

'You still end up with nothing': Reality of living in work poverty revealed

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As the number of working families who live in poverty continues to rise in the UK, a new 'On the front line' article reveals the severe challenges that low pay, limited working hours and constrained employment opportunities bring.

Acknowledging that data on In Work Poverty (IWP) provides insight into the scale of the problem, researchers Jo McBride et al. suggest that, "The 'voices' and experiences of people living in this situation are currently lost in the statistics... Only by listening to first-hand accounts of people living through in-[work poverty](#) can their experiences be more deeply understood." This [article](#) is one of *Work, Employment and Society's* unscripted 'voice of the workers' articles that are freely available to students and the general public.

Through a testimony given by Marcell Mbala, a part-time cleaner and community volunteer, an important insight into low-paid work, in work poverty (IWP), the use of foodbanks and underemployment in the UK is exposed. Marcell Mbala, who left college to get a job and financially support his partner and child discusses his struggles to make ends meet:

"This is the only job I've managed to get here. I need extra hours, but I only managed to find this part-time job and I've got heating to pay, electric, water bills, TV license, child support and rent. It's a nightmare. Food, transport to work ... you end up with nothing, sometimes you end up in debt."

This article offers an important contribution to current academic and social policy debates around low-paid work, IWP the use of foodbanks, and underemployment.

More information: "'You end up with nothing': The experience of being a statistic of 'in-work poverty' in the UK," *Work, Employment and Society*, 2017.

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