How much is enough? Reaching social consensus on minimum household needs

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What does it include?

Over time, MIS has become increasingly used in policy debate and analysis. In recent years it has been used to assess, for example: the costs of raising children; the financial implications for households of the introduction of Universal Credit; the 'couple penalty'; and the number of people living below adequate income. It has an impact on the lives of an increasing number of people, helping charities to set grant levels for individuals, and informing the level of the Living Wage outside London.

How is it related to the poverty line?

MIS is relevant to the discussion of poverty, but does not claim to be a poverty threshold. This is because participants in the research were not specifically asked to talk about what defines poverty. However, it is relevant to the poverty debate in that almost all households officially defined as being in income poverty (having below 60 per cent of median income) are also below MIS. Thus households classified as being in relative income poverty are generally unable to reach an acceptable standard of living as defined by members of the public.

Who produces it?

The original research was supported by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF). It individuals with a range of backgrounds and perspectives develop a shared view on whether an item should be included or excluded from minimum household budgets. Chapter 4 then describes some of the main rationales that groups have developed in this process of deciding what to include in MIS budgets. Chapter 5 gives a detailed account of the items that are included for diffes

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