

Child poverty

Also see data-packs on 'Deprivation', 'Low income' and 'Financial inclusion')

Headlines

Poverty impacts upon the lives of more than 35,000 children and young people in Leeds, reducing their life chances and the potential of Leeds as a great city.

Child poverty is defined as the proportion of children living in families in receipt of Child Tax Credit whose reported income (including benefits) is less than 60 per cent of the median income, or families in receipt of Income Support or Income-Based Jobseekers Allowance. Low income families are defined as those receiving Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit or where the family is out of work (whether the total income is above or below 60% median threshold).

Why is this important?

Poverty impacts on a range of other outcomes for children and young people, with levels of infant mortality and child health being worse in areas of the city where levels of poverty are higher. Levels of educational attainment also tend to be lower in more deprived areas and the proportion of young people not in employment, education or training (NEET) is higher. Tackling child poverty is vital to improve the lives of children and to improve their life chances by enabling all children to fulfil their potential.

The causes of child poverty are complex and require concerted partnership effort to tackle them. Child poverty must be everybody's business.

Story for Leeds

Minimising the effects of poverty is a cross cutting theme for the Vision for Leeds 2011-2030 and work to improve the life chances of children and families will take place across all five city priority plans in Leeds.

The Child Poverty Needs Assessment undertaken in early 2011 sets out the issues faced by children and families living in poverty.

The most recent data (from August 2009) indicates that in Leeds there are around 31,000 children under 16 living in poverty (23.4%, compared to 21.9% for England). There are over 35,000 dependent children and young people under the age of 20 in Leeds living in poverty (22.7%, compared to 21.3% for England).

Of the 35,145 dependent children aged under 20 who are living in poverty in the city:

- 24,390 are living in lone parent families, and
- 7,330 are living in families with 4 or more children.

In Leeds the number of children aged under 16 living in poverty increased by 1,440 from 2008 to 2009, while the total number of children living in poverty increased by 1,850.

Where is this causing the greatest concern?

Geographical analysis of child poverty at the Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) level shows huge variations in the proportions of children living in poverty in different parts of the city. In 2009, 22.7% of all dependent children under the age of 20 in Leeds were living in poverty, however at the LSOA level there were:

- 9 LSOAs where no children were deemed to be living in poverty (there were 19 LSOAs in this category in 2008)
- 80 LSOAs with rates of 5% or less (there were 105 LSOAs in this category in 2008)
- 47 LSOAs where 45.4% or more of children are living in poverty (double the city average).

In the most deprived LSOAs in Leeds (the 92 LSOAs ranked in the most deprived 10% nationally on the 2010 Index of Multiple Deprivation) there are 17,340 dependant

children living in poverty, a rate of approximately 44%. None of these 92 LSOAs are lower than the city rate with the lowest being 28.6%.

Figure 1 below shows how child poverty is concentrated in the LSOAs in the inner city areas.

Analysis of the Council's benefits data (households in receipt of Housing and / or Council Tax Benefit) shows a similar pattern with the numbers of children living in households in receipt of these benefits being heavily concentrated in the Inner East (41.8%), Inner South (33.0%) and Inner West (29.5%) compared to a city average of 22.8%.

Figure 1 – Child Poverty 2009

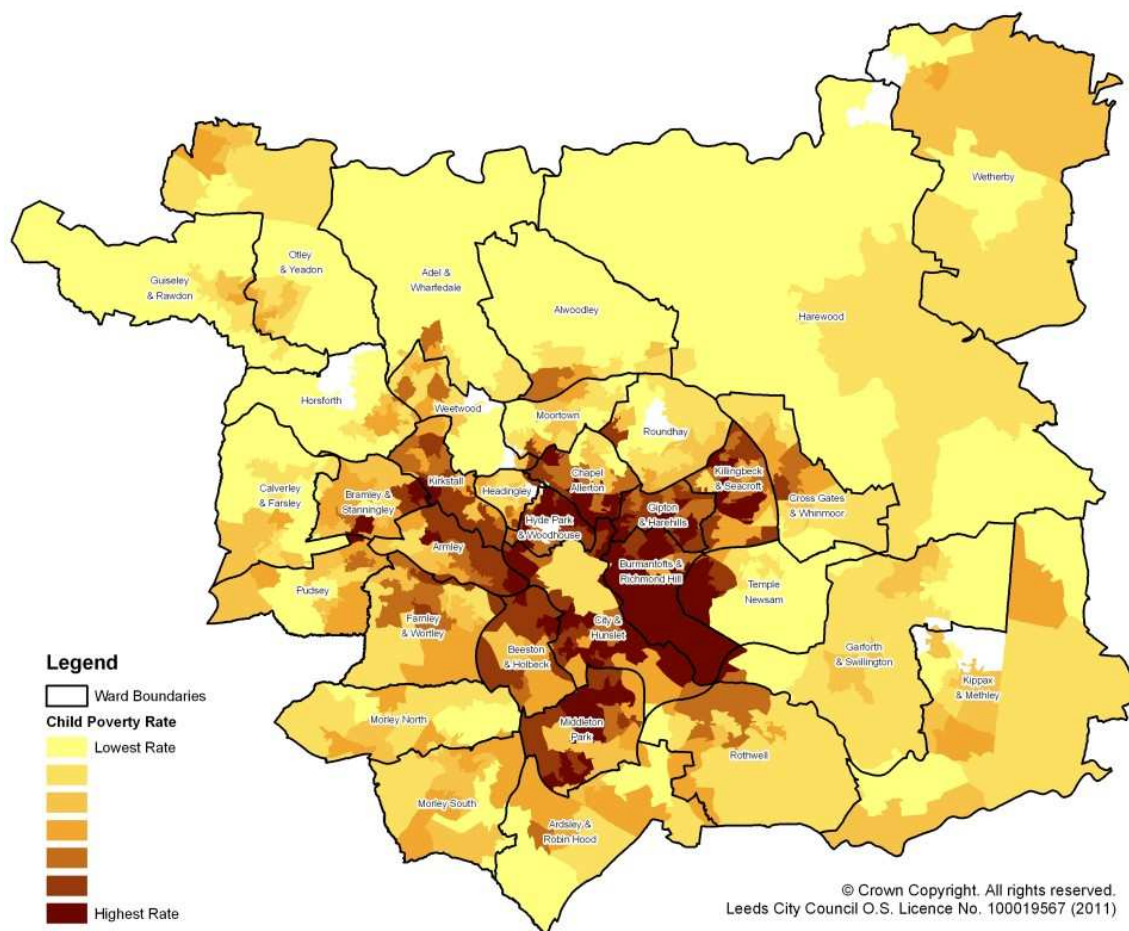


Figure 2 – Children in Leeds living in poverty by family type and age

	All dependent children in Leeds living in poverty			
	2006	2007	2008	2009
All dependent children	31,770	33,700	33,295	35,145
Family Type				
Couples	9,450	10,820	9,905	10,760
Lone Parents	22,320	22,880	23,390	24,390
Children in families				
1 child	7,625	7,690	7,540	8,265
2 children	10,120	10,480	10,460	11,2200

3 children	7,525	8,150	7,945	8,330
4 or more children	6,500	7,380	7350	7,330
Age breakdown				
0-4 years	10,050	10,620	10,695	11,640
5-10 years	10,370	10,570	10,380	10,975
11-15 years	8,720	9,050	8,620	8,525
16-19 years	2,635	3,455	3,600	4,010

Source: HM Revenues and Customs

Eligibility for Free School Meals

Eligibility for free school meals (FSM) is a proxy indicator of deprivation. Data from the annual School Census (January 2011) shows that 12,377 primary school pupils and 7,558 secondary school pupils were eligible for FSM.

Further information on the uptake of Free School Meals can be found in the data pack relating to "Healthy Eating".

N.B. The criteria for FSM eligibility is slightly different and potentially narrower than that for being classed as a child in poverty. For example, those living in families eligible for working tax credit are not eligible for FSM. This goes some way to explain why a lower proportion of children are eligible for FSM than those deemed to be in poverty.

Local Authority administered benefits

Households in receipt of Housing and / or Council Tax Benefit (HB / CTB) is often used as a proxy indicator of low income. The City Council's benefits data can be analysed to provide additional valuable information on children living in low income households. Figure 3 provides a summary of the numbers of children living in households in receipt of Housing and / or Council Tax benefit by different household compositions.

Percentage of pupils in Leeds schools eligible for free school meals					
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Primary	20.3	19.7	19.9	21.5	22.2
Secondary	17.9	17.2	18.0	18.3	19.4
Total	19.4	18.7	19.2	20.3	21.1

Source: School Census

Figure 3

	Households in receipt of Housing and / or Council Tax Benefit		All children in households in receipt of benefit	Lone Parent households	Children in lone parent households	Workless households with children	Children in workless households
	Number	Rate					
Inner East	14542	41.8%	9336	3285	5922	3278	6302
Inner North East	66922	21.8%	3221	1130	2022	976	1894
Inner North West	8693	22.2%	3305	1260	2154	1141	2074
Inner South	12213	33.0%	6936	2533	4534	2480	4754
Inner West	7108	29.5%	3787	1444	2441	1301	2382
Outer East	7670	19.5%	3587	144	2543	1202	2291
Outer North East	3512	12.3%	1191	459	741	389	684
Outer North West	5385	13.0%	1788	719	1211	544	988
Outer South	7183	17.4%	2977	1250	2081	1027	1855
Outer West	6633	19.5%	3058	1169	1970	1028	1889
Leeds	80105	22.8%	39320	14750	25619	13366	25184

Views of local people

An initial selection of surveys and focus group outputs were gathered to enable inclusion of public opinion data within the JSNA but at this stage there is no survey or focus group data relevant to this topic. This part of the data set is under development for future versions of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

Considerations for the future

The Child Poverty Needs Assessment 2011 highlights the direct correlation between economic disadvantage and poor outcomes for children across education, health and social care data. It identifies the impact of worklessness, financial exclusion, crime and poor housing and how this is concentrated in particular localities.

Six priorities for immediate action emerge from the needs assessment:

- Give every child the best start in life.
- Raise the levels of aspiration and achievement faster for children growing up in poverty.
- Offer target groups clear pathways into sustainable work.
- Meet families housing needs more quickly and effectively.
- Increase family support services to vulnerable families and those at risk of poor outcomes.
- Maximise income and benefit for families in poverty and on low incomes.