



Department  
for Work &  
Pensions

# Workless households and educational attainment statutory indicators

Presented to Parliament pursuant to Section A1A of the Life Chances Act 2010 as amended

April 2017

# Workless households and educational attainment statutory indicators

Presented to Parliament pursuant to Section A1A of the Life Chances Act 2010 as amended

April 2017



© Crown copyright 2017

This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. To view this licence, visit [nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3](https://nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3) or write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

This publication is available at [www.gov.uk/government/publications](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications)

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at [helpingworklessfamilies@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:helpingworklessfamilies@dwp.gsi.gov.uk)

Print ISBN 978-1-78425-925-9

Web ISBN 978-1-78425-926-6

Printed on paper containing 75% recycled fibre content minimum.

## Contents

<b>Workless households and educational attainment statutory indicators</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Parental worklessness</b>	<b>3</b>
Overview	3
Statutory measure 1: children living in workless households in England	4
Statutory measure 2: children living in long-term workless households in England	4
Details and methodology	5
<b>Educational attainment</b>	<b>6</b>
Overview	6
Statutory measures 3 and 4: the educational attainment of children and disadvantaged children in England at the end of Key Stage 4	7
Details and methodology	7
Gap index (attainment of disadvantaged pupils relative to others)	8
How educational attainment at KS4 will be reported in future years	10
<b>Definition of key terms</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>12</b>
Parental worklessness – statistics	12
Educational attainment – statistics	12
Parental worklessness – supporting evidence	12
Educational attainment – supporting evidence	13

# Workless households and educational attainment statutory indicators

The Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 reformed the Child Poverty Act 2010 and placed a statutory duty on the Secretary of State to publish and lay before Parliament a report containing data on:

- Children living in workless households in England (see page 4);
- Children living in long-term workless households in England (see page 4);
- The educational attainment of children in England at the end of Key Stage 4 (see page 7);
- The educational attainment of disadvantaged children in England at the end of Key Stage 4 (see page 7).

It also specified that the report must set out how the Secretary of State has interpreted the following terms for the purposes of the report:

- (a) child;
- (b) household;
- (c) worklessness;
- (d) long-term worklessness;
- (e) educational attainment;
- (f) disadvantage.

Please see page 11 for these definitions.

The data contained in the report, and the provision about how the terms used in it are to be interpreted, must, so far as practicable, be derived from any relevant official statistics.

The Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 renamed the Child Poverty Act 2010 to the Life Chances Act 2010. Please see the following link for further information on the Life Chances Act 2010:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/9/part/A1>

Please refer to the Analysis and Research Pack supporting the *Improving Lives: Helping Workless Families* paper, available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-lives-helping-workless-families-evidence-base>

# Parental worklessness

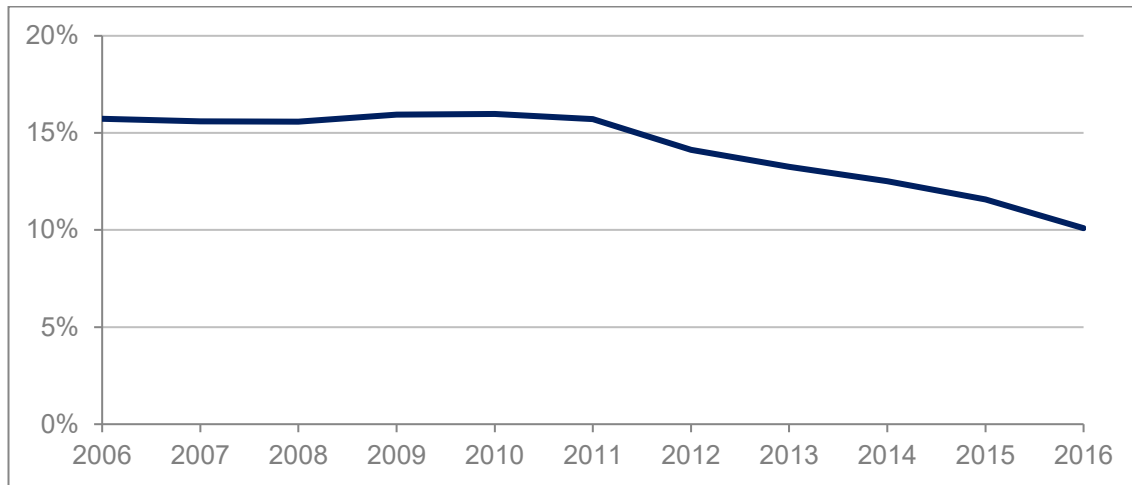
## Overview

**Gaining employment is the best way for workless families to get out of poverty. Good-quality employment helps parents to achieve financial stability and improves their children's future outcomes.**

Worklessness is the main driver of low income (DWP, 2014). Parental worklessness is strongly associated with poorer academic attainment and worse long-term labour market outcomes for children (DWP, 2017; Schoon et al., 2012; Parsons et al., 2014). That is why the first statutory indicator is the **proportion of children in workless households**. Long-term, persistent parental worklessness further increases the risk of poorer child outcomes, and their children are more likely to grow up as workless adults (Macmillan, 2010; Schoon et al., 2012). That is why the second statutory indicator is the **proportion of children in long-term workless households**. A long-term workless household is defined as a household in which adults have been unemployed or economically inactive for 12 months or more.

Please note the measures are based on different surveys and relate to different time periods. See page 5 for more information.

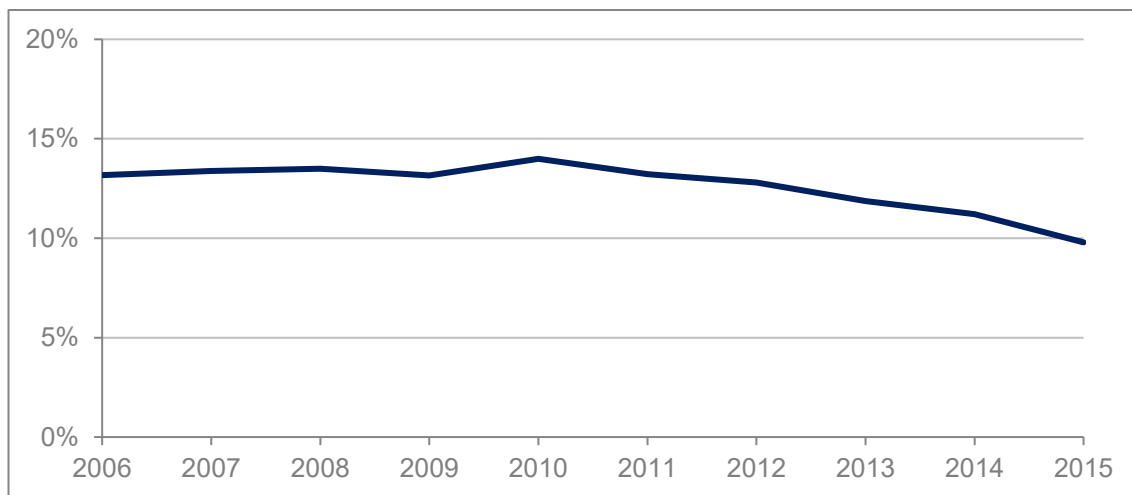
## Statutory measure 1: children living in workless households in England



Source: Labour Force Survey, Q4 2016

**10 per cent of all children in England** (around 1.1 million children) were living in workless households **in the fourth quarter of 2016**. The measure has seen an overall decrease since it increased in 2009 around the time of the recession.

## Statutory measure 2: children living in long-term workless households in England



Source: Annual Population Survey, 2015

**10 per cent of all children in England** (around 1 million children) were in long-term workless households **in 2015**. The measure has seen a continued decrease since 2010.

## Details and methodology

### Children in workless households

Figures are based on the Labour Force Survey (LFS) which is conducted quarterly, with a sample size of around 100,000 people. The measure is based on the fourth quarter of the Labour Force Survey data for each year, and is not comparable quarter-on-quarter because of seasonal fluctuations. The measure captures the proportion of children living in households where all adults aged 16 or over are workless.

A workless household is defined as a household which has at least one working age adult and all adults in the household, aged 16 or over, are currently economically inactive or unemployed.

Further details can be found in the accompanying ONS publication, available here:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/workingandworklesshouseholds/octtodec2016#children-living-in-workless-households-is-at-its-lowest-level-since-comparable-records-began>

### Children in long-term workless households

Figures are based on the Annual Population Survey (APS) which boosts the quarterly Labour Force Survey (LFS) sample size to around 300,000 people. The APS uses LFS waves and the Local Labour Force Survey (LLFS) samples to provide a rolling annual survey each quarter. This allows additional breakdowns, such as disability, ethnicity and family status. The annual survey used for this measure is based on a rolling calendar year.

The measure captures the proportion of children living in households where all adults aged 16 or over have been workless for at least twelve months. A long-term workless household is defined as a household which has at least one working age adult, and all adults in the household, aged 16 or over, are unemployed or inactive and have either:

- been out of work for 12 months or more; or
- never worked (in a paid job).

The definition of long-term workless households does not necessarily imply that adults within them are also long-term unemployed, using the Eurostat and International Labour Organisation definition of long-term unemployment. Some adults may also have been out of work for 12 months or more, but had periods of inactivity such as looking after family and home, or illness, during that time. All these types of economic inactivity are counted as long-term worklessness.

For further details, see the accompanying ONS publication, available here:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/releases/methodsnotechildrenlivinginlongtermworklesshouseholdsuk>



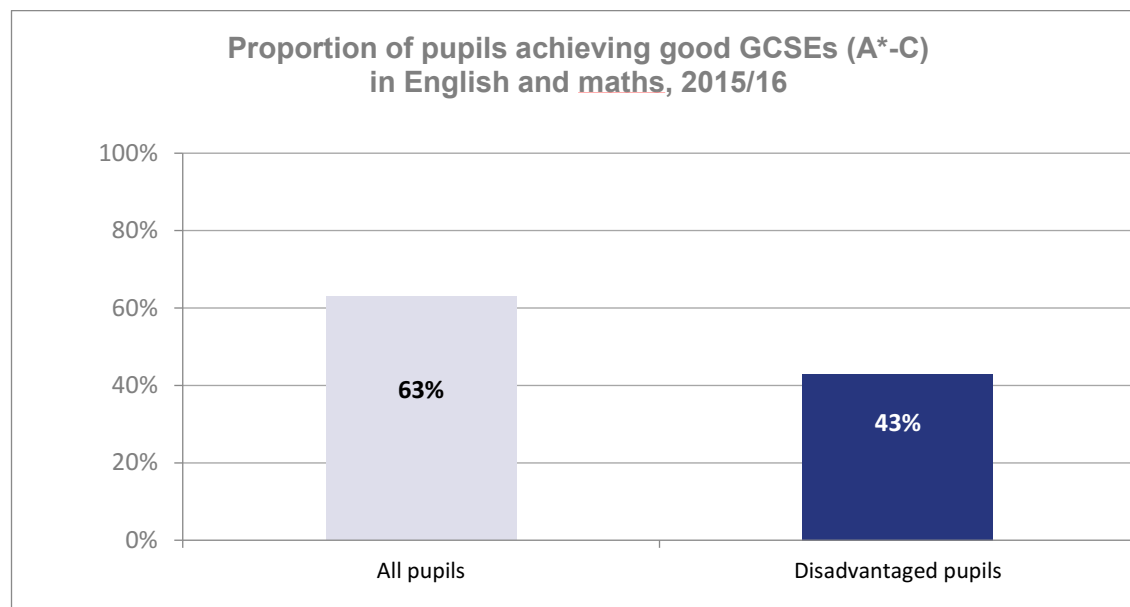
# Educational attainment

## Overview

**Educational attainment is vital for employment prospects and future outcomes. Developing good cognitive, social and emotional skills is important for academic achievement and success in adult life.**

Educational attainment and cognitive skills are among the most important factors influencing a child's future outcomes, in terms of employment and earnings, and in doing so their risk of future poverty (DWP, 2014). As a result, we have a particular focus on raising the attainment of disadvantaged pupils. Social and emotional skills are also important for later outcomes, including mental health and educational attainment (Gutman and Vorhaus, 2012; Goodman et al., 2015). There is also evidence that disadvantaged pupils tend to fall further behind their peers as they progress through school (Perera et al., 2016). To reflect the important transition point that young people reach at the culmination of secondary schooling, we will be measuring the educational attainment of all pupils, and of disadvantaged pupils at 16 (KS4). Changes to the curriculum and qualifications mean that it will only be possible to make year-on-year comparisons for KS4 indicators from 2019 onwards. This is why we have also reported on the gap index, which measures the relative difference in outcomes between disadvantaged pupils and others on page 8. Information about how attainment will be measured in future is provided on page 10.

## Statutory measures 3 and 4: the educational attainment of children and disadvantaged children in England at the end of Key Stage 4



Source: key stage 4 attainment data (England)

In 2015/16, 63 per cent of all pupils and 43 per cent of disadvantaged pupils achieved good GCSEs in English and maths.

## Details and methodology

### Trends

**In 2015/16, 63 per cent of all pupils in state-funded schools achieved this measure compared to 43 per cent of disadvantaged pupils.**<sup>1</sup> Owing to system reform, the figures are not comparable to earlier years. Around 28 per cent of pupils at KS4 in 2015/16 were defined as disadvantaged.

### Further detail

In 2016, pupils could achieve the English component of this with A\* to C in English language or literature. In 2015 pupils had to achieve an A\* to C in English language, and have sat an English literature exam. The change means a higher proportion of pupils achieve the measure. From 2016, the accountability system reform means schools will no longer be held accountable for 5+ A\*-C including English and maths, but the measure will continue to be reported. GCSEs are being reformed to improve standards and the 'good pass' will be more challenging.

<sup>1</sup> Pupils are defined as disadvantaged if they are known to have been eligible for free school meals in the past six years (from year 6 to year 11), if they are recorded as having been looked after for at least one day or if they are recorded as having been adopted from care.

Information on attainment at the end of KS4 is derived from school census records, qualification entries and results collected from awarding organisations. Information on attainment is presented for pupils in state-funded schools who have reached the end of KS4 study in the academic year, and may include qualifications obtained in previous years. A good pass is currently defined as being equivalent to an A\*-C GCSE pass. GCSEs and certain approved equivalent qualifications are included. Further information on the data sources, their coverage, the quality and how the data is validated and processed can be found in the quality and methodology information document: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/584167/SFR03\\_2017\\_QualityandMethodology.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/584167/SFR03_2017_QualityandMethodology.pdf)

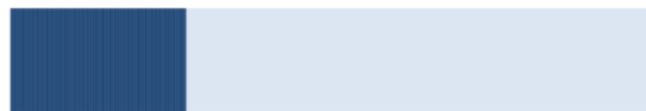
## Gap index (attainment of disadvantaged pupils relative to others)

This measure assesses the relative difference in outcomes between disadvantaged pupils and others. It compares ordering of scores in English and maths assessments to overcome changes to grading and expected standards between years. But unlike the headline measures, it cannot tell us whether more pupils are reaching the expected standard. The gap index measure is based on the same assessments as the headline education measures at KS4.

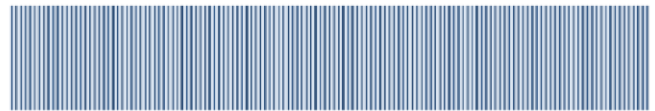
### The disadvantaged gap index

Bars illustrate how disadvantaged (dark bars) and other pupils (light bars) would line up in order of their average English and maths scores:

Maximum gap = 10



Ideal situation = 0



Current situation

mean rank of disadvantaged pupils = 0.36



KS4 gap in 2015 = 3.80



Low attainers

mean rank of other pupils = 0.55

High attainers

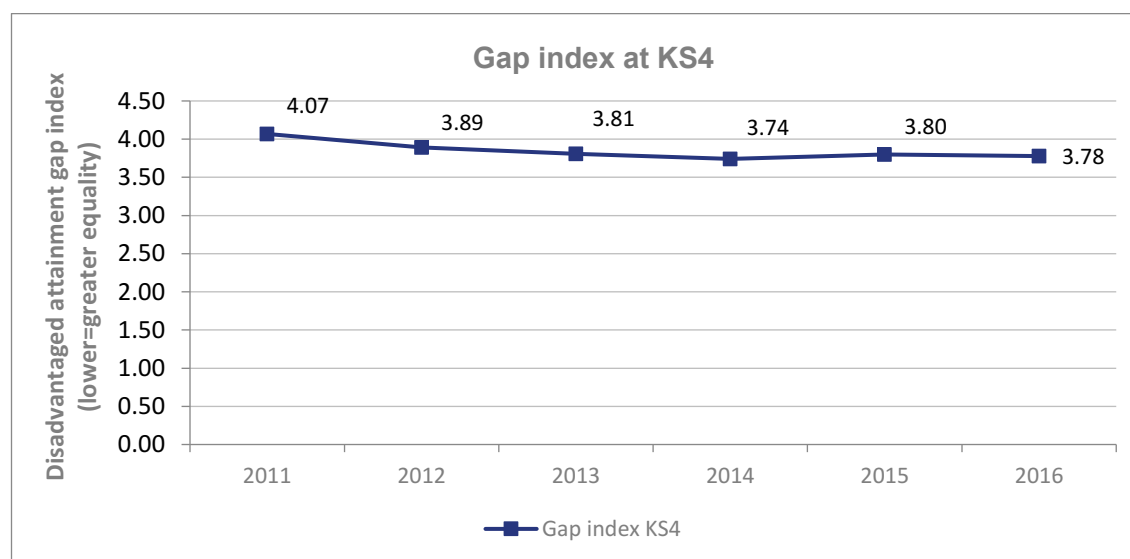
Pupils' average point scores are ranked. The mean rank for disadvantaged pupils was 0.36, meaning the average pupil was just over a third of the way up the distribution, while that of other pupils was 0.55, more than halfway up the distribution. The disadvantaged pupils' attainment gap index multiplies the difference between these by 20:  $(0.552 - 0.362) \times 20 = 3.80$ .

Because it relies on ranked data, not actual grades achieved, the measure can be calculated in the same way during a period of GCSE assessment reform to enable consistent comparisons over time. The minimum possible gap is 0 while the maximum gap is 10 (or -10 if disadvantaged pupils were ahead).

More details of the methodology for the gap index is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/measuring-disadvantaged-pupils-attainment-gaps-over-time>

## Current trends



Source: national pupil database and key stage 4 attainment data (England).

At KS4, the gap between disadvantaged pupils and others decreased in three of the last four years, narrowing by 7 per cent overall since 2011.

This measure shows whether disadvantaged pupils are catching up or getting left behind. It cannot tell us whether more pupils are reaching the expected standard, or whether average attainment is improving, just that the **average positions** of 'disadvantaged' and 'other' pupils in the distribution have become closer together.

## How educational attainment at KS4 will be reported in future years

Important reforms to strengthen accountability, qualifications and the curriculum over the next few years mean that year-on-year comparability on the headline KS4 indicator will not be possible until 2019 onwards. Given the range of reforms that are taking effect, the gap index will be used at KS4 to assess how disadvantaged pupils are achieving in comparison to other pupils, and if the difference between the two groups of pupils is improving. We will review the use of the interim gap index measure as part of the indicator suite once meaningful comparisons over time on the headline KS4 indicator is possible. This is summarised in the table below.

Financial year	Publication date	Exams taken	KS4 education indicator	Gap index
2016/17	KS4: Jan 2017	Summer 2016	% GCSEs good pass (A*-C) in English and maths for all pupils and disadvantaged pupils	Yes
2017/18	KS4: Jan 2018	Summer 2017	% reformed GCSEs good pass (9-5) <sup>2</sup> in English and maths for all pupils and disadvantaged pupils	Yes
2018/19	KS4: Jan 2019	Summer 2018	% reformed GCSEs good pass (9-5) <sup>3</sup> in English and maths for all pupils and disadvantaged pupils	Review use at KS2
2019/20	KS4: Jan 2020	Summer 2019	Attainment 8 for all pupils and disadvantaged pupils	Review use at KS4
2020/21	KS4: Jan 2021	Summer 2020	Attainment 8 for all pupils and disadvantaged pupils	To be confirmed

<sup>2</sup> A new grading system is being introduced from 2017 at GCSE to replace the A\*-G system with a new 9 to 1 scale. The achievement of at least a grade 5 on the new 9 to 1 grading scale at GCSE will be considered the new 'good pass' in performance table threshold measures.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

## Definition of key terms

The Life Chances Act 2010 specified that the statutory report must set out how the Secretary of State has interpreted the terms in the report. See a full list of defined terms used for each statutory indicator:

- (a) Child – child is defined as:
- for the purpose of the workless households measures, children under 16 years old<sup>4</sup>;
  - for the purposes of the educational attainment measures, pupils at the end of Key Stage 4, typically those starting the academic year aged 15<sup>5</sup>;
- (b) Household – households where at least one person is aged 16-64<sup>6</sup>;
- (c) Worklessness – all adults aged 16 or over are either economically inactive or unemployed<sup>7</sup>;
- (d) Long-term worklessness – all adults aged 16 or over are either unemployed or economically inactive and have either been out of work for 12 months or more, or never worked (in a paid job)<sup>8</sup>;
- (e) Educational attainment – proportion of students achieving A\*-C in English and maths at GCSE<sup>9</sup>;
- (f) Disadvantage – pupils are defined as disadvantaged if they are known to have been eligible for free school meals in the past six years (from year 6 to year 11), if they are recorded as having been looked after for at least one day or if they are recorded as having been adopted from care<sup>10</sup>.

---

<sup>4</sup> This is the ONS definition. For more information, the Working and Workless Households publication can be found here: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/workingandworkless-households/octodec2016#annex-1-concepts-and-definitions-for-working-and-workless-households>

<sup>5</sup> This is in accordance with the Department for Education's definition. For more information, the Revised GCSE and equivalent results in England, 2015 to 2016, publication can be found here:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/584473/SFR03\\_2017.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/584473/SFR03_2017.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> This is the ONS definition. For more information, the Working and Workless Households publication can be found here:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/workingandworkless-households/octodec2016#annex-1-concepts-and-definitions-for-working-and-workless-households>

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> This is the ONS definition. For more information, the Children Living in Long-term Workless Households publication can be found here:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/releases/methodsnotechildrenlivinginlongtermworklesshouseholdsuk>

<sup>9</sup> This is in accordance with the Department for Education's headline accountability measures for schools. For more information, the Revised GCSE and equivalent results in England, 2015 to 2016, publication can be found here:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/584473/SFR03\\_2017.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/584473/SFR03_2017.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> This is in accordance with the Department for Education's definition. For more information, the Revised GCSE and equivalent results in England, 2015 to 2016, publication can be found here:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/584473/SFR03\\_2017.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/584473/SFR03_2017.pdf)

# References

## Parental worklessness – statistics

Office for National Statistics (2017) *Statistical Bulletin, Working and workless households in the UK: Oct to Dec 2016*.

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/workingandworklesshouseholds/octtodec2016>

Office for National Statistics (2017) *Children living in long-term workless households, UK*.

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peoplenotinwork/unemployment/adhocs/006856childrenlivinginlongtermworklesshouseholdsuk2006to2015>

## Educational attainment – statistics

Department for Education (2017) Revised GCSE and equivalent results in England: 2015 to 2016. SRF 03/2017. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/revised-gcse-and-equivalent-results-in-england-2015-to-2016>

## Parental worklessness – supporting evidence

Department for Work and Pensions (2017) *Improving Lives: Helping Workless Families*. London: Department for Work and Pensions. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-lives-helping-workless-families-evidence-base>

Department for Work and Pensions (2014) *An evidence review of the drivers of child poverty for families in poverty now and for poor children growing up to be poor adults*. London: Department for Work and Pensions.

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/285389/Cm\\_8781\\_Child\\_Poverty\\_Evidence\\_Review\\_Print.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/285389/Cm_8781_Child_Poverty_Evidence_Review_Print.pdf)

Macmillan, L. (2010) *The intergenerational transmission of worklessness in the UK*. Working Paper No. 10/231. Bristol: The Centre for Market and Public Organisation (CMPU).

<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/cmpo/migrated/documents/wp231.pdf>

Parsons, S., Schoon, I. and Vignoles, A. (2014) Parental worklessness and children's early school achievement and progression. *Longitudinal and Life Course Studies*, 5,1.

<http://www.llcsjournal.org/index.php/llcs/article/viewFile/230/263>

Schoon, I., Barnes, M., Brown, V., Parsons, S., Ross, A. and Vignoles, A. (2012) *Intergenerational transmission of worklessness: Evidence from the Millennium Cohort and the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England*. Department for Education. Research Report DFE-RR234. London: Department for Education.

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/183328/DFE-RR234.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/183328/DFE-RR234.pdf)

## Educational attainment – supporting evidence

Goodman, A., Joshi, H., Nasim, B. and Tyler, C. (2015) *Social and emotional skills in childhood and their long-term effects on adult life: A review for the Early Intervention Foundation*. London: Institute of Education. <http://www.eif.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/EIF-Strand-1-Report-FINAL1.pdf>

Gutman, L.M., and Vorhaus, J. (2012) *The impact of pupil behaviour and wellbeing on educational outcomes*. Department for Education Research Report. DfE-RR253. [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/219638/DFE-RR253.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/219638/DFE-RR253.pdf)

Department for Work and Pensions (2014) *An evidence review of the drivers of child poverty for families in poverty now and for poor children growing up to be poor adults*. London: Department for Work and Pensions.

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/285389/Cm\\_8781\\_Child\\_Poverty\\_Evidence\\_Review\\_Print.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/285389/Cm_8781_Child_Poverty_Evidence_Review_Print.pdf)

Perera, N. and Treadaway, M. with Sellen, P., Hutchinson, J., Johnes, R. and Mao, L. (2016). *Education in England Annual Report 2016*. Centre Forum. <https://centreforum.org/live/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/education-in-england-2016-web.pdf>



This publication can be accessed online at:  
[www.gov.uk/government/publications](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications)

For more information about this publication, contact:  
[helpingworklessfamilies@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:helpingworklessfamilies@dwp.gsi.gov.uk)

Copies of this publication can be made available in  
alternative formats if required.

Department for Work and Pensions

April 2017

[www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

