



'Benefit cheats forced to take cash jobs'

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Benefit cheats are forced to take cash jobs on the side to stave off acute poverty or crises, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation has said.

Many felt the current system "often trapped them in a cycle of poverty with few financial incentives to work formally"

A report based on six years of research by the charity Community Links in east London said it was "need not greed" that caused people to do low-paid work they did not declare simply to pay for food, heating or mounting debts.

In the report, claimants cited a complex and inefficient tax and benefit system as reasons why they resort to casual labour.

Many felt the current system "often trapped them in a cycle of poverty with few financial incentives to work formally" despite measures such as family or working tax credits to help low-income families.

The report's author, Aaron Barbour, said: "People in deprived areas are resorting to informal paid work because they are trying to support, feed and clothe their families. They are hard-working, ordinary people trying to survive day by day."

"The government needs to understand and include the informal economy in all its strategies if it is to reach its employment, anti-poverty and regeneration targets," he added.

More support, training and development for those people who want to move from cash jobs into a formal work environment is recommended by the report.