

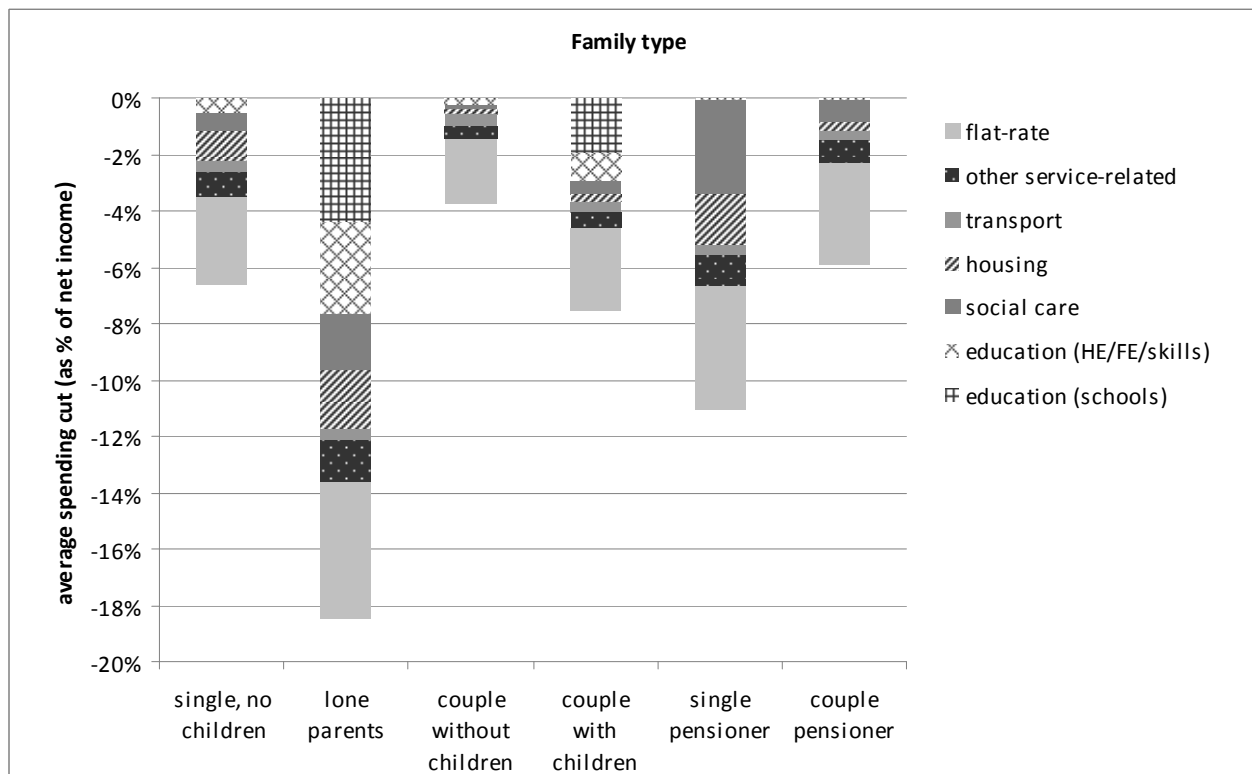
Unkindest Cuts: Analysing the effects by gender and age

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The Coalition government claims that its measures to reduce the deficit are both necessary and ‘fair’: distributing the pain across the whole of society. The authors argued that vulnerable groups will suffer the worst effects of the package of cuts and tax changes, focussing on how older people and women are affected.

This summary includes a selection of charts highlighting the effects by 2014 of cuts announced in the October 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review on different types of households using public services; more detail can be found in the PowerPoint slides that can be accessed at www.radstats.org.uk.

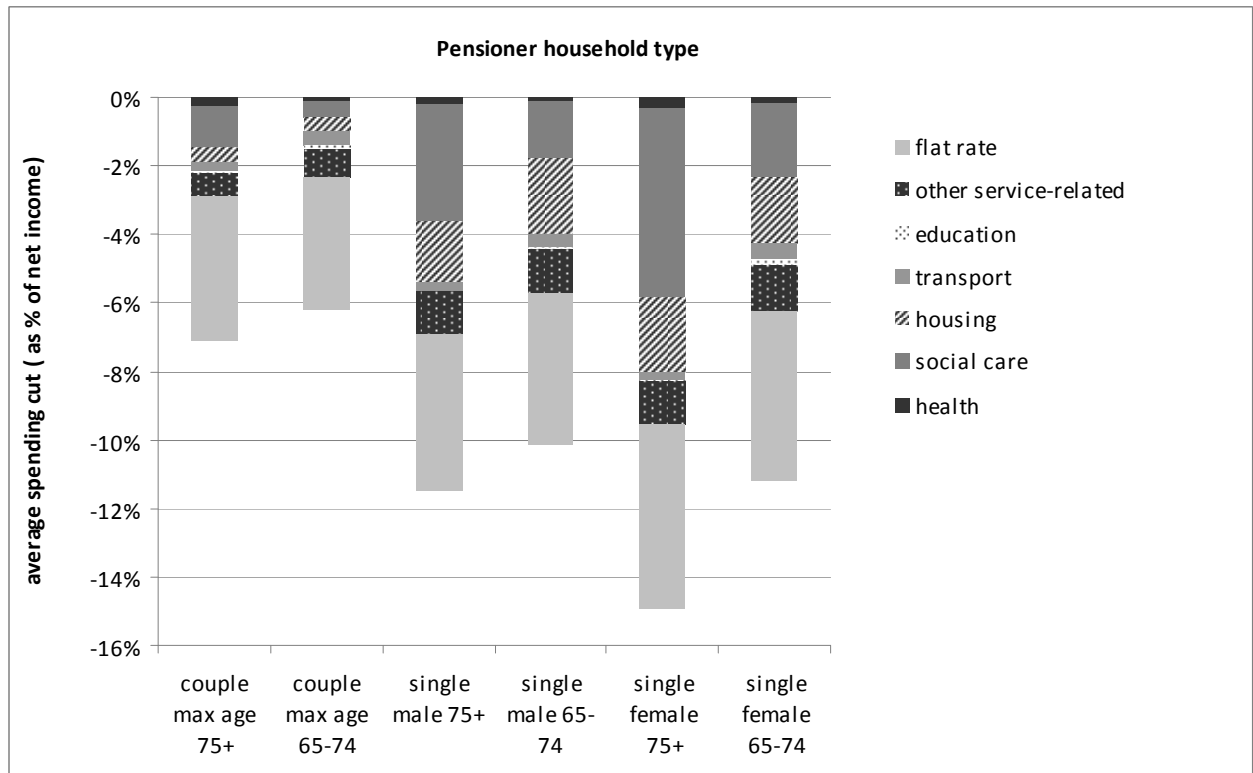
Figure 1: Effects of the spending cuts by 2014 on public services used by family type relative to net household income



Source: author's calculations using data supplied by Howard Reed as used in WBG (2010) and Reed and Horton (2010)

As Figure 1 shows, lone parents and single pensioners will be hit hardest by the cuts in services. Lone parents, 91% of whom are women, will suffer a cut worth 18.5% of their net income (compared with 6.85% on average over all households). Within all types of households, singles will suffer proportionately more than couples, but people under 65 without children, the only group within which singles are more likely to be men, suffer the smallest cuts in proportion to their income. Single pensioners, 73% of whom are women, will receive a cut worth 11.1% of their cash income. And among these, older women will receive the most severe cuts as Figure 2 shows.

Figure 2: Effects of the spending cuts by 2014 on public services used by types of pensioner households relative to net household income (information collected on a slightly different basis to Figure 1)



Source: author's calculations' using data supplied by Howard Reed as used in Age UK (2010)

The coalition government has made its most severe cuts on the grants that it gives to local authorities. These cuts will impact on the services that local authorities provide, such as social care, that are used particularly by vulnerable people, many of whom are old. It is single pensioners and particularly the older ones among them that rely most on social care. Figure 2 shows that cuts in social care impact most heavily on over 75s living alone, particularly older women. Cuts to housing also impact heavily on lone pensioners. Cuts to social care

and housing make up over half of the services lost by older pensioners living on their own.

More difficult to assess are the cumulative effects of policy decisions that shrink the state's role in healthcare and the consequent risks posed to the GP-patient relationship and older people's care by the Health & Social Care Bill. Most of these are not included in the above figures since they were not part of the Comprehensive Spending Review, which promised that health spending would be protected, though not in real terms. Older women are likely to be particularly badly affected as a large proportion of them have long term chronic conditions.

These spending cuts will also affect women in two other ways. Women are the majority of workers in the public sector so the majority of jobs lost will be theirs. Also, where families and communities succeed in making up for cuts in public services, this will happen mainly through women's unpaid work because women are mainly responsible for both informal and formal care.

The presentation also included analysis of gender differences in income and pensions, but this was well covered in "Unkindest Cuts: the impact on older people" by Jay Ginn in *Radical Statistics* #103.

Bibliography

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