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**The dynamics of poverty and employment: the contribution
of qualitative longitudinal research to understanding
transitions, adaptations and trajectories**

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Abstract

In recent years there have been significant advances in our understanding of the dynamics of poverty, social exclusion and labour market transitions through the analysis of large-scale panel studies. This article examines the particular contribution that longitudinal qualitative research might additionally make in these areas, illustrated by evidence from an ongoing longitudinal qualitative study of lone mothers and their children, following the families as they leave income support for employment.

Introduction

In recent years there have been significant advances in our understanding of poverty and social exclusion as dynamic processes. These processes may be set in motion by certain triggers or events, may last for different durations, may form part of a particular type of trajectory, and may have longer-term consequences and impacts. The increased availability of good quality longitudinal data, with large sample sizes, and covering substantial time periods, has transformed our understanding of the dynamics of income poverty. Since the pioneering work of Walker (1994) and Leisering and Walker (1998), who themselves acknowledge a strong debt to Bane and Ellwood (1986, 1994), various studies have examined the relationship between personal, family and labour market characteristics and the entry into, duration of, and exit from income poverty (for example, Gardiner and Hills, 1999; Jenkins and Rigg, 2001; Jenkins and Schluter, 2003; DWP, 2004; Rigg and Sefton, 2004). The dynamic approach has had a significant impact not only on poverty research but also on the discussion of policy approaches and solutions (Kemp *et al.*, 2004; Alcock, 2004; Hills, 2002, 2005). Understanding the processes that put people at risk of poverty, or which protect them from it, has become an important part of the social policy research agenda.

There is a long-standing body of research in the UK which has used qualitative methods in order to explore how people experience and manage poverty and social exclusion. However, as Alcock (2004: 404) points out, there is a relative lack of qualitative evidence on the dynamics of poverty: 'if our concern is to explore social dynamics, and in particular

the decisions and actions which have shaped people's lives, we need to address questions of experience, attitude and motivation, which cannot be captured in quantitative surveys'. Poverty is clearly associated with structural factors such as social class, ethnicity, gender and other social divisions, which are important in determining the risk and duration of poverty. But the dynamic analysis of poverty and social exclusion also focuses attention on the active ways in which people are (or are not) able to respond to their situations and in particular their responses to risk events, and the resources that they are able to call upon to deal with these.

This article discusses the potential contribution of qualitative longitudinal research methods to the analysis of poverty and social exclusion. It is divided into two main sections. The first examines some key concepts in longitudinal analysis with examples of how these have been applied in both quantitative and qualitative research, and the second applies these to the analysis of interview data with lone mothers and their children, following the families as they leave income support for employment.

Poverty dynamics and longitudinal qualitative research

This section examines some key concepts in the analysis of poverty as a dynamic process and considers how longitudinal qualitative research might contribute to the further development of these.

Understanding transitions

The concept of transition – a change from one status or situation to another – is central to quantitative longitudinal analysis of poverty. For example, Jenkins and Rigg (2001) analyse transitions into and out of poverty, defined as crossing a set poverty line, and compare the relative importance of labour market and demographic events as ‘triggers’ which drive these transitions. Apospori and Millar (2003) use European Household Panel Survey data to examine poverty and social exclusion outcomes at the time of four key lifecourse transitions (from childhood to becoming a young adult; from transition from work to retirement; becoming a single parent, and becoming long-term sick or disabled).

Qualitative studies also examine transitions as changes from one status to another, but from the perspective of the individuals involved and the meaning of these transitions to them, the ‘subjective experience of personal change’, as Thomson *et al.* (2002: 337) put it. They note that these subjective experiences have been variously characterised in the sociological literature as ‘epiphanies’, ‘turning points’, ‘career breaks’, and by Giddens (1991) as ‘fateful moments’ – points at which an individual weighs up the risks and consequences of a potential course of action. Giddens argues that this creates an empowering experience, with implications not just for future situations but also for self identity. Thomson and her colleagues use their longitudinal data (based on a sample of 100 young people followed over a five year period) to examine ‘critical moments’ in their lives, defined as ‘an event described in an interview that either the researcher or the interviewee sees as having important

consequences for their lives and identities'. They found that, while the same 'transition' points were experienced by many of the young people, the responses to these were very different. Thus they concluded that 'while most young people may speak the language of choice, control and agency, it is only for some that the rhetoric is accompanied by the requisite resources and opportunities' (*op cit*: 351).

Chamberlayne *et al.* (2002) use retrospective longitudinal qualitative data to explore how people deal with risk or crisis events, often radical changes in circumstances which were not of their own choosing: 'life journeys such as those brought about by enforced redundancy or early retirement, by difficulty entering the labour market after formal education, or by exile and migration' (*op cit*: 3). In-depth personal biographies from individuals in seven countries were used to explore the interactions between the three domains of individual attitudes and motivations, personal and family circumstances, and institutional agencies. The authors distinguish between 'tactical' and 'strategic' approaches to coping with risk events. Some people are in such situations that they can only 'live life one day at a time', responding to circumstances rather than being able to control these. Others are better placed to take a longer-term strategic view.

These qualitative studies thus present a more complex picture of transitions, and of the factors that trigger these, than do the large-scale quantitative studies. Transitions are not necessarily temporally fixed, discrete and clearly definable events. Not all transitions are critical, or fateful, in the ways in which these terms are defined above. Transitions

may be interpreted very differently from different standpoints in time. The combination of resources – individual, family and state – with which people respond to transitions plays an important role in understanding their impact, but so probably do luck and chance (as Thomson *et al.*, 2002 suggest). Developing our understanding of the meaning of transitions is an important part of the research agenda for longitudinal qualitative research, and would provide a complement to, and enhancement of, quantitative work in this area. We discuss further below recent research on the transition from income support and into work, and how this is experienced by individuals and families.

Coping and adapting

Lister (2004) identifies four ‘forms of agency’ potentially practiced by people in poverty. These are ‘getting by’ (coping and managing), ‘getting back at’ (everyday resistance including fraud and rule-breaking), ‘getting organised’ (political responses) and ‘getting out’ (trajectories of change). Getting out is clearly a transition, but not all experience over time is about change in situation or circumstances. Experience over time also involves living with what is, responding to relatively minor changes, or even avoiding change. The processes involved in getting by over time can be considered more effectively in qualitative than in quantitative data, and can explore how and in what ways people manage and adapt, or not, over different durations of poverty.

There are some studies that have looked at how people in poverty try to maintain their living standards over time. Kempson *et al.* (1994)

conclude that there are two main strategies that poor people adopt in order to manage their money. One is maintaining a very tight control over all aspects of their expenditure at all times. The other is living from day to day and paying whatever is the most pressing need or debt. People do not necessarily adopt one or the other of these, some people move between them over time, sometimes using one and sometimes the other. The study explored the relationship between the current situation of these families, their situation one year earlier, and their projected situation one year in the future (based on the families' own assessments and on their overall financial position). This suggested that there was considerable fluidity across their four analytical categories of 'keeping heads above water', 'struggling to the surface', 'sinking' and 'drowning'. Relatively small changes in circumstances could move families fairly quickly from one situation to another, but getting to a sustained better-off situation was often a 'long haul'. Three factors were important in how the families coped: the resources available to them, how they used those resources, and what they did to try and maximise incomes.

The 'thirty families' studied by Ritchie (1990) over about four years in the early 1980s included both those where the man returned to work and long-term unemployed families. Among the former, she found that some families carried forward into work the very tight system of budgeting that they had felt forced to adopt during unemployment. Others, who had also 'ruthlessly' managed their money in unemployment, reacted against this by becoming much more relaxed about both spending and debt when back in work. Among the long-term unemployed families, expenditure was

controlled to the 'bare essentials' but even so many could not avoid debt. People did 'adapt' to their circumstances more or less successfully, but with highly negative social and psychological consequences. These studies remind us, as Alcock (2004: 406) puts it, of 'the debilitating consequences of long periods of poverty and low income'.

Qualitative longitudinal research can thus help us to understand how people cope, manage and adapt to their situation over time, which may also be relevant to understanding the longer-term trajectories that are experienced by individuals and social groups.

Trajectories over time

Trajectories consist of sequences of states and transitions, moving out of income poverty, for example, by way of a move from unemployment to training to low-paid employment to a better-paid job. Trajectories are functions of initial starting points, the capacity to access individual, family and societal resources, and the consequences of transitions and events. They therefore provide a way to explore how these interact with each other, and in particular to consider the impact of state provisions and policy. For example, Room (2000) argues that successful welfare institutions should provide 'buffers' against risk events and/or 'passports' to take advantage of opportunities, thereby intervening to create trajectories in positive directions. Similarly Hills (2002) argues that policy should be concerned with prevention (from adverse events happening) and protection (from the impacts of adverse events), but also with

promotion (of exit or escape) and propulsion (away from adverse circumstances).

The relationship between social systems and individual trajectories is also the focus of the 'political economy of the life course', developed by Dewilde (2003) as a framework for the dynamic analysis of poverty and social exclusion. She distinguishes between 'stratification of the life course' and 'stratification over the life course'. The former refers to the way in which social institutions for the distribution of resources (market, family and state) influence the opportunities for groups and individuals in society and so create or sustain inequality between these. The latter refers to the longer-term implications of this, as the effects are amplified over time into patterns of 'cumulative advantage and disadvantage'. Dewilde sets out a research agenda for applying this framework in an analysis of whether and how families and households mediate the impact of potentially negative transitions or events, drawing on current resources and previous experience (and in Dewilde, 2004, applies this to an analysis of poverty mobility in Belgium and Britain).

Dewilde's research agenda is explicitly focused on large-scale quantitative and cross-national comparative research, but longitudinal qualitative research would also have a role to play, in particular in identifying and categorising the 'household economy' strategies that are the starting point for the analysis. These strategies are the ways in which 'families and the individuals within them' seek to maintain or restore the balance between needs and resources and overcome any discrepancies between these. Qualitative longitudinal data would provide insight into the

construction of such strategies and would also be able to explore in more detail the interactions between individuals within families in this process. This is an issue which cannot be addressed easily in large-scale surveys but which may be crucial in understanding the constraints on following particular trajectories, for example from a workless to dual-worker family. Quantitative data can map out trajectories over time, qualitative research data can provide an understanding of what lies behind these.

In this section we have considered some of the key concepts that have been developed in recent research on the dynamics of poverty and social exclusion. These include transitions as movements from one state to another, coping and adaptation to situations or states over time, and trajectories of cumulative patterns over time. In the next section we consider how these might be applied in analysing the experience of change over time for lone mothers, and their children, as the mothers make the move from income support into paid employment.

Lone-mother families: from income support to work

This section draws on data from an ongoing study funded by the Economic and Social Research Council¹ which is following the experiences of a sample of 50 lone-mother families as the mothers move into work. The families were selected for the sample from both urban and rural areas of England in early 2004 on the basis of three main conditions: they had left income support or jobseekers allowance between October 2002 and October 2003; they had started jobs of 16 hours or more per week and had claimed tax credits; and they had at least one child aged

between eight and fourteen. Interviews were carried out with both the mothers and the children. The first round of interviews was in early 2004, when 50 lone mothers and 61 children were interviewed. The second round was in mid to late 2005, when 44 mothers and 53 children were interviewed. At the first interview about half the women had been lone mothers for five years or more. Two women were bereaved, nine were single mothers, and 39 were divorced or separated. Five of the women came from ethnic minority backgrounds and a further three had mixed heritage children.

The main aims of the research are to examine the impact of paid work, and for some job loss, on family life and living standards over time; and to explore whether and how these families negotiate the everyday challenges of sustaining low-income employment over time. There are a number of points to note about the methodology. First, interviewing the children, as well as the mothers, was an important part of the research design. Policy discourses in relation to families and work have generally constructed children as passive and dependent family members. Thus children in workless families are seen as part of the 'barriers' to work, creating care needs that parents, in particular mothers, struggle to balance with work requirements. There have been some insightful in-depth studies of how lone mothers perceive and manage childcare and employment (Skinner, 2003; Bell *et al.*, 2005). But there is a lack of research which explores these issues directly from the views and experiences of the children themselves. We wanted to access the children's own views and so to be able to examine not only how they experienced the change in the family

when the mothers started work, but also how they contributed to making this possible, and their role in sustaining family cohesion around issues of work and care. The interviews with the children lasted about 40 minutes and focused on whether and how their lives at home and at school had changed since their mothers started work. Great care was taken to ensure that the questions were appropriate and understood by the children (the youngest was eight) and that they were clear that they did not have to answer any of the questions, and could stop the interviews at any point.

Second, the two interviews spanned a time period of about 18 to 20 months (with the last of the second interviews taking place in October 2005). This is a relatively short period of time for a qualitative study (see further discussion in Corden and Millar, this issue). However, the fieldwork covered a period of about three years, because (as noted above) the sample was drawn from records over a period of one year starting October 2002. In addition, the interviews collected both retrospective and prospective data. At the first interviews the women and children were asked about their lives before the mothers entered work, as well as about their current situations, and about their plans and expectations for the future. At the second interview they were also asked to reflect back on the period since the first interview, and again about current circumstances and future plans. As Walker and Leisering, (1998: 28) have argued:

‘Exciting possibilities rise from mixed designs that involve repeated interviews in which respondents are invited to look backwards and forwards in time. Data collection is recursive. Information is collected

on intentions and expectations which are compared in subsequent interviews with actual events, behaviour and outcomes’.

Such data are challenging to analyse, as people’s perceptions and interpretations of events, situations and experiences can and do change as they look at these from different time standpoints (see also Lewis; Corden and Nice, this issue). But the opportunity to explore such changes in understanding is unique to longitudinal qualitative approaches, and provides a way to explore how people themselves explain the relationship between their individual choices and actions and the situations and conditions under which they make their choices about how to act.

Thirdly, having interview data at two points in time and from both the mothers and the children means that we have a complex data set that can be analysed in a number of different ways.² For example, we can analyse the interviews from the mothers as two cross-sections, with retrospective data in each, and also as a longitudinal panel; and likewise for the children. Also, we can analyse the interviews for the family as a whole, exploring (for example) the issue of childcare in the accounts of both the mothers and the children. This enables us to take a family perspective and to explore work as a ‘family practice’ (Morgan, 1996), something in which all family members are engaged in their various ways. The analysis of the data is ongoing, and the discussion here draws on just a small part of the overall data and the possibilities it provides for examining a range of topics in various ways. The aim here is to explore what this study tells us about transitions, coping and trajectories.

Transitions

As outlined above, our sample was constructed around one particular transition – an exit from income support and entry into work of at least 16 hours per week. This is an important transition from a policy perspective, as 16 hours is the starting point of eligibility for in-work tax credits. But we were also aware that this transition was just one point in the longer-term employment history of the women, both before and since they became lone mothers, and not even necessarily the most significant change from the perspective of the families. In one of the few previous longitudinal qualitative studies of employment sustainability, Graham *et al.* (2006) have pointed to some of the limitations of the concept of transitions. Their sample of 29 families included both couples with children and lone parents, who were interviewed twice over a period of about two years. One of the main research aims was to study transitions:

‘This aim is grounded in the assumption that there is a single definable transition to explore and that where it occurs, it is somehow distinguishable from other changes and transformations in a family’s circumstances ... [this] is a concept, in the main, constructed by researchers and by policymakers ... the experiences recounted over the two waves of the research suggest an experience of ongoing flux, exacerbated and mediated by a wide variety of circumstances’ (*op cit*: 101).

We also found that there was considerable change in the employment situations of our sample of lone mothers. Even between the time of the sample selection (i.e. the point at which the women left income support) and the first interview (about 10-12 months later) about half of the women had experienced, or were now facing, some further changes in employment. Included here were women who had left work altogether, or changed jobs, or changed hours of work, or who had time off sick or for maternity leave. There were also women who knew they were about to be made redundant or who were reaching the end of temporary jobs. Some women had experienced more than one of these changes. Thus, rather than one simple transition from being out of work to being in work, many families experienced a number of changes in relation to their employment, not least as they tried to find a combination of jobs and hours that they could manage, and which would improve their lives. Childcare arrangements were also in a state of flux for some families in these early months in employment. And for some families there were other changes – meeting new partners, changes in health status, moving home, family bereavement – that were taking place alongside this process of moving into work.

However, this is not to say that the women and the children did not experience some significant changes in their lives as a consequence of the entry into work. From both the mothers and the children there is clear evidence of the impact of the mothers' employment across a range of domains: family incomes, expenditure, social participation, self-esteem and identity, on how and where they spent their time, and on how family

practices and relationships changed, not just between the mothers and the children, but also in their dealings with other family members especially grandparents and ex-partners. To some extent therefore, the transition to work could be construed as a 'critical moment' for the families, or more accurately the process of moving into work was a 'critical period' of change, in which there were many dimensions. Both the mothers and the children were trying to manage these changes, for themselves and for each other. Many mothers tried to minimise the impact on children of the changes in time and care; many children tried not to worry their mothers with problems and difficulties. This also had implications for sustaining employment.

Coping and adapting: sustaining employment

Among the 44 women who took part in a second interview (some 18-20 months after the first, and 24-34 months or so since leaving income support), there were 37 women who were in work and seven who were not. However, 15 had had at least one spell out of work, four had changed jobs but without being unemployed between jobs, and 14 were in the same jobs but had changed their hours of work. This leaves just 11 women with no change of job or hours. Employment sustainability is not just about staying in the same job, but can involve both continuity and change. We have explored this by looking at the resources involved in managing employment over time from family, employers and the state.

The first point to note is that both the mothers and their children were in general committed to the 'work project', and some invested a lot of

effort in staying in work despite difficult work and home situations. There was a large element of 'push' in this, in that neither the mothers nor the children wanted a return to the poverty and constraint of living on income support. But the 'pull' of work was also apparent, for financial, social, self-esteem and identity reasons. And the longer the mothers stayed in work, the more this seemed to be the case.³

Family played a key role in sustaining employment, and was arguably the most important resource. One very strong and important finding relates to the active role that the children play in this (explored in more detail in Ridge, 2006, 2007). The children were engaged in a complex range of caring and coping strategies not only to manage the changes in their lives and but also to support their mothers in employment. This included taking on extra responsibilities themselves – domestic chores (cleaning, washing, cooking, etc) and caring responsibilities (for themselves and siblings). Some children were worried about their mothers' wellbeing and tried to offer emotional support in various ways.

Other family members also played important roles in providing practical and emotional support to the mothers and to the children. A number of the families included older siblings, in their late teens or early twenties, and some of these were still living at home and helping in various ways. Grandparents played a significant role, which included having children to stay with them on a regular basis, including school holidays. The fathers (i.e. former partners) were sometimes quite closely involved in some families. This did not usually take the form of directly providing care while the mothers were at work, although there were some

examples of that. More often the fathers would have regular time with the children, at weekends for example, which would give the mothers some time and space to manage other domestic activities, or simply to relax.

Employers also play a key role. As noted above, changes in employment were common. Sometimes this was because jobs were temporary, sometimes because of redundancy. But job moves were also often because the women were seeking jobs with better conditions – hours, pay, location – and with more ‘flexible’ employers. The right sort of understanding employer (or manager) played an important part in enabling the women to cope, to deal both with the ongoing demands of managing their time but also with one-off, potentially crisis, events and circumstances – the ‘everyday’ and the ‘contingent’, as McKie *et al.* (2002) put it. When the women talked about their relationships with their employers and colleagues they often stressed the importance of common ground or identity, in particular in relation to being a working parent. We will be exploring these relationship and identity issues in more detail in future work.

The third main type of potential resource to sustain employment comes from state services and transfers. For these families, with mostly school-age children, it was schools, school clubs, before and after school services, and school-based holiday schemes which were of major importance. These, alongside family, were the main forms of childcare. The services of Jobcentre Plus – Personal Advisers, the New Deal programme, benefit ‘run-ons’ into work – were very important when the mothers first left income support (Millar, 2006). But few of the women who

had changes in employment used these services to help them find new jobs (as Graham *et al.*, 2006 also found). However, tax credits were in general very important to the families, both initially and in the longer term. Many of the women were in relatively low-paid jobs and/or were working part-time. Weekly earnings were not high and tax credits were an essential addition to wages. Thus problems with accessing tax credits could be a major cause of stress, and create financial difficulties including debts.

Access to resources across these three domains – family, labour market, and state – is clearly central to managing and adapting to the situation of being a ‘working family’.⁴ Being able to access these resources is often crucially dependent on social relationships. This was most immediately apparent in respect of family and employers/work colleagues, although it was also the case that the women talked in these terms about the help they received from their Personal Advisers and others (such as Citizen’s Advice Bureau advisers).⁵ For children also social relationships were central to their experience of school and of other forms of care. Social relations are dynamic and changing over time, and longitudinal qualitative data provide a way to explore whether and how these are (more or less) responsive to changing needs and situations, and the implications of this for coping, adapting and planning for the future (Millar and Ridge, forthcoming).

Trajectories

As discussed above, this transition to work was one moment in the lives of these families. It is difficult to compress the complex and diverse patterns

of individual experience over time into simple categories, but using both retrospective and current data from both interviews, we have tentatively identified three (almost evenly sized in this sample) groups of women in terms of employment trajectories:

- i. Those who have always or mostly been in paid work, with the spell on income support when we picked them up relatively short and related to specific circumstances (for example, becoming a lone parent, having young children, job loss or redundancy) at the time. These women were still in work at the second interview, although with some changes, including some moves into better jobs, with more pay and responsibility.
- ii. Those who were long-term recipients of income support, with several years on benefits and limited experience of employment. For most of these women the return to work was part of a process over time, with planning for the future and training, voluntary or short-hours part-time work to get there. But for some there was a more abrupt jump into work after what could have been many years on income support. These women were also usually still in work at the second interview, some with job changes.
- iii. Those with more complex patterns of movements in and out of work; some of these women were in work at the second interview while others were not. Complex sets of often inter-related events – personal

and family illness, bereavement, unhappy situations at work, job loss, problems with children at school or care, debts and money problems – made it a real struggle for these women to stay in work. Sometimes they managed to do so, and sometimes they did not.

This preliminary identification of three main types of trajectory raises an important point about the care needed in the interpretation of these. In quantitative dynamic analysis of income trajectories these are typically summarised in relation to movements up and down: trajectories are rising, falling, stable, erratic, and so on (Jenkins and Riff, 2001; Hills, 2005; Hills *et al.*, 2006). This is appropriate in relation to income changes, where tracking such movements is central to exploring the dynamics of poverty. But it is much more difficult to apply such an approach to other areas of life, including employment, without making normative judgements about the nature of the trajectories. For some of these women – and cutting across the three patterns we identify above – it was stability and consolidation rather than change and advancement that was their immediate aim. Other studies also report similar findings. For example, Hoggart *et al.* (2007), in their qualitative research with participants in the Employment Retention and Advancement Demonstration Project, find that people place very different meanings on the concept of ‘advancement’ and attitudes towards advancement were often ‘ambiguous or ambivalent’ and dependent on current circumstances in work, and on the strategies adopted for managing work and family. This does not mean that the women in our study did not have aspirations for change and

'advancement' in the future, indeed for some the main point of working now was to secure or to improve their future situations (their pensions, being able to buy their own homes), and career aspirations for individual fulfilment were also important to some of the women. But these future aspirations had to be balanced, and sometimes put on hold, as they managed their current situations. Trajectories are themselves subject to change, and in our ongoing analysis we are exploring these changes in relation to the family, labour market and state resources for supporting employment, and to social relationships and identity.

Conclusion

The aim of this article has been to explore the potential contribution of longitudinal qualitative research to the analysis of poverty and social exclusion and in particular in relation to employment as a route out of poverty. Qualitative dynamic analyses of transitions, durations and trajectories show that these are complex and multi-faceted processes, differentially experienced and interpreted by the people involved. This is a rich and exciting avenue for further research, with potential contributions both theoretically and in respect of policy.

Notes

1 ESRC Reference: RES-000-23-1079. We are also grateful to the Inland Revenue (now Revenue and Customs) for drawing the sample.

2 We are using a software package (NVivo) for the analysis, as well as working directly from the transcripts.

3 See also Graham *et al.* (2006) who conclude that there are six key factors affecting employment sustainability: financial gain, better living standards, psychological benefit, motivation to work or escape benefits, childcare, and support from family and friends. They also suggest that employment-related factors – the nature of the job and work activities, relationships with colleagues and employers, possibility of progression at work, and the ‘fit’ of the job with other commitments and aspirations – get more important over time, as the people stay in work.

4 In the US, there is an ongoing qualitative longitudinal study of lone mothers leaving welfare to work which provides almost a direct comparison with our UK study, and which shows many similarities in the way the women manage the complexities of work and care, although in a very different policy context (Scott *et al.*, 2000; London *et al.*, 2004; Scott *et al.*, 2005).

5 The evaluations of the New Deal for Lone Parents clearly show that one of the main things that participants valued was the individual contact with the Personal Advisers, and that lone parents’ perceptions of the Personal Advisers was central to their views about the programme as a whole (Millar, 2005).

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