

PROGRAMME ONE      Part 1

TITLES

SYNC TRICIA OLIVERS

I consider I'm poor and if you look at other people, working people, you're at the bottom.

SYNC ROY WESTON

You know, you're going down and down and you're trying to get yourself up and you just seem to go down more. It's very hard to get back on your feet again.

SYNC ERNIE PEGMAN

Well, it's hard. It's the most difficult task to get by. It's very hard.

SYNC KEVIN CAIN

It's difficult because like, I'm not getting enough money, I don't think meself, you know, to keep me.

SYNC PAMELA BENN

I'm just fed up with the whole thing and the money is ridiculous. I can't cope on the money and I can't cope in living here.

ROY BRAGG SYNC

What it is to me is just the question of how to make ends meet.

MAVIS GOLD SYNC

I feel destitute not poor

COMM

This series is about the poor in Britain today. It looks at who they are and why they're poor. It does so by following 7 families who are representative of the groups most vulnerable to poverty.

SYNC PAMELA

The rain starts falling in from the window, then you've seen from the window already, it's gonna fall in before very long because the sides of the window are falling off, the glass is gonna fall in. So I'm frightened, the rain starts coming down from here.

The beasties start coming up through the floorboard, slug, beetles, the lot. They start from behind the cooker at first, and they start c- working their way along the back of the door come through the door and then they start coming in here. Beasties go all over the bed, the cot and all over the floor.

COMM

Pamela Benn is 23 years old. Her baby, Emma, is 9 months. Like many young unmarried mothers, Pamela has little money and nothing to fall back on; no savings and no experience. She lives in central London, in a tiny attic flat infested with insects.

SYNC PAMELA

Well I've been bitten, er, more than once and she always gets bitten by them, I had bites all over my face, I have, I've got still on my hand. Been bitten again on the hand. Yes they bite a lot and they go in my food and everything and I can't eat the food at all, I have to throw everything away.

SYNC TRICIA

I only have one meal a day and when I say one, I mean one and not one and some snacks.

And that's because I can't afford more than just one meal.

ACTUALITY

Hello Mum

COMM

Tricia Olviers was divorced last year. She's now left to bring up her two children, Sandra and Tony, on her own.

TRICIA OLIVERS V/O - SYNC

Well its a lot different now to when it was when I was married.

When we was both working, at that time I could afford to go out and buy anything I wanted, clothes for the kids, toys for the kids, anything, put money in the bank and go and buy furniture and have a holiday, all those types of things and now I can't have anything like that, even to get the kids something to wear. It's something they've got to wait for until it's absolutely essential and you've got to save for that.

COMM

Tricia lives in a pleasant suburb of Stockport, Greater Manchester. She struggles to maintain what she can of her old life. The growing number of single parent families are one of the groups most vulnerable to poverty.

ACTUALITY

Family talk about what they can't afford Michelle - 'You talk as if you'll really get back to work'.

V/O ROY WESTON

I get so frustrated, knowing I'm stuck at home, feeling useless, you can't feel like a man, they won't let you, the system won't let you feel like a man.

So until I get a job, I have just got to sit down and suffer, that's the word, the indignities of being out of work.

COMM

Roy and Ann Weston find that with three children, Michelle, Lesley and Tony, it's difficult to manage. Unemployed families are the other group, along with single parents, who are most likely to be poor. Roy has been trying to find work for the last three and a half years. But he lives in Birmingham, a city devastated by the recession. So far it's proved impossible. Ann and Roy worry about the effect on the children.

SYNC ANN AND ROY

Ann: They complain, I don't think they really understand the situation.

Roy: Tony and Michelle do, it's just the little one, Leslie. We have got to try and convince that I'm not like other fathers, like, well some fathers out working

KEVIN SYNC

I've left school five years. And I've had jobs for about a month, then a long spell of unemployment.

COMM

Kevin Cain was born and brought up in Vauxhall, Liverpool. It's the city with around the highest unemployment in England. Recent years have added yet another cruel twist to decades of decline. The city is left with pervasive poverty, the young with no hope and no future. For Kevin, marriage and setting up a home are out of the question.

SYNC KEVIN

Er, well there's, there's a girl who, who I'd like to, you know, push you know, go further with but at, you know, at this state of time, I couldn't you know, I couldn't ask her to marry me and buy a

still on the dole.

SYNC ROY BRAGG

The wage itself I'd say, it's more or less a poverty line. Compared to other firms, as I said, it's more or less a poverty line.

COMM

Roy Bragg works nights in a Manchester factory. Most people with a job can manage. But Roy's wages are low. He take home only about £80 a week.

V/O ROY BRAGG

A single bloke er you know, it's, he'd be far better off with my wage. As er me it's very difficult, with having the three children, the wife to support, it's really hard going.

COMM

At home Roy's wife Elaine faces endless problems. Mounds of washing pile up waiting for a fine day. It doesn't dry indoors because there's no money to heat the house.

SYNC ELAINE

You are just living from day to day. We can't live from week to week, its day to day'. Because the money's just so tight, we just can't manage on the wages Roy is bringing home, so I'm hoping to get this job that I've gone after, on the school dinners. I'm just hoping and praying I get it, because I have been all over trying to get a job, and I can't get a job.

COMM

Mavis Gold is blind, partially deaf and diabetic. When she was younger she was fit and had a job. She was reasonably well off. Now she can't manage. The sick and disabled today, as in the past, are much more likely to be poor than others. Mavis lives largely on eggs and

SYNC MAVIS

Well, if I haven't got anything else and I've got an egg, I'll have an egg. Oh, I got some rice krispies, somewhere in there, and I had some sugar, I put some sugar on the rice krispies, which is really supposed to be taboo, but it carries you through.

That's the thing I very often forget I've got in there, more than often, that's something I very often do. I very often have burnt toast.

COMM

Aged 79, Ernie Pegman finds that he's left with nothing but worries. As pensioners grow older, their health worsens and their savings dwindle. They find it increasingly difficult to manage financially.

SYNC ERNIE

That's the telephone ... £19.59, I haven't had it no time. £168. It's fantastic, I've had that one, what's this one? ... £23 I can't account for that. Talk about being bamboozled ... this has to be paid, £20, Oh golly ... they're a headache to me. Oh Ernie ... why was I born .. that's a big question.

COMM

By looking at the problems of these seven families, the series will examine why so many people fall through the safety net of the welfare state. It will look at why state benefits are often inadequate. And at why the services provided by the government, such as education and health care, often don't succeed in giving children of poor families a fair chance. And it will look at ways in which things might be improved in the future.

But the first question to be resolved is where the poverty line should be drawn today. In Britain in the 1980s, how poor is too poor?

COMM

The only absolute minimum standard of living is what is required for survival. And in the last century, there were some, for whom poverty was a matter of survival - a matter of living or dying.

Today, virtually no-one dies of starvation in Britain. But there are those for whom poverty remains a matter of life and death.

Pamela Benn lives in appalling housing conditions. The danger of disease and infection from lack of hygiene is ever present - for her and for her baby.

Both of them suffer, but it's the baby who is most at risk. Poor children are nearly four times as likely to die in infancy as children of well-off families. And for baby Emma, at the very bottom of the pile, the dangers are much greater still.

SYNC PAMELA

I have to keep on taking her back to the doctor cos she's suffering from bad colds, she's getting viruses all the time. And um she can't sleep in that cot, as I've shown you, you know, she - there's mice crawling about in that cot. If I leave her in that cot she starts screaming.

Well the doctor already advised me and my health visitor's already advised me that the best thing for me to do is move out. Cos the situation's too bad.

COMM

Pamela's GP, Dr. Tauquir Ahmad, has had to pay frequent visits to the flat in recent months. (KNOCKS)

The family is causing him increasing concern.

V/O AHMED - SYNC

I'm afraid that this mother and her daughter are in great jeopardy.

Their whole accommodation is very unsatisfactory and the child's life may be, a little baby's life may be at jeopardy. As the child grows, every now and then the child is suffering from repeated ailments which leads to permanent weak health. I have been using various kinds of medicines where I need not have been using had the housing been satisfactory.

I'm convinced that such kind of housing actually are dangerous to survival of the little children and little babies.

COMM

For the Westons, living on the dole has dangerously exacerbated the ill-health of their 13 year old son Tony. He suffers from serious bronchial asthma, made worse by the lack of heating in the house.

V/O ANN WESTON

We can't afford to heat upstairs. It's very cold upstairs for him. He has to have two pillows to prop him up at night time, because if he's got bronchitis, he's coughing most of the night, and some nights he's crying all the night with the cough. Cause it is hurting that much to cough, and he's hurt, and when he's got the asthma, he cries as well half the night, some nights he's slept with me when he's been that bad, and his dad's slept in his room.

All last year when he was bad, on and off through the year, he really got us worried.



SYNC MAVIS

But when I see, the times i've been in hospital, for diabetes, for control, it seems that they do nothing but feed you. And you feel that you are having too much, but you know that its a correct diet, usually when I come out of hospital, I've put on quite a lot of weight.

COMM

It is not only children whose lives are endangered by poverty. Adults too are more likely to die if they are poor. For Mavis Gold the problem of lack of proper food is causing immediate concern What makes her problem so acute is that she is a diabetic. Unless she can maintain her diet, her condition could become fatal.

V/O MAVIS

The DHSS have got my life in their hands And what can you do about it. You take insulin and go into insulin reaction because you haven't got any food or go without your insulin, what happens then.

I think the diabetic specialists could tell you all about that.

COMM

Pamela Benn is also at risk from a lack of proper food. As a single parent she often has to sacrifice her own diet for the sake of her baby.

V/O PAMELA

Sometimes I have to go hungry, in order to feed the child, to buy her nappies and her milk. For two or three days at a time, I go without food. I just drink a cup of tea. That's all I do.

COMM

Pamela is obviously not dying of starvation but lack of food has affected her health.

SYNC PAMELA

If I don't eat I start getting dizzy spells and blackouts. I've had to go to the doctor to get some iron tablets in order to help me to cope. Stop the blackouts and stop the dizziness.

COMM

At the age of 23, Pamela runs a much greater risk of death than others of her age. Overall, adults who are poor are well over twice as likely to die before they reach the age of 60 than adults who are well-off. There are many reasons. For Pamela her extreme lack of food leads to a reduced resistance to disease. For others, the risk of death stems from a very different problem.

SYNC ELAINE BRAGG

I've always been overweight from being a child. All my family are overweight. My father's been told he's got to lose weight - he's in real danger of having a heart attack etc.

COMM

Elaine Bragg has been ordered by her doctor to go on a diet. At the age of 26, far from eating too little food, she has been eating too much of the wrong food. She runs a high risk of heart and arterial disease. The poor are much more likely to die in mid-life from heart attacks than the well-off, and in recent years the gap between the chances of the poor dying of these causes and others has been widening. Elaine needs to eat salads for her diet but that's a problem.

V/O ELAINE BRAGG

A lettuce isn't expensive really but, sort of, tomatoes n' stuff that you have to go with it's expensive - cheese, and what have you, that's expensive so it's really you, really you've got to have plenty of money to have salad all the time.

COMM

Two years ago, Sir Douglas Black headed the most important post-war inquiry into the health of the nation. He found that poor diet was a major cause of early death among the poor.

SYNC BLACK

The protective foods or if you like the good things are distinctly more expensive things like fruit and vegetables, than what you might call the stodgy foods, carbohydrates particularly, sugar, and starches even without the accompanying fibre you get in natural foods, these things are cheap, and naturally people who are poor, they skimp on food.

And therefore they have this sort of distorted nutrition. It's quite possible for someone who's fat to be badly nourished. In fact, the fact that they're fat almost shows that they're badly nourished.

SYNC ELAINE

We eat chips a lot. Sometimes we have boiled potatoes, sometimes roast. You have to have something that fills them up. And the kids like chips. There's nothing else you can do that's price of food's terrible.

COMM

Potatoes can form part of a healthy diet but a diet largely of chips, processed bread and sugar is not health. It's the sort of diet that's cheap and so popular with poor families.

For Elaine's children, it will mean that they too are more likely to die in mid-life if their bad eating habits continue.

The gap between the chances of the poor dying and others has not changed since the turn of the century. Even so, it is also true that poverty doesn't kill as often now as it used to.

Elaine's youngest child, Melanie, would probably already be dead if she'd been born last century. She suffered all winter from bronchial pneumonia. This raises a major problem in trying to establish an absolute minimum poverty line. Even survival is relative. Our attitudes towards it change all the time.

Professor A.H. Halsey runs the social studies department at Oxford University. He conducted one of the largest studies into the problems of the poor this century.

#### SYNC HALSEY

There are some people who would want to make poverty entirely objective by seeking a measure of it outside people's heads and outside people's expectations and outside society's norms. And they sometimes think that death might do the trick for them. But it is not like that. Because of course the expectation that people have of how long they will live and how well they will live will always depend upon their expectations of others. It will depend on a socially created idea of life and death and so even the use of mortality statistics is itself essentially a relative approach to pover

COMM

Views on what constitutes a serious risk to life change. There is no absolute measure of what poverty is, of what is "too poor". It's a question that has to be judged by the standards of the society of the day.

Breadline Britain has conducted a major survey to determine the poverty line for today.

We'll be looking at what it revealed after the break.

END OF PART ONE

PROGRAMME ONE Part 2SYNC ERNIE

My mother died when I was 5 year old. And my father, he had to go, he was out of work and what he used to do to earn some coppers, he used to get barbed wire, old wire and you know what we lived on, white puddings --- they don't they're born today ...

COMM

To Ernie Pegman, brought up in the hardship of the turn of the century, it seems that the poor of today have it easy.

COMM

But by today's standards the picture looks rather different. Everyone is far better off than in the past. The poor, however, are excluded from much of this new age of wealth. Tricia Olivers is a single parent struggling to bring up two children by herself.

SYNC TRICIA

Well I go down about once every two weeks to Stockport. I just go looking in the windows, looking at the kids' clothes, pricing them, pricing shoes, things that you'd buy if you had the money, its nice to go and look at thing In every shop I've got something I want, I go down and look at it. It makes you feel better. Even though you can't actually buy it, it makes you feel better.

COMM

Tricia Olivers judges her life by the standards of today - not the standards of the past. For most people there is a wide choice of new goods from today's consumer society.

For Ann Weston there is no choice but other people's cast-offs. She has to

rummage through jumble for all the clothes the family need.

The gap between the poor and the rest of society has changed little since the turn of the century. The poor today are as badly off compared to others as ever.

The question is whether the gap between the poor and the rest is so great that the poor miss out to a degree considered unacceptable by people today.

Breadline Britain has commissioned a major survey to establish what people think is an unacceptable standard of living for the 80s. It's the first time this crucial question has ever been investigated.

ACTUALITY

I'm from MORI. We're doing a survey about living standards. Could I ask you a few questions?

COMM

Interviewers from the research company Market Opinion and Research International asked a representative sample of 1200 people throughout Britain about a range of items that make up our standard of living.

ACTUALITY

This box is for items, is for items you feel all adults should have in Britain today and which all adults should be able to afford and which they should not have to go without. This box is for items which are not necessary, though maybe desirable.

COMM

People were asked about all items of regular expenditure, from clothing and heating to food and leisure.

ACTUALITY

Deciding about various options

COMM

The test was necessity, not desirability. The survey also established how many people were too poor to be able to afford these necessities. Some people will not have these items because they do not want them. Only those who do not have a necessity because of lack of money are counted as poor.

ACTUALITY

Would you read out the numbers in Box A

COMM

The list is not, of course, comprehensive. It does not include every single thing that might be necessary. It's based on preliminary research and a trial run to establish a range representative of a minimum living standard.

Professor Halsey from Oxford

HALSEY SYNC

I like the approach that this survey has adopted because it's highly realistic. It is recognising from the beginning that poverty is what is in the minds of people who actually live in society. It is a subjective thing, it's how we all feel about what it would be either to be poor or to be rich. And secondly, I like it because it reflects the kind of society we live in. It is more or less a democratic society and so we're in effect voting to decide what we regard as minimum standard of life.

COMM

People voted overwhelmingly that everyone should be able to afford heating to warm living areas of the home if it's cold.



V/O MAVIS

I very often go to bed in -er during the day to keep warm. Pile on as much as I can find maybe a couple of coats. Cos I've only got er one blanket and er a sleeping bag that I've had for years. I've got nightie and I've got a dressing gown and I got bedsocks and woollies.

And I just stay there. Sometimes I fall asleep and I wake up at about 7pm and I get up and I see what I've got to drink and eat nad then I come quickly back again and that works out my day.

COMM

Heating is top of the list of necessities.

Yet around 3 million people in Britain today, like Mavis Gold, cannot afford this obvious necessity.

The items that people thought were the next most important related to housing conditions.

SYNC PAMELA BENN

Well it's very bad with the damp, the rain coming in through the window, the mice, the rats, the bugs, the beasties, the lot. It's very cramped in here. I can't get room to move about. I can't put me child on the floor to play. And if I put her on the floor she either goes straight for the door and down the stairs. And when it rains in here I have, the floor gets soaking wet.

V/O PAMELA

We all have to use same bathroom, and the same toilet. There's only one bath to share with the whole house. They make me, I don't see why I should have to live like this.

COMM

People overwhelmingly agree with Pamela that she should not have to live in these conditions.

COMM

The housing necessities are:  
an indoor toilet not shared with  
another household,  
a bath for each family,  
a damp-free home,  
self-contained accomodation  
and enough bedrooms for older children  
to have their own rooms

Yet nearly five million people in  
Britain today lack one or more of these  
necessities.

The survey next considers the quality  
and quantity of food that people feel  
everyone should have.

When Mavis Gold goes shopping, she finds  
she can't afford enough food for regular  
hot meals. And there's never any spare  
cash for anything special. For most of  
the time she relies on bread and eggs  
eggs and more eggs.

ACTUALITY

Egg chatter

V/O MAVIS

A standard of living surely give you  
a benefit of making a choice of whether  
you have a piece of beef or a small chop  
a piece of beef would last you two or  
three days where a chop would last you  
one, surely living standards should give  
you the choice of being able to buy  
a small joint. You can't do it.

COMM

A large majority of the population agree  
with Mavis. People saw the minimum  
standard of food that everyone should  
be able to afford not just in terms of  
having enough for survival but also  
in terms of quality.

For food, the necessities are:  
a roast joint or its equivalent once a  
week,  
meat or fish every other day,

and two hot meals a day.  
At least five and a half million  
people in Britain today cannot afford  
one or more of these items.

The survey also found that three meals  
a day for children was seen as a  
necessity. Yet nearly half a million  
children today have to go without  
because of their families' lack of  
money.

The next items to be considered concerne  
clothing.

MAVIS V/O

Someone found it for me, but they didn't  
realise it was split in the first  
place and it's not waterproof anymore  
and the sleeve linings are going and  
it's split in both sleeves, whether  
somebody wore a lot of woollies and  
split it, I don't know, but it lets  
water through here and if i've been  
caught out in heavy rain I've got very  
wet shoulders.

COMM

Items of clothing needed for protection  
against the weather were considered  
extremely important by people : a  
warm, waterproof coat, and two pairs  
of all weather shoes.

The survey also investigated the  
quality of clothing people should be  
able to afford.

ACTUALITY

Anne: Not bad for 50p

COMM

Ann Weston has to buy all her family's  
clothes at jumble sales. For her, new  
clothes are out of the question.

ANN SYNC

For Michelle, a dress would cost £10, £12 brand new. Its very expensive to go normal shopping for kids these days, I'm not so worried about myself so much, or even Roy, but it would be nice to buy the kids some new clothes now and again, if only we could, but who can afford it. Wouldn't it Michelle? And I know she'd like to be in the fashion, but I think she understands that we can't afford to buy new clothes for her. What type of clothes do you like.

Michelle: Fashion clothes

Mum: What's fashion clothes, how about shoes.

Who bought those shoes for you, Michelle? They were only 25p from the jumble, but she doesn't like wearing them. I make her wear them when the bad weather's about. When it's raining and that and she doesn't like wearing them do you (No)

Describe a pair of shoes that you would like, if we'd got the money.

Michelle: Like Vicky's

Ann: I don't know what Vicky's are like describe them.

Michelle: Black, slip ons, and they go (demonstrates)

COMM

Today people do not expect the poor to be forced to depend on second-hand clothes. Most people felt that everyone should be able to afford new clothes. Overall the items of clothing classed as necessities are:

a warm, waterproof coat  
two pairs of all-weather shoes  
along with new, not second-hand clothes

And yet, at least six million people can not afford one or more of these necessities.

COMM

The survey also looked at the importance people place on household furnishings and goods. Ann Weston feels that while she can keep the home clean she can't keep up the standards she'd like.

SYNC-V/O ANN WESTON

No we cant. It was all decorated when they modernised it, it was 7 years ago, and we started to strip it down to decorate it ourselves, beginning part of the year, and as you can see, we are still waiting to afford the paper. But trying to persuade my husband just to emulsion the walls, because having the children, having people, kids running in and out. But its even difficult to do that.

We had this carpet give us, when my mother in law was alive, which was two years, three years ago, and I'd love to have a nice thick pile carpet in the bedroom, but money is tight. Money is very tight, where carpet's concerned, to fit this bedroom would be about 60 or 70 pounds, probably more for a fitted carpet. But its having the money, and getting money these days, and jobs, its not right, just can't get a job. Well my husband cannot get a job

COMM

The survey found that a large majority of people felt that everyone should be able to afford carpets in the living areas of the house. Its a sign of how attitudes have changed. Carpets are not something the poor in the 30s would have expected.

But changes in other household goods are even more dramatic. Twenty years ago few people would have had a washing machine. Now few are without. For Elaine Bragg washing is a particular problem as her two boys both wet the bed every night, a problem not uncommon in low income families.

V/O ELAINE BRAGG

I'd be lost without my washing especially having sheets every day. And I have like pyjamas every day and napped for Melanie and towels and things like that but if I leave them too long they just smell. I have to sort of washing them every day or every other day at least, otherwise they just smell. What are you doing Melanie? These are the boys' pyjamas and they're absolutely wringing wet. This is what I have every day, I mean its bad enough having one wetting the bed but when you've got two its very very hard.

COMM

A washing machine is today regarded as a necessity by more than two people in three. The survey also found that a fridge - another acquisition that has spread over the last 20 years - is overwhelmingly felt to be something everyone should be able to afford. The other major consumer good that's entered virtually every home in the last 20 years is, of course, television. For Ernie Pegman its the centre of his life. A small majority of the population now regard the television as a necessity, though attitudes vary. Most professional workers do not see the television as important, in sharp contrast to the attitudes of the poor.

V/O PAMELA

I watch TV from first thing in the morning till last thing at night, till the television goes off. I sit and watch it all day, that's all I've got to watch. That's all I've got to do all day, sit and watch television. I can't afford to do other things at all. The only thing I can do is sit and watch television, I can't go out anywhere, I can't go out and enjoy myself or nothing.

COMM

Overall, the household goods seen as necessities are:

carpets

a washing machine

a fridge

and a television

Three and a half million people do not have one or more of these household goods because of lack of money - less than other necessities, as these are goods that last and can be bought when times are good.

The survey also investigated what people thought were necessities for children. For single parents, like Tricia Olivers, buying toys for her son and daughter is a major problem.

SYNC TRICIA

Now these are the sort of things that Tony likes, but as you can see this one, you're talking about £13.90 and with the type of money I get, its just ridiculous, and as you can see, you need little bits of things to go with it which are about £12.00 again, £13.00 everythings so expensive. Little things like this you talk about £7, £6 and there's just no way I can afford to buy him things like this.

COMM

The necessities for children are:  
toys and

leisure equipment such as a bicycle.

Yet in Britain today, nearly 1.5 million children are deprived of these essentials.

Not all the necessities of life are material goods. Our standard of living also covers services that we use and activities that we enjoy.

As a family the Westons miss out on many of these things. They can't afford public transport and so seldom leave the inner city area around their home.

V/O ANN WESTON

When we all go out we do walk. We walk a lot. Its very rare we use the buses. Cost of coaches, the trains they're all expensive. I think it's important for the kids to get out of the city. So they can see things that they probably wouldn't see otherwise. Well, wild flowers. I mean when I was a kid, we used to go bluebell picking in the woods and that. But it's, it's just impossible.

COMM

The survey found that most people did not think that a car was a necessity. But it was a different story with public transport. Unable to afford the cost of fares, the Westons have to rely on their local park for keeping their children amused.

V/O ROY WESTON

They get a bit frustrated and bored because we can't take them anywhere during the holidays. They have to stay round this area 52 weeks of the year, don't get out of it, on nice days, you'd like to take them somewhere but you just can't afford to. They get a bit frustrated when I say you can't go we haven't got the money. They go off sulking somewhere, or crying. And it makes you feel rotten.

COMM

The survey found that nine out of ten people felt everybody should be able to afford public transport. Yet getting on for 1.5 million people in Britain today cannot afford to use it.

Finally the survey looked at leisure and social activities. Some, such as inviting family or friends round for a meal once a month, a night out once a fortnight or an outing for children once a week, were not thought to be necessities.



But attitudes were different towards holidays - something the Braggs can only dream about.

ELAINE V/O - SYNC

The children have never had a holiday. They don't know what it's like to have a holiday. They go out with the school. When the school holidays, we go down to play scheme, we go out for days, but they don't know what it's like for a proper holiday.

COMM

By today's standards the Bragg children are missing out. People felt that everyone should be able to afford a holiday away from home for at least one week a year not staying with relatives. Other items the survey asked about were a hobby, special celebrations at times like Christmas, and presents for family at least once a year. That's something children like Tony Weston go without.

V/O ANN WESTON - SYNC

I think they feel a bit let down, that we can't buy them new things. It's just that we haven't got the money. I mean it was Tony's birthday in March, he is still waiting for his birthday present.

Roy: It was yours in May. And you are still waiting for your present.

Ann: Yes

Roy: You know they are going to mount up and mount up, and if and when I do get a job, I'm going to spend the first few months getting presents.

Ann: Just the backdated ones.

COMM

Overall, the leisure activities seen as necessities, are:

a holiday,  
presents,  
a hobby and  
celebrations on special occasions

Yet more than 10 million people in Britain today cannot afford one or more of these activities. Many go without a holiday.

Overall, across a wide range of goods and activities, there is little disagreement over the items that are regarded as necessities.

To test how strongly these views were held, we asked people if they would be prepared to pay more income tax themselves to enable others to afford these necessities.

74% said they would pay more tax. Only 23% said they would not. Professor Halsey:

HALSEY SYNC

Well it's clear from the survey that there is a social consensus. That there is a notion of what it is to be poor in Britain now, and that definition of what it is to be poor now is something which is shifting. If we went back to the poverty surveys at the beginning of the century, they were much less generous and much more related to what you might call survival whereas getting at it in this way by asking people to say whether this is a necessary thing or that is a necessary thing, you have answers which describe what it's like to have good or bad housing, shelter, clothes, opportunities to go on holiday and so on, and er, out of that er you get this er relative definition of poverty which is absolutely in accord with present day experience.

COMM

We also worked out, with the help of Professor Meghnad Desai, of the London School of Economics, how many people in Britain today fall below this relative standard of poverty, we looked at the whole range of goods and activities classed as necessities. The results show that a few of the people who cannot afford one or two necessities are not on low incomes. But the people who cannot afford three or more necessities are heavily concentrated among those on the lowest incomes.

These are the poor and there are 7½ million people in Britain today who cannot afford this minimum standard of living. That's one in seven of the population.

Of these people, five and a half million cannot afford five or more necessities, a degree of deprivation that affects their whole way of life. And among the poor, there are some, like Mavis Gold, who live in intense poverty. Three-quarters of a million people cannot afford most of the necessities for living in Britain today.

In next week's programme, we will examine why, despite the welfare state, so many people fall below the poverty line set by society as a whole - a line which in turn reflects the feelings of those at the bottom of the pile.

V/O - SYNC MAVIS

How do I feel about my standard of living? It's very low at the moment. You query the price of things so much when you go out, can I afford this, can I afford that, I like meat, I like vegetables, and things like that. But I've got to query it, I might have vegetables twice a week, I might have meat twice a week, otherwise I've got to live on eggs and things like that.

and this isn't a standard of living,  
its existence.

SYNC ROY AND ANN WESTON

Roy: I feel poor, one because I cannot  
do the things I used to do, two, I  
cannot buy the things I'd like to buy,  
three, I cannot go out...

Ann: We can't go out

V/O ANN AND ROY

We can't go out, four I can't take the  
kids out anywhere. I used to take Tony  
down the football.

Ann: We used to take them down the  
seaside, or down to London

Roy: Yes I do feel poor, I'm not  
ashamed to admit it.

V/O PAMELA

Yeah, I feel very poor.

I do without food, I do without clothes  
for myself, I do without shoes.

If I can manage it I buy her a small  
thing, maybe cost me 50p or something  
I should be able to take my daughter  
out somewhere.

Why I would take her to the zoo and  
things like that, places she's never  
been, or seen, and half the places I  
haven't seen in London myself, things  
that I can't afford to do.

I mean to say, it's not fair for the  
child to suffer, for me to suffer, or  
any parent to suffer like that.