# ‘Two Steps Forward, Two Back? Understanding recurrent poverty’

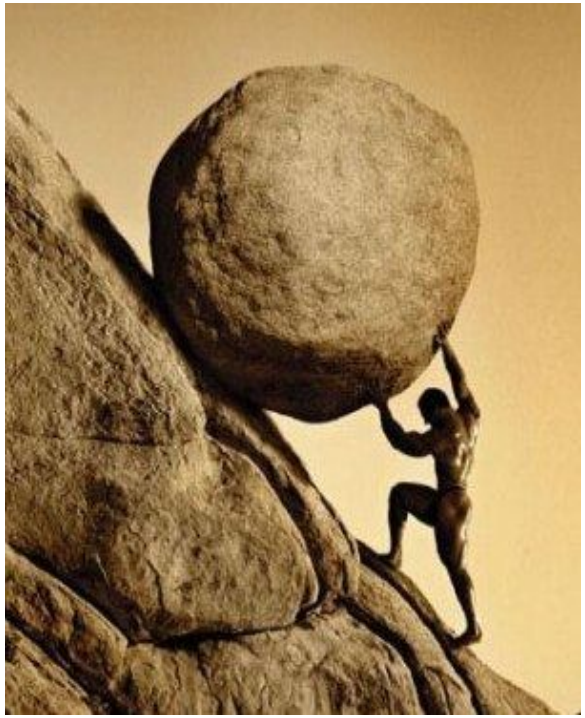
- Exploring:

  ‘the low-pay, no-pay cycle’ and ‘recurrent poverty’

- …from the perspective of:

  those engaged in it, employers & support agencies

- Interested in the effects of multiple, cumulative disadvantage



# Agencies & employers findings

- **Profusion (& confusion) of support agencies** for 'workless'
- **Limited interest in demand-side** of 'employability'
- **Barriers to employment?** = confidence, 'right attitude', childcare, complex benefits, gendered jobs, transport
  - not skills/ qualifications,
  - not pay levels (shared perception that NMW = not 'low pay' but 'good' or 'fair pay')
- **= reasonable match with what main interviewees said**
- ….and barrier of '**cultures** of worklessness'/ '**inter-generational** unemployment'
- **= no match with what main interviewees said**

# Summary & policy conclusions

- Complex factors of multiple disadvantage entwine with labour market casualisation & insecurity
- ‘Low-pay, no-pay’ cycle extends to mid-age workers, not stepping stones to better jobs
- Little, if any, evidence of ‘cultures of worklessness’
- Employment retention/ progress important, not just ‘welfare to work’
- Complexities/inadequacies of benefit system a barrier to more sustained labour market engagement *for some*
- ‘Persistent’ & ‘recurrent’ poverty despite employment: the failure of jobs and/ or benefits to relieve poverty or provide routes from it