

Child poverty in England and Wales

More than

1 in 3

children are living in poverty
across England and Wales.

Over

800,000

food parcels were sent to
children in the UK through food
banks last year.

3.6 million

children are living in poverty
in the UK.

**The Child Poverty Act of 2010 set a target to end child poverty by 2020.
This target was not achieved by any country in the UK.**

Millions of children in the UK do not have enough resources to meet their basic needs. Children are more likely to enter poverty than any other age group. The only year since 2010 that the number of children living in poverty was reduced by more than one percentage point was 2020/21 when the UK Government introduced the temporary £20 per week uplift to Universal Credit. This measure has since been removed.

The rise in child poverty levels has correlated with increasing numbers of children entering care. Rises in child poverty fuelled by benefit cuts were associated with over 10,000 more children being taken into care between 2015 and 2020, including almost 22,000 additional children being placed on child protection plans. As the current cost of living crisis deepens, the Child Poverty Action Group predicts that 200,000 more children will be pushed into poverty unless urgent action is taken.



Article 27 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that “the parent(s) or others responsible for the child have the primary responsibility to secure, within their abilities and financial capacities, the conditions of living necessary for the child's development.” The state is taking on corporate parenting responsibility for more children, at a significant cost, because of its failure to effectively address family poverty.



The social security system is vital to protecting children from poverty but is a reserved power for the UK Government. This means that the Welsh Government do not have responsibility for benefits or welfare rates in Wales. If the UK Government is committed to 'levelling up' communities, urgent action is needed to end the scandal of child poverty in our country.

What is in place to tackle child poverty in England and Wales

Policy	England	Wales
What is the current rate of children living in poverty?	29%	34%
When was the most recent national strategy published to tackle child poverty?	2014	2015
Is a national strategy to tackle child poverty committed to by the current government?	No	No
Are there 'cost of living' support packages for children?	Partially ¹	Yes
Does the government have a formal mechanism for listening to the views of children in poverty?	No	No
Is there a minister with responsibility for tackling child poverty?	No	Yes ²

- 1 UK Government's cost of living support package in England is not exclusive to children as it covers families in general.
- 2 Welsh Government's Minister for Social Justice has responsibility for the "coordination of measures to mitigate child poverty."

NYAS (National Youth Advocacy Service) is a children's rights charity that campaigns for the rights of care-experienced young people across England and Wales, championing their voices to be heard in their decisions. We work to uphold children's right to a standard of living adequate for physical, mental, spiritual, moral, and social development. NYAS is committed to tackling child poverty and its root causes.

Across the Border Briefings are a series of NYAS reports that draw on our experience of working within the different national systems of England and Wales. They aim to highlight best practices, and where improvements need to be made to make sure young people's rights are protected in line with the UNCRC (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child). Care-experienced children and young people must receive the best possible support, no matter where they live.



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