

# Local Numbers, National Crisis: Child Poverty Across the UK

The scale of child poverty at a constituency level



June 2025

# About this research

This report summarises findings for the latest update to the *Local Indicators of Child Poverty After Housing Costs* statistics produced by the **Centre for Research in Social Policy, Loughborough University**, for the **End Child Poverty Coalition**. The data build upon the *Children in Low Income Families* data produced by the Department for Work and Pensions, which show the rate of child poverty before housing costs in local areas. Using local administrative data and analysis of the household survey *Understanding Society*, we produced modelled estimates that account for housing costs, thereby providing a more accurate picture of how disposable incomes vary in different geographical areas.

Currently, the data used to estimate child poverty rates do not include those children in households with no recourse to public funds (NRPF). There are estimated to be around 722,064 children affected by NRPF in the UK, and these children are at particularly high risk of being in poverty; evidence suggests that around a third of children living in deepest poverty are in migrant households. Excluding these children from local and national estimates of child poverty is therefore likely to result in an underestimation of the rate of child poverty that is particularly pronounced in areas with a high proportion of NRPF households.

## Summary

- National analysis indicates that **4.5 million** children (**31%** of all children) were in relative poverty in 2023/24, and the poverty rate remained high across the nations and regions.
- Devolved policies such as the Scottish Child Payment have contributed to overall lower levels of poverty across Scotland, as compared to the rest of the UK, although more than one in five children remain in poverty.
- In **two-thirds** of parliamentary constituencies, at least **one in four** children are in relative poverty after housing costs.
- Constituencies with the highest levels of child poverty are well above the national average, with **over half of all children in these areas living in poverty**. This includes Middlesbrough & Thornaby East (52%), Manchester Rusholme (51%), Liverpool Riverside (50%), Dewsbury & Batley (58%), Bradford West (57%), Bradford East (55%), Leeds South (52%), Birmingham Hodge Hill (55%), Birmingham Perry Barr (52%), Birmingham Yardley (51%), Walsall & Bloxwich (51%), Birmingham Hall Green & Moseley (50%) and Bethnal Green & Stepney (50%).
- The constituency with the highest level of child poverty is **Birmingham Ladywood where a shocking 62% of children live in poverty**. This means in an average classroom of 30 children here, 18 are living in poverty.
- Constituency-level child poverty rates are directly and strongly correlated with the percentage of children affected by the **two-child limit** in that local area, providing further evidence that the policy is a key driver of child poverty.

## Recommendations

As the government prepares to release its new child poverty strategy, it is clear that bold policy decisions are needed if any progress is to be made to reduce the high number of children living in poverty in constituencies across the UK. At a constituency level, there is a very strong

correlation between child poverty and the number of children affected by the two-child limit. Removing the policy would therefore benefit the poorest areas across the UK the most, although children in low-income households would benefit in every constituency.

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Growing up in poverty is relentless. As a child trying to navigate life with the weight of poverty, every day is a struggle. Poverty is never just about money - it is about isolation, shame, and missed opportunities. For me, and for so many other young people, poverty steals our confidence and limits our futures before we've even had a chance to dream. We need a proper government strategy to give us hope. It shows that our experiences are being heard, and that there's a commitment to building a fairer society where no child has to grow up feeling less than others just because of their circumstances.

**Liv, a Youth Ambassador for the End Child Poverty Coalition who has grown up in a low-income household**

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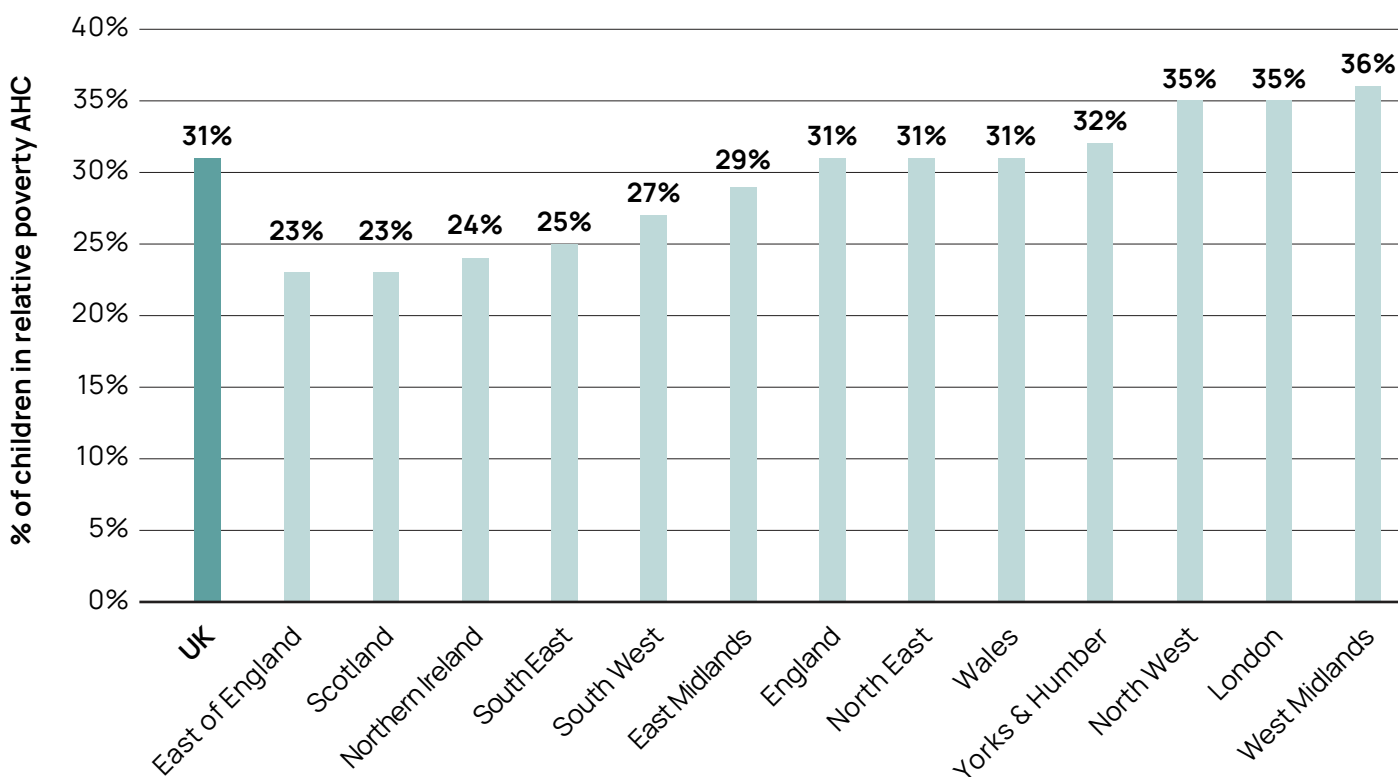


## Child poverty across the UK

The most recent official statistics from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) indicate that in 2023/24, 4.5 million children were in relative poverty, after housing costs (AHC) – representing 31% of all children – up from 4.3 million children in 2022/23 (30%).

**Figure 1** shows that the estimated poverty rate also remains high across the nations and regions.<sup>1</sup> The West Midlands has the highest levels of child poverty at 36%, meaning just over 1 in 3 children here are growing up in poverty.

**Figure 1: Percentage of children in poverty, AHC in 2021/24, by country and region**



This latest data on local child poverty after housing costs was produced for the End Child Poverty Coalition by the Centre for Research in Social Policy at Loughborough University. The data are produced by adjusting the Before Housing Costs (BHC) statistics available in the Children in Low Income Families (CiLIF) release, using administrative data on rents for local authorities, combined with household-level data from the Understanding Society longitudinal survey<sup>2</sup> to estimate the relationship between

housing costs and the relative risk of being in poverty before and after housing costs.

**Table 1** below lists the 10 constituencies within each region and nation with the highest percentages of children living in poverty. Five of these regions/ nations have constituencies where one or more has a child poverty rate of 50% or more. Constituencies with the highest levels of child poverty are well above the national average, with over half of all children in these areas

<sup>1</sup> Region/country estimates are based on three-year averages.

<sup>2</sup> University of Essex, Institute for Social and Economic Research. (2022). Understanding Society: Waves 1-14, 2009-2023 and Harmonised BHPS: Waves 1-18, 1991-2009. [data collection]. UK Data Service. SN: 6614, <http://doi.org/10.5255/UKDA-SN-6614-16>.

## Local Numbers, National Crisis: Child Poverty Across the UK - June 2025

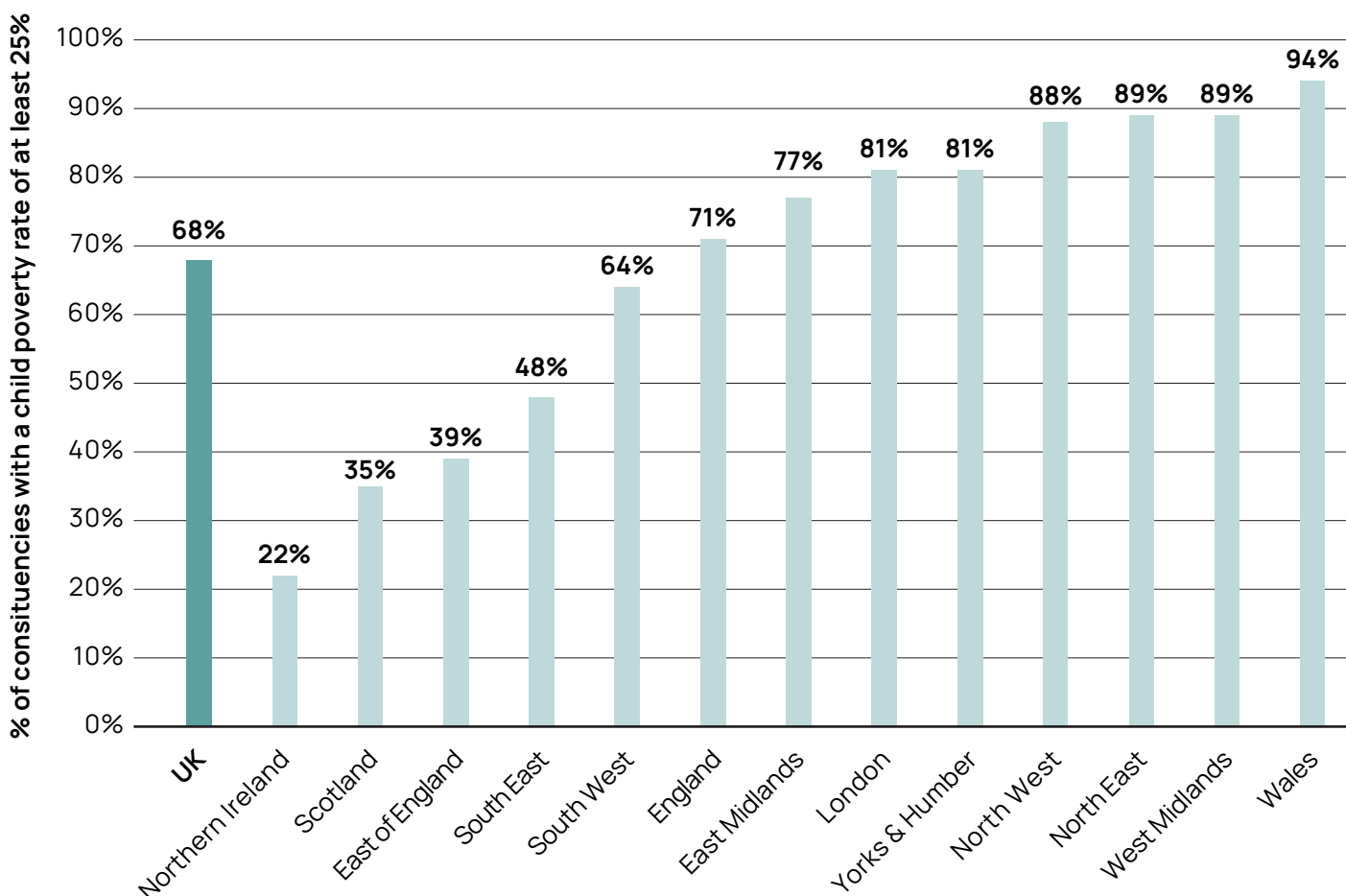
living in poverty. This includes Middlesbrough & Thornaby East (52%), Manchester Rusholme (51%), Liverpool Riverside (50%), Dewsbury & Batley (58%), Bradford West (57%), Bradford East (55%), Leeds South (52%), Birmingham Hodge Hill (55%), Birmingham Perry Barr (52%), Birmingham Yardley (51%), Walsall & Bloxwich (51%), Birmingham Hall Green & Moseley (50%) and Bethnal Green & Stepney (50%).

The constituency with the highest level of child poverty is Birmingham Ladywood where a shocking 62% of children live in poverty. This means in an average classroom of 30 children here, 18 are living in poverty.

**Figure 2** uses this data to show the percentage of constituencies in each country or region

where the child poverty rate is 25% or higher. The estimate for the UK as a whole indicates that in more than two-thirds of constituencies, at least one in four children are in relative poverty after housing costs. The percentages are especially high in the Northern regions of England, the West Midlands and in Wales, where around nine out of 10 constituencies have a child poverty rate higher than 25%. In contrast, in Scotland the prevalence of high rates of child poverty is much lower: only around a third of constituencies have a child poverty rate of 25% or more. This reflects the overall lower rates of child poverty in Scotland compared to the rest of the UK, in part due to devolved policies, such as the Scottish Child Payment, that are targeted at low-income families with the specific aim of reducing child poverty.

**Figure 2: Percentage of constituencies where at least 25% of children are in poverty, by country/region: 2023/24**



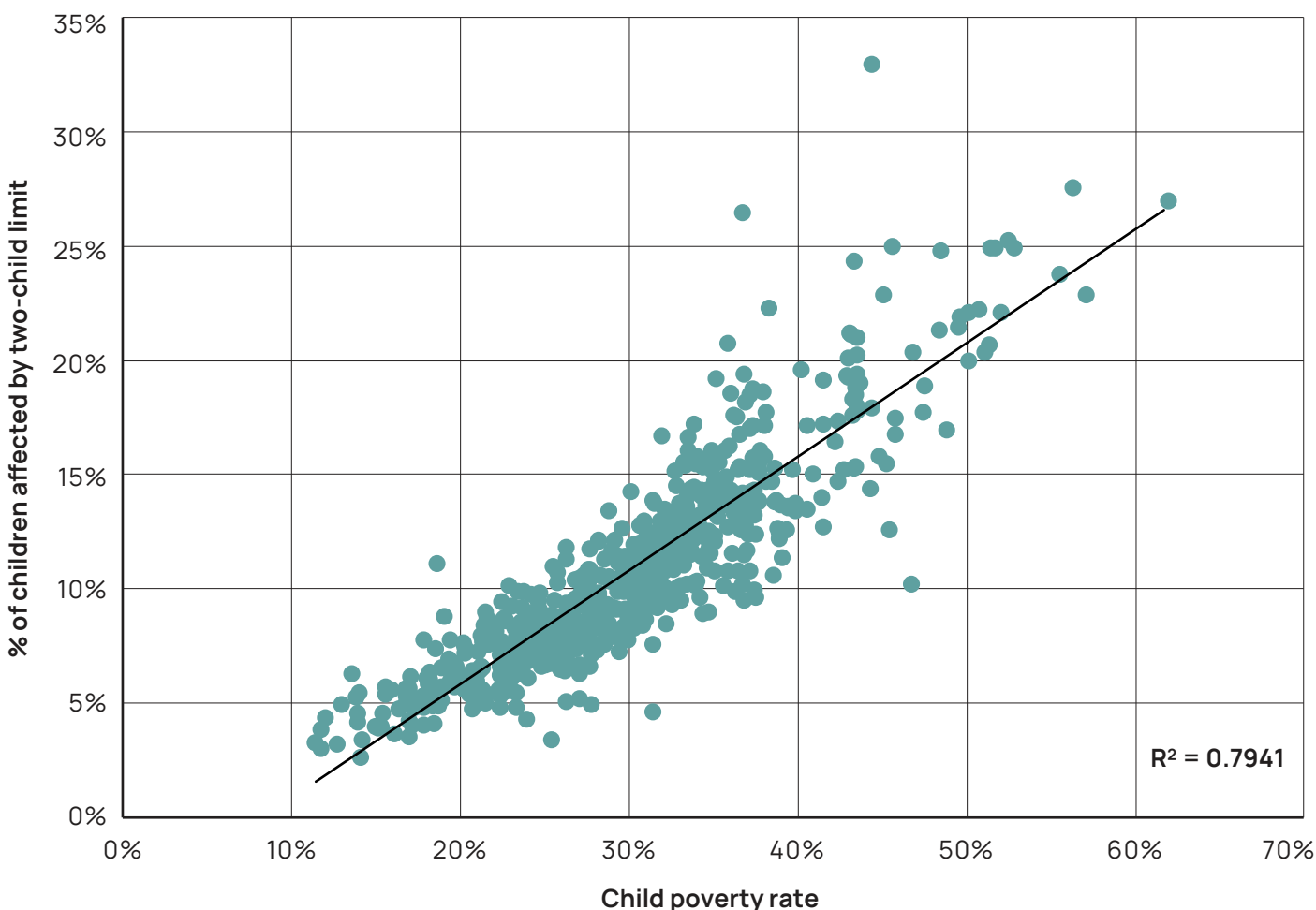
## The two-child limit and child poverty in local areas

Larger families are especially vulnerable to poverty, not just because they have higher overall costs, but due to restrictions on access to social security that affect these households in particular. The two-child limit to benefit payments restricts eligibility for means-tested benefits to the first two children in a family, for children born after April 2017. It is widely acknowledged that many households are living below the poverty line as a direct consequence of the policy. Of these households a high proportion are also already in work (60% in April 2024), with limited scope to increase their incomes.<sup>3</sup> Research by Child Poverty Action Group indicates that removing the policy would lift 350,000 children out of poverty,

while reducing the depth of poverty for a further 700,000 children.<sup>4</sup>

**Figure 3** looks at the relationship between the 2023/24 child poverty rate and the proportion of children affected by the two-child limit in each constituency.<sup>5</sup> It is clear that the two are extremely highly correlated. This adds to already compelling evidence that the two-child limit is a major driver of child poverty across the UK. **Figure 4** shows the correlation at country/region level, clearly demonstrating that the strong relationship between the number of children affected by the two-child limit and the risk of child poverty, holds throughout the UK.

**Figure 3: Correlation between child poverty rate and % of children affected by the two-child limit, by constituency: 2023/24**

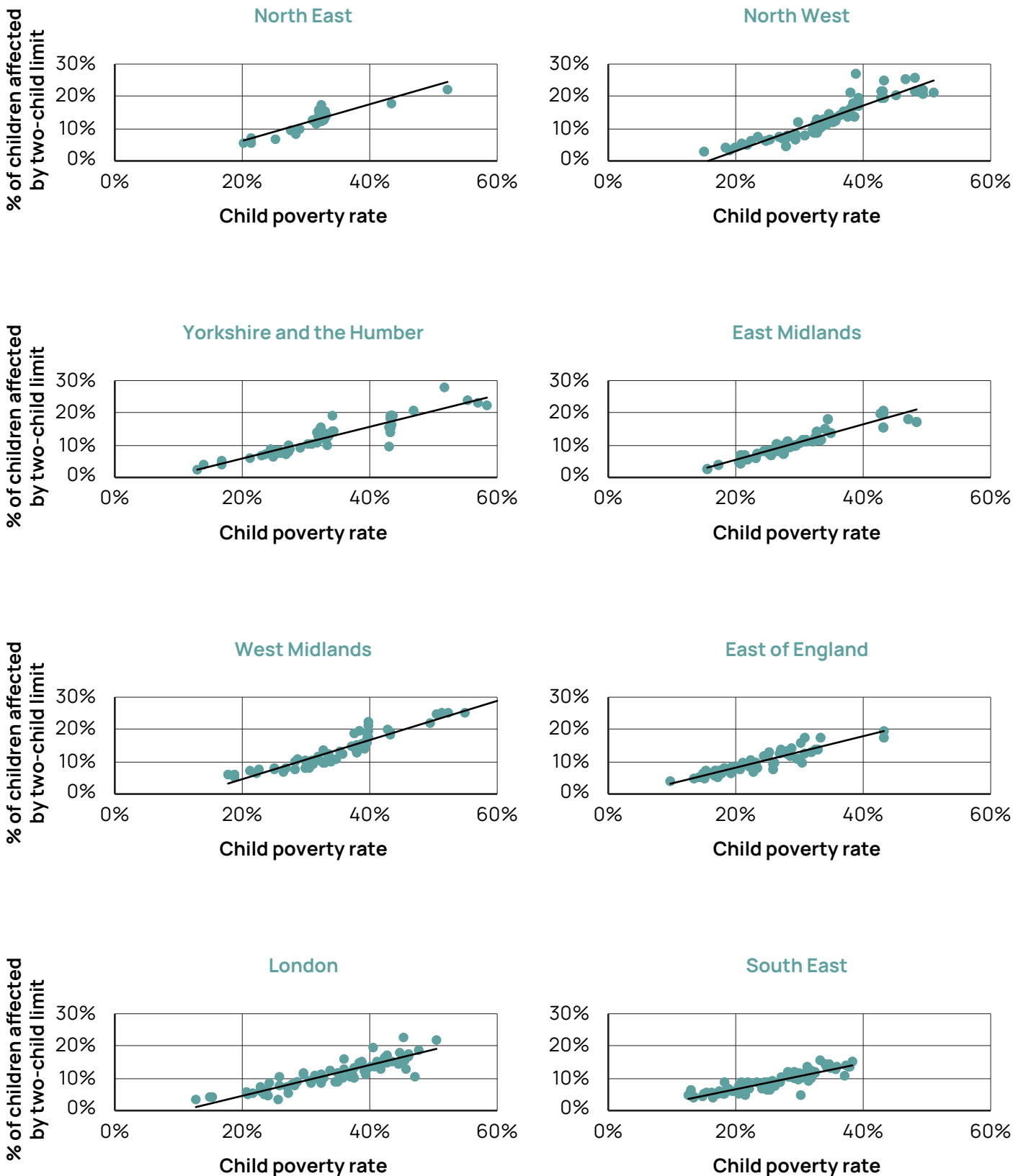


<sup>3</sup> DWP/HMRC (2024) Universal Credit and Child Tax Credit claimants: statistics related to the policy to provide support for a maximum of 2 children, April 2024 <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/universal-credit-and-child-tax-credit-claimants-statistics-related-to-the-policy-to-provide-support-for-a-maximum-of-2-children-april-2024>

<sup>4</sup> CPAG (2025) New costings: scrapping two-child limit is 'by far' most cost-effective way to cut child poverty <https://cpag.org.uk/news/new-costings-scrapping-two-child-limit-far-most-cost-effective-way-cut-child-poverty>

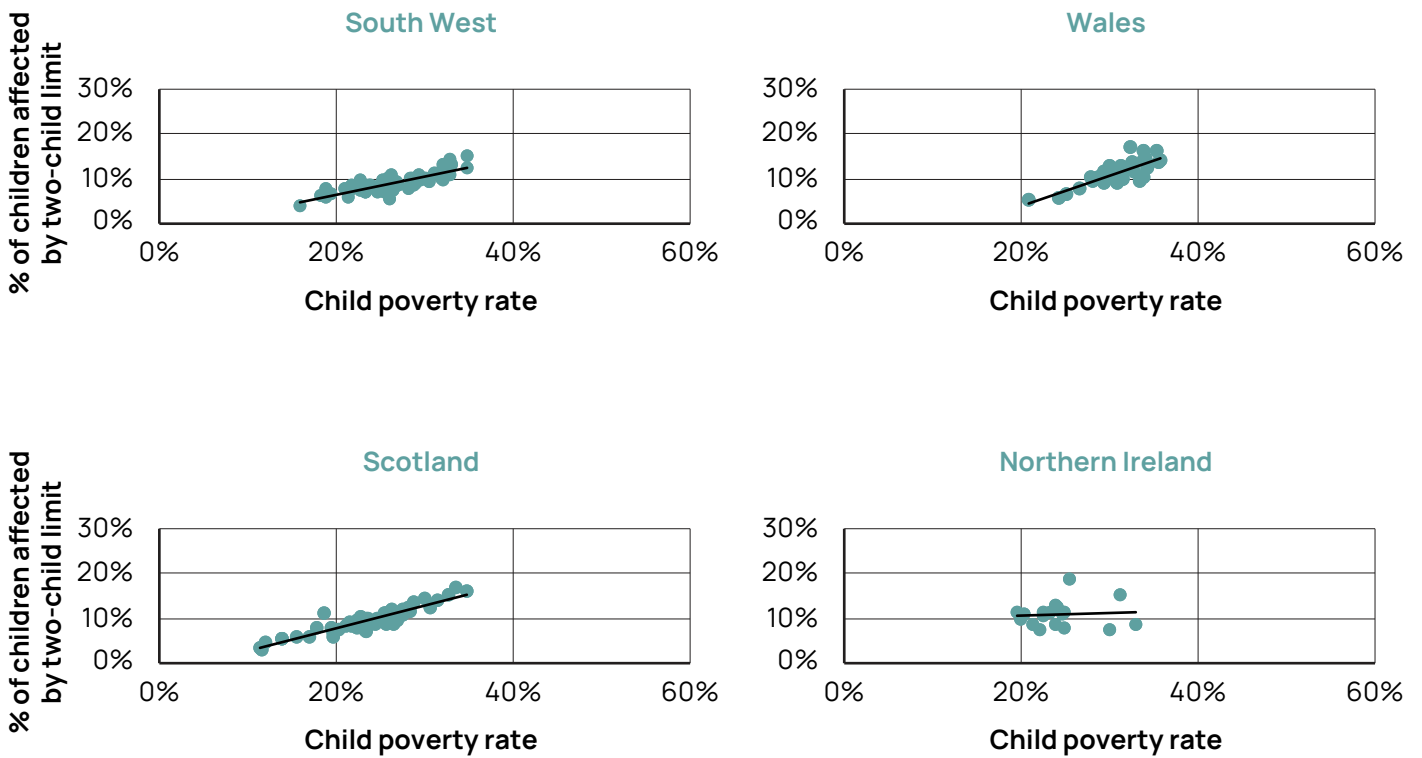
<sup>5</sup> The original data on the number of children subject to two-child limit was obtained by End Child Poverty Coalition via Freedom of Information requests to the Department of Work and Pensions, HMRC and the Department for Communities Northern Ireland. [https://endchildpoverty.org.uk/two\\_child\\_limit/](https://endchildpoverty.org.uk/two_child_limit/)

Figure 4: Correlation between constituency-level child poverty rate and % of children affected by the two-child limit, by country/region: 2023/24



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Figure 4 Cont...



# Conclusion

As the government prepares to release its new child poverty strategy, it is clear that bold policy decisions are needed if any progress is to be made. The rate of child poverty in the UK continues to rise, with 4.5 million children in relative poverty after housing costs in 2023/24. There is substantial variation both across and within regions/countries.

This variation is not random. Scotland has historically had lower child poverty rates than the UK as a whole, but this is now even more pronounced, not least because of Scottish Government's investment in the Scottish Child Payment, which shows the importance of investing in families through the social security system as a key way to reduce child poverty.

But crucially at a constituency level there is a very strong correlation between child poverty and the number of children affected by the two-child limit. Removing the policy would therefore benefit the poorest areas across the UK the most, although children in low-income households would benefit in every constituency.

**Despite this, the government has yet to commit to abolishing the two-child limit.**

## Data going forwards

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has acknowledged the importance of providing After Housing Costs (AHC) child poverty statistics at local level. Work is underway within the DWP to develop an AHC version of CiLIF, informed by our work to date.<sup>6</sup> This means that from 2026 the data described in this report will likely be produced by the DWP. We hope these statistics will play a key role in ongoing evaluation of the forthcoming Child Poverty Strategy and will allow more robust analysis of change over time.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-in-low-income-families-local-area-statistics-2014-to-2024/children-in-low-income-families-after-housing-costs-consultation-note>

## Local Numbers, National Crisis: Child Poverty Across the UK – June 2025

**Table 1: The ten constituencies with the highest percentage of child poverty by country/ region for the UK: 2023/24**

North East	
Middlesbrough & Thornaby East	52%
Newcastle upon Tyne Central & West	43%
Easington	33%
Bishop Auckland	33%
Blyth & Ashington	33%
Stockton North	33%
South Shields	33%
Newcastle upon Tyne East & Wallsend	32%
Redcar	32%
Gateshead Central & Whickham	32%

North West	
Manchester Rusholme	51%
Liverpool Riverside	50%
Blackburn	49%
Oldham West	48%
Bolton South & Walkden	48%
Gorton & Denton	47%
Rochdale	45%
Hyndburn	43%
Blackley & Middleton South	43%
Manchester Central	43%

Yorks & Humber	
Dewsbury & Batley	58%
Bradford West	57%
Bradford East	55%
Leeds South	52%
Sheffield Brightside & Hillsboro	47%
Bradford South	44%
Halifax	44%
Rotherham	43%
Kingston upon Hull East	43%
Huddersfield	43%

East Midlands	
Nottingham East	49%
Leicester South	47%
Nottingham North	44%
Leicester West	43%
Leicester East	43%
Derby South	43%
Boston & Skegness	37%
Nottingham South	36%
Ashfield	36%
Bassetlaw	35%

West Midlands	
Birmingham Ladywood	62%
Birmingham Hodge Hill	55%
Birmingham Perry Barr	52%
Birmingham Yardley	51%
Walsall & Bloxwich	51%
Birmingham Hall Green & Moseley	50%
Stoke-on-Trent North	43%
Smethwick	43%
Stoke-on-Trent Central	43%
Tipton & Wednesbury	40%

East of England	
Luton South	43%
Peterborough	43%
Luton North	33%
Ipswich	33%
Lowestoft	33%
Norwich South	32%
Bedford	31%
Clacton	31%
North Norfolk	30%
Great Yarmouth	30%

London	
Bethnal Green & Stepney	50%
East Ham	48%
Holborn & St Pancras	47%
West Ham & Beckton	46%
Barking	46%
Hackney South & Shoreditch	46%
Stratford & Bow	46%
Tottenham	45%
Ilford South	45%
Poplar & Limehouse	45%

South East	
East Thanet	38%
Portsmouth South	38%
Hastings & Rye	38%
Southampton Test	37%
Isle of Wight East	37%
Southampton Itchen	36%
Dover & Deal	36%
Folkestone & Hythe	36%
Isle of Wight West	35%
Slough	35%

South West	
Bristol East	35%
Plymouth Sutton & Devonport	35%
Plymouth Moor View	33%
Gloucester	33%
North Cornwall	33%
Bristol South	33%
Torbay	32%
Camborne & Redruth	32%
Bridgwater	32%
St Ives	32%

**Local Numbers, National Crisis: Child Poverty Across the UK – June 2025**

**Table 1 Cont...**

Wales	
Blaenau Gwent & Rhymney	36%
Rhondda & Ogmore	35%
Newport East	35%
Merthyr Tydfil & Aberdare	34%
Aberafan Maesteg	34%
Clwyd North	34%
Cardiff South & Penarth	34%
Swansea West	34%
Ceredigion Preseli	33%
Mid & South Pembrokeshire	33%

Scotland	
Glasgow East	35%
Glasgow South West	34%
Glasgow North East	33%
Glasgow North	31%
Glasgow South	31%
Glenrothes & Mid Fife	30%
Glasgow West	29%
Ayr, Carrick & Cumnock	29%
Dundee Central	28%
Airdrie & Shotts	28%

Northern Ireland	
Belfast West	33%
Belfast North	31%
Newry and Armagh	30%
Foyle	25%
South Down	24%
West Tyrone	25%
East Londonderry	25%
Fermanagh & S. Tyrone	24%
Upper Bann	25%
Mid Ulster	23%



**This research project was funded by:**

## About us

The End Child Poverty Coalition is made up of over 130 organisations including child welfare groups, social justice groups, faith groups, trade unions and others. Together with a group of Youth Ambassadors, we all believe that no child growing up in the UK should live in poverty. **We ask that this and future governments commit to end child poverty.**

We engage with young people, providing opportunities for them to share their experiences with decision makers, share knowledge and develop solutions with Coalition members, and campaign together - uniting coalition members and young people to ask central and devolved governments to end child poverty.

[www.endchildpoverty.org.uk](http://www.endchildpoverty.org.uk)



