



# Growing Up Poor

BBC Three

9:00pm to 10:00pm

**Time Out says**

**Star Rating: 4**

With social security provision set to be one of the year's political hot potatoes, this two-part doc couldn't be more timely. This opening episode profiles three female teenagers as they eke out a meagre living via state support, some occasional assistance from friends and credit unions (although Shelby isn't sure she'll be able to afford the £6 joining fee). The north/south divide is a definite factor – these northern towns (Bradford, Rotherham and Glasgow) feel like prospect-free zones. But what really hits home is the enervating effect of poverty – the sense of boredom is stifling, these girls have no horizons, no sense of their own potential and therefore, no real goals to drive them forward. At times, they're hard to like – Bridie's a volatile loose cannon, Amber proclaims her fear of 'being a shit mum' while smoking through her pregnancy. But Tim Lawton's film is admirably non-judgemental – it's clear that these girls are victims, failed by everyone from parents to the education system to central government itself. Sad. Phil Harrison

## **Synopsis**

### **Growing up Poor, Episode 1: Girls**

Filmed over one summer, this documentary follows three very different teenage girls all on the cusp of adulthood and dealing with the pressures of growing up with one similarity - they are all surviving on under £10 a day. For Bridie, her hopes of joining the army hinge on her staying out of trouble with the police. Amber is 16 and pregnant. She's fortunate that her mum is there to support her, but nonetheless scraping money together for all that she needs is a daunting task, quite apart from the prospect of motherhood. Like so many British teenagers affected by the recession Shelby was on jobseeker's allowance, but she's determined to find a job. Currently completing a work placement, she hopes it will develop into a real job.