

**Impact case study (REF3b)**

<p><b>Institution:</b> University of York</p>
<p><b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 22, Social Work and Social Policy</p>
<p><b>Title of case study:</b> The Impact of Research on Child Well-Being</p>
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)          Jonathan Bradshaw and colleagues at York influenced UK and international measures of child poverty, child deprivation and child well-being. The multi-dimensional well-being measures have been adopted by UNICEF and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The Office for National statistics (ONS) is now developing measures of child happiness based on our work.          Our research highlighted how badly children in Britain were doing. Informed by this evidence, a Government strategy was developed after 1999 and investment in children improved at least until 2010. As a result, child poverty and well-being improved in the UK. Our work contributed to moving the national and international discourse beyond a focus on income poverty.</p>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)          We started to research the impact of child poverty in Britain when levels of poverty more than doubled during the recessions of the 1980s. There are four elements to the research since 1993 which were original and have made an impact:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Four books on child well-being in the UK were the first “state of children” reports produced in Britain. In 1994 UNICEF, concerned about rising child poverty rates in rich countries, commissioned a series of national case studies. Bradshaw (Professor 1988-present) wrote the UK case. In 1995 the ESRC launched the 5-16 initiative and Bradshaw successfully bid to develop that work with a project entitled <i>Poverty: the outcomes for children</i>. That resulted in a book and nine articles. Three more edited books were produced with contributions from York colleagues in 2002, 2005 and 2011<sup>1</sup> reviewing the well-being of children in the UK.</li> <li>2. These books included comparative evidence and when in 2005 a report was produced, calling for children to be mainstreamed within the Lisbon Strategy and the Laeken Indicators, we (Bradshaw, Dominic Richardson (2005-2007 Research Fellow) and Petra Hoelscher (UNICEF)) produced the first multi-dimensional comparative analysis of child well-being (in the EU25) for the UK Presidency. UNICEF asked us to produce it for the OECD countries as Innocenti Report Card 7. They also commissioned us to reproduce it for the Central and Eastern Europe and the Confederation of Independent States (CEE/CIS countries). Later we updated the original comparisons to the EU 29<sup>2</sup> and the Pacific Rim. We subsequently undertook the research for UNICEF Innocenti Report Cards 9, 10 and 11 on poverty, deprivation and well-being. OECD has now produced a similar index. We (Bradshaw, Meg Huby (Senior Lecturer until 2010), Karen Bloor (Professor to present), Ian Sinclair (Professor to 2010), Michael Noble, Kate Wilkinson and David McLennan (University of Oxford) also used the same methodology to compare child well-being in England at small area level<sup>3</sup> in a project for the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and the results were used by local authorities in England in their child poverty strategies.</li> <li>3. We helped to develop measures of deprivation-based child poverty subsequently adopted by both UK and in international government agencies’ comparative analyses of child income poverty and deprivation. Bradshaw was PI and Naomi Finch (Lecturer to present) (and colleagues from Loughborough and Bristol) for the Poverty and Social Exclusion Survey (PSE) 1999 which used socially perceived necessities as deprivation indicators<sup>4</sup> and Bradshaw and Emese Mayhew (Research Fellow to 2012) were commissioned by the European Commission to develop a measure of extreme poverty<sup>5</sup> using some of these methods. Bradshaw was also responsible for the analysis of material poverty in the first three waves of the Millennium Cohort Survey.</li> <li>4. We developed and tested measures of child subjective well-being in a series of surveys for the Children’s Society. From 2005 we (Bradshaw and Antonia Keung (Research Fellow to present), Gwyther Rees and Haridahn Goswami (Children’s Society) began a series of school-based</li> </ol>

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surveys of subjective well-being in collaboration with the Children's Society<sup>6</sup>. The scales and measures tested in these studies are now being incorporated into the ONS on work measures of childhood happiness.

### 3. References to the research \* peer reviewed journal

1. Bradshaw, J. (ed) (2011) *The well-being of children in the United Kingdom*, Third Edition, Bristol: Policy Press (Can be supplied on request) (The most recent of four similar books).
2. \* Bradshaw, J. and Richardson, D. (2009) An index of child well-being in Europe, *J. Child Indicators Research*, 2, 3, 319. DOI: 10.1007/s12187-009-9037-7 (An example of the multidimensional comparisons of child well-being).
3. \* Bradshaw J, Noble M, Bloor K, Huby M, McLennan D, Rhodes D, Sinclair I, Wilkinson K. (2009) A Child Well-Being Index at Small Area Level in England, *J. Child Indicators Research* 2, 2, 201-219 DOI: 10.1007/s12187-008-9022-6 (The index at small area level used by local authorities)
4. \* Bradshaw, J. and Finch, N. (2003) Overlaps in Dimensions of Poverty, *Jnl. Soc. Pol.*, 32, 4, 513-525. DOI: 10.1017/S0047279403009061 (analysis derived from PSE survey 1999)
5. \* Bradshaw, J. and Mayhew, E. (2010) Understanding Extreme Poverty in the European Union, *European Journal of Homelessness*, 4, 171-186 (Journal article summarising longer EU report) Available on request.
6. \* Bradshaw, J., Keung, A., Rees, G. and Goswami, H. (2011) Children's subjective well-being: international comparative perspectives, *Children and Youth Services Review*, Review 33, 548-556 DOI: 10.1016/j.chilyouth.2010.05.010 (One of the articles based on our research with the Children's Society)

### Supporting grants: \*peer reviewed grant

- \*Jonathan Bradshaw *Poverty the outcomes for children* ESRC 5-16 Programme Poverty the Outcomes for Children. ESRC 2001-2006 £209k (H141251016)
- Jonathan Bradshaw *The well-being of children in the UK* Save the Children (UK) 2001-2006 £180k
- Jonathan Bradshaw *The well-being of children in Rich Countries* UNICEF Innocenti Centre 2005-2007 £25k
- Jonathan Bradshaw - *The well-being of children and small area level in England* Department of Communities and Local Government 2006-2007 £99k (NR37)
- Jonathan Bradshaw *Poverty and Social Exclusion Survey* Joseph Rowntree Foundation 1997-2003 £350k
- Jonathan Bradshaw *Child poverty in large families* Joseph Rowntree Foundation 2004-2005 £37k (803537)
- Jonathan Bradshaw *Surveys of Subjective well-being Children's Society* 2008-2011 £37k
- \*Jonathan Bradshaw *Poverty and Social Exclusion Survey* ESRC 2010-2013 £27k (RES-060-25-0052) (York part of a multi-centre project led by David Gordon, University of Bristol)
- \*Jonathan Bradshaw *Children's World: an international report on child well-being* Jacobs Foundation 2013-2015 £146k

### 4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Our comparative research in the 1990s highlighted how bad Britain's rates of child poverty had become. In 1999, informed by this and others' evidence, Tony Blair declared that it was the Government's intention to eradicate child poverty within 20 years. Child poverty became a major preoccupation of the UK government. A strategy was developed which included targets and monitoring. Using the results of our 1999 Poverty and Social Exclusion survey, at a seminar with officials and through membership of DWP advisory groups, we persuaded the DWP to adopt a third tier (deprivation based) child poverty measure. This and other multi-dimensional indicators were adopted in the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) *Opportunity for all* series. The measure was adopted in the Child Poverty Act 2010 targets. A child poverty strategy was published in 2012 which proposed to use a range of child well-being indicators. In October 2012 the Government announced a consultation on the measurement of child poverty to which we submitted robust evidence.

Influenced by this UK experience in 2008, the EU Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) adopted a similar set of deprivation indicators, and in SILC 2009 a special module on child deprivation was introduced. We were the first to analyse it (for UNICEF Innocenti RC 10). In 2010 a deprivation measure was adopted into the EU 2020 Poverty and Social Inclusion strategy targets.

UNICEF Innocenti Report Card 7 in 2007 based on our index of child well-being had the UK at the bottom of the international league table of rich countries. This provoked a public outcry and enormous media interest. This and the resulting *Ditchley Declaration*, an agreed, cross-party statement of principles and proposals of what should be done to improve child well-being in the UK, contributed to revitalising the child poverty strategy in 2008 and 2009. The Department for Children, Schools and Families published a revision to *The Children's Plan* in 2009 which drew on a review of evidence that was very similar to that covered in our *Well-being of children in the UK* reviews<sup>1</sup>.

The development of our local index of child well-being at the behest of DCLG proved very useful for local authorities, who under the Child Poverty Act (Part 2, Section 22) are required to prepare and publish an assessment of the needs of children living in poverty in their area. Many of these needs assessments drew on the index directly<sup>2</sup> and are a resource to support the development of a local Child Poverty Strategy. The data from our index was made available on the DCLG website and also by the NHS Observatory of Maternity and Child Health (CHIMAT).

In 2010 David Cameron asked the Office of National Statistics (ONS) to monitor the general well-being of the population. ONS established two working groups to develop measures. Jonathan Bradshaw and Gwyther Rees (Children's Society) were asked to join the Children and Young People Working Group. Our experience of surveying children about their subjective well-being has proven very influential<sup>3</sup> and we have contributed to a review of available sources and undertaken pilot work towards the establishment of national well-being measures for children.

The evidence is that child well-being has been improving in the UK. Most child indicators have improved. In 2011/12 child poverty had fallen to 17% from 26% in 1998/9. There is also evidence from our analysis of Understanding Society data that child subjective well-being improved significantly between 1994 and 2011. In the UNICEF Innocenti Report card 11 published in 2013 the UK had moved up the international league table of 29 rich countries from bottom to 16th. Our work has contributed to these outcomes and to our capacity to measure them.

More generally, our work has contributed to taking the national and international discourse beyond income poverty. Child well-being is now a preoccupation of the UK government and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), international organisations, such as the OECD, UNICEF and the European Union. Indeed, both the European Commission and the OECD are now publishing<sup>4</sup> deprivation based poverty measures and multi-dimensional well-being indicators that we pioneered. In 2013 the EU published a first Council Conclusion on *Tackling child poverty and promoting child well-being*.

Jonathan Bradshaw<sup>5</sup> who led this work has used his influence as: Advisor to the House of Commons Work and Pensions Committee (2003); Member of the DWP Technical Working Group on measuring child poverty (2003); UK expert on the EU group of experts on social inclusion (2005-); Member of the JRF Technical Group on a Strategy for Child Poverty (2006); Member of the Ministerial Advisory Committee on child poverty (2006); Member of the Board of the International Society for Child Indicators (2007-2013); Fellow of the British Academy (2010-); Member of the ONS National well-being advisory group (2010-2012); Honorary Fellow, UNICEF UK (2012-); and as a Trustee of the Child Poverty Action Group (2012-).

##### 5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

<sup>1</sup> For example *Darlington Putting Children First: Child Poverty Needs Assessment November 2010*

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<https://www.nfer.ac.uk/emie/inc/fd.asp?user=&doc=Darlington+CP+needs+assessme4nt%2Epdf>  
and <http://www.chimat.org.uk/default.aspx?QN=CHMT0>.

<sup>2</sup> Two examples of uses of a broader set of indicators in government documents

- Department for Children, Families and Schools (2009) *The Children's Plan two years on: A progress report CM 8061* (2011) *A New Approach to Child Poverty: Tackling the Causes of Disadvantage* and

- *Transforming Families' Lives See annex A: Child poverty strategy indicators*

<https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/CM-8061.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> Evidence of the influence of our work on subjective well-being in collaboration with the Children's Society

[http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/tcs/good\\_childhood\\_report\\_2012\\_final.pdf](http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/tcs/good_childhood_report_2012_final.pdf)

and being used by ONS Beaumont, J. (2013) *Measuring National Well-being - Children's well-being, 2013*, Office for National Statistics page 5.)

<sup>4</sup> Evidence of OECD and EU drawing on our work on child well-being OECD (2009) *Doing better for children* <http://www.oecd.org/els/familiesandchildren/doingbetterforchildren.htm>

TARKI (2010): *Child poverty and child well-being in the European Union*. Report prepared for the DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (Unite E.2) of the European Commission, Budapest. <http://www.tarki.hu/en/research/childpoverty/index.html>

<sup>5</sup> Bradshaw was made Commander of the British Empire (CBE) for services to child poverty 2007 and in 2011 awarded a Doctor of Social Sciences *honoris causa* by the University of Turku, Finland the citation said: "in recognition of his long and internationally recognized, scholarly career in the field of comparative family policy and child poverty... "

**Five individual users/beneficiaries who could be contacted:**

- Research Director UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre could corroborate claims on impact of comparative indices of child well-being.
- Chief Executive of UNICEF UK could corroborate impact of research on child well-being particularly Innocenti Report Cards 7 and 8-11
- Former Research Director of the Children's Society could corroborate impact of research on subjective well-being and influence on Office for national statistics work.
- Chief Executive of the Child Poverty Action Group could corroborate impact of research on child poverty and well-being on Child Poverty Act targets and measures.
- DG Employment, European Commission could corroborate the impact of research on the development of the Laeken Indicators, the 2020 poverty and social exclusion and child well-being research in the EU and candidate countries.