Human City Institute

9th Annual Lecture

Professor Kate Pickett

‘Creating a Wellbeing Society’

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Amanda Tomlinson, CEO
Black Country Housing Group
HCI 9th Annual Lecture
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Creating a Wellbeing Society

Kate Pickett, FRSA FFPH
University of York and The Equality Trust
The Spirit Level showed

- Income inequality is linked to a wide range of health and social problems
- The effects are large and there are big differences between societies
- Not only the poor are affected, inequality affects the whole population
Problems

Income inequality
Health and social problems are worse in more unequal countries

Index of:
- Life expectancy
- Math & Literacy
- Infant mortality
- Homicides
- Imprisonment
- Teenage births
- Trust
- Obesity
- Mental illness – incl. drug & alcohol addiction
- Social mobility

Wilkinson & Pickett, The Spirit Level

www.equalitytrust.org.uk
Mental Health Foundation Survey, UK 2018

74% of adults (83% of 18-24 year-olds) felt so stressed they were overwhelmed or unable to cope sometime in the past year.

32% of adults (39% of 18-24 year-olds) had suicidal feelings as a result of stress.

16% of adults (29% of 18-24 year olds) had self-harmed as a result of stress.
The Inner Level shows:

- How income inequality undermines feelings of self-worth and damages mental health
- How popular myths about human nature and capabilities are used to justify inequality
- How we can tackle inequality and why we must do so to make the transition to sustainable wellbeing
Robert Walker et al.
Poverty in global perspective
*Journal of Social Policy*
2013; 42, 215-233
Mental illness is more common in more unequal societies.
Individual differences will explain who falls, but the height of the hurdles will explain how many fall.
Dominance Behavioural System
Status anxiety is higher at all income levels in more unequal countries

Redrawn from Layte and Whelan (2014), data kindly provided by Richard Layte
There is more depression...

I'm great!
I'm right!
I'm very smart!
More people exaggerate their self-importance...

....and become more narcissistic

College students’ Narcissistic Personality Inventory scores over time reflect the rise in US income inequality.
...there is more schizophrenia

Addictive behaviour increases: e.g., gambling
WE BUY THINGS WE DON'T NEED WITH MONEY WE DON'T HAVE TO IMPRESS PEOPLE WE DON'T LIKE.
There is more advertising in more unequal countries
Money and consumerism become more important

People withdraw from social interaction

Attitudes towards people with mental illness by 2010 income inequality in the EU27

Difficulty talking to a person with a significant mental health problem (%)

Country level income inequality (Gini)

Lithuania

R² = 0.36, p = 0.001

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Waiting for lunch at Morecambe Bay Primary School in Morecambe, England. About a third of the school’s 350 students would not have breakfast unless the school provided it, one teacher said. Credit: Laura Boushnak for The New York Times
Child poverty in Britain set to soar to new record, says thinktank

IFS forecast that 37% of children will be in relative poverty by 2022 would see all progress made in the last 20 years undone.

A young girl walking through a housing estate in Skelmersdale, Lancashire. Photograph: Alamy
Gains of the past are being undone

Taylor-Robinson D, Whitehead M, Barr B. BMJ 2015
Fig 1 Infant mortality rate (95% confidence interval) by socioeconomic classification, 2008-15.

David Taylor-Robinson, and Ben Barr BMJ 2017;357:bmj.j2258

©2017 by British Medical Journal Publishing Group
Local authority budget cut 2010-11 to 2014-15 versus child poverty

Impact of tax and welfare reforms 2010-2017
Deciles of household net income, GB, 2021-2

Equality and Human Rights Commission
Discrediting experiences: outcomes of eligibility assessments for claimants with psychiatric compared with non-psychiatric conditions transferring to personal independence payments in England

Katie Pybus, Kate E. Pickett, Stephanie L. Prady, Charlie Lloyd and Richard Wilkinson

Background
Recent qualitative research suggests that changes to the way eligibility for welfare payments is determined in the UK may be detrimental to claimants with mental illnesses. No large-scale analysis has been undertaken to date.

Aims
To examine differences between claimants with psychiatric conditions compared with non-psychiatric conditions in the number of claims disallowed following a personal independence payment (PIP) eligibility assessment for existing disability living allowance (DLA) claimants.

Method
Administrative data on DLA claimants with psychiatric conditions transferring to PIP between 2013 and 2016 was compared with claimants with non-psychiatric conditions to explore differences in the number of claims disallowed following an eligibility assessment.

Results
Claimants with a mental illness were 2.40 (95% CI 2.36–2.44) times more likely to have their existing DLA entitlement removed following a PIP eligibility assessment than claimants with musculoskeletal conditions, neurological conditions and diabetes.

Conclusions
PIP eligibility assessment outcomes show marked differences by health condition, raising questions as to whether the process is equitable.

Declaration of interest
None.

Keywords
Service users; parity of esteem; personal independence payments; welfare reform; eligibility assessment.

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Shut out of society, young Londoners talk to UN poverty envoy

United Nations rapporteur Philip Alston with Young Equality Campaigners in London Council