

**21st century welfare
and the working
poor: lone mothers in
the UK**

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CHARLOTTE – GETTING INTO WORK

‘what have I done, I've made the biggest mistake of my life coming off Income Support and I just panicked.’

‘I don't want to go back to where I was.’

‘I didn't have no confidence before I started working at all, because I just didn't think in a million years I'd be doing what I'm doing now, because I didn't think I could do it’.

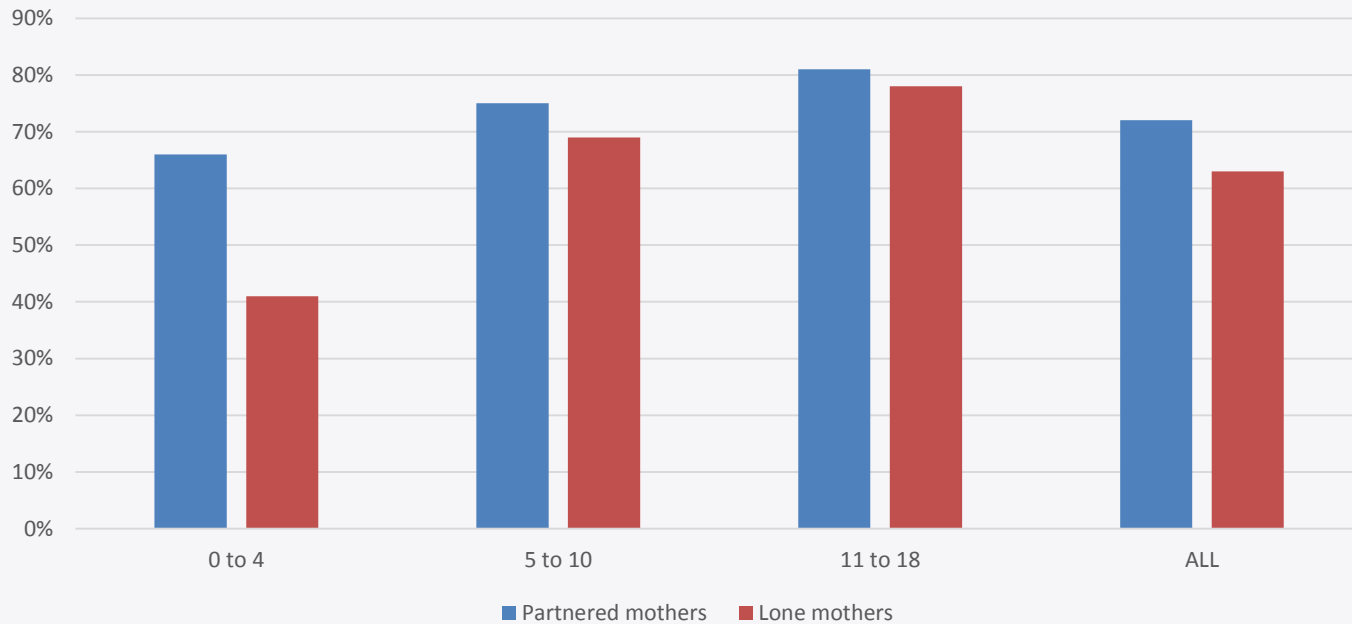
FIVE THEMES

1. Tenacity
2. A process over time
3. The 'family-work' project
4. The policy environment
5. Self-confidence

THE POLICY ENVIRONMENT: THEN & NOW

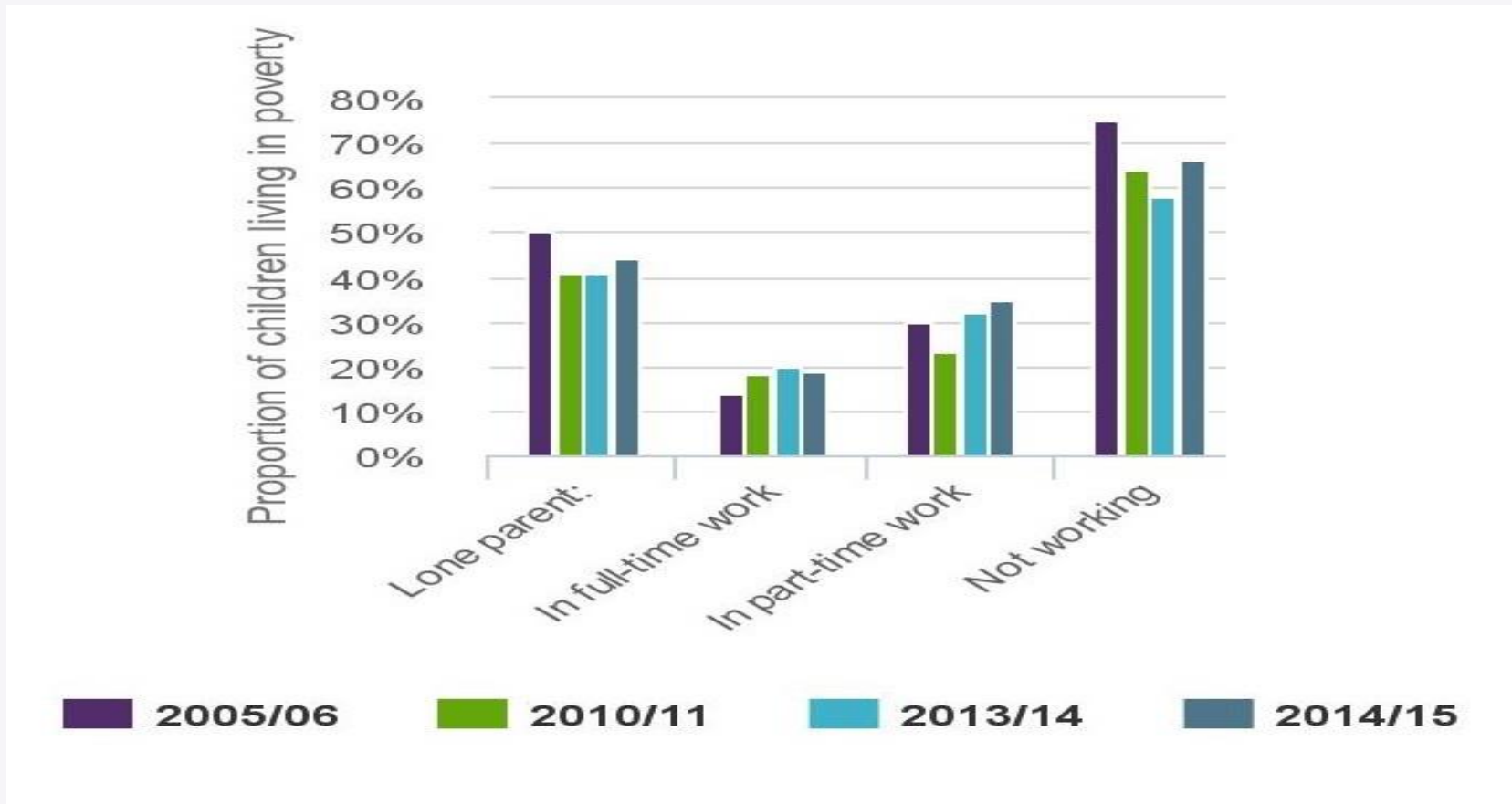
- From voluntary to compulsory
- From tailored to generic
- Austerity and benefit cuts

Employment rates by age of youngest child: mothers, 2014



Source: ONS, *Families in the Labour Market 2014*

Child poverty by working status: lone parents



Source: HBAI (via JRF website)

Charlotte in 2016

‘I have tried everything so I can carry on working, because I don’t want to be dependent on anybody. I want to work as long as I can, but it’s hard.’

‘my world had just come to an end you know all that, all the hard work, everything that I have done, I had just moved into this house, a three storey town house with stairs and I thought God what am I going to do, who is going to pay my bills because there is only me that pays my bills and I thought what am I going to do’.

Three points

1. Coping with events
2. In-work progression
3. Just managing?

Social investment

‘Social investment involves strengthening people’s current and future capacities.

In other words, as well as having immediate effects, social policies also have lasting impacts by offering economic and social returns over time, notably in terms of employment prospects or labour incomes.

In particular, social investment helps to “prepare” people to confront life’s risks, rather than simply “repairing” the consequences. ...’

Source: EU (2015) Social Investment in Europe: A study of national policies

More information

The family work project: earning and caring in low-income household

<http://www.bath.ac.uk/ipr/policy-briefs/working-lone-mother-families-and-their-children.html>

Change, choice and constraint in family and work

<http://www.bath.ac.uk/casp/projects/change-choice-constraint-family-work/>

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