



Save the Children



# Severe Child Poverty in the UK

Monica Magadi  
Sue Middleton

we support  end child poverty  
A member of the Campaign to End Child Poverty

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**Save the Children**  
UK

**Save the Children fights for children in the UK and around the world who suffer from poverty, disease, injustice and violence. We work with them to find lifelong answers to the problems they face.**

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# Foreword

Save the Children fights for children across the world who suffer from poverty, working with them to find lasting answers to the problems they face. Its experience over many decades and across many countries means that Save the Children knows poverty when it sees it. As a former Chair of the Low Pay Commission, I became aware of the blight that low incomes can have on many people's lives, including children, here in the UK.

Poverty infringes a child's right to an adequate standard of living, which is enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Every state has a responsibility to use its resources to the maximum effect possible to ensure that children do not experience poverty. In the UK, one of the world's richest countries, the resources available are large.

As throughout the world, Save the Children's work in the UK is focussed on those in the severest poverty. Since publishing major new studies of the problem – *Britain's Poorest Children 1* and *2* – Save the Children has argued that the government must direct greater resources towards this critical group. So far, however, the government has not been convinced that a specific focus on those in the most extreme poverty is required.

*Severe Child Poverty in the UK* adds a further dimension to our understanding of severe poverty.

Rather than looking solely at measures of a family's income, it looks also at other indicators of deprivation. There are more than one million children living in families with incomes a long way short of the poverty line and lacking real basics. They lack different bedrooms for teenage children of different sex, and have no money to furnish worn out furniture or replace broken electrical equipment, no money for children to participate in activities, family breaks or even school trips, and no money to save for a rainy day.

This is not the poverty we expect of a country like Britain. Save the Children believes that the government must track severe poverty explicitly and not leave it to the voluntary sector to ensure that those with the least are not ignored. The government has taken important steps to target child poverty, but more action is needed, particularly to help those facing the most severe deprivation.



Adair Turner



# I Introduction: why focus on severe child poverty?

Despite the considerable recent decline in child poverty in the UK that has, at least in part, been attributed to government reforms, separate independent research has suggested that children from the very poorest families remain a legitimate concern. Indeed, Sutherland (2001) noted that the income situation of the poorest children may have worsened following the government's early reforms. Recent evidence from the British Household Panel Survey (BHPS) showed that whereas the proportion of children in non-severe poverty declined significantly after 1997, there has been no evidence of a corresponding decline in the proportion of children in severe poverty (Magadi and Middleton, 2005). This was consistent with findings from a separate study based on the Family Resources Survey (FRS), which observed that the decline in child poverty between 1997/98 and 2003/04 was lower for more severe poverty (below 50 per cent of median income) compared to the proportion below 60 per cent of median income (Brewer *et al*, 2005).

While currently and under its new measures (DWP, 2003) the government will continue to monitor various dimensions of poverty, including material deprivation, there are no plans to monitor severe poverty. There has been a vast array of recent research on child poverty, but little is known about the circumstances and characteristics of children in severe poverty for whom policy responses may need to be different (Adelman *et al*, 2003).

It has been argued that:

*'... within the context of target-driven policies such as the reduction of child poverty by one-quarter by 2004, most improvements had been among those who were easiest to help, that is those children who were closest to the poverty line and, therefore, arguably easiest to*

*raise above it. Humanitarian concerns would suggest that policy had failed, since the group of children who were experiencing the most severe poverty had been left behind. Indeed, if child poverty is to be eradicated, it is essential to maintain a focus on dealing with children who are facing the most difficult circumstances, and to ensure that policy interventions benefit this group. It is, therefore, important that eradication of severe child poverty be incorporated in official targets, and measures of severe poverty included in the new child poverty measures (DWP, 2003), through which progress towards the long-term goal to eradicate child poverty is to be assessed. Appropriately targeted policy aimed at tackling severe poverty would require a better understanding of the circumstances of those in severe poverty. ... Another major challenge relates to measurement problems to be able to distinguish between those who are genuinely in severe poverty, from those whose incomes are unsteady or cannot be measured accurately, especially the self-employed. The best approach would be a measure combining very low income (eg, below 40 per cent of median) with severe material deprivation'.*

(Magadi and Middleton, 2005)

Previous research for Save the Children by the authors of this report (Adelman *et al*, 2003; Magadi and Middleton, 2005) used a measure of severe childhood poverty derived from the Poverty and Social Exclusion Survey of Britain, since there was no measure of material deprivation available from large national datasets when the research was undertaken. However, since 2004/05 the Family Resources Survey (FRS), from which most of the government's measures of childhood poverty are drawn, has collected data on material deprivation. Although at the time of writing no decision has been made about how these data are to be used to construct a measure of material

deprivation, it seemed timely to undertake analysis that could suggest a measure of severe poverty in childhood, based on the principles outlined in our earlier reports, but using the new data on material deprivation.

Therefore, this report contains the findings of a technical study, which aimed to identify a measure of severe child poverty that can discriminate between the experiences of children defined as severely poor and other children. The measure should:

- take into account the child's own experience of poverty or deprivation, not just whether the family/household was poor
- measure parents' experience of poverty or deprivation, separately from that of their children
- consider the income of household, since the contribution of low household income to the risk of poverty in childhood cannot be ignored.

The next section of the report briefly examines some of the relevant literature about poverty measurement (Section 2.1), before considering the setting of a threshold for material deprivation for both children and adults (Section 2.2), and low income (Section 2.3). Section 2.4 contains our recommended methodology for measuring severe childhood poverty and shows how the measure discriminates between children experiencing different forms of poverty in terms of material deprivation. Section 3 describes the characteristics of children experiencing severe childhood poverty and highlights those characteristics that seem to place children at most risk of being severely poor. Section 4 provides a brief summary of the findings and our conclusions.

## 2 Setting out the methodology and testing

### 2.1 Overview: poverty measurement

Given the multi-dimensional nature of poverty, its measurement should encompass a variety of dimensions and not just income (Perry, 2002), since focusing solely on income may miss out important aspects of what it means to be poor (Nolan and Whelan, 2005). Furthermore, it has been pointed out that poverty measures based solely on income are often limited, given the difficulty in obtaining an accurate calculation of a household's income and widespread misreporting of income by respondents in surveys. Material deprivation indicators should compensate to some extent for the misreporting of income, which is believed to be a particular problem at the lower end of the income distribution (Willits, 2006).

The measure of material deprivation in this research is based on an 'enforced lack' approach, which helps to discriminate between those choosing not to have necessities and those forced to do without necessities because of a lack of economic resources (Hallerod, 1995). There is, of course, an on-going debate in deprivation literature on the role that choice plays in answering questions about a lack of necessities and how different groups may respond differently to such questions (Cappellari and Jenkins, 2004). For instance, it has been noted that younger people tend to say they cannot afford items, whereas older people tend to say they don't need items (Mckay, 2004). Nevertheless, our confidence in the use of the enforced lack approach in this study is strengthened by the fact that research evidence has not highlighted differential reporting of deprivation indicators by families with children – families tend not to differ much from the general population (Willits, 2006).

Although some researchers have highlighted the benefits of material deprivation measure over income and vice versa, many experts recognise the

complementary nature of the two measures and support the use of combined income and deprivation indicators for a more robust and reliable poverty measure (Ringen, 1988; Muffels, 1993; Hallerod, 1995; Nolan, 1999; Adelman *et al.*, 2003; DWP, 2003). According to the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) (2003), a better measure of living standards at any point in time can be obtained by measuring both low income and material deprivation combined to identify households whose low incomes are leading to deprivation. Furthermore, the combined measure helps minimize the role of choice in deprivation items.

Analogous to the methodology used by Adelman *et al.* (2003) to measure severe child poverty based on the Poverty and Social Exclusion Survey (PSE) of 1999, the measurement of severe child poverty in this study, based on the 2004/05 FRS, involves three indicators:

- a) child deprivation – whether the child goes without items that the majority of parents in the UK believes to be necessary for children, because parents cannot afford to provide the item(s)
- b) parent deprivation – whether parent(s) go without items that the majority of adults in the UK believes to be necessary for adults because they cannot afford the items
- c) income poverty of the household – below a given threshold of median household income (eg, 50 per cent or 40 per cent of median, or 'poorest of the poor')?

### 2.2 Material deprivation threshold

It has been suggested that it is not necessary to include a long list of goods and services when measuring material deprivation (DWP, 2003). The list of deprivation items included in the FRS (see Annex A) was arrived at through analysis of all existing UK



deprivation data to identify a set of questions that best discriminates between poor and non-poor families (McKay and Collard, 2004). A range of analytical methods were used to select the subset of questions, ranging from an examination of items that families were most commonly unable to afford and direct investigations of the ability of particular questions to discriminate between poor and non-poor, to more powerful statistical methods based on factor analysis and latent class analysis. The different methods identified a consistent set of questions as having the greatest relevance and it is these that have been incorporated into the FRS since 2004/05 and which have been used in this study.

### 2.2.1 Setting deprivation thresholds: discriminant analysis

The first step in the analysis is to set the deprivation threshold for severe child poverty measurement. Our preferred measure of material deprivation (for both children and parents) is based on a simple additive

approach.<sup>1</sup> We established appropriate thresholds for the number of material deprivation items that children or parents have to go without before being classified as deprived. Consistent with the enforced lack approach, the family's economic circumstances, including current income and other indicators of economic hardship, should be reflected in the deprivation measure. We used discriminant analysis<sup>2</sup> to establish appropriate thresholds for the number of child/adult items lacked for cases to be classified as deprived or non-deprived, based on three key predictor variables of economic hardship, namely: household income;<sup>3</sup> keeping up with payments of household bills;<sup>4</sup> and economic activity.<sup>5</sup>

### Adults'/parents' deprivation

A significant proportion of children were in families who could not afford specific adult-related necessities (Table 2.1).

To determine the appropriate threshold for the number of adult necessities lacked for cases to be

**Table 2.1 Percentage of children in families deprived of specific adult-related items**

Item	Adults have this	Would like but cannot afford	Do not want	NA/missing
A holiday away from home for at least one week a year	57.0	38.3	4.0	0.8
Friends or family around for a drink or meal at least once a month	58.0	16.7	23.4	1.9
Two pairs of all weather shoes for all adults in the benefit unit	87.2	10.4	1.9	0.6
Enough money to keep your home in a decent state of decoration	77.9	18.7	1.3	2.1
Household content insurance	74.8	17.7	5.2	2.3
Make regular savings of £10 a month or more for rainy days or retirement	53.5	40.8	5.0	0.8
Replace any worn out furniture	59.1	30.6	7.9	2.4
Replace or repair electrical goods such as refrigerator or washing machine when broken	70.4	21.7	5.4	2.4
Have a small amount of money to spend each week on yourself (not on your family)	62.7	33.4	3.4	0.5
Have a hobby or leisure activity	56.9	18.6	23.2	1.3

Base population: all children (n = 16,012) in 2004/05 FRS

**Table 2.2 Number of adult deprivation items that families were unable to afford**

Number of necessities lacked	Per cent	Cumulative per cent
None (not in deprivation)	39.9	100.0
1	12.1	60.0
2	8.9	47.9
3	8.1	39.0
4	6.2	30.9
5	6.3	24.7
6	6.1	18.4
7	4.7	12.3
8	3.6	7.6
9	2.6	4.0
10	1.4	1.4

Base population: all children ( $n = 16,012$ ) in 2004/05 FRS

classified as deprived, a sequential approach was adopted whereby children first were classified as deprived if they lacked one or more necessities and as not deprived otherwise. This was extended to two or more items as deprived, and so forth. The extent to which deprived or non-deprived children were similar to other children within the group on the other hardship variables listed above was established using discriminant analysis.

The results of the discriminant analysis (see Annex C, Table C1) suggest that the best distinction between non-deprived and deprived was between lacking none or less than four adult-related necessities versus lacking four or more necessities. This classification yielded the greatest difference between ‘deprived’ and ‘non-deprived’ groups (i.e. the highest Eigen value – a measure of the extent of the difference between the two groups; and the lowest Wilks’s Lambda – the smaller the Lambda, the greater the difference between groups of the centroid of means on the predictor

variables). Using this classification, 31 per cent of the children were classified as deprived, based on adult-related necessities lacked (Table 2.2).

### Children’s deprivation

The same approach as used above for adult-related deprivation was used to determine the appropriate threshold for child-related deprivation items. The discriminant analysis results (see Annex C, Table C2) suggest that the best distinction was between not lacking any necessity versus lacking at least one necessity. Hence, 43 per cent of children were classified as deprived based on child-related necessities (Table 2.4).

Based on the above classification for child-related and adult-related deprivation, 28 per cent of children were deprived based on both indicators; that is, 28 per cent of children had parents who were deprived and were themselves deprived in 2004/05.

**Table 2.3 Percentage of children in families who are deprived of specific child necessities**

Item	Children have this	Would like but cannot afford	Do not want	NA/ missing
A family holiday away from home for at least one week a year	63.5	31.4	3.5	1.6
Enough bedrooms for each child of 10 or over of a different sex to have their own bedroom	14.4	3.1	0.4	82.1
Leisure equipment such as sports equipment or a bicycle	85.8	8.2	3.6	2.4
Celebrations on special occasions such as birthdays, Christmas or other religious festivals	93.3	4.5	1.0	1.2
Go swimming at least once a month	58.6	10.6	27.0	3.8
Do a hobby or leisure activity	76.6	7.0	11.8	4.6
Have friends around for tea or snacks at least once a fortnight	70.1	8.2	18.1	3.6
Go to toddler group/ nursery/ playgroup at least once a week (for children under six not attending primary or private school)	25.3	2.6	7.5	64.6
Go on school trips (for those over six, or under six and attending primary or private school)	75.7	5.1	2.5	16.6

Base population: all children ( $n = 16,012$ ) in 2004/05 FRS

**Table 2.4 Number of child-related deprivation items lacked by families**

Number of items lacked	Per cent	Cumulative per cent
None (not in deprivation)	57.3	100.0
1	20.4	42.9
2	9.4	22.5
3	5.2	13.1
4	3.2	7.9
5	1.7	4.7
6	1.1	3.0
7	0.8	1.9
8	0.7	1.1
9	0.4	0.4

Base population: all children ( $n = 16,012$ ) in 2004/05 FRS

If this approach (ie, based on discriminant analysis) is to be adopted, appropriate classification could be established for the first year (used as a baseline). The same classification and type of necessities would need to be maintained in subsequent years to be able to meaningfully monitor trends.

However, there is in our view some difficulty with this approach. First, the measures identify a greater proportion of children (43 per cent) as deprived than lived in households where adults were deprived (31 per cent). This contradicts the findings of previous research that has clearly shown that children are far less likely to be materially deprived than their parents (see, for example, Middleton *et al.*, 1998). Second, there may also be presentational difficulties with a measure that counts children as deprived if they are ‘only’ going without, for example, a bicycle. Third, explaining the measure in an accessible way to the general public would present difficulties. Therefore, we propose an alternative way of setting the material deprivation thresholds.

### 2.2.2 Alternative simple additive approach for material deprivation threshold

One option for establishing the material deprivation threshold is to take a simple rational approach, rather than a statistical one (eg, discriminant analysis described above). Not being able to afford one child-related or one adult-related necessity may be indicative of some (possibly mild) deprivation, while not being able to afford two or more child-related or adult-related necessities is likely to be indicative of more severe material deprivation.

Alternative thresholds for children in families experiencing material deprivation might be:

- deprived on at least one child and one parent item (ie, last four categories) – 39.3 per cent of children
- deprived on both parent and child items, one of which is severe (two items or more) (ie, the last three categories) – 36.5 per cent of children
- deprived on at least two adult and at least two child items – 21.4 per cent.

**Table 2.5 Percentage of children deprived of adult-related and child-related necessities**

Nature of deprivation	Per cent
Not deprived on any item	36.5
Deprived on one parent item only	8.5
Deprived on one child item only	3.2
Deprived on 2+ parent items only	12.3
Deprived on 2+ child items only	0.2
Deprived on 1 parent, 1 child item	2.8
Deprived on 2+ parent, 1 child item	14.3
Deprived on 1 parent, 2+ child items	0.8
Deprived on 2+ parent, 2+ child items	21.4
Unweighted cases	16,012

Base: all children, FRS 2004/05

Although less robust, this approach has the advantage of simplicity and can easily be replicated in subsequent years to monitor trends. It is this simple additive approach, therefore, that is proposed and has been incorporated in the measure of severe child poverty in what follows.

## 2.3 Setting the low income threshold

Income used in this report refers to household income, equivalised<sup>6</sup> based on the modified Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) equivalence scale, consistent with child poverty measures to monitor progress on child poverty reduction in the UK (DWP, 2003). Although the official UK measure of low income<sup>7</sup> (DWP, 2006) currently uses the McClements scale, the OECD scale is preferred for child poverty measures since it assigns greater weight to the cost of young children and facilitates comparison with other official statistics in the UK and Europe.

Low income measures may be based on ‘before housing cost’ or ‘after housing cost’ income. With an ‘after housing cost’ measure, the median income poverty line and the proportions below it are calculated after deducting housing costs from the household income. On the other hand, housing costs are not deducted from the household income in a ‘before housing cost’ measure. This implies that with a ‘before housing cost’ measure, those with high housing costs (eg, in London) could be wrongly classified as not being in poverty because their high housing costs, if taken into account, might leave them with low income below the poverty line. Those with low housing costs may also be wrongly classified as being in poverty. Consequently, we have used an ‘after housing cost’ measure which is a better measure of disposable household income. The measure is more suitable for identifying those facing greatest financial difficulties – that is, those experiencing *severe* poverty.

### 2.3.1 Severe income poverty threshold

Three options were considered in identifying an appropriate income threshold for *severe* child poverty measurement. The first involved an attempt to circumvent the well-recognised drawback of using arbitrary income poverty thresholds. We considered using the median of amounts allowed to those in receipt of Income Support as a proxy for low income. However, a major shortcoming of this approach is that prevailing Income Support levels are unlikely to reflect acceptable minimum living standards. No reliable measure currently exists that can guide the setting up of a rationally justifiable income threshold. Nevertheless, there is some scope for using this approach in future when findings from the ongoing work to produce a ‘minimum income standard for Britain’ will be able to meaningfully inform the setting of such a threshold.<sup>8</sup>

A second approach focused on the ‘poorest of the poor’ – that is the bottom half of those classified as being in poverty based on the commonly used threshold of 60 per cent median income. This involved obtaining the median income for all individuals in income poverty at the 60 per cent threshold, then classifying those in the bottom half (ie, below poor median) as being in ‘severe poverty’. An examination of the proportion of children classified as being among ‘the poorest poor’ will help establish the extent to which children (or families with children) are close to the conventional poverty line or disproportionately experience dire financial difficulties. The difficulty with this approach is that the definition would be difficult to explain simply to a wide audience. Given that the 60 per cent of median income poverty measure is in itself complex, it would not seem sensible to add the further complication of trying to explain the ‘below poor median’.

The final option used the lower end of routinely published income thresholds. The current approach in *Opportunities for All* is to report a range of low-income thresholds at 50, 60 and 70 per cent of median. *Measuring Child Poverty* (DWP, 2003) uses the higher end of these income thresholds, 70 per cent of contemporary median income, in conjunction with

material deprivation. Our focus in this study is on *severe* poverty, hence, a lower threshold is appropriate. We considered using the lower income threshold of 50 per cent, and a more extreme cut-off point of 40 per cent. According to the FRS 2004/05 survey, about 16 per cent and nine per cent of all children in the UK were in households with income below 50 per cent and 40 per cent of median income,<sup>9</sup> respectively. Given that there is apparently some doubt about the reliability of income data for those at the lower end of the income distribution, it was decided to use the 50 per cent of median income as a cut-off.

The disadvantage of this method is that it continues to rely on an arbitrary median income threshold. However, it has the advantage of using a measure that is already widely available and supported in policy circles.

## 2.4 Recommended methodology

Our recommendation is to measure severe child poverty based on a combination of severe income poverty and material deprivation. Income poverty measurement is based on relative poverty lines which are considered more relevant in developed country contexts, such as the UK, where the key challenge is to ensure that the whole population shares the benefits of high average prosperity, and what are regarded as minimum acceptable living standards depend largely on the general level of social and economic development (Expert Group on Poverty Statistics, 2006). For material deprivation, a simple additive approach is recommended due to its simplicity and the fact that it can easily be replicated in subsequent years to monitor trends.

### 2.4.1 Measuring severe child poverty

Children are classified as being in 'severe' poverty if they are in households with severe income poverty (ie, income below 50 per cent of median), in combination with 'severe' material deprivation (deprived of both adult and child necessities, at least one of which shows some degree of severity – ie, two

or more items). Other households that are below 70 per cent of median income, in combination with some form of adult or child deprivation, are classified as being in non-severe poverty. The remaining children are classified as not being in poverty.

As explained in the preceding sections, the main rationale for the choice of low income and material deprivation thresholds used in this study was reliability, simplicity and ability to replicate the measure over time to monitor trends. The 50 per cent of median income threshold was chosen because of its reliability (compared to 40 per cent of median threshold) and simplicity (compared to 'the poorest poor'). Similarly, the additive approach was chosen for the material deprivation threshold for its simplicity, as opposed to a weighted or a statistically determined threshold. Of the three thresholds for material deprivation outlined in section 2.2.2, the second one was chosen since it suggests some degree of severity of deprivation on either the child or adult items. This was necessary to avoid classifying those deprived of a single item that cannot be afforded by a significant proportion of families (eg, a holiday away from home) as deprived on both child and adult items (note that some of the items – such as holiday away from home – are included in both the child and adult deprivation lists).

Based on the above measure, 10.2 per cent (1.3 million) of children in the UK are classified as being in severe poverty, being in households with very low income (below 50 per cent of contemporary median), in combination with severe material deprivation. Those in severe poverty have extremely low after housing cost incomes, averaging only £132 per week for a couple with one child, compared to £462 for those not in poverty (see Table 2.6). Those classified as being in severe poverty have substantially lower average disposable income than the other sub-groups, with the exception of those classified as having severe income poverty with non-severe or no material deprivation. These sub-groups, especially those having no deprivation are likely to comprise those for whom reliable income measures are not available. Further examination shows that those in

**Table 2.6 Poverty permutations**

Poverty permutation	Mean income for a one-child couple family (£)*	Per cent of children
<b>Not in poverty</b>	<b>462</b>	<b>68.6</b>
– neither income poor nor deprived	584	31.3
– not income poor, some material deprivation	397	32.0
– income poor, no material deprivation	132	5.3
<b>Non-severe poverty</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>21.3</b>
– non-severe income poverty, some deprivation	219	18.2
– severe income poverty, non-severe deprivation	77	3.1
<b>Severe poverty</b> (severe income poverty and severe deprivation)	<b>132</b>	<b>10.2</b>

Base population: all children ( $n = 16,012$ ) in 2004/05 FRS

\*The corresponding mean income, equivalised based on a modified OECD scale with childless couple used as reference is given in Table D1 in Annex D

**Table 2.7 Percentage of children whose families cannot afford specific adult-related necessities**

Item	Not in poverty	Non-severe poverty	Severe poverty
A holiday away from home for at least one week a year	22.6	64.3	92.5
Friends or family around for a drink or meal at least once a month	8.3	29.0	51.0
Two pairs of all weather shoes for all adults in the benefit unit	4.3	20.0	32.0
Enough money to keep your home in a decent state of decoration	9.8	34.2	51.1
Household contents insurance	5.6	38.9	60.4
Make regular savings of £10 a month or more for rainy days or retirement	25.2	71.6	83.7
Replace any worn out furniture	18.2	53.7	73.8
Replace or repair electrical goods such as refrigerator or washing machine when broken	10.4	42.1	61.8
Have a small amount of money to spend each week on yourself (not on your family)	19.7	58.8	74.3
Have a hobby or leisure activity	10.4	33.4	44.9
Unweighted cases	10,843	3,488	1,681

Base population: all children ( $n = 16,012$ ) in 2004/05 FRS

severe income poverty but no deprivation comprise a disproportionately high proportion of the self-employed, a group prone to income measurement errors. For example, 46 per cent of children in severe income poverty who are not deprived have self-employed parents, compared to only 13 per cent for all children.

### 2.4.2 What do parents and children in severe poverty go without?

Children in severe poverty fare poorly on each of the specific adult-related and child-related deprivation items. The first point to note from tables 2.7 and 2.8 is the extent to which, even among children in severe poverty, children are less likely than adults to be deprived of comparable items or activities.

- Although 93 per cent of severely poor children live in households where adults cannot afford a holiday away from home for at least one week a year, 'only' 87 per cent of severely poor children do not get such a holiday.

- 51 per cent of adults in the households of severely poor children cannot afford to have friends or family round for a drink or meal at least once a month, but 'only' 29 per cent of severely poor children cannot have their friends round for tea or snacks at least once a fortnight.
- 45 per cent of children in severe poverty live in households where adults cannot afford a hobby or leisure activity, but 'only' 24 per cent go without a hobby or leisure activity themselves.

We see here the 'parental sacrifice' that has been identified in other research.

However, these tables also show the extent of environmental deprivation and financial precariousness that children classified as severely poor are experiencing:

- 84 per cent live in households that cannot afford regular savings of £10 a month or more

**Table 2.8 Percentage of children whose families cannot afford specific child-related necessities**

Item	Not in poverty	Non-severe poverty	Severe poverty
A family holiday away from home for at least one week a year	17.2	53.0	87.3
Enough bedrooms for each child of 10 or over of a different sex to have their own bedroom	8.4	28.7	40.8
Leisure equipment such as sports equipment or a bicycle	2.9	14.6	32.8
Celebrations on special occasions such as birthdays, Christmas or other religious festivals	1.4	7.7	18.6
Go swimming at least once a month	4.4	21.5	33.5
Do a hobby or leisure activity	2.8	14.0	24.2
Have friends around for tea or snacks at least once a fortnight	3.2	15.5	29.3
Go to toddler group/nursery/playgroup at least once a week (for children under six not attending primary or private school)	3.3	9.8	24.8
Go on school trips (for those over six, or under six and attending primary or private school)	2.1	11.4	22.3

Base population: all children ( $n = 16,012$ ) in 2004/05 FRS



- 74 per cent are in households that cannot afford to replace worn out furniture
- 62 per cent are in households where replacement or repair of electrical goods cannot be afforded
- 60 per cent are living in households without contents insurance.

The next section of the report used the measure of severe childhood poverty described in this chapter to assess the characteristics which seem particularly likely to predispose a child to experiencing severe poverty.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> A detailed analysis/discussion of a simple additive versus weighted approach is available in Willitts (2006).

<sup>2</sup> Discriminant analysis is useful in classifying cases into the values of a categorical dependent variable, usually a dichotomy. The approach has been used here to establish the extent to which

deprived children were similar to each other, while at the same time non-deprived children were also similar to each other, so that differences between the two groups were maximized.

<sup>3</sup> Equivalised (based on OECD scale) household income.

<sup>4</sup> Being behind with payment of household bills.

<sup>5</sup> Being in a workless household.

<sup>6</sup> Adjusted to take into account household size and composition. Equivalisation is necessary to make sensible income comparisons between households – a larger family needs a higher income than a smaller family for both households to enjoy a comparable standard of living.

<sup>7</sup> *Households Below Average Income* series.

<sup>8</sup> See [minimumincomestandard.org.uk](http://minimumincomestandard.org.uk)

<sup>9</sup> An 'after housing cost' income measure, equivalised using the OECD scale, modified to take a childless couple as reference with an equivalence value of 1.00

## 3 Characteristics/risk factors of severe child poverty

This section examines a range of characteristics of children who are experiencing severe child poverty using the measure defined in the previous section. First it describes the associations between severe child poverty and each characteristic separately, before providing the results of analysis that takes account of possible associations between these characteristics. Annex E contains analysis of the association between severe child poverty and each characteristic for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Annex F shows the risk of experiencing severe childhood poverty for children with each characteristic.

### 3.1 Regional variations in severe child poverty in the UK

The proportion of children in severe poverty ranges from a low of about seven per cent in the South of England (the South-East and South-West) to a high of about 17 per cent in London (see Table 3.1). Other regions with above average levels of severe child poverty are the West Midlands and Wales. It is important to note that average housing costs are highest in London and the South-East, hence, these regions would be expected to show lower poverty levels if income was based on a 'before housing cost' measurement. On the other hand, Northern Ireland has considerably lower housing costs compared to the other regions, hence, would show higher poverty levels, relative to the other regions, if income was based on a 'before housing cost' measure.

### 3.2 Economic activity of parents

There is a strong association between economic activity of parents and severe child poverty status (Table 3.2). As might be expected, children in severe poverty are highly likely to have workless parents and unlikely to have parents in full-time work. The majority (62 per cent) of children in severe poverty have workless parents, compared to 42 per cent of children in non-severe poverty and only five per cent of children not in poverty. Conversely, the proportion of children in severe poverty who have parents in full-time work is considerably lower than that of children in non-severe poverty or not in poverty.

### 3.3 Benefit receipt in family

Consistent with the economic activity patterns described above, children in severe poverty are more likely to be in families in receipt of means-tested benefits such as Jobseeker's Allowance, Income Support or Housing/Council Tax Benefit (Table 3.3). A particularly high proportion of children in severe poverty or in non-severe poverty were in families receiving income support (44 per cent) or Housing/Council Tax Benefit (51 per cent), compared to children not in poverty (four per cent and five per cent, respectively).

It is interesting to note that children in severe poverty were less likely to be in families receiving Child Tax Credit (CTC), compared to those in non-severe poverty or not in poverty. Children in severe poverty were also less likely than those in non-severe poverty, and as likely as children not in poverty, to be in families receiving Working Tax Credit (WTC). While the lower receipt of WTC among

**Table 3.1 Regional variations of severe child poverty in the UK**

Row per cent

UK government region	Percentage of children			Unweighted cases
	Not in poverty	Non-severe poverty	Severe poverty	
North-east England	62.6	27.8	9.6	611
North-west England and Merseyside	66.1	24.2	9.6	1,762
Yorkshire and Humberside	66.8	23.2	10.0	1,122
East Midlands	70.0	20.3	9.8	1,102
West Midlands	66.5	21.6	11.9	1,321
Eastern England	76.8	16.0	7.2	1,199
London	58.3	24.5	17.2	1,644
South-east England	74.0	19.1	6.9	1,888
South-west England	72.3	20.8	6.9	1,141
Wales	63.8	22.8	13.4	643
Scotland	72.8	18.0	9.2	2,181
Northern Ireland	73.4	16.9	9.7	1,398
All (UK)	68.6	21.3	10.2	16,012

Base population: all children in 2004/05 FRS

**Table 3.2 Severe child poverty status by economic activity of parents**

Column per cent

Economic activity of parents	Severe child poverty status			All children
	Not in poverty	Non-severe poverty	Severe poverty	
One or more self employed	14.2	10.1	7.8	12.7
Full-time work (lone or both)	23.0	5.1	1.3	17.0
One FT, one PT (couple)	30.1	8.1	2.5	22.6
One FT, one no work (couple)	18.6	18.9	9.9	17.8
Only PT work (lone or both)	8.8	15.7	16.2	11.0
Workless parent(s)	5.3	42.1	62.3	19.0
Unweighted cases	10,843	3,488	1,681	16,012

Table 3.3 Severe child poverty status by benefit receipt in family

Column per cent

Benefit/tax credit receipt of family	Severe child poverty status			All children
	Not in poverty	Non-severe poverty	Severe poverty	
Disability Living Allowance (DLA)	6.4	7.8	5.2	6.6
Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)	0.4	3.0	6.8	1.6
Incapacity Benefit (IB)	2.2	6.4	5.8	3.5
Income Support (IS)	3.9	37.7	44.1	15.2
Working Tax Credit (WTC)	13.7	21.4	13.7	15.3
Child Tax Credit (CTC)*	59.0 (62)	54.9 (86)	42.6 (81)	56.5 (69)
Housing/Council Tax Benefit (HB)	4.5	40.9	51.3	17.0
None of the above benefits/tax credits	36.4	12.1	15.2	29.1
Unweighted cases	10,843	3,488	1,681	16,012

\* bracketed figures assume all families on Income Support were in receipt of CTC

families of children in severe poverty than those in non-severe poverty might be explained by the higher proportion of workless parents among this group, the lower receipt of CTC is questionable since almost all families in this group would be eligible for CTC since they have dependent children and are on low income. It is our understanding that families who were in receipt of Income Support prior to the introduction of tax credits and were still so doing in 2004/05 had not yet been 'migrated' to CTC as originally planned and continued to receive a single Income Support payment, which includes CTC. However, they will have been receiving the same levels of benefit as those receiving their benefits from two sources; Job Centre Plus and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs. If we assume that all families on Income Support were in receipt of CTC (figures in brackets), then a higher proportion of children in severe poverty were in families receiving CTC than those not in poverty, as might be expected. However, the fact that even after this adjustment a lower proportion of children in severe poverty than those in non-severe poverty were in families receiving CTC, coupled with an overall

higher proportion not being in receipt of any of the above benefits or tax credits, suggests that take-up of (or eligibility for), benefits might be an issue for families of children in severe poverty.

Apart from Income Support, Jobseeker's Allowance and Housing/Council Tax Benefit (received by larger proportions of children in severe poverty than in non-severe poverty), receipt of the other benefits is highest among families of children in non-severe poverty. This shows the appallingly low levels of these means-tested benefits, but other benefits appear to be at least helping children avoid the worst forms of poverty.

### 3.4 Parents' educational attainment

There is a strong association between parents' educational attainment and severe child poverty (Table 3.4). A considerably higher proportion of mothers of children in severe poverty had no

**Table 3.4 Severe child poverty status by parents' educational attainment**

Column per cent

Educational attainment of parents	Severe child poverty status			All children
	Not in poverty	Non-severe poverty	Severe poverty	
Mother's* educational attainment				
– No qualification	10.8	31.4	44.3	18.6
– Non-degree qualification	66.5	62.3	52.3	64.1
– Degree level or above	22.7	6.3	3.4	17.3
Age mother* left full-time education				
– 15 years or younger	6.1	14.7	22.1	9.5
– 16 years	40.0	54.4	48.4	43.9
– after 16 years	53.9	31.0	29.6	46.6
Unweighted cases	10,843	3,488	1,681	16,012

\* refers to father for children living with lone fathers

qualification (44 per cent), compared to mothers of children in non-severe poverty (31 per cent) or not in poverty (11 per cent). Correspondingly, only three per cent of mothers of children in severe poverty had degree level qualifications, compared to 23 per cent of mothers of children not in poverty. The patterns for age of leaving full-time education are consistent with those for educational attainment, with children in severe poverty having a considerably higher proportion of mothers leaving full-time education

before the age of 16 years (22 per cent), compared to those in non-severe poverty (15 per cent) or not in poverty (6 per cent).

### 3.5 Housing tenure

It is not surprising that children in severe poverty are more likely to live in rented accommodation, but less likely to live in accommodation owned by parents

**Table 3.5 Severe child poverty status by housing tenure**

Column per cent

Housing tenure	Severe child poverty status			All children
	Not in poverty	Non-severe poverty	Severe poverty	
Owns house outright	10.8	6.0	3.1	9.0
Mortgage or part own, part rent	72.5	33.2	23.5	59.2
Rent	15.7	60.0	72.1	30.9
Rent-free	1.0	0.8	1.4	1.0
Unweighted cases	10,843	3,488	1,681	16,012

(Table 3.5), given the expected financial difficulties faced by such parents. Only 27 per cent of children in severe poverty live in accommodation owned by parents (outright or through mortgage), compared to 39 per cent of those in non-severe poverty and 83 per cent of those not in poverty. Conversely, 72 per cent of children in severe poverty live in rented accommodation compared to 60 per cent and 16 per cent of those in non-severe poverty or not in poverty, respectively.

### 3.6 Family savings and assets

The value of family savings and assets described in Table 3.6 mainly relate to savings in bank accounts (current, savings/investments), ISAs, premium bonds, and stocks/shares/bonds.

As might be expected, the ability to save and the amount of savings were strongly associated with severe child poverty status. Almost all children in severe poverty were in families that reported no savings, and only two per cent were in families with saving/assets of between £3,000 and £20,000, compared to 20 per cent of those not in poverty and five per cent of those in non-severe poverty.

### 3.7 Family type and size

There is a strong association between family composition and severe child poverty status (Table 3.7), severe child poverty being associated with lone parent or large families. A considerably higher proportion of children in severe poverty were in lone parent families (48 per cent), than those not in poverty (15 per cent). In relation to family size – 21 per cent of children in severe poverty were in families with four or more children, compared to only six per cent of those not in poverty.

### 3.8 Age of parents

The relationship between age of parents and experience of severe child poverty is not straightforward (Table 3.8). However, there is some indication that younger age of parents (ie, mother or household head) is associated with higher experience of child poverty, both severe and non-severe.

**Table 3.6 Severe child poverty status by family savings/assets**

*Column per cent*

Family savings and assets	Severe child poverty status			All children
	Not in poverty	Non-severe poverty	Severe poverty	
No savings	68.0	89.9	96.2	75.5
Less than £3,000	11.9	4.7	2.3	9.4
£3,000–£7999	11.3	3.3	0.8	8.5
£8,000–£19,999	7.9	1.9	0.6	5.9
£20,000 or more	1.0	0.2	0.6	0.7
Unweighted cases	10,843	3,488	1,681	16,012

**Table 3.7 Severe child poverty status by family type and size**

Column per cent

Family composition	Severe child poverty status			All children
	Not in poverty	Non-severe poverty	Severe poverty	
Family type				
– lone parent	14.9	43.8	47.9	24.4
– couple parents	85.1	56.2	52.1	75.6
Family size				
– one child	26.8	18.9	23.2	24.7
– two children	47.5	39.0	34.4	44.4
– three children	19.4	23.5	21.5	20.5
– four or more children	6.3	18.7	20.9	10.4
Unweighted cases	10,843	3,488	1,681	16,012

**Table 3.8 Severe child poverty status by age of parents**

Column per cent

Age of parents/household head	Severe child poverty status			All children
	Not in poverty	Non-severe poverty	Severe poverty	
Age of mother* (years)				
– 16–24	3.1	11.0	11.0	5.6
– 25–34	27.0	39.8	31.4	30.2
– 35–44	53.6	39.3	45.7	49.7
– 45 years or older	16.3	9.9	11.9	14.5
Age of household head (years)				
– 16–24	1.5	7.7	8.1	3.5
– 25–34	20.7	34.3	29.4	24.5
– 35–44	53.7	41.8	45.9	50.4
– 45 years or older	24.0	16.3	16.6	21.6
Unweighted cases	10,843	3,488	1,681	16,012

\* refers to father for children living with lone father/carers

## 3.9 Age of children

The experience of severe child poverty does not show a clear pattern by age of children, although there is some indication that the older age group (15–19 years) is associated with a higher experience of severe child poverty (Table 3.9). For instance, 20 per cent of children in severe poverty were aged 15–19 years,

compared to 15 per cent and 16 per cent of those in non-severe poverty or not in poverty, respectively. The pattern of severe child poverty by age of the youngest child in the family is, again, inconclusive, with some indication of higher rates of severe and non-severe poverty where the youngest child in the family is in the 0–4 age group.

Table 3.9 Severe child poverty status by age of children

Column per cent

Age of child	Severe child poverty status			All children
	Not in poverty	Non-severe poverty	Severe poverty	
Age of child				
– 0–4 years	25.7	29.4	27.9	26.7
– 5–9	27.3	27.8	21.7	26.8
– 10–14	30.8	28.1	30.8	30.3
– 15–19	16.1	14.7	19.6	16.1
Age of youngest child in family				
– 0–4 years	37.7	47.6	44.6	40.5
– 5–9	29.3	28.6	24.1	28.6
– 10–14	25.0	18.0	24.7	23.5
– 15–19	7.9	5.8	6.6	7.4
Unweighted cases	10,843	3,488	1,681	16,012

### 3.10 Ethnic background

There is a strong association between ethnic background and experience of severe child poverty (Table 3.10). Children of Asian ethnic origin, and to some extent, those of Black, Chinese and other ethnic minorities comprise a disproportionately high proportion of children in severe poverty. In particular, a considerably higher proportion of children in severe

poverty are from Asian and Asian British ethnic origins (14.5 per cent) than those in non-severe poverty (eight per cent) or not in poverty (four per cent). Similarly, a higher proportion of children in severe poverty were from Black or Black British ethnic origin (six per cent) than those in non-severe poverty (3.5 per cent) or not in poverty (two per cent). Although the majority of children in severe poverty are of White ethnic origin (74 per cent),

Table 3.10 Severe child poverty status by ethnic background

Column per cent

Ethnic background of household head	Severe child poverty status			All children
	Not in poverty	Non-severe poverty	Severe poverty	
White	91.2	85.1	74.4	88.2
Mixed	0.8	1.6	0.7	1.0
Asian and Asian British	4.4	7.9	14.5	6.1
Black and Black British	2.3	3.5	6.3	2.9
Chinese or other ethnic group	1.3	1.9	4.1	1.7
Unweighted cases	10,843	3,488	1,681	16,012



the proportions among those in non-severe poverty (85 per cent) or those not in poverty (91 per cent) are significantly higher.

### 3.11 Disability

The presence of disabled adults in the family is strongly associated with the experience of severe child poverty, but the same does not apply to the presence of disabled children (Table 3.11). About one third (33 per cent) of children in severe poverty were in families where there were disabled adults, compared to 29 per cent of children in non-severe poverty and 18 per cent of children not in poverty. The fact that it is the disability of adults, rather than that of children, that is strongly associated with the experience of severe child poverty is not surprising since it is adult family members who usually engage in economic activities, hence, their disability is likely to impact more negatively on the families' financial resources. However, it should be noted that a different measure of child poverty that took account of the additional costs that are associated with childhood (and, indeed, adult) disability would be likely to show much higher rates of severe child poverty in such households.

### 3.12 Risk of severe child poverty

The characteristics of children in severe poverty discussed in the preceding sections provide a useful overall picture of the profile of children in severe poverty but do not tell us the precise risk factors for severe child poverty. This section examines the risk factors of severe child poverty, taking into account the effect of other important factors.

Each of the associations described above may be influenced by the effect of other characteristics that are related to them. For example, parents with lower educational attainment may be less likely to participate in the labour force. Hence, it is not straightforward to establish from the bivariate associations whether it is educational attainment or labour force participation that is the important factor in severe child poverty. The regression analysis presented here allows us to examine the factors associated with a higher likelihood of severe child poverty, while holding the other important factors constant. Table 3.12 gives the risk factors for severe and non-severe poverty, relative to not being in poverty (based on a multinomial logistic regression analysis). A relative risk factor greater than 1.00 implies that the factor is associated with higher experience of child poverty than the reference category, while a value less than 1.00 implies a lower risk.

**Table 3.11 Severe child poverty status by disability of adults and children**

*Column per cent*

Disability	Severe child poverty status			All children
	Not in poverty	Non-severe poverty	Severe poverty	
Disabled adult(s) in family				
– No	82.0	70.7	67.3	78.1
– Yes	18.0	29.3	32.7	21.9
Disabled children in family				
– No	87.3	83.0	85.2	86.2
– Yes	12.7	17.0	14.8	13.8
Unweighted cases	10,843	3,488	1,681	16,012

The results of the regression analysis are largely consistent with the bivariate associations described in the preceding sections, confirming a relatively high risk of severe poverty among children:

- living in London and Wales, but with the addition of Northern Ireland
- with workless parents
- whose parents have low educational attainment
- living in rented accommodation
- whose parents have no savings/assets
- in large families of four or more children
- from ethnic minority groups, especially of Asian origin
- in families with disabled adult(s).

As might be expected, most of these risk factors apply to non-severe child poverty as well, but to a noticeably lesser degree. For instance, the relative risk

of severe poverty for children with workless parents (ie, compared to those whose parents are engaged in economic activity as full-time or part-time employees or self-employed) or parents with no qualifications (compared to parents with degree level qualifications) is more than double the risk of non-severe poverty. Children whose mothers have no qualifications are 5.2 times and 2.4 times more likely to be in severe and non-severe poverty, respectively (as opposed to not being in poverty) than those whose mothers have degree level qualifications. It is also worth noting that the risk of non-severe poverty is no higher statistically in any region than in the South and East of England; indeed the risk of non-severe poverty is lower for children in Scotland and Northern Ireland. However, children in London, Northern Ireland and, particularly, Wales are at much greater risk of severe poverty than children in the South and East.

**Table 3.12 Risk of severe and non-severe poverty, relative to not being in poverty**

Characteristic	Non-severe poverty	Severe poverty
Region ( <i>S &amp; E England</i> )		
– North/Yorkshire/Humberside	0.96	0.89
– Midlands	0.92	1.08
– London	1.18	1.45*
– Wales	1.16	1.72*
– Scotland	0.74*	0.86
– Northern Ireland	0.77*	1.38*
Economic activity of parents ( <i>workless</i> )		
– Self employed	0.35*	0.07*
– Couple or single: all in full-time work	0.10*	0.01*
– Couple: one FT one PT work	0.14*	0.01*
– Couple: one FT, one unemployed	0.44*	0.06*
– Couple or single: PT work, no FT	0.44*	0.21*
Benefit receipt ( <i>no receipt</i> )		
– Disability Living Allowance	0.17*	0.06*
– Jobseeker's Allowance	3.05*	1.79*
– Incapacity Benefit	1.42*	0.69*
– Income Support	2.09*	0.95
– Working Tax Credit	1.01	0.50*
– Child Tax Credit	1.35*	1.04
Age mother left education ( <i>post 16</i> )		
– Before 16 years	1.26*	1.46*
– At 16 years	1.20*	1.02

*continued overleaf*

**Table 3.12 Risk of severe and non-severe poverty, relative to not being in poverty** *continued*

Characteristic	Non-severe poverty	Severe poverty
Mother's educational qualification ( <i>degree</i> )		
– No qualification	2.40*	5.22*
– Non-degree qualification	1.85*	3.44*
Housing tenure ( <i>rent</i> )		
– Own outright	0.31*	0.06*
– Mortgage	0.42*	0.30*
Parents have savings/assets ( <i>no</i> )	0.57*	0.29*
Single parent ( <i>couple</i> )	1.37*	0.76*
Number of children in family ( <i>4 or more</i> )		
– One child	0.28*	0.32*
– 2 children	0.43*	0.35*
– 3 children	0.54*	0.43*
Age of child ( <i>15–19 years</i> )		
– 0–4	0.57*	0.37*
– 5–9	0.59*	0.34*
– 10–14	0.64*	0.49*
Age of mother ( <i>45 years or older</i> )		
– 16–24	1.86*	1.30
– 25–34	1.40*	0.98
– 35–44	1.02	1.13
Ethnic background ( <i>White</i> )		
– mixed/other	1.42*	1.46*
– Asian	1.51*	3.52*
– Black	1.04	1.68*
Disabled adult present in family ( <i>no</i> )	1.38*	1.41*
Disabled child present in family ( <i>no</i> )	0.85*	0.78*

\* significant at five per cent level

Reference categories are given in italics in brackets.

The regression results with respect to some of the characteristics show some interesting patterns. In particular, the low take-up of benefits associated with the experience of severe child poverty is puzzling. The risk of severe poverty for children in families receiving benefits, with the exception of Jobseeker's Allowance, is generally lower than for children in families who are not receiving benefits. By contrast, the experience of non-severe poverty shows the expected positive association with respect to receipt of means-tested benefits such as Income Support and

Jobseeker's Allowance. Furthermore, the fact that non-receipt of Incapacity Benefit (even after controlling for disability in the family) and of Working Tax Credit (after controlling for economic activity) are associated with higher experience of severe poverty may suggest that this is a particularly vulnerable sub-group. Those in receipt of Disability Living Allowance are highly unlikely to be in severe or non-severe poverty. These results might suggest that benefit take-up is possibly an issue for families experiencing severe child poverty that is worth investigating. The fact that this group

is associated with particularly low educational attainment might suggest a lack of knowledge of benefit entitlement or the skill to make a successful application among those eligible. Given the very low income of families with children in severe poverty, one might expect at least some of these families to be eligible for means-tested benefits.

Another interesting pattern relates to children with lone parents who are more likely to be in non-severe poverty, but **less** likely to be in severe poverty compared to those with couple parents, when other important factors such as economic activity are controlled for. The apparent strong association between having a lone parent and the experience of severe child poverty observed earlier in the bivariate association is largely due to the low economic activity of lone parents. In fact, about half of children with

lone parents (52 per cent) are in workless families, while another 27 per cent of lone parents are in part-time work.

The results of the regression analysis also show that older children aged 15–19 years are significantly more likely to experience severe poverty than the younger age groups. A detailed examination of experience of severe child poverty by child's age (not shown) suggests that it is the 14–15 year olds who are at the highest risk of severe poverty. This might be partly due to the fact that, while benefits have moved away from weighting by age, equivalence scales have not changed, assigning children aged 14 years or older greater weight. However, there is no evidence that mother's age is associated with severe child poverty, when the effect of other significant factors are controlled for.

## 4 Summary and conclusions: key points

- Our recommended measure of severe child poverty incorporates both low income and material deprivation.

*Children are classified as being in 'severe' poverty if they are in households with very low income (ie, below 50 per cent threshold), in combination with material deprivation (deprived of both adult and child necessities, at least one of which shows some degree of severity, ie, two or more items). Those in households below 70 per cent of median income, in combination with some form of adult or child deprivation are classified as being in non-severe poverty. The remaining are classified as not being in poverty.*

- Based on the above definition, 10.2 per cent of children in the UK (1.3 million) are classified as being in severe poverty. This sub-group of children shows relatively high levels of deprivation on each of the specific child-related or adult-related necessities.
- There are significant regional variations in the experience of severe child poverty in the UK, ranging from around seven per cent in the South (the South-East and South-West) of England to 17 per cent in London.
- The analysis of characteristics of children in severe poverty largely conforms to expected patterns, increasing our confidence that the recommended measure is identifying the most disadvantaged. The results show a relatively high likelihood of severe poverty among children: living in London, Wales and Northern Ireland; with workless parents; whose parents have low educational attainment; living in rented accommodation; whose parents have no savings/assets; in large families of four or more children; from ethnic minority groups, especially of Asian origin; and in families with disabled adult(s).
- However, interesting results are observed with respect to benefit receipt. There is strong evidence that non-receipt of benefits in the family is associated with high levels of experience of severe child poverty. This issue is worth further investigation.

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# Annex A: Material deprivation questions in FRS 2004/05

In the FRS 2004/05, respondents were asked:

## **(a) Adults'/parents deprivation**

*'For each of the following things please tell me the number from the showcard which best explains whether [you and your family /you and your partner/you] have it or not ...'*

Responses on the showcard were:

- (1) We/I have this
  - (2) We/I would like to have this, but cannot afford it at the moment
  - (3) We/I do not want/need this at the moment
  - (4) Does not apply
- A holiday away from home for at least one week a year, whilst not staying with relatives at their home?
  - Friends or family around for a drink or meal at least once a month?
  - Two pairs of all weather shoes for [name all adults in the benefit unit]?
  - Enough money to keep your home in a decent state of decoration?
  - Household content insurance
  - Make regular savings of £10 a month or more for rainy days or retirement
  - Replace any worn out furniture

- Replace or repair electrical goods such as refrigerator, or a washing machine when broken
- Have a small amount of money to spend each week on yourself (not on your family)?
- Have a hobby or leisure activity/

In addition, respondents were asked:

- in winter, are you able to keep this accommodation warm enough?
  - (1) Yes
  - (2) no
  - (3) Does not apply
- Sometimes people are not able to pay every bill when it fall due. May I ask, are you up-to-date with the bills on the card? are you behind with any of them?
  - (1) behind with electricity bill
  - (2) behind with gas bill
  - (3) behind with other fuel bills like coal or oil
  - (4) behind with council tax
  - (5) behind with insurance policies
  - (6) behind with telephone bill
  - (7) behind with TV/video rental or HP
  - (8) behind with other HP payments
  - (9) behind with water rates
  - (10) not behind with any of these.

**(b) Child deprivation**

*'For each of the following things please tell me the number from the showcard which best explains your child/children have it or not ...'*

Responses on the showcard were:

- (1) Child(ren) has/have this
  - (2) Child(ren) would like to have this, but we cannot afford it at the moment
  - (3) Child(ren) do not want/need this at the moment
  - (4) Does not apply
- A family holiday away from home for at least one week a year?
  - Are there enough bedrooms for each child of 10 or over of a different sex to have their own bedroom?
  - Leisure equipment such as sports equipment or a bicycle?

- Celebrations on special occasions such as birthdays, Christmas or other religious festivals?
- Go swimming at least once a month?
- Do a hobby or leisure activity?
- Friends around for tea or snacks at least once a fortnight?
- Go to toddler group/ nursery/ playgroup at least once a week (for children under six not attending primary or private school)?
- Go on school trips (for those over six, or under six and attending primary or private school)?

In addition, respondents were asked:

- Does your child/ do your children have an outdoor space or facilities nearby where they can play safely?
- (1) Yes
  - (2) No



# Annex B: Material deprivation – family level analysis

This annex shows, for information, the extent to which families with children are disproportionately deprived in relation to families without children.

## B.1 Adults'/parents' deprivation

**Table B1** Per cent of families who cannot afford specific adult-related items

Item	Families without children	Families with children	All families
A holiday away from home for at least one week a year	22.8	38.2	27.0
Friends or family around for a drink or meal at least once a month	10.0	16.6	11.8
Two pairs of all weather shoes for all adults in the benefit unit	4.7	9.8	6.0
Enough money to keep your home in a decent state of decoration	11.6	18.3	13.6
Household content insurance	9.6	17.6	11.9
Make regular savings of £10 a month or more for rainy days or retirement	26.6	39.7	30.2
Replace any worn out furniture	18.5	31.2	22.3
Replace or repair electrical goods such as refrigerator or washing machine when broken	13.6	22.6	16.3
Have a small amount of money to spend each week on yourself (not on your family)	11.8	32.6	17.4
Have a hobby or leisure activity	5.9	18.6	9.3
Unweighted cases	20,132–23,464	8,518–8,704	28,657–32,168

Base population: all benefit units – with valid responses on adult deprivation questions

FRS: Family (benefit unit) level analysis

**Table B2 Number of adult deprivation items lacked by families**

Number of items lacked	Per cent	Cumulative per cent
None (not in deprivation)	56.0	100.0
1	12.3	44.2
2	7.8	31.9
3	6.0	24.1
4	4.6	18.1
5	3.9	13.5
6	3.1	9.6
7	2.6	6.5
8	1.9	3.9
9	1.3	2.0
10	0.7	0.7

Base Population – all benefit units

FRS: Family (benefit unit) level analysis

## B.2 Children's deprivation

**Table B3 Percentage (unweighted) of families with children who cannot afford specific child-related items**

Item	Per cent
A family holiday away from home for at least one week a year	31.1
*Enough bedrooms for each child of 10 or over of a different sex to have their own bedroom	14.1
Leisure equipment such as sports equipment or a bicycle	7.5
Celebrations on special occasions such as birthdays, Christmas or other religious festivals	4.2
Go swimming at least once a month	9.3
Do a hobby or leisure activity	6.3
Friends around for tea or snacks at least once a fortnight	7.6
Go to toddler group/ nursery/ playgroup at least once a week (for children under 6 not attending primary or private school)	6.3
Go on school trips (for those over 6, or under 6 and attending primary or private school)	6.2
No outdoor facility/space where children can play safely	16.2
Unweighted cases	8,201–8,705

Base: families with children, FRS 2004/05 – with valid responses

\* for families with children aged over 10 of different sex ( $n = 1,016$ )

**Table B4 Number of child-related deprivation items lacked by families**

Number of items lacked	Per cent	Cumulative per cent
None (not in deprivation)	58.5	100.0
1	20.9	41.5
2	9.4	20.6
3	4.6	11.2
4	2.7	6.6
5	1.5	3.9
6	1.0	2.4
7	0.6	1.4
8	0.5	0.8
9	0.3	0.3

Base: families with children, FRS 2004/05

# Annex C: Discriminant analysis for material deprivation threshold

**Table C1** Deprivation threshold based on adult necessities

	Number of necessities lacked by those classified as deprived						
	1 or more	2 or more	3 or more	4 or more	5 or more	6 or more	7 or more
Mean income (£)							
non-deprived	426	396	377	362	351	341	331
deprived	236	221	210	198	191	180	174
Proportion behind with household bills							
non-deprived	0.02	0.03	0.05	0.06	0.08	0.10	0.12
deprived	0.26	0.31	0.35	0.39	0.42	0.46	0.49
Proportion in workless households							
non-deprived	0.03	0.05	0.06	0.07	0.09	0.11	0.13
deprived	0.29	0.35	0.40	0.45	0.50	0.56	0.59
Eigen value	0.27	0.34	0.39	0.42	0.41	0.38	0.26
Canonical corr.	0.46	0.50	0.53	0.55	0.54	0.52	0.45
Willks' Lambda	0.79	0.75	0.72	0.70	0.71	0.73	0.79
Percent of cases correctly classified							
non-deprived	58.5	92.4	90.3	88.2	90.2	94.0	95.9
deprived	83.5	50.2	56.1	62.7	55.8	42.9	31.9
Children classified as deprived (%)	60.0	47.9	39.0	30.9	24.7	18.4	12.3

Base population: all children, FRS 2004/05 ( $n = 16,012$ )

**Table C2 Deprivation threshold based on child necessities**

	Number of necessities lacked by those classified as deprived			
	1 or more	2 or more	3 or more	4 or more
Mean income (£)				
non-deprived	377	345	331	323
deprived	223	195	182	168
Proportion behind with household bills				
non-deprived	0.06	0.10	0.13	0.14
deprived	0.30	0.39	0.41	0.41
Proportion in workless households				
non-deprived	0.06	0.11	0.14	0.16
deprived	0.36	0.48	0.53	0.55
Eigen value	0.271	0.267	0.170	0.101
Canonical corr.	0.462	0.459	0.382	0.303
Willks' Lambda	0.787	0.789	0.854	0.908
Percent of cases correctly classified				
non-deprived	89.2	90.6	94.8	95.3
deprived	50.7	45.3	23.5	18.9
Children classified as deprived (%)	42.9	22.5	13.1	7.9

Base population: all children, FRS 2004/05 ( $n = 16,012$ )

# Appendix D: Poverty permutations

Table D1 Poverty permutations

Poverty permutation	Mean income (£)*	Per cent of children
<b>Not in poverty</b>	<b>385</b>	<b>68.6</b>
– neither income poor nor deprived	487	31.3
– not income poor, some material deprivation	331	32.0
– income poor, no material deprivation	110	5.3
<b>Non-severe poverty</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>21.3</b>
– non-severe income poverty, some deprivation	183	18.2
– severe income poverty, non-severe deprivation	65	3.1
<b>Severe poverty</b> (severe income poverty and severe deprivation)	<b>110</b>	<b>10.2</b>

Base population: all children ( $n = 16,012$ ) in 2004/05 FRS

\* Income equivalised based on a modified OECD scale, with childless couple used as reference

# Annex E: Characteristics of children in severe poverty by region

Table E1 Characteristics of children in severe poverty in England

Column per cent

Characteristic	Severe child poverty status			
	Not in poverty	Non-severe poverty	Severe poverty	All children
Economic activity of parents				
– Self employed	14.0	9.8	8.6	12.6
– Couple or single: all in full-time work	22.4	5.0	1.3	16.5
– Couple: one FT one PT work	31.0	8.6	2.3	23.3
– Couple: one FT, one unemployed	18.7	18.3	10.8	17.9
– Couple or single: PT work, no FT	8.7	15.6	16.9	11.0
– workless	5.2	42.6	60.1	18.8
Benefit receipt				
– Disability Living Allowance	5.7	7.5	3.1	5.9
– Jobseeker's Allowance	0.4	3.0	6.4	1.6
– Incapacity Benefit	1.9	6.2	5.1	3.1
– Income Support	3.7	37.7	42.1	14.9
– Working Tax Credit	13.4	21.0	14.7	15.2
– Child Tax Credit	58.6	54.4	43.4	56.2
Age mother left education				
– Before 16 years	6.1	14.8	21.5	9.6
– At 16 years	40.0	53.5	47.3	43.7
– After age 16 years	53.9	31.6	31.2	46.8
Mother's educational qualification				
– No qualification	10.3	31.2	42.6	18.1
– Non-degree qualification	66.6	62.3	53.7	64.4
– Degree level or above qualification	23.0	6.5	3.7	17.5
Housing tenure				
– Own outright	10.6	5.9	3.6	8.9
– Mortgage	72.6	32.9	23.6	59.1
– rent	16.8	61.2	72.8	32.1

continued overleaf



**Table E1 Characteristics of children in severe poverty in England** *continued*

*Column per cent*

Characteristic	Severe child poverty status			
	Not in poverty	Non-severe poverty	Severe poverty	All children
Parents have savings/assets	32.0	10.5	4.1	24.5
Single parent	14.5	43.7	47.5	24.2
Number of children in family				
– One child	26.2	18.7	22.8	24.2
– 2 children	47.9	39.4	36.3	44.0
– 3 children	19.6	23.1	21.1	20.5
– 4 or more	6.3	18.8	19.8	10.3
Age of child				
– 0–4	25.5	29.7	29.0	26.8
– 5–9	27.5	27.5	21.3	26.8
– 10–14	31.0	27.8	30.8	30.3
– 15–19 years	16.0	15.0	18.9	16.1
Age of mother				
– 16–24	3.0	11.2	11.1	5.6
– 25–34	27.0	39.7	31.4	30.2
– 35–44	53.6	39.1	45.4	49.6
– 45 years or older	16.4	10.0	12.0	14.6
Ethnic background				
– White	89.9	82.9	70.7	86.5
– mixed/other	2.5	3.9	5.4	3.1
– Asian	5.0	9.1	16.7	7.0
– Black	2.8	4.1	7.2	3.4
Disabled adult present in family	18.0	28.9	30.1	21.6
Disabled child present in family	12.3	17.2	13.4	13.5
Unweighted cases	8,052	2,557	1,190	

Table E2 Characteristics of children in severe poverty in Wales

Column per cent

Characteristic	Severe child poverty status			
	Not in poverty	Non-severe poverty	Severe poverty	All children
Economic activity of parents				
– Self employed	16.3	15.3	0.0	13.9
– Couple or single: all in full-time work	22.0	5.4	0.0	15.3
– Couple: one FT one PT work	25.9	3.1	4.7	17.9
– Couple: one FT, one unemployed	20.4	28.7	4.3	20.2
– Couple or single: PT work, no FT	10.0	20.2	12.8	12.7
– workless	5.4	27.2	78.1	20.1
Benefit receipt				
– Disability Living Allowance	11.2	11.1	23.6	12.9
– Jobseeker's Allowance	0.0	0.8	9.9	1.5
– Incapacity Benefit	4.5	6.7	7.6	5.4
– Income Support	5.0	27.9	63.7	18.1
– Working Tax Credit	18.5	30.6	7.2	19.7
– Child Tax Credit	62.9	65.9	31.7	59.4
Age mother left education				
– Before 16 years	6.1	11.2	37.9	11.5
– At 16 years	44.9	64.6	50.5	50.1
– After age 16 years	49.0	24.2	11.7	38.4
Mother's educational qualification				
– No qualification	12.2	28.3	65.2	23.0
– Non-degree qualification	71.5	67.2	33.3	65.4
– Degree level or above qualification	16.3	4.5	1.5	11.6
Housing tenure				
– Own outright	12.4	9.7	1.5	10.3
– Mortgage	72.6	37.2	18.6	57.3
– rent	15.1	53.2	79.9	32.4
Parents have savings/assets	31.2	5.0	0.0	21.0

continued overleaf

**Table E2 Characteristics of children in severe poverty in Wales** *continued*

*Column per cent*

Characteristic	Severe child poverty status			
	Not in poverty	Non-severe poverty	Severe poverty	All children
Single parent	14.5	36.1	47.1	23.8
Number of children in family				
– One child	31.4	18.3	15.4	26.3
– 2 children	47.0	29.6	24.8	40.1
– 3 children	18.1	27.1	24.8	21.0
– 4 or more	3.6	24.9	35.1	12.7
Age of child				
– 0–4	28.8	24.0	17.8	26.2
– 5–9	24.3	34.7	19.6	26.0
– 10–14	27.7	29.9	32.5	28.9
– 15–19 years	19.3	11.3	30.1	18.9
Age of mother				
– 16–24	7.4	7.2	9.4	7.6
– 25–34	29.6	48.7	25.0	33.3
– 35–44	48.5	38.1	60.1	47.7
– 45 years or older	14.6	6.0	5.5	11.4
Ethnic background				
– White	98.0	99.3	92.3	97.5
– mixed/other	0.0	0.0	1.5	0.2
– Asian	1.8	0.7	6.2	2.1
– Black	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.1
Disabled adult present in family	19.3	30.6	59.3	27.2
Disabled child present in family	17.4	15.5	27.0	18.3
Unweighted cases	408	186	49	643

**Table E3 Characteristics of children in severe poverty in Scotland***Column per cent*

Characteristic	Severe child poverty status			
	Not in poverty	Non-severe poverty	Severe poverty	All children
Economic activity of parents				
– Self employed	10.8	6.6	7.4	9.8
– Couple or single: all in full-time work	29.2	6.0	2.6	22.5
– Couple: one FT one PT work	27.3	6.7	3.5	21.4
– Couple: one FT, one unemployed	17.0	19.7	5.3	16.4
– Couple or single: PT work, no FT	9.0	13.7	9.4	9.9
– workless	6.7	47.1	71.8	20.0
Benefit receipt				
– Disability Living Allowance	7.7	5.6	11.1	7.6
– Jobseeker's Allowance	0.6	2.6	8.9	1.7
– Incapacity Benefit	2.9	8.0	10.9	4.5
– Income Support	4.9	41.8	46.3	15.3
– Working Tax Credit	14.6	20.5	10.5	15.2
– Child Tax Credit	61.3	55.7	43.6	58.7
Age mother left education				
– Before 16 years	6.7	17.2	19.6	9.8
– At 16 years	39.5	55.6	58.4	44.2
– After age 16 years	53.8	27.2	22.1	46.1
Mother's educational qualification				
– No qualification	13.6	32.3	44.5	19.8
– Non-degree qualification	64.1	61.0	52.5	62.4
– Degree level or above qualification	22.3	6.7	3.0	17.7
Housing tenure				
– Own outright	9.5	2.4	0.0	7.3
– Mortgage	70.7	30.1	18.6	58.6
– rent	19.9	67.5	81.4	34.1
Parents have savings/assets	30.2	8.6	2.5	23.7

*continued overleaf*

**Table E3 Characteristics of children in severe poverty in Scotland** *continued*

*Column per cent*

Characteristic	Severe child poverty status			
	Not in poverty	Non-severe poverty	Severe poverty	All children
Single parent	18.9	51.9	50.2	27.7
Number of children in family				
– One child	30.9	22.4	32.7	29.6
– 2 children	46.7	39.2	28.0	43.6
– 3 children	16.7	25.6	22.6	18.9
– 4 or more	5.6	12.8	16.7	8.0
Age of child				
– 0–4	25.1	31.8	27.9	26.5
– 5–9	27.7	27.7	25.0	27.5
– 10–14	32.0	29.1	30.5	31.4
– 15–19 years	15.2	11.3	16.6	14.6
Age of mother				
– 16–24	2.3	13.7	11.9	5.3
– 25–34	25.3	37.5	36.1	28.5
– 35–44	57.1	39.4	38.5	52.2
– 45 years or older	15.3	9.4	13.5	14.1
Ethnic background				
– White	97.4	96.7	90.4	96.6
– mixed/other	0.8	2.6	2.5	1.3
– Asian	1.5	0.8	2.3	1.5
– Black	0.3	0.0	4.7	0.6
Disabled adult present in family	16.8	31.4	40.7	21.6
Disabled child present in family	14.7	14.7	20.0	15.2
Unweighted cases	1,544	481	156	2,181

**Table E4 Characteristics of children in severe poverty in Northern Ireland***Column per cent*

Characteristic	Severe child poverty status			
	Not in poverty	Non-severe poverty	Severe poverty	All children
Economic activity of parents				
– Self employed	24.1	18.3	4.1	21.2
– Couple or single: all in full-time work	24.2	3.5	1.8	18.5
– Couple: one FT one PT work	21.0	3.1	1.8	16.1
– Couple: one FT, one unemployed	16.3	13.9	7.5	15.0
– Couple or single: PT work, no FT	8.3	15.1	19.1	10.5
– workless	6.1	46.1	65.8	18.6
Benefit receipt				
– Disability Living Allowance	11.8	17.6	9.7	12.5
– Jobseeker's Allowance	0.2	6.3	7.7	2.0
– Incapacity Benefit	6.2	8.2	9.4	6.8
– Income Support	5.1	47.7	49.2	16.6
– Working Tax Credit	12.2	18.2	9.3	12.9
– Child Tax Credit	58.5	47.5	43.4	55.2
Age mother left education				
– Before 16 years	2.5	10.1	10.4	4.6
– At 16 years	35.6	56.8	49.5	40.5
– After age 16 years	61.9	33.0	40.1	54.9
Mother's educational qualification				
– No qualification	13.9	41.6	45.0	21.6
– Non-degree qualification	61.8	55.0	53.1	59.8
– Degree level or above qualification	24.3	3.4	1.9	18.6
Housing tenure				
– Own outright	15.4	12.1	0.0	13.4
– Mortgage	74.0	42.6	40.5	65.5
– rent	10.5	45.2	59.5	21.1
Parents have savings/assets	37.7	11.2	6.1	30.1

*continued overleaf*

**Table E4 Characteristics of children in severe poverty in Northern Ireland** *continued*

*Column per cent*

Characteristic	Severe child poverty status			
	Not in poverty	Non-severe poverty	Severe poverty	All children
Single parent	14.7	42.7	53.9	23.2
Number of children in family				
– One child	24.6	16.9	25.8	23.4
– 2 children	41.6	42.8	21.3	39.8
– 3 children	22.3	20.9	22.4	22.1
– 4 or more	11.5	19.4	30.5	14.7
Age of child				
– 0–4	29.0	25.1	19.5	27.4
– 5–9	27.0	24.7	28.8	26.8
– 10–14	28.1	32.0	29.5	28.9
– 15–19 years	15.9	18.3	22.2	16.9
Age of mother				
– 16–24	2.6	5.4	8.0	3.6
– 25–34	28.2	31.0	34.2	29.2
– 35–44	51.6	48.1	38.3	49.7
– 45 years or older	17.6	15.5	19.5	17.5
Ethnic background				
– White	98.5	99.1	100.0	98.8
– mixed/other	0.5	0.9	0.0	0.5
– Asian	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.3
– Black	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.4
Disabled adult present in family	19.9	32.2	29.1	22.9
Disabled child present in family	9.6	18.9	15.2	11.7
Unweighted cases	992	303	103	1,398

# Annex F: The risk of experiencing severe childhood poverty (UK and by region)

**Table F1 The risk of experiencing severe childhood poverty by children in a range of individual and family circumstances: UK**

Row per cent

Characteristic	Severe child poverty risk		
	Not in poverty	Non-severe poverty	Severe poverty
Economic activity of parents			
– Self employed	76.8	16.9	6.2
– Couple or single: all in full-time work	92.9	6.4	0.8
– Couple: one FT one PT work	91.3	7.6	1.1
– Couple: one FT, one unemployed	71.7	22.6	5.7
– Couple or single: PT work, no FT	54.6	30.4	14.9
– workless	19.3	47.3	33.4
House in receipt of some benefits			
– Yes	85.8	8.8	5.3
– No	61.5	26.4	12.1
Benefits received			
– Disability Living Allowance	66.6	25.4	8.1
– Jobseeker's Allowance	18.2	38.9	42.9
– Incapacity Benefit	43.7	39.2	17.1
– Income Support	17.7	52.9	29.5
– Working Tax Credit	61.2	29.7	9.1
– Child Tax Credit*	61.7	26.4	11.9
– Housing/Council Tax Benefit	18.3	51.1	30.6
Number of benefits received			
– 0	85.8	8.8	5.3
– 1	65.5	22.8	11.8
– 2	53.8	32.8	13.3
– 3	52.9	36.4	10.8
– 4	81.6	18.4	0.0
Age mother left education			
– Before 16 years	43.6	32.8	23.6
– At 16 years	62.5	26.3	11.2
– After age 16 years	79.4	14.2	6.4
Mother's educational qualification			
– No qualification	39.9	35.9	24.2
– Non-degree qualification	71.1	20.6	8.3
– Degree level or above qualification	90.2	7.8	2.0

\* Includes all children in households receiving Income Support

continued overleaf



**Table F1 The risk of experiencing severe childhood poverty by children in a range of individual and family circumstances: UK** *continued*

*Row per cent*

Characteristic	Severe child poverty risk		
	Not in poverty	Non-severe poverty	Severe poverty
Housing tenure			
– Own outright	82.3	14.2	3.5
– Mortgage	84.0	11.9	4.0
– Rent	35.0	41.3	23.7
– Rent free	68.9	16.8	14.3
Savings			
– No savings	61.7	25.3	12.9
– £8000–£19999	92.2	6.7	1.1
– £20000+	93.8	6.2	0.0
Number of children in family			
– One child	74.3	16.2	9.5
– 2 children	73.4	18.7	7.9
– 3 children	65.0	24.4	10.6
– 4 or more	41.4	38.2	20.4
Age of child			
– 0–4	66.0	23.4	10.6
– 5–9	69.8	22.0	8.2
– 10–14	69.9	19.8	10.3
– 15–19 years	68.4	19.3	12.3
Age of mother			
– 16–24	38.2	41.9	19.9
– 25–34	61.4	28.0	10.6
– 35–44	73.9	16.8	9.3
– 45 years or older	77.1	14.6	8.4
Ethnic background			
– White	70.9	20.5	8.6
– mixed/other	57.4	35.0	7.6
– Asian or Asian British	48.7	27.3	24.0
– Black or Black British	52.9	25.2	21.9
– Chinese or other	52.7	23.5	23.8
Disabled adult present in family	56.4	28.4	15.2
Disabled child present in family	62.9	26.2	10.9
Total	68.6	21.3	10.2

**Table F2 The risk of experiencing severe childhood poverty by children in a range of individual and family circumstances: England***Row per cent*

Characteristic	Severe child poverty risk		
	Not in poverty	Non-severe poverty	Severe poverty
Economic activity of parents			
– Self employed	76.2	16.9	6.9
– Couple or single: all in full-time work	92.6	6.6	0.8
– Couple: one FT one PT work	91.0	8.1	1.0
– Couple: one FT, one unemployed	71.6	22.2	6.1
– Couple or single: PT work, no FT	53.8	30.8	15.5
– workless	18.8	49.0	32.2
Benefits received			
– Disability Living Allowance	66.9	27.8	5.3
– Jobseeker's Allowance	18.9	40.9	40.2
– Incapacity Benefit	40.5	42.9	16.6
– Income Support	16.9	54.7	28.4
– Working Tax Credit	60.2	30.0	9.7
– Child Tax Credit*	69.7	21.0	7.8
Age mother left education			
– Before 16 years	43.8	33.6	22.6
– At 16 years	62.5	26.6	10.9
– After age 16 years	78.6	14.7	6.7
Mother's educational qualification			
– No qualification	39.0	37.3	23.7
– Non-degree qualification	70.7	20.9	8.4
– Degree level or above qualification	89.8	8.1	2.1
Housing tenure			
– Own outright	81.6	14.3	4.1
– Mortgage	83.9	12.1	4.0
– Rent	35.8	41.4	22.9
Savings			
– Parents have savings	89.0	9.3	1.7
– Parents have no savings	61.5	25.7	12.8
Parents			
– single parent	41.0	39.2	19.8
– couple parents	77.0	16.1	7.0

\* Includes all children in households receiving Income Support

*continued overleaf*

**Table F2 The risk of experiencing severe childhood poverty by children in a range of individual and family circumstances:**  
**England** *continued*

*Row per cent*

Characteristic	Severe child poverty risk		
	Not in poverty	Non-severe poverty	Severe poverty
Number of children in family			
– One child	73.8	16.7	9.5
– 2 children	72.9	19.0	8.1
– 3 children	65.3	24.4	10.3
– 4 or more	41.4	39.3	19.3
Age of child			
– 0–4	65.0	24.1	10.9
– 5–9	69.8	22.2	8.0
– 10–14	69.9	19.9	10.2
– 15–19 years	68.0	20.2	11.8
Age of mother			
– 16–24	36.5	43.5	20.0
– 25–34	61.1	28.4	10.5
– 35–44	73.7	17.1	9.2
– 45 years or older	76.8	14.9	8.3
Ethnic background			
– White	71.0	27.5	17.6
– mixed/other	54.8	28.1	23.9
– Asian or Asian British	48.0	25.9	21.2
– Black or Black British	52.9	20.8	8.2
Disabled adult present in family			
– yes	56.9	29.1	14.0
– no	71.4	19.6	9.0
Disabled child present in family			
– yes	62.4	27.6	10.0
– no	69.2	20.7	10.1
Total	68.3	21.7	10.1

**Table F3 The risk of experiencing severe childhood poverty by children in a range of individual and family circumstances: Wales**

Row per cent

Characteristic	Severe child poverty risk		
	Not in poverty	Non-severe poverty	Severe poverty
Economic activity of parents			
– Self employed	74.9	25.1	0.0
– Couple or single: all in full-time work	91.9	8.1	0.0
– Couple: one FT one PT work	92.5	4.0	3.6
– Couple: one FT, one unemployed	64.7	32.4	2.9
– Couple or single: PT work, no FT	50.4	36.1	13.5
– workless	17.1	30.8	52.1
Benefits received			
– Disability Living Allowance	55.7	19.7	24.6
– Jobseeker's Allowance	{0.0}	{11.8}	{88.2}
– Incapacity Benefit	[52.9]	[28.3]	[18.8]
– Income Support	17.7	35.1	47.3
– Working Tax Credit	59.8	35.3	4.9
– Child Tax Credit*	67.6	25.2	7.2
Age mother left education			
– Before 16 years	33.7	22.2	44.2
– At 16 years	57.2	29.3	13.5
– After age 16 years	81.6	14.4	4.1
Mother's educational qualification			
– No qualification	34.0	28.0	38.0
– Non-degree qualification	69.8	23.4	6.8
– Degree level or above qualification	89.5	8.7	1.8
Housing tenure			
– Own outright	76.6	21.4	2.0
– Mortgage	80.9	14.8	4.3
– Rent	29.6	37.3	33.1
Savings			
– Parents have savings	94.6	5.4	0.0
– Parents have no savings	55.6	27.4	17.0
Parents			
– single parent	38.9	34.5	26.6
– couple parents	71.6	19.1	9.3

\* Includes all children in households receiving Income Support

{ }: should be suppressed: percent based on less than 20 cases

[ ]: should interpret with caution: percent based on 20–49 cases

continued overleaf

**Table F3 The risk of experiencing severe childhood poverty by children in a range of individual and family circumstances:**  
**Wales** *continued*

*Row per cent*

Characteristic	Severe child poverty risk		
	Not in poverty	Non-severe poverty	Severe poverty
Number of children in family			
– One child	76.3	15.9	7.8
– 2 children	74.9	16.8	8.3
– 3 children	54.7	29.4	15.9
– 4 or more	18.1	44.7	37.2
Age of child			
– 0–4	70.1	20.8	9.1
– 5–9	59.5	30.4	10.1
– 10–14	61.3	23.6	15.1
– 15–19 years	65.0	13.6	21.4
Age of mother			
– 16–24	[61.9]	[21.5]	[16.6]
– 25–34	56.7	33.3	10.1
– 35–44	64.9	18.2	16.9
– 45 years or older	81.6	11.9	6.4
Ethnic background			
– White	64.1	23.2	12.7
– mixed/other	[0.0]	[0.0]	[0.0]
– Asian or Asian British	{53.8}	{7.3}	{38.9}
– Black or Black British	{100.0}	{0.0}	{0.0}
Disabled adult present in family			
– yes	45.2	25.6	29.2
– no	70.8	21.7	7.5
Disabled child present in family			
– yes	60.9	19.3	19.8
– no	64.5	23.5	12.0
Total	63.8	22.8	13.4

**Table F4 The risk of experiencing severe childhood poverty by children in a range of individual and family circumstances: Scotland**

Row per cent

Characteristic	Severe child poverty risk		
	Not in poverty	Non-severe poverty	Severe poverty
Economic activity of parents			
– Self employed	80.3	12.7	7.0
– Couple or single: all in full-time work	94.2	4.8	1.1
– Couple: one FT one PT work	92.9	5.6	1.5
– Couple: one FT, one unemployed	75.4	21.6	3.0
– Couple or single: PT work, no FT	66.4	24.9	8.8
– workless	24.4	42.4	33.2
Benefits received			
– Disability Living Allowance	73.3	13.2	13.5
– Jobseeker's Allowance	[26.4]	[26.5]	[47.1]
– Incapacity Benefit	46.1	31.7	22.2
– Income Support	23.2	48.9	27.9
– Working Tax Credit	69.5	24.2	6.4
– Child Tax Credit*	76.1	17.1	6.9
Age mother left education			
– Before 16 years	49.7	31.7	18.5
– At 16 years	65.2	22.6	12.2
– After age 16 years	85.0	10.6	4.4
Mother's educational qualification			
– No qualification	50.0	29.3	20.7
– Non-degree qualification	74.7	17.6	7.8
– Degree level or above qualification	91.6	6.8	1.6
Housing tenure			
– Own outright	94.2	5.8	0.0
– Mortgage	87.8	9.2	2.9
– Rent	42.4	35.6	22.1
Savings			
– Parents have savings	92.5	6.5	1.0
– Parents have no savings	66.6	21.5	11.8
Parents			
– single parent	49.6	33.7	16.8
– couple parents	81.7	12.0	6.4

\* Includes all children in households receiving Income Support

{ }: should be suppressed: percent based on less than 20 cases

[ ]: should interpret with caution: percent based on 20–49 cases

continued overleaf

**Table F4 The risk of experiencing severe childhood poverty by children in a range of individual and family circumstances:**  
**Scotland** *continued*

*Row per cent*

Characteristic	Severe child poverty risk		
	Not in poverty	Non-severe poverty	Severe poverty
Number of children in family			
– One child	76.2	13.6	10.2
– 2 children	77.9	16.1	5.9
– 3 children	64.6	24.4	11.1
– 4 or more	51.6	29.0	19.4
Age of child			
– 0–4	68.8	21.5	9.7
– 5–9	73.4	18.2	8.4
– 10–14	74.3	16.7	9.0
– 15–19 years	75.6	13.9	10.5
Age of mother			
– 16–24	32.4	46.7	20.9
– 25–34	64.6	23.7	11.7
– 35–44	79.6	13.6	6.8
– 45 years or older	79.1	12.0	8.9
Ethnic background			
– White	73.4	18.0	8.7
– mixed/other	[45.4]	[36.2]	[18.4]
– Asian or Asian British	[75.9]	[9.5]	[14.7]
– Black or Black British	{32.4}	{0.0}	{67.6}
Disabled adult present in family			
– yes	56.5	26.1	17.4
– no	77.3	15.7	7.0
Disabled child present in family			
– yes	70.4	17.4	12.2
– no	73.2	18.1	8.7
Total	72.8	18.0	9.2

**Table F5 The risk of experiencing severe childhood poverty by children in a range of individual and family circumstances:**  
**Northern Ireland**

Row per cent

Characteristic	Severe child poverty risk		
	Not in poverty	Non-severe poverty	Severe poverty
Economic activity of parents			
– Self employed	83.6	14.6	1.9
– Couple or single: all in full-time work	95.9	3.1	0.9
– Couple: one FT one PT work	95.6	3.2	1.1
– Couple: one FT, one unemployed	79.6	15.6	4.8
– Couple or single: PT work, no FT	58.1	24.2	17.7
– workless	24.0	41.7	34.3
Benefits received			
– Disability Living Allowance	68.9	23.6	7.5
– Jobseeker's Allowance	8.2	54.0	37.8
– Incapacity Benefit	66.6	20.1	13.3
– Income Support	22.7	48.5	28.8
– Working Tax Credit	69.3	23.7	7.0
– Child Tax Credit*	77.9	14.5	7.6
Age mother left education			
– Before 16 years	40.5	37.4	22.2
– At 16 years	64.5	23.6	11.9
– After age 16 years	82.8	10.1	7.1
Mother's educational qualification			
– No qualification	47.2	32.5	20.3
– Non-degree qualification	75.9	15.5	8.6
– Degree level or above qualification	96.0	3.0	1.0
Housing tenure			
– Own outright	84.7	15.3	0.0
– Mortgage	83.0	11.0	6.0
– Rent	36.5	36.1	27.4
Savings			
– Parents have savings	91.8	6.3	2.0
– Parents have no savings	65.5	21.4	13.1
Parents			
– single parent	46.4	31.0	22.6
– couple parents	81.6	12.6	5.8

\* Includes all children in households receiving Income Support

continued opposite



**Table F5 The risk of experiencing severe childhood poverty by children in a range of individual and family circumstances:**  
**Northern Ireland** *continued*

Row per cent

Characteristic	Severe child poverty risk		
	Not in poverty	Non-severe poverty	Severe poverty
Number of children in family			
– One child	77.1	12.1	10.7
– 2 children	76.7	18.1	5.2
– 3 children	74.2	16.0	9.8
– 4 or more	57.6	22.3	20.1
Age of child			
– 0–4	77.7	15.4	6.9
– 5–9	74.0	15.5	10.5
– 10–14	71.4	18.7	9.9
– 15–19 years	69.1	18.2	12.7
Age of mother			
– 16–24	52.8	25.5	21.7
– 25–34	70.8	17.8	11.4
– 35–44	76.2	16.3	7.5
– 45 years or older	74.2	14.9	10.9
Ethnic background			
– White	73.3	16.9	9.8
– mixed/other	{71.5}	{28.5}	{0.0}
– Asian or Asian British	{100.0}	{0.0}	{0.0}
– Black or Black British	{100.0}	{0.0}	{0.0}
Disabled adult present in family			
– yes	63.9	23.7	12.3
– no	76.3	14.8	8.9
Disabled child present in family			
– yes	60.2	27.2	12.6
– no	75.2	15.5	9.3
Total	73.4	16.9	9.7

{ }: should be suppressed: percent based on less than 20 cases

[ ]: should interpret with caution: percent based on 20–49 cases



# Save the Children

## Severe Child Poverty in the UK

This report finds that one out of every ten children in the UK is living in severe poverty. A total of 1.3 million children have an income well below the government's poverty line and lack basic necessities that most people in the UK take for granted.

Policy-makers say that the first step to changing something is to measure it. Yet the government does not currently measure severe poverty. Save the Children argues that the government must focus its efforts on these children.

Following previous research on *Britain's Poorest Children*, this latest study adds a further dimension to our understanding of severe poverty, using a new measure that combines household income with recent data on other indicators of deprivation.

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