

SOCIETY

Number in poverty has soared since Thatcher

By Chris Green
SENIOR REPORTER

The proportion of impoverished households has more than doubled to 33 per cent in the 30 years since Margaret Thatcher was prime minister, the largest study of deprivation ever conducted in the UK has concluded.

The research found that rises in the cost of living meant a full-time job was no longer enough to prevent some people from falling into poverty. One in every six adults in paid work is now defined as poor.

Last night the Government's poverty tsar, Frank Field, said the study's stark findings proved the Coalition's approach to the problem "isn't working" and called for the leaders of all political parties to make manifesto pledges to reverse the trend.

The Poverty and Social Exclusion project, based on interviews with more than 14,500 people in Britain and Northern Ireland carried out by eight universities and two research agencies, found that 18 million people cannot afford adequate housing while about 5.5 million adults go without essential clothing and 2.5 million children are living in damp homes.

The survey showed that the percentage of UK households which lacked "three or more of the basic necessities of life" has increased from 14 per cent (about three million) in 1983, the year that Margaret Thatcher was re-elected, to 33 per cent (8.7 million) in 2012, despite the size of the

economy doubling in that period. Researchers used the "three or more" formula as it is directly comparable with methods used in 1983.

Academics said the findings dispelled the myth that poverty was caused by a lack of work or by people shirking. Almost half the "employed poor" were clocking up 40 hours a week or more.

According to separate research by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, about half of the UK's 13 million people in poverty are in a household where someone works. Between 2008 and 2014 the cost of essentials such as childcare, rent, food and energy have driven up the amount needed by almost a third, it said.

Professor David Gordon of the Townsend Centre for International Poverty Research at the University of Bristol, which led the project funded by the Economic and Social Research Council, said the Government's strategy to tackle the root causes of poverty had "clearly failed".

Mr Field, the Labour MP who was tasked by David Cameron in 2010 to examine poverty, said the study "sadly emphasises that working doesn't now eliminate a family's poverty".

He added: "Tackling the causes of poverty is clearly the right strategy. This report shows that it isn't working. Here, then, is a most major challenge to all the political parties - what is your manifesto going to say to reverse the horrendous rise in the numbers of poor?"



The survey found that 18 million people cannot afford adequate housing GETTY

A Department for Work and Pensions spokesman said: "There is strong evidence that incomes have improved over the last 30 years, despite the misleading picture painted by this report. The independent statistics are clear, there are 1.4 million fewer people in poverty since 1998."

{i} Jonathan Bradshaw, professor of social policy at the University of York, said that "in many households parents sacrifice their own welfare" to try to keep their children insulated from the effects of poverty.

Poverty by numbers

18m People cannot afford adequate housing conditions

12m Are too poor to engage in common social activities

5.5m Adults go without essential clothing

4m Children and adults are not properly fed by today's standards

2.5m Children live in damp homes

1.5m Children live in households that cannot afford to heat their home

1 in 3 People cannot afford to heat their homes adequately in the winter

1 in 4 Adults have incomes below what they consider is needed to avoid poverty

17% Of adults in paid work are defined as poor

21% Were in arrears on their household bills in 2012

DIPLOMACY

Libya demands US returns man accused of embassy attack

By Kim Sengupta
DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

The Libyan government yesterday denied it had prior knowledge of the US capture of a top suspect in the deadly 2012 assault on Americans in Benghazi and demanded his return.

In a statement read on television, the interim government condemned the seizure of Ahmed Abu Khattala, who the US accuses of involvement in the attack on its consulate in Benghazi that left four Americans

dead, including Ambassador Chris Stevens.

The justice minister, Saleh al-Margahi, said: "We stress our right to try Abu Khattala on our territory according to our laws."

Last year American forces had seized Nazih Abdul-Hamid al-Ruqai, also known as Anas al-Libi, wanted in connection with the 1998 east Africa embassy bombings, in Tripoli, with the Libyan authorities maintaining, also on that occasion, that they had been kept in the dark. It was later claimed, by



Ahmed Abu Khattala was captured by US special forces AP

diplomatic sources, that the Libyan government was, in fact, told about the Khattala mission - but only after it had been completed.

The Americans were said to have been concerned that any prior revelation of information may have been leaked to the target, or may even have led to the Delta Force unit carrying out the task being ambushed.

ment is doing all it can to deal with the situation.

She told the Commons yesterday: "While the surge in demand usually experienced during the summer months started much

earlier in the year, I would like to say to anybody who is unable to travel because of a delay... that I am sorry and the Government is sorry for the inconvenience they have suffered."

POLITICS

May apologises for passport delays

By Lindsay Watling

Home Secretary Theresa May has apologised for delays in processing passport applications and insisted the Govern-

EDUCATION

Gove approves 38 new free schools

By Richard Garner
EDUCATION EDITOR

Education Secretary Michael Gove gave the go ahead for 38 new free schools yesterday - bringing the total to 331.

The latest batch of approvals appears to confirm a trend towards free schools being operated by multi-academy chains rather than individual groups or parents. In addition, there appears to be a move away from faith groups opening schools - one aspect of the scheme which has proved controversial.

Among today's approvals is a new sixth-form college for the creative industries in Liverpool run by the group behind the Liverpool Institute for the Performing Arts co-sponsored by Sir Paul McCartney.

"Free schools are giving thousands of children from ordinary backgrounds the kind of education previously reserved for the rich and lucky," said Mr Gove in announcing the proposals.

Of the 38, 35 are due to open in September 2015, 18 are primary schools, eight secondary, seven all-through schools from three to 19 and five are for 16 to 19-year-olds.

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