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**EMBARGOED: 00:00 19th May, 2021**

**Interviews, further briefing and stats available. Images** **available** [**here**](https://we.tl/t-E8fOJUFnRm) **(please credit Save the Children). Local authority and constituency data available below.**

**DRAMATIC RISE IN CHILD POVERTY IN NORTH EAST ENGLAND IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS SHOWS THE SCALE OF THE ‘LEVELLING UP’ CHALLENGE**

* Even before the pandemic, 4.3 million children were living in poverty, up 200,000 from the previous year – and up 500,000 over the past five years.
* North East England shows the greatest growth in child poverty over the past five years and has risen by a third, taking it from below the UK average to the second highest of any region
* Highest rates of child poverty continue to be in major cities – particularly London and Birmingham
* Three quarters (75%) of children living in poverty in 2019/20 were in households with at least one working adult; up from two thirds (67%) in 2014/15.

New figures released today reveal that even before the pandemic, in some parts of the UK, the majority of children are growing up in poverty, once housing costs are taken into account.

The research carried out by Loughborough University for the End Child Poverty Coalition shows that the North East of England has seen the most dramatic rise in child poverty in the past five years, fuelled by stagnating family incomes. In London high housing costs are pushing many families to the brink.

Overall, in the North East, the child poverty rate has risen by over a third - from 26% to 37% - over five years, moving from just below the UK average to the second highest of any region, after London. A third of the overall increase happened in the latest year (2019/20) with many low-paid workers pushed below the poverty line by the freeze in their in-work benefits.

Over the years, the proportion of children living in poverty who are in a household with at least one working adult has also increased sharply across the UK, up from two thirds (67%) five years ago to three quarters (75%).

Vikki Waterman is a single mum of two from Durham who works full-time. She says poverty in the north-east cripples hard-up families and it beggars belief that the UK Government doesn’t understand the struggles facing working parents, even more so following the financial impact of COVID-19.

*“Too many of us in the north-east work twice as hard for half as much. We’re not living, were just about surviving.*

*“Working families, particularly single parent families, already live day to day with the constant fear of having no flexibility or financial safety net, often forcing them to turn to high interest loans in times of desperate need. The government must not allow those of us barely managing to keep our heads above water from going under.”*

The new data also confirms London and Birmingham, two of the UK’s largest cities, as having the greatest concentrations of child poverty with a dozen constituencies showing the majority of children living below the poverty line, even before large numbers of people started losing their jobs as a result of the pandemic.

Of the UK nations, Wales has the highest percentage of children living in poverty nationwide (31%), followed by England (30%) then Scotland and Northern Ireland (24% each).

The coalition is calling on the UK Government to recognise the scale of the problem and its impact on children’s lives and to create a credible plan to end child poverty which must include a commitment to increase child benefits. Given the extent to which families are already struggling, the planned £20 p/w cut to Universal Credit in October tshould be revoked. The support should also be extended to those still receiving financial assistance from the old benefit system, referred to as ‘legacy benefits’, before they are switched to Universal Credit.

Anna Feuchtwang, Chair of the End Child Poverty Coalition said: “*The figures speak for themselves – the situation for children couldn’t be starker. We all want to live in a society where children are supported to be the best they can be, but the reality is very different for too many.*

*“The UK Government can be in no doubt about the challenge it faces if it is serious about ‘levelling up’ parts of the country hardest hit by poverty. After the year we’ve all had, they owe it to our children to come up with a plan to tackle child poverty that includes a boost to children’s benefits. And they need to scrap plans to cut Universal Credit given parents and children are having a tough enough time as it is.”*

The full report ‘Local indicators of child poverty after housing costs, 2019/20’ as well as tables with Constituency and Local Authority data are available [here](http://www.endchildpoverty.org.uk/local-child-poverty-data-2014-15-2019-20/).

**The 20 local authorities with highest increase in child poverty rates after housing costs, 2014/15 – 2019/20**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Local Authority** | | **% of children below 60% median income AHC** | |
|  | **2014/15** | **2019/20** | **%age point increase** |
| **UK** | **29%** | **31%** | **2%** |
| Newcastle upon Tyne | 28.4% | 41.2% | 12.8% |
| Gateshead | 24.7% | 36.0% | 11.2% |
| Redcar and Cleveland | 26.2% | 36.8% | 10.6% |
| County Durham | 25.3% | 35.8% | 10.5% |
| North Tyneside | 23.6% | 34.0% | 10.5% |
| Darlington | 25.7% | 36.1% | 10.4% |
| South Tyneside | 27.4% | 37.8% | 10.4% |
| Hartlepool | 27.4% | 37.8% | 10.4% |
| Middlesbrough | 29.2% | 39.4% | 10.3% |
| Sunderland | 27.4% | 37.6% | 10.3% |
| Stockton-on-Tees | 25.5% | 35.3% | 9.8% |
| Northumberland | 26.5% | 36.2% | 9.8% |
| Leicester | 30.0% | 37.9% | 7.9% |
| Bradford | 30.1% | 37.7% | 7.7% |
| Birmingham | 35.5% | 42.5% | 6.9% |
| Leeds | 28.6% | 35.3% | 6.7% |
| Manchester | 35.4% | 41.8% | 6.4% |
| Kirklees | 30.0% | 36.1% | 6.2% |
| Kingston upon Hull | 30.2% | 36.3% | 6.1% |
| North Lincolnshire | 27.2% | 33.1% | 5.9% |

**The 20 parliamentary constituencies with highest child poverty rates, 2019/20**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Constituency** | **% of children below 60% median income after housing costs, 2019/20** |
| **UK** | **31%** |
| Bethnal Green and Bow | 59.6% |
| Hackney South and Shoreditch | 56.3% |
| Birmingham Ladywood | 54.5% |
| Birmingham Hall Green | 54.3% |
| Birmingham Hodge Hill | 52.0% |
| Vauxhall | 51.6% |
| West Ham | 51.2% |
| Poplar and Limehouse | 50.6% |
| East Ham | 50.0% |
| Walthamstow | 49.8% |
| Birmingham Perry Barr | 48.9% |
| Barking | 48.9% |
| Warley | 47.8% |
| Tottenham | 47.6% |
| Bermondsey and Old Southwark | 47.4% |
| Bradford West | 47.3% |
| Walsall South | 47.1% |
| Manchester Gorton | 46.8% |
| Bradford East | 46.7% |
| Holborn and St Pancras | 46.4% |

**ENDS**

**For further information, please contact Beverley Kirk, Save the Children Senior Media Manager (Scotland),** [**b.kirk@savethechildren.org.uk**](mailto:b.kirk@savethechildren.org.uk) **07900214959**

**or Eurgain Haf, Save the Children Senior Media Manager** [**e.haf@savethechildren.org.uk**](mailto:e.haf@savethechildren.org.uk)**, 07900214959**

**NOTES TO EDITORS**

* The research was carried out by Dr Juliet Stone and Professor Donald Hirsch at the Centre for Research in Social Policy, at Loughborough University based on the latest Before Housing Cost child poverty data from DWP published in March 2021.
* Report and data all available here [Local child poverty data 2014/15 - 2019/20 | Improving the lives of children and families (endchildpoverty.org.uk)](http://www.endchildpoverty.org.uk/local-child-poverty-data-2014-15-2019-20/)
* For a family of one adult and one child, 60% of median income, after housing costs, in 2019/20 was £223 week
* For a family of one adult and two children, £280 week
* For a family of two adults and one child, £343 week
* For a family of two adults and two children, £400 week

**About End Child Poverty**

End Child Poverty is a coalition of organisations from civic society including children’s charities, child welfare organisations, social justice groups, faith groups, trade unions and others, united in our vision of a UK free of child poverty. For more details visit www.endchildoverty.org.uk.