



## **Aspects of Social Exclusion from the Millennium Cohort Study (First Wave)**

Centre for Longitudinal Studies for the RERC

January 2006

1. We can get some idea of the distribution of poverty and social exclusion over rural and urban areas of England, and the relative spatial concentration from responses in the Millennium Cohort survey given, mainly in 2001, by families who had a new birth during the period September 2000 to August 2001. Clearly this may not apply to other age groups in the population, but the patterns found are nevertheless likely to be indicative.
2. Poverty is for this purpose defined as having net family income (roughly 'equivalised', i.e. adjusted for family size and composition) below 60% of the median. Other dimensions of social exclusion are picked up on a few indicators such as use of formal advice services, vehicle access, and internet access as illustrations.
3. The incidence of poverty thus defined was lower in rural and semi-rural areas than urban England, which is another way of saying that relatively affluent people are more likely to live in the countryside, especially villages and more dispersed areas, but not that there are no poor people there at all. Around one in six of the families interviewed in rural areas were below this income line, compared with nearly one in three in Urban England (Table 1)
4. A relevant difference is that the poor families in towns and cities were much more likely to be found in areas in which poverty concentrated than

those living in villages and dispersed rural areas: Virtually none of the 'village poor' live in areas classified as high child poverty zones, whereas 39% of the poor living in fringe/small towns and 48% of the urban poor.

**Table 1 Incidence of Poverty and Settlement Type**

	Village/ dispersed	Rural town/ fringe	Urban
Percentage of all families below 60% median equivalent H-hold income	15	17	30
Percentage of all families Living in ward with concentrations of child poverty *	1	19	27
Percentage of poor families living in high poverty wards	3	39	48**

\*Living in 2001 in electoral wards with more than 38% of children under 16 in families receiving low-income – tested benefits in 1998 ( top quartile in England and Wales) but not including wards with high minority ethnic populations, most of which also had high concentrations of low-income families, and all of which were in urban England.

\*\*split between market towns (42.4%) and other urban (55.1%)

- As one indicator of the social exclusion thought to be associated with poverty we looked at responses to a question about sources of advice (other than family or neighbours) to whom a mother had turned. Sources include GP, Heath Visitor, Church, other advice service.

**Table 2: Percentage of mothers of who had not sought advice for their child from health service and other formal services**

Rurality	'Poor'	'Non-Poor'
Villages/dispersed	43	28
Small towns/rural fringe	51	41
Market towns	52	33
Other urban	47	35

- Poor mothers were less likely than others to have access to any of these sources of advice (Table 2). In villages 43 percent of the poor had had not used any of these sources of advice, compared with 28 percent of the non-poor in villages. This indicator of social exclusion it seems that the contrast between poor and non-poor is greater wherever they live that the type of geographical setting, though there is some tendency for both low income and other families to be better served in villages than elsewhere.

The advantage of villages in this respect for the low income families came from greater use of Health Visitors.

**Table 3 Percentage of young mothers with access to a vehicle**

Rurality	'Poor'	'Non-Poor'
Villages/dispersed	87.9	98.3
Small towns/rural fringe	75.7	97.4
Market towns	60.6	95.8
Other urban	59.4	93.3

7. There is a clear contrast between the two income groups for access to a vehicle (Table 3). As might be expected, in both groups there is a decrease in car access towards more urban areas, perhaps due to the increased provision of public transport, with less necessity for a car, as in more rural areas.

**Table 4: Percentage of young mothers with access to the internet (at home or at work)**

Rurality	'Poor'	'Non-Poor'
Villages/dispersed	40.2	77.5
Small towns/rural fringe	32.4	70.8
Market towns	18.7	65.9
Other urban	23.7	67.1

Using access to the internet as another indicator of social inclusion, which might compensate for the difficulties of transport in rural areas, we look at whether the families in the Millennium cohort had access to the internet either at home or at work (Table 4). Less than half (40%) of the rural poor families in villages had such access compared to 78% of the rural non-poor. People in more densely populated areas had somewhat less internet access. The contrast between the poor and non-poor is very distinct, with much greater access to the internet for those with higher income.