

# INSECURE LIVES, SECURE FUTURES?

Millions of people across the UK experience a lack of security in areas like money, housing, health and care. When these insecurities build and combine, it multiplies their effects. Experiencing a lack of security across different areas can impose emotional burdens, harm wellbeing and keep people out of the workforce. Multiple insecurities force a focus on short-term crisis management, rather than long-term planning for the future.

A multidisciplinary team of researchers across different universities, led by Professor Becky Tunstall, have explored how multiple insecurities affect life chances and wellbeing, and how joined-up policy could help. As part of this ESRC/MHCLG-funded project, a group of researchers, including LSE's Laura Lane, Dr Abigail McKnight and Dr Irene Bucelli, spoke to 36 people experiencing multiple insecurities in 4 deprived neighbourhoods in Sheffield, Milton Keynes, and Mablethorpe. Artist Laura Sorvala's illustrations capture the impact of insecure lives and the policy interventions that could help build more secure futures.

Funded by  
 Economic and Social Research Council



SCAN TO HEAR MORE  
FROM LAURA LANE  
ABOUT THE RESEARCH

## CASE STUDY:

**The White Family**  
ADAM & "SNOW WHITE"

Work keeps you alive, but it does not take you to a better life.



47% of UK adults experienced financial insecurity in 2023

Wellbeing problems were 2-3 times the average among the 5.2m UK adults experiencing multiple insecurities in 2023

In 2023 53% of people (of working age) experiencing multiple insecurities were in work

## CASE STUDY:

**Pink Diamond**  
AND HER SON MIKE

The frustrating thing was we couldn't get any care for nan... and then when nan finally died, they tried to evict mum from her home because she wasn't on the lease.



## USING VISUAL STORYTELLING



The fieldwork, led by Professors Helen Lomax and Sally Pearse (Sheffield Hallam University), used visual storytelling to help people talk about their experiences of insecurities, their aspirations for themselves and their families, what makes things worse, and what might make things better.

Laura Sorvala produced 8 picture cards to represent different areas of insecurity – including health, work, and money. Participants selected the images most relevant to them and shared their experiences of how these different insecurities overlap. All 36 people selected more than one card, indicating that they experienced multiple insecurities.

## CASE STUDY:

**C.B.**

It's like a bowl and arrow: having a stable job started putting the arrow on the bowl. Getting a flat, that will be the bow stretching... having a nice relationship and good health, that would be the bullseye.



## CASE STUDY:

**Clara-Louise**

I would like to be in a position where we can think about a fulfilling life, rather than just trying to survive.



## WHAT HELPS?

The research shows that local, accessible and trusted sources of support play a big role in helping people and mitigating the harms of multiple insecurities. Participants also shared that flexible and meaningful employment and volunteering could be key to enhancing wellbeing and providing a sense of stability.

To transform insecure lives in the future, joined-up policy needs to centre on improving public services, including health and social care, education and housing.



Illustrations: Laura Sorvala