



DEBATE PACK

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Poverty in the Liverpool city region

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Summary

This debate pack has been prepared ahead of the debate on poverty in the Liverpool city region to be held in Westminster Hall on Wednesday 1 March at 2:30pm. The subject for the debate has been chosen by Steve Rotheram MP.

The House of Commons Library prepares a briefing in hard copy and/or online for most non-legislative debates in the Chamber and Westminster Hall other than half-hour debates. Debate Packs are produced quickly after the announcement of parliamentary business. They are intended to provide a summary or overview of the issue being debated and identify relevant briefings and useful documents, including press and parliamentary material. More detailed briefing can be prepared for Members on request to the Library.

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1. Poverty statistics for Liverpool and the North West

1.1 What data are available?

Statistics for Liverpool City Region are not included in the 'official' poverty figures for the UK, as collected from the Department for Work and Pensions' (DWP) *Family Resources Survey*. There are too few survey respondents to give us information below the regional level.

However, HMRC publishes estimates of the number of children in "low income families" by local area based on benefits and tax credits data. These estimates give us some indication of poverty levels in Liverpool City Region and other local authorities, although as discussed below there are some important limitations to the statistics.

Therefore, section 1.2 of this briefing provides the official figures for the North West as published by DWP and then section 1.3 provides the local estimates from HMRC as well as the End Child Poverty coalition.

Definitions and measures

The headline poverty measures used in the UK count the number of people falling below a threshold of household disposable income. This threshold can vary from year to year in line with average incomes, or may be held constant in real terms.

- One commonly used measure is people in **relative low income** (sometimes referred to as relative poverty) – people living in households with income below 60% of median household income.
- Another measure is **absolute low income** (or absolute poverty) – people living in households with income below 60% of the median in some base year (2010/11), uprated for inflation.

In simple terms, the relative low income measure offers an indicator of inequality between low- and middle-income households. The absolute low income measure offers an indicator of the extent to which living standards of low-income households are improving over time.

The median is the point at which half of households have a lower income, and half have a higher income. Income figures are 'equivalised' so as to take into account differences in household size and composition.

Housing costs

Household income may be measured **before or after housing costs** are deducted (BHC or AHC). Both measures are commonly used, although in some cases one measure may be more appropriate than the other. Poverty levels are generally higher when household incomes are measured AHC, as households at the lower end of the income distribution tend to spend a larger share of their income on housing than higher-income households.

More information on understanding poverty statistics and trends in poverty can be found in the Library's briefing paper, *Poverty in the UK: Statistics*.

1.2 Poverty in the North West

Official statistics on poverty in the UK are collected via the DWP *Family Resources Survey* and are published in DWP's annual *Households below average income* report.

Statistics are available at the country and regional level. Poverty estimates by country and region are subject to greater sampling variability than estimates for the UK as a whole, since the number of households surveyed is smaller. Therefore the regional estimates are presented as three year averages so that the figures are less volatile.

Poverty in the North West, 2012/13 to 2014/15

Three-year averages; BHC = before housing costs, AHC = after housing costs¹

	Relative low income		Absolute low income	
	BHC	AHC	BHC	AHC
Number in poverty (millions)				
All age groups	1.2	1.5	1.2	1.5
Children	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.4
Working-age adults	0.7	0.9	0.7	0.9
Pensioners	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
% of people in poverty				
All age groups	18%	22%	18%	22%
Children	21%	29%	20%	30%
Working-age adults	17%	22%	17%	22%
Pensioners	16%	12%	16%	13%

Source: DWP *Households below average income, 1994/95-2014/15*

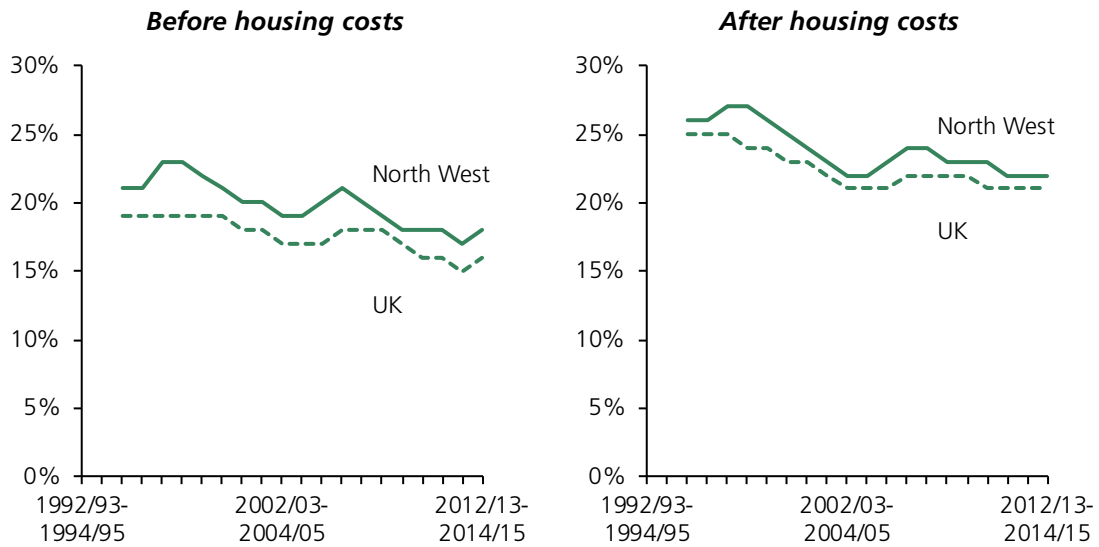
(1) BHC figures count the number of individuals in poverty based on their household income before deducting housing costs; AHC figures are based on household income after deducting housing costs.

Relative low income

The charts below show the trend in the percentage of the whole population in relative low income between 1994/95-1996/97 and 2012/13-2014/15. As noted above, the relative low income measure tells us about inequality between people with low household incomes and those at the middle of the income distribution.

The rate of relative low income in the North West was consistently higher than the rate for the UK as a whole over the past 20 years, although both the rate for the North West and UK have decreased over this period. This remains the case both before and after housing costs are taken into account.

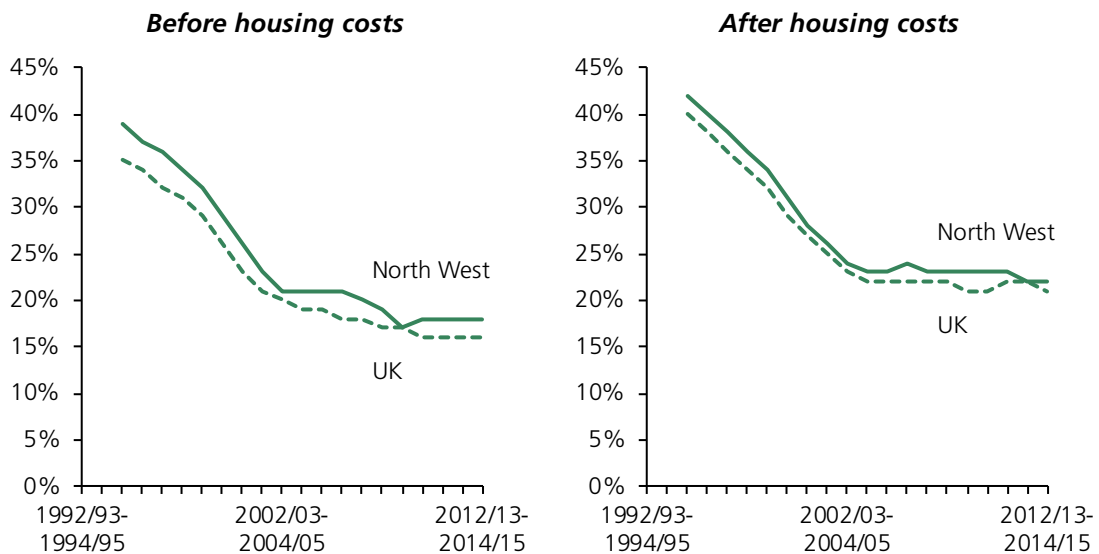
**% of people in relative low income, North West and the UK
1994/95-96/97 to 2012/13-14/15**



Absolute low income

There was a sharp fall in the proportion of people in absolute low income in the North West and UK from the mid-1990s up to the early 2000s. Since then, the proportion has been falling more gradually or has been stable. As noted above, the absolute low income measure offers an indicator of the extent to which living standards of low-income households are improving over time.

**% of people in absolute low income, North West and the UK
1994/95-96/97 to 2012/13-14/15**



Source: DWP *Households below average income, 1994/95-2014/15*

1.3 Poverty in the Liverpool City Region

Although the official poverty statistics as published by DWP are not available below the regional level, estimates of the number of **children** in poverty can be compiled from benefits and tax credits data. Estimates of poverty among other groups (e.g. pensioners, working-age adults) are not available below the regional level.

First of all, there are two different sources that provide estimates of child poverty by local area:

HMRC estimates

Estimates of child poverty by local area are [published by HM Revenue & Customs](#) (HMRC), based on benefits and tax credits data. The HMRC measure is based, in part, on a **relative low income threshold**. Children are counted as being in low income if they are living in a family in receipt of out-of-work benefits, or the family is in receipt of tax credits and has a reported income (before housing costs) less than 60% of median income.

However, these statistics need to be interpreted with caution: the HMRC measure is known to overestimate child poverty levels in families in receipt of out-of-work benefits, since all these families are assumed to be in poverty. In turn, it underestimates child poverty in families where members are in work compared to DWP's *Households below average income* report.

Although these effects roughly balance each other at the national level, it means the number of children in poverty may be over- or underestimated in a given local authority or constituency.

End Child Poverty estimates

The Centre for Research in Social Policy at Loughborough University has also calculated estimates of child poverty by constituency for the End Child Poverty coalition, as published on the [End Child Poverty website](#).

These estimates attempt to rectify reported biases in the HMRC methodology: the HMRC figures are adjusted so that they at least sum to regional totals for in-work and out-of-work poverty as provided in the *Households below average income* dataset. The HMRC figures are also 'updated' to October-December 2015 by supplementing them with other data. In some cases, these data adjustments produce estimates that are rather different to the original figures published by HMRC.¹

End Child Poverty publishes estimates of the number of children in relative low income both when household income is measured before housing costs have been deducted and when income is measured after deducting housing costs. HMRC provides estimates on a before housing costs basis only.

¹ A methodology note gives more details as to how the estimates are constructed: Donald Hirsch and Laura Valadez, [Local indicators of child poverty – developing a new technique for estimation](#), Centre for Research in Social Policy, Loughborough University, July 2014

For further discussion of what data are available and the relevant caveats, see section 8 of the Library's briefing paper, [Poverty in the UK: statistics](#).

Latest data: local authorities

The table compares HMRC and End Child Poverty estimates of the proportion of children in poverty in Liverpool. The End Child Poverty figures for the proportion of children in poverty *before housing costs* (BHC) are considerably lower than the HMRC estimates, indicating a risk that the HMRC estimates may be overstated.

Child poverty rates are higher in the Liverpool City Region than for the North West or UK as a whole, at least based on HMRC methodology.

Comparison of HMRC and End Child Poverty estimates, Liverpool City Region, latest data

Number of children in poverty

	HMRC		End Child Poverty	
	Before housing costs (BHC) August 2014		BHC Oct-Dec 2015	AHC Oct-Dec 2015
	Number	%	%	%
Local authorities				
Liverpool	30,230	32%	21%	34%
Knowsley	10,755	31%	19%	31%
Halton	7,385	25%	17%	28%
St. Helens	9,225	24%	16%	27%
Wirral	16,100	23%	16%	26%
Sefton	11,090	20%	15%	25%
Liverpool City Region	84,785	26%	..	..
North West	350,830	23%	..	..
United Kingdom	2,749,125	20%	..	..

Note: figures rounded to the nearest five. BHC = before housing costs; AHC = after housing costs

Sources:

HMRC, *Children in low-income families local measure: 2014 snapshot as at 31 August 2014*, 30 Sep 2016

End Child Poverty, *Poverty in your area, 2016*, 8 Nov 2016

Constituency estimates

HMRC estimates for constituencies are published on the Library's [Constituency Profiles](#) site.

End Child Poverty estimates for constituencies are published in spreadsheets on the [End Child Poverty website](#). An [interactive map](#) shows the estimated number and proportion of children in relative low income after housing costs.

Trends in poverty in Liverpool City Region

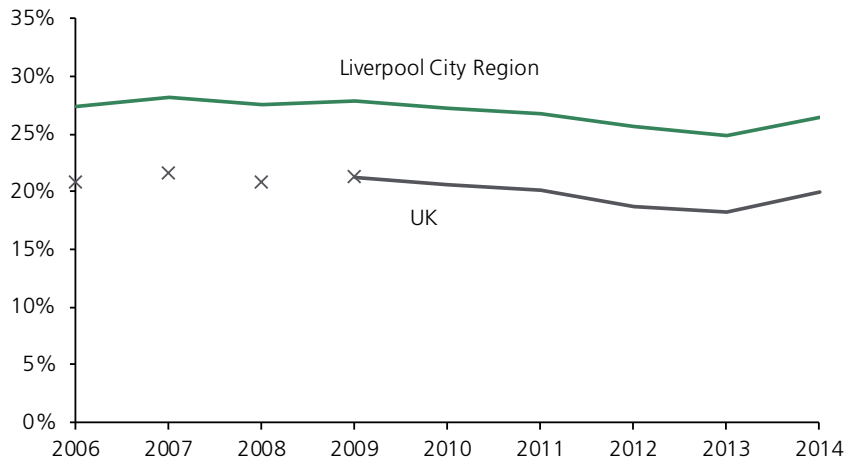
HMRC has published annual estimates for the number of children in poverty by local authority back to 2006 so we can look at changes over time. Figures for current parliamentary constituency boundaries are only available from 2010.

However, the trend in the data needs to be interpreted with some caution and in the context of the overall national picture reported in

Households below average income (and presented in the Library's briefing paper, *Poverty in the UK: statistics*), given the issues with the HMRC figures noted above. In particular, if the composition of families in poverty has changed, this may not be picked up in the series:

Child poverty in Liverpool City Region - HMRC estimates, 2006-2014

Estimated % of children in relative low income before housing costs



Note: 'UK' series shows figures for England for 2006-2008 and UK figures for 2009 onwards.

Source: HMRC, *Children in low-income families local measure: 2014 snapshot as at 31 August 2014*, 30 Sep 2016

Number of children in relative low income, before housing costs: HMRC estimates, 2006-14

Snapshot at August each year

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Number of children in poverty									
Knowsley	12,205	12,520	12,095	11,850	11,480	11,140	10,605	10,205	10,755
Liverpool	33,255	33,645	32,400	32,460	31,070	30,405	29,040	28,595	30,230
St. Helens	9,170	9,535	9,390	9,775	9,535	9,420	9,035	8,770	9,225
Sefton	11,685	11,880	11,445	11,665	11,480	11,350	10,705	10,460	11,090
Wirral	16,635	17,095	17,000	17,615	17,155	16,665	15,630	14,940	16,100
Halton	7,550	7,460	7,455	7,990	7,800	7,570	7,190	6,895	7,385
Liverpool City Region	90,500	92,135	89,785	91,355	88,520	86,550	82,205	79,865	84,785
% of children in poverty									
Knowsley	33%	34%	33%	32%	32%	31%	30%	29%	31%
Liverpool	35%	36%	35%	34%	33%	33%	31%	31%	32%
St. Helens	24%	25%	24%	25%	25%	25%	24%	23%	24%
Sefton	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	19%	19%	20%
Wirral	24%	24%	24%	25%	24%	24%	22%	22%	23%
Halton	26%	25%	26%	27%	27%	26%	25%	24%	25%
Liverpool City Region	27%	28%	28%	28%	27%	27%	26%	25%	26%
North West	23%	24%	23%	23%	22%	22%	21%	20%	23%
England	21%	22%	21%	21%	21%	20%	19%	18%	20%
United Kingdom	..	..	..	21%	21%	20%	19%	18%	20%

Note: Figures for North West, England and UK are not the 'official' poverty estimates for these areas and are shown in the table for comparative purposes only.

Source: HMRC, *Children in low-income families local measure: 2014 snapshot as at 31 August 2014*, 30 Sep 2016

2. Press Articles

[Benefit cap could lead to 4,000 more Merseyside children living in poverty, MP warns: Birkenhead is the worst-hit area according to an analysis requested by Frank Field MP](#)

Lorna Hughes

Liverpool Echo, 22 February 2017

[Liverpool City Region plan targets 'drivers of child poverty'](#)

BBC, 1 February 2017

[The making of an education catastrophe – schools in Knowsley were dubbed 'wacky warehouses': The Merseyside borough is at the top and bottom of every league table whose top or bottom you would be anxious to avoid. Last year it became the first British local authority to stop offering A-levels. What went wrong?](#)

Iain Cobain

The Guardian, 29 January 2017

[Fears in-work poverty caused by high rents could be affecting Halton families: Joseph Rowntree Foundation warns that high costs and uncertainty in private rental sector leaving thousands struggling](#)

Oliver Clay

Liverpool Echo, 9 December 2016

[A third of children in Liverpool are living in poverty: That's 4% more than the national average](#)

Daisy Collingwood

Liverpool Echo, 4 December 2016

[Can a new drive change the fortunes of schools in one of Britain's most deprived areas? After failing generations of children, a Merseyside school is confident its non-selective, grammar-type regime will stop the rot](#)

Daniel Boffey

The Observer, 12 November 2016

[Thousands of residents to be hit by new benefits cap: New move expected to affect more than 700 families across city](#)

Tom Belger

Liverpool Echo, 7 November 2016

[Universal credit delays forcing people to food banks, says MP: Delays in government's flagship welfare reform has caused debt, rent arrears and health problems, says Labour MP Frank Field](#)

Patrick Butler

The Guardian, 24 August 2016

[When a job is not enough: The number of working poor is growing. Blame high house prices, low productivity and too little full-time work](#)

The Economist, 25 June 2016

[Welcome to the towns the Brexit debate forgot: Merseyside](#)

Simon Kuper

Financial Times, 14 June 2016

[After years of decline, why Knowsley's schools are fighting back: In the face of a scathing attack from Ofsted chiefs the pupils and headteachers at Knowsley's failing schools insist they have turned a corner](#)

Joe Shute

Sunday Telegraph, 27 February 2016

[Food bank opens for young people hit by benefit sanctions: Merseyside Youth Association says service in Liverpool helps 16- to 25-year-olds who are going hungry but feel uneasy about visiting other food banks](#)

Dominic Smith

The Guardian, 10 December 2015

[On the edge: the working families who struggle to make ends meet: A new report tells the stories of people experiencing in-work poverty in Liverpool, with further cuts only set to make it worse](#)

Dawn Foster

The Guardian, 27 May 2015

[Liverpool Getting By report finds poor families struggling](#)

BBC, 24 March 2015

[Heat or eat? Or take out a loan, do both, and hope for the best? It's back to the bleak 1980s in Liverpool as hard-working people are forced to sit in the dark to save on fuel bills](#)

Patrick Butler

The Guardian, 30 September 2013

[Where austerity really hits home](#)

Gillian Tett

Financial Times, 8 March 2013

3. Press releases

[Anti-poverty commission proposes major changes to the Bedroom Tax](#)

Liverpool Housing Trust, 21 December 2016

The Liverpool City Region Child Poverty and Life Chances Commission has today asked the Government to grant children a Christmas Wish by initiating a major overhaul of the Bedroom Tax.

In a letter to the Work and Pensions Secretary, Damian Green, the Commission's Chairman, Frank Field, sets out evidence gained by the Commission on the impact of the Bedroom Tax on poorer families with children.

According to a survey carried by Liverpool Housing Trust (LHT) – alongside Riverside, Liverpool Mutual Homes and Halton Housing Trust – on behalf of the Commission:

- 112 families with children (83% of respondents to the Commission's survey) have cut back on their food budgets;
- 96 families with children (71%) have cut back on essential household bills, either by going without gas, electricity, and water, or by incurring additional debt on those bills;
- 67 families with children (49%) have resorted to payday loans, doorstep loans, credit cards, or store cards to get by from week to week; and
- 115 families with children (85%) are not currently looking to move home, due to a lack of suitable alternative accommodation into which they could move, as well as a natural desire to be good parents by providing a stable home which is near to their children's school.

Among the examples of human suffering raised in evidence are:

- A parent who reported going 'hungry or cold' on a number of occasions so they could both feed their child and make up the gap in rent that was opened up by the Bedroom Tax, 'so I don't lose my home'.
- A parent who wrapped herself and her daughter in several blankets to keep warm one evening, as they could not afford any gas.
- A parent in low-paid work who reported getting 'deeper and deeper into debt'.
- A parent's frequent dilemma between whether to 'buy clothes for my daughter or pay bills. She is not able to go to clubs, such as swimming, as I do not have the disposable income'.

The Commission issues two proposals to the Government:

- Amend the Bedroom Tax regulations immediately to reflect the recent rulings in the Supreme Court, and allow families exempted in this way to apply for backdated payments to compensate for their lost income over previous years. If the Government were to so act, families with disabled children who need overnight care, as well as families in which two disabled adults need to sleep in separate beds due to their medical condition, would thus be entitled to have a spare bedroom.
- Change the size criteria, so that the Bedroom Tax applies only to households with two or more spare bedrooms. Such a change would achieve the Government's aim of tackling significant under-occupation of social housing, but without penalising poorer families who have one spare bedroom through no fault of their own. This would all but eliminate the need for exceptions and Discretionary Housing Payments in respect of the Bedroom Tax.

In an attempt to win further immediate gains for poorer families, the Commission is appealing for families with children in the Liverpool City Region with a clear medical need for a spare bedroom, or who already meet the existing exemption criteria, and yet are being asked to make up the rent shortfall caused by the Bedroom Tax, to come forward if they wish to launch a legal challenge. The Commission extends this appeal for help to legal specialists who may be in a position to represent those families coming forward.

Frank says: 'Having borne the brunt of the Bedroom Tax over the past three years, I hope Merseyside will now spearhead the campaign to protect poorer families from the heart-breaking effects that have been reported to the Commission. We are calling for a series of reforms from the Government to deliver greater fairness, and for families who may meet the criteria for exemption to help us mount a legal campaign.'

[New figures reveal nearly half of children are living in poverty in some parts of the UK](#)

End Child Poverty, 8 November 2016

The End Child Poverty coalition has today published new figures providing a new Child Poverty map of the UK. There are more than 3 and a half million children living in poverty in the UK, and the new figures reveal that whilst child poverty exists in every part of the country, as many as 47% of children are living in poverty in some areas - compared to one in ten in others.

The local child poverty estimates are broken down by parliamentary constituency, local authority and ward. Child poverty is the highest in large cities, particularly in London, Birmingham and Manchester. As Table 1 illustrates, among the twenty parliamentary constituencies with the highest levels of childhood poverty, seven are located in London, three in Birmingham, and three in Manchester.

The coalition of charities, faith groups and unions is warning that the benefits freeze in place until the end of the decade will mean that as prices rise, low income families will find it increasingly hard to pay for the same basic essentials.

At the same time, recent cuts to in work support under Universal Credit further penalise low income working families – pushing more working families below the poverty line.

End Child Poverty is calling on the Government to use the upcoming Autumn Statement to end the freeze on children's benefits, and to reverse the sharp cuts being introduced to in-work benefits under Universal Credit.

Top 20 parliamentary constituencies with highest levels of child poverty across the UK

Constituency	% of children in poverty 2015 (after housing costs)
1. Birmingham, Ladywood	47.3%
2. Manchester Central	44.8%
3. Poplar and Limehouse	43.7%
4. Birmingham, Hodge Hill	43.7%
5. Bethnal Green and Bow	43.2%
6. Manchester, Gorton	42.0%
7. Leeds Central	41.8%
8. Hackney South and Shoreditch	40.9%
9. Westminster North	40.6%
10. Birmingham, Hall Green	40.5%
11. Blackley and Broughton	40.3%
12. Liverpool, Riverside	40.2%
13. Middlesbrough	39.9%
14. Sheffield, Brightside and Hillsborough	39.7%
15. Vauxhall	39.6%
16. Bermondsey and Old Southwark	39.5%
17. Nottingham East	39.5%
18. Glasgow Central	39.2%
19. Edmonton	39.2%
20. Nottingham North	39.0%

Top 20 local authorities with highest levels of child poverty across the UK

Local Authority	% of children in poverty 2015 (after housing costs)
1. Tower Hamlets	43.5%
2. Manchester	40.0%
3. Westminster	37.7%
4. Islington	37.7%
5. Newham	37.5%
6. Birmingham	37.4%
7. Hackney	37.1%
8. Middlesbrough	37.0%
9. Nottingham	37.0%
10. Southwark	36.7%
11. Barking and Dagenham	36.6%
12. Lambeth	36.1%
13. Leicester	35.9%
14. Blackpool	35.5%
15. Kingston upon Hull, City of	35.4%
16. Camden	35.2%
17. Sandwell	34.9%
18. Lewisham	34.7%
19. Waltham Forest	34.6%
20. Wolverhampton	34.6%

The parliamentary constituencies with the lowest levels of child poverty are Gordon, West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine, Sheffield Hallam, and York Outer, with figures between 9 and 10 per cent. The constituency of Theresa May (Maidenhead) is among the 20 with the lowest child poverty.

Chair of End Child Poverty Sam Royston said:

“As the Prime Minister has rightly recognised, this is not a country that works for everyone. In every community, there are children being denied the happy childhoods and the good start in life other children take for granted. Our children are now twice as likely to be poor as our pensioners.

“Many families who are just about managing today, won’t be managing tomorrow if Universal Credit leaves them with fewer pounds in their pocket, and if rising costs of living means their money doesn’t stretch as far as it used to.

“This month’s Autumn Statement is a major opportunity for the new government to act to help these families. We urge the Chancellor to reverse the significant cuts to Universal Credit targeted at working families and, at the very least, shield children’s benefits from inflation.”

Research lays bare England's new geography of disadvantage

Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission, 31 January 2016

Social mobility index highlights variations in prospects of disadvantaged kids across England.

The Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission today (31 January 2016) publishes a major new piece of research, ranking each of the local authorities in England in terms of the social mobility prospects of disadvantaged children in their area. This is the first piece of research to examine social mobility in detail at individual local area level.

The social mobility index maps the new geography of disadvantage. It shows London and its commuter belt pulling away from the rest of the country in terms of social mobility. It also shows many coastal areas - such as Blackpool, Great Yarmouth and Minehead - and industrial towns - like Mansfield and Stoke - are becoming entrenched social mobility cold spots.

For the first time it reveals that many better-off parts of England are worse at creating opportunities for their disadvantaged children than areas that are far more deprived. Some of the worst-performing areas - like Norfolk - are rural, not urban, in character or are in what have often been regarded as relatively affluent parts of the East of England and the Midlands. Norwich, Worcester, Oxford, Cambridge and Northampton are all identified as social mobility 'coldspots' - meaning they are among the worst-performing 20% of areas.

The 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 social mobility indicators covering the educational outcomes of disadvantaged young people - in the early years, at school and college and in higher education - and opportunities in local job and housing markets to identify the best and worst places in England in terms of the opportunities young people from poorer backgrounds have to succeed.

Key findings

London and its commuter belt is pulling away from the rest of the country. Young people from disadvantaged backgrounds who live in these areas are far more likely to achieve good outcomes in school and have more opportunities to do well as adults than those in the rest of the country.

Coastal areas and industrial towns are becoming real social mobility cold spots. Places like Doncaster, Mansfield, Stoke, Blackpool and Great Yarmouth are performing badly on both educational measures and adulthood outcomes, giving young people from less advantaged backgrounds limited opportunities to get on.

England's major cities are failing to be the places of opportunity they should be. While London is way ahead no other major cities do well, although there is still a marked difference between cities like Manchester, Birmingham and Southampton (which are about average

against the social mobility index) and cities like Nottingham, Derby and Norwich (which perform very badly).

Many of the richest places in England are doing worse than places that are much poorer. While there is undoubtedly a link between the affluence of a local area and the life chances of disadvantaged young people - with richer areas tending to do better against the social mobility index than poorer areas - there are many affluent areas that fail young people from poor backgrounds. Places like Worcester, Oxford, Cambridge, Northampton and Wellingborough do badly.

Similar areas that are only a few miles apart do very differently on social mobility despite having similar challenges and opportunities. There are large differences in life chances between areas that are only a few miles apart. The tables included in the report identify the best and worst areas in England and within each region, illustrate the wide variation that exists.

Social Mobility and Child Poverty Chairman Alan Milburn said:

The social mobility index uncovers a new geography of disadvantage in England. It lays bare the local lottery in social mobility. It gets beneath the surface of a crude north-south divide and calls into question some of the conventional wisdom about where disadvantage is now located. It is shocking that many of the richest areas of the country are the ones failing their poorest children the most.

This report is a wake-up call for educators and employers as well as policy-makers, both local and national. If social mobility is to take off, much more will need to be done if there is to be a level playing field of opportunity in our country. The gulf between the ambition of a one nation Britain and today's reality of a divided Britain is far too wide.

I hope the government will put itself at the head of a new national drive to ensure that in future progress in life depends on aptitude and ability, not background and birth: on where people aspire to get to, not where they have come from. This report suggests that is long overdue.

4. Parliamentary Materials

4.1 Written questions

[Department for Work and Pensions: Poverty: Liverpool City Region: 42740](#)

Asked by Luciana Berger (Liverpool, Wavertree)

Asked on 13 July 2016

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many households in (a) Liverpool, Wavertree constituency and (b) Liverpool City Region are living in (i) absolute and (ii) relative poverty.

Answered by Damian Hinds

Answered on 18 July 2016

This Government is committed to tackling disadvantage and extending opportunity so that everyone has the chance to realise their full potential. Our life chances approach will focus on tackling the root causes of poverty such as worklessness, educational attainment and family stability.

The Department for Work and Pensions published the 2014/15 Households Below Average Income (HBAI) statistics on 28th June 2016. This provides information on individuals living in relative and absolute low income.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/households-below-average-income-199495-to-201415>

The number of households in relative and absolute low income is not available at constituency or city region level. This is because the survey sample sizes are too small to support the production of robust estimates at this geography.

[Department of Health: Health: Equality: 42294](#)

Asked by Gloria De Piero

Asked on 11 July 2016

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps his Department is taking to reduce health inequalities in areas of high deprivation.

Answered by Jane Ellison

Answered on 14 July 2016

Reducing health inequalities is a priority for this Government.

The Department takes a comprehensive and strategic approach to tackling health inequalities that addresses the wider social causes of ill health, promotes healthier lifestyles for all, tackles differences in both access to, and outcomes from, health and public health services. Action is led locally to ensure that the solutions put in place reflect the needs of individual communities.

Achieving measureable and sustained reductions in health inequalities is integral to the Department's *Shared Delivery Plan 2015-20*, and reflected in the Government's mandate to NHS England, Public Health England's (PHE's) *Evidence into Action* and supporting strategic and business plans at national and local level. NHS England's Business Plan for 2016/17 prioritises closing the gap for groups experiencing poorer health outcomes, a poorer experience of, and access to, healthcare. PHE is supporting local and national efforts to address health inequalities by providing knowledge and intelligence, and evidence-informed tools and advice.

To support this, the Department has published *Improving outcomes and supporting transparency: A public health outcomes framework for England 2013-16*. The framework's vision is to improve and protect the nation's health and wellbeing, and improve the health of the poorest fastest. It is focused on the two high-level outcomes we want to achieve across the public health system and beyond. The first is increased healthy life expectancy; the second is reduced differences in life expectancy and healthy life expectancy between communities through greater improvements in more disadvantaged communities.

[Department for Work and Pensions: Children: Poverty: 227653](#)

Asked by Mrs Louise Ellman (Liverpool, Riverside)

Asked on 16 March 2015

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will make an assessment of the implications for his policies of the statistics collected by the Campaign to End Child Poverty on child poverty rates in Liverpool.

Answered by Esther McVey

Answered on 19 March 2015

We remain committed to our goal of ending child poverty by 2020. We've already made great strides under this government with 300,000 fewer children in relative poverty and around 390,000 fewer children growing up in workless families, now at the lowest levels since records began.

The Government is taking action to tackle child poverty including introducing Universal Credit, which will simplify the benefit system and ensure that work is always the best option; investing more in nursery and pre-school provision, including providing 260,000 disadvantaged 2 year-olds with 15 hours a week free childcare; investing in education, including £2.5 billion for the Pupil Premium; raising the tax threshold which will lift 3 million more people out of paying tax altogether; and introducing tax cuts for over 26 million people on low incomes.

This Government has taken action to give local areas more freedom to respond to local needs. Under the Child Poverty Act, each Local

Authority is required to complete a needs assessment of child poverty in its areas and, working with partners, introduce a local strategy to tackle the local problems. Local Authorities understand the local situation best, and can therefore design effective strategies for tackling child poverty at a local level.

4.2 Oral questions

Poverty: Children

[HC Deb 8 Oct 2013 c 180W](#)

Mr Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of the effect of policy from his Department since May 2010 on child poverty in (a) Birkenhead constituency, (b) the metropolitan borough of Wirral, (c) the Liverpool city region and (d) the UK. [169138]

Esther McVey: The Government are committed to tackling child poverty and to eradicating its causes including worklessness, educational failure and family breakdown, rather than simply treating the consequences of the problem.

The Government are taking action to tackle child poverty including introducing universal credit, which will simplify the benefit system and ensure that work is always the best option; investing more in nursery and pre-school provision, including providing 260,000 disadvantaged two-year-olds with 15 hours a week free childcare; investing in education, including £2.5 billion for the pupil premium for disadvantaged pupils and £1.2 billion for capital investment in schools; and raising the tax threshold which will lift more than 2 million people out of paying tax altogether.

Under the Child Poverty Act, each local authority is required to do a needs assessment of child poverty in its areas, and working with partners, introduce a local strategy to tackle the local problems. The Government believe that it is local authorities that understand the local situation best, and can therefore design effective strategies for tackling child poverty at a local level, supported by our wide-ranging national action.

4.3 Debates

Northern England: Opportunity and Productivity

[HL Deb 12 Jan 2017, c 2070 - 2108](#)

Reducing Health Inequality

[HC Deb 24 Nov 2016, c 1084 - 1131](#)

Education (Merseyside)

[HC Deb 19 Oct 2016, c342WH – 366WH](#)

Welfare Reforms and Poverty

[HC Deb 13 Jan 2014, c641 - 684](#)

5. Further reading

[Cities Outlook 2017](#)

Centre for Cities, January 2017

[State of the North 2016: Building northern resilience in an era of global uncertainty](#)

Ed Cox, Luke Raikes and Leonardo Carella, Institute of Public Policy Research North, December 2016

[Poverty in the UK: statistics](#)

House of Commons Library, November 2016

[Income inequality in the UK](#)

House of Commons Library, November 2016

[Child Poverty Map of the UK](#)

End Child Poverty, November 2016

[Living standards, poverty and inequality in the UK: 2016](#)

Institute for Fiscal Studies, July 2016

[The Social Mobility Index](#)

Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission, June 2016

[Households below average income: an analysis of the income distribution 1994/95 to 2014/15](#)

Department for Work and Pensions, June 2016

[Improving Life Chances](#)

Wirral Council, March 2016

[Uneven growth: tackling city decline](#)

Joseph Rowntree Foundation, February 2016

[Child Poverty and Life Chances Strategy 2015-2018](#)

Liverpool City Region Child Poverty and Life Chances Commission,
January 2016

[Making the Most of Devolution: The State of Liverpool City Region Report](#)

University of Liverpool and Liverpool John Moores University, January
2016

[State of the Nation 2015: Social Mobility and Child Poverty in Great Britain](#)

Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission, December 2015

[Children in Low Income Families 2015](#)

Wirral Council Public Health Intelligence Team, November 2015

[Getting by? A year in the life of 30 working families in Liverpool](#)

Liverpool City Council Action Group on Poverty, February 2015

[Rebalancing Britain: Policy or Slogan? Liverpool City Region - Building on its Strengths: An independent report](#)

The RT Hon the Lord Heseltine Add report here CH and Sir Terry Leahy,
October 2011

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