

Delivering on Child Poverty: what would it take?

**A report for the
Department for Work and Pensions**

by Lisa Harker

November 2006





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Presented to Parliament by
the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions
by Command of Her Majesty
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1. Background to the report

In June 2006, I was asked to provide some scrutiny and challenge to the Department for Work and Pensions' child poverty strategy and report to the Secretary of State with my recommendations by early October.

In the limited time available, it has not been possible to undertake a thorough review of the Department's strategy. However, in this report I am able to provide some guidance on:

- what it would take to reach the 2010 child poverty target and get on track for meeting the 2020 target;
- how much more can be achieved through Welfare to Work programmes and what contribution various reforms could make; and
- the gap that needs to be met by other policies.

The terms of reference limited the scope of this work to the areas of policy and service delivery that are within the remit of the Department for Work and Pensions. Although the Department is responsible for helping parents to participate in work – a key aspect of tackling child poverty – the Government's overall child poverty strategy cannot be viewed through the lens of a single department. As set out in the Government's 2004 Child Poverty Review, improving financial support for families, reforming public services to enhance children's life chances and supporting parents in their parenting role are also critical elements of this strategy. Nevertheless, for the purposes of this report, I have focused on the contribution of the Department for Work and Pensions to tackling child poverty.

I am very grateful to officials in the Department for Work and Pensions who have assisted me with my work.

The Government's commitment to eradicate child poverty represents one of the most important goals of our time. I hope that this report will provide a valuable contribution to the debate about how such a goal could be reached.



Lisa Harker

About the author

Lisa Harker is an independent policy adviser specialising in issues related to families, poverty and social exclusion. Until 2003, she was Deputy Director of the Institute for Public Policy Research and has previously worked for Save the Children, BBC News and Child Poverty Action Group. Lisa was chair of the childcare charity, Daycare Trust, from 2001 to 2006 and is a director of Aspire Oxfordshire, a social enterprise that provides employment opportunities for homeless people.