

# It Takes a Village

The Little Village family poverty report, 2022



Supported by

**JRF** JOSEPH  
ROUNTREE  
FOUNDATION



# Introduction



**Little Village is a charity that fosters a village of support and solidarity for families on low incomes with children under five in London. We equip families with pre-loved kids' clothes and baby essentials as well as linking them with key services. We also work alongside parents to fix the system that keeps them trapped in poverty.**

For a second year, we have commissioned exclusive research from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation looking at the rates, patterns, and severity of poverty among families with babies and pre-school children in the UK. In addition, we have conducted our own focus groups, interviews, and a national survey of nearly 1400 families in the UK, as well as a quantitative survey and focus groups specifically with the families we have supported in London through our baby banks, exploring their experiences of life on a low income while raising children under five.

# Introduction

The analysis from the research undertaken by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation confirms that child poverty rates remain high for families with a child aged under five years old.

Half of all children in poverty live in a family with an under five. This stark fact demonstrates how the presence of younger children in the household exacerbates the prevalence of poverty due to the increased financial pressures families with young children face.

1.3 million of the 4.2 million children in poverty in the UK are babies and children under the age of five.

This is a situation that is getting worse. The total number of children in poverty is predicted to rise by 2023/24 to 5.2 million – an additional 1.1 million children.<sup>1</sup>

It doesn't need to be like this.

Our report considers the factors influencing the scale, prevalence and depth of poverty affecting children during their early years, and

makes recommendations for change so that young children can get the decent start in life they deserve.

## **Why is it so critical to prevent poverty in the early years of life?**

The importance of children's early years is well evidenced and the impact of poverty at this stage can be profound. What happens during the first few years of a child's life sets the parameters for the rest of their childhood. Many of the families we have supported at Little Village report having had inadequate provision of key items such as a crib, toys, bottles, or suitable clothing. As well as physical impacts, the emotional impact of poverty on their parents affects children directly and indirectly.

Families with children under the age of five face economic precarity due to the high cost of bills, housing, and childcare for young children. With the additional stressors of the COVID-19 pandemic and the rising cost of energy bills, the need for our baby bank services at Little

## Introduction

Village have never been greater. We found that the support we provided to families went beyond their immediate material needs, and enabled families to access services outside the home as well.

We know that poverty can have a devastating impact on the health, development and prospects of both adults and young children.<sup>2</sup> Poverty in a child's earliest years can mean children go to sleep hungry, wear ill-fitting clothes, develop respiratory issues as a result of damp, poor quality housing, develop mental health difficulties, or struggle to concentrate while learning.<sup>3</sup> The consequences of growing up in poverty can be lifelong. People living in the most deprived 10% of areas will die nine years younger than those in the richest 10%.<sup>4</sup>

Poverty is time consuming, as parents on low income regularly tell us of the complex calculations they make just to pay their bills or afford necessities. Children in low-income families are also affected indirectly through the stress their caregivers are placed under.<sup>5</sup>

The stress caused by poverty can take away quality time from young children and their caregivers in their most formative years.<sup>6</sup> Children whose parents experience poverty in pregnancy are nine times more likely to face additional traumatic experiences than their wealthier peers.<sup>7</sup>

Interventions to support babies and young children are proven to be extremely cost effective. Research demonstrates that for every £1 invested in the early years, it would cost £13 in later interventions to have the same impact.<sup>8</sup> The early years are an age of opportunity, and yet, despite all the evidence available, these years are too often squandered by systemic challenges that mean families are not able to offer their children what we all want – the chance to thrive.

## What the data tells us

### Housing

Housing can be seen both as one of the primary drivers and one of the key indicators of child poverty.

Children under five are much more likely to be living in rented accommodation, and families with under-fives in rented accommodation face much higher poverty rates than other families. This reliance on the rented sector, combined with comparatively lower incomes for families with young children, means families are more likely to be in poverty.

Our analysis demonstrates that housing instability compounds other forms of structural disadvantage. Households with children under five are more likely than on average to be overcrowded; one in five racial minority households with under fives are overcrowded, as are around 15% of families with an under-five that are headed by a single parent or that have a disabled child. Over eight in 10 children



## What the data tells us

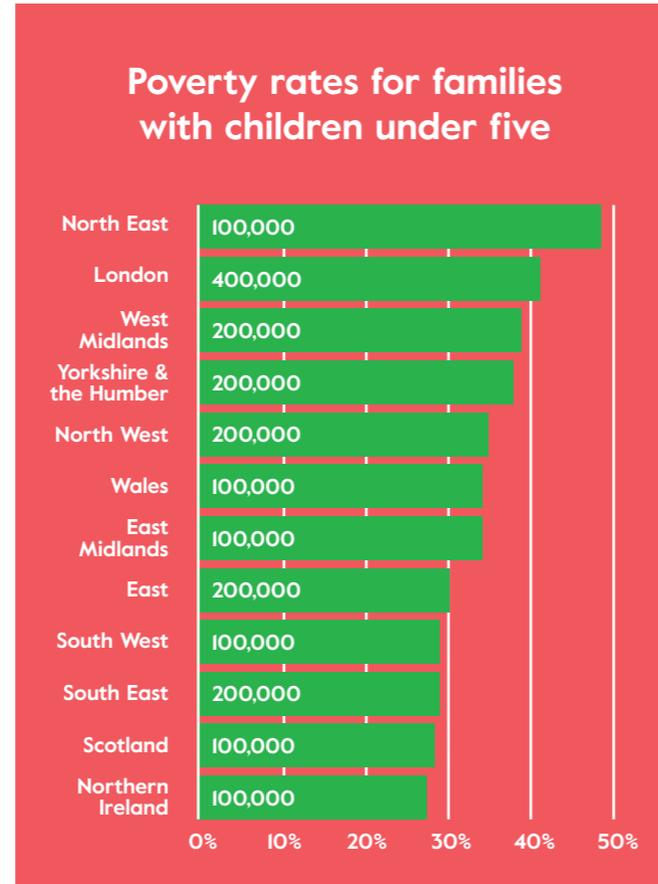
in single parent and young parent families (with at least one parent under the age of twenty five) with under-fives live in rented accommodation, as do over six in 10 children in racial minority households with under-fives.

### Location

We saw child poverty levels among families with a child under five vary heavily geographically, both in prevalence and depth.

The North East has the highest poverty rates for this group, with 47% of children in families with an under-five facing poverty. However, London has the largest number of children living in poverty, and children in London are living in deeper poverty.

Location will heavily influence how far the money a family has can go, due to the varying cost of living.



**Title:** Poverty Rates for children in families with an under five-year-old, 2017/18 to 2019/20.

**Source:** Joseph Rowntree Foundation

## What the data tells us

### Employment

The proportion of children in poverty who have one or more parent or carer in work has been increasing steadily over time. This is corroborated by 40% of Universal Credit claimants being in work, many of whom are families with children.

Three quarters of children in a family with an under five from a racial minority background who are in poverty have one or more parent in work. However, due to both childcare costs and the lack of a secondary caregiver, single parent families find it harder to be in work with an under-five.

### Family Background

Our research shows that poverty does not affect all children equally. Systemic inequalities intensify poverty. We have found that marginalised groups (those from a racial minority background or those with a disabled family member, single parent families and families with parents under the age of 25) are at greatest risk of poverty. We believe



**Title:** Average poverty depth for children in families with an under five-year-old, 2017/18 to 2019/20.<sup>9</sup>

**Source:** Joseph Rowntree Foundation

## What the data tells us

that poverty alleviation requires an intersectional lens, as these groups are at risk of not only poverty but heightened stigma, discrimination, and barriers.

People who are racially minoritised are over-represented in in-work poverty, and racial minority women are also twice as likely as white men to be on zero-hours contracts.<sup>10</sup> Many racial minority workers experience an ethnicity pay gap, with Bangladeshi and Pakistani workers on average being the lowest paid.<sup>11</sup> These disparities intensify inequality for children in these households.

After years of decline, the poverty rate for families with a disabled family member has been increasing since 2011/12.<sup>12</sup> Even by the age of three, research shows significant difference between cognitive development in children growing up in the poorest homes than those in the wealthiest.<sup>13</sup> Unpaid caring responsibilities for a disabled child can often result in an exit

from the workforce. The impact of this is often gendered, with mothers typically incurring this unpaid care labour. Consequently, only 16% of mothers of disabled children work, as opposed to 61% of all mothers.<sup>14</sup>

Groups such as lone parents, which are overwhelmingly comprised of women, report being faced with stigma in addition to the logistical challenges of caring for their children single-handedly.

Recent welfare changes, such as the benefit cap which restricts families' access to support, have also contributed to these disparities. Single parents face an added layer of disadvantage, as they will often face discrimination both in accessing housing and at work.<sup>15</sup>

Young parents are affected by financial barriers such as lower rates of Universal Credit until the age of 25 and the lower minimum wage for working young people, applicable to under 23-year-olds.

## What the data tells us

Our research finds that children in single parent families with under-fives, and children in Bangladeshi and Pakistani households with under-fives have all seen poverty rates increase over that last decade.

The research shows that:

### Racial minority families

- Children in Bangladeshi families with children under the age of five have a poverty rate of 70%
- 55% of children with an under five in their family from a black Caribbean background are living in poverty
- 51% of children with an under five in their family from a black African background were living in poverty
- Children in Bangladeshi and Pakistani households have seen poverty rates increase in the last decade

### Single parent families

- 55% of children in single parent families with a child under five are in poverty
- Over three in 10 children in single parent families and with an under five are food insecure

### Young parent families (parents under 25)

- 50% of young parent families with a child under five are in poverty

### Disabled families

- Over four in 10 families with under-fives who have a disabled parent are in poverty
- Over a third of families with an under five who have a disabled child are in poverty
- One in five families with a disabled parent or child are living in food insecurity

# Behind the data



## The experiences of families with young children

Between October 2021 and February 2022 Little Village conducted a national survey of families with children under five facing financial hardship in the UK.<sup>16</sup> Families were given room to share their own stories within the survey, and we also conducted five focus groups with 21 families to capture their experiences in more depth, in addition to individual interviews. These families reported evidence of why poverty is more prevalent in families with young children:

## Poor housing is both a cause and a symptom of poverty in the early years

The early years of childhood are often the point when a family's housing situation comes into crisis. The birth of a child can often be the catalyst for:

- Families to lose their housing as private landlords do not want young babies as

tenants. This is particularly true for single parents in shared accommodation;

- Relationships to break down, often leaving one parent in unstable accommodation;
- Housing to become overcrowded.

In our survey:

- 43% of respondents said they do not live somewhere that meets their family's needs
- 41% said they do not live somewhere that is affordable
- 52% said that they do not live somewhere that has enough space for their family
- 43% said that housing conditions had a negative impact on their child's development or health
- 52% said that housing conditions had a negative impact on their health (physical or mental) or that of their partner

*“When you move into a place you can afford, the child has to live on the bed, eat on the bed, do everything on the bed. It's not knowing how to look your child in the face and say ‘we are living like this because of the situation we are in.’ Things have to change.”*

**– Focus Group Participant**

*“I have been living for 18 months in a single bed with my son, for 18 months now, I don't have another bed in the hostel. I have to share a bathroom, kitchen and everything. It's been too long, we have bunk beds but my son does not want to sleep alone so he sleeps together with me in a single bed.”*

*Sometimes, people share beds next to us, some are drunk and fight, so it really is not good. I also now have a back problem and I am not sleeping well.”*

**– Focus Group Participant**

### Unaffordable childcare is driving parents out of work and into debt

For parents with children who are yet to start school, childcare is a prerequisite to being able to partake in work or training. The absence of affordable childcare therefore becomes a significant barrier to parents moving forward and escaping poverty. 41% of the families on low incomes we surveyed were in work. For many families with young children, work does not pay due to the high cost of childcare.

In our survey:

- 67% said that the cost of childcare stops them from being able to work or doing the job that they want to do
- 23% said that they had lost a job due to lack of suitable childcare
- 27% said that they had left a training or educational course due lack of suitable childcare

*“I feel like the main barrier [to financial security] is the cost of childcare, finding suitable childcare because when you think about like the job and you think of how much you have to pay for childcare, it's not even worth it.”*

*“Once you like take out the rent, utilities and everything a big chunk goes to childcare, you're left with barely anything so it's really hard.”*

– Focus Group Participant

*“I go to work for 15 hours, the childcare kind of cancels out the work that I've done[...] with Universal Credit, you have to have the money up front when you first sign your child up. Working at home at the time wasn't in fashion. I had to go to work and I couldn't afford to go to work[...] I felt so trapped really on Universal Credit”*

– Interviewee

*“Having a child, for example, and trying to get nanny service, It's quite pricey, right? If we want to work you have to pay for your nanny services. I think they should consider somehow, giving an opportunity to mums, single parents. Some people are highly skilled, but us mums, we tend to not be able to have a chance or have the time to have an income because you have to take care of the kids, not only the kids, but you have to do some household chores as well. It's not only the child that we're looking at we also don't take care of ourselves as well. So, it gets to this kind of a domino effect.”*

– Survey Respondent

### Essential purchases for young children make difficult decisions about which costs to prioritise even harder

Families with young children face significant pressures on limited budgets. Difficult decisions about “heating or eating” are made even harder when essential purchases such as nappies and formula milk are factored in. Larger purchases, such as Moses baskets to provide a safe place to sleep or buggies to enable travel out of the home, can plunge a family into debt. These are not items that families can safely forego without putting young children at risk of harm.

*“In order to go back to work you need to be able to pay for childcare, however for an average or low income this is impossible as any disposable income pays for this. It's an impossible situation as people who work pay for childcare and can't afford to live, people who don't work can't afford to live. It's a*

– Focus Group Participant

## Behind the data

These difficulties are compounded for families who are penalised by the two-child limit policy which restricts their access to benefits support for any subsequent children. Many larger families are also hit by the benefit cap which restricts their overall access to benefits. Families with no recourse to public funds and younger parents who receive a lower level of benefits are also hit hard. These policies leave many families on incomes that are inadequate to meet their needs.

In our survey:

- 49% of families told us they would not otherwise have been able to buy core items provided by Little Village.
- 38% said they would have had to cut back in other areas if they had had to purchase the items provided.
- 44% said they were able to purchase other items their family needed because baby kit had been provided by Little Village.

*“We are considering going onto a pre-payment meter and not using heating and just wearing clothes in layers instead so we can save some money that way... I am also having to cut the toe part of my son's onesies so he can use them for a little longer as he is outgrowing his clothes fast and I can't afford clothes every month for him”*

**– Survey Respondent**

*“I have cut everything where possible and we still have nothing left.”*

**– Survey Respondent**

*“They increased our energy bill, but they cut our universal credit.”*

**– Focus Group Participant**

*“We haven't had an outing since the [Universal Credit] cut, it's a choice between food and everything else. I do feel like a bad parent when he's bored but apart from free activities like the park there's nothing I can*

## Behind the data

*do. I currently don't own a decent pair of shoes as my son is growing and always needs new things. I take him to nursery late and pick him up early so I can avoid being seen in my ridiculous wellies. I'm a regular at the local food bank”*

**– Survey Respondent**

*“I've had to cut out everything not essential. Direct debits for bills have been cancelled, what I can afford to pay gets paid. I've skipped meals to make sure there's enough food available for my kids which isn't exactly healthy when I'm also 29 weeks pregnant. But I can't afford to do the same food shopping as I used to, so they get prioritised.”*

**– Survey Respondent**

*“Benefits and wages aren't nearly enough to live on. People have to go without sanitary pads etc because they put their kids first.”*

**– Survey Respondent**

*“Things went downhill when my son's dad was made redundant, which affected our relationship and we separated... Sometimes I had to think, ‘what bill can I forego this month to make ends meet?... When you're in debt, you start acquiring more debt. Getting credit cards to make ends meet, closing accounts. It just kept piling and piling... It was challenging on Universal Credit’*

**– Interviewee**

*“Often we have to choose between having food or gas, so I have to pre plan having baths rather than having them daily as we'd like”*

**– Survey Respondent**

*“How do they expect us to survive on the minimum that they give us? Child benefit, it goes down and down and if you get child tax credit it goes down if you have more than two children... You've got to suffer financially because you had another child. It*

## Behind the data

*doesn't make sense. It's not impacting us, it's impacting the children. It's not punishing us, it's punishing the children."*

**– Focus Group Participant**

### **Efforts to progress are undermined by an inadequate benefits system and spiralling cost of living**

Policy decisions about benefits have a significant impact both on parents' abilities to meet short term needs, and to make long term change in their situations. Parents we spoke to reported feeling penalised for trying to change their circumstances, particularly following the Universal Credit cut.

*"It's been difficult. I have a two-year-old, I work two jobs and attend university to better myself and my outcomes for my child. This benefit cut means I'm now forced to choose between finishing uni and getting off benefits for a brighter future or attending work and quitting uni so that I can afford bills to*

*survive the here and now. I feel trapped and can't do better for my family because the system prevents this. These cuts mean I have to sacrifice our future just to survive the week and pay bills"*

**– Survey Respondent**

*"I'm on universal credit, I've got three kids and I was on income support. Now that I'm going to university, they told me I've got to change to Universal Credit.... It doesn't cover my rent. So I have to pay full rent out of my university money, which comes every three, four months... They don't support you to go back into education and into work."*

**– Survey Respondent**

### **Stigma and stereotyping create unnecessary obstacles for families with young children**

At Little Village, we see various pathways to parents being pulled into poverty, ranging from redundancy, relationship breakdown, benefits sanctions, domestic abuse, refugee status

## Behind the data

*and you're this age'.. they expect you to fail and the government expects you to fail because you're a social statistic... When you're a certain age and you're a woman of colour, they look down at you and say 'she's just a statistic, her child is going to be a statistic as well. Especially when you have a son, they think automatically he's going to be in a gang. So that's just the government for you... They don't want you to succeed, especially if you're not a white English upper class person."*

**– Focus Group Participant**

*"The media has big role to play in it... what they don't realise that lots of people have had a change of circumstances, which of course is not their fault... When you're on benefits, there are so many conditions that come with it. I feel like it's unfair. Nobody wants to be at the mercy of another person for food or money."*

**– Focus Group Participant**

and more. It isn't uncommon for us to see a combination of factors which leave families in poverty. Sadly, despite a lot of work by anti-poverty organisations, such as the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and Save the Children,<sup>17</sup> parental blame is so far still widespread in the public conversation on child poverty. This stigma can stop parents accessing support, further exacerbating their situation. This is what families have shared with us:

*"As women, as mothers, we are made to feel that we should be able to cope with whatever resources are in front of us. And if the resources are not there or not available, we've failed as mothers...The stigma needs to stop because it stops people from reaching out for help."*

**– Focus Group Participant**

*"I'm a young mum, from my first baby people were judging me like 'Oh she can't do this and that, but it's hard. Because people are looking down at you, 'you've got three kids,*

### Early years services are essential to child development and parental mental health, but access is challenging and services are being cut

For families on a low income, stimulus and support outside the home can be critical in levelling up the disparities that can arise very early in a child's life. However, this requires access to free services in easy reach of families' homes, and the means to get to them. Access to play spaces, local activities and support is often a 'postcode lottery'.<sup>18</sup>

In our survey:

- 42% said that the availability of free, local activities and support for children has had a negative impact on their child's development or health
- 38% said that the availability of free, local activities and support for parents/caregivers has had a negative impact on their health (physical or mental) or that of their partner

- 28% of families said their child was now able to access nursery or a children's centre because of the items provided by Little Village (eg buggy or coats and shoes)

*"Since the buggy broke, I've stopped going out without my partner. We're basically housebound."*

**– Focus Group Participant**

*"My son hasn't gone to nursery all term because we can't use the buggy."*

**– Focus Group Participant**

*"I feel like they're cutting everything down, and it's really impacting on the families. In my local area, they've closed down a number of children's centres, and I remember when I had my son, the children's centres were a lifeline for me, when it came to my mental health because I was a new mum, my partner was not around, I didn't have any family. So them closing the children's centres now and*

*stopping those essential services for new parents, I really feel for the new mum."*

**– Focus Group Participant**

*"I'll be honest with you. When I had my first child, I didn't get help. I did not know those baby feeding clinics. I did not know there was birthing classes out there. I didn't know that these things were available. I had to suffer because of that. I asked the midwife, as my husband has got a genetic disorder. Can you please do a genetic test on my child? They didn't want to do it because they're underfunded. It frustrates me. Because if they did that to me, how many other parents did they do that to?"*

**– Focus Group Participant**

Our quantitative survey of families who have used our baby banks, also gave us insight into families' emotional state and circumstances prior to receiving support from Little Village. On a practical level, almost two thirds said they did

not have an appropriate place for their child to sleep. Over half (52%) said they had inadequate supplies of clothing for their children, with more (56%) saying they did not have suitable shoes and coats to allow children to go outdoors.

These practical needs were reflected in the emotional state of parents in our survey. Almost half reported that they were worried that social services (or other agency) would not feel they were able to look after their child. 42% were scared about their and their baby's future, and over half (52%) were feeling hopeless. 56% reported feeling in a 'bad place' with their mental health.

# What needs to change?



Early intervention measures to offset current barriers to financial security for families with children under five are urgently needed, as the negative impact of growing up in poverty means that current systemic challenges in place have long lasting implications. We know that with the right support, poverty does not have to be a permanent experience, but it is imperative that we change the conversation on child poverty and shift perceptions of families experiencing financial hardship.

The themes arising from both the stories families have shared with us and the analysis undertaken by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation reveal the necessity of pragmatic policy solutions.

Our primary recommendations are:

- Invest in **affordable quality childcare** for all children, and particularly children from low income households.
- Re-invest in local authority **early years support services**, to help close the gap by the time children start school.

# What needs to change?

- Make **Universal Credit** work for families and remove the two-child benefits limit to lift a significant number of children out of poverty.

## Affordable quality childcare

Childcare is public infrastructure that requires investment just like other forms of infrastructure, such as transport. Investing in childcare increases the earning capacity of parents who may otherwise have been trapped in poverty and excluded from the workforce. Childcare policy varies in the devolved nations, and thus our recommendations are focused on England where Little Village is based. The cost of childcare can be restrictive for high and middle income families, let alone low-income families for whom it can mean work no longer pays.

Recent research for Kindred Squared amongst teachers found that only 50% of their students arrived at school to start Reception this year being 'school ready'.<sup>19</sup> While no doubt

compounded by the effects of Covid, teachers and headteachers also identified the lack of availability of groups, Sure Start facilities and access to nurseries and childcare as well as pressures on working parents as key factors.

Free, universal childcare provided by qualified and well-paid staff would have a significant impact on children's development, child poverty and the motherhood penalty.

We are calling on the government to:

- Invest in free universal childcare for all children, starting with children from low income households.
- Increase the Universal Credit cap on childcare costs reimbursement, which is currently £646 for one child and £1108 for two or more children.
- Provide Universal Credit financial support for childcare costs in advance, instead of arrears.

## What needs to change?

### Early years support services

Most services that families rely on, whether health, education or housing, are provided locally. Accessible, streamlined support and early interventions would help address the factors that can push families with young children into poverty. However, cuts to early intervention support have increased spending on crisis support. Building back better for families means local government services need to be responsive to the needs of communities.

We urge local governments, with support of the UK government to:

- Re-invest in children's centres, particularly in areas with the highest rates of child poverty.
- Fund perinatal mental health and support services for new parents, particularly from under-represented groups.
- Adequately resource the Special Educational Needs and Disability services, particularly in the early years.

### Universal Credit and social security

Our current social security system is failing families with young children. From punitive sanctions to entitlement calculations that disadvantage the most deprived families, unfairness is built into the system as it currently stands. We know that measures such as lifting the two-child benefit limit would be an effective method to lift a significant number of children out of poverty, as a higher proportion of large families (with three or more children) are trapped in poverty (47%).

We urge the UK government to:

- Abolish the two-child limit.
- Write off benefits-related debt after two years.
- Increase the child element of Universal Credit.
- Pay under 25s the same standard rate as other adults on Universal Credit.

## Conclusion



**Our country faces challenging times ahead. Rising inflation, energy prices and food costs combined with a wholly inadequate social security safety net leaves the prospect of ever-increasing child poverty, with all the long-term consequences and costs that entails.**

Without a step change in attitudes and support for families with young children, we will not achieve the political or societal changes required to reverse this trend.

Little Village will continue to work with families to support them when they need it most, with the clothes, kit, books and toys that our donors lovingly pass on. But we will also redouble our efforts to highlight why families have been pulled into poverty in the first place, and why they get trapped there.

All children deserve a decent start in life. Join us in helping to make this possible.

# Appendix

Core data referenced in the document from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

**Title:** Tenure composition of children in poverty in a family with an under five by characteristic (2017-20)

JRF analysis of Households Below Average

**Source:** Income

	Owned (outright or with a mortgage)	Private rented sector	Social rented sector
Family with an under five	21%	39%	40%
Lone parent	5%	31%	64%
Young parent	5%	41%	54%
BME	20%	43%	37%
Disabled person in the family	16%	34%	50%
All children in poverty (inc those without under five)	25%	35%	40%

**Title:** Child poverty rates by tenure (2017-20)

**Source:** JRF analysis of Households Below Average Income

	Owns with mortgage	Owns outright	Social rented sector	Private rented sector
All children	12%	18%	47%	54%
Children in a family with an under five	14%	19%	48%	61%

# Appendix

**Title:** Proportion of households with an under five that are over-occupied by characteristic

**Source:** JRF analysis of Households Below Average Income

**Note:** Our definition of overcrowding uses the bedroom standard, which is based on the number, age and gender of people who sleep in one room. Our analysis of overcrowding rates uses code developed by the Social Metrics Commission.

	Proportion of household that are over-occupied
Households with an under five	9%
Lone parent	14%
BME	20%
Disabled child	15%

**Title:** Regional child poverty rates and number of children in poverty for children in a family with an under five (2017-20)

**Source:** JRF analysis of Households Below Average Income Data from

Region	Child poverty rate	Number of children
North East	47%	100,000
London	41%	400,000
West Midlands	39%	200,000
Yorkshire and the Humber	38%	200,000
North West	35%	200,000
Wales	34%	100,000
East Midlands	34%	100,000
East	30%	200,000
South West	29%	100,000
South East	29%	200,000
Scotland	28%	100,000
Northern Ireland	27%	100,000

## Appendix

**Title:** Proportion of children in a family with an under five in poverty that have an adult in work (2017-20)

**Source:** JRF analysis of Households Below Average Income

Group	In poverty
Young parent	46%
Disabled person in the family	59%
BME	75%
Lone parent	26%
Under five in family	69%

**Title:** Proportion of children in a family with an under five in poverty that have an adult in work (2017-20)

**Source:** JRF analysis of Households Below Average Income

	Child poverty rate
Children in a family with an under five	35%
Single Parent	56%
BAME	47%
Young	50%
Disabled person in the family	43%
Disabled parent	46%
Disabled child	39%

## Appendix

**Title:** Child poverty rate for children in families with an under five by ethnicity (2017-20)

**Source:** JRF analysis of Households Below Average Income

**Note:** The sample size is too small to produce a reliable value for the Chinese and Mixed and multiple ethnic groups for children in a family with an under five. The black Caribbean and black African groups are sub-groups of the black group. The black group also includes people with other black identities.

Ethnic Group	Poverty rate
White	30%
Black	52%
Black Caribbean	55%
Black African	51%
Indian	27%
Pakistani	55%
Bangladeshi	70%
Chinese	-
Other Ethnic Group	58%
Any other Asian Background	54%
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups	-

**Title:** The proportion of people in food insecurity by characteristic (2019/20)

**Source:** JRF analysis of Households Below Average Income

**Note:** Food insecurity includes people with very low or low food security.

Group	Poverty rate	
	All people	30%
	All children	52%
Children in families with an under five	All children in families with an under five	27%
	Lone parent	55%
	Young parent	70%
	Disabled person in the family	-
	Disabled parent	58%
	Disabled child	54%
	BME	-

## Appendix

**Title:** Following support from Little Village we see a significant shift in positive feelings.

**Source:** Little Village Survey of families who had received support from the baby bank.

**Note:** Respondents could choose multiple options.

Emotions prior to support from Little Village	
Anxious about how I was going to support my child	38%
Worried about my child's future	42%
Scared for myself and my child	42%
Hopeless	52%
In a bad place with my mental health	56%
Feeling like I was a bad mum	48%
Worried that social services or another agency would feel that I wasn't looking after my child well	48%

Emotions following support from Little Village	
My worry has been reduced	59%
Allowed me to feel proud seeing my child in new clothes or using new kit and toys	53%
Gave me 'head space' to think about other things	45%
Helped me feel more confident as a parent	46%
Helped me feel more able to cope with change in the future	30%

## Footnotes

1. A Corlett, *The Living Standards Outlook 2019*, Resolution Foundation, 2019, <https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/app/uploads/2019/02/Living-Standards-Outlook-2019.pdf>
2. HM Government (2014). An evidence review of the drivers of child poverty for families in poverty now and for poor children growing up to be poor adults. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/285389/Cm\\_8781\\_Child\\_Poverty\\_Evidence\\_Review\\_Print.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/285389/Cm_8781_Child_Poverty_Evidence_Review_Print.pdf)
3. National Education Union (2021). *Child poverty — the facts*. NEU. <https://neu.org.uk/child-poverty-facts>
4. Child Poverty Action group (2017). *The Effects of Poverty*. Child Poverty Action Group. <https://cpag.org.uk/child-poverty/effects-poverty>
5. UCL (2020). Children in poverty at greater risk of childhood traumas. *UCL News*. <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/news/2020/jul/children-poverty-greater-risk-childhood-traumas>
6. [www.psycnet.apa.org](https://psycnet.apa.org). (n.d.). APA PsycNet. <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2002-10732-001>
7. UCL (2020). Children in poverty at greater risk of childhood traumas. *UCL News*. <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/news/2020/jul/children-poverty-greater-risk-childhood-traumas>
8. <https://parentinfantfoundation.org.uk/>. (n.d.). The Economic Case — Parent-Infant Foundation. <https://parentinfantfoundation.org.uk/why-we-do-it/the-economic-case/>
9. A lower value means that average incomes are further below the poverty line indicating that the region has a higher proportion of children in deeper poverty.
10. Prane (2022). TUC: BME women twice as likely to be on zero-hours contracts as white men. <https://www.tuc.org.uk/news/tuc-bme-women-twice-likely-be-zero-hours-contracts-white-men>
11. [www.ons.gov.uk](https://www.ons.gov.uk). (n.d.). Ethnicity pay gap reference tables — Office for National Statistics. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/datasets/ethnicitypaygapreferencetables>
12. National Education Union (2021). *Child poverty — the facts*. NEU. <https://neu.org.uk/child-poverty-facts>
13. [www.ucl.ac.uk](https://www.ucl.ac.uk). (2012). CLS | Millennium Cohort Study. <https://cls.ucl.ac.uk/cls-studies/millennium-cohort-study/>
14. *Forgotten Families*. (n.d.). [https://contact.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/forgotten\\_isolation\\_report.pdf](https://contact.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/forgotten_isolation_report.pdf)

## Footnotes

15. *Single Parent Rights*. (n.d.). Single Parent Discrimination Research & Lobbying. <https://www.singleparentrights.org/research>
16. Between October 2021 and February 2022, we conducted a national survey of 1,384 families living on low incomes. Families were recruited through our partners and social media audiences and self-defined as “living on a low income”. The survey was conducted online and supported through focus groups and one-to-one interviews.
17. *Battling the blame game: exploring new narratives on child poverty*. (2022). <https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/content/dam/gb/reports/campaigning-materials/battling-the-blame-game-exploring-new-narratives-on-child-poverty.pdf>
18. *Nursery World*. (n.d.). Access to play spaces ‘unfair’ and ‘unequal’, finds new research. <https://www.nurseryworld.co.uk/news/article/access-to-play-spaces-unfair-and-unequal-finds-new-research>
19. *School readiness: qualitative and quantitative research with teaching professionals*. (2022). <https://www.kindredssquared.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/YouGov-Kindred-Squared-School-Readiness-Report-2022.pdf>

## Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the families who generously contributed their experiences to this study. Their openness and willingness to share their stories provide compelling evidence on the situation of families in the UK today.

We'd also like to thank the team at the Joseph Rowntree Foundation for their analysis, advice and guidance, in particular Grace Heatherington, Carla Cebula, and Joseph Elliott.

**Author:** Sophia Moreau

**Editors:** Sophie Livingstone and Rebecca Wilson

