



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

STATISTICS, DOCUMENT

Poverty and deprivation (National Survey for Wales): April 2021 to March 2022

This report presents the material deprivation findings for April 2021 to March 2022.

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Introduction

Material deprivation is a measure of poverty and its effects. Details of the derivation used in this report can be found in [terms and definitions](#).

In 2021-22, the National Survey included questions on the material deprivation of adults and pensioners as well as questions on food poverty and universal credit payments.

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. The results presented in this report cover the year April 2021 to March 2022, a period before the start of the current 'cost of living crisis'.

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

Main points

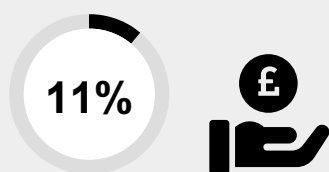
- 11% of all adults are materially deprived.
- 4% of pensioners are materially deprived.
- 2% of people say their household has received food from a food bank in the past 12 months.
- 13% of people say they are in receipt of Universal Credit.

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Material deprivation



of adults are materially deprived

The percentage of people in material deprivation has decreased since last reported in 2019-20 when 13% of adults were materially deprived. Further research is required to determine whether this is real change or connected with the change in survey mode.

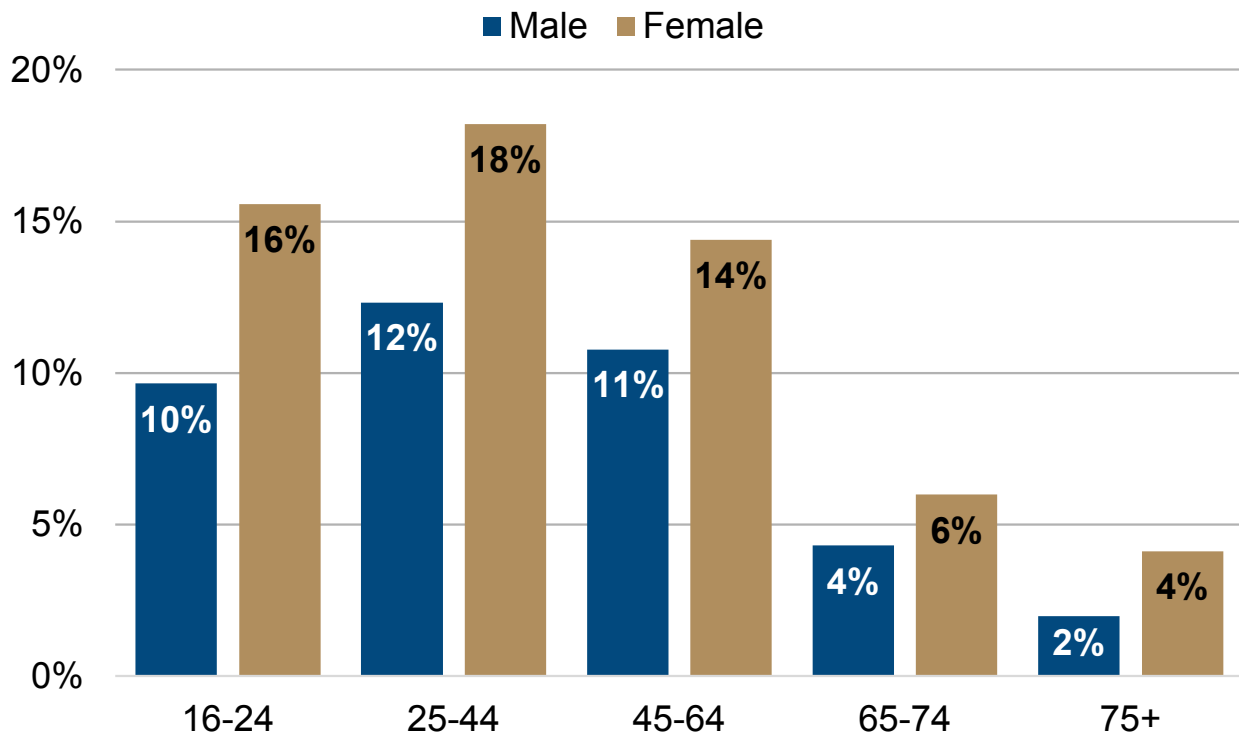
Unemployment is closely associated with whether a person is materially deprived. 44% of those who were unemployed were materially deprived, compared with 9% of people who were employed. Highest **educational qualification** is another factor: 58% of people experiencing material deprivation had level 2 or below qualifications compared with 37% of people not in material deprivation.

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Figure 1: Percentage in material deprivation by age and sex, April 2021 to March 2022



Description of Figure 1: Bar chart comparing percentages in material deprivation depending on whether respondent is male or female, and across five age groups.

Material deprivation is more common in younger age groups than in people aged 65 and over (Figure 1). Overall, people aged 25 to 44 were the most materially deprived (15%). Across all age groups, females were more likely to be in material deprivation than men, with 13% of women materially deprived compared with 9% of men.

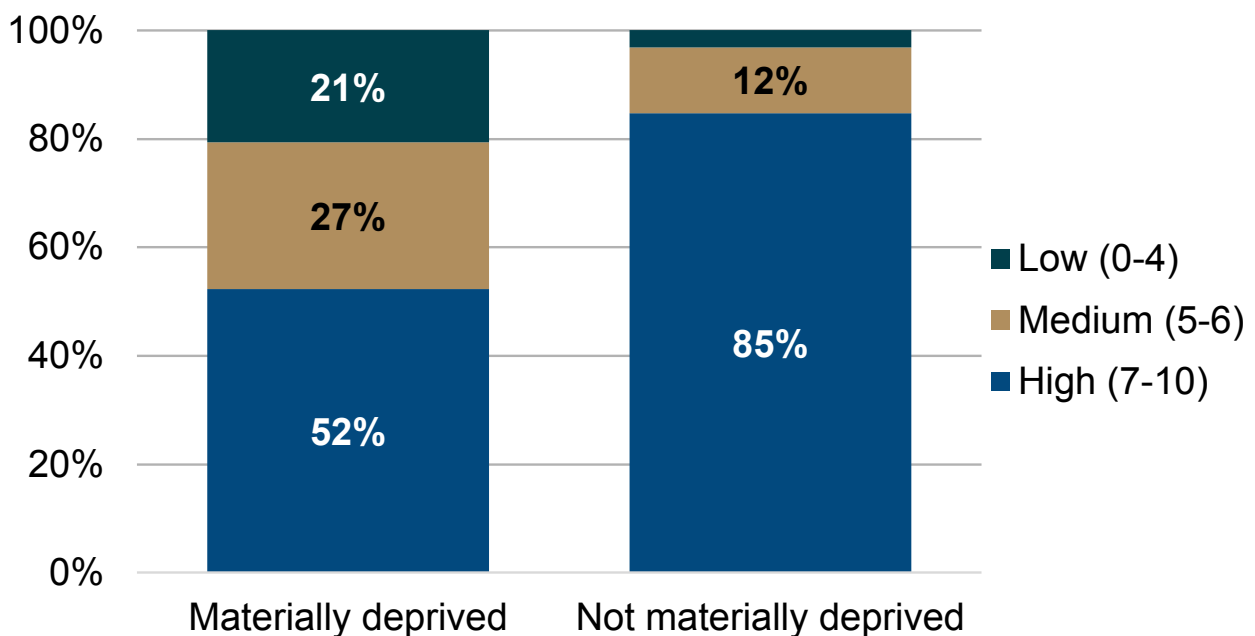
The size and makeup of a household is also linked with whether people are

likely to be materially deprived. Working-age adults who are single or live alone are more likely to be deprived than those in a household containing more than one adult. Single parent households with children under 16 have the highest rate of material deprivation, with 49% of single parents classed as materially deprived. This is the same proportion as in 2017-18.

People who say they are in good health are less likely to be materially deprived than those in bad health. Similarly, 19% of people who have a limiting long-term illness or condition are materially deprived compared with 7% of people who do not have such a condition.

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

Figure 2: Life satisfaction by material deprivation, April 2021 to March 2022



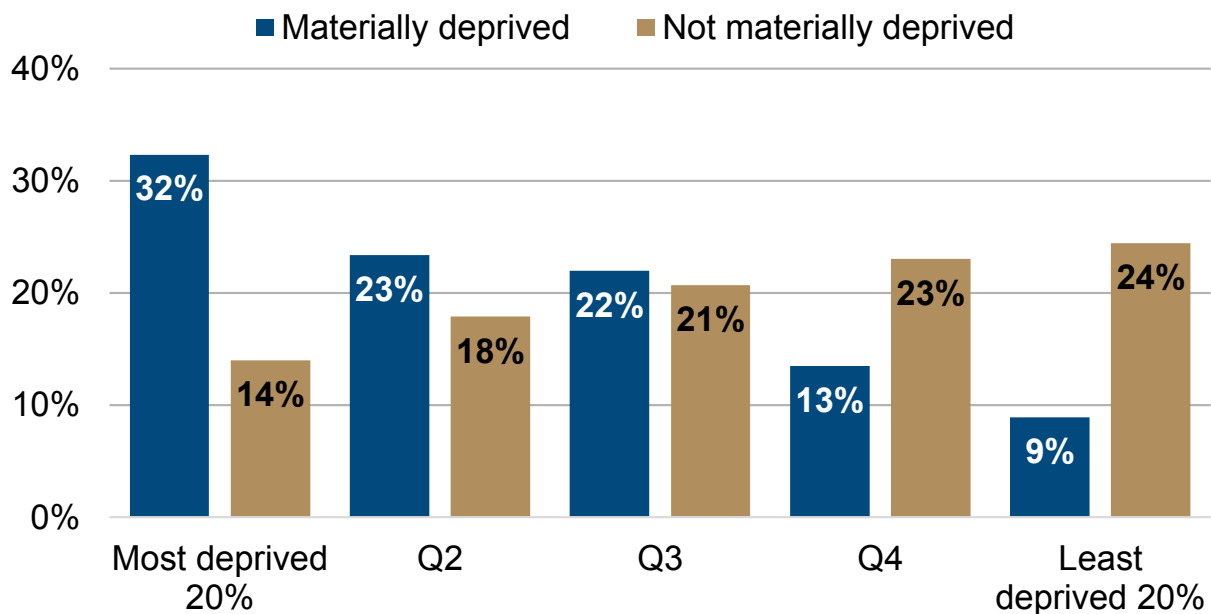
Description of Figure 2: A 100% stacked column chart. Two columns, materially deprived and not deprived, showing levels of life satisfaction. 85% of non-materially deprived people have high life satisfaction compared with 52% of materially deprived people.

Loneliness is another related factor. 35% of materially deprived people reported being lonely compared with 10% of those not in material deprivation. These are similar to the survey results in 2017-18. As with all analysis of this kind, we are unable to say whether being in material deprivation has an impact on mental well-being; or whether poor physical or mental health means a person is more likely to become materially deprived.

40% of people living in social housing are materially deprived, compared with 22% of people in private rented accommodation and 5% in owner-occupied housing. People living in materially deprived households are less likely to have access to a car or van for personal use: 70% compared with 91% of people who are not materially deprived.

Unsurprisingly over half of people experiencing household material deprivation also live in the 40% most deprived geographic areas, based on the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD). On the other hand, 9% of materially deprived people live in the least deprived areas. (Figure 3)

Figure 3: Percentage of people living in each WIMD quintile, by whether in material deprivation or not, April 2021 to March 2022



Description of Figure 3: Bar chart with two columns (materially deprived and not deprived) for each of the five WIMD classifications. 32% of materially deprived people live in the 20% most deprived geographic areas.

Detailed analysis of the 2017-18 survey results on material deprivation

showed that higher rates of smoking were associated with being materially deprived and also that people who were materially deprived were less likely to eat five servings of fruit and vegetables a day. We were unable to use these lifestyle factors in the main 2021-22 analysis model, as the lifestyle questions were not asked of the full survey sample. However, simple cross-analysis continues to show the same pattern of association.

Another link highlighted in 2017-18 remained significant in 2021-22: people living

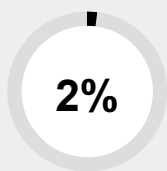
in material deprivation are less likely to take part in a regular sporting activity. 19% of materially deprived people participated in sport three or more times a week, compared with 35% of those who are not materially deprived.

Pensioner material deprivation

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

In 2021-22, 4% of pensioners were materially deprived, the same as in 2019-20 but lower than in 2016-17 (7%). The pensioner results are combined with the adult non-pensioner estimates to provide the 'all adults' estimate of 11% discussed above.

Food poverty



of people said their household used a foodbank in the past 12 months

A further 1% of people said they had wanted to use a food bank. Of those who had used a food bank, 71% used them between 1 and 5 times, 12% between 6 and 10 times, and 17% more than 10 times in the last 12 months.

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Food poverty is the inability of individuals and households to secure an adequate and nutritious diet. It can affect those living on low incomes, sometimes with limited access to transport. The causes of food poverty or 'food insecurity' are complex but in our analysis we found that many of the factors associated with material deprivation were also linked to food poverty.

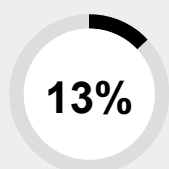
Age was one factor, people aged 65 and older being less likely than any other age group to use food banks. People living in owner-occupied accommodation were less likely to use a food bank (below 1%) than those who rent privately (4%) or live in social housing (10%). Similarly, **those with level 3 and level 4 qualifications** are less likely to use a food bank (1%) compared with people with lower qualifications (4%). 4% of people with a limiting long-term illness used a food bank compared with 1% of those without such a condition.

Unsurprisingly, people who said they had skipped meals or had gone at least one day in the previous fortnight with no substantial meal (due to cost) were more likely to use a food bank. Also, people who struggle to pay their bills and to keep up with credit commitments are more likely to use a food bank compared with those who have no financial difficulties.

People were asked several questions about their eating habits. 8% of people skipped meals or had smaller meals in the previous fortnight, a similar result to when this question was last asked in 2020-21. 22% of those who skipped meals said it was because they couldn't afford them.

4% of people had at least one day in the last fortnight where they did not have a substantial meal, and 35% of this group said they had not had a substantial meal because they couldn't afford it.

Universal credit



of working-age adults received Universal Credit payments in the previous 3 months.

A further 1% of people below state pension age had applied for Universal Credit (UC) in the last 3 months. UC is a benefit for people on low incomes or who are out of work. It replaces benefits such as income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, income related Employment and Support Allowance, Income Support, Working Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, and Housing Benefit.

Economic status and tenure type are associated with claiming Universal Credit. Figure 4 shows that 50% of people who are unemployed and 42% of people who live in social housing receive UC.

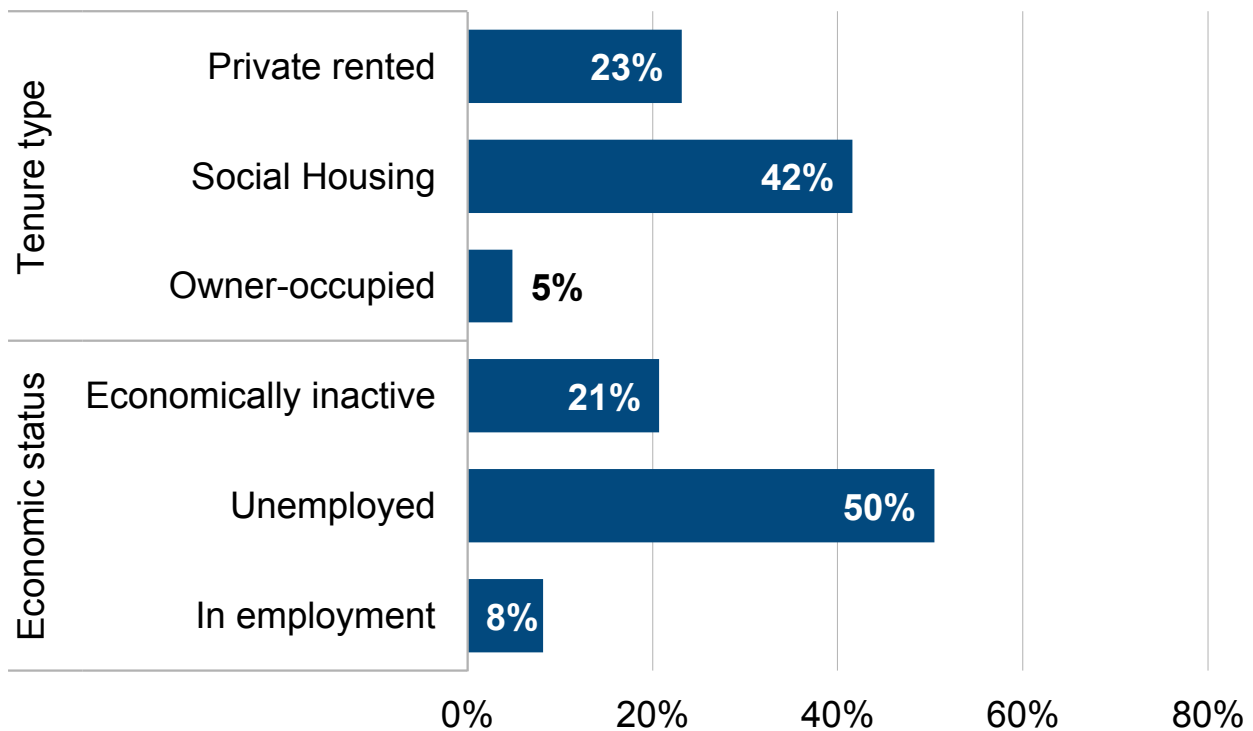
Of the people in receipt of Universal Credit who privately rent or live in social housing, 80% get help with their housing costs as part of their UC claim. 9% of those on UC are behind with their rent compared with 3% of those who are not receiving UC.

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Figure 4: Percentage in receipt of Universal Credit, by economic status and by tenure type, April 2021 to March 2022



Description of Figure 4: Two bar charts down side axis. Top chart shows tenure type and that people living in rented property are more likely to be receiving UC than owner-occupiers. Economic status is second chart showing that people in employment are the least likely to be receiving Universal Credit (UC).

Age is linked with claiming UC: 13% of 16 to 24 year olds, 16% of 25 to 44 year olds and 9% of 45 to 64 year olds are in receipt of the benefit. 19% of people with a dependent child in the household receive UC compared with 9% of people without children in the household.

Having a long-term limiting illness is associated with receiving Universal Credit. 23% of people with a limiting illness receive UC, compared with 9% of people without such a condition.

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 [Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation](#) (WIMD) provides a relative measure of deprivation by geographical area and adds further context to the National Survey results.

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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 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

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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 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

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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 of the wellbeing goals, and (b) lay a copy of the national indicators before Senedd Cymru. The national indicators were laid in March 2016. The National Survey collects information for **15 of the indicators**. This release presents the results for indicator 19; **the percentage of people living in households in material deprivation**.

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

Contact details

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