

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New research highlights why tackling child poverty in the North West must be top of the priority list for political parties this General Election

New research for the End Child Poverty Coalition shows that across North West England;

- **37% of all children in the region are living in poverty,**
- **90% of constituencies in the region have 1/4, or more, of children living in poverty,**
- **Levels of child poverty in the North West vary dramatically across the region; the difference between the area with the highest level and the area with the lowest level is 39 percentage points – showing clear inequality,**
- **Across the North West 13% of all children live in a family impacted by the two-child limit – a policy which pushes families into poverty,**
- **Across the UK child poverty costs an estimated £39 billion a year.**

New research on local levels of child poverty, carried out by Loughborough University for the End Child Poverty Coalition, provides new information on child poverty across North West England. This highlights that a shocking 37% of all children in the region are living in relative poverty, after the cost of housing is considered.

Of the 73 constituencies in this region, many with newly defined boundaries, almost all have a child poverty rate of 25% or more, showing that child poverty, and how politicians tackle this, is a key election issue for families across this region.

The table below shows the 10 new General Election constituencies with the highest levels of child poverty the North West.

Ranking	New constituency	Ranking	New constituency
1	Oldham West, Chadderton and Royton	6	Blackley and Middleton South
2	Manchester Rusholme	7	Bolton North East
3	Blackburn	8	Bolton South and Walkden
4	Oldham East and Saddleworth	9	Rochdale
5	Manchester Central	10	Hyndburn

Levels of child poverty in the North West vary dramatically across the region – the difference between the new parliamentary constituency with the highest figure (Oldham West, Chadderton & Royton, 53.5%) and the area with the lowest (Altrincham and Sale West, 14.7%) is 39 percentage points. This demonstrates that the overall child poverty figure for the region hides much higher child poverty figures for some areas.

Graham Whitham, CEO at Greater Manchester Poverty Action said:

“The new data released today really illustrates the appalling levels of poverty we are seeing in the North West. Nearly four in ten children are now living in poverty across the region – with this figure rising to one in two in the worst-hit constituencies. For many this means being excluded from activities like school trips and days out, not having clothes that fit them, going to school hungry, and in some cases sharing a bed or sleeping on the floor.

“No child should go without the things they need to be healthy and happy. We urgently need to see a commitment from the incoming government to develop a national mission to end poverty, backed by a clear anti-poverty strategy with real policy change. Whichever party forms the next government, they must commit to ending the cruel two-child limit policy – which forces parents into unimaginable choices, denies families the support they need from our social security system, and limits the potential of thousands of children and young people across our country.

“At a local level, we urge employers to pay the Living Wage and encourage local authorities to develop their own anti-poverty strategies, which implement robust responses to poverty in their communities.”

Rachel Walters, End Child Poverty Coalition Manager said:

“Whoever wins the election needs to urgently get a grip on child poverty. Rising costs and stalling wages are making it impossible for families to make ends meet. Across the North West parents are having to use food banks to feed their children and babies are being born into homes where parents can't afford to keep their houses warm in winter.

“Our social security system, like our NHS, should be there for us all, especially when we need it most. We need a social security system that's fit for the 21st Century. One that ensures all children can flourish, instead of one that pushes families into poverty, with its two-child limit to benefit payments. This policy must be scrapped immediately.”

Across the North West [13% of all children live in a family whose benefit payments are reduced by the two-child limit](#) – a policy which pushes families into poverty by reducing benefit payments by up to £3,455 per child (if born after April 2017) in 2023/24. That is over 200,000 children who are impacted. This figure is higher than the national average of 10%.

As a result of these findings, the End Child Poverty Coalition is calling for a strategy to tackle child poverty to be at the top of the priority list for all political parties in the General Election. Alongside this, they urge all political parties to commit to scrapping the two-child limit to benefit payments immediately. Research shows that lifting the two-child limit to benefit payments is the most effective way to reduce child poverty. Doing so [would lift 300,000 children out of poverty across the UK at a cost of £1.8 billion](#).

Across the UK [child poverty costs an estimated £39 billion a year](#), this is comprised in part due to the cost on public services to help address the damage done to children growing up in poverty.

CASE STUDY

A single mum from Stretford supported by Greater Manchester Poverty Action has been struggling with the cost-of-living for the past few years. Her money problems began after the birth of her daughter, who is now eight years old and showing signs of autism.

She said: “You have to sacrifice a lot. You always have to say, ‘oh, I’ll have to get that next month’. Because by the time I’ve paid all my bills, I’ve literally got nothing left. It makes me feel rubbish. I don’t have a nice place to live to call home, I don’t like anyone coming round because I feel embarrassed.

“It definitely affects my mental health and it definitely sometimes affects my daughter’s mental health too. You want to do more and you want to give them the life you want to – but you can’t. And there’s nothing out there to make it better.”

The mum was put in touch with Greater Manchester Poverty Action’s Money Matters programme by her daughter’s school. The programme helps people to maximise their income and manage debts. She said: “They helped me fill out my DLA form, and also helped me get my correct benefits because I wasn’t getting what I was entitled to, which has made a difference.”

Ends.

Notes to editor:

- The full report ‘Local indicators of child poverty after housing costs, 2022/23’ as well as tables with Constituency and Local Authority data and further information can be found here; <https://endchildpoverty.org.uk/child-poverty-2024>
- The End Child Poverty Coalition is made up of 120 organisations including child welfare groups, social justice groups, faith groups, trade unions and others. Together with a group of Youth Ambassadors, members campaign for a UK free of child poverty. Further information on the Coalition can be found here; <https://endchildpoverty.org.uk/about/>
- This research uses a Relative After Housing Costs measure of child poverty. ‘After Housing Costs’ shows the income available to a household once rent, water rates, mortgage interest payments, buildings insurance payments, ground rent and service charges are paid. This enables a more accurate comparison of what households have available to spend on food, utilities, clothing and leisure, than looking at income alone, given the disparity of rents in different parts of the UK.
- The statistics on local child poverty rates after housing costs presented in today’s report are calibrated to the Department for Work and Pensions’ (DWP) Households Below Average Income (HBAI) dataset for FYE 2022 and FYE 2023. The DWP’s data have undergone quality assurance, by this department, prior to publication. However, some issues remain; this is partly due to sampling issues related to the Covid-19 pandemic. We advise that users are encouraged to exercise caution when interpreting the data. We further recommend that users of these Local Child Poverty Statistics focus on longer-term trends to understand how poverty has changed in an area rather than year-on-year changes which are prone to fluctuations, and avoid direct comparisons of the overall rates of child poverty between nations and regions.

Media contact

- Graham Whitham, CEO, 07917 644435, graham@gmpovertyaction.org
- Hollie Griss, Communications and Media Officer, 07561 853933, hollie@gmpovertyaction.org

Who are Greater Manchester Poverty Action?

Greater Manchester Poverty Action (GMPA) is a recognised leader on poverty in the UK and exists to end poverty in Greater Manchester and beyond. We deliver independent, evidence-based activities to address socio-economic disadvantage. These focus on maximising the financial resources available to households, amplifying the voices of people with lived experience, and working with our network to achieve meaningful change. Further information can be found at www.gmpovertyaction.org

Greater Manchester Poverty Action is a member of the End Child Poverty Coalition, leading the Coalition’s North West media work.