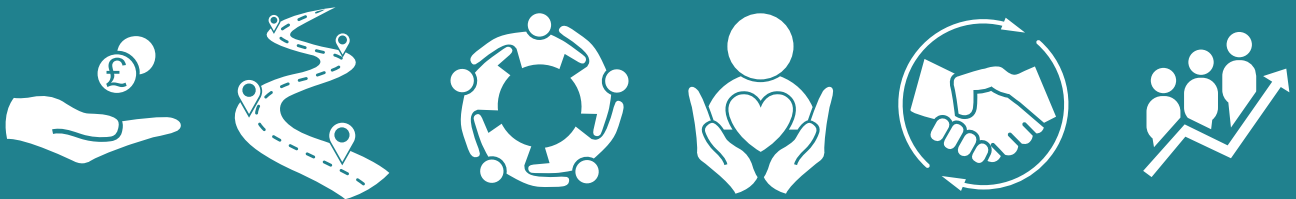




SOCIAL RESEARCH NUMBER: 117/2025

PUBLICATION DATE: 02/12/2025

Child Poverty Strategy Monitoring Framework 2025



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Full Research Report:

Griffiths, O. (2025). Child Poverty Strategy Monitoring Framework 2025.

Cardiff: Welsh Government, GSR report number 117/2025.

Available at:

<http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/>

Views expressed in this report are those of the analysts and not necessarily those of the Welsh Government

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Glossary

Acronym/Key word	Definition
Annual Population Survey (APS)	The Annual Population Survey (APS), which began in 2004, aims to provide data that can produce reliable estimates at local authority level. Key topics covered in the survey include education, employment, health and ethnicity.
Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups	The Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic category includes the following groups: Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese, Any other Asian Background, Black/African/Caribbean/Black British, Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups, Other ethnic group. Other ethnic group includes respondents identifying themselves as ‘Arab’. ‘White’ includes respondents identifying themselves as ‘White – Gypsy or Irish Traveller’.
Children	People up to the age of 18 as per the Welsh Government Child Poverty Strategy. Ages captured in some measures may differ to this and will be made explicit as and when they appear.
Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)	The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is the UK government department responsible for welfare, pensions and child maintenance policy.
Disability	According to the Equality Act 2010 you are disabled if you have a physical or mental impairment that has a ‘substantial’ and ‘long-term’ negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities. More information is available at the gov.uk website. This report uses the medical definition of disability to align with the data sources and measurement approaches applied. It is important to note that the Welsh Government supports the social model of disability, which recognises that people are disabled by barriers in society rather than by their impairment or difference.

Acronym/Key word	Definition
Domain	Broad themes used to group child poverty indicators linked to the objectives of the Child Poverty Strategy.
Education, employment, and training	People in education, employment, and training (EET), are those who are carrying out an apprenticeship, on a government employment or training scheme, working or studying towards any qualifications, have undertaken any job-related education or training in the previous 4 weeks, are enrolled on any full-time or part-time education course excluding leisure classes and are still attending or waiting for term to (re)start, employed, self-employed, on government employment or training programmes, or are an unpaid family worker.
Education other than at school (EOTAS)	Education other than at school (EOTAS) plays a crucial role in giving some of the most vulnerable children and young people access to learning in a range of settings including, but not limited to, pupil referral units, further education institutions, independent special schools and third-sector organisations.
Family	Defined as a single adult or a married or cohabiting couple and any dependent children. Since January 2006 same-sex partners (civil partners and cohabitees) have been included in the same family.
Family Affluence Scale (FAS)	The School Health Research Network (SHRN) administers a Student Health and Wellbeing Survey within secondary schools in Wales every two years. The Family Affluence Scale (FAS) has been employed as part of this survey to estimate young people's socio-economic status. An affluence score result has been calculated using five out of six possible six affluence results. More information on the survey can be found on the School Health Research Network dashboard, available via the <u>Public Health Wales website</u> .
Family Resources Survey (FRS)	The Family Resources Survey (FRS) is a continuous household survey which collects information on a representative sample of private households in the United Kingdom.

Acronym/Key word	Definition
Financial year	A financial year is a period of twelve months (not always January to December) for which businesses, governments, and other organisations plan their management of money. In the UK, a financial year (often referred to as the tax year), runs from 6 April to 5 April the following year. For example, the financial year ending (FYE) 2025 will start on 6 April 2024 and end on 5 April 2025. For data collected monthly, we measure from April to March.
Free school meals (FSM)	Free school meals (FSM) in the UK refer to meals provided to children in government-maintained schools, typically for those who meet certain eligibility criteria.
Households Below Average Income (HBAI)	DWP statistics on the number and percentage of people living in low-income households in the UK.
Lived experience	Personal knowledge gained from direct experience that would not ordinarily be apparent through observation or via representations constructed by a third party who has not ‘lived’ it through the eyes of those who were in the situation.
Low birthweight	Low birthweight is defined as a birthweight of less than 2.5kg and can be associated with health risks in an infant’s first year of life. The percentage of live singleton births with a birthweight of less than 2.5kg is one of 50 National indicators used to measure progress against the wellbeing goals in the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act. Low birthweights are often linked to low gestational age (where the baby is born before the start of the 37th week of gestation).
Lower layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs)	Lower layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) comprise between 400 and 1,200 households and have a usually resident population between 1,000 and 3,000 persons. Currently, there are 1,917 LSOAs in Wales.

Acronym/Key word	Definition
Material deprivation	The extent to which people are able to afford basic things such as food and heating. People in material deprivation lack the ability to access key goods or services.
Me and My Feelings measure	Emotional difficulties are derived from the Me and My Feelings measure from SHRN. Learners are asked how often they feel certain ways. The scale consists of 10 questions relating to emotional difficulties. Emotional difficulties questions include: 'I feel lonely'; 'I feel scared'; 'I worry when I am at school' and 'I cry a lot'. The scale is scored out of 20. Scores of 10 and higher indicate elevated emotional difficulties; scores of 12 and higher indicate clinically significant difficulties.
Measure	A way to measure and monitor a given outcome.
National Community Child Health Database (NCCHD)	National Community Child Health Database (NCCHD) is Wales's national community child health database and consists of anonymised records for all children born, resident or treated in Wales and born after 1987.
National Indicator	The national indicators are designed to represent the outcomes for Wales, and its people that will help demonstrate progress towards the seven wellbeing goals.
National Minimum Wage	The National Minimum Wage is the minimum pay per hour almost all workers in the UK are entitled to. The minimum wage a worker should get depends on their age and if they are an apprentice. It does not matter how small an employer is, they still have to pay the correct minimum wage.
National Survey for Wales	The National Survey for Wales involves around 12,000 people each year and covers a wide range of topics. It runs all year round, across the whole of Wales. The results are used by the Welsh Government to help make Wales a better place to live.

Acronym/Key word	Definition
Objective	The change which the intervention aims to bring about.
Pupil Referral Unit (PRU)	A pupil referral units (PRU) teach children who aren't able to attend school and may not otherwise receive suitable education. This could be because they have a short- or long-term illness, have been excluded or are a new starter waiting for a mainstream school place.
Protected characteristics	According to the 2010 Equality Act (UK Government, 2010a), it is against the law to discriminate against anyone (at work, in education, as a consumer, when using public services, when buying or renting property, as a member or guest of a private club or association) because of the following protected characteristics: age; gender reassignment; being married or in a civil partnership; being pregnant or on maternity leave; disability; race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin; religion or belief; sex; or sexual orientation.
Quintile	A quintile divides a dataset into five equal parts, with each quintile representing 20% of the population or data points when they are ranked in order. For the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation, the first quintile is the 20% of most deprived areas, and the fifth quintile is the 20% of least deprived areas in Wales.
Real living wage	The Real Living Wage is a voluntary wage rate in the UK. It is independently calculated by the Resolution Foundation and overseen by the Living Wage Commission on behalf of the Living Wage Foundation to reflect the real cost-of-living and currently stands at £12 per hour (as of April 2024). The Real Living Wage is different to the UK's statutory minimum wage rate regime (the National Living Wage and Minimum Wage). The statutory minimum varies depending upon the worker's age and whether or not the worker is an apprentice.

Acronym/Key word	Definition
Relative income poverty	An individual is classed as living in a relative low-income household (or relative low income) if the household income is calculated to be below 60% of UK median household income in that year. This measure is an indication of inequality between low- and middle-income households. The median is the point at which half of households have a lower income, and half have a higher income. Household income may be measured before housing costs or after housing costs are deducted. Figures in this report relating to relative income poverty in Wales are taken after housing costs, unless otherwise stated.
The School Health Research Network (SHRN)	The School Health Research Network (SHRN) is a policy-practice-research partnership between Welsh Government, Public Health Wales, and Cardiff University established in 2013. SHRN aims to improve young people’s health and wellbeing in Wales by working with schools in both primary and secondary education to generate and use good quality evidence for health improvement.
Student Health and Wellbeing Survey	The SHRN administers a Student Health and Wellbeing Survey within secondary schools in Wales every two years. Since 2017, all mainstream secondary schools in Wales have become registered members of SHRN, while half of all primary schools in Wales registered for the inaugural 2024 data collection and SHRN membership. For further details on survey methodology please see the <u>SHRN website</u> .
Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS)	The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS) comprises 14 statements which cover different aspects of wellbeing expressed positively – for example, ‘I have been feeling optimistic about the future’. Participants are asked to choose the answer that best describes their experience over the previous two weeks: ‘None of the time’, ‘Rarely’, ‘Some of the time’, ‘Often’, or ‘All of the time’ and this scale is scored from 1 to 5. The total Wellbeing score can range from 14 to 70.

Acronym/Key word	Definition
Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD)	This is the Welsh Government’s official measure of relative deprivation for small areas in Wales. It identifies areas with the highest concentrations of several different types of deprivation. <u>The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation</u> (WIMD) ranks all small areas in Wales from 1 (most deprived) to 1,909 (least deprived).
Workless household	Workless households are households where no one aged 16 years or over is in employment. These members may be unemployed or economically inactive. Economically inactive members may be unavailable to work because of family commitments, retirement, study, sickness or disability.
Young people	People up to the age of 25, as per the Welsh Government Child Poverty Strategy.

Background

The Child Poverty Strategy for Wales 2024 (**Welsh Government, 2024**) sets out the Welsh Government's long-term approach to tackling child poverty and achieving better outcomes for children and young people, regardless of their background or circumstances. It provides a strategic framework to make the most of the levers available to contributing to the eradication of child poverty.

The Child Poverty Strategy Monitoring Framework presents robust, population-level data across a range of child poverty indicators, offering insight into the impact of our actions and the direction of travel in improving outcomes for children and young people.

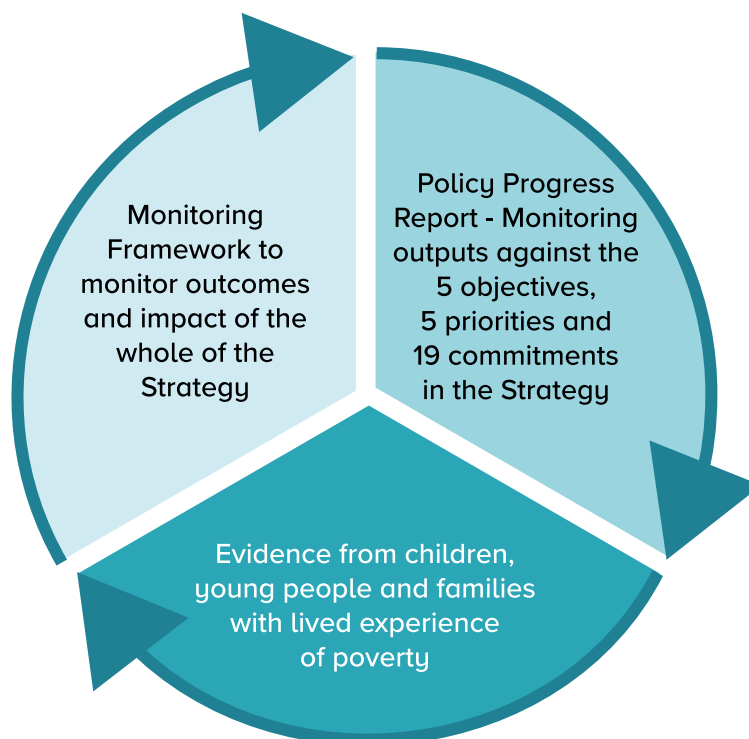
This report provides the data on a range of measures and follows on from the outline to the framework published in 2024 (**Welsh Government, 2024**).

The **national wellbeing indicators** are designed to represent the outcomes for Wales, and its people that will help demonstrate progress towards the 7 wellbeing goals.

The **Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015** required Welsh ministers to set national indicators to assess progress towards achieving the 7 wellbeing goals. These national indicators were laid before the Senedd in 2021. A full description of the national indicators including their technical definition and information about their data sources and frequency can be found in the Wellbeing of Wales **technical document**.

Every three years the following three elements will be published in order to demonstrate Welsh Government's progress on delivering the strategy's objectives, as required by the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010:

Figure 1: The three elements for demonstrating progress on the Child Poverty Strategy for Wales 2024



1. The **monitoring framework** reporting on regular and robust population level data on a range of child poverty indicators and measures to provide insight on impact and direction of travel on the outcomes for children and young people.
2. The **policy progress** report providing a detailed update on the impact of specific policies, actions and associated outputs, in delivering progress against the five objectives, five priorities and 19 commitments of the strategy.

3. Evidence from people with **lived experience** of poverty providing important information about how policies and actions are making a difference for children, young people and families at a household level.

The framework will not replace the regular reporting of the national poverty statistics (**Welsh Government, 2025**) which are published annually.

About the data

This report contains 11 national indicators, 22 measures (with 15 using children and young people as the unit of analysis) across 4 domains.

This report aims to identify trends in the data where possible, as well as highlighting any changes between the latest figures and prior ones. Comparisons are made using data from the beginning of the most recent ten-year periods, starting from periods ending in 2015, where available, to support consistent analysis

of longer-term trends. Where data for the full ten-year period span is unavailable, the longest available range is used instead. For example, for datasets covering three financial years, the range from 2013 to 2015 to 2022 to 2024 is used, where possible.

Links to data sources are provided where applicable, and further information on data quality can be found through these sources.

Summary of main points

The percentage of children living in relative income poverty (after housing costs) has remained relatively stable since the 2013 to 2015 period. In the most recent period, 2022 to 2024, 31% of children were estimated to be living in relative income poverty.

Families with fewer children and those where parents are in work tend to have a lower percentage of children living in relative income poverty compared to families with more children and parents not in work. In the 2022 to 2024 financial period, the percentage of children living in relative income poverty was 39 percentage points higher in workless households (56%) than in households where all adults were employed (17%).

In the 2022 to 2024 financial period, 9% of children in Wales were living in material deprivation – the highest level recorded since 2014 to 2015. Between these periods, the percentage remained relatively stable. No data was collected for this measure during the 2020 to 2021 and 2021 to 2022 periods.

Since data collection began, children from higher-affluence families have consistently reported eating breakfast every weekday at a higher rate than those from middle-affluence families, who in turn reported higher rates than those from low-affluence families. These differences have remained broadly consistent over time. In 2023, the gap between high- and low-affluence families was 15.3 percentage points.

Year 11 pupils eligible for FSM have consistently achieved A* to C grades at GCSE at lower rates than those not eligible. In 2024 to 2025, the gap between the two groups was 29.4 percentage points. This difference has remained relatively

consistent over time, regardless of changes in overall attainment, which have generally declined – except during the years most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2024, 67.4% of employed individuals in Wales earned at least the real Living Wage. This marked an increase from the previous year, although the overall percentage has remained relatively stable over the past decade.

Male employees earn more per hour than female employees, with a median difference of £0.32 in the most recent year. However, this gap is gradually narrowing over time. A similar pattern is observed in ethnicity-based pay differences: White employees have historically earned more than Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic employees, but the gap is also decreasing. In 2024, white employees earned a median £0.54 more per hour than their ethnic minority counterparts.

Residents living in more deprived areas of Wales generally experienced higher rates of low birthweight among single births compared to those in less deprived areas. In 2024, 7.8% of single births in the most deprived areas were classified as low birthweight, compared to 5.0% in the least deprived areas.

In 2023, 56% of children from high-affluence families reported exercising at least four times a week, compared to 40% of children from low-affluence families. Overall, children from high-affluence families engage in physical activity more frequently than those from low-affluence families.

Standard of Living Domain

Domain/national indicators

To enjoy an adequate standard of living; related to objective 1 of the Child Poverty Strategy: to reduce costs and maximise the incomes of families.

- National indicator 18: Percentage of people living in households in income poverty relative to the UK median, measured for children, working age and those of pension age.
- National indicator 19: Percentage of people living in households in material deprivation.

Measures

- Percentage of children in Wales living in relative income poverty (after housing costs).
- Percentage of children in Wales living in relative income poverty (after housing costs), by number of children in the household.
- Children in Wales living in relative income poverty (after housing costs) by family type.
- Children in Wales living in relative income poverty (after housing costs), by economic status of household.
- Percentage of children in Wales living in relative income poverty (after housing costs), by disability in the family.
- Percentage of children in material deprivation.
- Percentage of secondary school children who eat breakfast every weekday by family affluence.

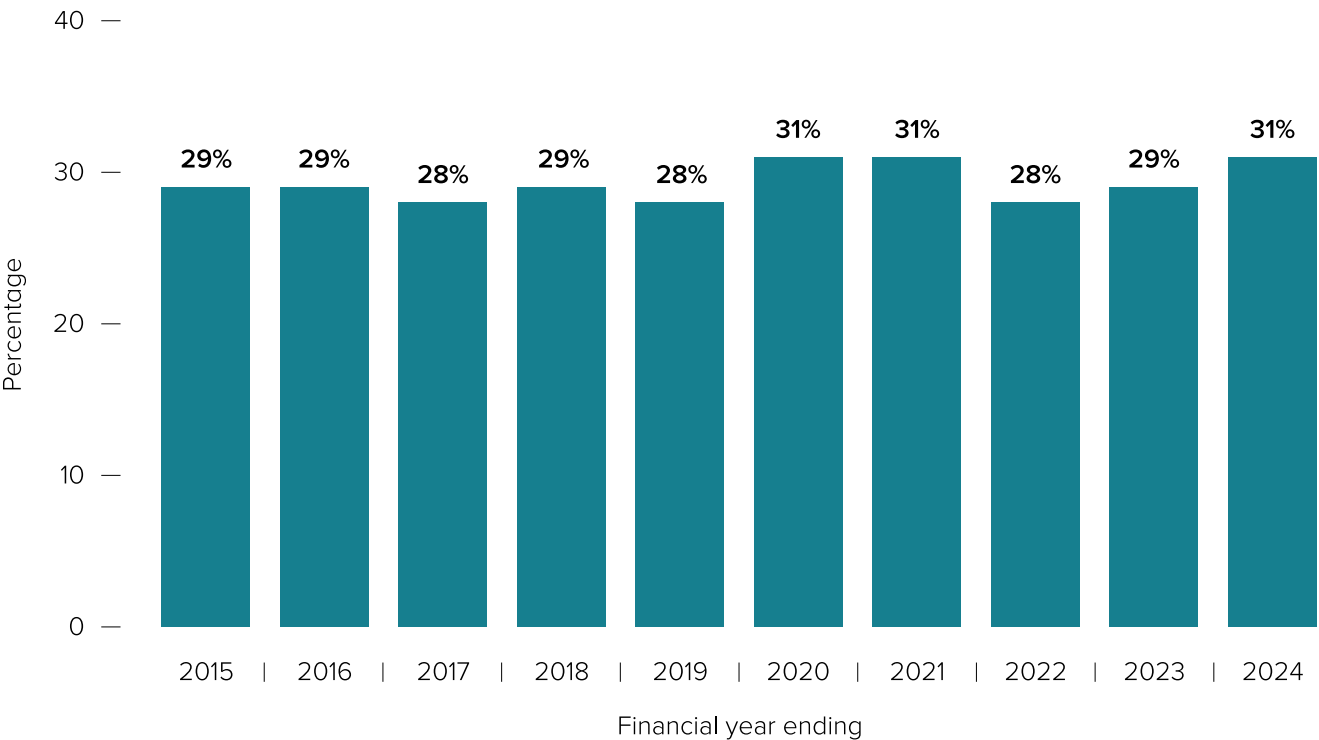
Planned revisions to poverty data in spring 2026

For the 2024 to 2025 survey year, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) plan to integrate administrative data about benefit and tax credit recipients into the Family Resources Survey (FRS) dataset to improve its accuracy. The Households Below Average Income datasets are based on the FRS. This means that the spring 2026 DWP release of poverty statistics will involve revisions to the back series as far back as the 2018 to 2019 survey year (the first year the improvements can be made). These revisions will be reflected in updated Welsh Government [Relative income poverty statistics](#). For more details please see: [Family Resources Survey: release strategy – GOV.UK](#).

Measure: Percentage of Children in Wales living in relative income poverty (after housing costs)

We advise caution when looking at year on year changes as these are unlikely to be statistically significant.

Figure 2: Percentage of all children in Wales living in relative income poverty, April 2013 to March 2024 periods [Note 1] [Note 2]



Description of Figure 2: Column chart showing that over the last decade the percentage of children living in relative income poverty peaked during 2019-21 (31%). Following a decrease immediately after, this has since risen to a similar level (31%).

Source: Family Resources Survey,
Department for Work and Pensions

Department for Work & Pensions

Relative income poverty (gov.wales)

[Note 1] Estimates for periods which span the financial year ending 2021 do not include the data collected during FYE 2021 in calculations. FYE 2021 estimates are unreliable as they are based on data collected during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, when lockdown rules severely disrupted the data collection.

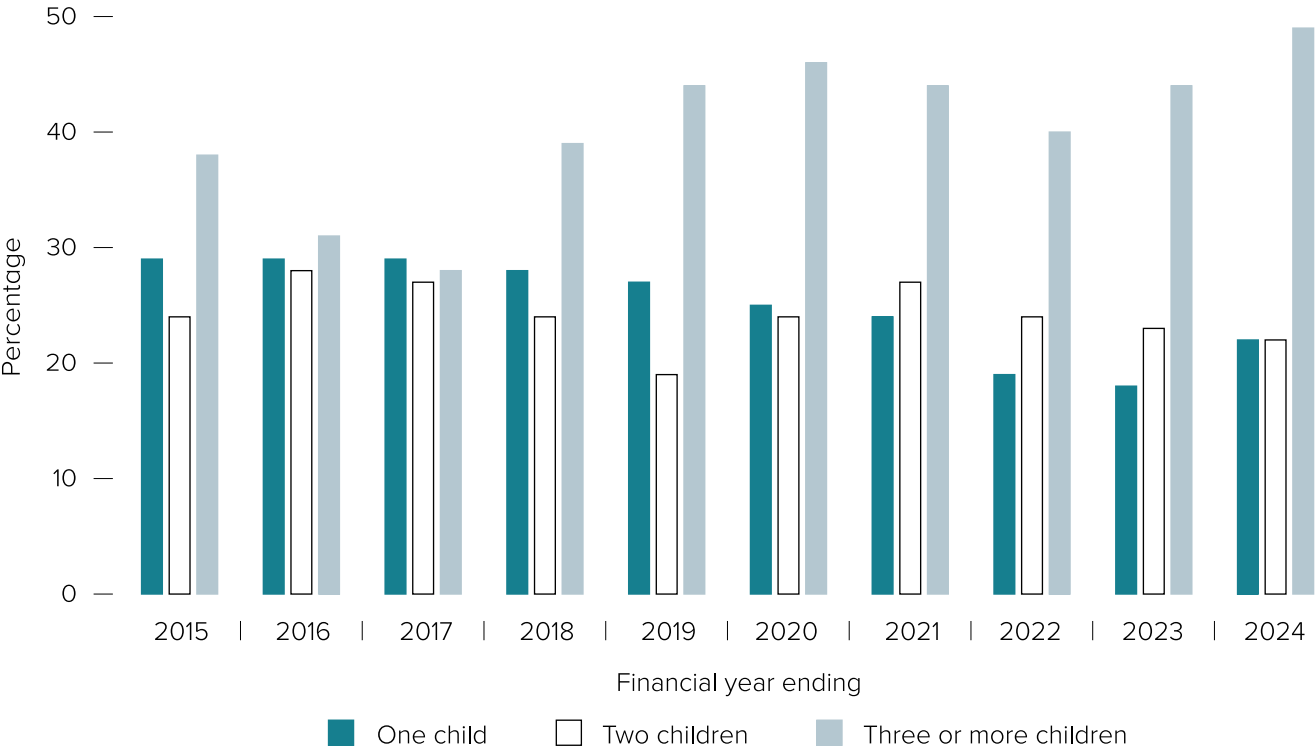
[Note 2] Data collection during the FYE2022 was via telephone interviewing as opposed to the established face to face method used prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Although we have assessed the FYE 2022 data quality to be robust enough for publication, there remains some residual bias in the survey sample resulting from the change in survey mode. More information on data quality is available in the DWP technical report which accompanies the release of the FYE 2022 statistics.

Between the FYE ending 2022 and 2024, 31.2% of children were living in relative income poverty. This represents a 2.2 percentage point increase compared to the previous period, suggesting a recent upward shift. However, it remains slightly below the level recorded during FYE 2019 to 2021 – the first period where data collection was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic – when the figure stood at 31.3%.

Measure: Percentage of children in Wales living in relative income poverty (after housing costs), by number of children in the household

We advise caution when looking at year on year changes as these are unlikely to be statistically significant.

Figure 3: Percentage of children living in relative income poverty by number of children in the household, April 2013 to March 2024 [Note 1] [Note 2]



Description of Figure 3: Column chart tracking relative income poverty among children by household size across the last ten reporting periods. Throughout this timeframe, children in households with three or more children consistently experienced the highest rates of relative income poverty. An exception occurred during the FYE 2015 to 2017, when children in households with exactly one child faced the highest risk.

*Source: Family Resources Survey,
Department for Work and Pensions*

Department for Work & Pensions

Relative income poverty (gov.wales)

[Note 1] Estimates for periods which span the financial year ending 2021 do not include the data collected during FYE 2021 in calculations. FYE 2021 estimates are unreliable as they are based on data collected during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, when lockdown rules severely disrupted the data collection.

[Note 2] Data collection during the FYE 2022 was via telephone interviewing as opposed to the established face to face method used prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Although we have assessed the FYE 2022 data quality to be robust enough for publication, there remains some residual bias in the survey sample resulting from the change in survey mode. More information on data quality is available in the DWP technical report which accompanies the release of the FYE 2022 statistics.

In the FYE 2022 to 2024, a higher percentage of children living in households with three or more children were living in relative income poverty (49%) compared to those in households with one or two children (both at 22%). Since FYE 2013 to 2015, trends have diverged across household sizes. The percentage of children living in relative income poverty from single-child households has decreased by 7 percentage points since FYE 2013

to 2015 (from 29% to 22%), while the rate for two-child households fell by 2 percentage points (from 24% to 22%). In contrast, the percentage of children living in relative income poverty in households with three or more children has risen significantly – up 11 percentage points from 38% to 49% over the same period.

Between the FYE 2015 and 2017, children living in households with exactly one child experienced a slightly higher rate of relative income poverty compared to those in households with more children. During this period, 29% of children in single-child households were living in relative income poverty, compared to 27% in two-child households and 28% in households with three or more children.

Measure: Children in Wales living in relative income poverty (after housing costs) by family type

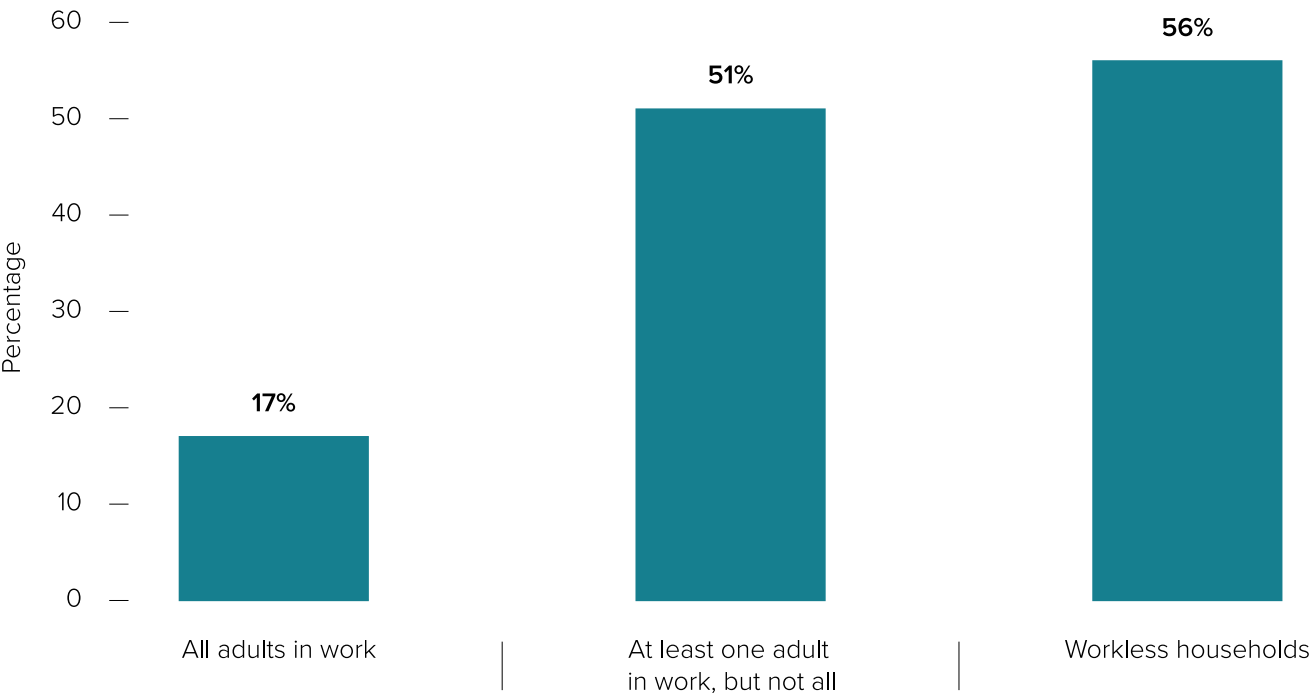
In the FYEs 2022 to 2024, 35% of children living with a lone parent were in relative income poverty. This represents a 5-percentage point increase from the previous period (FYE 2021 to 2023), when the figure was 30%. However, compared to FYE 2018 to 2020 – the last period before the COVID-19 pandemic began – the rate has decreased by 11 percentage points. Looking further back to FYE 2013 to 2015, which marks the start of the latest ten-year data series, the proportion has decreased by 9 percentage points.

Children living with couples were less likely to experience relative income poverty during the same period. In FYE 2022 to 2024, 30% of these children were in relative income poverty, an increase of 1 percentage point from FYE 2021 to 2023. Compared to FYE 2018 to 2020, the rate has risen by 4 percentage points, and by 6 percentage points since FYE 2013 to 2015.

Measure: Children in Wales living in relative income poverty (after housing costs), by economic status of household

We advise caution when looking at year on year changes as these are unlikely to be statistically significant.

Figure 4: Percentage of all children in Wales living in relative income poverty by economic status of household, April 2022 to March 2024 period [Note 1]



Description of Figure 4: Column chart showing the percentage of relative income poverty among children by household employment status. The highest percentage was observed among children living in workless households. This was followed by children in households where at least one adult was in work, but not all adults were employed (in-work poverty).

Source: Family Resources Survey, Department for Work and Pensions

[Department for Work & Pensions](#)

[Relative income poverty \(gov.wales\)](#)

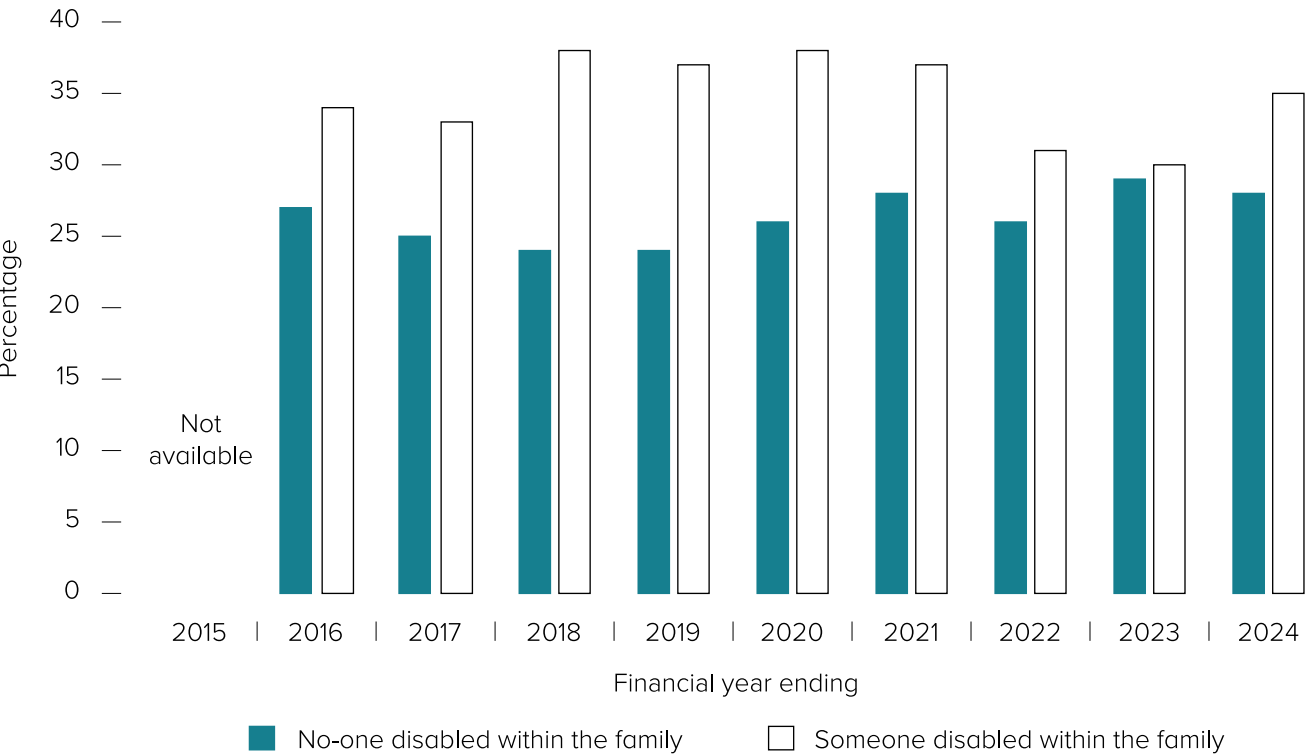
[Note 1] Data collection during the FYE 2022 was via telephone interviewing as opposed to the established face to face method used prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Although we have assessed the FYE 2022 data quality to be robust enough for publication, there remains some residual bias in the survey sample resulting from the change in survey mode. More information on data quality is available in the DWP technical report which accompanies the release of the FYE 2022 statistics.

In the FYE 2022 to 2024, 56% of children living in workless households were living in relative income poverty – the highest percentage among household types. This was followed by children in households where at least one adult was in work, but not all, at 51%. Both figures represent an increase compared to the previous period (FYE 2021 to 2023), when the rate was 49% for each group.

Children in households where all adults were in work also saw an increase to the percentage in relative income poverty, increasing from 14% in the previous period to 17% in FYE 2022 to 2024. Children in workless households and those with partial employment among adults have consistently had a higher rate of relative income poverty than the overall average across all household types.

Measure: Percentage of children in Wales living in relative income poverty (after housing costs), by disability in the family

Figure 5: Percentage of all children in Wales living in relative income poverty by whether there is disability (Equality Act definition) in the family, April 2013 to March 2024 periods [Note 1] [Note 2] [Note 3]



Description of Figure 5: Clustered column chart comparing the percentage of children living in relative income poverty based on whether there is a disability within the family. Across the last ten reporting periods, children in families with disabilities consistently faced a higher risk of income poverty than those in families without disabilities. The chart shows a peak in poverty rates during the FYE 2018 to 2020, followed by a steady decline in each subsequent period up to FYE 2022 to 2024. Identifying disabled people has changed over time, so data for FYE 2013 to 2015 has been omitted.

*Source: Family Resources Survey,
Department for Work and Pensions*

Relative income poverty (gov.wales)

[Note 1] Estimates for periods which span the FYE 2021 do not include the data collected during FYE 2021 in calculations. FYE 2021 estimates are unreliable as they are based on data collected during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, when lockdown rules severely disrupted the data collection.

[Note 2] Data collection during the FYE 2022 was via telephone interviewing as opposed to the established face to face method used prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Although we have assessed the FYE 2022 data quality to be robust enough for publication, there remains some residual bias in the survey sample resulting from the change

in survey mode. More information on data quality is available in the DWP technical report which accompanies the release of the FYE 2022 statistics.

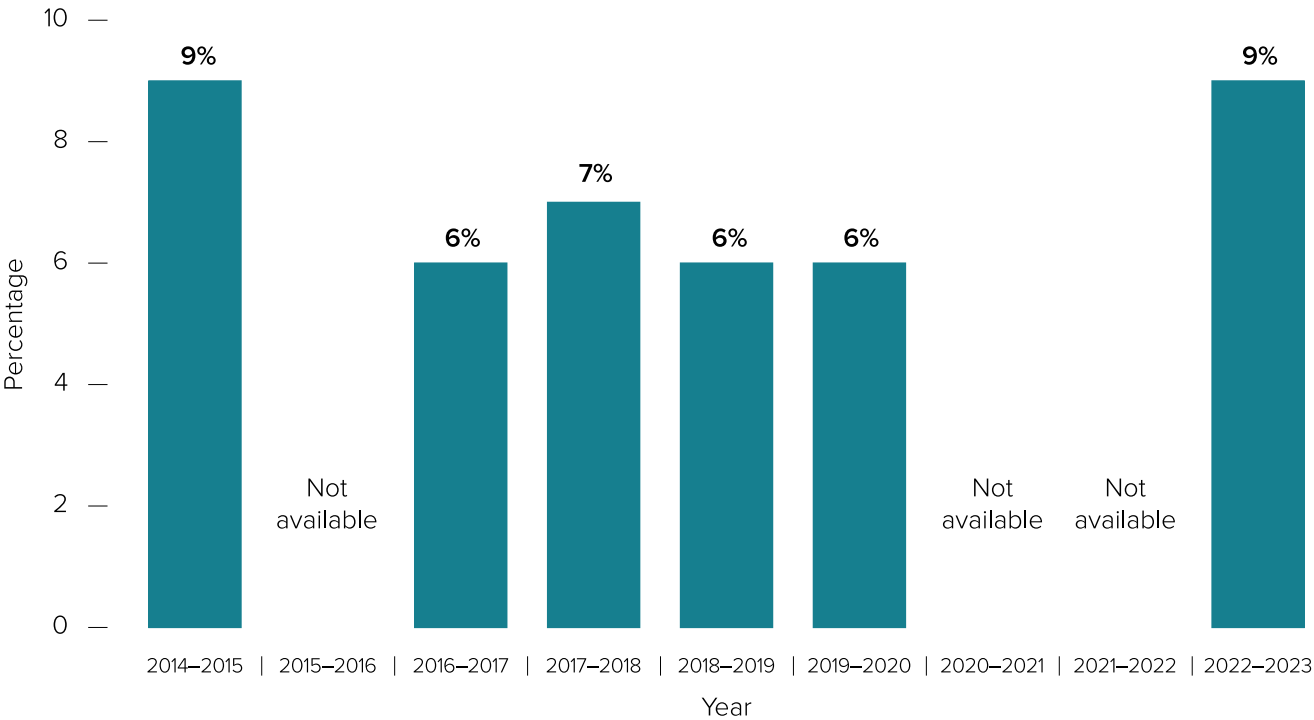
[Note 3] Disabled people are identified as those who report any physical or mental health condition(s) or illness(es) that last or are expected to last 12 months or more, and which limit their ability to carry out day-to-day activities a little, or a lot. This is in line with Equality Act definition.

Children living in families where someone has a disability have consistently faced a higher risk of relative income poverty compared to those in families without disabilities. In the financial years ending 2022 to 2024, 35% of children in families with a disability were living in relative income poverty – an increase of 5 percentage points from the previous period (FYE 2021 to 2023), and 1 percentage point higher than the rate recorded in FYE 2014 to 2016, when this measure was first introduced.

In the financial years ending 2022 to 2024, 28% of children in families without a disability were living in relative income poverty. This was 1 percentage point lower than the previous period (29%) and 1 percentage point higher than the rate recorded in FYE 2014 to 2016 (27%). Since data collection began in FYE 2008 to 2010, the percentage for this group has remained relatively consistent over time.

Measure: Percentage of children in material deprivation

Figure 6: Percentage of children in material deprivation in Wales, April 2014 to March 2023
[Note 1] [Note 2]



Description of Figure 6: Column chart showing trends in the percentage of children living in material deprivation over time. In the years leading up to the COVID-19 pandemic, the percentage remained relatively consistent and lower compared to later periods. The first year this measure was recorded following the pandemic shows an increase, indicating a shift in material deprivation levels among children since the pandemic.

Source: *National Survey for Wales, Welsh Government*

National Survey for Wales

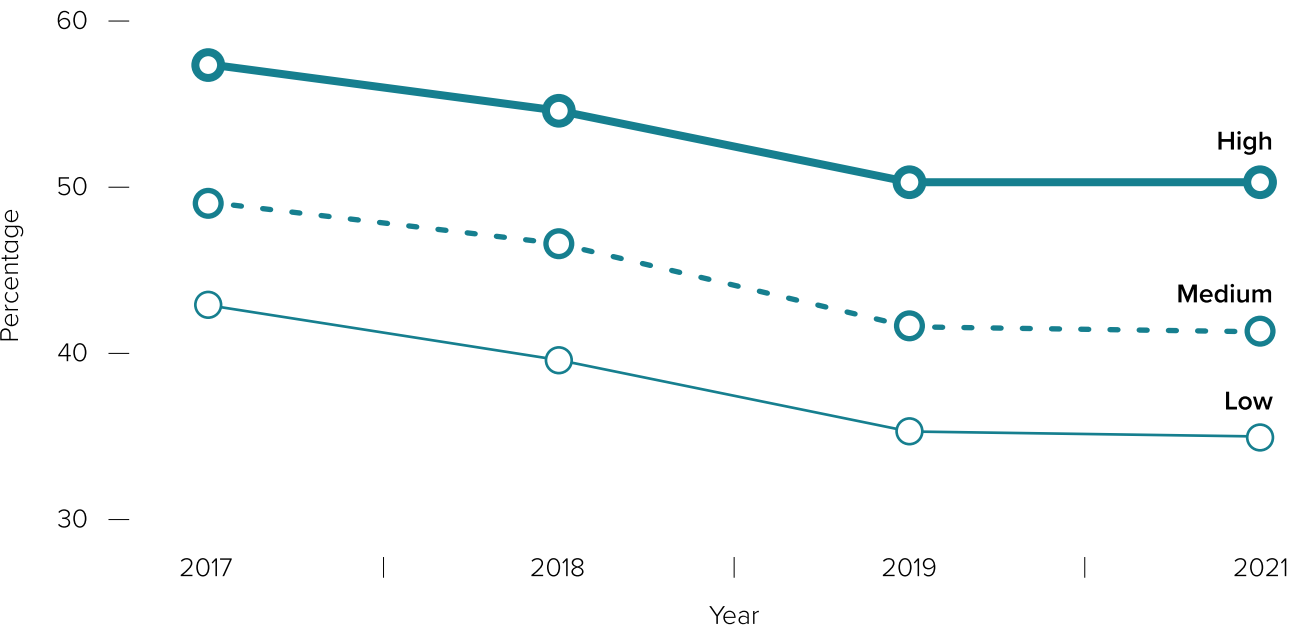
[Note 1] Data on material deprivation is not included in every year of the National Survey for Wales. As a result, figures are unavailable for 2015 to 2016, 2020 to 2021, 2021 to 2022, and 2023 to 2024, and comparisons across years should be made with caution.

[Note 2] Changes to the National Survey for Wales’s data collection since the COVID-19 pandemic may affect comparability.

In 2022 to 2023, 9% of children were living in material deprivation. This was 3 percentage points higher than in 2019 to 2020 (6%), which was the last year before the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2022 to 2023 figure matches the level recorded in 2014 to 2015, when this measure was first introduced.

Measure: Percentage of secondary school children who eat breakfast every weekday by family affluence

Figure 7: Percentage of children aged 11-16 reported eating breakfast every weekday, by family affluence scale, 2017 to 2023 [Note 1]



Description of Figure 7: Line chart showing that since 2017, the percentage of children reporting that they eat breakfast every weekday has declined across all affluence groups for secondary school-aged pupils. The data shows a consistent year-on-year decrease for each group since recording began. Children from higher affluence families have generally reported higher rates of weekday breakfast consumption compared to those from lower affluence families.

Source: School Health Research Network survey data, School Health Research Network

School Health Research Network

[Note 1] The data includes 11 to 16-year-olds who answered that five days out of five they have more than a glass of milk or fruit juice for breakfast.

In 2023, 50.3% of children from high family affluence groups reported eating breakfast every weekday. This was unchanged from the previous year but represents a decrease of 7.1 percentage points compared to 2017 (57.4%). Among children from middle affluence families, 41.3% reported eating breakfast daily in 2023 – a decrease of 0.3 percentage points from 2022 (41.6%) and 7.8 percentage points lower than in 2017 (49.1%). For children from low affluence families, the percentage was 35% in 2023, also down 0.3 percentage points from the previous year (35.3%) and 7.9 percentage points lower than in 2017 (42.9%).

In 2023, the percentage of children eating breakfast every weekday was 9 percentage points higher in high affluence families compared to middle affluence families, and 15.3 percentage points higher than in low affluence families.

Education, skills, and employment domain

Domain/national indicators

Engagement, attainment and skills and opportunity to participate in the labour market; related to objective 2 of the Child Poverty Strategy: to create pathways out of poverty so that children and young people and their families have opportunities to realise their potential.

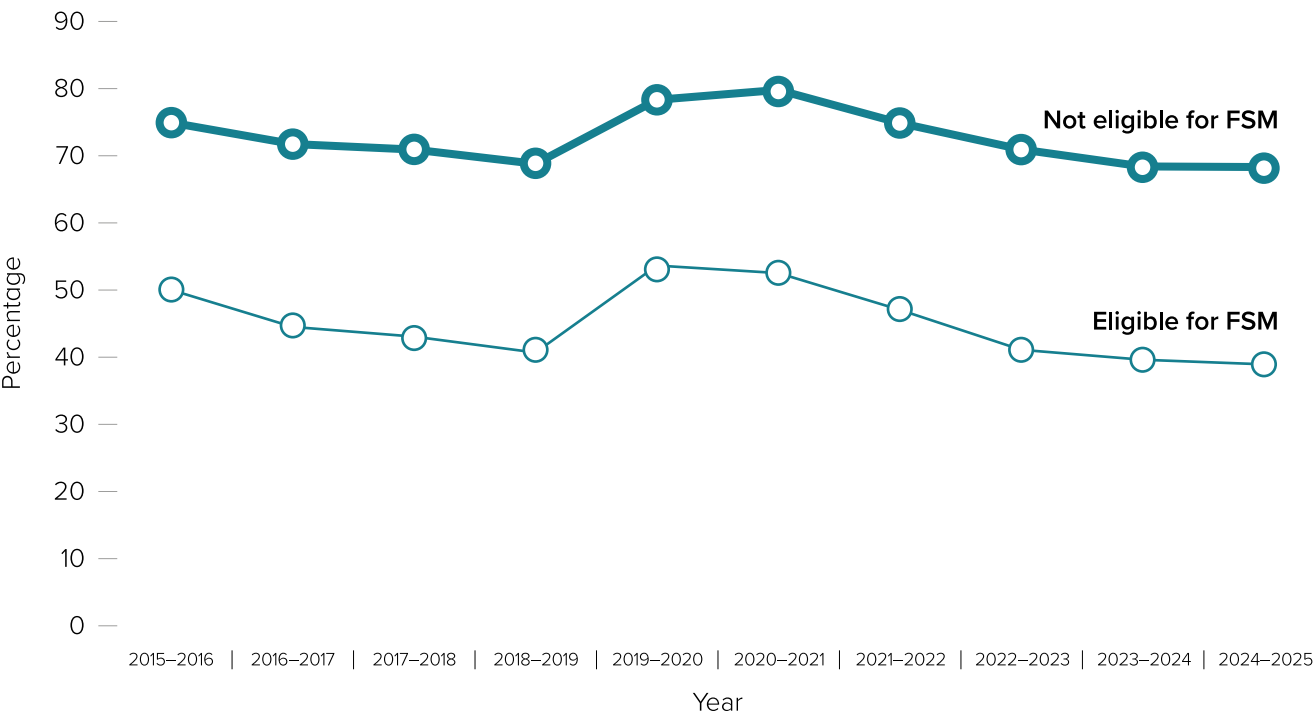
- National indicator 7: Average capped 9 points score of pupils, including the gap between those who are eligible or are not eligible for FSM.
- National indicator 16: Percentage of people in employment, who are on permanent contracts (or on temporary contracts and not seeking permanent employment) and who earn at least the real Living Wage.
- National indicator 17: Pay difference for gender, disability and ethnicity.
- National indicator 22: Percentage of people in education, employment or training, measured for different age groups.

Measures

- Percentage of GCSE entries awarded by grade range in all subjects A* to C for Year 11 pupils comparing pupils eligible for FSM and those not eligible.
- Percentage of people in employment in Wales who earn at least the real Living Wage.
- Pay difference in Wales (median hourly earnings for full-time employees excluding overtime) and totals by category (gender, disability and ethnicity).
- Percentage of people aged 16 to 24 in education, employment or training.

Measure: Percentage of GCSE entries awarded by grade range in all subjects A* to C for Year 11 pupils comparing pupils eligible for FSM and those not eligible

Figure 8: Percentage of year 11 pupils that received A* to C in their GCSE results by FSM eligibility, September 2015 to August 2024 [Note 1]



Description of Figure 8: Line chart showing the percentage of children achieving A* to C grades at GCSE, broken down by eligibility for FSM. Across all years, children not eligible for FSM consistently had higher attainment rates than those who were eligible. For both groups, the percentage decreased year-on-year until the first year affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, when attainment rates increased. Since then, the percentages have declined again in each subsequent year.

Source: Welsh Examinations Database, Welsh Government

GCSE entries and results pupils in Year 11 by FSM (StatsWales)

[Note 1] Data is only included for pupils who are matched between the Welsh Examinations Database and the School Census. Independent schools, Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) and Educated Other Than at School (EOTAS) do not complete the school census and results for pupils in these schools are not included.

The closure of schools during the March to August 2020 period prevented the Welsh Government from completing a census of PRU schools or EOTAS pupils. For this reason,

PRU and EOTAS pupils have not been included in the results for the 2019 to 2020 academic year only. From 2019 to 2020 onwards, these pupils have not been included in characteristics data.

For GCSEs and A levels, the 2021 to 2022 and 2022 to 2023 examination period were transitional years, where relevant qualifications sat by Welsh pupils returned to written examination. This was not a complete return to pre-pandemic examinations. To compensate for any disruption to the school timetable, pupils who sat exams in 2021 to 2022 were given a wider choice of questions from the syllabus, with Qualifications Wales setting results broadly midway between 2018 to 2019 (the last time examinations were sat) and 2020 to 2021 outcomes. In 2022 to 2023 Qualifications Wales set the results broadly midway between 2018 to 2019 and 2021 to 2022 outcomes. In 2023 to 2024 Qualifications Wales have returned to awarding results in line with pre-pandemic results, resulting in a slight decrease from 2022 to 2023 results.

On 21 June 2021, the then Minister for Education confirmed that **learners entered for GCSE, AS and A Levels qualifications in summer 2021 would have their qualifications awarded through a centre determined grade model.**

In the 2024 to 2025 period, 68.3% of Year 11 pupils who were not eligible for FSM achieved A* to C grades at GCSE, compared to 38.9% of pupils who were eligible. These are the lowest percentages on record for both groups and reflects an attainment gap of 29.4 percentage points between the two groups. Compared to the previous year, attainment decreased for both groups: a reduction of 0.1 percentage points for pupils not eligible for FSM (from 68.4%) and 0.7 percentage points for those who were eligible (from 39.6%).

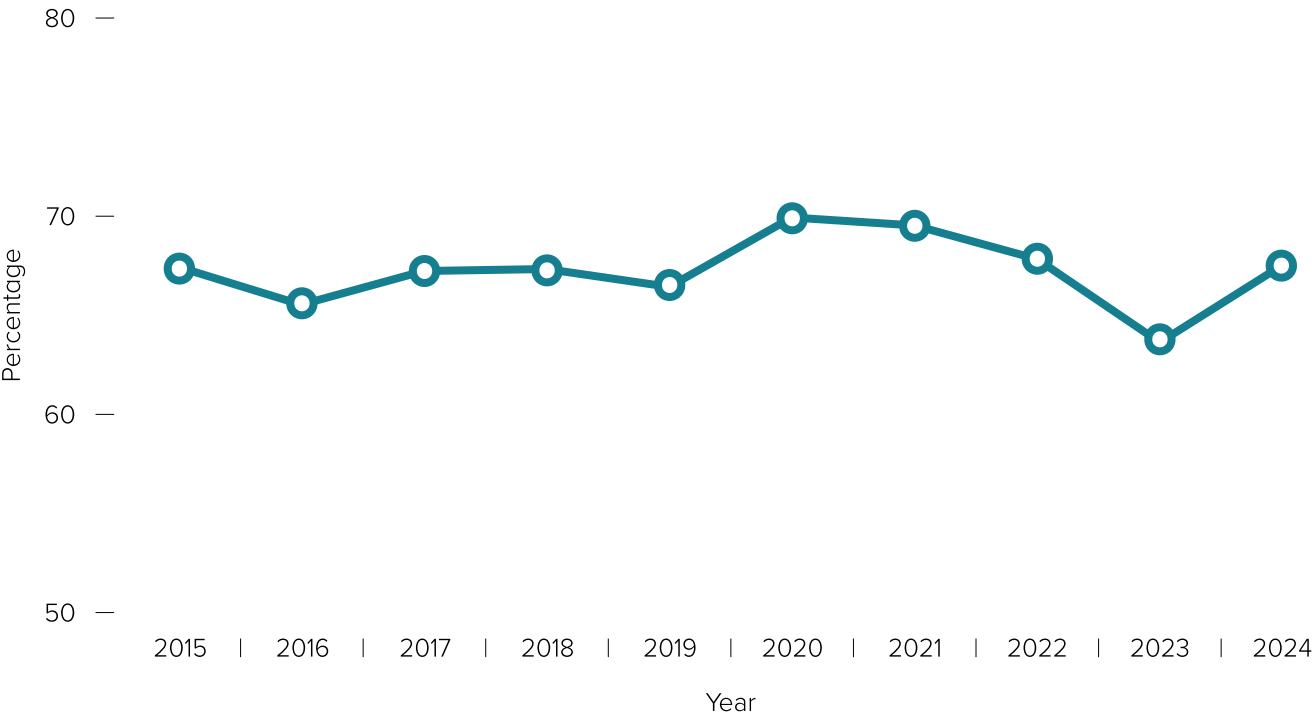
Since the 2015 to 2016 academic year, children not eligible for FSM have consistently achieved a higher percentage of A* to C grades compared to those who were eligible. The attainment gap between the two groups widened steadily until 2019 to 2020, when it dropped sharply to 24.7 percentage points – the first year impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. In the years that followed, the gap increased again, except in 2023 to 2024, when it narrowed slightly. That year, the percentage of non-eligible children achieving A* to C grades was 28.8 points higher than their eligible peers, down from 29.8 points the year before.

Since 2015 to 2016, the percentage of pupils not eligible for FSM achieving A* to C grades has fallen by 6.6 percentage points (from 74.9%), while the decrease among pupils eligible for FSM has been larger, at 11.1 percentage points (from 50%).

GCSE attainment was higher during the period when assessments were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2019 to 2020, 78.3% of pupils not eligible for FSM achieved A* to C grades, compared to 53.6% of pupils who were eligible.

Measure: Percentage of people in employment in Wales who earn at least the real Living Wage

Figure 9: Percentage of people in employment and who earn at least the real living wage [Note 1]



Description of Figure 9: Line chart showing the percentage of people in employment earning at least the living wage since 2015. Over this period, the percentage has remained relatively stable, with limited variation year to year. The highest recorded percentage occurred in 2020, while the lowest was in 2023.

Source: Annual Population Survey,
Office for National Statistics

Percentage of people in employment, who are on permanent contracts (or on temporary contracts, and not seeking permanent employment) and who earn at least the real Living Wage (StatsWales)

[Note 1] The data for this chart only includes people on permanent contracts or people on temporary contract who are not seeking permanent employment.

In 2024, 67.4% of people in employment earned at least the real living wage. This was 3.9 percentage points higher than in 2023 (63.5%) and slightly above the level recorded in 2015 (67.3%).

Measure: Pay difference in Wales (median hourly earnings for full-time employees excluding overtime) and totals by category (gender, disability and ethnicity)

Gender

According to the Annual Population Survey, median hourly earnings vary by gender. In 2024, male employees earned £17.43 per hour, compared to £17.11 for female employees – a difference of £0.32, equivalent to 1.9% of male earnings. In 2023, the gap was larger, with males earning £16.62 per hour and females earning £15.80, a difference of £0.82 or 4.9% of male earnings. In 2015, male employees earned £12.42 per hour, while female employees earned £11.50, resulting in a pay gap of £0.92, or 7.4% of male earnings. Earnings breakdowns by ethnicity and disability were not available for 2024 at the time this report was produced.

Disability

In 2024, disabled employees earned a median hourly wage of £14.00, compared to £15.18 for non-disabled employees – a difference of £1.18 (7.8%). In 2023, the gap was larger, with disabled employees earning £12.65 per hour and non-disabled employees earning £14.40, a difference of £1.75 (12.2%).

In 2015, disabled employees earned £9.11 per hour, while non-disabled employees earned £10.38, resulting in a difference of £1.27 (12.2%). The largest recorded gap occurred in 2019, when disabled employees earned £9.87 per hour compared to £11.63 for non-disabled employees – a difference of £1.76 (15.1%).

Ethnicity

Figures for 2024 show that white employees earned a median hourly wage of £14.97, compared to £14.43 for Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic employees – a difference of £0.54 (3.6%). In 2023, the pay gap was larger, with white employees earning £14.03 per hour and Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic employees earning £12.10, a difference of £1.93 (13.8%).

In 2015, white employees earned £10.23 per hour, while Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic employees earned £9.00, resulting in a difference of £1.23 (12%). The smallest recorded gap was in 2017, when Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic employees earned slightly more than white employees (£10.64 compared to £10.57) resulting in a -£0.07 difference (-0.7%).

Measure: Percentage of people aged 16 to 24 in education, employment or training

In 2023, 86.4% of young people aged 16 to 24 in Wales were engaged in EET. This marks a 0.3 percentage point increase from 86.1% in the previous year and represents a 2.5 percentage point increase compared to 2015, when the figure stood at 83.9%.

Looking at gender differences, 84.4% of males were in EET in 2023, compared to 88.6% of females. Compared to 2022, the percentage of males in EET saw a slight decline of 0.1 percentage points (from 84.6%), while the percentage of females increased by 0.9 percentage points (from 87.7%). The gender gap in EET participation widened slightly over the year, increasing from 3.2 percentage points in 2022 to 4.2 percentage points in 2023.

In 2023, 89.9% of 16 to 18-year-olds were in EET, an increase of 2.2 percentage points compared to 2022 (87.7%). This figure is broadly in line with the level recorded in 2015 (89.8%).

Gender differences were evident in 2023, with 93.8% of females in EET compared to 86.4% of males. This marks a decrease of 2.8 percentage points for males since 2022 (89.2%), and an increase of 7.7 percentage points for females (up from 86.1%). Compared with 2015, the percentage of males in EET has declined by 2.3 percentage points (from 88.7%), while the percentage of females has increased by 2.9 percentage points (from 90.9%).

Gender pay difference in Wales by year (median hourly earnings full-time employees excluding overtime) (£) (StatsWales)

Median hourly pay and pay difference between hourly earnings of employees by disability status and ethnicity, Wales, 2014 to 2023 (gov.wales)

Estimated 16-24 year olds not in education, training or employment by gender, economic activity and age groups (StatsWales)

Wellbeing domain

Domain/national indicators

To be able to enjoy activities for health and wellbeing, to be able to enjoy good mental wellbeing. Related to objectives 3 and 4 of the Child Poverty Strategy: to support child and family wellbeing and make sure that work across the Welsh Government delivers for children living in poverty, including those with protected characteristics, so that they can enjoy their rights and have better outcomes; and to ensure children, young people and their families are treated with dignity and respect by the people and services who interact with and support them and to challenge the stigma of poverty.

- National indicator 1: Percentage of live single births with a birth weight of under 2.5kg.
- National indicator 29: Mean mental wellbeing score for people.
- National indicator 38: Percentage of people participating in sporting activities three or more times a week.

Measures

- Percentage of live single births with low birthweights by Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) quintile.
- Mean mental wellbeing score for adults aged 16 or over by material deprivation.
- Mean emotional difficulties score for primary school pupils on the Me and My Feelings Questionnaire by family affluence.
- Percentage of secondary school pupils who rated their life satisfaction as 6 or above by family affluence.
- Percentage of parents by material deprivation reporting that their child takes part in regular organised activity once a week outside school, such as sport or a youth group.
- Percentage of primary school children who reported exercising (so much that they get out of breath and sweat) at least four times a week by family affluence.
- Percentage of secondary school children who are physically active for at least 60 minutes per day by family affluence.

Measure: Percentage of live single births with low birthweights by Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) quintile.

Figure 10: Percentage of single live births to Welsh residents in Wales with low birthweight, by Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) quintile, 2024 [Note 1]



Description of Figure 10: Column chart showing the percentage of low birthweight babies as a proportion of total births, broken down by deprivation quintile in Wales. The most deprived quintile consistently shows the highest percentage of low birthweights, while the least deprived quintile has the lowest. Notably, quintile 2 – despite being more deprived than quintile 3 – has a lower percentage of low birthweight births, indicating a deviation from the overall pattern.

Source: National Community Child Health Database, Digital Health and Care Wales;

Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation, Welsh Government

Singleton live births to Welsh residents by birthweight and Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation quintile (StatsWales)

[Note 1] Not stated includes all records where the resident LSOA was missing, or where the LSOA was not in Wales.

In 2024, the proportion of live single births with low birthweight in Wales was highest among residents living in the most deprived areas (first quintile), where 7.8% of births fell into this category. This was followed by the third quintile at 6.5%, the second quintile at 6.3%, the fourth quintile at 5.1%, and the least deprived areas (fifth quintile) at 5.0%.

Compared to the previous year, the most notable change occurred in the first quintile, which saw a decrease of 1.7 percentage points. In contrast, the second quintile experienced the smallest change, with a slight increase of 0.1 percentage points from 2023.

Compared to 2019 – the first year this measure was recorded and the last unaffected by the COVID-19 pandemic - the largest increases were observed in the third and fourth quintiles, both rising by 0.9 percentage points from 5.6% and 4.2%, respectively. The proportion in the most deprived areas (first quintile) remained unchanged at 7.8%.

Looking further back to 2019 (the last year unaffected by the COVID-19 pandemic), the largest shift was observed among births where the LSOA was not stated. In this group, the percentage of low birthweight births dropped from 9.2% in 2019 to 6.1% in 2024 – a decrease of 3.1 percentage points. Meanwhile, the first quintile showed the least change over the same period, with a marginal increase of 0.1 percentage points.

Measure: Mean mental wellbeing score for adults aged 16 or over by material deprivation

In 2024 to 2025, the average mental wellbeing score for adults aged 16 and over in Wales, as measured by the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale, was 48.4. This marked a slight increase from the previous recorded score of 48.2 – a difference of 0.2 percentage points from 2022 to 2023. The scale itself ranges from 14 to 70, based on responses to 14 positively worded statements. It is important to note that results from 2021 to 2022 onwards are not directly comparable with earlier years due to changes in the survey methodology.

Measure: Mean emotional difficulties score for primary school pupils on the Me and My Feelings Questionnaire by family affluence

Turning to children's emotional wellbeing, data from the Me and My Feelings Questionnaire revealed differences based on family affluence. In 2022-2023, children from families with low affluence had an average emotional difficulties score of 7.6 out of 20. Those from middle-affluence families scored slightly lower, at 7.2, while children from high-affluence families had the lowest average score, at 6.7.

Measure: Percentage of secondary school pupils who rated their life satisfaction as 6 or above by family affluence

According to SHRN, in 2023, 84.5% of secondary school pupils aged 11 to 16 from high-affluence families rated their life satisfaction as 6 or above on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 represents "the worst possible life" and 10 represents "the best possible life." This compares with 77.7% of pupils from middle-affluence families and 70.9% from low-affluence families. The gap between high and low affluence groups was 13.6 percentage points, while the difference between high and middle affluence groups was 6.8 percentage points.

In 2021, 82.4% of secondary school pupils aged 11 to 16 from high-affluence families rated their life satisfaction as 6 or above. This compares with 76.6% of pupils from middle-affluence families and 69.6% from low-affluence families. Compared to 2023, these figures were 2.1 percentage points lower for high-affluence pupils, 1.1 percentage points lower for middle-affluence pupils, and 1.3 percentage points lower for those from low-affluence families.

Measure: Percentage of parents by material deprivation reporting that their child takes part in regular organised activity once a week outside school, such as sport or a youth group

Findings from the 2022 to 2023 National Survey for Wales indicate a notable difference in participation in regular organised activities outside school – such as sports or youth groups – between families experiencing material deprivation and those who are not. Just over half (55%) of parents in material deprivation reported that their child took part in such activities at least once a week, compared with 78% of parents not in material deprivation.

Measure: Percentage of primary school children who reported exercising (so much that they get out of breath and sweat) at least four times a week by family affluence

In 2022 to 2023, just over half (56%) of primary school children from high-affluence families reported exercising at least four times a week to the point of getting out of breath and sweating. This level of activity was less common among children from middle-affluence families, with 47% reporting the same, and even lower among those from low-affluence families, at 40%. The difference between high and low affluence groups was 16 percentage points, while the gap between high and middle affluence groups was 9 percentage points.

Measure: Percentage of secondary school children who are physically active for at least 60 minutes per day by family affluence

In 2022 to 2023, 20.4% of children aged 11 to 16 from high-affluence families reported engaging in at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day over the past week. This was higher than the proportion among children from middle-affluence families (15.6%) and low-affluence families (15.3%), with gaps of 4.8 and 5.1 percentage points respectively.

Compared to the previous recorded year (2021), physical activity levels increased across all affluence groups. Among high-affluence children, the proportion rose by 2.4 percentage points from 18.0%. Middle-affluence children saw a 1.5 percentage point increase from 14.1%, while low-affluence children increased by 1.4 percentage points from 13.9%.

Looking further back to 2017, the percentage of children meeting the daily activity threshold was slightly lower among high-affluence families at 19.9% – a 0.5 percentage point increase by 2023. In contrast, middle-affluence children reported a higher rate in 2017 (16.3%), marking a 0.7 percentage point decrease over time. For low-affluence children, the figure was 15.9% in 2017, 0.6 percentage points higher than in 2023.

Student Health and Wellbeing in Wales

National Survey for Wales: results viewer

Inclusive communities domain

Domain/national indicators

To be satisfied with the community where you live, to access services, feel included, respected, and treated with dignity. Related to objective 4 of the Child Poverty Strategy: to ensure children, young people and their families are treated with dignity and respect by the people and services who interact with and support them and to challenge the stigma of poverty.

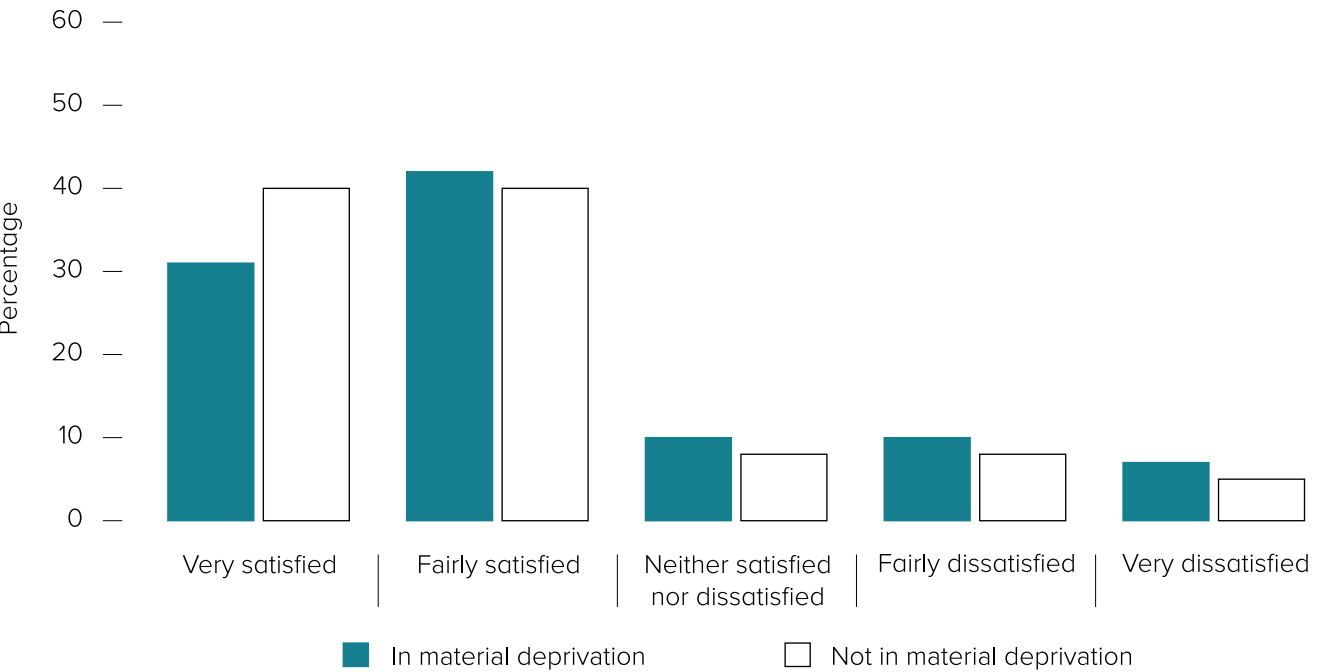
- National indicator 24: Percentage of people satisfied with their ability to get to/access the facilities and services they need.
- National indicator 27: Percentage of people agreeing that they belong to the area; that people from different backgrounds get on well together; and that people treat each other with respect.

Measures

- Percentage of people by material deprivation satisfied with their ability to get to/access the facilities and services they need.
- Percentage of people by material deprivation satisfied with outdoor and indoor places for children to play in their local area.
- Percentage of people by material deprivation agreeing that they belong to the area; that people from different backgrounds get on well together; and that people treat each other with respect.
- Percentage of primary school children who agree that teachers accept them as they are, overall and by family affluence.

Measure: Percentage of people by material deprivation satisfied with their ability to get to/access the facilities and services they need

Figure 11: Survey responses regarding access to local services, by material deprivation status, 2024 to 2025



Description of Figure 11: Clustered column chart showing that, in 2024 to 2025, most National Survey for Wales respondents reported being at least fairly satisfied with their access to local services, regardless of their material deprivation status. However, overall satisfaction levels were higher among those not experiencing material deprivation compared to those who were.

Source: National Survey for Wales, Welsh Government

National Survey for Wales: results viewer (GOV.WALES)

In 2024 to 2025, satisfaction with access to local services differed between households in material deprivation and those not experiencing deprivation. Among respondents from households in material deprivation, 73% reported being

either fairly or very satisfied with their ability to access local services. This compares with 79% of respondents from households not in material deprivation – a difference of 6 percentage points.

A small proportion of respondents expressed neutral views, with 10% of those in material deprivation reporting they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, compared to 8% among those not in deprivation.

Levels of dissatisfaction were higher among those in material deprivation. A combined total of 17% reported being fairly or very dissatisfied, compared to 13% of respondents from households not in material deprivation – a 4-percentage point difference.

Measure: Percentage of people by material deprivation satisfied with outdoor and indoor places for children to play in their local area

In 2022 to 2023, satisfaction with indoor and outdoor places for children aged 1 to 10 varied between households in material deprivation and those not experiencing deprivation. Among respondents from households in material deprivation, 54.3% reported being either fairly or very satisfied with these spaces. This compares with 69.9% of respondents from households not in material deprivation – a difference of 15.6 percentage points.

Neutral responses were similar across both groups, with 9.3% of respondents in material deprivation and 7.7% of those not in deprivation reporting they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

Dissatisfaction was more common among those in material deprivation. A combined total of 36.5% reported being fairly or very dissatisfied, compared to 22.4% of respondents from households not in material deprivation – a difference of 14.1 percentage points.

Measure: Percentage of people by material deprivation agreeing that they belong to the area; that people from different backgrounds get on well together; and that people treat each other with respect

In 2024 to 2025, a sense of belonging in the local area was more commonly reported among respondents from households not in material

deprivation. Among those in deprivation, 64% either strongly or tended to agree that they belonged in their area. This compares with 74% of respondents from households not in material deprivation – a difference of 10 percentage points.

Neutral responses were slightly more common among those in deprivation, with 23% neither agreeing nor disagreeing, compared to 16% among those not in deprivation.

There were too few respondents experiencing material deprivation who answered that they strongly disagreed that they belonged in their area to provide a reliable estimate. However, those who tended to disagree were slightly more common among respondents in material deprivation. Overall, 8% of respondents in material deprivation tended to disagree that they belonged in their area, compared to 7% of those not in deprivation – a difference of one percentage point.

Measure: Percentage of primary school children who agree that teachers accept them as they are, overall and by family affluence

In 2022 to 2023, 89% of primary school children agreed that their teachers accept them as they are. This figure was consistent among children from both high- and low-affluence families. Children from middle-affluence families reported slightly higher agreement, at 90%.