

## Briefing Paper

### Can money bring you happiness? No

If you won £84 million on the lottery, would it make you happy? You would almost certainly be shocked and excited. But would it make you happy? The research evidence actually suggests that it wouldn't. This might seem difficult to believe as most people dream of winning millions but if you really want to make yourself happier the evidence is clear: you should improve your health (give up smoking, stop drinking so much alcohol, eat your five a day, take more exercise and so on) and improve your close relationships. But this sounds a bit like hard work whereas winning the lottery sounds like fun. But if you did win there would be all those difficult choices to make: where should you invest your money? Should you buy the 3-berth yacht or the 4-berth? Should you give your second cousin once-removed some money to help pay off their debts? Research with lottery winners shows that it isn't all plain sailing and they need a lot of support to help them manage their good luck. Some can see marriages and other relationships break down under the strain. So money isn't everything - unless you are living on a very low income and struggling to make ends meet of course. But in that case you don't need millions, just a decent level of income from benefits or wages. Spreading that £84 million around to people on very low incomes would certainly make a lot of people a lot happier rather than give one person a potentially mixed blessing.

Karen Rowlingson

Professor of Social Policy

Director of Centre on Household Assets and Savings Management

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