

Child Poverty in Milton Keynes

Analysis, experience, and action

Commissioned by the Children and Families
Partnership

Why look at child poverty in MK?

- Poverty is bad for children
- MK child poverty rates rising, and likely to rise more in the future if nothing is done
- MK economic outlook is relatively good, so asserted action now, could make a difference
- New localism frees up local partners to develop locality strategies

Who and where are poor children in MK?

- 12,340 poor children (2009), 20.6% of local population
- Virtually the same as national percentage, but much higher than southeast, 15.4%
- $\frac{3}{4}$ live in a lone parent household
- Just over half live in families with at least one child under five
- Just under half live in a family with 3 or more children

Where do poor children live

Highest levels of child poverty

- Eaton Manor (40.9%)
- Woughton
- Campbell Park
- Wolverton

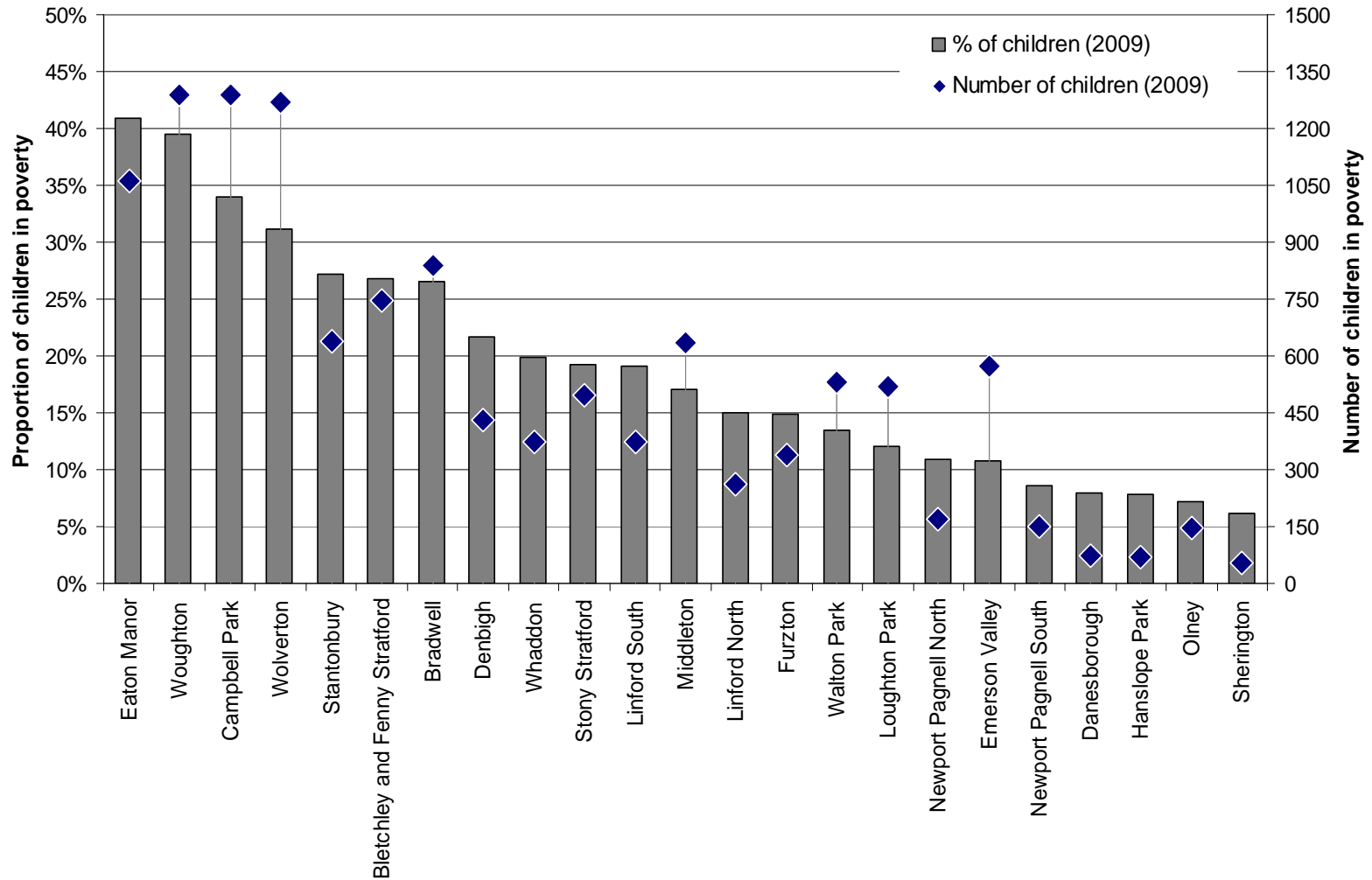
Together account for 40% of all poor children in MK

Lowest levels of child poverty

- Sherington (6.2%)
- Olney
- Hanslope
- Danesborough
- Newport Pagnell South
- Emerson Valley

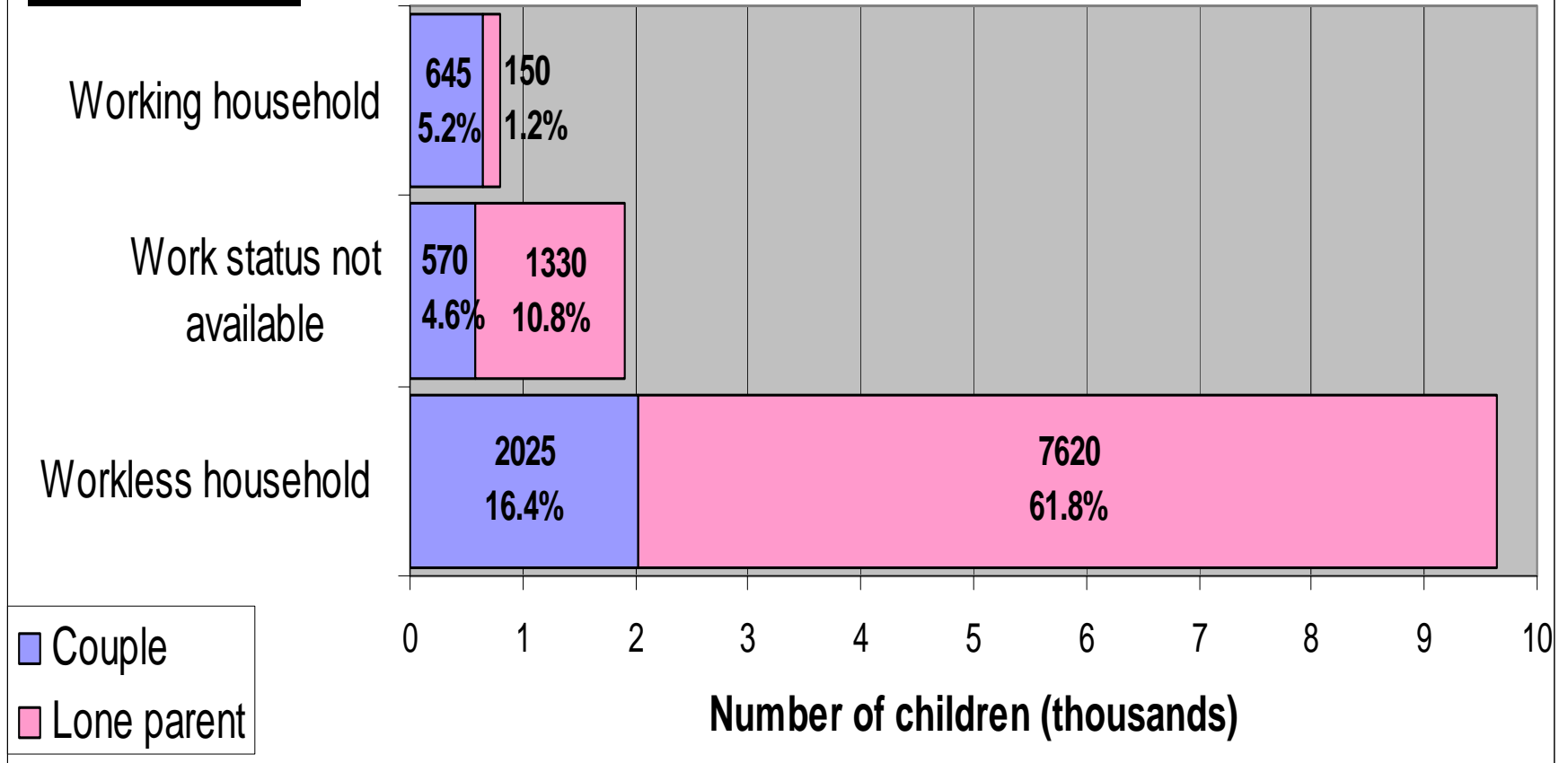
Together account for 5% of poor children in MK

Proportion and number of children in poverty in each ward (2009)



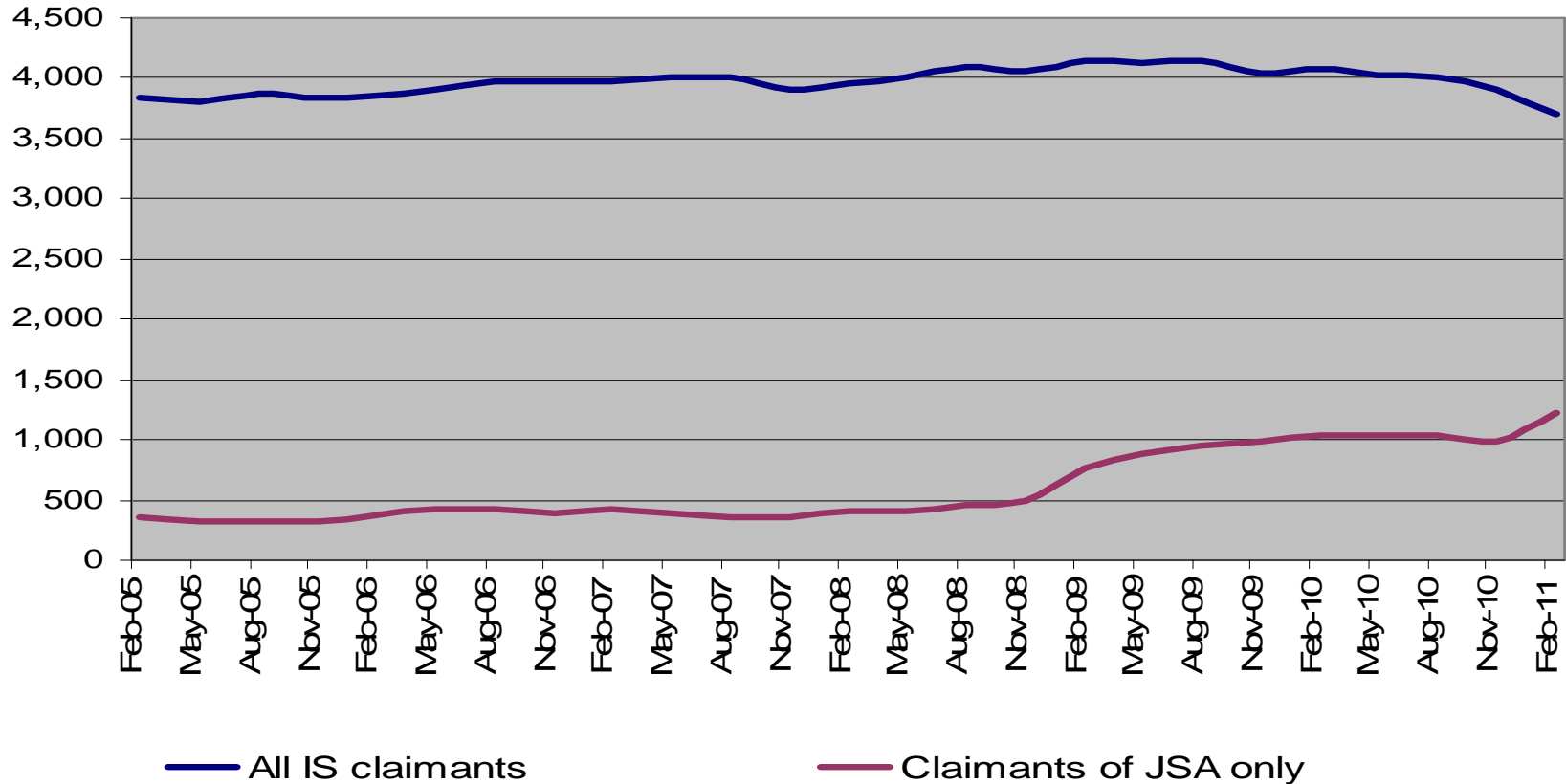
What kinds of households are poor?

31 August 2009

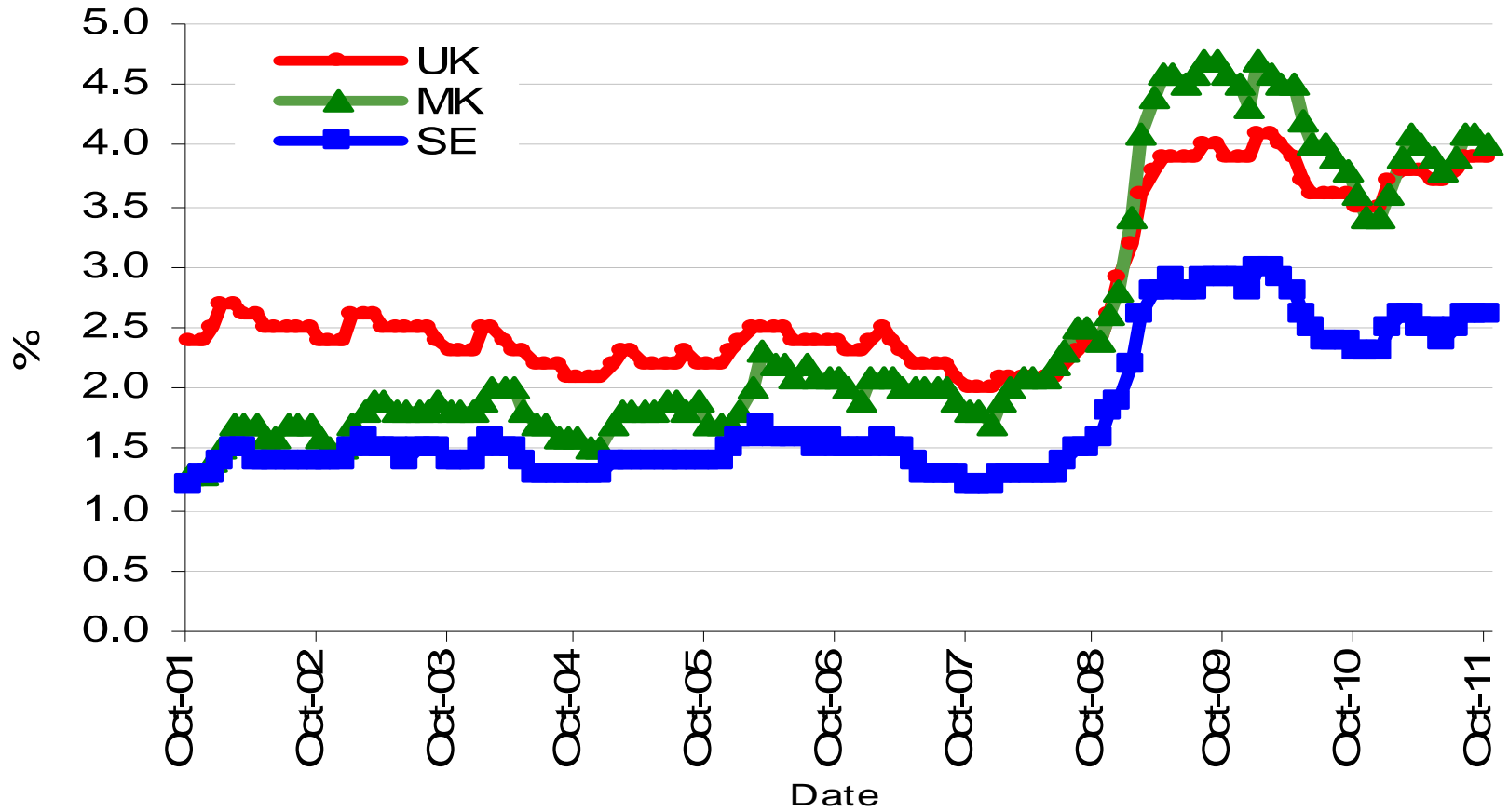


Number of IS/JSA claimants with children

Income Support or Job Seekers Allowance: number of claimants in Milton Keynes who have children



Unemployment rate: 2001-2011



What would it take to halve child poverty?

Reduce workless claimants by **3256**

How:

- Concentrate efforts on families with young children in poorest wards
- Improve parents' skills
- Consider childcare subsidies for larger families

The local economy and employment market

- Employment sectors relatively well spread
- Outlook for MK economy positive
- But, worklessness concentrated on particular estates
- Long term unemployment worse than southeast, and concentrated on poor estates
- Youth unemployment low, but likely to rise
- Skills employers want not always available locally

What poverty feels like

- *I spend on essentials for the children*
- *When mum has no money, our family does without food*
- *It makes me feel sad when we have no sweets, but I know she is doing it for the best of my family*
- *If you are not working, your children are likely to grow up not working as that's their role model.*

The MK offer: how to make better use of what we have?

- Overall, strong infrastructure of local services but
 - Need better collaboration and joint planning to improve quality and reduce duplication
 - Current climate puts many services under threat: need to assess through lens of child poverty impact assessment
 - Better communication between employers, schools and training providers to ensure what is being offered is what is really needed.
 - More flexible employment to fit in with parents' responsibilities

Quality and take up of free early years entitlement

Children Centre locality area	% of children living in poverty		Quality: proportion of childcare judged good or better	Sessional occupancy	Take up of free early years entitlement (NEG)	Workless households (including lone parent households)	Lone parent out of work households
	0-19 years	0-4 years					
MK average	20%	23%	67%	91%	72%	26%	20%
Netherfield	42%	42%	11%	85%	64%	46%	36%
Water Eaton	38%	45%	54%	73%	67%	42%	31%
Fishermead	34%	33%	33%	99%	72%	38%	29%
Beanhill	34%	31%	72%	95%	71%	35%	26%
Conniburrow	32%	36%	71%	73%	64%	35%	27%
Fullers Slade	29%	30%	41%	95%	76%	35%	28%
Bradville	23%	26%	76%	91%	62%	28%	21%
New Bradwell	23%	24%	74%	73%	93%	26%	19%
Central Bletchley	21%	25%	51%	92%	60%	24%	18%

Recommendations

Reduce the numbers in poverty now

- Clear focus on all adult contact to improve chances of employment
 - Skills training
 - Flexible employment
 - More affordable childcare
 - Better advice on benefits and in work calculations

Reduce the likelihood of poverty in the next generation

- Clear focus on improving educational outcomes for **all** children and young people
 - Improve the quality of the early years offer
 - Improve the uptake of the early years offer, esp in poor areas
 - Do more in schools to develop work aspirations
 - Do more in schools to develop the skill set needed by employers

Questions