



North East and North Cumbria's Child Health and Wellbeing Network

***The Facts of Life* for children and young people growing
up in the North East and North Cumbria:**

Chapter 3 – Child poverty

September 2021

@NorthNetChild

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We need to address the poverty cycle in which impoverished families have undernourished children with subsequent low educational attainment that results in low income employment or unemployment. We need better paid jobs, more early support, and more support for schools in disadvantaged areas.

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Chapter Three SPOTLIGHT to direct momentum for initiatives

3 Child poverty

3.1 Relevance

Higher levels of child poverty are associated with a wide range of negative health impacts, resulting in worse cognitive, social-behavioural and health outcomes. Furthermore, living in poverty is associated with negative educational outcomes and adverse long-term social outcomes. These impacts are often enduring leading to poor physical and mental health and life chances in adulthood¹.

Tackling child poverty is fundamental to reducing health inequalities. Raising children out of poverty to give them the best start in life was a key recommendation in the 2010 Marmot Review². The Inquiry on Health Equity for the North highlighted the relative disadvantage for children growing up in the north of England where there are higher levels of child poverty³.

¹ Whickham S et al. Poverty and child health in the UK: using evidence for action. Arch Dis Child 2016; 101: 759-766: [link](#)

² Fair Society, healthy lives: the Marmot Review: strategic review of health inequalities in England post 2010: [link](#)

³ Due North: Report of the Inquiry on Health Equity for the North. University of Liverpool and Centre for Local Economic Strategies: 2014: [link](#)

The North East currently has the second highest rate of child poverty in England behind Inner London and this is increasing⁴.

The data in this chapter relate to routine measures and indicators of child poverty including:

- Percentage of resident children in low income families (relative and absolute)
- Percentage uptake of free school meals
- Rates of family homelessness

Child poverty was the second highest priority of the network as highlighted by professionals and the third highest as highlighted by children and young people themselves.

3.2 Commentary and findings

Child Poverty

Low income can be defined in absolute or relative terms.

Absolute low income is based on family income Before Housing Costs (BHC) in the reference year (2019/20 in this case) in comparison with incomes in 2010/11. Absolute low income takes the 60 per cent of median income threshold from 2010/11 and then fixes this in real terms (i.e. the line moves with inflation). A family must have claimed one or more of Universal Credit, Tax Credits or Housing Benefit at any point in the year to be classed as low income in these statistics. The children in absolute low income families measure is useful for tracking changes over time in relation to a fixed reference point and is designed to assess how low incomes are faring with reference to inflation⁵.

⁴ Jonathon Bradshaw (2020) Child poverty in the North East: [link](#)

⁵ PHE Fingertips (2021) Indicator Definitions Children in absolute low income families (under 16s): [link](#)

Relative low income is used to measure the number and proportion of individuals who are currently in low income compared to the current meChart legend defined as a family in low income Before Housing Credit Significance compared with England worse similar better and one or more of Universal Credit, Tax Credits or Housing Benefit at any point in the year to be classed as low income in these statistics⁶.

	Period	England	Region	Lower tier local authorities																
				North Cumbria				North of Tyne and Gateshead				Durham, South Tyneside and Sunderland			Tees Valley					
				Allerdale	Carlisle	Copeland	Eden	Gateshead	Newcastle upon Tyne	Northumberland	North Tyneside	County Durham	South Tyneside	Sunderland	Darlington	Hartlepool	Middlesbrough	Redcar and Cleveland	Stockton-on-Tees	
Children in absolute low income families (under 16s) (Persons, <16 yrs, %)	2019/20	15.6 ▲	21.9 ▲	14.6 ▶	15.1 ▲	13.2 ▶	13.9 ▶	20.7 ▲	27.2 ▲	19.4 ▲	18.7 ▲	21.6 ▲	25.0 ▲	23.1 ▲	21.5 ▲	25.1 ▲	33.4 ▲	22.0 ▲	20.1 ▲	
Children in relative low income families (under 16s) (Persons, <16 yrs, %)	2019/20	19.1 ▲	25.9 ▲	18.5 ▲	18.9 ▲	16.8 ▲	17.0 ▲	24.9 ▲	31.1 ▲	22.7 ▲	22.0 ▲	25.7 ▲	29.2 ▲	27.3 ▲	25.8 ▲	29.4 ▲	38.6 ▲	26.2 ▲	23.7 ▲	
Children in low income families (all dependent children under 20) (Persons, 0-19 yrs, %)	2016	17.0 ▼	-	13.3 ▼	12.6 ▼	14.3 ▼	8.4 ▶	20.5 ▼	24.7 ▼	16.7 ▶	17.0 ▼	21.4 ▶	25.9 ▶	23.2 ▶	19.4 ▶	28.1 ▶	31.4 ▼	24.5 ▶	20.9 ▶	

Figure 3.1 – Child poverty indicators – Lower tier local authorities

The data relating to children under 16 years indicate that, on average:

⁶ PHE Fingertips (2021) Indicator Definition Children in relative low income families (under 16s): [link](#)

- There are significantly higher numbers of children living in low income families (absolute and relative) across the **North East and North Cumbria (NENC) region** compared with the England average, in all local authorities other than those in **North Cumbria**.
- In the **NENC region**, 25.9% of children are living in relative low income families compared with the England average (19.1%).
- The proportion of children in relative low income families varies between localities within the region. The lowest percentages are evident in **North Cumbria** (**Allerdale** 18.5%, **Carlisle** 18.9%, **Copeland** 16.8% and **Eden** 17.0%) but the rest of the region record significantly higher levels than the England average ranging from 22.0% in **North Tyneside** to 38.6% in **Middlesbrough** (a value which is twice the national average).
- Time trends indicate that the proportion of children in both absolute and relative low income families is rising across England as well as most of the **NENC region**.

The data relating to dependent children under 20 indicate that, on average:

- The proportion of children in low income families varies considerably across the **NENC region**.
- The four localities in **North Cumbria** have significantly lower proportions than the England average (17.0%), including **Eden** where the proportion (8.4%) is less than less than half the England average.
- All but two (**Northumberland** and **North Tyneside**) of the other areas in the NENC region have percentages which are significantly higher than England ranging from 20.5% in **Gateshead** to 31.4% in **Middlesbrough**.
- Time trends show that the numbers are falling in England and seven of the areas in the NENC region (**Allerdale**, **Carlisle**, **Copeland**, **Gateshead**, **Newcastle upon Tyne**, **North Tyneside** and **Middlesbrough**) but whilst all other areas remain stable.



	Period	England	Region	Upper tier local authorities												
				North Cumbria	North of Tyne and Gateshead				Durham, South Tyneside and Sunderland			Tees Valley				
				Cumbria	Gateshead	Newcastle upon Tyne	Northumberland	North Tyneside	County Durham	South Tyneside	Sunderland	Darlington	Hartlepool	Middlesbrough	Redcar and Cleveland	Stockton-on-Tees
Free school meals: % uptake among all pupils (Persons, School age, %)	2018	13.5 ▼	17.1 ▼	9.8 ▼	15.9 ▼	25.5 ▶	12.3 ▼	12.6 ▼	18.1 ▼	19.2 ▼	20.9 ▶	16.5 ▼	25.8 ▶	24.2 ▼	17.9 ▼	16.4 ▼
Family homelessness (Persons, Crude rate- per 1,000)	2017/18	1.7 ▶	-	0.3 ▶	1.4 ▶	1.4 ▶	0.8 ▶	1.3 ▶	0.4 ▶	0.5 ▼	0.6 ▶	0.1 ▶	0.2 ▶	0.4 ▼	0.3	0.3

Figure 3.2 – Child poverty indicators – Upper tier local authorities

Free School Meals

The data for 2019 indicate that, on average:

- The percentage of school age children who are living in the **North East and Cumbria** and attending a state school who are eligible for and claiming free school meals (17.1%) is significantly higher than that seen on average across England (13.5%).
- This proportion varies widely between different localities in the region. The lowest proportions are reported in **Cumbria** (9.8%) and the highest in **Hartlepool** (25.8%).
- Time trends for England, the North East and Cumbria and its constituent local authorities indicate that the numbers are falling in most areas. There are three exceptions (**Newcastle upon Tyne**, **Hartlepool** and **Sunderland**) where the numbers are stable.

Family homelessness

The data for 2017/18 indicate that on average:

- Across the entire **North East and Cumbria** region, there are significantly lower rates of family homelessness per 1,000 households than the England average of 1.7 per 1,000.
- The lowest rate in the region and, based on national analysis, the second lowest across England is found in **Darlington** with a rate of 0.1 per 1,000.
- The highest rates in the region relate to **Gateshead** (1.4 per 1000), **Newcastle upon Tyne** (1.4 per 1000) and **North Tyneside** (1.3 per 1000).
- Across England, the region and most local authority areas in the region, the rates are not changing but the data for **South Tyneside** and **Middlesbrough** indicate that rates of family homelessness are falling significantly.

Live indicators and definitions from this section can be viewed at <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/indicator-list/view/r8ICzjbDoE>.

3.3 Commentary on network actions

Poverty is one of the top priorities of the Child Health and Wellbeing Network defined by the system and has its own workstream on the workplan.

As a baseline the network commissioned a scoping study to inform our actions around poverty proofing in health settings. Read the NENC Child health & wellbeing network (2021) Poverty proofing health settings report [here](#).

In 2021 a second phase of this work was commenced to apply the initial consultation in practice looking at the impact of poverty on accessing diabetic services. This work is led by a partner network – the NENC CYP Diabetic network for further information contact jenny.foster5@nhs.net.

A network partnership has led to a successful NHS Charities Together bid which will enable further spread into more health care organisations in each of our 4 main geographical areas, do contact that work through Children's North East or england.northernchildnetwork@nhs.net.

This Poverty proofing work is an extension of Children North East's successful poverty proofing concept in Education (for Further details contact Children's North East luke.bramhall@children-ne.org.uk). Both the education implementation and the Network's focus on poverty proofing in health was successful in an Applied Research Collaborative bid led by Newcastle University which will start to strengthen the impact of such work on our young people. For further information on the research contact Dr Josephine Wildman NIHR Applied Research Collaboration North East & North Cumbria via Josephine.Wildman@newcastle.ac.uk.

Other work in the network is also directed to support communities in more deprived areas to ensure they are accessed by those area's first. For example the STAR initiative (South Tees ARts Project) brings an arts intervention to children adopting holiday hunger approaches to two primary schools located within geographies with high levels of deprivation.

The network partners with many organisations who have poverty as a core focus of their work and including the North East Child Poverty Commission stakeholder network who are active members of the End Child Poverty coalition and the Child Poverty action group (www.nechildpoverty.org.uk)

The networks Interactive film series tackle many issues exacerbated through poverty and support young people and professionals to explore some hard hitting issues in a safe environment.

The network has appointed new advisors to conduct a short term piece of work regarding Inequalities to be reported out in 2022 to ensure our reach into our underserved communities.

For any further information and proposals on initiatives relating to poverty do contact the network via england.northernchildnetwork@nhs.net and the website [Child Health and Wellbeing Network | North East and North Cumbria ICS](#).

3.4 Relevant key policy and research papers

Health inequalities

Fair Society, healthy lives: The Marmot Review: strategic review of health inequalities in England post 2010
<http://www.parliament.uk/documents/fair-society-healthy-lives-full-report.pdf>

Health equity in England: The Marmot review 10 years on. <https://www.health.org.uk/publications/reports/the-marmot-review-10-years-on>

Due North: Report of the Inquiry on Health Equity for the North. University of Liverpool and Centre for Local Economic Strategies: 2014 <https://cles.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Due-North-Executive-summary-report-of-the-Inquiry-on-Health-Equity-in-the-North.pdf>

Child Poverty

IPPR (2020) Child poverty and devolution in North East England <https://www.ippr.org/files/2020-09/child-poverty-and-devolution-sep20.pdf>

Jonathon Bradshaw (2020) Child poverty in the North East

<https://cpag.org.uk/sites/default/files/files/policypost/Child%20poverty%20in%20the%20NE.pdf>

NENC Child health & wellbeing network (2021) Poverty proofing health settings report <https://nhsjoinourjourney.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/NENC-CHWN-Poverty-Proofing-Health-Settings-Report.pdf>

The North East Child Poverty Commission <https://www.nechildpoverty.org.uk/about/>

End Child Poverty Coalition <http://www.endchildpoverty.org.uk/>

Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (2020) State of Child Health. London: RCPCH
<https://stateofchildhealth.rcpch.ac.uk/evidence/family-and-social-environment/child-poverty/>

Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (2018) The impact of poverty on child health <https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/news-events/news/impact-poverty-child-health>

Gregg P, Propper C and Washbrook E (2008) Understanding the relationship between parental income and multiple child outcomes: A decomposition analysis. Working Paper 08/193 Bristol: Centre for Market and Public Organisation University of Bristol. pp. 29. <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/cmpo/migrated/documents/wp193.pdf>

Whickham S et al. (2016) Poverty and child health in the UK: using evidence for action. Arch Dis Child 2016; 101: 759-766
<https://adc.bmj.com/content/archdischild/101/8/759.full.pdf>

Taylor-Robinson D, Lai ETC, Wickham S, et al (2019) Assessing the impact of rising child poverty on the unprecedented rise in infant mortality in England, 2000–2017: time trend analysis BMJ Open 2019 <https://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/9/10/e029424>

National Child Mortality Database (2021) Child Mortality and Social Deprivation https://www.ncmd.info/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/NCMD-Child-Mortality-and-Social-Deprivation-report_20210513.pdf

Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion (2017) Does Money Affect Children's Outcomes? An update
<https://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/dps/case/cp/casepaper203.pdf>

The cost of missing lunchtime: A briefing on free school meals in the North East of England (2021) <https://children-ne.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/The-Cost-of-Missing-Lunchtime-a-Briefing-on-Free-School-Meals-in-the-North-East-of-England.pdf>

Multiple disadvantage

Children's Commissioner. Building back better. London: 2021 <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/cco-building-back-better.pdf>