Media release
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New London data reveals true extent of child poverty challenge

* **London child poverty rate reaches 39% - the highest of any UK region -even before the pandemic**
* **In 9 London constituencies more than half of children are living in poverty after housing costs are factored in.**
* **London local authority and constituency data available below**

London’s child poverty rate rose to 39% in 2018-2019 - up from 37% the year before - according to research published today by the End Child Poverty coalition. The increase shows the scale of the challenge faced by government if it is to realise its ambition to build back better after the pandemic.

The research by Loughborough University shows that, even before the pandemic, London boroughs dominated the list of UK local authorities where child poverty is highest, with 14 of the 20 child poverty hotspot boroughs in the capital. In nine London parliamentary constituencies more than half of children are living below the poverty line once housing costs are taken into account (tables below).

While London is not in the top 20 areas for the fastest growth in child poverty between 2014-15 –2018-19 after housing costs are factored in, the new data shows the huge impact of high housing costs on child poverty rates in the capital (table below). Whereas for the UK as a whole the child poverty rate is 10 percentage points higher once housing costs are factored in, in London including housing costs increases child poverty to a greater degree. For example, ignoring housing costs, the child poverty rate in Bethnal Green and Bow constituency is 30%. But if housing costs are factored in, as they should be, the rate is 61%. In Hackney South and Shoreditch, ignoring housing costs, the rate is 24%. That rises to 52% when housing costs are taken into account.

**The 20 local authorities with highest child poverty rates, 2018/19**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Local authority** | **% of children below 60% median income after housing costs, 2018/19** |
| **UK** | **30%** |
| Tower Hamlets | 55.4% |
| Newham | 50.3% |
| Barking and Dagenham | 49.9% |
| Hackney | 48.0% |
| Waltham Forest | 47.4% |
| Southwark | 44.3% |
| Islington | 43.4% |
| Greenwich | 43.2% |
| Lambeth | 43.0% |
| Haringey | 42.4% |
| Lewisham | 42.0% |
| Birmingham | 41.6% |
| Redbridge | 41.3% |
| Middlesbrough | 41.1% |
| Brent | 40.8% |
| Hounslow | 40.8% |
| Manchester | 40.6% |
| Sandwell | 40.4% |
| Oldham | 39.9% |
| Luton | 39.8% |

**The 20 parliamentary constituencies with highest child poverty rates, 2018/19**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Constituency** | **% of children below 60% median income after housing costs, 2018/19** |
| **UK** | **30%** |
| Bethnal Green and Bow  | 60.6% |
| Birmingham Ladywood  | 54.5% |
| Birmingham Hodge Hill  | 53.8% |
| West Ham  | 52.5% |
| Birmingham Hall Green  | 52.5% |
| Poplar and Limehouse  | 52.4% |
| Hackney South and Shoreditch  | 52.0% |
| East Ham  | 51.3% |
| Walthamstow | 50.8% |
| Barking | 50.8% |
| Bermondsey and Old Southwark  | 50.3% |
| Tottenham  | 50.2% |
| Vauxhall  | 49.7% |
| Mitcham and Morden | 48.5% |
| Birmingham Perry Barr  | 48.4% |
| Warley | 48.0% |
| Oldham West and Royton  | 48.0% |
| Holborn and St Pancras  | 47.9% |
| Bradford West  | 47.8% |
| Manchester Gorton  | 47.6% |

The impact of poverty on children is well documented with children from low income families more likely to experience worse physical and mental health; do less well in school; and have fewer opportunities in the future. The coalition is calling on the Government to recognise the scale of the problem and its impact on children’s lives. They are urging the Government to set out an ambitious plan to tackle child poverty encompassing not only social security spending but the high cost of housing and childcare and investment in children’s services.

The report is based on data published by the Department for Work and Pensions in March 2020, and on estimates of the effect of housing costs on poverty rates produced by the Centre for Research in Social Policy at Loughborough University, based on survey evidence.

Earlier this year, Boris Johnson was rebuked by the statistics watchdog for his repeated misuse of child poverty statistics. The Statistics Authority upheld a complaint from the End Child Poverty coalition judging that on three separate occasions his statements on child poverty were ‘incorrect’.

Anna Feuchtwang, Chair of End Child Poverty which commissioned the research, said:

*“The Government can be in no doubt about the challenge it faces if it is serious about ‘levelling up’ disadvantaged parts of the country. This new data reveals the true extent of the hardship experienced by families on low incomes – the overwhelming majority of which were working households before the pandemic. The children affected are on a cliff edge, and the pandemic will only sweep them further into danger.*

*The Prime Minister must urgently admit to the true extent of child poverty in our country rather than resorting to his own inaccurate statistics. An ambitious plan to put this shameful situation right would be transformational for millions of children. As a matter of urgency we are calling on the Chancellor not to go ahead with planned cuts to Universal Credit which would see families lose out on £1000 a year. Given today’s data, this cut is unconscionable.’*

Chief Executive of Child Poverty Action Group Alison Garnham said:

*“Londoners want every child to be able to reach their full potential but this new data shows that our capital has the highest concentration of children in poverty in the UK, and rising - which in practice means hundreds of thousands of children were falling behind, even before the pandemic. That should be a wake-up call for Government as we enter a coronavirus recession. Cutting universal credit would only mean more of London’s children falling into poverty. It would make no sense at all in the context of a building back better agenda – it should not happen.”*

*End Child Poverty is calling for an urgent Government plan to end child poverty including*

* *Uprating of housing assistance in line with inflation;*
* *Retain the £20 uplift in Universal Credit introduced at the start of the pandemic, which the Government has indicated will end in April 2021;*
* *End the benefit cap and the two-child limit on benefits;*
* *Invest in all children with an increase to child benefit;*
* *Extend Free School Meals to all families in receipt of Universal Credit and those with No Recourse to Public Funds*

***The full report ‘Local indicators of child poverty after housing costs, 2018/19’, as well as tables with local data, are available at:*** [***www.endchildpoverty.org.uk***](http://www.endchildpoverty.org.uk)

**The 20 constituencies with the highest AHC compared to BHC poverty rates, 2018/19**

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| --- | --- |
| **Constituency** | **% of children below 60% median income AHC** |
| AHC | BHC | %age point difference |
| **UK** | **30%** | **20%** | **10%** |
| Bethnal Green and Bow  | 60.6% | 30.1% | 30.5% |
| Hackney South and Shoreditch  | 52.0% | 23.9% | 28.1% |
| Bermondsey and Old Southwark  | 50.3% | 22.3% | 28.0% |
| Holborn and St Pancras  | 47.9% | 19.9% | 28.0% |
| Vauxhall  | 49.7% | 22.2% | 27.5% |
| Poplar and Limehouse  | 52.4% | 25.1% | 27.3% |
| Islington South and Finsbury | 46.2% | 19.4% | 26.8% |
| West Ham  | 52.5% | 25.9% | 26.6% |
| Walthamstow | 50.8% | 24.5% | 26.3% |
| Tottenham  | 50.2% | 24.0% | 26.2% |
| East Ham  | 51.3% | 25.5% | 25.8% |
| Camberwell and Peckham  | 46.1% | 21.1% | 25.0% |
| Hackney North and Stoke Newington  | 44.6% | 19.6% | 25.0% |
| Greenwich and Woolwich  | 45.9% | 21.0% | 24.9% |
| Mitcham and Morden | 48.5% | 23.8% | 24.7% |
| Leyton and Wanstead  | 46.0% | 21.3% | 24.7% |
| Lewisham West and Penge  | 45.9% | 21.5% | 24.4% |

**ENDS**

**Notes to editors**

For further information on London data, please contact Child Poverty Action Group’s media office: 07816 909302

The research was carried out by Dr Juliet Stone and Professor Donald Hirsch at the Centre for Research in Social Policy, at Loughborough University using Before Housing Cost data produced by the Department for Work and Pensions in March 2020, together with housing cost data from the Valuation Office Agency and income data from the Understanding Society survey. The report and data is available at [www.endchildpoverty.org.uk](http://www.endchildpoverty.org.uk)

1. Note that the total number of children in poverty shown in the data tables only includes those aged under 16 and is therefore lower than in the main poverty statistics, which also includes 16-19 year olds in full-time secondary education.
2. For more information about End Child Poverty’s complaint to the Office for Statistical Regulation and their judgement visit [www.endchildpoverty.org.uk/pms-use-of-child-poverty-statistics-misleading/](http://www.endchildpoverty.org.uk/pms-use-of-child-poverty-statistics-misleading/)

**About End Child Poverty**

End Child Poverty is a coalition of organisations from civic society including children’s charities, child welfare organisations, social justice groups, faith groups, trade unions and others, united in our vision of a UK free of child poverty. For more details visit: [**www.endchildpoverty.org.uk**](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.endchildpoverty.org.uk%2F&data=02%7C01%7Crnewson%40ncb.org.uk%7Ca868bf4030b64fad74fe08d833bf8720%7Cadc87355e29c4519954f95e35c776178%7C0%7C0%7C637316244992028784&sdata=VZ147meKF9s%2BnshrN2xOjlL3Ml20%2F3iF%2BwMFVTR06vg%3D&reserved=0)