**EMBARGOED: 00:01, Monday 5th June 2023**

**NEW LOCAL DATA SHOWS CHILD POVERTY “UNACCEPTABLY HIGH” ACROSS SCOTLAND AND REST OF UK**

**“Urgent action needed at every level of government”, say campaigners.**

**Interviews, further briefing and stats available. Images available** [**here**](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1GZECuwl1NVrqgvfV4jHELt2jT0WZ9UUp) **(please credit Save the Children).**

* **Nearly one in four children across Scotland (24%) were still living in poverty prior to the full roll out of the new Scottish Child Payment. Across the UK, the figure was 29%.**
* **Campaigners say that urgent action is still needed at every level of government to ensure that Scotland’s legal child poverty reduction targets are met.**
* **They urge UK Government to scrap the two-child benefit limit but that Scottish Ministers should “do the right thing” and mitigate this “unfair and indiscriminate” policy.**
* **Local authorities also urged to build on existing action to maximise family incomes and cut costs.**
* **Breakdown of Scottish local authority data available below.**

Levels of child poverty remain unacceptably high across Scotland and the rest of the UK, according to new research from Loughborough University published today by the End Child Poverty coalition.

The new data covers the period to 2021/22 and provides the best available estimates of child poverty at local authority level, after housing costs have been taken into account.

Across the UK, 4.2 million children were living in poverty (29%) whilst in Scotland the figure is 250,000 (24% of Scotland’s children). Levels of child poverty across Scotland’s council areas range from one in seven (East Renfrewshire) to nearly one in three in Glasgow.

Campaigners highlight the damaging effect the UK Government’s two child limit policy is having. The policy limits key child-related benefits, such as universal credit, to the first two children in a family. They point to the evidence showing children with two or more siblings are more likely to be in poverty. Across the UK their risk of being in poverty rises to 42%.

Members of the End Child Poverty coalition – whose members in Scotland include Child Poverty Action Group, Save the Children, Trussell Trust, Poverty Alliance, Oxfam Scotland, Close the Gap, Aberlour, Children 1st, Home-Start Scotland, Children in Scotland, Action for Children and One Parent Families Scotland – are calling on the UK Government to scrap the two child limit policy at source.

However, in the meantime they are also urging the Scottish Government to invest further in the Scottish Child Payment, both to increase its value and to provide additional payments for families affected by the UK-wide two child limit, until it is abolished.

**Speaking on behalf of Scotland members of the End Child Poverty coalition, John Dickie said:**

“These latest statistics are a stark reminder that child poverty remains unacceptably high across the UK, including in every local authority area of Scotland. It’s now absolutely vital that the UK Government scraps poverty creating policies like the two-child limit.”

Highlighting the need for action at every level of government, Mr Dickie continued:

“Here in Scotland, the Scottish Child Payment is already making a big difference to struggling families, but nearly one in four children still face this deep injustice and further effort is now needed to ensure Scotland’s upcoming child poverty targets are met.

“The First Minister has committed to used devolved powers to the ‘absolute maximum effect’, so his government must now do the right thing and go further to both increase the value of the Scottish child payment and put in place additional payments for families affected by the two-child limit.”

Pointing to the role of local government, Mr Dickie continued:

“These new local child poverty statistics also highlight how critical the role of local authorities and their partners are in maximising incomes and reducing the costs families face. We urge all councils to double down on their local child poverty action plans and put low-income families front and centre when prioritising resources and local economic development.”

**Kat (not her real name), a 19-year-old End Child Poverty Youth Ambassador from one of the Scottish islands, added:**

**“**I live in a large family, I have more than five siblings and many people assume we are financially well off because there are so many of us and both my parents work. But this isn't the case, we are in poverty, like many larger families in Scotland and across the UK. The two-child limit doesn't help, it feels like we are being punished for being alive, 'how dare you exist, only the eldest two are acceptable!' The Scottish Child Payment helps, I'm grateful the Scottish Government has implemented it. But it doesn't make up for the two-child limit. And it doesn't help all the families like mine that live in other parts of the UK. I would like them to be helped too, because all children matter.”

Scotland has lower levels of child poverty than England or Wales. However, campaigners in Scotland say that whilst progress is being made there can be no room for complacency if Scotland’s statutory child poverty targets, which were agreed by all of the Holyrood parties, are to be met.

The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act requires the Scottish Government to ensure fewer than 18% of children are living in poverty by 2023/24, on course to achieving less than 10% by 2030. The new statistics are another stark reminder that there remains significant work to do to achieve that ambition.

Councils and local health boards are also required to publish annual Local Child Poverty Action Reports setting out action being taken at local level to tackle child poverty.

**Estimates of children living in poverty 2021/22, below 60% median income after housing costs, by Scottish local authority.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Local authority** | ***Estimated number of children in poverty*** | ***Percentage of children in poverty*** |
| Aberdeen City | 7994 | 20.5% |
| Aberdeenshire | 8799 | 16.0% |
| Angus | 5067 | 24.2% |
| Argyll and Bute | 3062 | 21.7% |
| City of Edinburgh | 17339 | 19.5% |
| Clackmannanshire | 2764 | 28.3% |
| Dumfries and Galloway | 6751 | 26.0% |
| Dundee City | 7208 | 27.1% |
| East Ayrshire | 6314 | 27.2% |
| East Dunbartonshire | 3367 | 14.9% |
| East Lothian | 4765 | 21.1% |
| East Renfrewshire | 3288 | 14.4% |
| Falkirk | 7771 | 25.3% |
| Fife | 18602 | 26.1% |
| Glasgow City | 35891 | 32.0% |
| Highland | 9799 | 22.8% |
| Inverclyde | 3427 | 24.4% |
| Midlothian | 4590 | 22.7% |
| Moray | 4228 | 24.1% |
| Na h-Eileanan Siar | 913 | 19.8% |
| North Ayrshire | 7141 | 29.0% |
| North Lanarkshire | 18252 | 26.6% |
| Orkney Islands | 824 | 20.1% |
| Perth and Kinross | 5914 | 21.9% |
| Renfrewshire | 7840 | 23.3% |
| Scottish Borders | 4963 | 23.4% |
| Shetland Islands | 700 | 15.4% |
| South Ayrshire | 4807 | 24.4% |
| South Lanarkshire | 14292 | 22.8% |
| Stirling | 3529 | 20.8% |
| West Dunbartonshire | 4696 | 27.6% |
| West Lothian | 9364 | 23.9% |

**ENDS**

**Notes to editors**

For further information, or requests for interview please contact Emma Craig, Media Manager, Save the Children on 07929 442 572, e.craig@savethechildren.org.uk or John Dickie on 07795 340 618

* The full report ‘**Local indicators of child poverty after housing costs, 2021/22**’ as well as tables with Constituency and Local Authority data and further information about the coalitions’ key positions are available [here](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1GZECuwl1NVrqgvfV4jHELt2jT0WZ9UUp).
* The End Child Poverty Coalition is made up of 101 organisations including child welfare groups, social justice groups, faith groups, trade unions and others. Together with a group of Youth Ambassadors, members campaign for a UK free of child poverty. Further information on the Coalition can be found [here](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/yljl9ie7e6hnq3x/AAAL1KZKpzNahRhIWLnX2RJQa?dl=0&preview=End+Child+Poverty+Policy+Positions+Designed.pdf). End Child Poverty members working together in Scotland include Aberlour, Action for Children, Barnardo’s Scotland, Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) in Scotland, Children 1st, Children in Scotland, Close the Gap, Engender, Home-Start in Scotland, One Parent Families Scotland, Oxfam Scotland, Parenting across Scotland, Poverty Alliance, Save the Children and the Trussell Trust.
* The statistics on local child poverty rates after housing costs presented in today’s report are calibrated to the Department for Work and Pensions’ (DWP) Households Below Average Income (HBAI) dataset for FYE 2021 and FYE 2022. The DWP’s data has undergone extensive quality assurance prior to publication but, due to sampling issues related to the Covid-19 pandemic, users are encouraged to exercise caution when interpreting this data. We further recommend that users of these Local Child Poverty Statistics focus on longer-term trends to understand how poverty has changed in an area rather than year-on-year changes which are prone to fluctuations.
* More information about the DWP’s Households Below Average Income dataset is available [here.](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/households-below-average-income-for-financial-years-ending-1995-to-2022)
* First Minister Humza Yousaf told the recent [Cross-Party Anti-Poverty Summit](https://www.gov.scot/publications/cross-party-anti-poverty-summit-first-ministers-opening-remarks-3-2023/) that to tackle poverty: “We have to go further, and therefore we have to use the devolved powers we have to the absolute maximum effect.”