



Health impacts of recession – Emerging evidence and implications for energy poverty

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Outline of presentation

- Evidence on health impacts of economic recession
- What are the opportunities and challenges for improving health through healthier housing, in the context of Ireland's burst property bubble?
- 8 observations and 2 questions

Health Impacts of Employment

a review



Evidence: significantly higher risk of ill health



- Strong correlation with increased suicide, alcohol poisoning, liver cirrhosis, ulcer, mental disorders**
- Increase of suicide incidence: 17% in Greece and Latvia, 13% in Ireland***
- Associated with a doubling of the risk of illness and 60% less likelihood of recovery from disease*
- Anticipation of job loss as a result of early indicators of crisis also having a negative effect***
- **NEVERTHELESS**, we also know that active labour market policies and effective social safety nets can mitigate most of these adverse effects, according to evidence from Sweden and Finland during their financial crisis in the early 1990s)



Other mediators

- Changes in government spending on health and social care services eligibility
- Changes to personal health spending– eg health insurance, prevention, primary care, home care
- Changes in government spending on capital investment programmes – foundations for public health – housing, infrastructure, transport, schools
- Social welfare reform
- Policy initiatives to deal with debt and insolvency



Housing in Ireland – boom

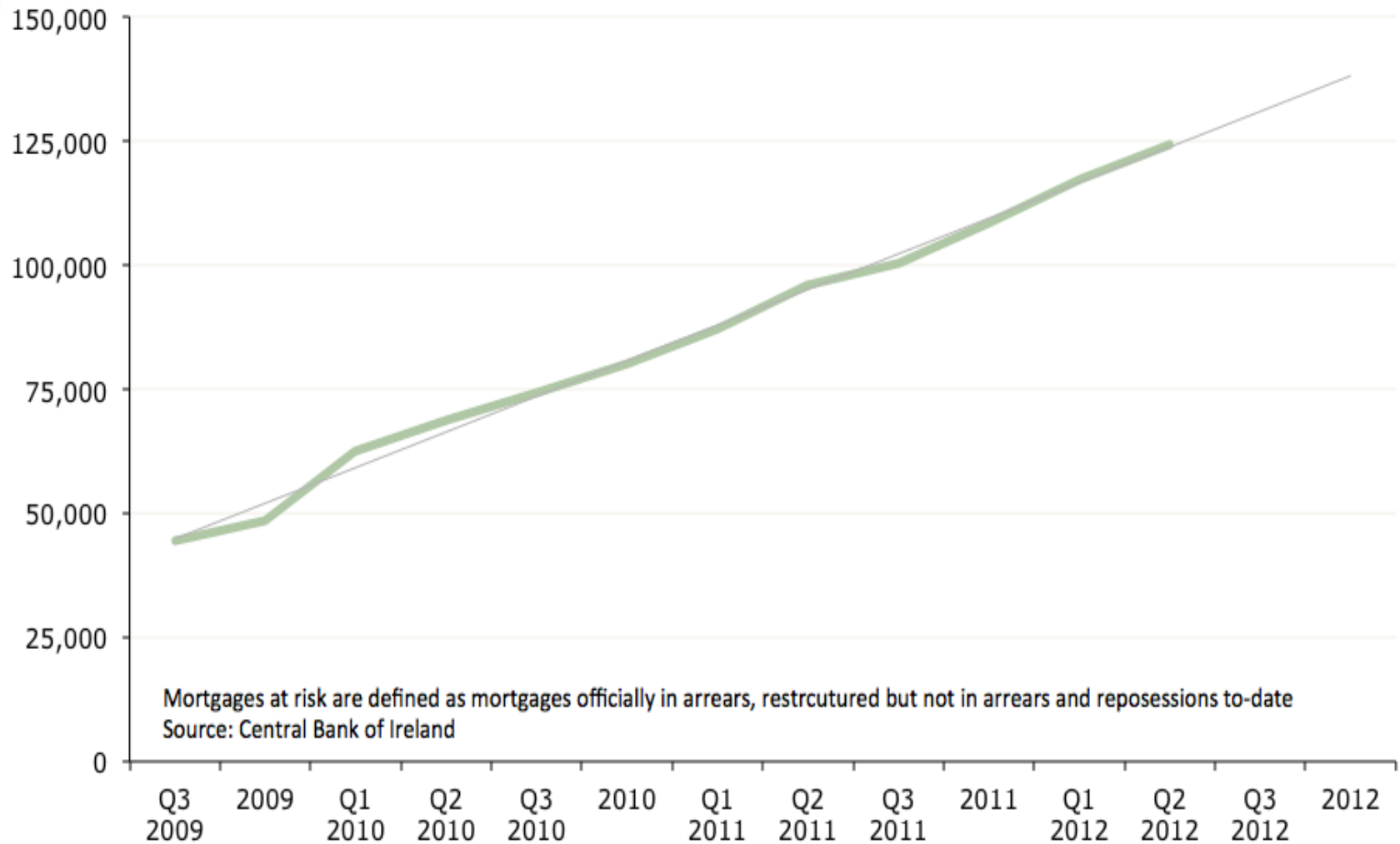
- April 2011 – 1,994,845 dwellings
- Prosperity, tax incentives and bank lending policies - a culture of property investment
- Housing stock increased by 21.2% in the period 2002-2006 and by 12.7% between 2006-2011
- Variety in the type , size and quality of housing built
- Increases in people living alone
- Multiple property buyers, buy to let , ‘property pension’ among middle-aged purchasers
- Housing retrofits - SEAI schemes & BER introduced



Housing in Ireland - bust

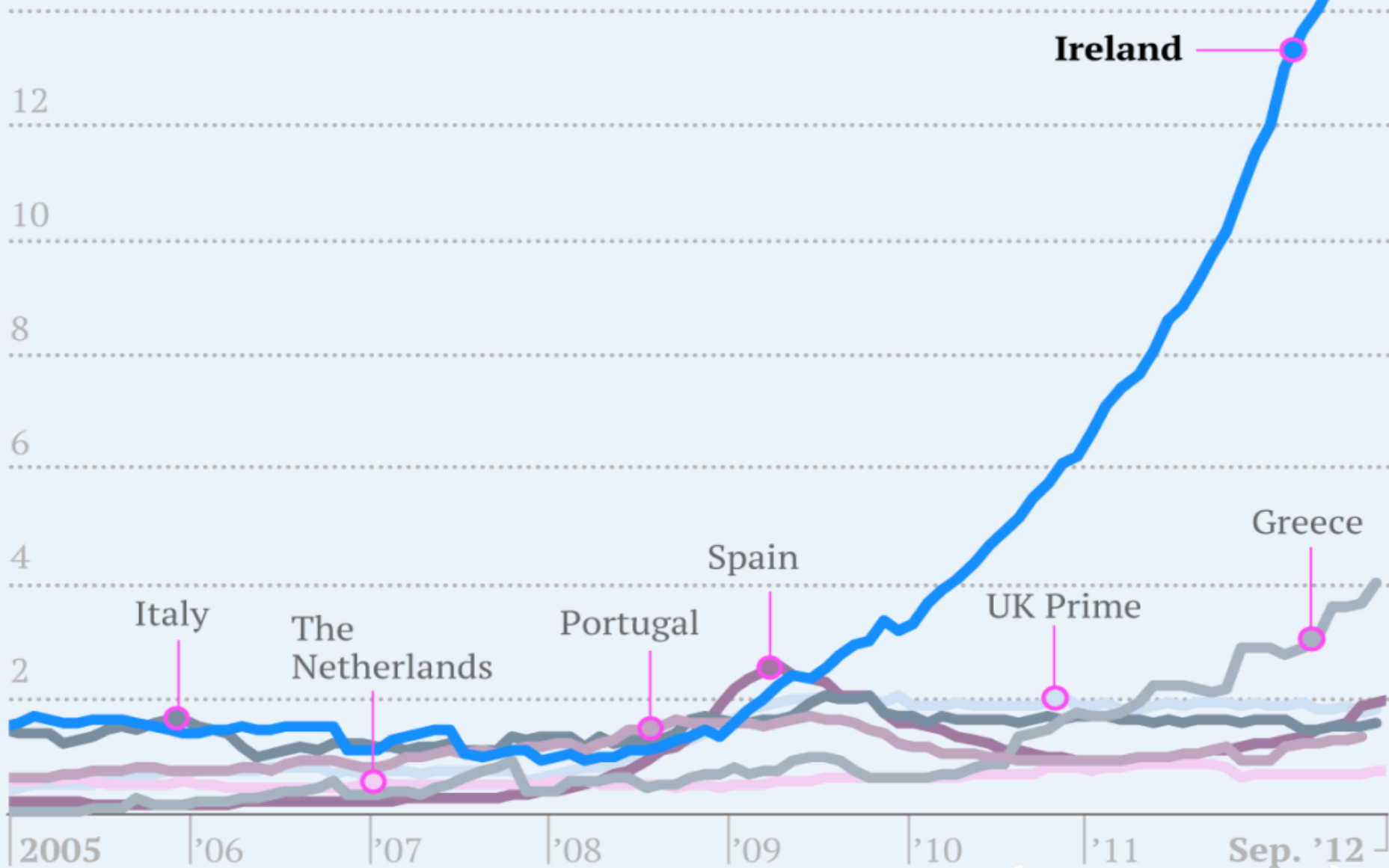
- Ghost estates
- Mortgage arrears (graph)
- Repossession (? on the way)
- Debt – including utility debt
- Increases in the proportion of the population living in private rented accommodation (Census 2011)
- Increases in the demand for social housing but limited funds to build it
- Boom time buildings - compliance with health and safety (and energy efficiency?) standards?

Mortgages at Risk (ex <90 days arrears)
numbers of mortgages and linear trend forecast



Late stage mortgage arrears in European countries

14% of the total balance



Non-boom, non-bust

- Groups in relative income poverty & deprivation – change or the same?
- Poor quality energy inefficient housing lacking central heating remained concentrated among older people (table)
- Demographic backdrop - population ageing, increases in older people living alone, child poverty
- Concentration of fuel poverty among lone-parent households

No central heating

Private Households in Permanent Housing Units (Number) by Type
of
Central Heating, Age Group of Reference Person and Census Year

2011

No central heating

Under 25 years	1,081
25 - 29 years	1,562
30 - 34 years	1,660
35 - 39 years	1,506
40 - 44 years	1,624
45 - 49 years	1,868
50 - 54 years	2,216
55 - 59 years	2,471
60 - 64 years	2,789
65 years and over	10,175
65 years and over not living alone	5,597
65 years and over living alone	4,578

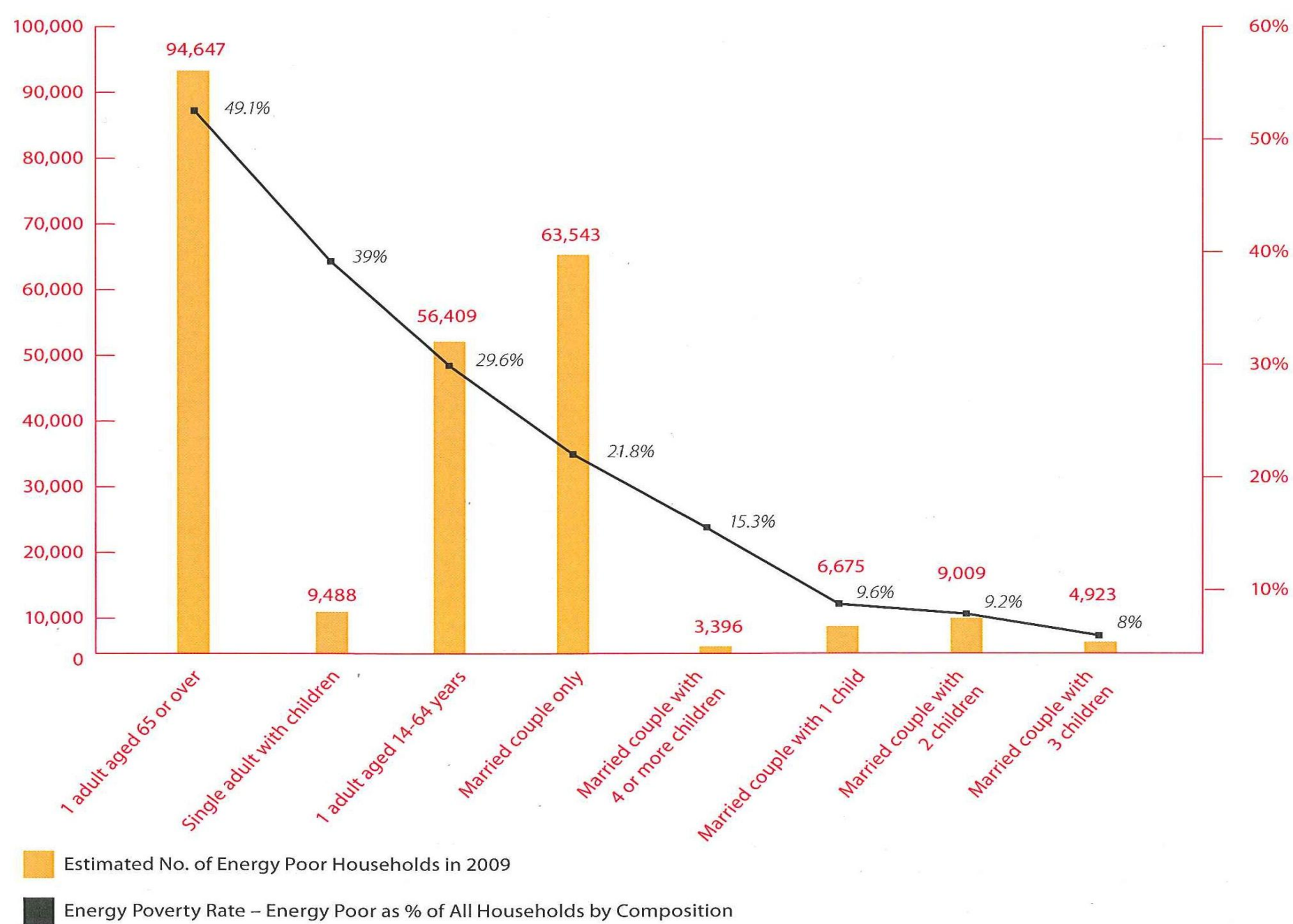
Concurrent health trends

- Population ageing – increases in number of people with conditions affected by living in cold homes
‘vulnerable’
- Rates declining, numbers increasing – CVD
- Rates static(?), numbers increasing - COPD, respiratory disease
- Rates increasing, numbers increasing – childhood asthma, allergic diseases (GUI, ISAAC studies)
- Rates increasing, numbers increasing – mental illness, depression and anxiety
- Falls among older people

WARMER HOMES

A Strategy for Affordable Energy in Ireland





Source: CSO, Household Budget Survey 2004-05 and analysis of movements in energy prices and incomes between 2004/05 and 2009

Private Households in Permanent Housing Units (Number) by Type of Central Heating, Age Group of Reference Person and Census Year

2011

Peat (incl. turf)

Under 25 years	750
25 - 29 years	2,091
30 - 34 years	3,679
35 - 39 years	5,027
40 - 44 years	6,029
45 - 49 years	7,677
50 - 54 years	9,236
55 - 59 years	9,648
60 - 64 years	9,123
65 years and over	25,378
65 years and over not living alone	9,434
65 years and over living alone	15,944



Observations

- Improved energy efficiency has the potential to act as a protective factor for the health and wellbeing of vulnerable householders in difficult economic times – a healthy affordable home is a real asset
- Incentivising governments to invest in improved energy efficiency will be a challenge when departmental budgets are constrained, particularly when this area might be considered ‘non-core’ work
- Incentivising householders to invest in improved energy efficiency is an even bigger challenge when family budgets are constrained



Observations

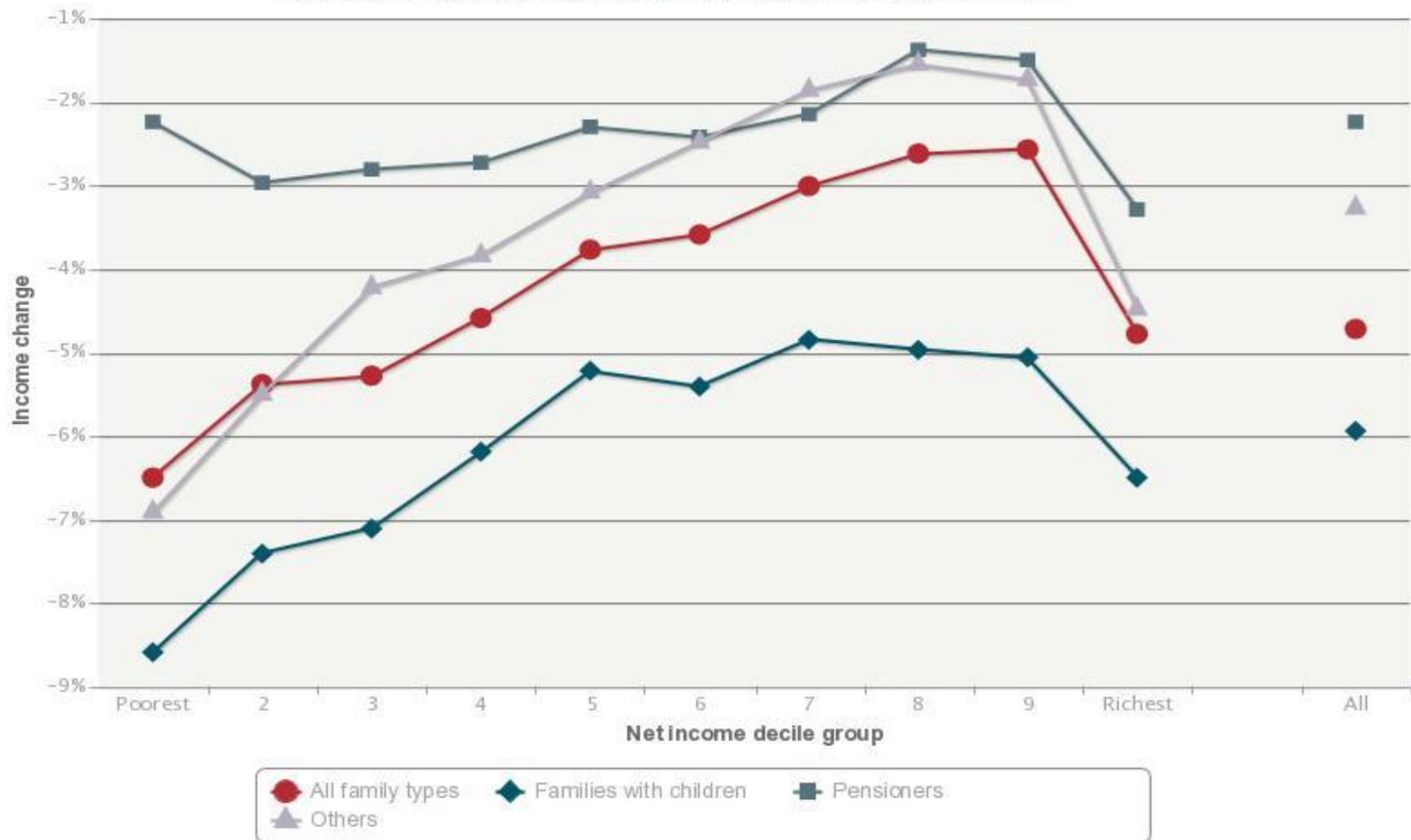
- Constrained governmental budgets should lead to an increase in partnership working, but this depends on high level commitment and belief in its value across several key departments
- Healthy Ireland, Ireland's new public health strategy proposes increased cross-sectoral responsibility for health and a Health In All Policies Approach
- The direction of health policy and health service reform could present opportunities for increased partnership around a common priority – better prevention and management of chronic disease



Observations

- Changes are afoot in terms of social welfare and health reform as well as in energy policy - need to keep an eye on many policy targets – damage limitation for fuel poor householders may be key!

Impact of modelled tax and benefit reforms in the UK: 2011-2014



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Observations

- Better consideration of local fuel poverty implications of European and global policy directives can be important in terms of not creating additional vulnerabilities



- Tackling the worst housing, improving private rented
- Ensuring adequate energy efficient homes for social housing applicants
- Integrating energy efficiency into policy responses to unemployment, housing repossession, debt and ghost estates
- Integrating energy efficiency considerations into ageing policy
- Demonstrating the case for further investment within a harsh fiscal climate
- Leveraging cross-departmental engagement and budgets
- Developing appropriately nuanced approaches to European policy
- Regularly refreshing data and misconceptions about fuel poor households



Question

- Can policy responses to the economic crisis be oriented to protect the health and wellbeing of vulnerable and fuel-poor households?

How can we realise opportunities for improving energy efficiency into -

- Policy response to personal debt, PIP, mortgage arrears and repossession
- Policies and programmes addressing unemployment
- Social welfare reform
- Health service reform
- Health service frameworks on relevant conditions



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