

# Tackling Exclusion



## Overview

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## Summary

There are many dimensions of 'social exclusion', linked and mutually reinforcing. Some groups are particularly vulnerable, including:

- those growing up in low income households;
- children suffering from some form of family conflict;
- young people in care;
- some BME groups.

The growth in 'social exclusion' in recent years reflects a wide range of economic and social changes. It also reflects the inadequacies of some policy responses from government and failures of service delivery. The National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal provides the framework for tackling exclusion and disadvantage, through a variety of programmes but mainly through measures to improve the quality, relevance and co-ordination of main programmes and services.

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## What's the problem?

The SEU has defined 'social exclusion' as:

*'a shorthand term for what can happen when people or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime, bad health and family breakdown'.*

Clearly 'social exclusion' means more than poverty (though it includes that). There is a variety of dimensions to exclusion, but critically:

- the characteristics are linked and
- they reinforce one another.

The SEU offers some examples of these interrelationships:

- *rough sleepers*
  - 30-50 per cent suffer from mental health problems
  - only 38 per cent have any educational qualifications
  - up to 50 per cent have a serious alcohol problem
  - up to 80 per cent have drug problems
- young runaways – Compared with those who do not run away:
  - three times more likely to be regular truants
  - twice as likely to have been excluded from school
  - one and a half times more likely to come from a workless household
  - five times more likely to have problems with drugs
  - three times more likely to have been in trouble with the police
- *Prisoners*
  - 56 per cent of prisoners are unemployed before sentencing
  - 50 per cent have poor reading skills, 80 per cent have poor writing skills and 67 per cent have poor numeracy skills
  - 38 per cent will be homeless on release

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 47 per cent of prisoners are in debt at time of sentence</li> <li>- 66 per cent of prisoners admit to use of drugs (other than alcohol) in the year before imprisonment</li> </ul> <p>These are just a few examples of how the characteristics of exclusion reinforce each other. Unless these links are understood, local strategies to tackle exclusion will not work.</p> <p>Only a very small percentage of the population suffer from the most extreme forms of exclusion – such as rough sleeping – but the SEU estimates that a third of us may be at risk in some way. Particularly vulnerable groups include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• those growing up in low income households;</li> <li>• children suffering from some form of family conflict;</li> <li>• young people in care;</li> <li>• some BME groups.</li> </ul> <p>Wherever they live, these are examples of groups that are at a disproportionate risk of suffering some kind of exclusion. But in England, the combined effect of the housing market and local housing policies mean that these vulnerable groups are concentrated in particular neighbourhoods. The common feature is the availability of cheap housing, much of it in the 'social rented sector' – council or housing association accommodation.</p>
	<p><b>What's the explanation?</b></p> <p>The growth in the numbers of people affected by some form of exclusion is a result of a variety of economic and social changes, explored in the overview of neighbourhood renewal, but which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a more open global economy that has meant more competition and the need to continually update skills;</li> <li>• the decline in the importance and scale of traditional industries such as manufacturing and mining;</li> <li>• the growth of knowledge-based industries that require higher levels of qualifications;</li> <li>• an increase in the numbers of young people growing up in lone parent households, which are disproportionately likely to be on a low income;</li> <li>• many more people experiencing breakdown in their parents' relationship and/or their own, which can leave them less well equipped to cope with other difficulties they may face;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the polarisation and fragmentation of many communities, so that, for example, poor and unemployed people are less likely to live in a community where others might be able to put them in touch with a job.</li> </ul> <p>But in addition, it is now widely recognised that part of the explanation lies in the failure of public services to tackle key issues adequately, because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• no single agency was responsible;</li> <li>• there was insufficient co-ordination between agencies;</li> <li>• some policy changes inadvertently increased problems elsewhere;</li> <li>• a variety of agencies had some involvement in tackling the same issue.</li> </ul>
	<h3>What's the policy context?</h3> <p>The framework for the policy response to these issues is provided by the national strategy for neighbourhood renewal – described in outline in the neighbourhood renewal overview. We provide a summary of the main programmes through which the strategy is being delivered in another entry in this section of the site: Neighbourhood Renewal Programmes.</p> <p>But the response extends beyond the national strategy – across government in fact, with three specific goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• preventing social exclusion from occurring in the first place, by reducing the risk factors and especially for those groups most vulnerable;</li> <li>• reintegrating those who become excluded;</li> <li>• delivering basic minimum standards to all – in health, education, in-work income, employment and in tackling crime.</li> </ul> <p><i>What does renewal.net offer?</i></p> <p>This section of the site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• explores some earlier experiences of trying to tackle the problems of exclusion and deprived neighbourhoods – <i>Experience of previous programmes</i>;</li> <li>• examines the issues facing some groups that suffer disproportionately, looking specifically at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Black and Minority Ethnic communities</li> <li>- Children and young people</li> <li>- Elderly people</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	- Disabled people
	<p><b>References</b></p> <p>Social Exclusion Unit: <i>Preventing Social Exclusion</i> (Cabinet Office 2001)</p> <p>This and a variety of other relevant reports is available on the SEU website: <a href="http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/seu">www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/seu</a></p>