

Single earner couple benefit units with caring responsibilities

United Kingdom

May 2013

Background

This report is in response to Parliamentary Question 150082:

Guto Bebb MP, Aberconwy, to ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what proportion of single earner families have caring responsibilities for very young children, relatives with a long-term illness or the disabled.

Results

For the purposes of this analysis a single earner family is considered to be equivalent to a single earner couple benefit unit, please see the Methodology for more details.

Sixty per cent of single earner couple benefit units contained a young child and/or an individual with a disability and/or an individual with caring responsibilities.

Breaking the results down by category:

- Twenty-seven per cent of single earner couple benefit units contained a young child.
- Thirty-two per cent of single earner couple benefit units contained an individual with a disability.
- Eighteen per cent of single earner couple benefit units contained an individual with caring responsibilities.

The three categories are not mutually exclusive. For example, a single earner couple benefit unit containing a young child, with a disability, who is receiving informal care from a resident parent, would appear in all three.

Source: Family Resources Survey 2010/11, figures rounded to nearest per cent.

Methodology

This analysis has been carried out using the Family Resources Survey (FRS), 2010/11.

The FRS is a nationally representative sample of approximately 25,000 UK private households. Data for 2010/11 was collected between April 2010 and March 2011. The figures from the FRS are based on a sample of households which have been adjusted for non-response using multi-purpose grossing factors which align the estimates to regional populations by age and sex. Estimates are subject to sampling error and remaining non-response error.

The FRS collects information on the incomes and circumstances of private households in the United Kingdom.

Single earner couple benefit unit

A single earner couple benefit unit is defined as a married or cohabiting couple and any dependent children where only one of the couple has income from employment or self-employment.

Benefit unit

A benefit unit is defined to be a single adult or a married or cohabiting couple and any dependent children; since January 2006 same-sex partners (civil partners and cohabittees) have been included in the same benefit unit.

Adult

All those individuals who are aged 16 and over, unless defined as a dependent child (see *Child*); all adults in the household are interviewed as part of the Family Resources Survey.

Child

A dependent child is defined as an individual aged under 16. A person will also be defined as a child if they are 16 to 19 years old and they are:

- Not married nor in a Civil Partnership nor living with a partner; and
- Living with parents; and
- In full-time non-advanced education or in unwaged government training.

Within this report a young child is defined as a child aged under 5.

Caring responsibilities

A benefit unit is defined as have caring responsibilities if it contains an informal carer, that is an individual who provides any regular service or help to someone, in or outside of their household who is sick, disabled or elderly; excludes those who give this help as part of a formal job.

Disability

Disability is defined as having any long-standing illness, disability or infirmity that leads to a significant difficulty with one or more areas of the individual's life. Everyone classified as disabled under this definition would also be classified as disabled under the general definition of disability in the Equality Act (EA). However, some individuals classified as disabled and having rights under the EA would not be captured by this definition.

Exclusions

This analysis excludes benefit units containing an adult who is married or in a civil partnership and the spouse is not within the household. This is because information on income received by the spouse is not available on the FRS so it is not possible to determine the earning status of such benefit units.

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