

# Assessing the effects of language groups for Children with English as an Additional Language.

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# Background

Alsford et al (2017)

Assessed children in 7 reception classes in schools in the London borough of Haringey.

Language scores strongly correlated with level of deprivation of schools catchment area – supporting previous evidence that social deprivation effects children's language.

Schools in more deprived areas had many low scoring children with E1L and many very low scoring children with EAL.

Both groups improved in reception but scores remained low.

Neither group improved in year 1 (although they improved more in some schools than others).

Two things alarmed us here.  
The many children especially those with EAL with low scores.  
The failure of children to improve once they were in year 1.

We now report on the effect of language groups for  
children with EAL during their reception year.

Children were randomly assigned to attend or act as controls in 6 of  
the original schools and 3 more schools in the following year.

10 weeks, 1/2 sessions per week

Results were marginally significant but not impressive.

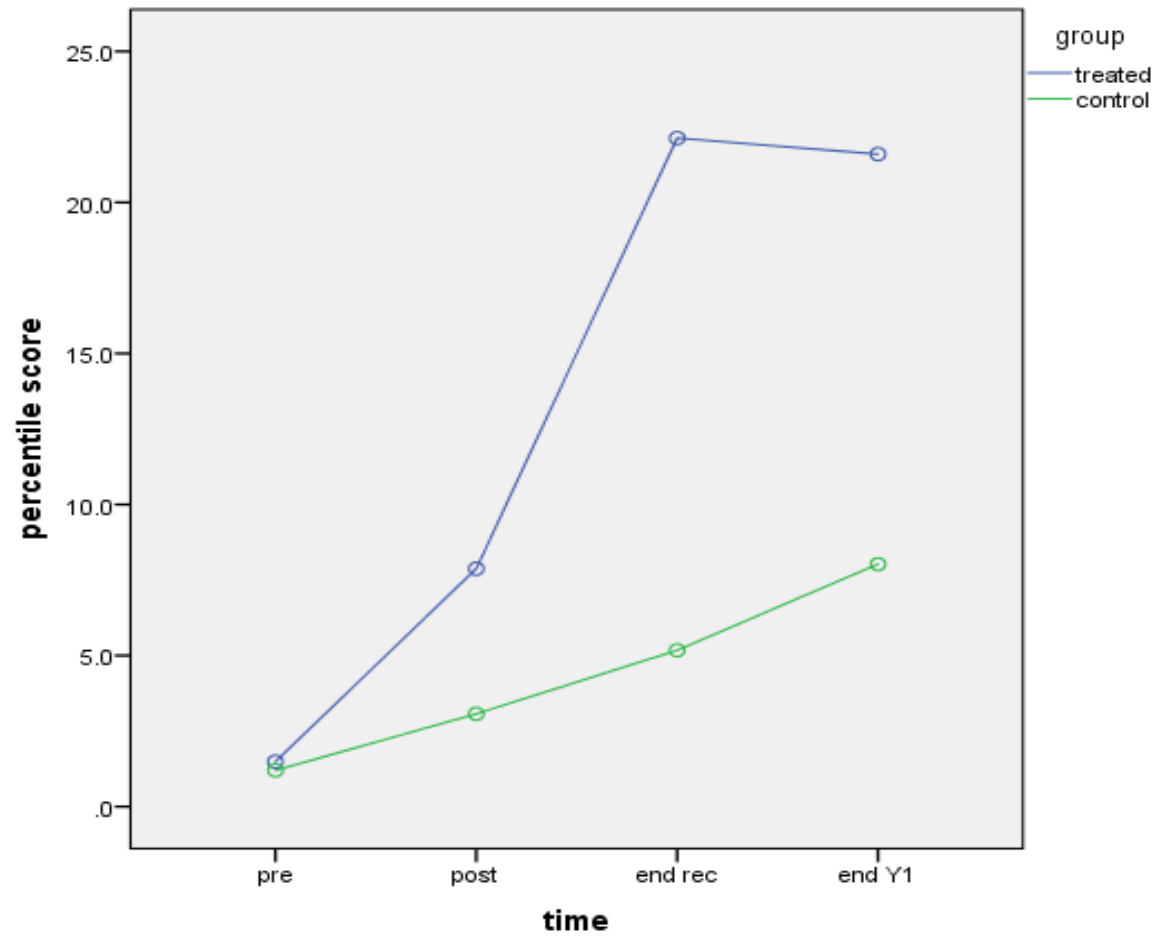
		Pre	Post
Treated children n = 33	Mean % score	1.65	7.26
	<i>Standard deviation</i>	<i>2.09</i>	<i>9.61</i>
Control Children n = 33	Mean % score	2.06	4.35
	<i>Standard deviation</i>	<i>2.78</i>	<i>5.55</i>

However, by the end of reception year the treated group had improved more strongly ( $p < .001$ )

		Pre	Post	E of Y	NV
Treated children n = 33	Mean % score	1.65	7.26	18.07	51.97
	<i>Standard deviation</i>	2.09	9.61	17.45	25.91
Control Children n = 33	Mean % score	2.06	4.35	7.11	47.64
	<i>Standard deviation</i>	2.78	5.55	11.94	25.29

In the mean time children in the first 6 schools had reached the end of year 1 so we retested them.

		Pre	Post	E of Y	E of Y1	NV
Treated children n = 17	Mean % score	1.48	7.87	22.12	21.60	55.11
	<i>Standard deviation</i>	1.77	9.42	19.86	19.46	24.94
Control Children n = 20	Mean % score	1.20	3.07	5.17	8.02	48.85
	<i>Standard deviation</i>	1.67	4.64	5.66	12.29	24.02



## Conclusions 1. Language groups work

Language groups can help

- Children with EAL in reception classes.
- Children with social deprivation in nurseries (Reeves et al submitted; go see the poster)
  - Children with social deprivation in early school years (Lee and Pring 2016)

And others (Dockrell et al 2010, Fricke et al 2014, 2017).



Conclusions 2. But are not enough.

- But the children in these studies did not reach their age appropriate level.

No evidence that the interventions allowed them to progress without further help

(which they probably didn't get).

## Conclusions 3. The strange case of evidence based practice in SLT

Why does evidence based practice in SLT begin with the assumption that there is a resource limitation?

We should look at the effects of different dosages.

And if larger doses have better effects someone else can decide whether to fund the treatment (and take responsibility for not doing so).

## Conclusions 4. Maintenance or Consolidation

- The intervention had a delayed effect.
- Normally we have a follow up assessment to see if treatment effect is maintained.
- Future research should have a follow up assessment to see if there is further progress.

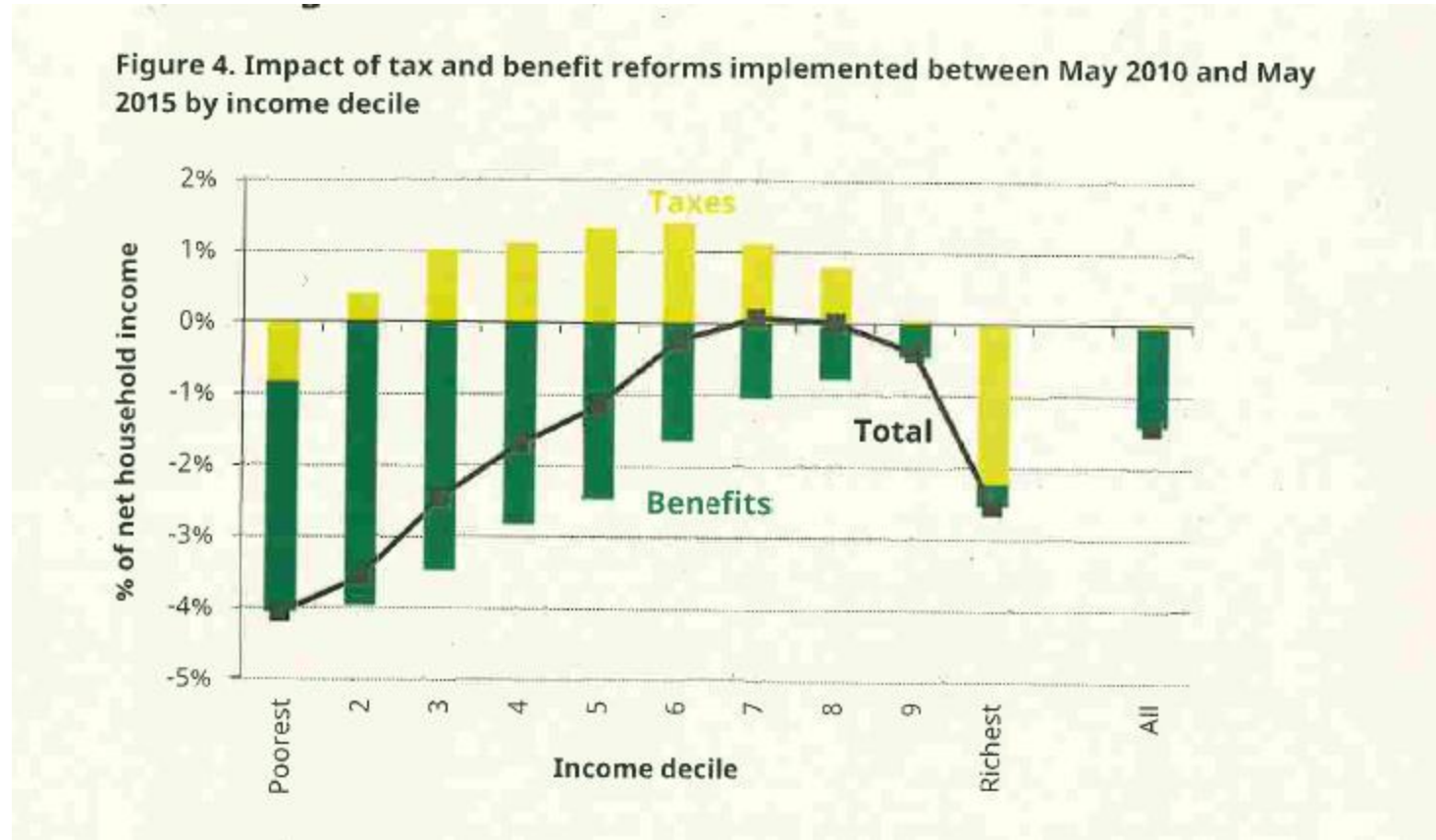
## Conclusions 5. Year 1 doesn't work

- The combination of intervention plus the reception class environment helps children.
- Year 1 is bad news for kids with language delays whether treated or not.

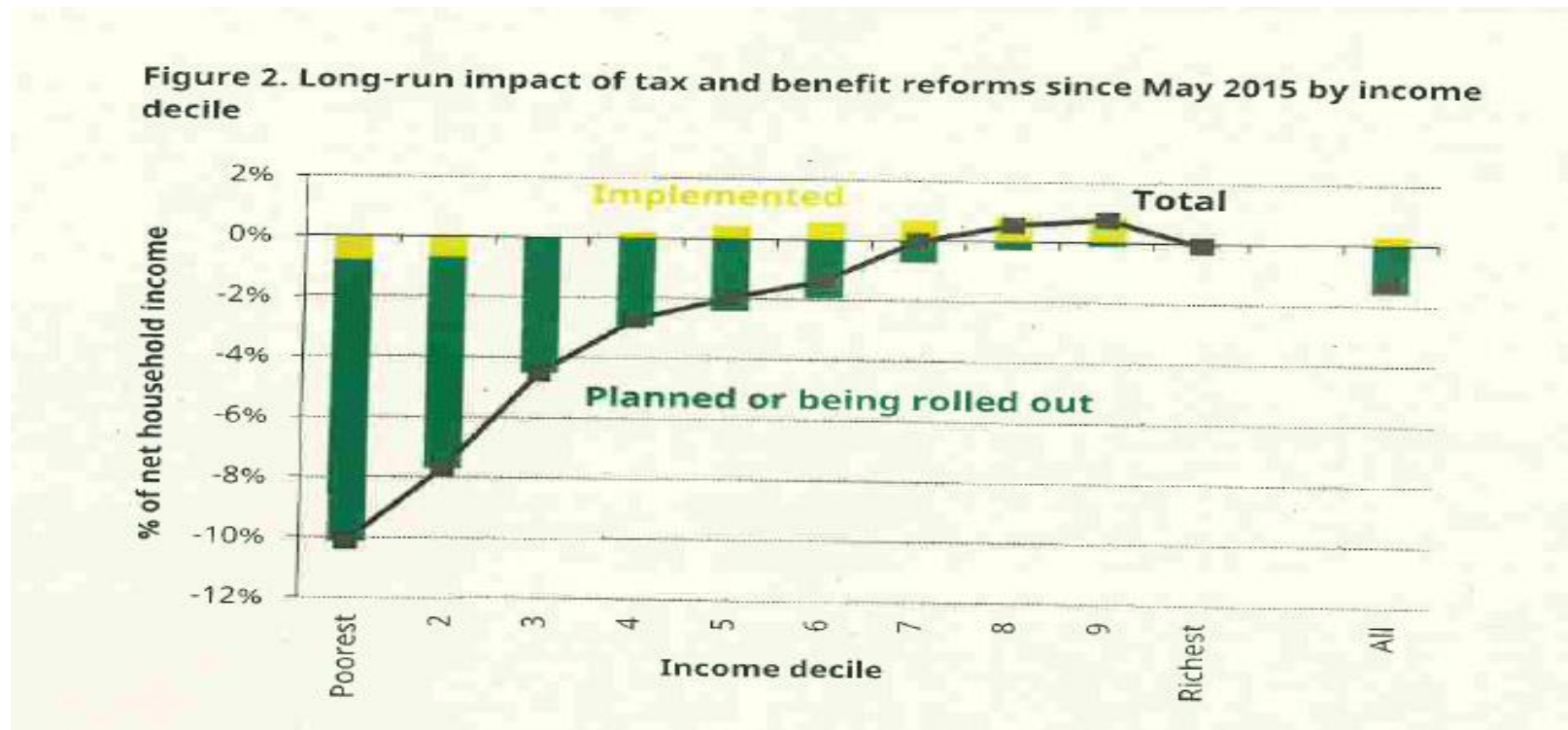
## Conclusion 6. Austerity is destroying children's chances.

- 3.5 million children (27%) in the UK are living in poverty (in families with incomes below 60% of median income).  
67% are in working families.

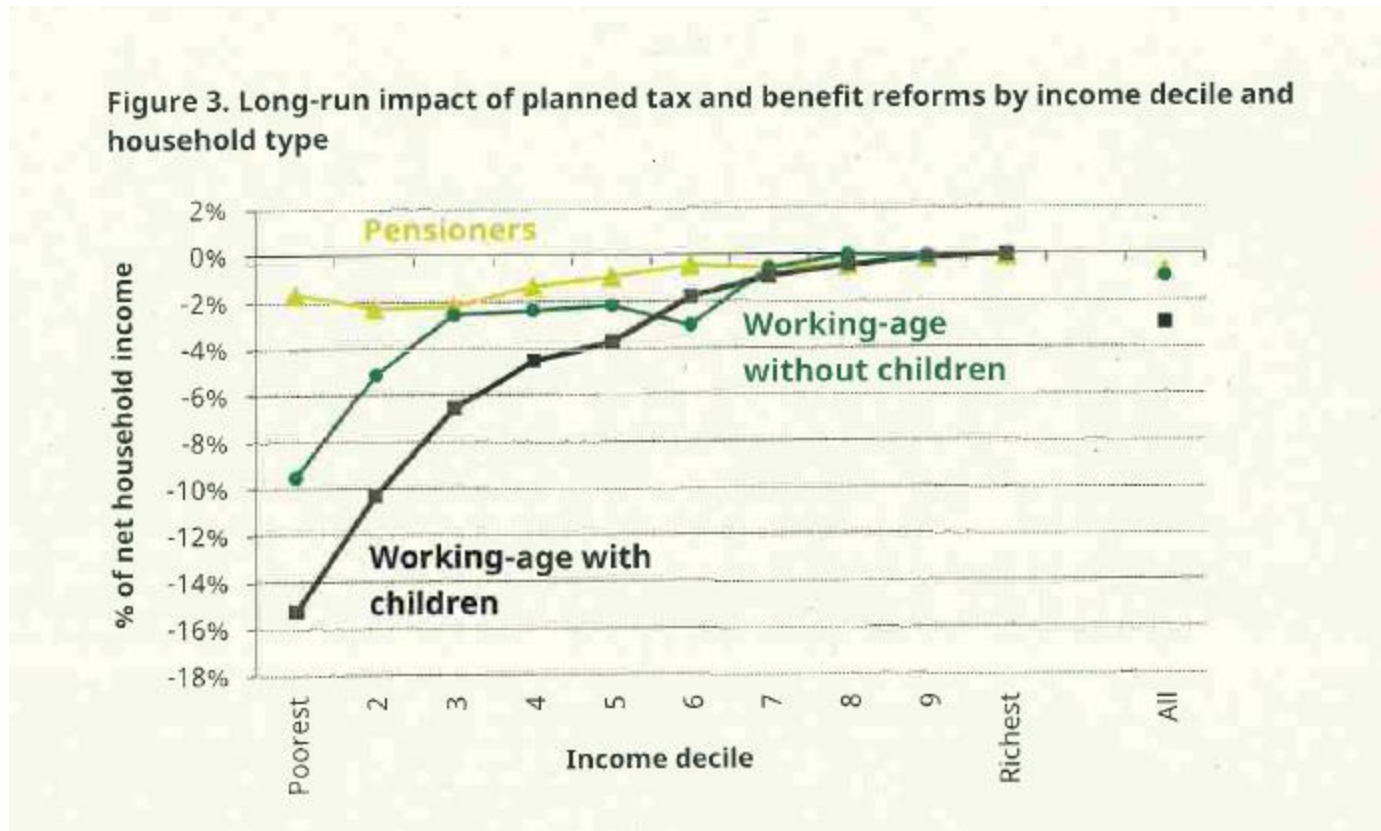
# Effects of tax and benefit changes up to 2015.



Hood and Waters (2017)  
Changes still to be implemented  
will have a much bigger impact.



And will particularly effect low income families with children.





## Conclusion 7

SLT may be evidence based but government policy is not.

Children improve when families get an increase in their income.

- Cooper and Stewart (2013, 2017) systematic review of studies where family income increases.
- “The overwhelming majority of studies find significant positive effects of income across the range of children’s outcomes, including cognitive development and school achievement, social and behavioural development and child health”.

“There can be no keener revelation of a society’s soul than the way in which it treats its children.”

Nelson Mandela

For more information go to

<http://paediatricslt.wordpress.com>

<http://politicsofpoverty.wordpress.com>