

Search



- [Home](#)
- [Developing Well](#)
- [Children and young peoples wellbeing](#)
- [Children and young peoples wellbeing](#)
- [Children and Young People's Mental Health](#)
- [Child neglect](#)
- [Child Poverty](#)
- [Child Sexual Assault](#)
- [Child Sexual Exploitation](#)
- [Economic Resilience](#)
- [Looked After Children / Children In Need](#)
- [Parental Substance Misuse](#)
- [School Life](#)
- [Special Educational Needs](#)
- [Youth Offenders](#)
- [Children's Strategic Needs Assessment 2015](#)

[Home](#) > [Developing Well](#) > [Children and young peoples wellbeing](#) > [Child Poverty](#)

Child Poverty



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Introduction

Despite being one of the wealthiest countries in the world, a fifth of children in the UK live in relative poverty (living in households where income is less than 60% of median household income before housing costs).¹ In 2010, the Marmot review² highlighted that children who grow up in poverty are much more likely to suffer poorer health, lower education achievement and a lower economic status than children born into wealthier families. It also emphasised that early intervention is likely to have more success than interventions applied later in life to address the resultant problems. Following this review, the government introduced The Child Poverty Act 2010³ which set income-based UK-wide targets to be met by 2020. The legislation and associated guidance required councils to develop Child Poverty Strategies with the aim of reducing and mitigating the effects of child poverty.

In 2016 the Welfare Reform and Work Act superseded the Child Poverty Act and repealed these targets and removing many of the statutory responsibilities of local authorities to directly assess need and report on the prevalence of child poverty in their areas⁴.

The impacts of child poverty

The impacts of child poverty are seen in all areas of the child's life including their education, health and future chances.

Children from poorer backgrounds lag at all stages of education⁵.

- By the age of 3, poorer children are estimated to be, on average, 9 months behind children from more wealthy backgrounds.
- By the end of primary school, pupils receiving free school meals are estimated to be almost 3 terms behind their more affluent peers and this lag increases further by age 14 and 16.
- Children receiving free school meals achieve 1.7 grades lower at GCSE.

Poverty is also associated with a higher risk of both illness and premature death⁵.

- Children born in the poorest areas of the UK weigh, on average, 200 grams less at birth than those born in the richest areas.
- Children from low income families are more likely to die at birth or in infancy than children born into richer families.
- Children living in poverty are also more likely to suffer chronic illness during childhood or to have a disability.
- Poorer health over the course of a lifetime has an impact on life expectancy: professionals live, on average, 8 years longer than unskilled workers.

Poverty impacts the way children are able to interact with their environments⁵

- Children living in poverty are almost twice as likely to live in bad housing, which has significant effects on both their physical and mental health, as well as educational achievement.
- Fuel poverty also affects children detrimentally as they grow up as low income families do sometimes have to make a choice between food and heating.
- Children from low income families often forgo events that most of us would take for granted, for example school trips, inviting friends round for tea and holidays.
- Studies show that although there are more play areas in deprived areas, their quality is generally poorer, with vandalism, playground misuse and danger of injury all acting as deterrents to using what otherwise might be good facilities.

The drivers of child poverty

Children's charity Barnardo's identifies the greatest risk factor for child poverty as living in a workless family,⁶ however the

proportion of children living in poverty despite one or more parents working is increasing. Other risk factors identified by Barnardo's include living in a lone parent family, living in a larger family (≥ 3 children), or living in a family where someone is disabled.

In 2014 the government published 'An evidence review of the drivers of child poverty for families in poverty now and for poor children growing up to be poor adults' which identified 13 key factors or characteristics that make it harder for some families to get out of poverty and that make some poor children more likely to become poor adults:

- (Long-term) Worklessness & Low Earnings
- Parental Qualifications
- Family Instability
- Family Size
- Parental Health
- Educational Attainment
- Housing
- Neighbourhood
- Debt
- Drug and Alcohol Dependency
- Child Health
- Non-Cognitive Development
- Home Learning Environment, Parenting Styles & Aspirations

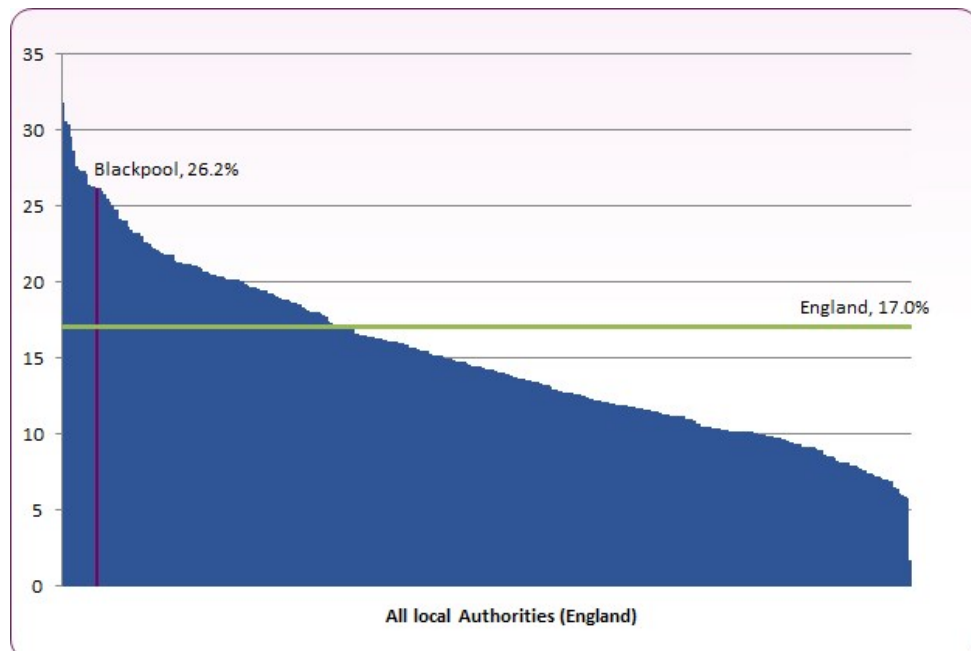
Facts and figures

The 2015 IMD index⁷ ranks Blackpool as the most deprived of 326 Local Authority areas in England, based on both the average LSOA score and concentration of deprivation measures. This ranking indicates an increase in general deprivation levels compared to other authorities since 2010 when Blackpool was ranked 6th, 2007 when Blackpool was ranked 12th, and 2004 where it was ranked 24th. Blackpool is the 9th most deprived local authority in the country when ranked by income deprivation affecting children.

Worklessness and low earnings

In 2016, 26.2% of children under 16 (and 25.8% of dependent children under 20) were living in low income families (Figure 1). Blackpool has the 14th highest level of child poverty in the country by this marker.

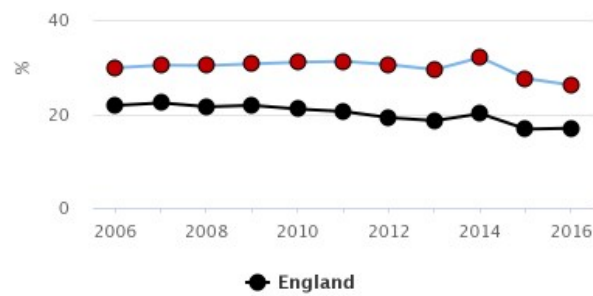
Figure 1: Percentage of children living in low-income families¹



Source: PHE PHOF, Indicator 1.01ii - Percentage of all dependent children under 16 in relative poverty

Levels of child poverty remained stable for many years (Figure 2), however since 2014 there has been a fall in both Blackpool and nationally.

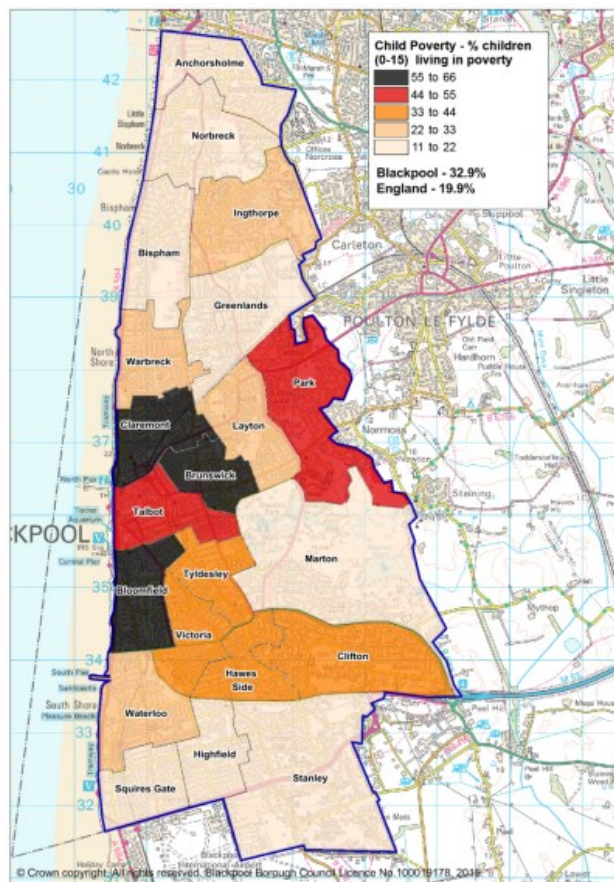
Figure 2: Trend in percentage of children living in low-income families¹.



Source: PHE PHOF, Indicator 1.01ii - Percentage of all dependent children under 16 in relative poverty

Within Blackpool, there is some variation in levels of child poverty as measured by low-income families, however 30% of the LSOAs within Blackpool fall into the most deprived decile as measured by the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (2012 data).⁸ At ward level, the percentage of children (0-15 years) living in low-income families varies from 11.4% in Norbreck to 65.1% in Bloomfield (Figure 3).⁸

Figure 3: Children in low-income families across Blackpool



Source: PHE Local Health

Workless families

- As of May 2015, there were 7,850 children aged 0-18 living within 4,120 households in Blackpool in receipt of out of work benefits.⁹
- This is an increase on the 2011 Census level of 3,596 households with dependent children with no adults in employment.¹⁰

Lone parents

Lone parents are amongst those vulnerable groups at greatest risk of unemployment due to the demands of balancing working and home life, especially with younger children. Two thirds of all children in poverty are from lone parent families.

- There are approximately 1,360 lone parent income support claimants living in Blackpool which make up 1.6% of working aged residents¹¹. The number of people claiming this benefit has been reducing year on year since 1999.
- One reason for these changes is likely the introduction of changes to income support in 2007 reducing the maximum length of claim to a youngest child's 5th birthday.
- Another factor in poverty in single parent households was the introduction of benefit caps. Between April 2013 when the cap was first introduced, and February 2017, 441 households in Blackpool were affected by the cap, of which 281 were single parents with dependent children.¹²

- ONS statistics also show that in 2016, 5,600 people were "economically inactive" due to looking after the family/home. This statistic showed a significant drop around 2007 but has remained broadly static since then at between 3-3.5% of the working age population.¹³
- Data from the 2011 Census reports that there were 5,733 lone-parent households with dependent children. It also highlights the status of lone parents by economic activity. There were 2,397 lone parent households where the parent was not in work.¹⁴

Family size

- According to statistics reported by HMRC on families claiming child benefit, Blackpool has 2,730 families with 3 or more children.¹⁵
- The most recent national statistics indicate that children who live in large families, defined as those with three or more children, are more likely to live in low income households and households in combined low income and material deprivation.
- Within large families, 27% of children are living in relative low income, compared to 17% of children from families with 2 children and 17% of children from 1 child families.¹⁶

Family Homelessness

Homelessness and experiences of living in temporary accommodation during childhood can adversely affect physical and mental health and development of children, and disrupt schooling. Homelessness during childhood has also been shown to reduce life chances and impact adult employment.⁶

Data from Blackpool Housing Options shows that in 2015/16, 313 families with children presented to Blackpool Council housing options as **homeless or at risk of homelessness**

- Of those families, 101 were actually homeless at time of presentation to services.
- Of the 101, only 35 families met the criteria for full support from the council; i.e. families with a connection to the local area, for whom homelessness has not been prevented and who do not have alternative sources of support or accommodation (e.g. family).
- In addition to this, 212 families presented at risk of homelessness (within 28 days), all of whom were supported to prevent homelessness.

In addition to those families who present to services as at risk of being or actually homeless, the large quantity of **poor quality housing** in Blackpool means that there are likely to be children living in sub-standard or overcrowded housing although it may be impossible to say how many.

Disability within the family

- As of May 2015, 120 children aged 0-18 were living within 70 households in receipt of Incapacity Benefit or Severe Disablement Allowance.⁹
- According to the 2011 Census, there were 3,345 households with dependent children where 1 person had a long-term health problem or disability.¹⁰

Free school meals and educational attainment

- In 2016, 4,706 children were receiving free school meals; 25% of all children on the roll. This has decreased in number and percentage over the past 3 years.¹⁷
- In Blackpool, only 53.1% of children in receipt of free school meals had reached a good level of development at the end of reception¹⁸ compared to 64.5% when looking at all children.¹⁹
- In 2016, 37.1% of students in secondary schools in Blackpool who were categorised as "disadvantaged" achieved Grade C or better in English and Maths GCSEs compared to 50.4% of all students (mean of all schools with data available for 2016 from OFSTED website).²⁰

Social Mobility

- The Social Mobility Index compares the chances that a child from a disadvantaged background will do well at school and get a good job across each of the 324 local authority district areas of England.
- It examines a range of measures of the educational outcomes achieved by young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and the local job and housing markets to shed light on which are the best and worst places in England in terms of the opportunities young people from poorer backgrounds have to succeed.
- Blackpool is ranked 9th worst performing local authority in the 2016 Social Mobility index.²¹
- This is particularly striking as our geographical neighbour Fylde is ranked the 22nd best social mobility "hotspot".

[Together on Poverty; Blackpool's Child Poverty Framework 2012-2015](#) sets out Blackpool Council's vision for reducing child poverty and mitigating against its effects in Blackpool.

The aims established in the Child Poverty Framework are included in Blackpool Council's [Children and Young People's Plan 2013-2016](#). This document reviews the work of previous years and sets out plans for the future to meet the three key priorities, which are:

- Priority 1 - Keeping children and young people safe, preventing them entering the care and custody system wherever possible and ensuring there are safe and effective exit routes
- Priority 2 - Improving the health, self-confidence and resilience of children and young people
- Priority 3 - Maintaining Blackpool's culture of high expectations and aspirations where attendance, participation and achievement for all are improved.

Better start

The **Better Start** Programme aims to improve the life chances of babies and very young children by delivering a significant increase in the use of preventative approaches in pregnancy and first three years of life. By targeting the formative early phase of life, it is hoped that the effects of child poverty may be mitigated.

Selective licencing

Selective licensing is a regulatory tool that allows local authorities to tackle areas suffering from significant anti-social behaviour or low housing demand by requiring all privately rented homes to be licensed. The Council has designated the Claremont ward for the selective and additional licensing of all private rented housing within the area. In Blackpool there are two elements to this work - the work with landlords and a people's section who work with and provide support to the families/tenants that inhabit the homes and accommodation. Better Start will work with the peoples section and provide additional resource to support families who have young children, completing the Getting it Right (GIR) process and ensuring access to the services the families require.

[1] PHE [Public Health Outcomes Framework](#), Indicator 1.01ii - Percentage of all dependent children under 16 in relative poverty

[2] Institute for Health Equity; 2010. [Fairer Society, Healthy Lives](#): strategic review of health inequalities in England post 2010

[3] Department for Education, 2011. [A new approach to child poverty: tackling the causes of disadvantage and transforming families' lives](#)

[4] [Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016](#)

[5] Shelter, [The impact of homelessness on children](#)

[6] Child Poverty Action Group. [The impact of poverty](#), 2013

[7] Barnardo's [What increases the risk of poverty?](#)

[8] Department for Communities and Local Government, 2015. [English indices of deprivation 2015](#)

[9] Department for Work and Pensions, 2016 [Children in out-of-work benefit households statistics](#), 31 May 2015

[10] 2011 Census, [KS106EW Adults not in employment and dependent children and persons with long-term health problem or disability for all households, local authorities in England and Wales](#) (Excel spreadsheet)

[11] Nomis, Official labour market statistics. [Main benefit claimants - Time series](#) for benefit claimants in Blackpool claiming as a lone parent.

[12] Department for Work and Pensions, 2017 [Benefit cap: number of households capped to February 2017](#)

[13] Nomis, Official labour market statistics. [Economically Inactive - Time series](#) for economically inactive people looking after family/home.

[14] 2011 Census, [KS107EW Lone parent households with dependent children, local authorities in England and Wales](#) (Excel spreadsheet)

[15] HMRC, 2016. [Child Benefit statistics geographical analysis: August 2016](#)

[16] Department for Work and Pensions, 2017. [Households Below Average Income: 1994/95 to 2015/16](#)

[17] PHE Child and Maternal Health Profile, [Overview of Child Health](#), Indicator: Eligible and claiming free school meals

[18] PHE Child and Maternal Health Profile, [Overview of Child Health](#), Indicator: School Readiness: The percentage of children with free school meal status achieving a good level of development

[19] PHE Child and Maternal Health Profile, [Overview of Child Health](#), Indicator: Children achieving a good level of development at the end of reception

[20] OFSTED [Find and Compare schools in England](#)

[21] Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission [Social Mobility Index, 2016](#)

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