



Children's
Rights Alliance
for England

STANDARD OF LIVING

STATE OF CHILDREN'S
RIGHTS IN ENGLAND

2014

STANDARD OF LIVING

ARTICLE 26 - Children have a right to benefit from social security, taking into account the resources and circumstances of those who have responsibility for the child.

ARTICLE 27 - Every child has a right to a standard of living adequate to their physical,

mental and social development. States Parties shall take appropriate measures to assist parents and carers and shall, in case of need, provide assistance and support with particular regard to food, clothing and housing.

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What does the Convention say?

Under Articles 26 and 27 of the UNCRC, when families do not have enough to live on, children have a right to financial support from the government in order to enjoy a standard of living will meet their basic needs and allow them to develop fully. The UNCRC recognises that parents are primarily responsible for meeting their children's needs but governments must step in ensure that children's essential needs are met - in particular, food, clothing and housing - where families are unable to do so. Public bodies should use the maximum available resources to ensure that all children have an adequate standard of living under Article 4 of the UNCRC.

In 2008, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child highlighted its concern about a number of areas relating to disadvantaged children's rights in the UK. Among these, it recommended that the UK Government:

- Allocate the maximum resources available to implement the UNCRC, with a particular focus on eradicating poverty and reducing inequality
- Provide material assistance and support to children living in poverty
- Prioritise children and families in most need of support
- Implement legislation aimed at ending child poverty by 2020
- Establish measurable indicators to achieve this goal
- Require local authorities to provide safe and adequate sites for travellers

There are four general principles, which underpin each of the specific rights outlined in the rest of the Convention:

- Article 2 - children should not be discriminated against in the enjoyment of their rights
- Article 3 - the child's best interests should take precedence in every decision and action taken relating to a child
- Article 6 - children have a right to life and develop to their full potential
- Article 12 - children have a right to express their views and have them given due weight

What progress have we made?

There is no definitive list of indicators which determines whether or not children enjoy their rights. This section presents indicators which have been used to illustrate particular rights issues facing children in England, and is based on a combination of official statistics, published research and additional material gathered through Freedom of Information requests. In addition, it summarises significant laws or policies which affect children's human rights.

Context

Poverty damages children's lives. Poor children are more likely to eat unhealthy foods; live in substandard, insecure and unsafe housing; have fewer places to play; be worried about household finances and their parents' health and mental health; try to hide their poverty from others; and do less well at school.¹ Living in poverty undermines a child's right to develop (Article 6), and can have a negative impact on their other rights, including the right to education, the right to health, and the right to be safe.

The Child Poverty Act² was passed in 2010. It sets out in law the government's intention to significantly reduce child poverty by 2020. There are four targets listed in the Act:

1. Relative low income – to reduce to less than 10% the proportion of children living in households with below 60% national median income (before housing costs)
2. Combined low income and material deprivation – to reduce to less than 5% the proportion of children living in households with below 70% national median income who also experience material deprivation³
3. Absolute low income – to reduce to less than 5% the proportion of children living with below 60% national median income in real terms (at the 2010-11 median)
4. Persistent poverty – to reduce to less than 7% the proportion of children living in households below 60% national median income for three out of the last four years⁴

1 Kothari, P, Whitham, G and Quinn, T (2014) A fair start for every child: why we must act now to tackle child poverty in the UK. http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/images/A_Fair_Start_for_Every_Child.pdf

2 Child Poverty Act 2010. <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/9/contents>

3 "Material deprivation" is based on a series of questions asked for the annual Family Resources Survey

4 Duncan Smith, I (2014) Statement on child poverty. House of Commons Hansard, 16 October 2014, col. WS39. <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201415/ldhansrd/text/141016-wms0001.htm#14101675000210>

The coalition government added a fifth measure that is not in the Act (severe poverty)

- Severe poverty - the number of children living in households with below 50% national median income who also experience material deprivation (before housing costs)

The Act also places a duty on local authorities and other agencies to mitigate the effects of child poverty in their local area. They must undertake a local child poverty needs assessment and prepare a joint child poverty strategy.

Levels of child poverty in the UK

“Income” can be measured before housing costs (BHC - the government’s preferred measure) or after housing costs (AHC). Housing costs in some regions of England - in particular, London and the South East - are among the highest in Europe, so it is important to take these into account in working out whether a family has enough to live on.

The proportion (and number) of children living in households with a “relative low income” is now lower than it was in 2008-09, not because those households are necessarily better off, but because average incomes have fallen by 8% since the beginning of the recession in 2008-09.⁵ The number in absolute poverty after housing costs has increased.

LEVELS OF CHILD POVERTY IN THE UK ⁶	2008-09	2012-13
Relative low income BHC	2.8 million children - 22%	2.3 million children - 17%
Absolute low income BHC	2.7 million children - 20%	2.6 million children - 19%
Relative low income AHC	3.9 million children - 30%	3.7 million children - 27%
Absolute low income AHC	3.6 million children - 28%	4.1 million children - 31%
Low income and material deprivation ⁷	2.3 million children - 18%	1.8 million children - 13%
Severe poverty	0.8 million children - 6%	0.5 million children - 4%

The 2013-14 figures are not yet available, but as a series of benefit cuts, detailed below, took effect from April 2013, forthcoming figures are expected to show that child poverty levels are rising again.⁸ The Institute of Fiscal Studies⁹ predicts that, by 2020 - the target year for reducing child poverty in the UK - we will see child poverty levels of:

- 3.4 million (23.5%) children living in relative poverty BHC, rising to 4.7 million (32.9%) AHC
- 3.9 million (27.2%) children living in absolute poverty BHC, rising to 5.1 million (35.9%) AHC

The Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission agrees, saying in their latest annual report, that poverty is set to rise, not fall: ‘... *without radical changes to the tax and benefit system to boost the incomes of poor families, there is no realistic hope of the statutory child poverty targets being met in 2020.*’¹⁰ That denotes a serious and conscious failure by the Government to have regard to the social and economic rights of children, and to the role that the State should be playing to reduce poverty levels.

⁵ MacInnes, Tom and others (2041) Monitoring poverty and social exclusion. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation. <http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/MPSE2013.pdf>

⁶ Department for Work and Pensions (2014) Households below average income (HBAI): 1994-95 to 2012-13

⁷ Questions in the survey changed in 2010/11 so not directly comparable

⁸ Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission (2014) State of the Nation 2014: social mobility and child poverty in Great Britain, p.157. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/365765/State_of_Nation_2014Main_Report.pdf

⁹ Browne, J, Hood, A and Joyce, R (2013) Child and working age poverty in Northern Ireland from 2010 to 2020, Appendix A. <http://www.ifs.org.uk/comms/r78.pdf>

¹⁰ Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission (2014) State of the nation 2014: social mobility and child poverty in Great Britain, p.v https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/365765/State_of_Nation_2014_MainReport.pdf

In-work poverty

The Child Poverty Act requires the government to publish a national child poverty strategy every three years. The most recent strategy came out in 2014 and focuses on breaking the cycle of poverty through behavioural change and increasing employment. Its core message is that *'families can work themselves out of poverty'*¹¹ - a point of view undermined by the growing levels of in-work poverty in the UK.

"In-work poverty" refers to children in families where at least one of the parents is working but the household income is below the poverty line, and is a function of stagnant wages, restricted hours, and cuts in tax credits. Average earnings have been falling since 2009-10, inflation has hit families hard,¹² and millions of workers are earning less than a living wage.¹³ Although the cost of living has increased by 27-28% since 2008, average annual earnings have risen by only 9%.¹⁴

Article 7 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights recognises the right of everyone who is working to receive remuneration that, as a minimum, provides them with a decent living for themselves and their families.¹⁵ The Joseph Rowntree Foundation estimates that a couple with two children needs to earn £40,600 in order to achieve what most people regard as a socially acceptable living standard,¹⁶ which is much higher than either the average wage (currently around £27,000) and much higher than the official poverty line (relative low income).

Currently, the national minimum wage is £6.50 an hour for people 21 and over; £5.13 for 18 to 20 year-olds; and £3.79 for under-18s.¹⁷ A growing number of employers, including some local authorities, have signed up to the Living Wage - currently set at £7.85 an hour for most of the UK and £9.15¹⁸ in London. The National Minimum Wage is agreed by the government, employers, the unions and others and is set at a level that should not have an adverse impact on employment. In contrast, the Living Wage is calculated according to the basic cost of living.

*In 2012-13, 63% of children in poverty were living in families where at least one adult works. Increasing levels of parental employment does not automatically lead to a reduction in poverty: '... in too many cases, it simply moves children from low income workless households to low income working households.'*¹⁹

Welfare reforms and benefit cuts

Since 2010, the government has introduced a series of cuts to the benefits and tax credits system, undermining both out-of-work and in-work support. Those affecting families with children include:

- Benefits, such as child tax credits, have been uprated by just 1% a year, which is less than inflation
- £190 Health in Pregnancy grant scrapped
- £500 Sure Start maternity grant restricted to first child only
- Child Benefit rates frozen until 2014-15 when they increase by 1%
- Childcare costs covered by working tax credit cut from 80% to 70%
- Total benefit cap of £500 a week for families with children, no matter how big the family
- Removal of the spare room subsidy (commonly called the bedroom tax) - families with one spare bedroom lose 14% of their housing benefit; those with two rooms lose 25% of their housing benefit
- Council Tax Benefit replaced by Council Tax Reduction, which is devolved to local authorities, the majority of which are now levying a minimum charge on all working-age families no matter what their level of income
- Social Fund community care grants and crisis loans replaced by non-ring-fenced Local Welfare Assistance schemes; all government funding for the scheme will cease in April 2015

11 HM Government (2014) Child poverty strategy 2014-17. p.28. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/324103/Child_poverty_strategy.pdf

12 Belfield, C and others (2014) Living standards, poverty and inequality in the UK: 2014. London: IFS <http://www.ifs.org.uk/uploads/publications/comms/r96.pdf>

13 Whittaker, A and Hurrell, A (2013) Low pay Britain 2013. London: Resolution Foundation. <http://www.resolutionfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Low-Pay-Britain-2013.pdf>

14 Hirsch, D (2014) The cost of a child 2014. London: CPAG. http://www.cpag.org.uk/sites/default/files/Cost_of_a_child_2014.pdf

15 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights <http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cescr.aspx>

16 Davis, A, Hirsch, D and Padley, M (2014) A minimum income standard for the UK in 2014. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation. <http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/Minimum-income-standards-2014-FULL.pdf>

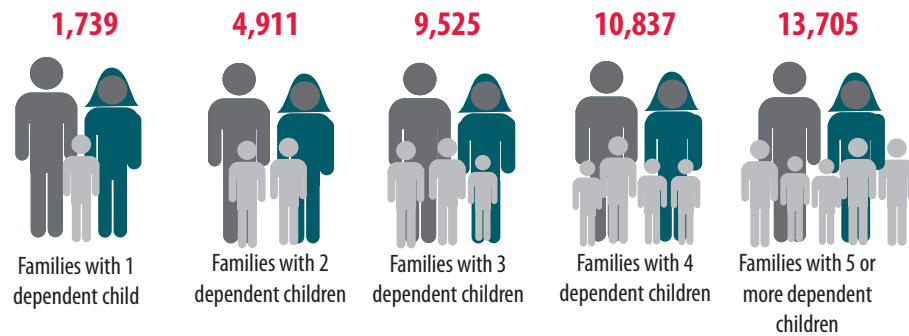
17 National minimum wage webpages <https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates>

18 Living Wage website <http://www.livingwage.org.uk/>

19 Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission (2014) Response to the consultation on the Child Poverty Strategy 2014 to 2017, para.9. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/318062/2b_Poverty_ResponseFinal.pdf

Research from Action for Children shows how the introduction of the benefit cap has broken 'the historic link between need and welfare',²⁰ affecting more than 175,000 children in England.

HOUSEHOLDS AFFECTED BY THE BENEFITS CAP ²¹



96% OF ALL THE HOUSEHOLDS IN ENGLAND, AFFECTED BY THE BENEFITS CAP, HAVE CHILDREN

APRIL 2013 - MAY 2014

The Social Fund, which provided loans for families facing unexpected costs like having to pay for a new washing machine or find some basic furnishings for an empty flat, has been replaced by Local Welfare Assistance schemes administered by local authorities. A Freedom of Information request by the Guardian newspaper and Centrepoin²² found that only 58% of those applying for assistance were getting it, compared to an 80% success rate for Social Fund applications. Local authorities had tighter eligibility criteria, often excluding the working poor entirely, and were offering vouchers or referrals to other sources of help like food banks rather than cash. There is no additional funding to support the scheme from 2015-16, and the Local Government Association has indicated that 15% of local authorities will no longer be able to offer this kind of assistance.²³

Some of the harshest cuts have been to housing-related benefits. New Policy Institute analysis reveals²⁴ that:

- In April 2014, 780,000 families were receiving less housing benefit than they needed to pay their rent
- Couples with children lost an average of £20.71 per week
- Lone parent families lost an average of £15.96 per week
- Single adults without children lost an average of £10.48 per week

An early evaluation of the spare room subsidy²⁵ reveals that, over the first six months of the policy, only 4.5% of affected tenants moved to a smaller property. One in five tenants had registered to move, but their landlords were unable to accommodate them with a smaller home. Eighteen percent of those who were working were trying to find ways of earning more money to cover the benefit shortfall, and 50% of those who were unemployed were looking for work, many of them disabled or with young children. Fifty-seven percent of claimants reported cutting back on essential household items to pay their rent.

From April 2014, 1.4 million families have to pay on average £154 a year in council tax for the first time - an amount they were considered too poor to pay before the programme of welfare cuts began.²⁶

20 Rennison, R (2014) Children and the benefit cap, p.6. Watford: Action for Children. https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/media/8341721/children_benefit_cap.pdf

21 DWP (2014) Benefit cap: number of households capped to May 2015. Table 1. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/benefit-cap-number-of-households-capped-to-may-2014>

22 Butler, P and others (2014) The crisis in local welfare assistance explained. 20 April 2014. Guardian newspaper. <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/datablog/2014/apr/20/the-crisis-in-local-welfare-assistance-explained>

23 Centre for Social and Economic Inclusion (2014) How councils are meeting local crisis and community care needs. Local Government Association. <http://www.local.gov.uk/documents/10180/11531/LGA+delivering+local+welfare++how+councils+are+meeting+local+community+care+needs/92c88e3c-ca8e-4caf-9bd7-6b236e27d500>

24 Aldridge, H and MacInnes, T (2014) Multiple cuts for the poorest families. London: New Policy Institute/Oxfam. http://npi.org.uk/files/4613/9816/3093/Full_report_-_Multiple_cuts_for_the_poorest_families.pdf

25 Ipsos MORI (2014) Evaluation of the spare room subsidy. London: DWP. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/329948/rr882-evaluation-of-removal-of-the-spare-room-subsidy.pdf

26 Aldridge, H and MacInnes, T (2014) Multiple cuts for the poorest families. New Policy Institute/Oxfam. http://npi.org.uk/files/4613/9816/3093/Full_report_-_Multiple_cuts_for_the_poorest_families.pdf

The way in which the changes are being implemented, as well as the reductions themselves, have added to the difficulties facing families.²⁷ Having to apply online is almost impossible for those who do not know how to use the internet. Losing face-to-face contact time with Jobcentre and council staff makes the system harder to navigate. Having eligibility assessments run by private companies like Atos Healthcare adds to the levels of suspicion and mistrust.

The cost of living: fuel poverty

Being in fuel poverty means that a household has higher fuel costs than average which, if they were to spend the amount they need to on fuel, would leave them with an income below the poverty line. Fuel poverty has risen as energy prices have increased and household incomes have fallen.

*Around 2.28 million, or 10.4%, of households in England were in fuel poverty in 2012. Forty-five percent of those living in fuel poverty in 2012 were families with children, compared to 17% in 2008.*²⁸

The Children's Society reports that in 2011-12, there were 110 excess winter deaths among children in England and Wales, and many said their families were having to cut back on spending on food, clothing and transport in order to cover the cost of heating their homes.²⁹

The quality of a child's housing – and particularly the number of poorer families living in substandard private rental properties - is a factor in fuel poverty. The unemployed and households living in privately rented accommodation have the highest rates of fuel poverty in the UK.²⁸ One in ten privately rented homes has the lowest energy efficiency rating.

PERCENTAGE OF FUEL POOR HOUSEHOLD BY HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION ^{30 31}	2008	2012
Couple with dependent child(ren)	10%	30%
Lone parent with dependent child(ren)	7%	15%
Couple with no dependent children	6.8%	9%

Recently, the government has consulted on a new strategy in which it proposes establishing a new indicator to monitor the number of children under 16 living in fuel poverty.³²

The cost of living: food poverty

Food is the largest item of household expenditure for low income households after housing, fuel and power costs. In 2012, an average 11.6% of all household spend went on food in the UK; the 20% lowest income households spent 16.6% of their household finances on food.³³

Low income households have a poorer diet as well: they eat more food and drinks high in fat and/or sugar, and fewer fruit and vegetables - nutritious food is becoming too expensive for people on low wages or benefits.

28 Defra (2014) Annual fuel poverty statistics report, 2014. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/319280/Fuel_Poverty_Report_Final.pdf

29 Royston, S (2014) Behind cold doors: the chilling reality for children in poverty. http://www.childrensociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/tcs/behind_cold_doors_-_final.pdf

30 DECC (2012) Trends in fuel poverty, 2003 to 2010. Table 5 <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/trends-in-fuel-poverty-england-2003-to-2010>

31 DECC (2014) Annual fuel poverty statistics report, 2014, Chart 3.6 https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/319280/Fuel_Poverty_Report_Final.pdf

32 HM Government (2014) Cutting the cost of keeping warm: a new fuel poverty strategy for England. Consultation document. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/335099/fuel_poverty_consultation.pdf

33 Defra (2013) Family food report 2012. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/265243/familyfood-2012report-12dec13.pdf

*The nation's heightened state of food insecurity raises serious concerns with regard to the UK's compliance with its international human rights obligations in relation to the human right to food.*³⁴

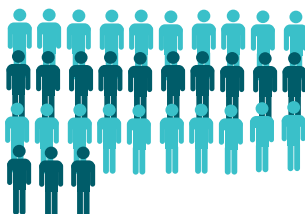
Oxfam, Church Action on Poverty and the Trussell Trust calculate that more than half a million children in the UK are living in families unable to provide a minimally acceptable diet.³⁵ The rise in the cost of living, wage stagnation, and the impact of benefit cuts and benefit sanctions have led to the increase in food poverty.³⁶ The evidence suggests that turning to food aid happens only when a family has exhausted all other strategies.³⁷

REFERRALS TO TRUSSELL TRUST FOOD BANKS³⁸



25,899 PEOPLE

2008-09



330,205 CHILDREN

2013-14

(ABOVE: 1 INDIVIDUAL REPRESENTS 10,000 PEOPLE)

Homelessness

Secure and adequate housing is a right under the UNCRC. The state of a child's home – in terms of how fit is for habitation, its size, stability and location – affects a child's physical and mental health, education, relationships and safety. Homeless children are three to four times more likely to have mental health problems, two to three times more likely to be absent from school, and are likely to have lower academic achievement, which does not correlate to the child's ability.³⁹

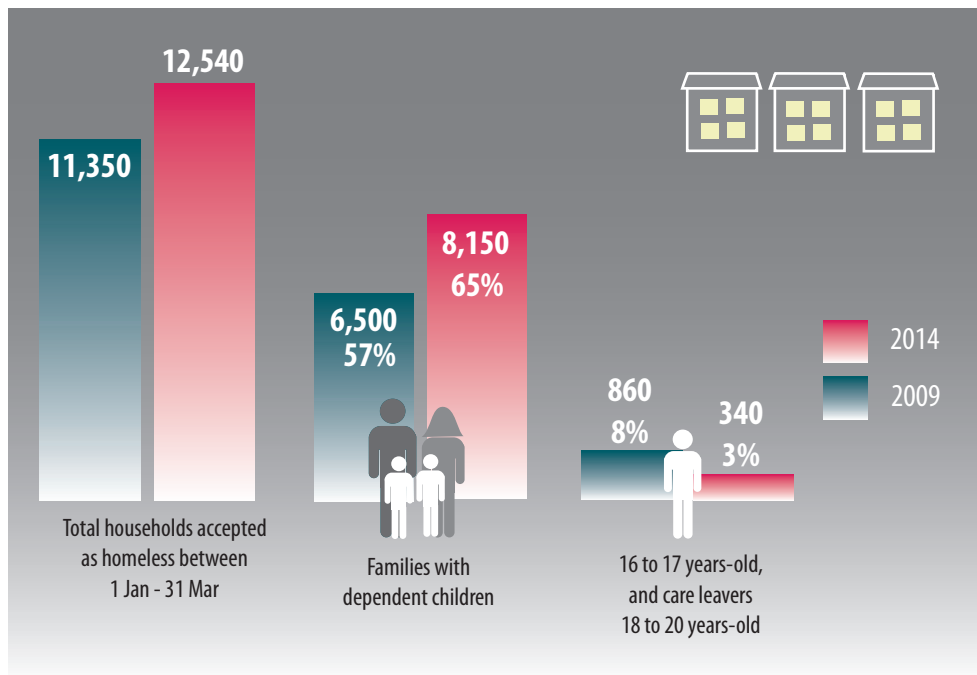
When children are homeless, authorities must step in and assist them. Under the Housing Act 1996, local authorities are required to find accommodation for homeless families with children, 16 and 17 year-olds who are not living with their families, and care leavers. Homeless applications and acceptances have been increasing since 2011. However, a shortage of appropriate housing stock means families and single young people are increasingly placed in temporary accommodation, and this can include bed and breakfast accommodation.

Bed and breakfast accommodation is recognised as unsuitable for homeless children. Sharing accommodation with vulnerable adults who can have problems with drugs, alcohol, or violence can both feel and be unsafe. Families have to share bathrooms with other residents, and there are often no cooking facilities. Children often share a room with the whole family.⁴⁰ There is no place to do homework.

- 34 Just-Fair (2013) Going hungry? The human right to food, p.8. http://just-fair.co.uk/uploads/Going_Hungry_Human_Right_to_Food_REPORT_FINAL..pdf
- 35 Church Action on Poverty/Oxfam/Trussell Trust (2014) Below the headline: the relentless rise of food poverty in Britain. http://www.trusselltrust.org/resources/documents/foodbank/6323_Below_the_Breadline_web.pdf
- 36 Griffith, R, O'Connell, M and Smith, K (2013) Food expenditure and nutritional quality over the Great Recession. IFS Briefing Note BN143. <http://www.ifs.org.uk/bns/bn143.pdf>
- 37 Lambie-Mumford, H and others (2014) Household food security in the UK: a review of food aid. Final report. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/283071/household-food-security-uk-140219.pdf
- 38 Trussell Trust website <http://www.trusselltrust.org/stats#Apr2013-Mar2014>
- 39 Shelter (2006) Chance of a lifetime: The impact of bad housing on children's lives
- 40 Shelter (2013) Nowhere to go: the scandal of homeless children in bed and breakfast. http://england.shelter.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/727290/Nowhere_to_go_CHRISTMAS_2013.pdf

However, the use of bed and breakfast accommodation has gone up in response to changes to the benefit system, particularly the benefit cap.⁴¹ Private landlords can charge higher rates than housing benefit recipients can now afford.

HOMELESSNESS HOUSEHOLD COMPARISON 2009:2014⁴²



BED & BREAKFAST ACCOMODATION ^{43 44}	1 JANUARY - 31 MARCH 2009	1 JANUARY - 31 MARCH 2014
Total number in bed & breakfast accomodation	2,450	4,370
Families with children in bed and breakfast accomodation	470	1,900
Longer than 6 weeks	70	440
Young people 16 to 17 years-old	340	60
Longer than 6 weeks	120	20

It is against the law for local authorities to keep homeless families or pregnant women in bed and breakfast accommodation for longer than six weeks⁴⁵ but, in reality, more families with children have to stay for a longer period of time while attempts are being made to find them more suitable accommodation.

41 Shelter (2013) Nowhere to go: the scandal of homeless children in bed and breakfast. http://england.shelter.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/727290/Nowhere_to_go_CHRISTMAS_2013.pdf

42 DCLG (2014) Live tables on homelessness. Tables 773 and 775. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-homelessness>

43 DCLG (2013) Families in bed and breakfast accommodation for more than 6 weeks: quarterly figures for 2007 to 2012: individual local authorities. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/families-in-bed-and-breakfast-accommodation-for-more-than-6-weeks>

44 DCLG (2014) Statutory Homelessness: January to March Quarter 2014 England (Revised). <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statutory-homelessness-in-england-january-to-march-2014>

45 The Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2003. http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2003/3326/pdfs/uksi_20033326_en.pdf

Spotlight: Children's views on poverty

Amplify, the Children's Commissioner's advisory group of children and young people, surveyed 1,300 children about their views on what they need in order to fulfil their hopes and dreams.⁴⁶

- Nearly 90% said money was important because it helps children access items and opportunities that help them reach their goals
- Their top opportunities were: access to education, access to health care, and support and advice
- Having a home, someone to care for you, food and water, and a bathroom were basic items that everyone needs

In its annual Good Childhood report,⁴⁷ The Children's Society included a set of questions on the impact of recent changes to household income as a result of the global economic crisis and the introduction of austerity measures in the UK on child wellbeing. They found:

- Only 12% of children reported no impact from the economic crisis - 36% reported either a "fair amount" or "great deal" of impact
- Children who reported a stronger impact had significantly lower levels of wellbeing, as well as higher levels of exposure to the effects of reductions in income and increasing financial strain within their families
- Perceptions of material equality seemed more important to children than being better off than their friends and peers

The Children's Commission on Poverty, made up of 15 young people, was set up in October 2013 to explore children's attitudes to and experiences of childhood poverty, as well as ask what can be done to improve living standards for the most vulnerable children. In their first report, they find that, on average, parents are spending £800 on education costs, school uniforms, school meals, sports kits, trips, clubs, travel, books and internet access at home. Twenty-eight percent of the children surveyed reported being bullied because they were unable to afford some things, and more than half avoided asking their parents to pay for some school-related items or activities.⁴⁸

The Children's Commission on Poverty is supported by The Children's Society.

Recommendations

- Set out a new strategy and timetable for meeting the 2020 child poverty targets
- Ensure that fiscal policy decisions aim to reduce the number of children living in poverty
- Make families living in relative poverty eligible for the Warm Home Discount⁴⁹ - a payment of £140 for low income, vulnerable households
- Terminate the benefit cap for households with dependent children
- Identify households with dependent children living in poor housing, and prioritise them to reach the decent home standard
- Introduce rent controls for low income households
- The government should develop and implement an action plan to address food poverty
- Introduce a living wage as the minimum wage - currently £7.85 an hour outside London, and £9.15 in London
- Uprate benefits in line with inflation

46 Amplify and others (2013) What we say we need: a report on the important items, opportunities and aspirations for children and young people. London: Office of the Children's Commissioner. http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/content/publications/content_738

47 Pople, L and others (2014) The good childhood report 2014. London: The Children's Society. http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/the_good_childhood_report_2014_-_final.pdf

48 Holloway, E and others (2014) At what cost? Exposing the impact of poverty on school life. London: The Children's Society. <https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/At%20What%20Cost%20Exposing%20the%20impact%20of%20poverty%20on%20school%20life%20-%20Full%20Report.pdf>

49 Warm Home Discount webpages. <https://www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme/overview>

CRAE believes that human rights are a powerful tool in making life better for children. We're one charity working with over 100 organisational and individual members to promote children's rights, making us one of the biggest children's rights coalitions in the world. Our vision is a country that values and upholds every child's human rights.

We fight for children's rights by listening to what children say, carrying out research to understand what children are going through, and using the law to challenge those who violate children's rights. We campaign for the people in power to change things for children. And we empower children and those who care about children to push for the changes that they want to see.

CRAE has produced an annual State of Children's Rights in England report since 2003. This report is one chapter from the full report State of Children's Rights in England 2014.

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