

Families & Communities

CPF

Discussion Brief 2022/1



CPF Discussion Briefs exist to stimulate debate. They do not necessarily represent the views of the Conservative Party.

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Dear Colleagues,

2022/1 Families & Communities

Thank you to everybody who participated in our consultation on Housing and Planning. This new consultation paper invites your input on how to strengthen families and communities.

Please send your responses to the questions in this paper to CPF.Papers@conservatives.com, using the associated response form published alongside the paper on the CPF website. The deadline for submitting your response is 20th March. We aim to publish our next discussion paper, on A Dynamic and Relevant United Kingdom, on 9th May, after a campaigning break for the local elections.

A summary of responses to this consultation paper will be sent to the Prime Minister's Policy Unit, relevant Ministers, Party Chairman and CPF Chairman by mid-April. We look forward to hearing your ideas.

Kind regards,

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The Challenge

"The [Supporting Families] programme will continue to support recovery by helping children back to school, helping those who have lost their jobs get back to work, by helping young people avoid crime, protecting mental health and by tackling domestic abuse."
(Eddie Hughes MP, Minister for Supporting Families, 26 March 2021)¹

In Autumn 2020, CPF Groups called for the government to "do more to back long-term, stable relationships, particularly marriage and family life" and identified childcare cost & availability as the top barrier to in-work progression.

Over the past decade, government has been in a race to provide ever more hours of childcare to working parents of three and four-year-olds. This has been welcomed by parents, however there is relatively little support available for parents of younger and older children and little flexibility for parents to use this provision in alternative ways with traditional nurseries. With the rising cost of living, the continued importance of supporting families and the moral imperative of supporting parents (mostly mothers) to make choices for their families and careers, we need to take a fresh look at the role of the state in supporting families in the 21st century.

The government's Supporting Families programme¹ aims to:

- Raise the ambition for vulnerable families, driving local services to work better together to build their resilience and help them to thrive.
- Drive improvements to local partnership working and data use so that vulnerable families receive the right support, at the right time. This means investing more in good practice, overcoming barriers to data-sharing and involving the voice of families in service design and commissioning (that is, its operation and performance).
- Update our eligibility and outcomes framework to ensure it continues to reflect the needs of families and provides flexibility for authorities to respond.
- Help local areas to work towards stronger multi-agency, data-driven local partnerships by co-designing a road map to achieving a mature local system of family support services and considering new incentives to help drive progress.
- Using our national voice, alongside local and national networks to champion the case for early help, ensuring families get the support they need as early as possible before their problems escalate into crises and they need statutory support.

Questions for discussion

1. Poll: How well does the current provision support families across the country and the income distribution? (On a scale of 0-"not at all" through 5-"adequately" to 10-"as well as possible")
2. What are the biggest weaknesses in the current government offer to support families?
3. Poll: How well do government policies match Conservative family values? (Same 0-10 scale as above)
4. In what ways might they be improved?
5. What single policy does your group think could most strengthen families and communities?
6. Is there any other observation you would like to make?

Recent Government Action & Plans

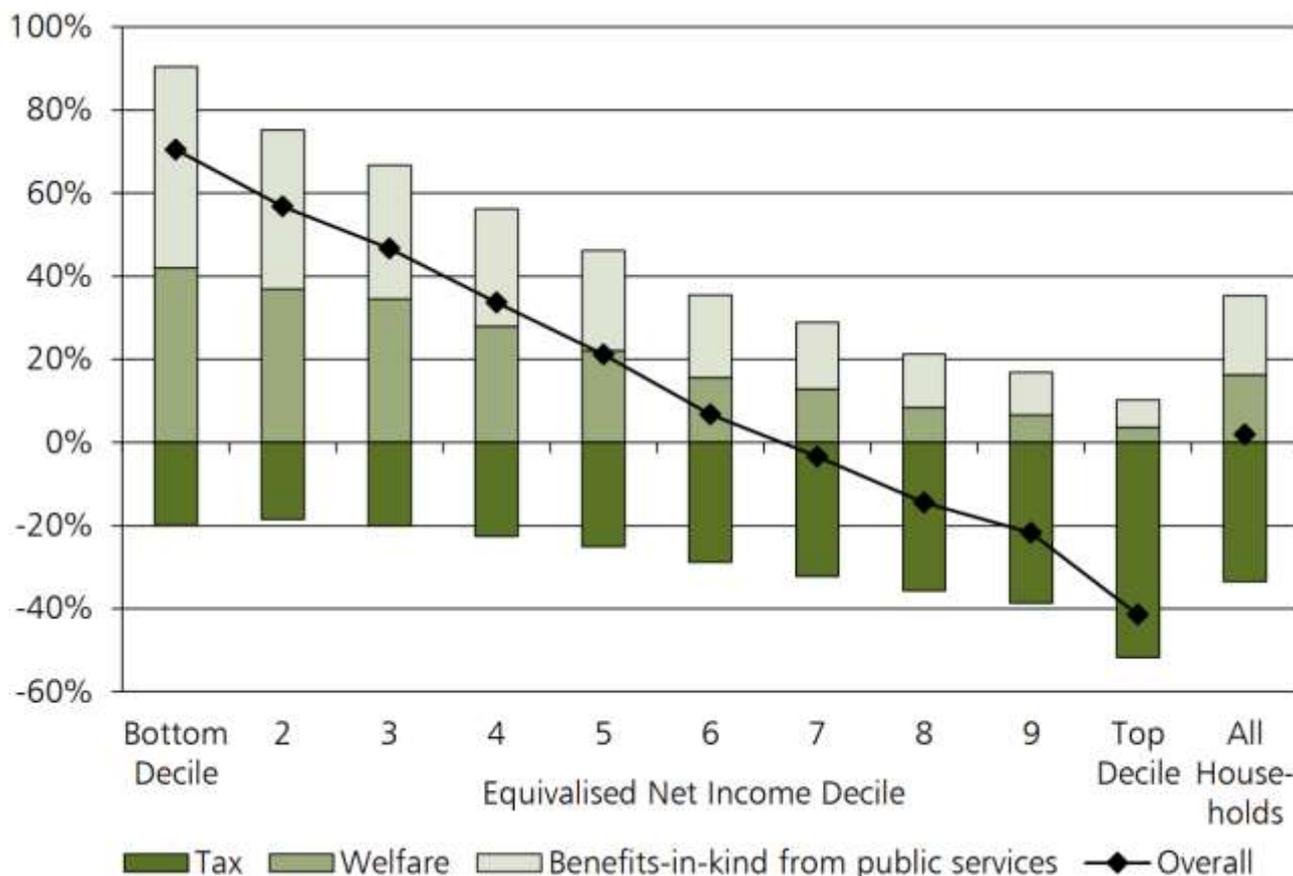
*"We want every family not just to avoid poor outcomes, but to thrive. We want to help them to build their resilience and community connections and empower them to find their own solutions to problems."*¹

- More than 1.21 million three-and four-year olds—nine in ten of them—and over 124,000 two-year-olds are now benefiting from 15 hours of free childcare a week for 38 weeks of the year; and over 328,000 three-and four-year olds, those whose parents are in work, now receive a total of 30 hours of free childcare a week.²
- 282,000 families are now benefitting from the government's Tax-Free Childcare offer, reducing the cost of childcare for 329,000 children.³
- The government will deliver the "Action Areas" set out in the Early Years Healthy Development Review, encouraging all local authorities to publish a clear Start for Life offer for parents and carers, showing families what support they can expect to receive during the 1,001 critical days from conception to age two, and encouraging local authorities to make Family Hubs a place for families to access Start for Life services as well as advice and support with other issues.⁴
- An impact study which tracked the outcomes achieved by families supported by the Troubled Families programme between 2015 and 2018 highlighted its role in preventing high-cost statutory interventions. Compared to families with similar characteristics who had not been on the programme, the study found 19-24 months after starting to receive support the proportion of:
 - Children in care was found to have reduced from 2.5% to 1.7% (32% decrease);
 - Adults receiving custodial sentences fell from 1.6% to 1.2% (25% decrease);
 - Juveniles receiving custodial sentences fell from 0.8% to 0.5% (38% decrease);
 - Adults claiming Jobseeker's Allowance fell by 11%;
 - A cost benefit analysis showed the programme provides £2.28 of savings for every pound invested.¹
- In March 2020 the government launched the "Everyone In" scheme, whereby local authorities were asked to house immediately rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping.²⁰
- Under the government's landmark Domestic Abuse Act, councils now have to find accommodation for people made homeless through domestic abuse, helping to ensure victims do not remain with their abuser for fear of not having a roof over their head.⁵
- Investing £2 billion over the next three years to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping, including support for households in England who are homeless or at risk of losing their home.⁶
- The Changing Futures programme will provide essential support and treatment in 15 local areas across England over the next three years for vulnerable adults facing a combination of homelessness, substance misuse, poor mental health, domestic abuse, or contact with the criminal justice system.⁷
- The Government's recent Prisons Strategy White Paper set out a plan to create 18,000 additional, modern prison places and up to 2,000 new temporary places—the biggest prison-building programme in more than 100 years. The paper includes rigorous new literacy and numeracy standards, a job-matching service to find employment and new "Resettlement Passports", providing proper plans for all prisoners on release with all the things they need to start looking for work and to access vital support services in the community.⁸

Context: Charts and Data

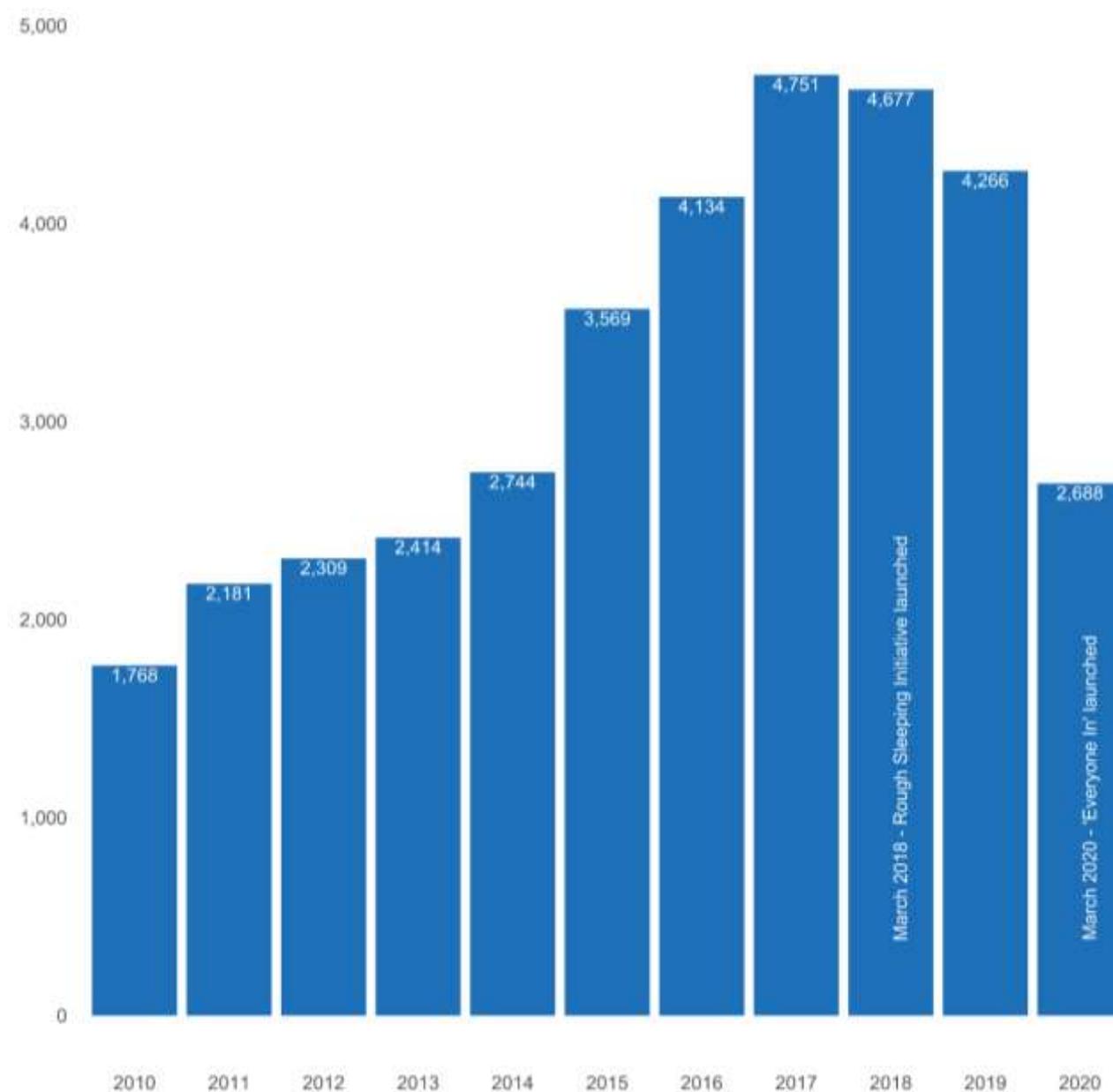
- Unpaid informal care provided by friends and family is essential to our society and the economy. In 2016, around 2 million adults in the UK received informal care. This is the equivalent of just over 4 million adult social care workers working every week of the year at their median weekly hours and was valued at £59.5 billion per year.⁹
- In 2018-19, over a quarter (29%) of all households were led by someone aged 65 or over: 6.9 million households in total. Nearly half of these (45%) were single-person households, more than twice the rate in younger age groups. Over 3.1 million adults aged 65 and over lived alone. The majority of these single adults (2.1 million) were women.¹⁰
- In 2020 to 2021, almost one in every twelve adults in England (8.6%) reported feeling lonely “often” or “always”. Those single or widowed were at particular risk of experiencing loneliness more often. In addition, social renters were more likely to report that they were often or always lonely (17% compared with 6% of owner occupiers and 9% of private renters).¹¹
- Around one in six (17%) adults experienced some form of depression in summer 2021 (21 July to 15 August); this is a decrease since early 2021 (21% during 27 January to 7 March) but is still above the levels prior to March 2020 (10%).¹²
- Children from the poorest 20% of households in the UK are four times as likely to have serious mental health difficulties by the age of 11 compared with those from the wealthiest 20% of households. Severe mental illness has been found to reduce life expectancy by 10 to 20 years.¹³
- Seven million working-age families (26%), containing 15.8 million people, are now entitled to claim Universal Credit, including five in every six lone parent families and 95% of lone parent renters.¹⁴

Overall level of public spending received, and tax paid, as a percentage of net income (incl. households’ benefits-in-kind from public services), by income decile, in 2021-22¹⁵



- There are some 2.3 million victims of domestic abuse a year aged 16 to 74 (two-thirds of whom are women) and more than one in ten of all offences recorded by the police are domestic abuse related. The cost of domestic abuse is estimated to be approximately £66bn for victims of domestic abuse in England and Wales for the year ending March 2017.¹⁶
- At the start of 2022, there were just over 79,000 people in prison in England and Wales (96% of them men; 4.2% for less than 12 months), leaving a spare capacity of around 2,200 useable places.¹⁷ The prison population is projected to increase to 98,500 by March 2026, largely as a result of the recruitment of an extra 23,400 police officers.¹⁸
- In June 2020, 34,830 households were assessed as homeless and therefore owed a relief duty; and 31,210 households were assessed as being threatened with homelessness, and therefore owed a prevention duty. A further 96,600 households were in temporary accommodation.¹⁹
- The number of people in England estimated to be sleeping rough on a given night in autumn fell in 2020 for the third year in a row from its peak in 2017 but remained higher than in 2010. Nearly half (44%) of all people sleeping rough are in London and the South East.²⁰

Estimated number of people sleeping rough on a single night in autumn in England since 2010²⁰



Sources and Further Details

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