

# Family Finance Surveys User Conference 2024

Wednesday 10 July 2024, 9.45 – 15.40

## Abstracts

### Keynote presentation

#### **Understanding the prevalence and effects of deep poverty through existing data infrastructure**

Daniel Edmiston, London School of Economics and the Autonomous University of Barcelona.

What forms and degrees of poverty are missed through existing data infrastructure and analysis? Why does this matter? And what can we do about it? Drawing on analysis of the Family Resources Survey and Understanding Society, this presentation explores these questions to consider the challenges associated with understanding deep poverty and its long-term effects in the UK.

### Research paper abstracts

#### **How do those already out of employment fare when the state pension age rises?**

Anna Henry, Institute for Fiscal Studies

We assess the impact of increasing the female state pension age on spending patterns and wellbeing. Using the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing (ELSA) we study the effect of the increase in state pension age (SPA) for women from 60 to 66 between 2010 and 2020 in the UK. Focussing on a group of women who left work prior to 60, we show these individuals face a 40% drop in income when their SPA increases. Despite this drop in income, we find that spending on non-durable goods (food consumption in and out of the home, energy, clothing, and leisure) does not show significant change. However, we find a 6% decrease in the likelihood of giving a transfer to people outside the home. We find that depressive symptoms increase for women who left employment early; this increase is particularly large for less educated individuals and singles.

## **Falling behind on household bills: Exploring trends in the incidence of this debt in the UK since 2009**

Maya Middleton-Welch, University of Liverpool

Falling behind on household bill payments is a particularly harmful form of debt (Salter, 2014) and can affect the ability of individuals to access basic necessities such as housing and energy (Lane et al, 2018). There is currently limited empirical evidence about the extent to which UK populations have been affected by this form of indebtedness in the UK over time.

This research will investigate how the total number and percentage of UK individuals belonging to households which have been affected by this form of indebtedness has varied over time. It will also explore how the likelihood of a person belonging to a household that was behind on household bills has varied across different demographic and socioeconomic groups over time.

The analysis will involve the utilisation of descriptive analysis techniques and longitudinal regression methods to analyse Understanding Society Main Study data (University of Essex and Institute for Social and Economic Research, 2023). Possible factors which may underlie trends to be explored include whether an individual was receiving benefits and whether the individual had caring responsibilities.

This work is in the early stages. By the time of the conference, preliminary results will have been obtained. The presenter would be grateful for the opportunity to present preliminary results at the conference and to receive thoughts from others about this research.

## **Material deprivation in the UK: beyond the binary**

Ana Maria Nicoricu, University of Manchester

Traditional approaches to assessing poverty, which primarily rely on income levels, fail to reflect the diverse challenges experienced by those living in precarious conditions. As a result, complementary measures, such as material deprivation, have been developed.

This study challenges the dichotomous categorisation of material deprivation in the UK and proposes a multi-group classification approach. The analytical sample is represented by 5,395 families (with children) in the UK. The 2019/20 Household Below Average Income dataset was selected for analysis as it represents the main source of material deprivation information in the UK. Latent Class Analysis was applied to this dataset. A combination of goodness of fit and interpretability favoured a five-class solution. Measurement equivalence was tested by comparing different family types and was confirmed, reinforcing the robustness of our results. The analysis revealed the nuanced reality and typologies of material deprivation, highlighting the complex interplay between child and adult deprivation and the prioritisation of resources.

## **Floor coverings in social housing**

Bekah Ryder, Altair Consultancy and Management Services Ltd

For those who are new to social housing, it can come as a shock that homes do not come with floor coverings as standard. After all, the people who need social housing are those least likely to have the income or savings needed for what can be quite a significant spend.

A lack of floor covering is most commonly an issue in social housing. End Furniture Poverty survey data found that there are an estimated 760,000 adults currently living in social housing with no carpet or flooring in their bedrooms and living areas, as many as 15% of UK households living in social housing. Our survey showed 45% of social renters spent over £1,000 on providing floor coverings, with nearly a quarter getting into debt (through taking out a loan) to pay these costs.

The lack of floor coverings significantly impacts tenants financially; we estimate it takes at least 20 months for those on Universal Credit and eight months for those on low incomes to repay the cost of floor coverings. Tenants have told us that they feel stigmatised by the lack of floor coverings, with those responding to our survey using the word 'poor' as the main singular word response.

Cost is the biggest barrier to landlords providing floor coverings. But there are numerous benefits to providing, for both tenants and landlords, including increased tenancy sustainment, greater pride in an area, increased community cohesion, and health and wellbeing benefits from less anxiety about money and reduced social isolation.

Longleigh Foundation, a grant making body founded in social housing, commissioned Altair to conduct research into the provision of floor coverings in social housing in England, Scotland, and Wales. In our presentation, we will talk through the findings of our research and our recommendations for government and social housing providers.