

Inequalities and Poverty Workshop

Developing a framework for a tool to
assess action

Definitions of poverty

“ ...lack of income and productive resources to ensure sustainable livelihoods; hunger and malnutrition; ill health; limited or lack of access to education and other basic services; increased morbidity and mortality from illness; homelessness and inadequate housing; unsafe environments and social discrimination and exclusion.”

United Nations

Definitions of poverty

Absolute poverty

“a condition characterised by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information. It depends not only on income but also on access to services.”

World Summit for Social Deprivation

Definitions of poverty

Relative poverty

“Because of their poverty they may experience multiple disadvantages through unemployment, low income, poor housing, inadequate health care and barriers to lifelong learning, culture, sport and recreation ... And their access to fundamental rights might be restricted.”

European Commission's Joint Report on Social Inclusion

Definitions of poverty

Persistent poverty

... being in relative poverty in three out of the last four consecutive years

In-work poverty

those whose low pay and other expenses mean that they remain in relative poverty even though they are in regular employment

Definitions of poverty

Child poverty

- **Relative poverty – living on incomes below 60% of the median net household income level**
- **Absolute poverty – living on incomes below 40% of the UK median net household income**

Fuel poverty

- **When a household has to spend >10% of its income on all household fuel use in order to maintain an acceptable level of temperature throughout the home**

Joseph Rowntree Foundation: independent report on “Monitoring Poverty and Social Exclusion”

Indicators covering 5 topics

- **Money**
- **Housing**
- **Work**
- **Benefits**
- **Services**

Monitoring Poverty and Social Exclusion in Northern Ireland 2014

- **Household incomes, poverty rates and labour market have all worsened in the last 5 years**
- **Average income fell by 10% between 2006/07 and 2011/12**
- **Proportion of unemployed working-age people almost doubled between 2007/08 and 2012/13 (5.8%)**
- **Status of Welfare Reform is unclear but extent of its impact may be wider than that in the rest of the UK**

Northern Ireland Poverty Bulletin 2012/13 (NISRA)

- **Average household income has increased in real terms “from the previous year”; however, average income still remains comparatively low**
- **Overall level of relative poverty has decreased between 2011/12 and 2012/13 – this decrease was more marked in some population groups than others**
- **In 2012/13, there were small % point decreases in the number of people, children, and working-age people living in relative poverty and absolute poverty**

Equity: a complex concept

- **Equity is a complex concept, especially when applied to the many dimensions of health**
- **The definition of equity in itself can be a source of debate, and there are many definitions in use**
- **A further source of debate are the challenges that arise when trying to agree on what achieving equity might mean in practice, especially in relation to tangible health outcomes across a wide geographical area and diverse populations or communities in any country**

Definition of inequity

“Inequities in health, ‘avoidable health inequalities’, arise because of the circumstances in which people live, work and age and the systems put in place to deal with illness. The conditions in which people live and die are, in turn shaped by political, social and economic forces.”

Commission on the Social Determinants of Health

http://www.who.int/social_determinants/final_report/en/

Definition of equity

'... health equity has many aspects, and is best seen as a multidimensional concept. It includes concerns about achievement of health and the capability to achieve good health, not just the distribution of health care. But it also includes the fairness of processes and thus must attach importance to non-discrimination in the delivery of health care. Furthermore, an adequate engagement with health equity also requires that the considerations of health be integrated with broader issues of social justice and overall equity, paying adequate attention to the versatility of resources and the diverse reach and impact of different social arrangements.'

Amartya Sen (2004) Why Health Equity?

Difficulties in assessing equity

Different people mean different things when they talk about equity, especially when taking into account the different economic and socio-political backgrounds of different localities

How can we address this?

By identifying the elements or components that comprise equity

Possible components of equity in terms of the provision of a resource

- ***Availability*** – Is the resource provided? (This can reflect investment, e.g. some resources may not be provided at all, some resources may be cut, some resources may not be provided to all people, etc)
- ***Accessibility*** – Is the resource accessible to people? (Accessibility itself has several sub-categories: proximity/geographical location, and the provision of appropriate support to enable access for certain groups in the population, such as physical alterations to facilities for people with a disability, social/cultural support, e.g. the provision of a translator for people who are not fluent in the official language of the country, information/educational support to enable best use of a resource for people with low levels of education, etc)
- ***Quality*** – Is the resource provided at the same level of quality to all people or communities?