

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **New research shows why tackling North East child poverty must be ‘a top priority’ for next Government**

The findings of new research published today (6<sup>th</sup> June 2024) highlight why tackling child poverty in the North East must be ‘a top priority’ for the next Government – and for every General Election candidate standing in the region – according to campaigners.

The analysis – carried out by Loughborough University for the End Child Poverty coalition – emphasises just how widespread disadvantage is for babies, children and young people across the North East, estimating that:

- **At least one in four children are growing up in poverty in a shocking 89% of the region’s 2024 General Election constituencies. This compares with 66% of all constituencies across the UK.**

The rate is much higher in the ten constituencies now estimated to have the highest child poverty levels in the North East:

- Middlesbrough and Thornaby East
- South Shields
- Newcastle Central and West
- Redcar
- Gateshead Central and Whickham
- Hartlepool
- Darlington
- Easington
- Bishop Auckland
- Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland

And today’s report highlights the ‘extremely high’ correlation across the country – including in the North East – between the Westminster seats with the highest rates of child poverty, and those with the highest proportions of children affected by a policy known as the ‘two-child limit’.

In the new Middlesbrough and Thornaby East constituency – which today’s research finds has the highest child poverty rate in the region – almost one in five children (19%) are estimated to be living in a family impacted by the two-child limit. In the Hexham constituency, with the lowest child poverty rate in the North East, just six per cent of children growing up in the area are affected by the policy.

Since its introduction in April 2017, the two-child limit has meant that almost all families having a third or subsequent child are no longer entitled to receive support for those children through Universal Credit. This means younger children missing out on around £66 per week in support that their older siblings receive. 59% of families hit by the two-child limit are in work.

It is calculated that scrapping this policy would be the most effective way to tackle child poverty, as it would lift 300,000 children out of poverty and mean a further 800,000 children living in less deep poverty across the country – at a cost of just £1.8 billion.<sup>1</sup>

It has been previously estimated that – beyond the immeasurable costs of poverty to individual children and families – the ‘wider societal costs’ of child poverty across the country are more than £39 billion per year.<sup>2</sup>

**Responding to today’s findings, incoming Chair of the North East Child Poverty Commission – Beth Farhat – said:**

‘This research really does lay bare the scale of disadvantage for children growing up in the North East, and emphasises why tackling child poverty has to be a top priority for every single candidate standing for election right across our region.

‘No one should accept the life chances and opportunities of tens of thousands of children throughout the North East being restricted by poverty – nor the unsustainable pressures that rising levels of hardship have placed on public and voluntary sector organisations across our region – not least when we know that this can change with political will, and the right policies and investment, in place.

‘Whoever forms the next Government must therefore make ending child poverty a top – and ongoing – priority too. This means all political parties committing to introduce a clear and evidence-led strategy to tackle child poverty, an immediate focus of which must be to end the two-child limit.’

ENDS

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**NOTES**

- The [End Child Poverty](#) Coalition is made up of 120 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. The [North East Child Poverty Commission](#) is a member of the Coalition.
- The full report ‘**Local indicators of child poverty after housing costs, 2022/23**’, as well as tables with constituency and local authority level data and further information, will be available on the End Child Poverty website from 6<sup>th</sup> June 2024: <https://endchildpoverty.org.uk/child-poverty-2024>
- All figures in this report refer to relative child poverty, after housing costs; that is the % of children living in households with below 60% of the UK median household income, after housing costs have been taken into account. After housing costs child poverty figures are important because they show the disposable income available to a household once any rent, water rates, mortgage interest payments, buildings insurance payments, ground rent and service charges are paid. This enables a more accurate comparison of what households across the UK have available to spend on food, utilities, clothing and leisure than looking at income alone, given the disparity in housing costs in different parts of the UK.
- 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 2022 and FYE 2023. The DWP’s data have undergone quality assurance, by this Department, prior to publication. However, some issues remain; this is partly due to sampling issues related to the Covid-19 pandemic. We advise that users are encouraged to exercise caution when interpreting the 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, and avoid direct comparisons of the overall rates of child poverty between nations and regions.

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<sup>1</sup> CPAG (2024) [Submission to the 2024 Budget consultation](#)

<sup>2</sup> CPAG (2023) [The cost of child poverty in 2023](#)