



## Under pressure: Single parents in the UK

**Martina Klett-Davies**

This report has just been published by the Bertelsmann Foundation as part of their Families and Education programme.

Martina Klett-Davies analyses trends and characteristics associated with single parents in the UK from 1997 to 2015 and considers the everyday realities faced by two million single parents and their children in the UK.

The Study report analyses empirical data, research and policy documents and discusses:

- how the British welfare state has transformed single parents from carers to workers in low paid and precarious employment
- how the costs and availability of childcare act as a barrier to employment
- how parenting has become a target for intervention
- the impact of legal aid cuts on mediation and post separation parenting
- single parents as a prime example of the increasing social inequality apparent in Britain
- reform options to improve the situation of single parent families in the UK.

Both the report and the executive summary can be downloaded free of charge at the bottom of this page [www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/family-and-education](http://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/family-and-education)

A few findings of the report:

- Nearly half of children living in single parent families live in poverty after housing costs; that's 1.3 Million or 42% and double the percentage of children who live in couple families.
- While the poverty rate has decreased for children in single parent families throughout the New Labour Government period, there has been no further reduction since 2010 to 2013.
- Only around half of children in separated families are supported by an effective child maintenance arrangement.
- Universal Credit will make the lives for many single parents worse and this could lead to an increase in child poverty rates. It needs improving.
- The conditionality and the regime of sanctions attached to Universal Credit is the toughest and most extensive yet seen in the British welfare system.
- Universal Credit is founded on the view that unemployment is an outcome of individual choices/behaviour rather than the result of broader economic and structural factors.
- Single parents are a prime example of the increasing social inequality apparent in Britain. Where does this leave the 1.3 Million children?