

# Child poverty in Scotland: The Facts

## More than 1 in 5 children in Scotland are growing up in poverty

**170 000** (17%) children in Scotland live in poverty in Scotland (before housing costs) and **220 000** (or more than 1 in 5) children living in poverty (after housing costs). **130 000** (13%) children in Scotland live in low income and material deprivation.

At least **50 000** more children will be living in poverty by 2020.

**Children are more at risk** of living in poverty than other age groups. The highest levels of poverty in Scotland can be found in families with young children.

**Almost every local authority** in Scotland contains wards where more than 1 in 5 children live in poverty. Nearly half of Scottish local authorities now have wards where over **30%** of children live in poverty.

Poverty is defined as a family of 4 living on less than **£17 200** per year or **£330** per week or a single parent with 2 children getting by on less than **£13 500** or **£258** per week.

## 90 000 of these children are growing up in severe poverty

**9% or 1 in 9** children in Scotland is living in severe poverty. This figure has remained stubbornly static in the last few years.

**15** local authority areas in Scotland have a rate of severe child poverty above the Scottish average.

We define severe poverty as a family of 4 living on less than **£14 300** a year or **£275** per week or a single parent with 2 children living on less than **£11 250** a year or **£216** per week.

## Child poverty costs the public purse in Scotland

Between **£0.5 & 0.75 billion per annum**. Underachievement in schools costs public services another **£1 billion a year**.

## Children growing up in poverty in Scotland are:

- **Missing out on the things that many other children take for granted**
  - According to a recent survey by Save the Children 61% of parents living in poverty said they had cut back on food; 14% of children living in poverty said they lacked a warm winter coat and 19% of children living in poverty said they were missing out on going on school trips.
- **More than twice as likely as their better off peers to suffer developmental difficulties as they reach school age**, facing challenges with early language and communication, physical health and social skills.
- **Less likely to reach their potential at school**
  - By three years old, children from deprived backgrounds are already **9 months behind** the average development and 'school readiness'.
  - By six years of age, initially low-achieving children from more advantaged homes will tend to outperform initially high-achieving children from less advantaged homes.
  - By P7, the gap in reading attainment levels between pupils living in poverty and their peers is 22%, and the attainment gap in maths is 15%.
  - By S2 only half as many pupils from deprived backgrounds are reaching expected levels of reading as their classmates and a mere 17% of disadvantaged pupils are reaching the expected level in maths, half of the average.
- **More likely to experience lower health outcomes**
  - Children living in low-income households are nearly 3 times more likely to suffer mental health problems than their more affluent peers.
  - Three year olds in households with incomes below about £10 000 are 2.5 times more likely to suffer chronic illness than children in households with incomes above £52 000.
  - Ill health during childhood has long term consequences. A child born in Lenzie North, a more affluent area of Glasgow can expect to live 28 years longer than a child born in Calton, a more deprived Calton area of the same city.
- **Less likely to reach their potential in adult life**
  - In 2010/11, 1 in 5 school leavers from deprived areas of Scotland went straight into unemployment upon leaving school - compared to an average of only 1 in 10.
  - In deprived areas of Scotland 11% of pupils leave school without any qualifications as against 3% for the rest of Scotland and 8% of pupils had no exam entries as against 4% for the rest of Scotland.

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