

Working Paper no.7: Children's Voices on Poverty

Expert Advisory Group on
Solutions to Child Poverty

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Purpose

1. To provide the Expert Advisory Group (EAG) with children's perspectives of poverty, two pieces of work were initiated. The first undertaking, comprising Section 1 of this paper, is a synthesis of the recent literature on children's perspectives of poverty and disadvantage. The second undertaking is to gather children's views on poverty and, in a broad sense, to solutions the EAG are proposing. The outline of this consultation process is included in Section 2 of this paper.
2. This paper was prepared to provide the EAG with an overview of how family indebtedness may be contributing to child poverty. There have been several recent and comprehensive New Zealand studies on this topic. This paper summaries key elements relevant to child poverty, but does not attempt to replicate those reports here.
3. The EAG wish to acknowledge Michelle Egan-Bitran, Office of the Children's Commissioner, for her work on this report.

Section 1 - Children's perspectives on poverty from recent literature

4. If policies and services are to be successful in making things better for children and young people through better responses to poverty, it is important to understand what poverty is for them and how they experience it. This review shows that we can learn from children and young people about how they have experienced and perceive poverty. There is an important policy purpose to these studies. By engaging with and listening to children and young people we have the opportunity to:
 - begin to understand some of the experiences and realities of childhood poverty
 - gain insight into the issues and concerns that children in low-income households identify as important
 - learn how policies and the provision of services impact on children's lives
 - gain valuable insights into how we can better meet their needs.

5. This review reveals that the experience of poverty in childhood is clearly damaging and is felt in all areas of children's lives from the economic, material, social, cultural, educational to relational constraints. Of particular significance is the impact poverty has on children and young people's social relationships, social inclusion, school experience, sense of self and future prospects. Deep emotional costs are evident as many of the children and young people struggle to cope with the personal and more hidden aspects of poverty associated with shame, sadness and the fear of difference and stigma. Children's accounts show however that they are not passive victims of poverty. They actively employ coping strategies such as seeking employment so they can contribute financially to their families, taking on caring duties so parents can work, and making do to ease financial pressures within the home. These strategies are not without tensions and costs for the children themselves.

Findings

6. Twenty seven studies, all published since 1998 are examined in detail. There is an important policy purpose to these studies. Children's perspectives are used to identify the most important issues that the children themselves associate with economic disadvantage (Ridge, 2002; van der Hoek, 2005). Detailed methodology and characteristics of studies included in this review can be found in Appendix 1 and Tables 1-8.
7. The following sections summarise the findings from the review to highlight the key messages that can be drawn from listening to children's accounts of their lives and the challenges, demands and pressures that poverty places upon them on a regular basis. The themes that emerged were:
 - Lack of money
 - Lack of material resources, including essential items
 - Health
 - Housing
 - Social exclusion
 - School
 - Family
 - Poverty in working families
 - Children's strategies for coping with poverty and disadvantage at home
 - Out of school hours care
 - Neighbourhoods/community
 - Transport

- Low-income rural childhoods
- Future prospects

A lack of money

- Children and young people's concerns about having sufficient income have been highlighted in a number of studies (including Caldwell, 2012, NZ; Crowley and Vulliamy, 2007; Egan-Bitran, 2010, NZ; Ridge, 2002; Ridge and Millar, 2008; Roker, 1998 and Te One, 2012, NZ). It is evident that 'not having enough money' creates considerable material, social and familial tensions. Findings from Egan-Bitran's (2010) consultation with New Zealand children, young people and young adults echoed this, with many young people speaking of often worrying about themselves or their families having enough money to pay bills. Some teen parents and young adults questioned how they and their children could get by on such low benefit rates given the cost of essentials. Teen parents (11-17 year olds) and young people (18-24 year olds) in particular were acutely aware of the cost of everything, for example, food, rent, power, petrol, and the cost of baby-related essentials. Having enough money to cover these costs was often a problem and created additional pressure and stress for them.
- Often children and young people's ideas for eradicating child poverty were money-related. Their ideas included providing financial or in-kind support to relieve the immediate effects of poverty, and the Government helping low-income families more with housing costs and household bills (Horgan, 2009; Willow, 2001). Others spoke of the need for fairer distribution of income by lowering taxes and by tackling inequalities in society through reducing wage differentials (Caldwell, 2012, NZ; Te One, 2012, NZ; UK Office of the Children's Commissioner, 2011), taxing the rich more and the need to ensure a real 'living wage' that keeps pace with inflation (UK Children's Commissioner, 2011). New Zealand children felt that the Government should try and ensure that food, public transport, power, cars and petrol, education and rent are made more affordable (Caldwell, 2012; Te One, 2012).
- Children in some studies noted that increasing the income of families would not always assist children and families to get out of poverty. They felt that some parents or young people might not spend the money on essential items such as food, items for school, clothing, leisure activities (Willow, 2001) but rather on items such as cigarettes, drugs and alcohol (Egan-Bitran, 2010, NZ; Willow, 2001). Some children in Willow's (2001) UK study proposed that young people could be given a swipe card rather than cash to purchase essential items such as clothing, educational items and leisure activities. It is important to note that some children in this study discussed the potential stigmatisation such policies and practices might cause. After careful exploration of these issues they proposed that gift vouchers or swipe cards would need to be universally issued to all children and young people, with the amount each child has on their cards being determined by their family income (Willow, 2001).

A lack of material resources, including essential items

11. Participants' from studies carried out by Egan-Bitran (2010, NZ) and Willow (2001); and other studies identified a lack of essentials such as food, clothing, warmth and basic everyday necessities like bedding and towels as a common part of being in poverty. Research shows that for children a lack of material goods and childhood possessions including toys, games and appropriate clothing can have a profound impact on their everyday lives including their social interactions with their friends. Visible signs of poverty and difference and an inability to take part in the same social and leisure activities meant that children often experienced bullying and were fearful of stigma and social isolation (Crowley and Vulliamy 2007; Egan-Bitran, 2010, NZ; Elliot and Leonard, 2004; Ridge, 2002 and 2007; Roker, 1998).
12. The studies suggest that clothing is an issue for both adults and children in low-income families. Children report the issue being one of not having the 'right' type of clothing and shoes (trainers) to fit in with peers, in particular the significance of fashion brands or "labels" to children from low income families (Elliot and Leonard, 2004; UK Office of the Children's Commissioner, 2011). Findings from Egan-Bitran (2010) New Zealand consultations differed from such studies in that while children and young people spoke of not having the right clothing, for example, incomplete school uniforms and sports uniforms; not having enough clothing; lacking warm clothing; and of their clothing being in poor condition due to their parents being unable to replace the clothing. There was no talk of not being able to have more expensive labels or brand clothing. Similarly, children's conversations in Willow's (2001) and Harju and Thorod's (2010) studies about clothes included stories of young people being bullied by their peers for wearing shabby, ill-fitting or out-of-date clothing.
13. A number of studies with identified access to nutritious food as an issue. Willow's (2001) consultation identified access to food as being an issue for some children and young people living in poverty; Roker's 1998 study found that one-third of low-income children reported that income affected when and what type of food was bought by their family; Crowley and Vulliamy (2007) and the UK Office of the Children's Commissioner (2011) found that children and young people reported that they or their families often had to buy food that was not healthy because it was cheaper, they also described the impact of poverty on children's diets and how this could lead to poor health in later life; Egan-Bitran's (2010) New Zealand consultation identified hunger, a lack of nutritional food and malnourishment as being issues for many of the participants; the Harju and Thorod (2010) study found that children experienced a lack of food, or empty fridges at the end of the month. New Zealand children in the Caldwell (2012) and Te One (2012) consultations said that they wanted the Government to help ensure that families had enough money to provide the basics, including food and that families should have access to healthy foods.
14. In a number of United Kingdom studies, where school meals are available, children recommended that free school meals be offered more discreetly and more widely, with the value of the entitlement being sufficient for young people to get a variety of healthy foods, not just the cheapest menu option (Horgan, 2007; UK Children's Commissioner, 2011).

Health

15. In addition to issues surrounding food and nutrition and the impact of these on health, children's narratives reveal concerns about issues about the availability and accessibility of health services for children and their families, the cost of medicine and difficulties in getting to hospitals and treatment centres.
16. A common theme in the New Zealand consultations (Caldwell, 2012; Egan-Bitran, 2010; Te One, 2012) was the perceived lack of health services provided for children and/or issues about the ability to access these services. Te One (2012) concludes that the reason for this in her study is unclear, but said that in the rural setting, accessibility, availability and cost of transport to the nearest medical centre were issues. Children's narratives also reveal that the cost of some medicines meant that poor children and their families who were sick or stricken with conditions such as head lice went without treatment (Crowley and Vulliamy, 2007; Egan-Bitran, 2010, NZ). Children also spoke of how difficult it could be to get to hospitals or other treatment centres if you didn't have a car or enough money for a taxi; poor public transport accentuated these difficulties (Crowley and Vulliamy, 2007; Egan-Bitran, 2010, NZ).
17. When New Zealand children were asked how they thought that the Government should help families and children, they said that the Government should provide support, counselling and education for all New Zealanders and thought that families should have free or cheaper access to the dentist and doctor (Caldwell, 2012; Te One, 2012).

Health-compromising behaviours

18. Children and young people in studies such as Crowley and Vulliamy (2007), Egan-Bitran (2010, NZ) and the UK Office of the Children's Commissioner (2011) talked about the stress and pressure of growing up in poverty and that being affected by related issues can often cause them to get involved in risky and health-compromising behaviours such as drinking, smoking and taking drugs. Children and young people in Sweeney's (2008) study revealed that they drank alcohol because there is nothing else to do. They were also concerned about the availability of alcohol and drugs to young people and said that the cost of drinking and promotions such as buy one, get one free, made excessive drinking worse.

Housing

19. Housing is a critical issue for low-income children who are highly vulnerable to experiencing poor quality, inadequate, unfit and unstable housing conditions. The studies show that while some children in low-income and disadvantaged households are positive about their homes, others revealed significant concerns. Homes were often described by New Zealand children as damp, cold, run down, dirty, in some cases rat-infested and overcrowded (Egan-Bitran, 2010; Te One, 2012).
20. The social and emotional costs of poor housing borne by children and young people, and their anxieties about stigma and difference were also revealed (Egan-Bitran, 2010, NZ; Rice, 2006; Ridge, 2002; Roker, 1998). What is particularly apparent is how problems with housing

can impact on many different areas of children's lives including their relationships with family and friends (Rice, 2006; Ridge, 2002; Roker, 1998). Children in the Roker (1998) study reported that a shortage of space, overcrowding and not having any privacy or space to be alone, causes arguments and tension which in turn affects family relationships. Anxiety about overcrowding and poor conditions also affected sleeping, homework, playing with friends or having friends over to stay. Lack of warmth and freezing conditions in winter meant that children got cold, had difficulties in sleeping, experienced poor health and that friends were reluctant to come and stay.

21. Many New Zealand children also spoke of not wanting to invite people to their house because they were too ashamed of the state of their house, revealing their concerns about stigma and of being different (Egan-Bitran, 2010).
22. Multiple moves, as reported by some New Zealand children in Egan-Bitran's consultation (2010) and homelessness have been shown to cause social and emotional upheaval and loss, with children experiencing dislocation from schools, neighbourhoods and friends (Morrow, 2001; Roker, 1998). Children's narratives expose the significant impact of losing a home both within the family and on a personal social level. Losing a home meant losing touch with friends and making new friends became harder each time children had to move. Trying to stay at the same school was critically important but ultimately a struggle for many children for whom long and tiring journeys were often unsustainable due to the costs of fuel and fares. Repeated moves brought extreme stress and anxiety and, for some, vulnerability to bullying and poor mental health. These, and other studies, highlight the importance of families and young people living independently being able to access secure and affordable housing.

Social exclusion

23. Childhood is an important time for the formation of self and social identities. The ability to make and sustain good friendships and take part in social activities is vital to children and young people's sense of belonging and their wellbeing. Being picked on, rejected by their peers, bullying and social exclusion were significant issues for many of the children and young people in the studies examined. This was exacerbated by not being able to wear adequate and suitable clothing and not being able to take part in sporting, cultural and school activities (Crowley and Vulliamy 2007; Egan-Bitran, 2010, NZ; Elliot and Leonard 2004; Horgan, 2009; Ridge 2002, 2007; Roker, 1998; Seaman et al., 2006; Sutton, 2008; Willow, 2001). Children and young people are often fearful about being singled out or being seen as different – what academics would call 'othering': being 'other' and not part of the group.
24. The studies suggest that children in poverty show low levels of participation in organised out-of-school activities compared to their more affluent peers (Sutton et al, 2007). Being left out of activities enjoyed by peers is a common experience for children and young people living in poverty (Van der Hoek, 2005; Willow, 2001). The children's accounts reveal that this can be for a range of reasons including a lack of affordable and adequate transport, the costs

of entry or membership, and the added costs of uniforms or sports clothing, equipment and refreshments. These difficulties are further compounded by poor provision of neighbourhood opportunities including a lack of affordable or accessible out-of-school provision, especially in rural areas (Ridge, 2002; Roker, 1998; Sweeney, 2008). The older children in a number of studies (Crowley and Vulliamy; Egan-Bitran, 2010, NZ; Willow, 2001) stressed the importance of leisure and social activities, and linked the lack of opportunities with boredom and the dangers of getting caught up in crime and substance abuse.

25. The studies also highlighted the link between social exclusion through lack of money and resources and bullying and stigma. Studies showed that children living in poverty experience a lot of pressure to fit in with peers and are often subject to bullying if they cannot afford to (Crowley and Vulliamy, 2007; Daly and Leonard, 2002; Egan-Bitran, 2010; the UK Office of the Children's Commissioner, 2011; Willow, 2001).
26. Children and young people in Crowley and Vulliamy (2007) and Egan-Bitran (2010, NZ) studies spoke about the impact poverty and related issues have on their mental and emotional wellbeing. As Ridge (2009) states:

Poverty strips children of economic security and penetrates deep into their social relationships. It also has an emotional cost as children struggle to cope with social risks of difference and disadvantage. Children's inner fears are largely hidden, and they are rarely asked what their thoughts and feelings are...Children can feel different and inferior and they can be anxious and fearful about being bullied, isolated and left out. Poverty brings uncertainty and insecurity to children's lives, sapping self-esteem and confidence and undermining children's everyday lives and their faith in future wellbeing. (p. 29)

27. Social support appears to be one factor that acts as a buffer against the effects of poverty (Van der Hoek, 2005). Such support may come through relationships with family and/or friends or youth and community networks (Roker, 1998). Children explain how their situation is not as bad as it seems because they have such good relationships with family. The close family relationships these children have make their lives enjoyable and meaningful: they feel valued and loved despite living on low-incomes (Roker, 1998). For children living in poverty, the cost of not having good family relationships is high, with these children appearing the most depressed and pessimistic (Roker, 1998).

School

28. Children spend a large proportion of their daily lives in the school environment and it is one of the key services areas that has the potential to improve the well-being of children experiencing poverty and disadvantage. School is an important place for the development of children's skills and capabilities for the future, as well as being a key site of social and cultural learning. There are a range of studies that engage with children about their experiences of school and these highlight how the presence of poverty in childhood can permeate every aspect of children's school lives. Key studies in this area include: Caldwell, 2012, NZ; Crowley

and Vulliamy, 2007; Egan-Bitran, 2010, NZ; Horgan, 2007, 2009; Kellet and Dar, 2007; Ridge 2002; Roker, 1998; Sutton et al., 2007; Taylor and Nelms, 2006; Taylor, 2009; Taylor and Gee, 2010; Te One, 2012, NZ; Wikeley et al., 2007; Willow, 2001. These studies show that although children's experiences of school are diverse, and some reported having positive experiences, the overwhelming message from the children in disadvantaged families is a negative one. Children's accounts reveal that poverty has a damaging effect across all areas of their school lives, including the social and material realm and through apparently exclusionary institutional practices.

29. Sutton et al.'s (2007) study gives some insight into the different experiences of school for disadvantaged and more affluent children. The more affluent children who went to private schools had an intensive school life, were generally very positive about school and had access to a wide range of after-school activities. In contrast, the disadvantaged children held more negative attitudes towards school and their accounts described school as boring and controlling, saying that they were often shouted at for not knowing what to do. In general, these children tried to spend as little time there as possible by not attending out of school activities for example. This was not the case for some New Zealand children in the Te One (2012) research. For them, school provided a safe place. The children viewed school as enjoyable and also commented that the holidays could be difficult because parents were either working or couldn't afford to send their children to out-of-school activities..
30. The children and young people in a number of studies expressed strong views about the impact of not having much money on school life (Crowley and Vulliamy, 2007; Egan-Bitran, 2010, NZ; Horgan, 2007 and 2009; the UK Office of the Children's Commissioner, 2011; Willow, 2001). Overall, children felt that poverty affected school life and that it was a stigmatising experience in school. They pointed to four main areas where they perceived disadvantage: being unable to afford the school uniform; the embarrassment of receiving free school meals; experiencing difficulty buying essential items for school; and being unable to pay for extra things at school like school trips and books. All of the children and young people recognised that school provided a potential route out of disadvantage but some felt that living in a deprived area meant that the type of education offered was likely to be poor as well. In Crowley and Vulliamy's study, teachers were identified as part of the problem for some young people who felt that teachers had lower expectations of them because of where they lived.
31. Roker's (1998) study of low-income young people in the 13 to 18 age group found that the majority of the children had experienced difficulties at school. These included problems with reading and writing, and falling behind because of illness or because they 'could not keep up' and did not understand the work. These young people also felt that school was irrelevant and boring. For many of these young people problems at school had been followed by difficulties in gaining places on college courses or training courses and they were disheartened by their future prospects.

32. Te One's (2012) New Zealand study found that education featured highly when asked what they felt that adults in their community could do to help children and spoke of the importance of adults encouraging educational aspirations.
33. Caldwell's (2012) consultation in New Zealand Child, Youth and Family residential care echoed these views with the majority of the children and young people in the consultation describing schools as places where they often felt judged and where they did not feel that they had been given a second chance. They did not believe that schools responded well to individuality and asked for more variety based on each individual's interests and strengths and that these be presented in more practical ways. Children in Horgan's study (2009) also expressed the need for more apprenticeships so they could learn a trade. Overall, however, most children spoke of the desire to be given more opportunities, to be supported and encouraged by teachers who respected and listened to them in schools which created a positive and respectful schooling experience.

Material and social disadvantage

34. Children's accounts of their lives show that they feel under social and material pressure at school and experience economic barriers to participation. Without adequate economic resources, children report missing out on school trips; not being able to afford school essentials such as uniforms, stationery and books; and experiencing barriers to participating in sports and other activities due to costs. This often caused children and young people in a number of studies to feel a sense of shame, further alienated them from their peers and could be a source of bullying. Bullying and the fear of being seen as different at school underpinned children's accounts of school in many studies (Egan-Bitran, 2010, NZ; Horgan, 2009; Ridge 2002, Willow, 2001).
35. Participating in school trips was especially important for children in families that could not afford to go away for holidays (Crowley and Vulliamy, 2007; Egan-Bitran, 2010, NZ and Ridge, 2002). Half of the children in Ridge's (2002) study had not been away on a family holiday in recent years and some had never been away for a family holiday.
36. Overall, the children in this study felt that going away with peers on a school trip was a highly valued social event; there were also trips that were linked to examination criteria. In some cases, children and young people were making a judgement that the school trips or activities were too expensive for their families to afford and therefore did not take messages home about school trips or did not ask their parents whether they could go, effectively excluding themselves from the events (Ridge, 2002).
37. Attendance at school-based activities could be particularly important for children who were already missing out on opportunities for shared leisure activities and clubs in their neighbourhoods. Wikeley et al's (2007) study explored disadvantaged and more affluent children's experiences of educational relationships in and out of school. The study found that children who were in poverty had considerably less access to formal out-of-school activities than their more affluent peers. Lack of participation in activities also included out-of-school

activities based within the school environment. For children who did engage in out-of-school activities there were clear benefits, not just in terms of participation and the development of skills but also in relation to children's wider experiences of formal schooling and their relationships with teachers.

Relationships with teachers

38. The relationships children and young people have with teachers have been shown to play an important role in school engagement for some disadvantaged children (Taylor & Nelms, 2006). Where co-operative relationships are not developed, children report feeling less in control at school, lacking confidence to perform the tasks required of them, and they may develop negative attitudes to learning (Hirsch, 2007). A number of studies report that while many children living in deprived areas felt that school potentially represented an opportunity for them to escape from poverty, the reality was that they felt poorly served by their schools (Crowley and Vulliamy, 2007). This was reflected in other studies where children linked disadvantage to poor relationships with teachers especially in relation to being shouted at. They also expressed a sense of being badly taught and generally undervalued and disregarded because of their disadvantage (Horgan, 2007; Sutton et al., 2007; the UK Office of the Children's Commissioner, 2011).

Stigmatising institutional processes and practices within schools

39. Studies also highlight the impact on children from apparently stigmatising processes and practices within schools. These included: an insistence on wearing uniforms; demands for extra school items and materials for examinations and practical subjects; deposit deadlines that families were unable to meet; meetings after school with no transport home (Egan-Bitrán, 2010, NZ and Ridge 2002); and institutional provision, for example free school meals, where the processes of delivery were identified as highly stigmatising and embarrassing (Ridge, 2002). Horgan (2007), the Australian longitudinal study (Taylor and Fraser, 2003; Taylor and Nelms, 2006; Taylor and Nelms 2008; Taylor 2009; Taylor and Gee 2010) and the UK Office of the Children's Commissioner (2011) found that 'dress down days', when children could wear their own clothes to school, caused anxiety among some children who did not consider that they had any decent or fashionable clothes, and were afraid of being teased or laughed at by the other children. Uniforms, on the other hand, were seen as having a protective effect – reducing differences among children, although some parents worried about not being able to afford the 'full' uniform (Taylor and Fraser, 2003). Poor children also regularly missed out on school trips that required a parental contribution.

Family

40. A secure, loving and supportive home environment is important for all children and young people. While numerous studies highlight the strengths and resilience of families and the vital role that supportive, loving relationships can bring to children's lives, especially in adversity, children in other studies reveal the negative impact of poverty on the home and family life.

41. The children's narratives highlight their awareness of parents' situations and the potential tensions, strains and conflict that poverty can create within families. A review of the studies shows that children and young people have considerable empathy with their parents and understand the financial pressures they are under and have used words such as sadness, anger, frustration and loneliness to describe how their parents might feel about having no money (Crowley and Vulliamy, 2007; Egan-Bitran, 2010, NZ; Te One, 2012, NZ; Willow, 2001). Even quite young children were concerned about their families' circumstances and the stresses and strains that poverty could bring. Hooper et al's (2007) study focusing on family relationships, revealed that when family pressures were associated with poverty children were hiding their needs, and that where parents were stressed children were also likely to be stressed. Children's relationships with their families and friends were central to their experience and well-being, and were sources of stress or unhappiness for some and resilience for others.
42. There was evidence that some children were experiencing conflict within their homes and that the pressures of poverty could create tensions between children and parents. Children and young people talked about the stress and pressure of growing up in poverty and that being affected by related issues can often cause them, or their family members, to get involved in risky and health-compromising behaviours such as drinking, smoking and taking drugs. A considerable number of New Zealand children and young people in Egan-Bitran's study (2010) also associated poverty with abuse, neglect and other forms of violence. One group in this study spoke of the "cycle of violence and abuse – as an abuser or abused". The children and young people spoke about the emotional impact of growing up in such environments. Children in Te One's consultation also mentioned parents arguing and others spoke, briefly, about family violence. Physical discipline, "a smack" or "a hiding", was highlighted by some participants while several children also spoke about being abused. These were the only studies in this review to identify abuse, neglect and violence as issues. Egan-Bitran's New Zealand consultation was also the only study where a number of the groups spoke of young people and young parents being involved in prostitution. A couple of young people had been prostitutes themselves or their mothers had been. These young people spoke about how financial difficulties, a lack of education, qualifications and work experience, along with responsibilities to provide for their families, had led them or their mothers into this work.

Poverty in working families

43. There is very little research that has engaged directly with low-income children about their experiences of low-income, working family life. Studies available (Ridge, 2007; Ridge and Millar, 2008) found that children whose mothers had managed to move into and sustain employment felt that overall they had gained from their mother's employment, especially in relation to an improvement in family income, and a general increase in social participation, albeit from a low starting point. However, despite the advantages identified by children of their mother's employment there were also concerns expressed about the costs of

employment to them and especially to their mothers. These included worries about their mother's health, and for some, anxiety about inadequate incomes from work and rising debts. New Zealand children in Te One's (2012) consultation also showed a general awareness about adult participation in the workforce and the potential positive impact this could have on their personal circumstances, including the ability for adults to afford a house, new clothes, food and that they may be given money.

44. For many of the children, especially younger children, there were concerns about the amount and quality of time spent together as a family since the onset of employment. This was echoed in Egan-Bitran's (2010) consultation where many New Zealand teen and young adults said that getting into work and working long hours was not necessarily the best solution for them and their children as they recognised the importance of the early years and wanted to raise their children themselves. Others spoke of their desire to "create a better life for them and children" by studying or working but said that Work and Income assistance was not enough to cover transport and childcare costs.
45. On the other hand, many of the older children and young people had taken on considerably more self-responsibility and were spending time alone at home, letting themselves in at night and leaving last in the mornings. This increase in responsibility and time alone was generally greatly valued. Overall, almost all children in the study had taken on extra responsibilities within the household to help sustain work and family life.

Children's strategies for coping with poverty and disadvantage at home

46. It is very clear from these studies that children are active rather than passive family members. Roker's (1998) study highlights the responsibility that children and young people can feel about helping out financially at home. Many of the children and young people in this study were very concerned about the financial difficulties their families faced and saw these not just as problems for their parents but rather as difficulties to be shared. A range of studies reveal how children are key contributors to family life, playing an important role in mediating and managing the experience of poverty within families. Many were actively adopting a range of strategies to mediate and negotiate the impact of disadvantage on their lives. These coping strategies included contributing to family finances through income generated through their own employment, care work, moderating their needs and concealing the effects of poverty from their friends and families. Each of these strategies was potentially costly for children themselves (Crowley and Vulliamy, 2007; Egan-Bitran, 2010, NZ; Harju and Thorod, 2010; Hooper et al., 2007; Ridge, 2002 and 2007; Ridge and Millar 2008; Roker, 1998; Seaman et al., 2006 and Van der Hoek, 2005).
47. Research by Ridge (2007) reveals that children in low-income, working, lone-mother families played a key role in sustaining their mothers in employment through taking on extra chores and responsibilities within their households. Children's accounts of their lives revealed a complex range of caring and supporting activity including helping around the house – cooking, cleaning, and washing; helping with sibling care, and in many cases taking on the

responsibility for self care; moderating needs, sharing financial burdens where and when they could; and giving emotional support to their mothers and siblings. Participants in Sweeney's (2008) study and Egan-Bitran's (2010) New Zealand study spoke of the roles children and young people take in response to parents having to work, including looking after siblings while their parents are at work. This often means that children and young people are missing out on school. It also challenges the idea that children and young people are a barrier to work as they are playing an active part in keeping employment going.

48. A number of studies show that a key strategy of low-income children for coping financially and trying to increase their own and often their family's incomes is to engage in some form of work or to seek employment (Elliot and Leonard, 1998; Ridge, 2002; Roker, 1998; Van der Hoek, 2005). Research evidence shows that disadvantaged children do not tend to have access to regular forms of childhood income like pocket money or an allowance – something that more affluent children take for granted. What money is available in the household is often already allocated for basic necessities like food and clothing (Ridge, 2002). Where children do have some access to pocket money, it is likely to be irregular and often from other family members like grandparents (Ridge, 2002). In highly constrained economic circumstances and in the absence of any other monetary source, children are likely to seek out opportunities for employment. In general, where children were working the experience overall was positive, allowing children a measure of autonomy and helping them contribute to the family income. However, the demands of employment could also be in tension with their equally pressing need to stay connected and achieve at school to lift their future prospects in the labour market (Ridge, 2002).

Out of school hours care

49. In terms of children's perspectives on attending out of school hours care, children in Ridge and Millar's (2008) study expressed a general dissatisfaction about the type and quality of care that was available. Chief among their concerns was that childcare was often inappropriate, unsuitable and stigmatised. They stressed poor service provision, badly mixed age groups and a lack of stimulation, resulting in boredom. Many children expressed a preference for spending time with their 'mates' and did not like the idea of staying on after school, especially if they did not like school in the first place. There were children in this study that were very resistant to the idea of breakfast and after-school clubs, and they expressed concerns about the perceived stigma of attending them, these particular children tended not to be involved in formal care.

The neighbourhood/community

50. The Wager et al., (2007) study shows that public space had a far greater significance for disadvantaged children than more affluent children. Public space is social space for children and young people and its value for the wellbeing of low-income children is revealed by a study supported by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (Sutton et al., 2007). This study used participatory methods to compare the lives of children from different social backgrounds.

The study drew on findings from research with 42 children with a particular focus on children's freedom, safety and use of public space. Findings showed that for the disadvantaged children in the study, public space and street play were of vital importance. In particular the use of public space compensated children for a lack of space at home and reduced opportunities for alternative activities. The quality of space, security and opportunity that children can enjoy within their home neighbourhood is therefore of critical importance for low-income children.

51. Many children in the studies reviewed believed that there was a need to upgrade physical environments in order to improve opportunities and wellbeing. This included clean public spaces and having access to safe playgrounds and recreational facilities. The prevalence of gambling, liquor and fast food outlets in their communities was also seen by New Zealand children and young people as contributing to challenges the communities faced such as health, violence and alcohol, drug and gambling addictions (Egan-Bitran, 2010; Te One, 2012).
52. The children's accounts reveal that children's opportunities to take part in leisure activities are severely compromised by a range of factors including limited provision, poorly located services, inadequate and unaffordable transport and badly designed and/or costly services that did not cater for children's needs (Egan-Bitran 2010, NZ; Horgan, 2009; Ridge, 2002; Roker, 1998; Seaman et al., 2006; Sutton, et al., 2007; Sweeney, 2008).
53. Children in many of the studies depicted public space as unsafe, degraded and hostile by many disadvantaged children. In some localities, children and young people have to negotiate a range of risks including litter, broken glass and discarded needles (Egan-Bitran, 2010, NZ; Horgan, 2009; Seaman et al., 2006; Sutton et al., 2007; one third of the children in Roker's (1998) study reported being a victim of crime, and many spoke of their own involvement in crime as something that everybody in the neighbourhood participated in. Some of the participants in the Blakett-Milburn et al. (2003) study refer to areas where they live, or nearby areas as unsafe. Many children characterised their neighbourhoods by aggressive and hostile behaviour from adults and gangs. In a study by Butler (2005), disadvantaged children aged between six and eleven years old expressed considerable concern and anxiety about their neighbourhoods. They experienced them as 'scary places' and many had either experienced or witnessed aggression, drunkenness or harassment by adults or gangs of older youths.
54. Morrow's (2001) study of neighbourhood experiences found that girls were more likely to feel unsafe than boys and that children from ethnic minority groups had experienced disturbing incidents of racial harassment. Age was also an issue with younger children feeling that they lacked safe space to play and older young people missing out on places to meet and socialise. Staying safe in problematic local neighbourhoods was challenging for children and some were clearly resigned to being bullied and harassed. Others had a range of strategies for keeping themselves safe; these included staying together in groups for

protection, although this could prove problematic when adults or other peers interpreted this behaviour as threatening (Seaman et al., 2006). In Egan-Bitran's (2010) New Zealand study a considerable number of participants talked about the link between poverty and growing in, or joining a gang. Many young people saw gangs as a way of being accepted, a possibility of good times and of not having to live in poverty. But they knew that it came at a cost. Young people said that joining a gang was sometimes good to start with, but hard to cut ties with if they want to go elsewhere.

55. Children in a number of studies, including the UK Children's Commissioner (2011) recommended that children have free and well publicised access to facilities from youth and leisure centres.

Transport

56. Children's narratives reveal difficulties in accessing and affording transport. In general, children are dependent on other people for their transport needs because they are too young to drive and this affects their capacity to see friends, take part in activities and access environments beyond their immediate localities. Children are therefore highly dependent on being able to draw on affordable, reliable, safe and flexible transport. However, evidence from low-income children shows that lack of affordable and appropriate transport is a key issue for them. Unlike more affluent children whose parents are more likely to have access to private transport, low-income children tend to be heavily dependent on costly and inadequate public transport. Affordable transport is a vital component linking children to their friends, to after-school services and to formal and informal leisure activities, yet children's accounts repeatedly mention difficulties in gaining affordable access to the transport they need (see, among others: Crowley and Vulliamy 2007; Ridge, 2002; Sweeney, 2008). In rural areas, transport can be particularly problematic exacerbating rural isolation and effectively containing young people within their immediate localities. Even where families have access to their own cars, especially in rural areas, the running costs can be prohibitive and responding to children's social needs may be low on the list of essential trips to be afforded (Ridge, 2002, 2007). Public transport is also particularly expensive in rural areas, and young people experienced considerable difficulties getting to further education, socialising and meeting up with friends. Children in a number of studies recommended that children have free (or at least subsidised) transport (UK Children's Commissioner, 2011).

Low-income rural childhoods

57. Low-income children and young people in rural areas identify a rather different set of challenges to those expressed by children in urban areas. The experience of poverty in rural communities can be a particularly isolating one as many rural areas are predominantly affluent, and children and young people are particularly vulnerable to stigma and difference. Although rural areas might be characterised as having more space and potentially more desirable environments studies show that in reality children are often restricted from entering many rural spaces (Ridge, 2002). Rural space is limited and children can be in

competition for space with adults, for example small playing fields can be captured by adult interests like cricket, and children are not allowed on the turf. Furthermore, inadequate and costly transport coupled with a lack of affordable and accessible activities leaves low-income children with nowhere to go and nothing to do. As a result children were increasingly visible and could come into conflict with adults resulting in increased surveillance and censure (Ridge, 2002, 2007; Sweeney, 2008).

Future prospects

58. Children's narratives suggest that living in a low-income family affects children and young people's aspirations and their planning for the future¹. While the majority of children living in poverty will engage actively in what Ridge (2002) terms the struggle for social inclusion and survival, some appear to resign themselves to their situation.
59. Children in studies such as Crowley and Vulliamy's (2007) and Willow (2001) were generally hopeful that children can escape poverty. However, they also recognised that it can be difficult and that much would depend on their ability to gain employment and the type of job they could get. They saw education as being a key determinant in whether people can get a good job, with some young people considering it difficult for children in poverty to get a good education and many others feeling discouraged from going in for higher or further education because of the perceived cost and because of the low expectations of the adults around them (Horgan, 2009; Sweeney, 2008; Willow, 2001).
60. The children's narratives highlight the need to provide better training opportunities and actively engage the less academic students in appropriate courses; opening up more work opportunities through apprenticeships or through 'paid work experience'; the need for providing more support to access higher education through grants and sponsorship; offering more incentives to gain work through the likes of free transport; assisting with school costs such as textbooks and subject fees; ensuring adequate family income support and promoting a healthy balance between students' paid work and study. Children and young people in the UK Children's Commissioner (2011) study also spoke of wanting help to identify local role models, people who have succeeded – against the odds – in making something of their lives.
61. However, other studies revealed that many children and young people have become used to a 'restricted' lifestyle and clearly did not believe that their situation would change (Egan-Bitran, 2010, NZ; Roker, 1998; Sweeney, 2008; Van der Hoek, 2005; Willow, 2001).

¹ Crowley and Vulliamy, 2007; Egan-Bitran, 2010; Horgan, 2009; Ridge, 2002; Roker, 1998; Sutton et al., 2007; Sweeney, 2008; Taylor & Fraser, 2003 and Willow, 2001.

Section 2 - Gathering children's voices on poverty

62. While we know how many children are affected by poverty, who are most affected and where they live, current information on child poverty in New Zealand rarely includes the views of children and young people themselves. Little has been recorded about how New Zealand children and young people see and experience poverty in their lives², let alone their ideas about solutions. Their experiences are subsumed into the experiences of households and families. It is assumed parents' and other adults' interpretations of children's experience of poverty are the same as those of children and young people themselves.
63. The new sociology of childhood challenges such assumptions by arguing that children's perspectives are unique to children and filtered through fundamentally different views of, and responses to, the social world³. Children and young people are seen as competent interpreters of the social world and social actors able to contribute to society in their own right. This provides a strong rationale for listening to and respecting children and young people's perspectives⁴.
64. As a result there has been a movement towards more participatory research approaches with children and young people in order to better "*understand the social world from the view point of the child living in it*"⁵. There is now a growing body of international research on children and young people's experiences of poverty⁶ to inform policy and service responses

² Michelle Egan-Bitrán (2010). This is how I see it: Children, young people and young adults' view and experiences of poverty. Office of the Children's Commissioner

³ Corsaro, W. (2003). *The Sociology of Childhood*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press

Qvortrup, J. (1994) 'Introduction', in *Childhood Matters*, Avebury, Aldershot, pp. 1-23

⁴ Smith, A.B., Gollop, M.M., Taylor, N.J. and Marshall, K.A. (2004) *The discipline and guidance of children: Messages from research*. Dunedin: Children's Issues Centre and the Office of the Children's Commissioner

⁵ Grieg, A. and Taylor, J. (1999). *Doing Research with Children*. London: Sage Publication, p. 43

⁶ Crowley, A. and Vulliamy, C. (2007) *Listen Up! Children and young people talk: About poverty*. Save the Children Wales

Horgan, G. (2009) *Speaking Out Against Poverty: voices of children living in disadvantaged areas*. Save the Children Northern Ireland

Ridge, T. (2002) *Childhood poverty and social exclusions: From a Child's Perspective*. Policy Press, Bristol, UK

Ridge, T. (2003) Listening to children: Developing a child-centred approach to childhood poverty in the UK. *Family Matters*, 65, 4-9

Ridge, T. (2009) *Living with Poverty: A review of the literature on children's and families experiences of poverty*. A report of research carried out by the Centre for the Analysis of Social Policy, University of Bath on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions. Research Report No 594

Roker, D. (1998) *Worth More Than This: Young People Growing Up in Family Poverty*, London: The Children's Society.

Taylor, J. and Fraser, A. (2003) *Eleven plus: Life Chances and Family Income*. Melbourne: Brotherhood of St Laurence

Van der Hoek, T. (2005) *Through Children's Eyes*. An initial Study of Children's Personal Experiences and Coping Strategies Growing Up Poor in an Affluent Netherlands, *Innocenti Working Papers*, Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.

to it. *“The concept of participation emphasises that including children should not be a momentary act, but the starting point for an exchange between children and adults”.*⁷

65. If New Zealand policies and services are to be successful in making things better for New Zealand children and young people through better responses to poverty, it is important to understand what poverty is for them, how they experience it and to hear their ideas as to solutions to poverty.

Process for involving children and young people in the ‘Solutions to Child Poverty’ project

66. Engaging children on any topic, and especially on a topic as sensitive as poverty, requires rigorous design and ethical consideration.
67. This project will be led by the Office of the Children’s Commissioner. The Office has extensive experience in undertaking such consultations. Ethics approval has been sought and obtained through the Families Commission Ethics Committee. This process was guided by He Korowai, a framework for Māori research and He Tagaloa, the Framework for Pacific research.

68. The project will be carefully managed to ensure that the exploration of poverty views and possible solutions to poverty does not become a stigmatising or shaming exercise and will in fact be a positive experience for the children and young people involved. As Alderson and Morrow state:

*...enable children to be heard without exploiting them, protect children without silencing and excluding them and.....without distressing them*⁸.

69. The Office has identified potential community partners and schools who are known to the Office and who have well established relationships with children and young people located in rural and urban areas where there are vulnerable populations. The Office has contacted the potential partners to explore the scope of the consultation project and to ascertain whether they were interested in being involved in the project. The Office has then co-constructed a mutually negotiated process for each of the consultations.

70. Aspects of whakawhanaungatanga⁹ have been, and will be, used to guide the process of collaboration and partnership with communities, children and young people. In particular, this consultation is designed around a process of co-joint construction for the consultation. This process is predicated upon warm interpersonal relationships based on mutual respect, commitment to one another and to exploring the issues of poverty in a manner which will be

⁷ Committee on the Rights of the Child General Comment 12, (2009) The right of the child to be heard, p.7

⁸ Alderson, P. and Morrow, V. (2004) *Ethics, Social Research and Consulting with Children and Young People*. Barnardos, Barkingside, p. 12

⁹ Bishop, R. (1996). *Collaborative Research Stories: whakawhanaungatanga*. Dunmore Press

a positive experience for participants, community partners, shared common understanding, co-operation and a shared responsibility for one another.

71. Community partners with local knowledge are essential for understanding the local population profile and practice context. Community-based partners understand sensitive local issues and concerns in a way that an 'outsider' might not, and are therefore better able to recruit effectively.
72. There are also ethical advantages because community workers know the individuals and dynamics of the groups. The involvement of workers is therefore, likely to provide participants with support if need be to ensure that they will be able to participate in the project with minimum risk of psychological stress or discomfort.
73. Following the consultation period, the Commission will then write a report for the EAG on the consultation findings and present this to them. This will include where possible identifying different viewpoints of different groups of children and young people, including, Māori, Pacific, teen parents, children with disabilities, children and young people in rural areas, and the Office of the Children's Commissioner's Young People's Reference Group.

Appendix 1

Methodology and Characteristics of the studies included in this review

74. Two criteria have been used to select the studies included in this review: first, they focus primarily on children's¹⁰ perspectives on the broad domains being examined by the Expert Advisory Group on solutions to child poverty, including income, health, housing, education, family, community/neighbourhood and social relations in the context of low incomes, poverty or economic disadvantage. Second, studies chosen are concerned with children's perspectives on economic disadvantage in developed countries within the OECD (as many of the studies on children's perspectives on issues relating to poverty and economic disadvantage in developing countries are more focused on areas such as child labour than education which is a key focus of the rich country studies).
75. This Paper is also informed by four literature reviews on children's experience of poverty carried out by the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth Collaborative team in New South Wales, Australia (2008); Hirsch (2007) on poverty and educational disadvantage; the review of findings from qualitative research carried out by Ridge (2009) in the United Kingdom since 1998 with children and young people who are living in poverty and The Social Policy Research Centre (2008).
76. Given the lack of New Zealand based literature, Egan-Bitran's (2010) "This is how I see it' Children, young people and young adults' views and experiences of poverty"¹¹ consultation and some of the material collected as part of the Office of the Children's Commissioner's consultations with children on the Green Paper on Vulnerable Children (Caldwell, 2012 and Te One, 2012)¹² has been included in this review, despite not necessarily meeting the above criteria due to age, or in the case of the Green Paper, not being specifically about children and young people's views on low incomes, poverty or economic disadvantage.

¹⁰ Children are defined as being 0-17 inclusive, in line with United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child's definition of a child and the Office of the Children's Commissioner legislative mandate.

¹¹ This project involved the Office working with nine community partners, 56 children, 32 young people and eight young adults living in low socioeconomic communities throughout New Zealand. The purpose of the project was to explore three questions: Does poverty exist in New Zealand?; How would you define poverty?; and How does poverty affect children and young people? While this consultation did not formally record ethnicity, the consultation included considerable numbers of Māori and Pacific Island children and young people and a number of young Māori adults.

¹² While the consultations carried out by Caldwell (2012) and Te One (2012) were not focused on low incomes, poverty or economic disadvantage, one was carried out in three Decile 1 primary schools and one Decile 6 intermediate school with a special class. Two classes were predominantly Pasifika, and another class followed kaupapa Māori education, reflecting their school roll demographic which was over 95 percent Māori (Te One, 2012), while the other consultation was carried out across eight Child, Youth and Family run residences¹². There are high numbers of Māori children in residences, approximately 50% in care and protection residences and up to 85% in youth justice residences, although this changes daily (Caldwell, 2012). In both consultations children expressed views relating to issues of low income, poverty or economic disadvantage.

77. Twenty seven analyses, all published since 1998 are examined in detail. Fifteen concerned children in the UK, three from New Zealand, two from Wales, two from Northern Ireland and one each from the United States, Australia, Western Scotland, Sweden/Norway and the Netherlands. Tables 1-4 briefly summarise some of the characteristics of the twenty seven studies. Samples were varied in size. Some were localised to a particular area of a city¹³, while others sampled children in both urban and rural areas¹⁴, in several regions of the country¹⁵. In general, an attempt was made to sample boys and girls in equal numbers, approximately just over half of the studies reported including a significant number of children from ethnically diverse groups¹⁶. However, none of these studies provided a separate analysis according to ethnicity. In twelve of the twenty seven studies, parents as well as children were interviewed, with teen parents and young parents being interviewed in Egan-Bitran's consultation. In five¹⁷, the perspectives of middle class children as well as those of poor children were obtained. Most studies made policy recommendations.

78. In terms of themes covered, the twenty seven studies can be placed into four groups:

- Studies which have a general and exploratory character to them, and examine a wide range of issues relating to children's own experiences of and perspectives on living in low income families¹⁸.
- Studies which explore differences between poorer and middle class children¹⁹.
- Studies which focus on quite specific questions²⁰.
- Consultations relating to the Green Paper on Vulnerable Children: Every child thrives, belongs, achieves²¹.

¹³ Backett-Milburn et al., 2003; Butler, 2005; Morrow, 2001; Seaman et al., 2006; Taylor and Fraser, 2003; Taylor and Nelms, 2006; Taylor and Nelms 2008; Taylor 2009; Taylor and Gee 2010; Weinger, 2000.

¹⁴ Crowley and Vulliamy, 2007; Egan-Bitran, 2010; Horgan, 2007; Ridge, 2002 and 2007; Wikeley et al., 2007.

¹⁵ Caldwell, 2012; Crowley and Vulliamy, 2007; Egan-Bitran, 2010; Elliot and Leonard, 2004; Harju and Thorod, 2010; Hooper et al., 2007; Horgan, 2009; Kellet and Dar, 2007; Millar and Ridge, 2008; Rice, 2006; Roker, 1998; Sutton et al., 2007; Sweeney, 2008; Te One, 2012; UK Office of the Children's Commissioner, 2011; Van der Hoek, 2005; Willow, 2001.

¹⁶; Butler, 2005; Caldwell, 2012; Crowley and Vulliamy, 2007; Egan-Bitran, 2010; Harju and Thorod, 2010; Hooper et al., 2007; Morrow, 2001; Taylor and Fraser, 2003; Taylor and Nelms, 2006; Taylor and Nelms 2008; Taylor 2009; Taylor and Gee 2010; Te One, 2012; UK Office of the Children's Commissioner, 2011; Van der Hoek, 2005; Weinger, 2000; Willow, 2001.

¹⁷ Backett-Milburn et al., 2003; Sutton et al., 2007; Taylor and Fraser, 2003; Taylor and Nelms, 2006; Taylor 2009; Taylor and Gee 2010; Weinger, 2000; Wikeley et al., 2007.

¹⁸ Crowley and Vulliamy, 2007; Egan-Bitran, 2010; Harju and Thorod, 2010; Hooper et al., 2007; Ridge, 2002; Roker, 1998; Seaman et al., 2006; Sweeney, 2008; UK Office of the Children's Commissioner 2011; Van der Hoek, 2005; Willow, 2001.

¹⁹ Backett-Milburn et al., 2003; Horgan, 2009; Kellet and Dar, 2007; Taylor and Fraser, 2003; Taylor and Nelms, 2006; Taylor and Nelms, 2008; Taylor, 2009; Taylor and Gee, 2010; Sutton et al., 2007; Weinger, 2000.

²⁰ Butler, 2005; Elliot and Leonard, 2004; Horgan, 2007; Morrow, 2001; Rice, 2006; Ridge, 2007; Ridge and Millar, 2008; Wikeley et al., 2007.

²¹ Caldwell, 2012; Te One (2012).

Table 1: Characteristics of the studies included in this review

	Roker (1998)	Weigner (2000)	Willow (2001)	Morrow (2001)
Aim of the study	To describe young people's experience of growing up in family poverty. Examines nine major issues, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's family incomes • Personal finances • Friends • Social lives • Family relationships • Health • School • Crime • Future aspirations. 	To have both middle class and poor children describe middle class and poor children's lives in the abstract, by showing the children photographs of opulent and run-down looking homes, and asking them questions about who might live there.	To explore children's and young people's experiences of poverty. Examines twelve themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A basic life • Fullest potential • Left out of childhood • Education • Health • Crime • Relationships with parents • Sadness and shame • Hope and dreams • It's not all bad • Making lives better • End child poverty. 	To explore children's experiences of their neighbourhoods, their quality of life, the nature of their social networks, and their participation in their communities.
No. of children	60	48	106	101
Age range	13-18	5-14	5-16	12-15
Parents surveyed	No	No	No	No
Sample type	Children from low income homes.	Children from low and middle income homes.	Children living in areas of high poverty and social deprivation.	Children from two schools in relatively deprived wards in a town in south-east England.
Where	United Kingdom	United States	United Kingdom	United Kingdom
Specific policy conclusions	Yes	No	Yes	Yes

Table 2: Characteristics of the studies included in this review

	Ridge (2002)	Backett-Milburn et al. (2003)	Taylor and Fraser (2003) / Taylor and Nelms (2006) / Taylor and Nelms (2008) / Taylor (2009) / Taylor and Gee (2010)
Aim of the study	To study how poverty and social exclusion affect children's perceptions of their social and familial lives. Focuses on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's family relations • Income sources • School • Fitting in with friends • Sources of social exclusion. 	To examine children's views on processes that impact on inequality and health.	Five waves in a longitudinal study tracking children as they grow up in a Melbourne suburb. Taylor and Fraser (2003) focus on family relations, school and friends. Taylor and Nelms (2006) examine family, school engagement and life chances for 15 year olds. Taylor and Nelms (2008) investigate 16 year olds views on family, engagement with school and paid work, planning for the future and explore the experiences of the 16 year olds who had left school. Taylor (2009) explores the stories of eight young people who left school to illustrate some of the policy issues for the school to work transition. Taylor and Gee (2010) outline the education experience of 18 year olds from different income groups.
No. of children	40	35	142 / 41 / 125 / 8 / 138
Age range	10-17	United Kingdom	11-12 / 16 / 17 / 18
Parents surveyed	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sample type	Children from low income homes.	Children from low and middle income homes.	Mostly low income, some well off.
Where	United Kingdom	United Kingdom	Australia
Specific policy conclusions	Yes	No	Yes

Table 3: Characteristics of the studies included in this review

	Elliot and Leonard (2004)	Van der Hoek (2005)	Butler (2005)	Seaman et al. (2006)
Aim of the study	To explore children's attitudes towards fashion brands (trainers/athletic shoes) and their symbolic meanings.	To examine strategies children employ to cope with poverty. Focuses on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family relations • Peers • Emotional pressure • Children's coping strategies. 	To identify what the priorities are for children living in poverty in Swansea in terms of service access and provision. Explores: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationships in neighbourhoods • The importance of home and family • Play and leisure provision • Tackling environmental and participation poverty. 	Two linked studies examining experiences and perspectives of children from disadvantaged communities. Focuses on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk and safety in disadvantaged communities • Safety and social exclusion • Parenting • Hopes for the future .
No. of children	30	65	60	259
Age range	8-12	6-16	6-11	8-14
Parents surveyed	No	Yes	No	Yes
Sample type	Children from low income homes.	Children from low income homes.	Children from two schools in the disadvantaged area of Swansea. The sample included children with disabilities and special educational needs.	Children from disadvantaged communities.
Where	United Kingdom	Netherlands	Wales	Western Scotland
Specific policy conclusions	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table 4: Characteristics of the studies included in this review

	Rice (2006)	Crowley and Vulliamy (2007)	Wikeley et al. (2007)
Aim of the study	This study also included exploring children's own experiences of, and views on, the housing crisis.	To explore children's and young people's views on poverty. Examines eleven themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A basic or a good life • Different treatment • Left out of childhood • Education • Health • Crime • Relationships with parents • Sadness and shame • Hopes and dreams • Not all bad • Ideas for improving the lives of children who live in poverty. 	To examine impact of out of school educational relationships on young people's learning.
No. of children	20	100	55
Age range	7-15	5-16	11 and 14
Parents surveyed	Yes	No	No
Sample type	Children from 11 families living in bad housing in London and Bristol.	Children living in areas of high deprivation.	Children from low and middle income homes.
Where	United Kingdom	Wales	United Kingdom
Specific policy conclusions	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table 5: Characteristics of the studies included in this review

	Kellett and Dar (2007)	Horgan (2007)	Ridge (2007)	Hooper et al. (2007)
Aim of the study	To explore what can be learnt about education and poverty from children's own perspectives when they are empowered as active researchers. Areas explored include homework experiences, learning environments and how confidence affects literacy.	To explore young children's views of the impact of poverty on the school experience. In particular: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what it means to be poor • how children cope with being poor • being left out • local neighbourhood • the cost of going to school. 	To explore perspectives of low-income children before and after mother's return to work. Examines: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived attitudes of other children • Changes in family income • Household work and child-care • Changes in their relationships with their mothers. 	To explore in depth the relationships between poverty, parenting and children's well-being, in diverse social contexts, from the perspectives of parents, children and professionals. Themes covered include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stress and resilience • Parent-child relationships • Siblings relationships • Extended family • Friendships • Professional or semi-professional support workers.
No. of children	12	220	61	59
Age range	11	5-11	8-14	5-11
Parents surveyed	No	No	Yes	Yes
Sample type	Two groups of six children from two UK primary schools from contrasting socio-economic areas.	Children from fifteen schools (advantaged and disadvantaged, urban and rural).	Children from low income homes.	Children from low-income families living in areas with high levels of deprivation and children from low-income families living in affluent areas
Where	United Kingdom	Northern Ireland	United Kingdom	United Kingdom
Specific policy conclusions	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table 6: Characteristics of the studies included in this review

	Sutton et al. (2007)	Millar and Ridge (2008)	Sweeney (2008)
Aim of the study	To explore two contrasting groups of children's views and experiences of social difference.	To explore how mothers and the children both create and respond to changes in work, school, care and family lives over time.	Report on a one-day children's engagement event exploring their views of living in poor communities. Examines: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family life • Where they live • Local facilities for children and young people • Issues of most concern • Good things about their local areas • Things they would change to make their area better • The future • Society's attitudes to young people.
No. of children	42	61	29
Age range	8-13	8-14	12-20
Parents surveyed	Yes	Yes	No
Sample type	Children from low and middle income homes.	Children from lone mother families receiving tax credits and who had left income support/jobseeker's allowance during a specified 12 month period.	Children living in poor communities in North East England.
Where	United Kingdom	United Kingdom	United Kingdom
Specific policy conclusions	Yes	Yes	No

Table 7: Characteristics of the studies included in this review

	Horgan (2009)	Harju and Thorod (2010)	UK Office of the Children’s Commissioner (2011)
Aim of the study	To explore the impact of poverty on children’s experience of primary school. Examines: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What children think of school • What worries children about school • The cost of school • Broader school relationships. 	To explore child poverty in a Nordic welfare state context from the points of view from the children who participated in two studies from Sweden and Norway. Examines: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food • Housing • School • Children taking responsibility • Different experiences. 	To explore the children and young people’s views on the impact poverty has on their lives. Focuses on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of poverty on their material circumstances and social life • Families and communities • Education and training • Aspirations around employment.
No. of children	220	Norway 26 Sweden 14	73
Age range	5-11	Norway 11-13 Sweden 7-19	16-20
Parents surveyed	No	Yes	No
Sample type	Children from advantaged and disadvantaged urban and rural settings across Northern Ireland.	Children from low income families.	Children and young people living in disadvantaged areas.
Where	Northern Ireland	Norway and Sweden	United Kingdom
Specific policy conclusions	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table 8: Characteristics of the studies included in this review

	Te One, OCC (2012)	Caldwell, OCC (2012)	Egan-Bitran, OCC²²(2010)
Aim of the study	To seek the views of children on the Green Paper for Vulnerable Children: Every child thrives, belongs, achieves. Explores children's perspectives on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents and families • Schools • Communities • Workforce • Government. 	To seek the views of children in residential care on the Green Paper for Vulnerable Children: Every child thrives, belongs, achieves. Explores children's perspectives on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents and families • Schools • Communities • Workforce • Government . 	To explore children's views on poverty in New Zealand; their definitions of poverty and how it affects children. Examines fourteen themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child poverty in New Zealand • Lack of money • Lack of essentials, including food • Health • Housing • Social exclusion • School • Work and the impact on children • Child abuse, neglect and violence • Gangs • Mental and emotional wellbeing • Addictions • Physical environments • Future prospects.
No. of children	92	100	56 children, 32 young people and 8 young adults
Age range	10-13	8-16	0-17, 18-24, 24+
Parents surveyed	No	No	Yes, teen and young parents
Sample type	Children from three Decile 1 primary schools and one Decile 6 intermediate school with a special class.	Children from eight Child, Youth and Family residences.	Children, young people and young adults from mostly low income homes.
Where	New Zealand	New Zealand	New Zealand
Specific policy conclusions	No	No	No

²² Office of the Children's Commissioner.

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