statistics show that, since the 1970s, an increasing proportion of people report a health problem or disability – for example the proportion of people who report they have a longstanding limiting illness, disability or infirmity has increased from 15 per cent in 1972 to 19 per cent in 2001. But more abstract health indicators, such as mortality rates, show an improvement in health. This suggests that part of the change may be due to

increased expectations of health, or the lessening of the stigma attached to disability encouraging people to report it (though better survival rates may also contribute)⁶⁸. We have seen that many disabled people are in work, and this proportion is increasing.

172. We will continue to work to ensure disabled people are given the rights and opportunities necessary to participate fully in society, including work for those who can, security for those who can't, and support and encouragement for those moving towards work. For example we will publish a draft Disability Bill during 2003, and we will undertake activities to raise public understanding of disability and the rights of disabled people.
173. In October 2004 we will extend the duties to protect against discrimination against disabled employees and jobseekers to small employers and to most currently exempt groups such as police officers and firefighters. This means an extra 7 million jobs will be brought within the scope of the Disability Discrimination Act. In the same month the final access duties under Part 3 of the Disability Discrimination Act will come into force. This means that, where a physical feature makes it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to make use of a service, the service provider will have to take reasonable steps to remove, alter, or provide a reasonable means of avoiding, the feature.
174. We are also developing a Special Educational Needs Action Programme that will set out our long-term vision for Special Educational Needs. The programme will also contain a range of practical measures to support early education settings, schools and local education authorities in improving educational outcomes for children with Special Educational Needs and disabilities. These will include measures to promote earlier intervention and stronger links between special and mainstream schools.
175. We have also produced the consultation document *Pathways to work*⁶⁹, which sets out its proposals for supporting people in receipt of incapacity benefits. This work is continuing.
176. The Department for Work and Pensions will continue to modernise the benefits system. This should result in significant improvements in the speed and accuracy with which disability benefits and carers' benefits are paid.
177. The Social Exclusion Unit mental health project is looking at the issue of mental health and social exclusion – including gaining employment or retaining current employment, as well as increasing social participation and access to services. It will produce its recommendations in 2004.

178. We must also address attitudes to disability. The action we have taken to challenge prejudice, for example through media campaigns, has been welcomed. Disability organisations also have an important role to play and we are engaging with them to work towards a better understanding of disability and the rights of disabled people.
179. Whilst discrimination remains a barrier to equal rights for disabled people, attitudes are improving, and most people believe that the position of disabled people is better than in the past⁷⁰.

People from ethnic minority backgrounds

Introduction

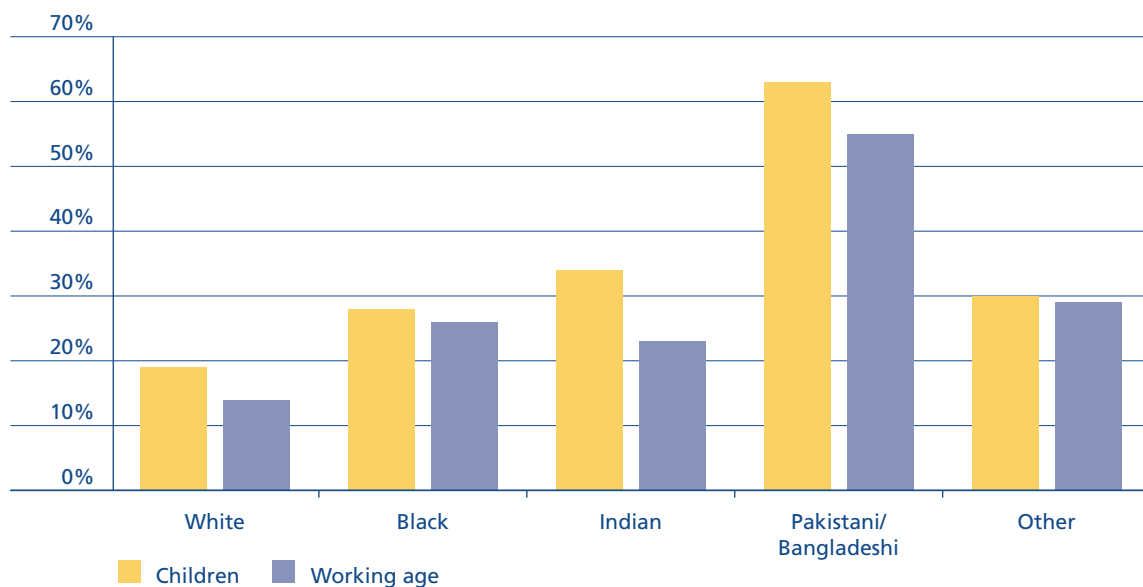
180. 'Ethnic minorities' is a term used to cover a diverse range of people. Individuals' needs and aspirations within these groups vary according to age, gender, ethnicity, faith and background. Using the commonly agreed definition, around 1 in 12 people in the UK are from ethnic minorities⁷¹.
181. The achievement of some ethnic minority groups matches or exceeds that of their White counterparts⁷². For instance those of Indian and Chinese origin, on average, outperform Whites in education. But some stark differences still remain.
- Despite performing better than Whites in terms of education, Indians still have a lower employment rate.
 - Twice as many Pakistani and Bangladeshi women have no educational qualifications compared with the national average for women.
 - Chart 2.14 shows that nearly six out of ten working-age adults from Pakistani and Bangladeshi backgrounds are in low-income households – roughly three times the average rate for all people of working age.

- In England, 67 per cent of the ethnic minority population live in the 88 most deprived local authority districts, compared with 37 per cent of the White population⁷³. This inevitably has implications for wider community cohesion.

182. These facts serve as salient background for the purpose of the following analysis. Such relative disadvantages can lead to a high risk of poverty and social exclusion that differs by ethnic minority group. We need to expose and understand these risks and barriers to opportunity if we are to be successful in our overall strategy for tackling poverty and social exclusion.

183. Firstly, this analysis aims to bring together evidence of ethnic minority issues and our strategy for addressing the associated inequalities of opportunity. The analysis is organised around key public services and the labour market. People of ethnic minority origin are, in significant proportions, both users and actual employees in the public services. Yet evidence suggests that the ethnic minority population have less confidence in public services than their White counterparts and that some ethnic minority groups do not have the same access to public services as other groups⁷⁴. There are thus potential gains to be made in efforts to improve public services by ensuring delivery of improvements in race equality across these services.

Chart 2.14: Percentage of people in low-income households by ethnicity (Great Britain)



Source: Households Below Average Income, 1994/5–2001/02, Department for Work and Pensions.
 Note: Low-income threshold – 60 per cent median equivalised household disposable income after housing costs.

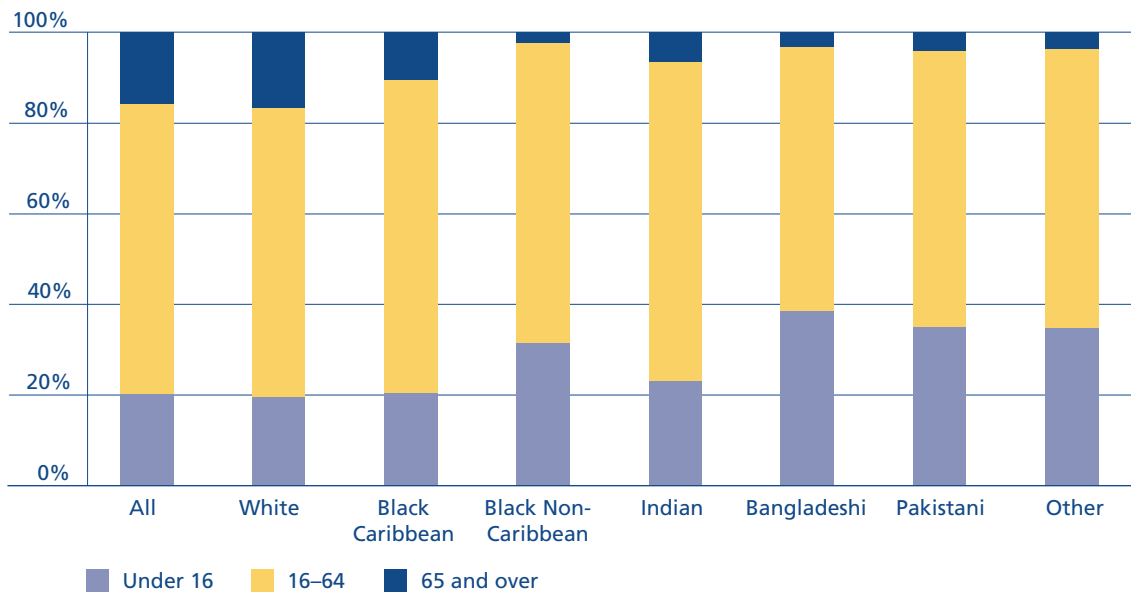
184. So the analysis begins by focusing on the education system as our first opportunity to tackle inequalities in attainment. This links, through qualifications and earnings potential, to the following analysis on labour market issues. Work is the best route out of poverty for those who can work, but it is important to acknowledge the ethnic dimension in this debate.
185. The rest of the analysis then moves on to address inequalities in wider service provision, and the importance of community cohesion, through neighbourhood renewal, health, housing and justice.
186. As the analysis progresses, what becomes clear is that not all of the problems highlighted lead to obvious or workable solutions. Not least this is because although certain problems are highly associated with ethnicity, it is not clear that they are the consequence of ethnicity. This is a crucial distinction to bear in mind – eventual conclusions from this analysis will have implications for our policies.

187. Therefore the second purpose of this analysis is to promote debate and feedback on our overall strategy and its consequences for ethnic minorities. Our understanding of this area is developing all of the time. We would welcome your views.

Tackling educational disadvantage

188. Overall, as Chart 2.15 shows, people in ethnic minority communities tend to be younger than the White population. The 2001 Census has shown that nearly one in eight pupils come from an ethnic minority background. By 2010, the proportion is expected to be around one in five. For all children, school achievement will be a key determinant of their success in later life. It will affect whether they go to university, whether they get a good job and the contribution they make to society. And, as Chapter one has shown, educational achievement can play an important part in helping people escape poverty.

Chart 2.15: Distribution of ethnic minority groups by age (United Kingdom)



Source: 2001 Census data.

189. This is why it is so worrying that many ethnic minority young people underachieve. The Pupil Level Annual School Census 2003 has given us the first accurate picture of the performance of young people from different backgrounds⁷⁵. Students from Chinese and Indian backgrounds achieve significantly above average results. But the picture for other ethnic minority groups is very different. Black pupils and those from Pakistani and Bangladeshi backgrounds achieve poorer GCSE results than other groups.

190. Some of the differences may be explained by the fact that ethnic minority pupils more often live in disadvantaged areas. Most pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds live in and around the big cities – 75 per cent attend schools in a third of local authorities and 40 per cent attend schools in London, which has just 16 per cent of the population of England.

191. Research also suggests that social class is a strong influence on ethnic minority attainment⁷⁶. But it also shows us that the impact differs for different ethnic groups: the correlation between class indicators and attainment is not as strong for Black Caribbean and Black African pupils as for White ethnic groups⁷⁷.
192. However, individual school and local authority data show a more complex picture. In some areas, bilingual groups are among the highest-performing groups. But other smaller minority groups, such as Turkish and Portuguese pupils, tend to underachieve throughout school.
193. Gender also has a significant impact. In most cases girls outperform boys of the same background at all key stages. Furthermore, whilst most ethnic minority pupils live in ethnically diverse urban areas, many live in areas of the country where the population is predominantly White. We should not overlook the problems that such isolation can create. Research shows that teachers in schools with few ethnic minority pupils can be less confident in preparing their pupils for life in Britain's diverse society⁷⁸.
194. Pupils from some ethnic minority backgrounds may find themselves facing other barriers. Twenty-eight per cent of Black Caribbean secondary school pupils were recorded as having Special Educational Needs, 23 per cent of Pakistani pupils and 23 per cent of Bangladeshi pupils compared with 18 per cent of White pupils. Schools are also up to four times more likely to permanently exclude Black Caribbean pupils, increasing the chances that they will be disengaged from education in the longer term.
195. In addition, the Office for Standards in Education has shown that traveller children (mostly Gypsy, Roma or Travellers of Irish Heritage) have the lowest results of any ethnic minority group and are the group most at risk in the education system⁷⁹. The fact that they tend to attend school intermittently clearly contributes to this. They are also more likely to be excluded from school than most other pupils.

Laying the foundations

196. So it is clear that the gap between where we are and where we want to be is significant. But the best schools have shown that it can be closed⁸⁰. We can and will give a clear lead by ensuring that national policies and programmes address the needs of all pupils. We have already put in place two important levers that we believe will provide schools with a firm basis upon which to move forward.

Case study – Sudbourne Primary School, Lambeth

At Sudbourne Primary School, about half the children are of ethnic minority heritage. The school has 370 pupils, of whom the percentage eligible for free school meals (38.4 per cent) is above the national average. The percentage of pupils with English as an additional language (27.7 per cent) is very high. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is also high, above the national average.

And yet attainment at Sudbourne Primary School, as shown in National Curriculum assessments, has been consistently high for many years. The number of Black Caribbean pupils attending the school has always been significant and they have shared in the success achieved by the school. In the 1999 Key Stage 2 tests, 27 per cent of the cohort were Black Caribbean and their level of attainment was well above the national average.

And unlike the average picture, the attainment of boys was better than that of girls. No boys achieved less than Level 4 and the percentage of Black Caribbean boys achieving Level 5 was well above the national average. The attainment of girls, although not as high as that of boys, was also above the national average. In total, no Black pupil achieved less than Level 3 in any subject.

Data collection

197. The new Pupil Level Annual School Census means that it will be possible for the first time ever to monitor the achievement of ethnic minority pupils locally and nationally in a consistent way⁸¹. It will also provide a straightforward means of identifying schools with high levels of pupil mobility, and will track traveller children.
198. This represents a huge step forward. We are committed to publishing the Census data. This will give schools and local and central government a much clearer picture of the relative performance of particular groups of pupils. It will enable school leadership teams and policy makers to get answers to questions about which groups are doing well and which are doing less well. As a result we can focus energy and resources where they are needed most. Above all, it will improve accountability – success or failure will be clear for all to see.

The Law

199. The Race Relations (Amendment) Act has important implications for the work of schools and other educational institutions. The legislation requires schools to:
- prepare a written statement of the school's policy for promoting race equality, and to act upon it;
 - assess the impact of school policies on pupils, staff and parents of different racial groups, including, in particular, the impact on the attainment levels of these pupils;

- monitor the operation of all the school's policies, including, in particular, their impact on the attainment levels of pupils from different racial groups; and
- take reasonable steps to make available the results of its monitoring.

200. This is a powerful tool that can be used to raise ethnic minority achievement. By monitoring the outcomes of their policies on ethnic minority pupils, schools are better able to identify and remove any unintended barriers to the achievement of ethnic minority pupils.

201. To support schools, the Department for Education and Skills has worked with the Commission for Racial Equality to:

- produce a *Statutory Code of Practice* to give practical advice on how to meet the duties;
- produce a *Guide for Schools* to help governing bodies, parents, pupils and others with an interest, to understand what they can expect from schools and what schools might expect from them; and
- develop a database of good practice, which will be made available on the internet.

202. The Act has teeth. The Commission for Racial Equality can enforce the specific duties by issuing a compliance notice. Failure to comply could result in legal action. Ofsted will inspect schools' compliance with the Act as part of its regular inspections. The new inspection

framework places a strong emphasis on race equality and the need for schools to plan action to narrow achievement gaps, whatever the composition of the community they serve. Ofsted's guidance on evaluating educational inclusion sets out for schools what it means to be an inclusive school and gives schools a valuable tool for monitoring and evaluating their practice. In addition, Ofsted undertakes a thematic review to assess schools' progress towards meeting the requirements of the Act and to identify good practice.

How schools can tackle underachievement

203. Schools and teachers want to see all their pupils succeed. We recognise that this can be particularly challenging in schools with a diverse intake, particularly where high pupil mobility is a fact of life. However, underachievement is not inevitable. Many schools are raising the achievement of their ethnic minority pupils. Research has shown that schools that achieve successful outcomes for their ethnic minority pupils are characterised by certain principles⁸².

- Strong leadership – the headteacher and senior teachers lead an effective strategy that is applied across the whole school.
- Effective teaching and learning – lessons are planned and delivered as effectively as possible, with support provided for bilingual pupils. And teachers are able to reflect in their lessons the cultures and identities of the communities represented in the school.

- High expectations – every pupil is expected and encouraged to achieve their potential by teachers and parents. These expectations are underpinned by the practical use of data and monitoring. Policies and exam results are monitored for their effect on particular groups of pupils to pinpoint and tackle underperformance.
- An ethos of respect – there is a strong ethos and culture of mutual respect where pupils are able to have their voices heard. There are clear and consistent approaches to bad behaviour, bullying and tackling racism across the whole school with a focus on prevention.
- Parental involvement – parents and the wider community are positively encouraged to play a full part in the life and development of the school.

204. It is vital that such best practice is widely adopted. Chapter one has shown how early relative disadvantage can feed through to adulthood, as attainment in education is such a powerful predictor of labour market outcomes.

Tackling labour market disadvantage

205. We recognise that in order to tackle the causes of inequality for ethnic minority groups, work needs to be joined up across government. In March 2003, the Strategy Unit's *Ethnic Minorities in the Labour Market: Final Report* was published⁸³.

206. The report makes 28 recommendations to tackle the barriers faced by ethnic minorities in the labour market. These include efforts needed to build employability, connecting people with work more effectively and ensuring that there are equal opportunities for all in the workplace.

Ethnic Minority Employment Task Force

207. To deliver on these recommendations, a new Ethnic Minority Employment Task Force will work alongside:
- the Department for Education and Skills, to drive up attainment at school and in further and higher education;
 - the Department of Trade and Industry, on employment rights and employer discrimination, on promoting the business case for a diverse workforce and for improving recruitment and promotion practices;
 - the Home Office and the Commission for Racial Equality, who lead on tackling racism and community cohesion; and
 - the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister on the Housing and Employment Mobility Service, to ensure that ethnic minority Registered Social Landlords are included in the scheme.

208. The Minister for Work has been given the task of heading this task force, in recognition of the role that the labour market can play in tackling poverty and social exclusion for everyone. We will not achieve a fairer society and opportunity for all while some people suffer disproportionate levels of poverty and worklessness related to their ethnicity.

209. There is no doubt that this is still the case. Ethnic minority people are substantially over-represented both among the economically inactive and the unemployed. In total, in Great Britain there are about 240,000 ethnic minority individuals unemployed and 960,000 economically inactive (as of spring 2003)⁸⁴.

210. These overall figures also mask stark inequality for certain ethnic minority groups and genders within them. For example, Bangladeshi groups have an employment rate of 38 per cent and for women within this group the rate is as low as 19 per cent⁸⁵. This compares with an overall employment rate for Whites in the UK of around 76 per cent, or 72 per cent for women only. Many Asian groups are characterised by low participation rates among women, something that is reversed in the case of the Black Caribbean population.

211. The unemployment rates for ethnic minority males are up to three times higher than those for Whites, with particularly high rates for Bangladeshis and Black Africans. And for men from all

ethnic minority groups, unemployment is much higher among young people aged under 25 than among older people. For example, in 2001/02 over 40 per cent of young Bangladeshi men were unemployed⁸⁶.

212. Our **indicator of progress** monitors the employment rate of ethnic minority people and the gap between this rate and the overall rate. So far, progress has been slow. The employment rate of ethnic minority people increased from 57.3 per cent in 1998 to 58.3 per cent in 2003. But we have yet to make progress in reducing the employment rate gap. We are therefore increasing our efforts for 2004.

Closing the employment gap

213. We have set a Public Service Agreement (PSA) target to increase the ethnic minority employment rate and close the inequality gap with the rest of the population. In order to achieve this, we need to understand the reasons why ethnic minority people do not have an equal chance of employment. Many complex factors relate to ethnic minority disadvantage in the labour market, but there is a broad consensus that three interrelated factors are significant⁸⁷.

- Human capital – most (but not all) ethnic minority groups have lower average levels of education than the White population, which is likely to lead to lower levels of employment and lower pay for those in work⁸⁸.

- Geography – 67 per cent of the ethnic minority population of England live in its 88 most deprived local authority districts, compared with 37 per cent of the White population⁸⁹.
 - Discrimination – there is considerable evidence that people from ethnic minority backgrounds are discriminated against in seeking employment⁹⁰.
214. The implications for our policies for improving employment opportunities for people from ethnic minority backgrounds are clear. We need to focus our efforts on improving access to education and training, improving the help available in disadvantaged areas, and tackling discrimination by helping employers to open up employment opportunities to all.

The active role of Jobcentre Plus

215. Since 1998, Jobcentre Plus mainstream services have delivered help to jobless ethnic minority people mainly through New Deals and other mainstream services. For example, since their introduction, New Deals have helped over 78,000 people from ethnic minority communities into work.
216. However, we have begun to target more effectively the areas of disadvantage where the greater proportion of ethnic minority people live. We are moving away from the 'one size fits all' approach that does not always work for different communities.
217. Action Teams for Jobs and Employment Zones use flexible funding in innovative ways – for example by helping people to obtain a driving licence to widen their appeal to employers. Together, these schemes have helped around 25,000 ethnic minority people into jobs. In addition, an outreach service was introduced in April 2002 in the five conurbations where most people from ethnic minority groups live. This is run by organisations with close links to those local ethnic minority communities that are furthest from the labour market. These initiatives are testing out new approaches – for example engagement with employers to promote the advantages of recruiting a diverse workforce to reflect the local community.
218. The Jobcentre Plus target structure has changed too, leading to better geographic targeting of Jobcentre Plus resources to those areas with high unemployment and large ethnic minority populations. Jobcentre Plus staff in those areas are now looking at new ways in which their service can reach all parts of the community. They are also using the well-established links that Jobcentres have with employers, helping them in developing diversity and equal opportunities policies and promoting the business value of a diverse workforce. Jobcentre Plus is pulling all of this work together into a comprehensive action plan and strategy to improve its performance for ethnic minorities and to meet its obligations under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act.

219. Furthermore, new proposals were announced in Budget 2003 to provide extra support to help people from ethnic minorities. A new £8 million flexible pot of money will be made available for Jobcentre Plus district managers to use innovatively – for example to fund projects to address the wider barriers (such as substance misuse and gang culture) that prevent ethnic minority clients in some areas from getting and keeping jobs. Funding is also provided for a number of specialist account managers to work with employers in the five areas where most ethnic minority people live. These are two examples that will add to Jobcentre Plus's stock of measures to deliver its improved services for ethnic minorities.

Tackling health inequalities

220. Indian, African-Asian and Chinese people have similar levels of self-reported health problems as White people. But people from Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities are one-and-a-half times as likely to suffer ill health, and African-Caribbean people are a third as likely⁹¹. One stark indicator of this inequality is that infant mortality is 100 per cent higher for children of African-Caribbean and Pakistani mothers, compared with White mothers⁹².

221. Some ethnic minority groups are also at much greater risk of suffering specific conditions or diseases than White people. For example, Pakistani and Bangladeshi people are more than five times as likely

to be diagnosed with diabetes than White people, and African-Asian, Indian and African-Caribbean people are three times as likely. Pakistani and Bangladeshi people are also more likely to suffer coronary heart disease than other groups – 50 per cent more likely than Whites. Similarly, African-Caribbean women have higher rates of diagnosed hypertension than others – 80 per cent more likely than Whites⁹³.

222. Whilst much of this variation is due to differences in socio-economic status, there is evidence that health services do not always reach people from ethnic minority communities or meet their needs⁹⁴. For example, sexual health services are frequently not designed in a way that would reach specific ethnic minority groups⁹⁵. Cultural and religious considerations may mean that female patients from some ethnic minority groups do not want to be treated by male doctors. And there is evidence that language barriers impact on primary care services. A third of Chinese people do not understand the language used by their doctors and a large proportion of South Asian people have difficulty accessing a GP who shares a language with them⁹⁶.

223. Among African-Caribbean people, especially young men, the rates of diagnosis of psychotic illness are high relative to the White population. The same holds for admissions to hospital under the Mental Health Act, treatment by physical rather than talking therapies,

and admission to secure services. African-Caribbeans are also more likely to be referred to mental health services by the criminal justice system than by GPs or social care services⁹⁷. Evidence suggests that services are not adequately meeting the mental health needs of people from ethnic minority communities and that these people lack confidence in mental health services⁹⁸.

224. Our overall strategy to improve the nation's health (Chapter one) by concentrating on the major threats (such as heart disease) should have a positive effect on ethnic minority health. In addition, there are specific actions to help reduce inequality, such as the National Service Framework on mental health, and the provision of appropriate training materials for those who care for older people from ethnic minority communities. The framework for a National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal builds on this by recommending the setting of minimum targets and working closely with the community and other service providers in deprived areas.

Improving ethnic minority health

225. Raising standards across the board, and particularly with respect to coronary heart disease and mental illness, should have a positive effect on ethnic minority communities' health. But we have also set out a specific programme of work to tackle ethnic minority ill health.

226. The Department of Health has published a race equality agenda that includes:

- improving the skills of all staff in developing and delivering services that meet the cultural, religious and linguistic needs of local ethnic minority populations (this might include, for example, the publication of key information in languages appropriate for the local community);
- requiring Health Authorities, Primary Care Groups and Primary Care Trusts to give due regard to identifying and meeting the local population's health service needs, including those of ethnic minority groups (similarly, Health Improvement Programmes will provide culturally relevant services and properly targeted health messages); and
- using monitoring and target-setting mechanisms in ensuring that inequalities in health and the needs of ethnic minority communities are addressed⁹⁹.

Equality in mental health services

227. We are also changing the way that a number of core services are delivered with respect to mental illness.

- A national standard has been set for mental health and social services to combat discrimination.

- Mental health services have been required to plan and implement their activities in partnership with local communities to ensure that they meet the needs of ethnic minority communities.
- Performance measures have been defined, including monitoring of the experience of services by ethnic minority groups and evidence of appropriate care¹⁰⁰.

Increasing the accessibility of social care services

228. We recognise that social care services may not be easily accessed by ethnic minority communities or wholly appropriate to their needs. A number of initiatives have been put in place to help address this, including:

- developing, with local ethnic-minority-led voluntary organisations, action plans for improving services for older people from ethnic minority communities;
- producing training material for social care staff who work with ethnic minority older people and those with mental health problems¹⁰¹;
- funding a project to identify professionals and care workers who work with ethnic minority carers, to form a network for mutual support and sharing good practice; and

- funding a project to improve service delivery and outcomes – through policy development and sharing good practice – for ethnic minority children and their families.

Other examples of tackling health inequalities

229. Other examples of specific action to tackle health inequalities in ethnic minority communities include:

- increasing the awareness of HIV and AIDS, and issues around testing, particularly among Black African communities. This includes ante-natal testing, which is now offered and recommended to all pregnant women;
- developing a comprehensive and targeted campaign to promote organ donation among South Asian communities; and
- making explicit the need for coronary heart disease services – particularly important among some South Asian communities – to be accessible to everyone, taking account of race, culture and religion¹⁰².

Neighbourhood renewal and race equality

230. Neighbourhood renewal provides an effective platform for building strong and cohesive communities in which everyone, regardless of race or ethnicity, has a real stake. The Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy recognises that past initiatives have been notable for their failure to engage or benefit the ethnic minority voluntary and community sector and issues that are important to ethnic minority communities have often been afforded low priority.
231. The Neighbourhood Renewal Unit has developed a Race Strategy to ensure that race equality is embedded into every aspect of neighbourhood renewal policy. Commitment 98 of the national strategy promised that ethnic minority groups would both be involved in the neighbourhood renewal process and benefit from its delivery. This commitment has a particular resonance in light of the summer 2001 disturbances in Bradford, Oldham and Burnley and the resultant commitment to a new focus on community cohesion. The Race Relations (Amendment) Act adds further impetus to the requirement for a robust race equality strategy throughout neighbourhood renewal activity.
232. This work has started in relation to the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit's own programmes as outlined in its Race Equality Action Plan. However, real delivery will be achieved only through

ensuring that mainstream services benefit our most deprived areas. It is therefore crucial that, in doing so, race equality is a common theme at a local, regional and national level. This is also reinforced by the implementation of 'floor targets'.

Community cohesion

233. The disturbances in the summer of 2001 were a stark reminder of the vital importance of community cohesion. A number of reports were produced to identify possible causes for these disturbances and to begin the process of addressing those causes. The reports demonstrated a lack of trust between communities as being at the root of the problem. They suggested that young people were rarely involved or consulted by local agencies, and that in some cases community leaders were only partially representative. In many cases, the causes were compounded by serious deprivation.
234. A cohesive community is one where there is a common vision and a sense of belonging for all residents, the diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and positively valued, and those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities. A number of initiatives have been established to enhance community cohesion. For example, 12 Policy and Practitioner Groups have been established, with representation from a wide remit of disciplines including local community and voluntary sector

organisations. These groups will provide expert advice on preventing conflict and promoting cohesion. In addition 14 Community Cohesion Pathfinder projects have been established across England. £6 million has been provided to enable the Pathfinder areas to develop approaches to mainstreaming community cohesion by supplementing and simplifying existing funding streams.

Housing issues

235. Ethnic minority people can face significant difficulties in getting good quality housing. Whilst there has been some improvement since the early 1980s, they are still more likely to be less satisfied than White people with their homes and to live in poorer quality and less popular types of accommodation, regardless of tenure¹⁰³.
236. Home ownership is most common among people in Indian, African-Asian and Pakistani communities – around 80 per cent of whom own their homes. This compares with fewer than 70 per cent of the White population. African-Caribbean and Bangladeshi groups are the least likely to own their homes and are also disproportionately concentrated in social housing – with nearly 50 per cent of households being in some form of social housing, compared with around 25 per cent of White and Chinese households¹⁰⁴.

237. Fifteen per cent of ethnic minority households live in overcrowded conditions, compared with two per cent of White households. In the case of Pakistani and Bangladeshi households this rises to 40 per cent. This may reflect a lack of availability of houses appropriate for large families, a cultural tradition of caring for elderly family members in the home and, to a lesser extent, lower incomes¹⁰⁵.

238. It is estimated that people from ethnic minority communities make up about five per cent of those sleeping rough. However, voluntary organisations report that there are disproportionately high numbers of ethnic minority people among the single homeless population who live in hostels¹⁰⁶.

Action to tackle ethnic disadvantage in housing

239. We are encouraging local authorities to take a strategic approach to housing so that they identify needs better, plan more systematically, and work in concert with others. This will help make best use of the increased resources allocated to authorities and Registered Social Landlords.
240. Landlords, or their agents, should comply with certain key codes, such as the Commission for Racial Equality's *Code of Practice on Rented Housing*, the statutory *Code of Guidance on Homelessness and Allocations*, and the new *Code of Practice for Social Landlords on Tackling Racial Harassment*.

241. Authorities are encouraged to work closely with ethnic minority groups in drawing up their housing strategies. But some authorities are better at consulting and engaging with partners than others. We think the current guidance to authorities could have more focus on ethnic minority issues and we will be strengthening this element in future guidance.

Monitoring and driving up performance: Best Value

242. The Best Value regime is crucial for monitoring delivery of services to ethnic minority residents, and driving up performance by both local authorities and Registered Social Landlords. Best Value housing reviews must involve the ethnic minority community and reflect their views on the authority's performance. Inspectors will consider all these points and more as part of their Best Value inspection programme and reflect them in their published reports.
243. The Housing Corporation is in the process of setting up a similar regime for Registered Social Landlords, which will focus on good practice towards ethnic minority tenants as one of five main themes.

Allocations and homelessness

244. It is unlawful for landlords to discriminate on racial grounds when allocating housing. Policies and procedures that discriminate indirectly are also against the law. However, the Commission for Racial

Equality and academic studies indicate that three times as many ethnic minority households are homeless as White households¹⁰⁷. South Asian homelessness is often concealed and is less accurately documented than African-Caribbean.

245. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is piloting a new approach to local authority lettings. This is designed to make the process more open and transparent, and to give applicants a more active role in the choice of a home. Choice Based Lettings offer the opportunity to promote awareness of, and access to, local authority housing for groups whose take-up is low, for example some Asian groups.

Young people

246. We know that young people from ethnic minority backgrounds are more likely to be living in deprived neighbourhoods and overcrowded conditions than young people from White households. This can affect educational achievement, because there is nowhere for young people to study at home, and can have an adverse effect on health.
247. Overcrowding, racism and discrimination are some of the pressures that can lead to homelessness¹⁰⁸. Young people from ethnic minority backgrounds can also become homeless because of a rejection of cultural and family traditions, which causes extreme isolation and can require considerable support. This is particularly an issue for those of Asian background¹⁰⁹.

248. There are considerable differences in the experiences of young homeless people from different ethnic backgrounds. Young White people are more likely to sleep rough than those with ethnic minority backgrounds, who tend to stay with friends or relatives. Homelessness is more likely to be hidden, especially among Asian people, who are less likely to apply to agencies for help. There are, however, few ethnic-minority-led organisations offering support and accommodation to young homeless people.

Older people

249. Our policies need to recognise the increase in the numbers of ethnic minority older people and their relative poverty and exclusion. This will be a particular issue over the next 10–15 years as first-generation migrants grow older and reach retirement age.

250. It is of tremendous importance to older people in particular that their cultural needs and preferences are understood and respected in the provision of housing and related support services. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is working with the Department of Health and other organisations to develop and implement a strategic framework to promote this. Policies aimed at breaking down segregation will also need to weigh this aspect carefully.

251. Many elderly members of ethnic minority communities do not access the available support services. There is a range of reasons for this. Often they are unaware that help is available. And there may be religious or cultural barriers to seeking help outside the family.

252. Many ethnic minority elders live with their families and an increasing number will be the owners of inappropriate homes. Home Improvement Agencies across the country offer advice on how elderly, disabled and vulnerable groups can adapt their homes to assist independent living. Through Foundations, the national co-ordinating body, we are pressing Home Improvement Agencies to raise awareness of their services within vulnerable and excluded groups.

The Supporting People programme

253. The Supporting People programme is about helping vulnerable people live independent lives in the community. The programme will introduce a new funding and policy framework that places on local authorities the responsibility for planning housing support services for vulnerable groups. The new framework should ensure that, in future, needs are assessed in a more comprehensive and consistent manner, and that service provision is better matched to need.

254. Most of the housing-related services are provided either by Registered Social Landlords or by voluntary sector bodies. A number of ethnic minority Registered Social Landlords and community organisations provide services to vulnerable ethnic minority residents. Many of these are small bodies, and we are taking a number of steps to help ease their transition to the new system and address concerns about funding, and their capacity to participate effectively in the new processes. For example, we have encouraged local authorities to be flexible in their contract requirements for small providers. A particular example of this is insurance, where lower levels of insurance than those set out in the model contract may be appropriate for small providers.

Access to justice

255. Evidence suggests that ethnic minority communities have least confidence in criminal justice services of any public service¹¹⁰. For many young Black men in particular, police and community relations directly influence their day-to-day experience of life.

256. The Home Office has a clear action plan for implementing the recommendations of the Lawrence Inquiry report on policing. But our understanding of the way in which the criminal justice system as a whole impacts on ethnic minority communities is only partial. As a priority, the Criminal Justice System Race Unit was announced on 7 November 2002. The unit will work with stakeholders, Criminal Justice Agencies and local Criminal Justice Boards to:

- develop a better understanding of the representation of people from ethnic minorities in the criminal justice system;
- identify system-wide barriers to improved performance and ensure that the work necessary for individual agencies to meet their responsibilities under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act is joined up and complementary;
- propose a programme of action that will make faster progress in eliminating discrimination in the criminal justice system, and champion the implementation of agreed measures;
- draw together existing good practice and disseminate the lessons across the criminal justice system; and
- make recommendations on the statistics that should be collected in future in this area and how they should be analysed and published.

Conclusions

257. Chapter two has highlighted, in depth, the risks of poverty and social exclusion associated with three vulnerable groups: large families, the disabled and ethnic minorities.

- In the first part of this chapter we focused on large families – a group that has not conventionally been considered a vulnerable group. But our analysis has shown that the risk of low income increases with family size. Children who live in lone parent families, ethnic minority groups, households with a disabled adult or disabled child, workless households and some couple families with no second earners are at greater risk of low income. These risk factors are not mutually exclusive. Family size is also important. Half of all children in low-income households live in large families. Our analysis suggests that it is not necessarily family size *per se* that disadvantages large families, but the interaction between a range of characteristics. In addition, the practical constraints associated with juggling working life and family life may be magnified for larger families.
- In this, the European Year of Disabled People, the second part of the chapter focused on issues faced by disabled people. Our analysis shows that disabled people and their families are

more likely than non-disabled people to be in low-income households. Disabled people are also less likely to be employed or to have higher level qualifications and are more likely to live in a household where no one is in work. They may also have higher living costs as a consequence of their health problem or disability. These disadvantages can lead to a high risk of poverty and social exclusion. But our analysis also showed that a vast number of people with a disability do work, and more still would like to work. We are working to ensure that disabled people are given the civil rights necessary to enable them to participate fully in society.

- The final part of this chapter presented some of the research evidence about outcomes for the diverse range of groups broadly classified as ‘ethnic minorities’. The section showed that the achievement of some ethnic minority groups matches or exceeds that of their White counterparts. But some stark inequalities are shown to remain in education, in the labour market and in public services. The analysis showed that differences between ethnic minority groups are just as relevant as the aggregate difference from White groups.

258. It is our intention that this analysis is seen in the context of our commitment to halve child poverty by 2010 and eradicate it by 2020. Our analysis has shown that low income is associated with a lack of

opportunities to live secure and fulfilling lives. Research supports our emphasis on work as the best route out of poverty, for those who can work. Work increases the chances of escaping low income for each individual and their family, but also cumulatively it generates resources in the economy for targeting those most in need.

259. Our purpose in exposing this analysis is simple.

- Firstly, as we move forward in implementing our strategy we are learning that some groups may find it more difficult to work than others. Or, depending on the household structure, number of workers in a household, hours worked and level of earnings, some may still suffer in-work low income. Large families, households with a disabled adult or child, and ethnic minorities are three such groups that, on average, face additional barriers to work. We believe that we have policies in place to address many of these issues.
- Secondly, the analysis drawn together here has shown that the problems faced by large families, disabled people and people from ethnic minority backgrounds are not mutually exclusive. Many of the barriers they face are interrelated. Although we have been able to identify associations among them all, it is certainly not clear that research has identified principal causation or solutions.

260. So we would like to hear your views on these issues. Since its inception in 1999, *Opportunity for all* has always presented an evidence-based strategy. This has evolved over time as new evidence has emerged. Feedback and discussion are crucial parts of that process of evidence gathering. We are unlikely to be able to solve these problems if we do not hear all informed views. Please send your views to the address below:

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