**NEW REPORT REVEALS WEST MIDLANDS HAS HIGHEST PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN LIVING IN POVERTY**

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

A new report released today by the End Child Poverty Coaltition shows that the **West Midlands is the UK region with the highest rate of child poverty**. A shocking **38.4% of children in the area live below the poverty line** – compared to 29.2% nationally.

In addition, the report shows that **48% of children of single parents in the West Midlands are in poverty**. Nationally 44% of children of single parents are in poverty compared to 25% of children in couple parent families. While we know growing up in a single parent household doesn’t impact a child’s life chances, experiencing poverty does. These new figures show that almost half of children in single parent households in the area will experience the disadvantage and stigma of living in poverty.

Of the 20 constituencies with the highest rates of child poverty, six are in the West Midlands and four of these have child poverty rates of over 50%:

* Ladywood (54.6%, Shabana Mahmood MP)
* Hodge Hill (54%, Liam Byrne MP)
* Hall Green (53.7%, Tahir Ali MP)
* Yardley (50.4%, Jess Phillips MP)
* Perry Barr (49.6%, Khalid Mahmood MP)
* West Bromwich West (48%, Shaun Bailey MP)

**Victoria Benson, Chief Executive of Gingerbread and End Child Poverty Coalition member said:**

“It’s a national disgrace that so many children in the UK are living in poverty. This report shows that working full time doesn’t protect households from struggling and working more hours isn’t a solution. In fact, Gingerbread’s own research has shown that the more hours a single parent works, the more likely they are to experience problem debt – this is mainly due to the extortionate cost of childcare. We need to see better support in place for families and particularly single parent families. The two-child cap needs to be scrapped and our welfare system must be reformed to offer an effective safety net for those in need.”

The picture is bleak across the UK. An end to the additional support made available during the pandemic drove up the number of children experiencing poverty to 4.2 million last year. With the majority (71%) of children experiencing poverty despite living in households where at least one parent is working – this figure has risen by six percentage points since last year.

We already know that working more hours isn’t a route out of poverty for single parent families particularly because of a lack of affordable childcare. Today’s report shows that 26% of children in lone parent families where the parent is working full-time are in poverty after housing costs.

The analysis of official statistics, carried out by Loughborough University for the End Child Poverty Coalition, shows how children in larger families are significantly more likely to be experiencing poverty in England and Wales - this is why the End Child Poverty Coalition is calling for two-child limit for those claiming Universal Credit to be scrapped.

There is a clear correlation between children in receipt of disability living allowance and the rate of child poverty. Additionally, in every region of the UK, children from Black or minoritised communities are at an increased risk of being in poverty.

**END OF PANDEMIC SUPPORT SEES CHILD POVERTY RISING AGAIN**

The total number of children experiencing poverty in 2021/2022, 4.2 million, is an increase on the 3.6 million recorded the previous year.

That year, 2020/21 saw a £20 uplift in the weekly payment of Universal Credit, which helped ensure the first-time levels dropped by more than 1 per cent in a decade.

Its removal has seen the number climb back from 27 per cent of all children to 29 per cent - just behind the high registered in 2019.

**CHILDREN WITH TWO OR MORE SIBLINGS LIKELY TO BE IN POVERTY IN ENGLAND AND WALES**

The figures show a strong correlation between family size and the probability of child poverty after housing costs across the UK, but this is highest in the North West and West Midlands.

In 2021/22, the UK poverty rate among children with two or more siblings was 42 per cent, compared with 23 per cent and 22 per cent among children in families with one or two children.

An estimated 58% of families affected by the ‘two-child limit’ policy are already in work.

**NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN POVERTY LIVING IN WORKING HOUSEHOLDS ON THE RISE**

In 2020/21 some 65 per cent of children going through poverty lived with at least one adult with a job. That figure is now 71 per cent.

With 3.7 million people - or 12 per cent of the workforce - earning less than the real living wage, having a job is not the protection against poverty it once was.

The child poverty rate is more than a fifth - 21.5 per cent - even in the relevant households where all the adults work in the North East, for example.

**CHILD POVERTY CLIMBING MOST STEEPLY IN NORTH AND MIDLANDS**

While Tower Hamlets recorded the highest level of children experiencing poverty - 47.5 per cent last year - a dozen other local authorities have seen double digit increases since 2014/15.

On a regional basis over the same period the North East has seen a 9 percentage point rise with the West Midlands and East Midlands registering 8 percentage points and the North West climbing 5 percentage points.

**CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES AND FROM BLACK OR MINORITISED ETHNIC COMMUNITIES ARE DISPROPORTIONATELY** **AFFECTED BY POVERTY**

Households where one or more members are disabled are more likely to experience poverty throughout the UK. There is also a clear correlation between children in receipt of disability living allowance and the rate of child poverty at a local level.

In every region of the UK, children from Black or minoritised ethnic communities are more at risk of experiencing poverty than those with white ethnicity. This association is particularly strong in London, where due to the high ethnic diversity of the region a large number of children are likely to be affected. Even in areas with low numbers of Black or Minoritised Ethnic families, children in those families are more likely to be poor than children in white families.

\*Children in this research are age 0 to 19-years-old.

**Notes to editors:**

* 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).
* 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)

**--ENDS--**

**Notes to editors**

**For further information or interviews please contact:**

Fresh Communication: 0117 369 0025

Nathalie Golden: 07769 66 66 27, nathalie@freshcommunication.co.uk

Lisa Sutherland: 07801 979 987 lisa@freshcommunication.co.uk

**About Gingerbread**

Gingerbread is the leading charity working with single parent families. Our mission is to champion and enable single parent families to live secure, happy and fulfilling lives.

Since 1918 we’ve been supporting, advising and campaigning with single parents to help them meet their family’s needs and achieve their goals. We want to create a world in which diverse families can thrive. We won’t stop working until we achieve this vision. Whatever success means for a single parent – a healthy family, a flexible job, stable finances or a chance to study – we work with them to make it happen.