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Welsh Government



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# Poverty and deprivation (National Survey for Wales): April 2022 to March 2023

This report presents the material deprivation findings for April 2022 to March 2023.

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# Contents

[Introduction](#)

[Main points](#)

[Material deprivation](#)

[Comparisons with other sources](#)

[Quality information](#)

[Footnotes](#)

[Contact details](#)

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# Introduction

Material deprivation is a measure of long-term poverty and its effects (that is, the extent to which people are able to afford basic things like food and heating). The National Survey for Wales includes a standard set of questions about material deprivation every year.

The results presented in this report cover the period April 2022 to March 2023. Some results from previous years are included to provide context. However, due to a change in survey mode (moving from face-to-face to telephone in 2020) and possible real change due to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, care should be taken when making direct comparisons with results from 2019-20 and earlier.

The different breakdowns highlighted in this report each have an independent link with material deprivation even after a range of other factors is taken into account. As with all analysis of this kind while we discuss associations between different factors, we are unable to attribute cause and effect for these associations, or to take account of factors not measured in the survey. See [quality information](#).

## Main points

In 2022-23:

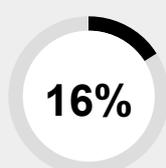
- 16% of all adults are materially deprived

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- 19% of working-age adults are materially deprived
- 4% of pensioners are materially deprived
- 9% of children are materially deprived



of adults are materially deprived

## Material deprivation

### Adult material deprivation

The percentage of people in material deprivation has increased since last reported in 2021-22, when 11% of adults were materially deprived; as well as being higher than reported in 2019-20, when 13% of adults were materially deprived.

In-depth analysis was carried out to investigate the links between material deprivation and a variety of demographic, social and health factors. While controlling for links with other factors, the following were independently associated with being in material deprivation:

Age, with 21% of people aged 16-44 being in material deprivation, compared

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with 17% of people aged 45-64 and 6% of people aged 65+.

Sex was also found to be a linked factor: 19% of females were in material deprivation compared with 12% of males.

Economic status was also independently linked to material deprivation. 42% of unemployed people were reported to be deprived, whilst 14% of people in employment and 17% of those who were economically inactive were in material deprivation.

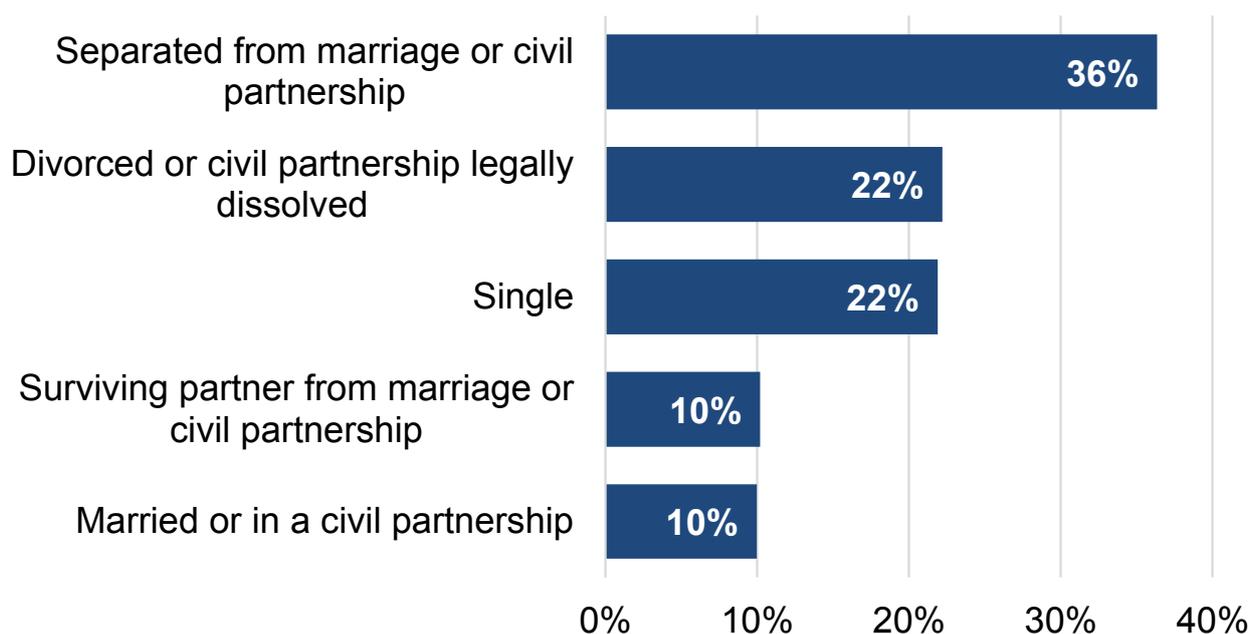
Buying or receiving second-hand items in the last 12 months was linked to material deprivation, with 17% of people who did so living in material deprivation compared with 10% of those who had not.

People living in social housing were the most likely tenure group to be deprived, with 46% of people living in this type of housing being materially deprived. In comparison, 28% of private renters and 8% of those living in owner-occupied housing were in material deprivation.

Living with children aged 16 or under was another factor independently linked with material deprivation, with 25% of such people being materially deprived, compared with 11% of people in child-free households.

Marital status was found to be associated with material deprivation, as shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Material deprivation by marital status**



Description of Figure 1: Bar chart showing material deprivation broken down by marital status. Being currently separated from a marriage or civil partnership was found to have the highest likelihood of living in material deprivation: 36% of separated people were in material deprivation. 22% of single people were living in material deprivation, as were 22% of divorced people; whilst 10% of people who were married or in a civil partnership were in material deprivation. 10% of widowers from marriages and civil partnerships also reported being materially deprived.

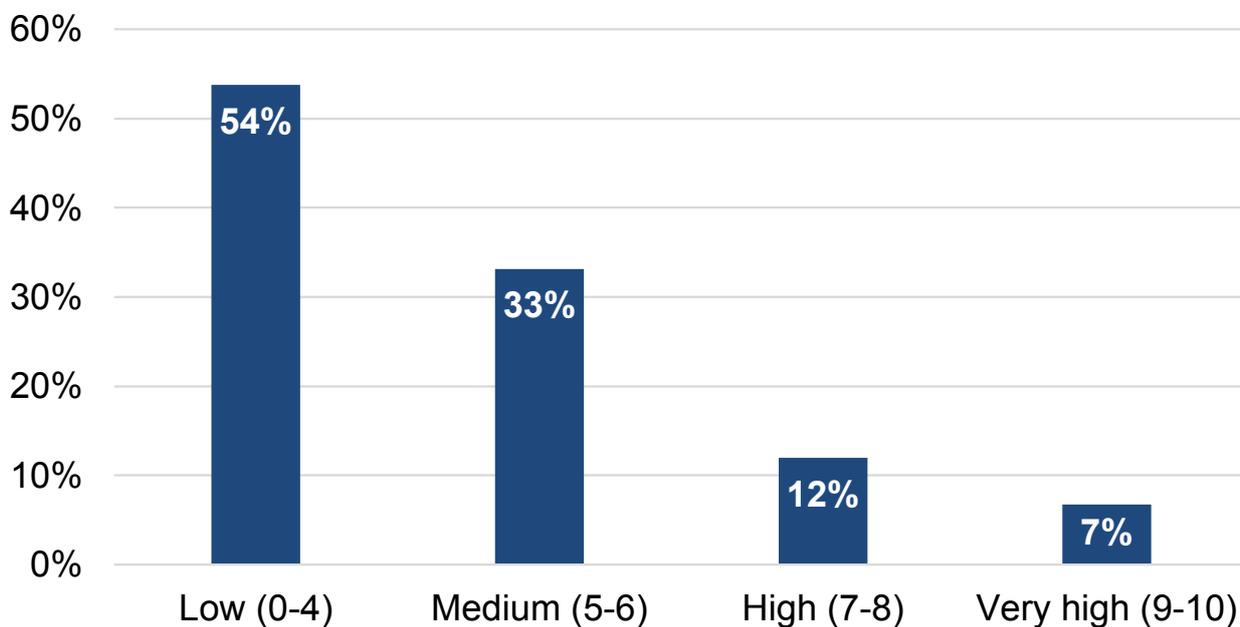
Health was found to be a linked factor to material deprivation, with people who reported their general health as 'bad' or 'very bad' being materially deprived in

41% of cases, compared with 22% of people in 'fair' health and 10% of people in 'good' or 'very good' health.

Similarly, having a limiting long-term illness was also found to be independently linked to material deprivation, with 17% of people who had such illnesses living in material deprivation compared with 10% of those without such illnesses.

Levels of **subjective well-being** were also linked with material deprivation. People who were materially deprived had lower levels of life satisfaction than those who are not deprived (Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Material deprivation by life satisfaction**

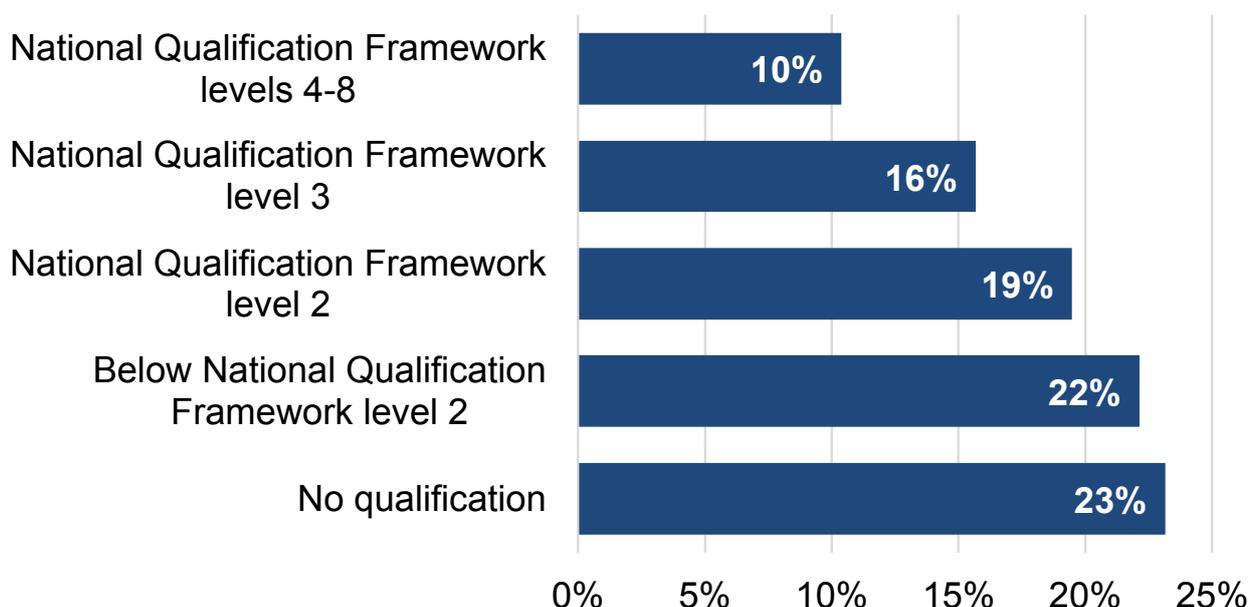


Description of Figure 2: Bar chart showing material deprivation broken down by life satisfaction on a scale of 0 to 10, split into 4 groups. 52% of people reporting low life satisfaction were materially deprived, whilst 7% of people reporting very high life satisfaction were materially deprived.

Loneliness was also found to be linked to material deprivation. Using the **De Jong Gierveld loneliness scale**, 42% of people identified as 'lonely' were living in material deprivation. In comparison, 15% of those identified as 'sometimes lonely' and 9% of people who were 'not lonely' were living in material deprivation.

Highest **educational qualification** was also a factor, as shown in Figure 3.

**Figure 3: Material deprivation by highest educational qualification**



Description of Figure 3: Bar chart showing material deprivation broken down by educational qualification. People with National Qualification Level 4 or higher qualifications were the least likely to be in material deprivation. People with no qualifications were the most likely to be in material deprivation, with 23% of such people being deprived.

As might be expected, people experiencing material deprivation were more likely to live in more deprived geographic areas, based on the **Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD)**. 55% of people living in material deprivation were found to be living in the 40% most deprived areas in Wales.

Ethnicity, religious beliefs, and sexual orientation were not identified as independently linked with material deprivation: that is, any differences in material deprivation by these groups were better explained by the factors listed above.

## Working-age adult material deprivation

In 2022-23, 19% of working-age people were materially deprived – higher than the 14% identified in 2021-22 and the 16% in 2019-20.

The above analysis was repeated for working-age people only. Independently linked factors were largely similar to the previously mentioned, however some differences were found. Both household type and area deprivation according to **WIMD** were no longer identified as independent factors. All other linked factors mentioned above were identified as being independently linked to material deprivation for working age adults in the same ways as previously discussed.

An additional measure of **subjective well-being** was found to be linked with working-age material deprivation: reported level of anxiety yesterday. People reporting high anxiety (defined as a score of 6 or higher out of 10) were living in material deprivation 33% of the time as opposed to 22% of medium anxiety adults (5 or 6), 15% of those with low anxiety (2 or 3), and 11% of those with very low anxiety (0 or 1).

Additionally, not having household access to a car or van was also linked with living in material deprivation for working-age people. 47% of working-age people without car or van access were living in material deprivation compared with 15% of those who did have access to these vehicles.

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As before, ethnicity, religious beliefs, and sexual orientation were not identified as independently linked factors with material deprivation with working-age people.

## Pensioner material deprivation

Older people are thought to sometimes under-report their material deprivation using the standard questions, and so people above the state retirement age are asked a different set of **questions** to measure their level of deprivation; these questions are more about necessities for the individual than about household necessities.

In 2022-23, 5% of pensioners were materially deprived – higher than in 2021-2022 (4%), but showing no significant difference compared with 2019-20.

When analysed for independent linking factors, fewer factors were found to be independently linked to pensioner material deprivation when compared with all adults and with working-age adults.

General health, marital status, loneliness, sex, household type, and area deprivation according to **WIMD** were all found to be independently linked to pensioner material deprivation, with the same trends as previously discussed.

Just as with working age adults, having household access to a car or van was linked to lower levels of material deprivation, with 4% of pensioners with vehicle access living in deprivation compared with 14% of those that didn't have this access.

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High anxiety was also once again identified as linked factor with increased rates of pensioner material deprivation. 11% of pensioners reporting high levels of anxiety (6 to 10) were living in deprivation, higher than for any other anxiety level, which did not exceed 6%. There were no significant differences between the deprivation rates of pensioners reporting 'medium', 'low' or 'very low' anxiety levels.

Once again, ethnicity, religious beliefs, and sexual orientation were not identified as independently linked factors with pensioner material deprivation. Having a limiting long-term illness was also not identified as an independent factor for pensioner material deprivation.

## Child material deprivation

Parents <sup>[footnote 1]</sup> are asked a separate set of **questions** to measure the level of material deprivation being experienced by their children; as with pensioners, these questions are more about the individual than household necessities.

As noted above, 25% of people who had children in their household were in material deprivation, compared with 11% of people in child-free households. However, a lower proportion of parents had children who were experiencing material deprivation themselves: 9%. This was an increase from when last measured in 2019-20, when 6% of parents had children who were experiencing material deprivation.

Once again, in-depth analysis was carried out to investigate the links between material deprivation and a variety of demographic, social and health factors.

Whilst controlling for links with other factors, the following were independently associated with child material deprivation:

Parental economic status was found to be linked to child material deprivation, with 5% of employed parents having children in material deprivation compared with 29% of economically inactive parents. Not enough respondents were unemployed to measure the material deprivation rates of children with unemployed parents.

Parental loneliness, measured according to the **De Jong Gierveld loneliness scale**, was also found to be linked with child material deprivation. Of parents who reported being 'lonely', 31% had children in material deprivation compared with 8% of 'sometimes lonely' parents and 4% of 'not lonely' parents.

Overall satisfaction with life was found to be linked with child material deprivation. Parents reporting higher levels of satisfaction with life were less likely to have children in material deprivation, with 5% of people with 'high' (7 to 8) or 'very high' (9 to 10) life satisfaction having children in deprivation, compared with 26% of children with parents reporting 'low' (0 to 4) or 'medium' (5 to 6) satisfaction.

Tenure type was linked with child deprivation, with 3% of owner-occupier parents having children in material deprivation, compared with 15% of parents in privately-rented accommodation and 32% of parents in social housing.

Aside from these overlapping factors with adult material deprivation, child material deprivation was also found to be linked to parents' satisfaction with children's clubs and organised activities in the local area. 6% of parents with

clubs and activities in the local area that were viewed as satisfactory had children in material deprivation, whereas 18% of parents who were not satisfied with clubs/activities in the area had children in material deprivation.

Additionally, having a parent take part in sporting activities 3 or more times a week was also associated with lower levels of child material deprivation. 5% of parents that took part in this level of sport had children in material deprivation, compared with 13% of parents who did not take part in this level of sport.

The age, sex, ethnicity, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, disability status, and marital status of parents had no independent link with the likelihood of their children being in material deprivation.

## Comparisons with other sources

Other Welsh Government statistics relating to poverty and deprivation can be seen on the [poverty related statistics page](#). The material deprivation questions asked in the National Survey are based on those in the Family Resources Survey (FRS), a UK wide survey. However, the National Survey differs from the FRS in how it is carried out and in the other topics it covers. The methodology used to derive the material deprivation indicator also varies between the two surveys. This means that the overall proportions of adults and pensioners in material deprivation based on the National Survey results are not comparable with the overall proportions provided by the FRS survey.

Since April 2019, the FRS has asked questions on household food security and

since April 2021, it has also asked questions about foodbank usage. The latest results for 2021-22 are likely to be published in Spring 2023.

The survey estimates published in this bulletin should be considered alongside other Welsh Government statistical releases related to **deprivation and low income** which use the FRS and the constituent Households Below Average Income (HBAI) series as data sources. The **WIMD** provides a relative measure of deprivation by geographical area and adds further context to the National Survey results.

## Quality information

The **National Survey for Wales** is a continuous, large-scale, random sample telephone survey covering people across Wales. Addresses are randomly selected, and invitations sent by post, requesting that a phone number be provided for the address. The phone number can be provided via an online portal, a telephone enquiry line, or direct to the mobile number of the interviewer for that case. If no phone number is provided, an interviewer may call at the address and ask for a phone number.

Detailed charts and tables of results are available in our interactive **results viewer**. For information on data collection and methodology please see our **quality report**, **technical report**, and **regression report** pages.

Cross-analysis suggests that various factors may be associated with the responses given to each question asked in the National Survey. However, these

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factors are often linked to each other (for example, people with a limiting long-term condition may also be older). To get a clearer understanding of the effect of each individual factor, we have used statistical methods to separate out the individual effect of each factor. These methods allow us to look at the effect of one factor while keeping other factors constant – sometimes called “controlling for other factors”. Each breakdown described in this report was identified as an individual factor.

## National Statistics status

The **United Kingdom Statistics Authority** has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the **Code of Practice for Statistics**.

National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality, and public value.

All official statistics should comply with all aspects of the Code of Practice for Statistics. They are awarded National Statistics status following an assessment by the UK Statistics Authority’s regulatory arm. The Authority considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate.

It is Welsh Government’s responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected of National Statistics. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss any concerns with the Authority promptly. National Statistics status can

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be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained and reinstated when standards are restored.

The continued designation of these statistics as National Statistics was confirmed in June 2020 following a compliance check by the Office for Statistics Regulation ([letter of confirmation](#)). These statistics last underwent a full assessment ([full report](#)) against the Code of Practice in 2013.

Since the latest review by the Office for Statistics Regulation, we have continued to comply with the Code of Practice for Statistics, by for example:

- providing more detailed breakdowns in the [results viewer](#)
- updated the survey topics regularly to ensure we continue to meet changing policy need
- continued to carry out regression analysis as a standard part of our outputs, to help users understand the contribution of particular factors to outcomes of interest

## Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFG)

The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales. The Act puts in place seven wellbeing goals for Wales. These are for a more equal, prosperous, resilient, healthier and globally responsible Wales, with cohesive communities and a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. Under section (10)(1) of the Act, the Welsh Ministers must (a) publish indicators (“national indicators”) that must be applied for the purpose of measuring progress towards the achievement

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of the wellbeing goals, and (b) lay a copy of the national indicators before Senedd Cymru. Under section 10(8) of the Well-being of Future Generations Act, where the Welsh Ministers revise the national indicators, they must as soon as reasonably practicable (a) publish the indicators as revised and (b) lay a copy of them before the Senedd. These national indicators were laid before the Senedd in 2021. The indicators laid on 14 December 2021 replace the set laid on 16 March 2016 and this release includes 1 of the national indicators namely indicator 19 – **the percentage of people living in households in material deprivation**.

Information on the indicators, along with narratives for each of the wellbeing goals and associated technical information is available in the Well-being of Wales report.

As a national indicator under the Act they must be referred to in the analyses of local well-being produced by public services boards when they are analysing the state of economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being in their areas.

The Act states national milestones must be set that “...the Welsh Ministers consider would assist in measuring whether progress is being made towards the achievement of the well-being goals.” In doing so Welsh Ministers must specify how we know that a national milestone has been achieved and the time by which it is to be achieved.

National milestones are not performance targets for any individual organisation, but are collective measures of success for Wales.

Further information on the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act**

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**2015.**

The statistics included in this release could also provide supporting narrative to the national indicators and be used by public service boards in relation to their local wellbeing assessments and local wellbeing plans.

## Footnotes

[1] Including legal guardians.

## Contact details

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