

**WORKING PAPER 2**

**THE NECESSITIES OF LIFE FOR CHILDREN**

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**Poverty and Social Exclusion**

Survey of Britain ●●● ●

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## **PREFACE**

This Working Paper arose from the *1999 Poverty and Social Exclusion Survey of Britain* funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. The *1999 PSE Survey of Britain* is the most comprehensive and scientifically rigorous survey of its kind ever undertaken. It provides unparalleled detail about deprivation and exclusion among the British population at the close of the twentieth century. It uses a particularly powerful scientific approach to measuring poverty which:

- incorporates the views of members of the public, rather than judgments by social scientists, about what are the necessities of life in modern Britain
- calculates the levels of deprivation that constitutes poverty using scientific methods rather than arbitrary decisions.

The *1999 PSE Survey of Britain* is also the first national study to attempt to measure social exclusion, and to introduce a methodology for poverty and social exclusion which is internationally comparable. Three data sets were used:

- The *1998-9 General Household Survey* (GHS) provided data on the socio-economic circumstances of the respondents, including their incomes
- The *June 1999 ONS Omnibus Survey* included questions designed to establish from a sample of the general population what items and activities they consider to be necessities.
- A follow-up survey of a sub-sample of respondents to the 1998-9 GHS were interviewed in late 1999 to establish how many lacked items identified as necessities, and also to collect other information on poverty and social exclusion.

Further details about the *1999 Poverty and Social Exclusion Survey of Britain* are available at: <http://www.bris.ac.uk/poverty/pse/>

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The *Breadline Britain* method involves asking a representative sample of the population, which out of a list of items relating to a standard of living they feel adults and children should have in Britain today. They are given a description of each item and asked to put them into one pile if they think the item is a necessity which all should be able to afford and which they should not have to do without and another pile for items which may be desirable but are not necessary. There is also a pile if they don't know. This paper presents the results of an analysis of the judgements made by adults of items for children. A separate analysis by Gordon, Pantazis and Townsend (1999a) is covering the adult and household items.

The necessities questions were asked of the Office of National Statistics Omnibus sample in June 1999. The Omnibus is a stratified random sample which is reweighted to match the population of Great Britain. Respondents were interviewed in their own homes. Adjustments were made for non response bias.

In the 1999 survey respondents were invited to classify 30 items relating to children including 23 assets and 7 activities. Most of these were new items which had not been included in the previous Breadline Britain Surveys in 1983 (Mack and Lansley 1985) and 1990 (Gordon and Pantazis 1997). Most of the new children's items came from the work of the Loughborough group drawing on their experience during the Small Fortunes project (Middleton et al 1997), but they were also subjected to scrutiny in a series of focus groups organised as part of the pilot for this project (Bradshaw et al 1998). Working Paper 3 examines changes over time in the proportion of the population considering an item a necessity (Gordon et al 1999b).

## **2. RESULTS**

The analysis below is based on individual level responses ie the weighted data set. Table 1 gives a breakdown of the responses of all individuals in the sample. It can be

seen that for all items respondents were able to make a decision about whether the item was a necessity or desirable but the proportion of don't knows varied with 4 per cent not being able to make up their minds about whether computer games and friends round for tea were necessary or desirable. Following the convention of the earlier analyses of the data don't knows/refused and not asked have been treated throughout as missing case. Thus the proportion thinking an item a necessity in the rest of the analysis is a percentage of the total after those cases have been excluded.

**Table 1: Proportions considering items were necessary, desirable, don't know**

	Necessary	Desirable	Don't know
Three meals a day	90	9	1
Toys (e.g dolls, play figures, teddies)	83	15	2
Leisure equipment (e.g sports equipment)	60	38	2
Enough bedrooms for every child	78	21	1
Computer games	18	78	4
A warm waterproof coat	95	5	1
Books of her/his own	89	10	1
A bike, new or second hand	54	43	3
Construction toys such as Duplo or Lego	62	36	2
Educational games	83	16	2
New, properly fitted shoes	94	6	1
At least seven pairs of underpants	83	16	1
At least four jumpers, cardigans	73	25	2
All school uniform required	87	12	1
At least four pairs of trousers	69	29	2
At least 50p a week for sweets	49	48	3
Meat/fish/vegetarian equivalent twice a day	77	22	2
Computer suitable for school work	41	55	3
Fresh fruit/vegetables once a day	93	6	1
A garden to play in	68	31	1
Some new, not second-hand clothes	70	28	2
A carpet in their bedroom	67	31	2
A bed and bedding to her/himself	93	6	1
A hobby or leisure activity	89	10	1
Celebrations on special occasions	92	7	1
Swimming at least once a month	75	23	2
Play group for pre-school aged children	88	11	1
A holiday away from home	70	27	2
A school trip at least once a term	74	24	2
Friends round for tea or a snack	59	37	4

In the previous Breadline Britain studies only items considered to be necessities by at least 50 per cent of the population were included as *socially perceived* necessities. It can be seen in Table 2 shows that only two children's items failed to meet this threshold - computer games and a computer suitable for school. At least 50p a week for sweets only just crept in at 51 per cent.

### 3. VARIATIONS IN JUDGEMENTS

We now turn to examine how the judgements about which items were necessary varied with the characteristics of the person making the judgement.

### **3.1 BY GENDER**

Table 2 shows that where there was a significant<sup>1</sup> difference between the judgements of men and women, men tended to be more generous - in fact this was true for all items except three meals a day, jumpers, school uniform and celebrations on special occasions. The biggest differences in the judgements of men and women were over leisure equipment, 50p for sweets, a computer suitable for school, and a bedroom carpet. Men exceeded the 50 per cent threshold while women did not only in respect of 50p for sweets.

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<sup>1</sup> A chi squared test was performed on the difference in proportion for each item. A chi squared value which is higher than would be expected by chance is indicate by \*\*\*  $p < .001$ , \*\* $p < .01$  and \* $< .05$ . Only differences at the \*\*\* level will be commented on in the text.

**Table 2: Proportion judging an item a necessity by gender**

	Sex of Respondent		
	Male	Female	All
Three meals a day	90*	92	91
Toys (e.g dolls, play figures, teddies)	85	85	85
Leisure equipment (e.g sports equipment)	68***	55	61
Enough bedrooms for every child	79	78	79
Computer games	21*	17	18
A warm waterproof coat	94	96	95
Books of her/his own	90	90	90
A bike, new or second hand	59*	53	56
Construction toys such as Duplo or Lego	62	65	64
Educational games	84	84	84
New, properly fitted shoes	93	95	94
At least seven pairs of underpants	83	85	84
At least four jumpers, cardigans	71**	77	74
All school uniform required	86**	90	88
At least four pairs of trousers	69	72	71
At least 50p a week for sweets	56***	46	51
Meat/fish/vegetarian equivalent twice a day	77	79	78
Computer suitable for school work	48***	38	43
Fresh fruit/vegetables once a day	93	95	94
A garden to play in	67	71	69
Some new, not second-hand clothes	72	71	71
A carpet in their bedroom	73***	64	68
A bed and bedding to her/himself	93	94	94
A hobby or leisure activity	92*	89	90
Celebrations on special occasions	91*	94	93
Swimming at least once a month	78	74	76
Play group for pre-school aged children	88	89	89
A holiday away from home	76**	69	72
A school trip at least once a term	75	75	75
Friends round for tea or a snack	59	63	61
N	878	977	1855

**3.2 BY AGE GROUP**

Where there are significant differences in the proportion considering an item a necessity it was most often because of less generous judgements by the youngest group (16-24). For example lower proportions of this group considered computer games, 50p for sweets, a computer for school, a garden, new not second hand clothes, swimming and holiday were necessities. Interestingly on many items the retired respondents made more generous judgements than the other age groups. But for some items the oldest group (75 and over) were less likely to judge an item a

necessity - including new properly fitting shoes, a bedroom carpet, a bed and bedding for her/himself. However the only item qualifying as a socially perceived necessity overall which fell below the 50 per cent threshold was 50p for sweets among those under 54. More than half of 65-74s thought a computer for school was a necessity.



**Table 3. Proportion judging an item a necessity by age group**

	Grouped Age						All
	16 to 24	25 to 44	45 to 54	55 to 64	65 to 74	75 and over	
Three meals a day	94*	91	91	86	94	89	91
Toys (e.g dolls, play figures, teddies)	83	86	84	87	87	77	85
Leisure equipment (e.g sports equipment)	56*	59	61	63	70	62	61
Enough bedrooms for every child	72**	77	78	84	84	83	79
Computer games	8***	14	21	24	27	32	18
A warm waterproof coat	94	96	97	96	95	90	95
Books of her/his own	86**	90	92	92	95	85	90
A bike, new or second hand	50*	58	52	56	63	51	56
Construction toys such as Duplo or Lego	55*	64	66	63	71	63	64
Educational games	77*	87	84	85	84	82	84
New, properly fitted shoes	91*	96	93	96	95	89	94
At least seven pairs of underpants	86***	87	86	81	81	73	84
At least four jumpers, cardigans	77	75	69	71	77	76	74
All school uniform required	90	88	88	88	89	83	88
At least four pairs of trousers	76**	75	66	65	66	67	71
At least 50p a week for sweets	44***	44	47	59	63	65	51
Meat/fish/vegetarian equivalent twice a day	72*	81	77	76	81	72	78
Computer suitable for school work	28***	40	46	47	57	46	43
Fresh fruit/vegetables once a day	95	95	93	93	94	91	94
A garden to play in	64***	67	68	72	82	68	69
Some new, not second-hand clothes	60***	68	76	79	79	69	71
A carpet in their bedroom	70***	76	65	59	66	56	68
A bed and bedding to her/himself	96***	95	94	95	92	82	94
A hobby or leisure activity	86	89	93	91	94	90	90
Celebrations on special occasions	94	93	92	93	94	92	93
Swimming at least once a month	63***	72	74	88	86	84	76
Play group for pre-school aged children	91	90	89	87	88	84	89
A holiday away from home	67***	66	73	75	84	85	72
A school trip at least once a term	75	74	75	74	79	80	75
Friends round for tea or a snack	61***	57	56	63	72	71	61
N	246	683	312	267	204	142	1855

### 3.3 BY REGION

Where there is regional variation in the judgements about necessities it tends to be due to the people of Wales making harsher judgements about items. Indeed this is true of all significant items except a garden where people in London and Scotland make harsher judgements. No region stands out as making consistently more generous judgments. Among the items considered necessities by more than 50 per cent overall only a bike Scotland and 50p for sweets in four regions fall below the 50 per cent threshold.

**Table 4: Proportion judging an item a necessity by region**

	Grouped regions							All
	The North	Midlands & East Anglia	London	South East	South West	Wales	Scotland	
Three meals a day	93	90	94	92	91	86	88	91
Toys (e.g dolls, play figures, teddies)	84	83	85	90	88	82	81	85
Leisure equipment (e.g sports equipment)	63	61	63	62	61	51	58	61
Enough bedrooms for every child	80	80	76	81	76	78	70	79
Computer games	21*	18	12	22	12	18	19	18
A warm waterproof coat	96***	96	94	96	96	82	97	95
Books of her/his own	90	90	89	94	92	87	85	90
A bike, new or second hand	55	57	55	62	55	50	49	56
Construction toys such as Duplo or Lego	64*	61	59	74	60	65	65	64
Educational games	83*	83	80	89	85	75	88	84
New, properly fitted shoes	95	93	94	97	93	90	93	94
At least seven pairs of underpants	87	82	85	84	88	79	81	84
At least four jumpers, cardigans	78*	70	80	76	73	67	70	74
All school uniform required	89**	87	93	90	91	77	83	88
At least four pairs of trousers	73**	69	79	74	68	57	66	71
At least 50p a week for sweets	56	50	52	46	48	45	48	51
Meat/fish/vegetarian equivalent twice a day	75***	82	84	83	70	66	75	78

Computer suitable for school work	41	46	46	46	38	42	37	43
Fresh fruit/vegetables once a day	94***	95	97	97	95	78	92	94
A garden to play in	67***	73	62	76	72	69	58	69
Some new, not second-hand clothes	74***	70	77	76	66	51	69	71
A carpet in their bedroom	73**	70	71	64	57	57	67	68
A bed and bedding to her/himself	95***	93	97	95	96	79	93	94
A hobby or leisure activity	89	90	96	95	89	85	87	90
Celebrations on special occasions	92*	94	94	96	92	87	89	93
Swimming at least once a month	80	77	76	71	79	70	70	76
Play group for pre-school aged children	87***	91	95	94	82	75	87	89
A holiday away from home	73	76	71	68	75	68	63	72
A school trip at least once a term	78	72	83	74	74	69	74	75
Friends round for tea or a snack	62*	55	70	65	61	56	63	61
N	501	498	177	258	157	99	165	1855

### 3.4 BY SOCIAL CLASS

The variations in judgements by social class are interesting in that for most items where there is a significant difference it is the Class 1 (professional) group and the never worked/unclassified group (which includes three from the armed forces) which make harsher judgements. Nearly two thirds of the latter group are in the 16-24 age group which we found above were also likely to make harsher judgements. If that group is removed from the analysis then the number of items where there is a significant difference by social class drops from 26 to 19. In most cases it is now the professional group making the harshest judgments about which items are necessities. However the only item falling below the 50 per cent threshold is 50p per week for sweets. More than half of Class V think a computer for school work is a necessity.

**Table 5: Proportion judging an item a necessity by social class.**

	Class							All
	I Professional	II Intermediate	III Skilled non manual	IIIM Skilled manual	IV Partly skilled	V Unskilled	army/never worked	
Three meals a day	87	91	94	91	92	91	86	91
Toys (e.g dolls, play figures, teddies)	88*	87	87	84	83	84	67	85
Leisure equipment (e.g sports equipment)	55*	60	64	65	57	72	46	61
Enough bedrooms for every child	69**	78	79	81	81	86	63	79
Computer games	7**	14	20	23	22	30	19	18
A warm waterproof coat	97	96	96	94	96	91	93	95
Books of her/his own	93	90	89	90	89	95	86	90
A bike, new or second hand	54	54	53	60	58	58	38	56
Construction toys such as Duplo or Lego	68	61	61	66	64	69	52	64
Educational games	87**	79	85	85	88	90	77	84
New, properly fitted shoes	94**	94	95	94	95	93	79	94
At least seven pairs of underpants	76*	83	82	87	87	85	76	84
At least four jumpers, cardigans	62***	72	73	80	74	86	63	74
All school uniform required	89*	89	90	87	87	94	73	88
At least four pairs of trousers	61***	71	65	76	70	82	56	71
At least 50p a week for sweets	39***	42	50	57	58	65	47	51
Meat/fish/vegetarian equivalent twice a day	78*	82	78	76	77	73	59	78
Computer suitable for school work	37**	38	40	46	49	56	31	43
Fresh fruit/vegetables once a day	97**	95	97	93	91	94	84	94
A garden to play in	58***	62	69	74	79	78	54	69
Some new, not second-hand clothes	73	70	71	74	70	72	51	71
A carpet in their bedroom	53***	63	67	74	72	81	77	68
A bed and bedding to her/himself	96*	93	95	94	93	90	81	94
A hobby or leisure activity	89	91	89	91	90	94	86	90
Celebrations on special occasions	92	94	94	93	91	97	81	93
Swimming at least once a month	68***	69	78	83	80	82	68	76

Play group for pre-school aged children	85	87	90	90	91	93	83	89
A holiday away from home	62**	69	74	78	72	76	58	72
A school trip at least once a term	70***	69	75	81	80	87	64	75
Friends round for tea or a snack	57	61	63	62	63	58	51	61
N	156	539	237	486	303	92	43	1855

### **3.5 BY CHILDREN IN THE HOUSEHOLD**

Respondents with children in their household ( mainly parents) were significantly more likely than those without to consider four pairs of trousers and a bedroom carpet were a necessity. In contrast those without children were significantly more likely to consider a holiday was a necessity. 50p for sweets did not achieve the 50 percent threshold for parents with children.

**Table 6: Proportion judging an item a necessity by whether there are children in the household.**

	no children	children	All
Three meals a day	91	92	91
Toys (e.g dolls, play figures, teddies)	85	85	85
Leisure equipment (e.g sports equipment)	63	58	61
Enough bedrooms for every child	79	77	79
Computer games	20**	15	18
A warm waterproof coat	95	96	95
Books of her/his own	90	90	90
A bike, new or second hand	54	59	56
Construction toys such as Duplo or Lego	62	67	64
Educational games	84	84	84
New, properly fitted shoes	94	95	94
At least seven pairs of underpants	84	85	84
At least four jumpers, cardigans	74	74	74
All school uniform required	88	89	88
At least four pairs of trousers	68***	76	71
At least 50p a week for sweets	53*	46	51
Meat/fish/vegetarian equivalent twice a day	78	77	78
Computer suitable for school work	44	40	43
Fresh fruit/vegetables once a day	94	93	94
A garden to play in	68	71	69
Some new, not second-hand clothes	73*	67	71
A carpet in their bedroom	65***	75	68
A bed and bedding to her/himself	92**	96	94
A hobby or leisure activity	91	89	90
Celebrations on special occasions	93	92	93
Swimming at least once a month	78**	71	76
Play group for pre-school aged children	89	90	89
A holiday away from home	75***	66	72
A school trip at least once a term	76	75	75
Friends round for tea or a snack	63**	56	61
N	1295	560	1855

### **3.6 BY ETHNICITY**

There were only 72 respondents from ethnic minority groups in the sample. They were significantly less likely to think toys are necessities and more likely to consider computer games and school trips are necessities. This is perhaps evidence of a remarkable similarity of judgement by different cultures about living standards.

**Table 7: Proportion judging an item a necessity by ethnicity**

	Ethnicity of respondent		
	White	non-white	All
Three meals a day	91	95	91
Toys (e.g dolls, play figures, teddies)	86***	66	85
Leisure equipment (e.g sports equipment)	61	72	61
Enough bedrooms for every child	79	76	79
Computer games	18*	30	18
A warm waterproof coat	95	96	95
Books of her/his own	90	93	90
A bike, new or second hand	56	54	56
Construction toys such as Duplo or Lego	64	70	64
Educational games	84	89	84
New, properly fitted shoes	94	91	94
At least seven pairs of underpants	85**	70	84
At least four jumpers, cardigans	74	72	74
All school uniform required	88	93	88
At least four pairs of trousers	70	77	70
At least 50p a week for sweets	51	51	51
Meat/fish/vegetarian equivalent twice a day	78*	87	78
Computer suitable for school work	42***	74	43
Fresh fruit/vegetables once a day	94	98	94
A garden to play in	69*	82	69
Some new, not second-hand clothes	71	67	71
A carpet in their bedroom	67*	81	68
A bed and bedding to her/himself	94	90	94
A hobby or leisure activity	90	90	90
Celebrations on special occasions	93	87	93
Swimming at least once a month	76	74	76
Play group for pre-school aged children	88*	98	89
A holiday away from home	72	75	72
A school trip at least once a term	75***	94	75
Friends round for tea or a snack	61	54	61
N	1768	72	1840

**3.7 BY AGE LEFT EDUCATION**

We have already seen that older people have more generous judgements about necessities and young people less generous and these results interact with the age at which people left full-time education. Those who left education before aged 16 tend to be older people and those still in education are almost all under 25. It can be seen in the table that the former group tend to have higher proportions considering items a necessity and the latter group lower proportions. When those two groups are

excluded from the analysis then there is a general tendency for those who left school at 16 to have significantly more generous judgments about necessities. More than 50 per cent of that age group think that 50p for sweets is a necessity. Less than 50 per cent of the small number who left education over 23 think that a bike is a necessity..



**Table 7: Proportion judging an item a necessity by the age that they left full-time education**

	<16	16	17-18	19-22	23+	Still in educ.	All
Three meals a day	92	91	91	89	92	94	91
Toys (e.g dolls, play figures, teddies)	83	86	86	87	82	88	85
Leisure equipment (e.g sports equipment)	67**	59	61	60	53	52	61
Enough bedrooms for every child	83**	81	74	76	72	68	79
Computer games	29***	18	10	13	13	5	18
A warm waterproof coat	95	95	96	95	96	95	95
Books of her/his own	90	90	91	91	89	87	90
A bike, new or second hand	58**	57	60	53	49	38	56
Construction toys such as Duplo or Lego	69**	64	63	61	58	47	64
Educational games	86***	85	88	80	81	70	84
New, properly fitted shoes	95	94	96	94	91	93	94
At least seven pairs of underpants	85	86	84	80	80	84	84
At least four jumpers, cardigans	78*	75	75	69	67	73	74
All school uniform required	88	87	90	90	87	91	88
At least four pairs of trousers	70	72	70	68	66	77	71
At least 50p a week for sweets	65***	54	39	39	36	40	51
Meat/fish/vegetarian equivalent twice a day	77	77	80	82	78	68	78
Computer suitable for school work	53***	44	37	32	36	34	43
Fresh fruit/vegetables once a day	92	93	96	96	97	95	94
A garden to play in	77***	73	61	59	55	70	69
Some new, not second-hand clothes	75**	73	68	70	73	54	71
A carpet in their bedroom	69**	76	64	67	52	62	68
A bed and bedding to her/himself	92	94	95	94	93	96	94
A hobby or leisure activity	92	86	92	92	92	91	90
Celebrations on special occasions	93	93	93	96	90	88	93
Swimming at least once a month	89***	77	72	67	67	50	76
Play group for pre-school aged children	90	91	88	85	88	87	89
A holiday away from home	81***	72	69	65	63	63	72
A school trip at least once a term	83***	78	70	70	64	63	75
Friends round for tea or a snack	66**	61	60	57	59	54	61
N	535	527	304	238	157	93	1855

### 3.8 BY TENURE

Overall private tenants tended to have less generous judgements about necessities. There was also a tendency for outright owners to be less generous. However in general it is difficult to discern a systematic pattern between the tenure and judgements about necessities.

**Table 8 : Proportion judging an item a necessity by tenure**

	Owns outright	Owns mortgage	Rents LA HA	Rents privately	All
Three meals a day	90	91	91	94	91
Toys (e.g dolls, play figures, teddies)	84	87	82	85	85
Leisure equipment (e.g sports equipment)	61	61	64	56	61
Enough bedrooms for every child	79***	77	87	69	79
Computer games	23***	15	27	9	18
A warm waterproof coat	95	96	94	93	95
Books of her/his own	91	90	90	86	90
A bike, new or second hand	56	56	56	52	56
Construction toys such as Duplo or Lego	67	64	60	59	64
Educational games	85	85	82	81	84
New, properly fitted shoes	94	94	94	95	94
At least seven pairs of underpants	78**	86	87	84	84
At least four jumpers, cardigans	71*	73	80	77	74
All school uniform required	90*	89	87	82	88
At least four pairs of trousers	62***	71	78	75	71
At least 50p a week for sweets	58***	43	65	39	51
Meat/fish/vegetarian equivalent twice a day	77	78	78	78	78
Computer suitable for school work	49***	39	51	28	43
Fresh fruit/vegetables once a day	94	94	91	96	94
A garden to play in	74***	65	80	56	69
Some new, not second-hand clothes	73	71	73	63	71
A carpet in their bedroom	59***	69	82	62	68
A bed and bedding to her/himself	91**	95	92	95	94
A hobby or leisure activity	91	91	88	90	90
Celebrations on special occasions	93	93	91	93	93
Swimming at least once a month	83***	72	80	72	76
Play group for pre-school aged children	88	90	89	87	89
A holiday away from home	78***	68	77	65	72
A school trip at least once a term	76***	71	86	71	75
Friends round for tea or a snack	68**	57	61	63	61
N	488	853	348	164	1853

### 3.9 BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS

There is an interaction between employment status and some of the variables that we have considered already. Thus for example again the retired have a tendency to be more generous in their judgments. There appears to be a tendency for the long term sick to have more generous judgements. Beyond that it is difficult to discern any consistent patterns. There is crossing of the 50 per cent threshold in respect of 50p for sweets, computers for school and a bike by some of the subgroups.

**Table 9: Proportion judging an item a necessity by employment status**

	full time	part time	self employe	unemplo	looking after family	retired	long term sick	student	other	All
Three meals a day	90	93	93	89	89	93	85	94	89	91
Toys (e.g dolls, play figures, teddies)	84	86	90	88	84	84	84	96	83	85
Leisure equipment (e.g sports equipment)	60*	55	64	54	54	65	73	71	64	61
Enough bedrooms for every child	75**	79	79	75	74	84	92	85	83	79
Computer games	13***	17	18	9	20	27	35	15	23	18
A warm waterproof coat	96**	97	96	90	89	95	97	100	99	95
Books of her/his own	89	90	94	85	91	91	94	92	89	90
A bike, new or second hand	55	54	63	50	58	57	54	46	63	56
Construction toys such as Duplo or Lego	61	65	67	59	69	67	59	51	58	64
Educational games	85	84	86	74	81	84	92	78	83	84
New, properly fitted shoes	94	97	92	94	95	94	95	91	89	94
At least seven pairs of underpants	86*	85	81	83	85	79	93	91	79	84
At least four jumpers, cardigans	74	73	67	70	77	75	82	81	66	74

All school uniform required	86	93	91	89	87	87	88	91	89	88
At least four pairs of trousers	71*	73	70	71	73	63	80	84	82	71
At least 50p a week for sweets	46***	47	48	47	47	64	55	49	51	51
Meat/fish/vegetarian equivalent twice a day	80	75	83	71	72	76	85	79	87	78
Computer suitable for school work	37***	36	55	36	38	51	54	47	56	43
Fresh fruit/vegetables once a day	94	96	96	93	91	93	92	93	97	94
A garden to play in	62***	73	69	63	71	76	83	73	68	69
Some new, not second-hand clothes	70	71	72	71	69	76	78	55	69	71
A carpet in their bedroom	72**	71	64	67	65	60	74	77	71	68
A bed and bedding to her/himself	95***	98	96	90	91	88	94	97	97	94
A hobby or leisure activity	90	89	93	89	89	92	89	96	84	90
Celebrations on special occasions	92	95	93	91	91	93	95	88	96	93
Swimming at least once a month	73***	68	88	76	72	85	86	46	72	76
Play group for pre-school aged children	90*	86	94	95	87	85	87	97	95	89
A holiday away from home	70***	65	71	68	65	83	77	74	75	72
A school trip at least once a term	73	74	74	77	80	77	89	74	72	75
Friends round for tea or a snack	59**	54	67	59	57	70	58	66	59	61
N	700	266	144	65	138	380	76	42	44	1855

### **3.10 BY FAMILY TYPE**

There are a number of items where there are significant differences by family type but it is difficult to discern any consistent patterns and there is a good deal of interaction going on with variables we have considered before, especially age.

**Table 11: Proportion judging an item a necessity by family type**

	single pension	couple pension	married dep child	married no child	lone parent	single adult	other	All
Three meals a day	90	93	92	90	94	87	91	91
Toys (e.g dolls, play figures, teddies)	80*	87	86	87	85	83	76	85
Leisure equipment (e.g sports equipment)	69	66	60	61	54	59	59	61
Enough bedrooms for every child	82**	88	78	76	86	77	72	79
Computer games	29***	26	14	19	15	21	12	18
A warm waterproof coat	94	95	96	95	96	97	93	95
Books of her/his own	87	95	90	90	90	92	87	90
A bike, new or second hand	59	60	59	53	55	55	47	56
Construction toys such as Duplo or Lego	66	70	64	61	64	62	58	64
Educational games	77	87	83	86	82	86	79	84
New, properly fitted shoes	93	95	95	93	98	94	92	94
At least seven pairs of underpants	75	81	85	86	88	84	83	84
At least four jumpers, cardigans	76	79	72	72	84	74	72	74
All school uniform required	86	88	89	88	92	90	81	88
At least four pairs of trousers	69**	69	75	69	81	66	62	71
At least 50p a week for sweets	60***	68	44	49	56	55	42	51
Meat/fish/vegetarian equivalent twice a day	74	80	77	79	75	78	77	78
Computer suitable for school work	50**	54	41	40	40	46	35	43
Fresh fruit/vegetables once a day	93	95	94	94	96	92	94	94
A garden to play in	73***	80	70	63	77	66	63	69
Some new, not second-hand clothes	71*	79	67	72	74	78	66	71
A carpet in their bedroom	59***	67	75	64	80	63	66	68
A bed and bedding to her/himself	85***	93	96	92	96	92	95	94
A hobby or leisure activity	90*	95	91	90	83	93	85	90
Celebrations on special occasions	89	96	92	92	94	92	95	93
Swimming at least once a month	88***	85	70	77	67	78	75	76
Play group for pre-school aged children	87	88	89	89	95	90	86	89
A holiday away from home	82***	87	67	71	66	68	70	72
A school trip at least once a term	81	78	73	75	87	74	72	75
Friends round for tea or a snack	74***	73	55	60	54	63	60	61
N	129	227	566	534	93	145	160	1855

### **3.11 BY INCOME QUINTILE**

The income variable in this analysis is derived from a long classification of grouped household gross income in the ONS Omnibus Survey. The mid point of the group and the top of the first and bottom of the last group were taken as the income of the households within the groups and an equivalence scale (HBAI before housing costs) applied. It can be seen that where there is some significant variation in the proportion of each quintile claiming an item is a necessity, in only a few cases is it clearly related to the item linearly ie the proportion increases or falls with income quintile. In fact this is only true for 50p for sweets and a carpet in the bedroom where in both cases the proportion considering the item a necessity falls as income increases. In general however the lower the quintile the more likely an item is identified as a necessity.

**Table 11: Proportion judging an item a necessity by income quintile**

	EQUIVALENT INCOME QUINTILES					All
	1	2	3	4	5	
Three meals a day	91	89	91	88	91	89
Toys (e.g dolls, play figures, teddies)	82*	81	87	89	85	85
Leisure equipment (e.g sports equipment)	65	55	61	63	56	60
Enough bedrooms for every child	85**	81	77	80	72	79
Computer games	28***	20	19	7	10	17
A warm waterproof coat	95	94	95	97	98	96
Books of her/his own	91	91	90	90	90	90
A bike, new or second hand	64**	59	51	56	51	56
Construction toys such as Duplo or Lego	66	65	66	63	59	64
Educational games	87	85	85	84	83	85
New, properly fitted shoes	95	94	93	94	96	94
At least seven pairs of underpants	82	81	84	84	83	83
At least four jumpers, cardigans	79*	75	77	67	74	74
All school uniform required	90*	84	91	87	91	89
At least four pairs of trousers	78**	68	74	66	67	71
At least 50p a week for sweets	60***	56	55	40	38	50
Meat/fish/vegetarian equivalent twice a day	78	73	78	80	81	78
Computer suitable for school work	52***	46	42	33	37	42
Fresh fruit/vegetables once a day	93	92	96	94	96	94
A garden to play in	81***	76	70	55	56	68
Some new, not second-hand clothes	73	71	71	67	73	71
A carpet in their bedroom	73**	70	69	70	59	68
A bed and bedding to her/himself	95	92	96	93	95	94
A hobby or leisure activity	91	87	89	91	91	90
Celebrations on special occasions	92	91	92	93	93	92
Swimming at least once a month	84**	81	75	72	74	77
Play group for pre-school aged children	92	86	89	91	88	89
A holiday away from home	76	74	73	71	67	72
A school trip at least once a term	84***	78	75	67	69	75
Friends round for tea or a snack	68*	58	60	54	58	60
N	287	258	88	269	272	1365



#### **4. INVESTIGATING THE DIMENSIONALITY OF THE SCALE**

In this section we examine the relationship between the individual necessity items and the overall scores on items in three ways.

First we have dropped each item in turn and examined the rank order correlation coefficient between the overall score and the overall score without the item. The higher the correlation the less important is the item to the overall score. Nine items have correlation coefficients of at least .999 which indicates that any of them (but not all of them) could be dropped without changing the overall rank orders. There is a tendency for the items which higher proportions of the population considering them to be necessities to have the highest correlations - but the ordering is not identical. Thus for example computer games has a higher correlation and friends round for tea or a snack a lower correlation than might be expected given the proportions considering them necessities.

**Table 12: Correlation between each item and the overall scores**

	Correlation Coefficient	
At least 50p a week for sweets	.995	51
Friends round for tea or a snack	.995	61
Computer suitable for school work	.995	43
bike, new or second hand	.995	56
A carpet in their bedroom	.996	68
At least four pairs of trousers	.996	71
Leisure equipment (e.g sports equipment)	.996	61
Some new, not second-hand clothes	.996	71
Construction toys such as Duplo or Lego	.996	64
A garden to play in	.996	69
Enough bedrooms for every child	.997	79
Meat/fish/vegetarian equivalent twice a day	.997	78
At least four jumpers, cardigans	.997	74
A school trip at least once a term	.997	75
swimming at least once a month	.997	76
A holiday away from home	.997	72
Computer games	.998	18
Toys (e.g dolls, play figures, teddies)	.998	85
Play group for pre-school aged children	.998	89
At least seven pairs of underpants	.998	84
Educational games	.998	84
All school uniform required	.999	88
A hobby or leisure activity	.999	90
Celebrations on special occasions	.999	93
Three meals a day	.999	91
Fresh fruit/vegetables once a day	.999	94
Books of her/his own	.999	90
A bed and bedding to her/himself	.999	94
New, properly fitted shoes	1.000	94
A warm waterproof coat	1.000	95

Second we undertook an Alpha analysis, a technique designed to assess the contribution that each item makes to an overall scale. This analysis confirmed that all items contribute more or less equally to the overall scale and there was no case for dropping any item. However, the items do not form an overwhelmingly strong dimension. The corrected item-total correlations are all moderate, reflecting variation between individuals in their selection of necessities.

Therefore, third, we undertook a factor analysis to see if it was possible to identify more than one independent dimension within the scale.. The principle component

analysis largely confirms what we already know from the reliability analysis and the alpha statistics. Six dimensions emerged. The first component and the additive scale are virtually identical because the items are more or less all pulling equally in a similar direction. Thus the item loading/weights (or item components correlations) on the first component are all moderate, positive, and fall within a fairly narrow range; from 0.346 to 0.535. This is precisely what we would expect given the high alpha coefficients and the item-total correlations from the reliability analysis which are also moderate, positive, and fall within a similarly narrow band. In other words, giving the items each a weight of one is little different than giving them any set of weights which vary little. However the first component could hardly be described as dominant: although obviously more important than other components/dimensions it accounts for no more than 20 per cent of the original variance. The moderate item-total correlations from the reliability analysis indicated as much. So the 30 items form a single dimension/scale but one of fairly moderate stature. To investigate further the interrelationships between children's necessities we applied principal-axis factoring with varimax rotation. Two interpretable, conceptually distinct factors were indicated covering two-thirds of the items. The first factor could be described as indexing children's minimum standard of living. Ten items associated with food (FRVEG, MEAL, MEAT), clothing/bedding (COAT, SHOES, BED, SCHUN) plus basic developmental or educational needs (BOOKS, EDUCG, TOYS) were strongly associated with this dimension. The second factor captured eleven items associated chiefly with leisure activities and social opportunities (BIKE, LEISEQ, PCSCH, PCGAME, SWIM, HOL, LEGO, SWMON, GARD, SNACK, TRIP). These two factors account for 9 and 5 per cent respectively of the total variance. There is then evidence for two, rather weakly defined sub-scales of children's necessities. However, further analysis indicated that little would be gained by using these two sub-scales rather than a single, underlying dimension and it was therefore decided to stick with the simpler, overall additive scale.'

## 4.1 COMPARISON OF MEAN SCORES

The next section continues the descriptive analysis by adding up the number of items that each individual considers to be a necessity and comparing the overall mean scores for each explanatory group. The results are summarised in the table below. The overall mean score is 21.3 (out of a possible total of 30). There is no significant differences in the mean scores by gender, ethnicity, tenure, whether children are present and employment status. Those aged 65-74 had statistically significantly higher necessity scores than those aged 16-24. The sub sample from Wales have significantly lower scores than all other regions. Those without work experience had lower scores than all other groups than the Professionals. Those who left school aged 14 have higher mean scores than those who left aged 19-25 and those still in education. Those who left school aged under 16 have higher scores than all other groups except those who left at 16. The other family type (mainly mixed forms) have lower scores than pensioner couples and married with dependent children and the married no child also have low scores than couple pensioners.. Those with incomes in the lowest quintile have higher scores than those in the top two quintiles. No other differences observed are significant ( $p < 0.05$  level using ANOVA and Scheffe's test).

**Table 13: Mean number of items considered necessities by the characteristics of the individual**

	Sex of Respondent		All
	Male	Female	
Mean	21.3	21.3	21.3
SD	7.2	6.7	7.0
N	878	977	1855

No sig difference

	Grouped Age						All
	16 to 24	25 to 44	45 to 54	55 to 64	65 to 74	75 and over	
Mean	20.3	21.1	21.3	21.5	22.9	21.0	21.3
SD	6.6	6.8	6.9	7.1	6.9	8.1	7.0
N	246	683	312	267	204	142	1855

Sig: 65-74>16-24 \*

	Grouped regions							All
	The North	Midlands and East Anglia	London	South East	South West	Wales	Scotland	
Mean	21.6	21.5	21.5	21.5	21.4	17.5	21.3	21.3
SD	7.0	6.9	6.8	6.5	5.9	10.1	5.8	7.0
N	501	498	177	258	157	99	165	1855

Sig: Wales<all other regions.

	Class							All
	I Professional	II Intermediate	III Non skilled non manual	IV Skilled manual	V Partly skilled	VI Unskilled	army / never worked	
mean	20.5	20.7	21.5	21.9	21.9	22.4	16.6	21.3
SD	6.1	6.9	6.8	6.9	6.6	7.3	10.1	7.0
N	156	539	237	486	303	92	43	1855

Sig: Never worked<all except Prof.

	no children	children'	All
Mean	21.2	21.6	21.3
SD	7.2	6.2	7.0
N	1295	560	1855

Diff. Not sig

	Ethnicity of respondent		All
	White	non-white	
mean	21.3	21.7	21.3
SD	6.9	7.6	7.0
N	1768	72	1840

Diff not sig

	Age left full time education.						All
	<16	16	17,18	19-22	23+	Still in education	
Mean	22.5	21.6	20.3	20.5	20.5	19.2	21.3
SD	6.8	7.1	7.3	6.4	5.8	7.5	7.0
N	535	527	304	238	157	93	1854

Sig: under 16>17,18,19-22,still in ed

	Housing tenure				All
	Owens outright	Owens mortgage	Rents LA HA	Rents privately	
Mean	21.2	21.2	21.9	20.7	21.3
SD	7.5	6.5	7.4	6.4	7.0
N	488	853	348	164	1853

No sig differences

	full time	part time	self employe	unemplo	looking after	retired	long term sick	student	other	All
Mean	20.8	21.7	20.8	20.5	21.3	22.0	23.4	20.9	20.4	21.3
SD	7.0	5.9	8.0	7.3	6.5	7.3	5.7	7.0	7.9	7.0
N	700	266	144	65	138	380	76	42	44	1855

No differences sig.

	FAMILY TYPE							
	single pens	couple pens	married dep child	married no child	lone parent	single adult	other	All
Mean	21.4	23.0	21.4	21.0	21.8	21.4	19.1	21.3
SD	8.2	6.4	6.4	7.1	6.3	6.6	8.0	7.0
N	129	227	566	534	93	145	160	1855

Sig: married no child <couple pensioners. Other <couple pensioners and married dependent child

	EQUIVALENT INCOME QUINTILES					All
	1	2	3	4	5	
Mean	23.1	22.0	22.1	20.8	20.9	21.8
SD	6.1	6.0	5.8	6.4	6.1	6.1
N	287	258	278	269	272	1365

Sig: quintile 1>quintile 4and 5.

## 4.2 MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS

The first technique employed is to apply Answer Tree analysis to each of the necessities. Answer Tree automatically explores the interaction between a dependant variable - in this case whether or not an item is considered a necessity and a host of independent variable. It is similar to chi squared but identifies the independent variables which are most closely associated with an item being considered a necessity. So for example in relation to three meals a day the only factor to explain variations in judgements is gender with social males less likely to consider this item is a necessity. In relation to dolls a more detailed breakdown emerges. The first split is on ethnicity with the white population more likely to consider dolls a necessity. Then within the white population there is a slit by family type with the pensioners and other(mainly young people less likely than the other family types to consider a doll a necessity. Leisure equipment presents a more complex picture. It first splits on gender with men more likely to consider it a necessity. Then among men it splits by class and within the non professional class by age group. Among women it splits by age and

then among the older women by tenure. The same analysis has been undertaken for all the items but as the explanation of the results begins to become rather repetitive and also some of the diagrams are unmanageable they have been relegated to the appendix.

However it is also possible to undertake an answer tree analysis on the overall scores and the results of this are summarised below. In this analysis Answer Tree was left to decide what was the most efficient split of scores. The first split was into four income groups with quintiles 1, 2 and 3 with the highest scores and the unclassified (mainly young people) group with the lowest scores. Then the quintiles 2 and 3 group splits by whether there are children present and the no children group splits again into quintile group. The 4 and 5 quintile group splits into age left education. The group with missing income data splits by family type and again whether children are present. At the end of this splitting we have a group of 182 cases with a mean score of 23.2 - those with no children in quintile group 3 in contrast with a group of 55 (mainly young people with a mean score of 17.1.

Finally we attempted multiple regression with the overall score as the dependant variable. The first model tried was with all the independent variable free to enter in stepwise. Two variables emerged which between them explained per cent of the variation. They were equivalent income and social class(manual/non manual). Both these factors have a negative impact on the overall scores.

#### **Regression analysis of overall scores Model 1.**

Variable	B	Beta	t	Sig
Income	-6.986E-05	-.125	-4.28	.000
Social class	-.737	-.061	-2.08	.038
Constant	23.65		66.4	.000

The second model employed only those variables that had been identified as significant in determining overall scores in the Answer Tree analysis of overall scores. Only three variables emerged education level (left school at 16/over16) income



quintile (missing/not missing) and family type (other not other) which between them explained only 3 percent of variation. The model is summarised below. Left school at 16 is positively correlated with scores that is those with post 16 education are less generous, income data missing is negatively correlated that means mainly young people have lower necessity scores, as do non standard family types.

**Regression analysis of overall scores. Model 2.**

	B	Beta	t	Significance
Education level	1.67	.119	5.18	.000
Income missing	-1.75	-.11	-4.81	.000
Family type	1.62	.065	2.81	.005
Constant	19.32		33.28	.000

Neither of these models are very satisfactory - the proportion of variation explained is very low. However they both seem to be pointing to the importance of this young/unclassified family group with no income data - young people not yet in employment - Thatcher's children and the upper socio economic group - as having the meanest judgements about necessities.

**5. CONCLUSION**

Out of the children items selected in this study all but two were considered necessities by more than half of respondents. There are some significant variations in the proportion of different types of people considering an item a necessity and in the number of items considered necessities. It appears that in general the professional classes, young people, those still in education and the top quintile groups are less likely to consider items are necessities. In contrast younger pensioners and people in the lowest quintile are more likely to consider an item a necessity. But this is not always the case for any particular necessity. Also there is a good deal of overlap and interaction in the characteristics we have examined. Multivariate analysis tended to confirm the conclusions drawn from the bivariate analysis. Examination of the characteristics of the overall scale tend to suggest that there is not a strong case for dropping any of the items in subsequent analysis except for those that do not meet

the 50 per cent threshold. They appear to form a unidimensional scale of socially perceived necessities for children.

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