Joseph Rowntree Foundation – Policy Analyst x2

£29,083 p.a., £34,083 in London.

Two questions:

# Question 1:

How should JRF go about convincing the government to take action on declining living standards and rising poverty? Max 2500 characters

Declining living standards are an economic, social, and moral threat. Lower average wages and high inflation affect the government’s ability to effectively benefit from economic growth, fuel discontent against institutions and neighbours, and break a fundamental aspect of our collective social contract. As such, it is incredibly important that effective action is taken to alleviate current trends.

The government often struggles to tackle these kinds of crises. Often, short-term political incentives mean that the long-run benefit to the treasury and social cohesion of reduced cost pressures are not fully felt, while short-term budget constraints are always a priority. Furthermore, there is often a strong degree of scepticism against redistributive policies, such as minimum wage legislation, unemployment benefits, or price subsidies and caps.

These misgivings are often not entirely misplaced, and JRF’s main task in convincing the government to take action must be to present evidence-based policy, restate the multi-faceted costs of poverty and low incomes, and leverage public lived experience to encourage political buy-in.

There is clear evidence that a reduction in inequality has a significant, lengthening effect on periods of positive growth, while redistribution in and of itself is generally neutral. If more localised research like this is sponsored, especially utilising a finer, intranational scope, a strong evidence base can be created to suggests that stronger social safety nets and lower rents through greater homebuilding are essential for sustained economic growth, one of the government’s top priorities.

Furthermore, productivity has been historically tied with lower productivity – using this framing, especially in the context of the UK’s ‘productivity puzzle’, is essential to spur action.

Finally, data should be humanised by recounting individual experiences. This approach is persuasive, eye-opening and can generate strong currents of public support if directed intelligently by leveraging social media impact multipliers. A strong public reaction would also remind the government that amongst their constituents are those who would benefit tremendously from the JRF’s proposals.

In this way, JRF can inform and shape a policy direction which addresses some of the most politically sensitive issues of the modern age. Furthermore, by ensuring that reforms are backed with public support, changes can be set in stone, rather than uncertain and teetering.

**ChatGPT proposed structure:**

**1. Understand JRF’s Role and Voice**

**The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) is a progressive social change organisation focused on solving poverty in the UK. Their voice is:**

* **Evidence-based**
* **Persuasive but non-partisan**
* **Focused on real-life impact and lived experiences**
* **Supportive of systemic, long-term change**

**So, your response should balance pragmatic policy suggestions with moral urgency, underpinned by solid evidence.**

**2. Structure Your Answer (suggested outline)**

**Here's a proven structure you can follow to stay within the 2500-character limit:**

**A. Opening Statement: Why This Matters (approx. 300–400 characters)**

**Briefly acknowledge the seriousness of declining living standards and rising poverty. You could mention the cost-of-living crisis, wage stagnation, and rising inequality as visible symptoms. Make it clear that this is both a moral and economic imperative.**

***“Declining living standards and rising poverty threaten not just individual dignity, but long-term economic resilience and social cohesion. Tackling them must be a national priority.”***

**B. Identify the Challenge: Why Government Inaction Persists (approx. 400–500 characters)**

**Identify *why* governments often fail to act. Possible reasons:**

* **Short-term political incentives**
* **Budget constraints**
* **Lack of pressure from constituents**
* **Skepticism about redistributive policies**

**This sets up your argument for how JRF should respond strategically.**

**C. Core Argument: How JRF Should Convince the Government (main section – around 1300–1500 characters)**

**This is the heart of your response. Break it into a few key strategies:**

1. **Frame poverty as a cost to the economy  
   Use JRF’s own research or similar findings to show that poverty leads to lower productivity, greater NHS burden, and higher welfare costs. Frame action as fiscally responsible.**
2. **Leverage cross-party coalitions and civic alliances  
   JRF can collaborate with employers, faith groups, think tanks, and local authorities to build pressure across the political spectrum. Emphasise that tackling poverty has broad-based support.**
3. **Elevate lived experience in policymaking  
   Present real stories from those affected by poverty to humanise the data. This is persuasive with both the public and MPs.**
4. **Produce practical, costed, scalable solutions  
   Avoid vague calls for “action” — instead, develop detailed proposals (e.g., strengthening the social security safety net, expanding affordable housing, improving in-work support) that civil servants and ministers can act on.**

**D. Closing Statement: A Call to Ambition (approx. 200–300 characters)**

**Finish with a forward-looking message about JRF’s unique position and why ambition is essential.**

***“JRF can inspire and inform a policy agenda that is not only morally just, but economically smart — helping the UK become a country where no one is held back by poverty.”***

# Question 2:

Can you tell us about a time when you've had to deliver something as part of a team, focusing on what you did to make it work well and what you learnt from the experience?

**DWP King’s Speech Policy Analysis**

I had just joined the DWP, working in a policy role in the Horizon Scanning and Insights team as a summer intern. As I had joined in the summer of 2024, the King’s Speech was delivered shortly after my arrival. I suggested to my team that we should document the bills mentioned and deliver succinct Horizon Scanning policy insights to the rest of our division, which was Fraud, Error and Debt.

Because we had other research projects that needed completing, I made sure that everyone was on board during a group meeting. I then suggested we divide ourselves according to our current research area to play to everyone’s expertise; for example, because I was researching Data Regulation, Privacy, and Ethics, I focused on the Cyber Security and Resilience Bill, and what is now known as the Data Use and Access Bill.

I created a central document for the team to log progress by setting up a custom shared sheet on Excel with functionality to indicate progress and when an update could be expected. Each colleague linked to a separate document with what they had written so far so that anyone falling behind due to other responsibilities, which often happened, could be quickly spotted. The reason this task was fairly urgent was because our team was fairly new at this time and we felt that distributing a relevant policy document quickly after the King’s Speech would garner attention and set the stage for our team’s final product.

Once the project was nearing completion, a colleague and I worked on the presentation strategy. I put forward that a video presentation focusing on each unique research topic was the best way to deliver the information, and we presented the final product only a week after the King’s Speech first aired during a departmental meeting.

I found that good communication, a clear plan and wide consensus was very important to delivering something as part of a team. Recognising when other colleagues were under stress from too many deadlines, and adjusting expectations accordingly, helped us gain momentum without overburdening anyone; an empathetic approach is therefore essential. I learned that, not only is dividing work on strengths efficient, it also allows for shared learning when policy areas overlap. This experience taught me that taking initiative, encouraging knowledge exchange, and shaping outputs collaboratively can be transformative, especially in a fast-paced policy environment where collective learning drives stronger results.