



Department
for Work &
Pensions

DWP Latest Updates & Developments

Family Finance Surveys User Conference – July 2026

Introduction

Joanna Littlechild, Head of Surveys Branch

Setting the scene

- The presentation today focuses on analytical updates and developments.
- We develop our statistics in the context of the Code of Practice and are focusing here on some of our methodological developments or data and results recently published.

DWP Statistical Work Programme

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dwp-statistical-work-programme/statistical-work-programme>

User Engagement via StatsUserNetwork

- As part of increasing user engagement for DWP Statistics, our Statistics producers publicise their releases on [StatsUserNetwork](#).

What is StatsUserNetwork?

- The forum was launched in early 2025 and replaces [StatsUserNet](#). This site became an archive from 1 May 2025 allowing users to still access all historical material without logging in.
- It is Government Statistical Service branded, ONS funded and maintained for benefit of all users of official statistics.
- [StatsUserNetwork](#) is a discussion forum for users and producers of Official Statistics. It allows you to create posts and add comments, connect with other users and join Statistical Theme Groups that are relevant to you.

How do I sign up on StatsUserNetwork?

- Sign up to set up a profile via: <https://www.statsusernetwork.ons.gov.uk/>

Update on Children in Low-Income Families

- Children in Low-Income Families

- Following the successful completion of discovery work and a public consultation, After Housing Costs local area child poverty statistics are also published in the latest release for financial year ending 2024 and 2025:
- [Children in low income families: local area statistics - GOV.UK](#).
- Information on the underlying methodology is available here: [Children in low income families: local area statistics: background information and methodology - GOV.UK](#).
- Any questions can be addressed to STATS.CONULTATION-2018@DWP.GOV.UK

DWP Areas of Research Interest

- [DWP Areas of Research Interest 2026 - GOV.UK](#)
- The latest ARI was published in June.
- The Areas of Research Interest (ARI) invites the research community to partner with DWP on the questions that matter most for work, welfare, and pensions.
- Victoria.Whitaker@dwp.gov.uk

FRS Developments

Progress on integration of administrative data



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Family Resources Survey Transformation: integrating administrative data

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/family-resources-survey-transformation-integrating-administrative-data-into-the-frs>

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frs.transformation@dwp.gov.uk

FRS Transformation – linkage of DWP/HMRC benefits

- We've talked at this event previously about our research into integrating administrative data into the FRS.
- In March 2026 we published the first integrated FRS dataset and related publications using linked benefit data.
- This resolves a substantial proportion but not all the long-standing undercount of benefit receipt in the survey.
- We published a detailed technical paper outing the approach and a set of tables demonstrating the effect of data linking on benefit underreporting.
- [Family Resources Survey Transformation: integrating administrative data for benefits - GOV.UK](#)
- I'll outline at a high level what we did – the other speakers will be talking about the effect of this quality improvement on their specific releases.
- frs.transformation@dwp.gov.uk

FRS Transformation – linkage of DWP/HMRC benefits

- Produce the FRS lookup file by linking adult respondents to their National Insurance Numbers.
- Use the lookup file to link around 95% of respondents to each of the administrative datasets, identifying benefit receipt and payments at the time of interview.
- Identify deductions, recoveries and the net amounts paid via the Central Payments System.

FRS Transformation – linkage of DWP/HMRC benefits

- Check other, survey-based responses (for the small-scale benefits, admin data sources are not available, and a very small proportion of on-benefit respondents are not able to be linked to their admin data).
- Quality assure by reconciling and credibility checking administrative data and survey responses.
- Compile a complete FRS benefits table based on administrative data for the main benefits, with residual survey elements.
- Ensure that other FRS tables, such as Adult, Benunit (family), Household and Renter tables, are consistent with the new benefits information.

FRS Transformation – linkage of DWP/HMRC benefits

- Technical and data availability issues mean it is not possible, at this stage, to implement a revised grossing regime to resolve more fully the benefit undercount.
- Work will continue on a revised grossing regime and the integration of other administrative data sources, including HMRC Real Time information on PAYE and Self Assessment.

Surveys Branch Latest Releases

Surveys Branch Team Members



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Family Resources Survey (FRS)

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Freya Lawrence

Family Resources Survey background

Code of Practice for Statistics

Trustworthiness

- Our **Release Strategy** continues to give transparency on plans for future years
- [Family Resources Survey: release strategy - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/family-resources-survey-release-strategy)

Quality

- Remains a large-scale survey with a big pool of respondents – nearly 30,000 adults in last year's sample
- Keen focus on accuracy; face-to-face interviewing wherever possible, reference to documents wherever possible, and an increasing use of admin data

Value

- continues to focus on concepts which are core to the DWP policy arena
 - income***, from both work & earnings, pensions, or state benefit receipt, or other sources such as investments
 - characteristics*** such as demographics, tenure, disability, carers, child maintenance and childcare
 - other facets*** such as material deprivation, pension participation, household food security & food bank usage

2024-25 publication & release of data

For the public [GOV.UK](https://gov.uk)

For analysts [Stat-Xplore](https://stat-xplore.gov.uk)

For researchers [microdata](https://microdata.gov.uk) @ UKDS / ONS *Secure Research Service*

New aspects for 2024-25

Integration of benefits admin data ... benefits information for major state benefits and tax credits is now based on administrative data sources. This process is at the core of the periodic review of the FRS, that the Office for Statistics Regulation are currently running.

+ Back-series to 2021-22 ... incorporating new administrative benefits data

Several other alterations

Family Resources Survey **looking ahead through 2026**

- **Field initiatives / Response monitoring**

Sample size, composition & mode; also, field capacity

- **Next publication – March 2027**

This will be the **2025-26** dataset and will include a further **three admin-linked back-series years**: 2020-21, 2019-20 and 2018-19.

- **Grossing rebasing – population back-series from 2012-13 to 2024-25**

Population estimates from the ONS, based in Census 2021 (2022 for Scotland).

This will produce a back series to allow for comparability across time from 2012-13 to 2024-25.

- **Council Tax Band**

The basis of Council Tax band has been improved, with an automated read-in of CT band, from VOA. We are pursuing a similar approach for Scotland, via ONS and the Scottish Assessors Association.

- **Other changes**

This will also include revisions: the 25/26 dataset will have a revised 'number of food parcels from food banks' variable; the 24/25 dataset for an uprating error with Council Tax variables – GROSSCT, CTANNUAL and CTAMT – the impact of this is minimal; and the 20/21 dataset will have a fix to the main education variable, which was then DVHIQUAL (now EDUCQUAL)

Additional questions on whether a child maintenance arrangement is working



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Pensioners' Incomes (PI) and Take-up

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/pensioners-incomes-series-statistics--3>
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/income-related-benefits-estimates-of-take-up--2>
pensioners-incomes@dwp.gov.uk
irb.takeup@dwp.gov.uk

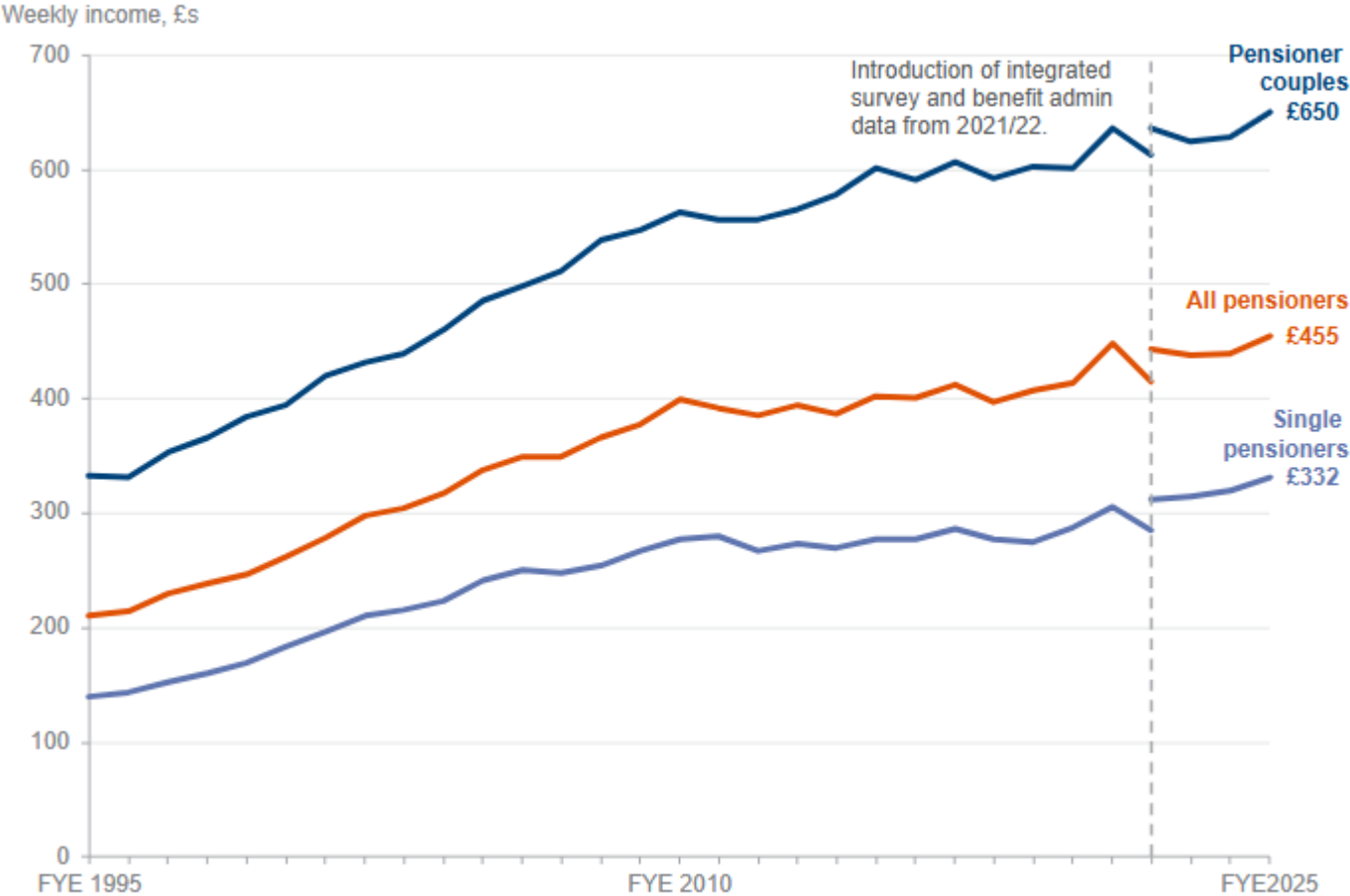
Pensioners' Incomes (PI) introduction

- Annual Accredited Official Statistics publication which reports on pensioners' incomes from the FRS.
- The statistics examine how much income pensioners get each week and where they get that income from. They look at how their incomes have changed over time and variations in income between different types of pensioners.
- Estimates are normally based on a sample of around 7,000 pensioners in private households in the UK. For financial year 24/25, there were 6,300 pensioner units in the sample.
- PI data is available to users on Stat-Xplore as well as on the UK Data Service (UKDS).
- From 21/22, PI estimates are based on admin-linked FRS data.

Pensioners' Incomes (PI) latest results

Pensioners' incomes have continued to be stable since FYE 2022

Average median weekly income of pensioners (after housing costs) in financial year ending (FYE) 2025 prices (£)



- In FYE 2025, pensioners had an average median income of £455.
- The average median income for pensioner couples was £650 per week. Single pensioners had an average income of £332 per week.



Income-related benefits: estimates of take-up introduction and latest results

- Annual statistical publication which reports on the take-up of benefits.
- Take-up refers to the receipt of benefits someone is entitled to - by caseload (% of eligible people) and expenditure (% of money claimed).
- FRS data is matched to administrative records to produce estimates for the main income-related benefits – currently Pension Age only – Pension Credit and Housing Benefit (for pensioners).

Overall PC caseload and expenditure figures for FYE 2024



6 out of 10 of those entitled to PC claimed the benefit



71% of the total amount of PC that could have been claimed was claimed

Overall HB (for pensioners) caseload and expenditure figures for FYE 2024



9 out of 10 of those entitled to HB (for pensioners) claimed the benefit



87% of the total amount of HB (for pensioners) that could have been claimed was claimed

Income-related benefits: estimates of take-up for UC (or equivalent benefits)

- The Department previously published estimates for working age take-up of income-related legacy benefits, but the introduction of UC meant that the methodology must change. We are now at a point where we have successfully worked through several data issues so we can plan to publish the first estimates, in compliance with the Code of Practice for Statistics.
- We intend to publish estimates of take-up of Universal Credit (or equivalent benefits) in the next release, on 22 October 2026, alongside the pension take-up statistics. This composite measure will assess the take-up of Universal Credit or equivalent income-related legacy benefits. These estimates will be labelled as Official Statistics in Development as we continue to refine our methodology to meet user needs and reflect continual changes in the benefit landscape.
- This initial release will report on FYE 2024 and FYE 2025 estimates. This publication will reinstate reporting on the working age population (last published in full for FYE 2016).
- The above update can be found in our release strategy document on our publication [home page](#). The [Department for Work and Pensions statistical work programme](#), has also detailed the development of this work.



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Households Below Average Income (HBAI)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/households-below-average-income-hbai--2>
team.hbai@dwp.gov.uk

Angela Smith

HBAI Introduction

- **Households Below Average Income (HBAI)** is an Accredited Official Statistic, produced annually and presents estimates of the number and percentage of individuals by measures of poverty including:

Living in low-income households
In material deprivation
In combined low income and material deprivation

Household food security status
Household food bank usage
Income inequality/deciles/quintiles

- HBAI data is available from 1994/95 to 2024/25 and the underlying data source is the Family Resources Survey (FRS).
- HBAI meets DWP's statutory obligation to publish a measure of relative and absolute low income; and combined low income and material deprivation for children under section 4 of the [Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016](#). **Note references to 2010/11 as the reference year for absolute poverty should now be read as 2024/25 for years where data has been admin linked.*
- See [the latest release page](#) for the most up-to-date information – including main findings presented in our 2024/25 Report, our Background, Information and Methodology report as well as extensive published tables are available on gov.uk.
- New for the 2024/25 publication:

Integration of survey and administrative-linked data

Updates to the back-series to integrate administrative data back to 2021/22

Update to the absolute low-income reference year to 2024/25

New Deep Material Poverty measure for children

- Data is available on [Stat-Xplore](#), along with a user guide and via the [UK Data Service](#), again with extensive user documentation.
- Please contact our team mailbox: team.hbai@dwp.gov.uk with feedback and with any queries.

Headline results for 2024-25 HBAI (Incomes)

[Households Below Average Income \(HBAI\) statistics - GOV.UK](#)

Income distribution (BHC) for the total population

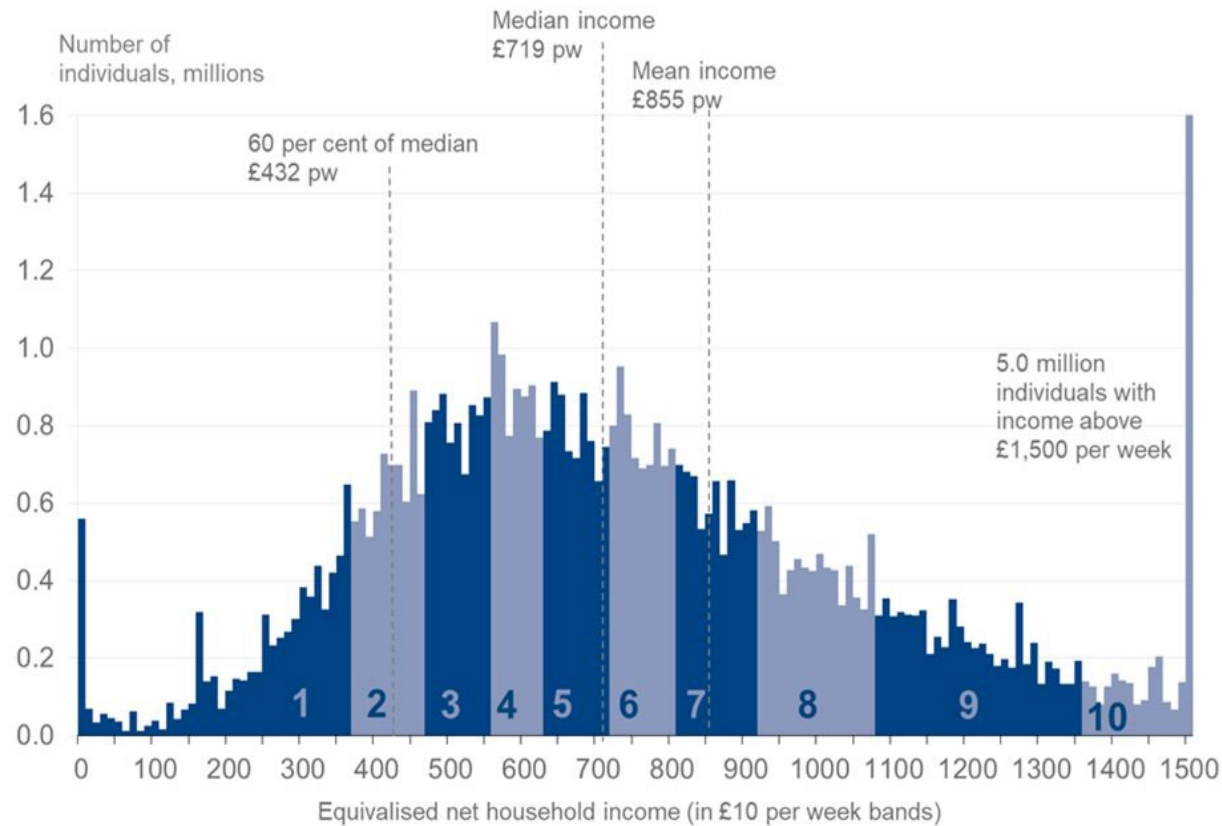
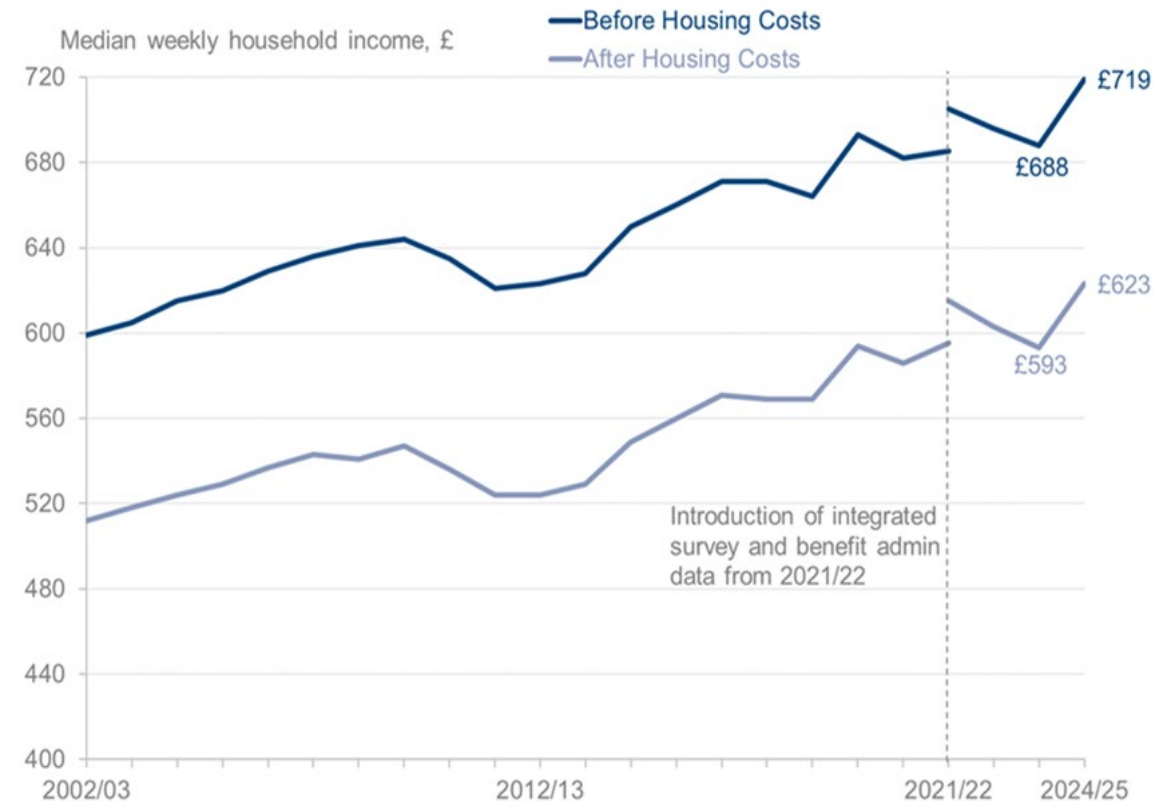


Chart shows income distribution for 2024/25. The distribution of UK household income is skewed with a long right-tail of higher incomes.

Median weekly household income



Median household income increased in real terms, rising by 5% before housing costs (BHC) and 5% after housing costs (AHC) to £719 and £623 per week, respectively. The increases for both these measures were statistically significant.

Headline results for 2024/25 (Poverty measures)

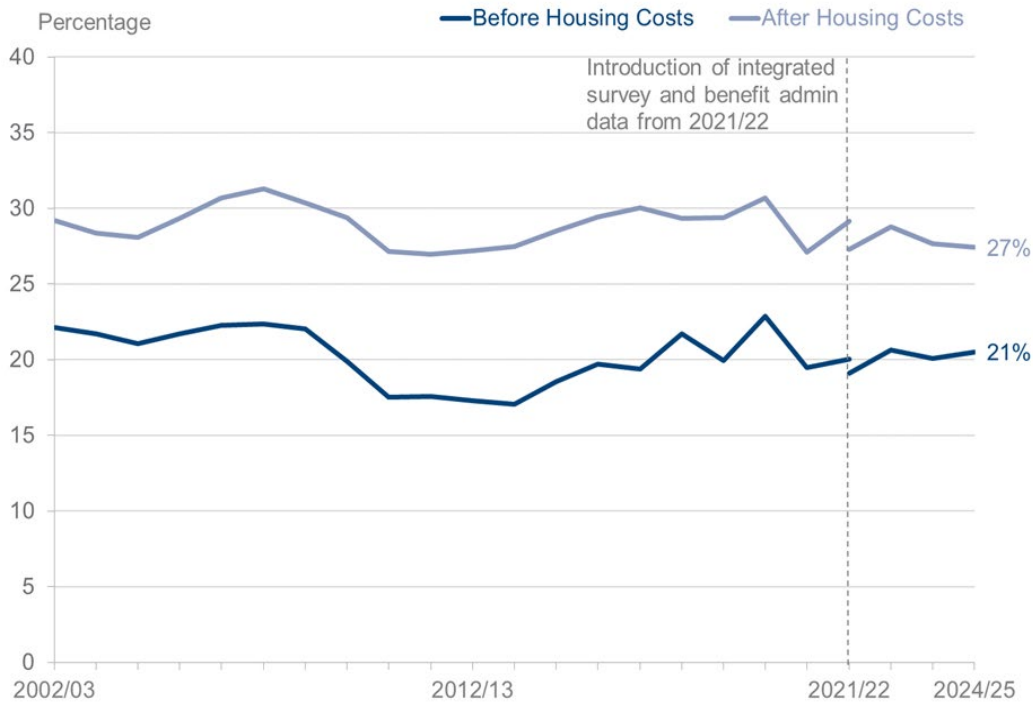
[Households Below Average Income \(HBAI\) statistics - GOV.UK](#)

Many different poverty measures – relative poverty & absolute poverty (income measures), material deprivation (lack of essential items), food bank use

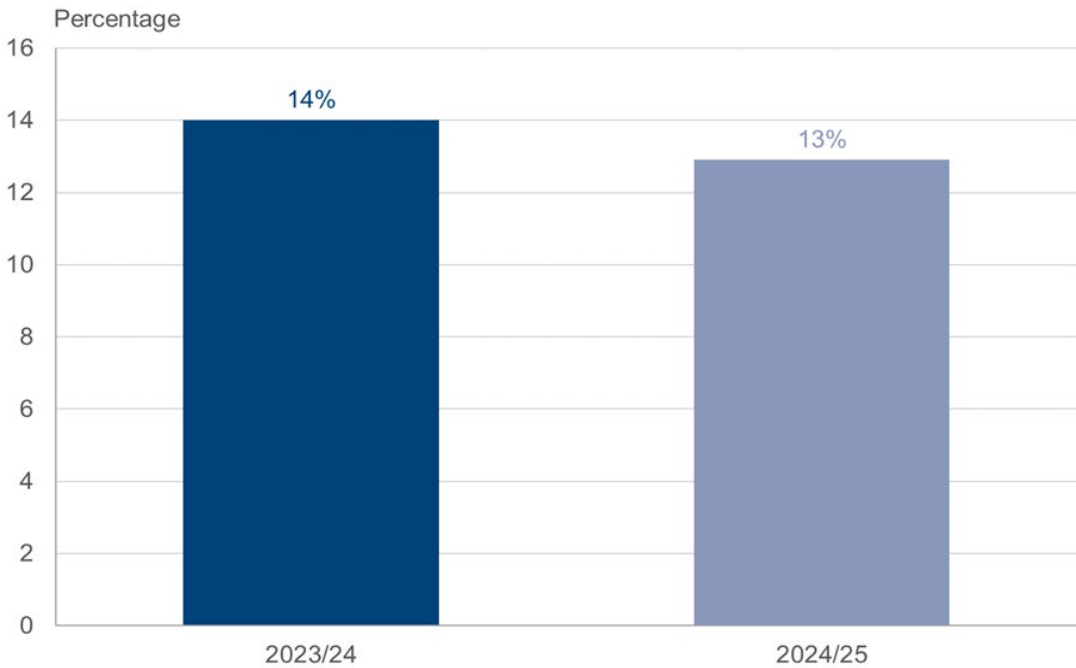
Relative poverty (AHC) is the government’s preferred measure. It reflects changes in standards of living based on the overall median income in the specific year and best captures long term trends

The Child Poverty Strategy will track progress against two headline metrics. The first is relative low income after housing costs (AHC), which is already included in the annual HBAI publication tables and the second is a new measure developed for 2024/25 – **deep material poverty for children** – developed to capture children experiencing a deeper level of poverty.

Percentage of children in relative low income



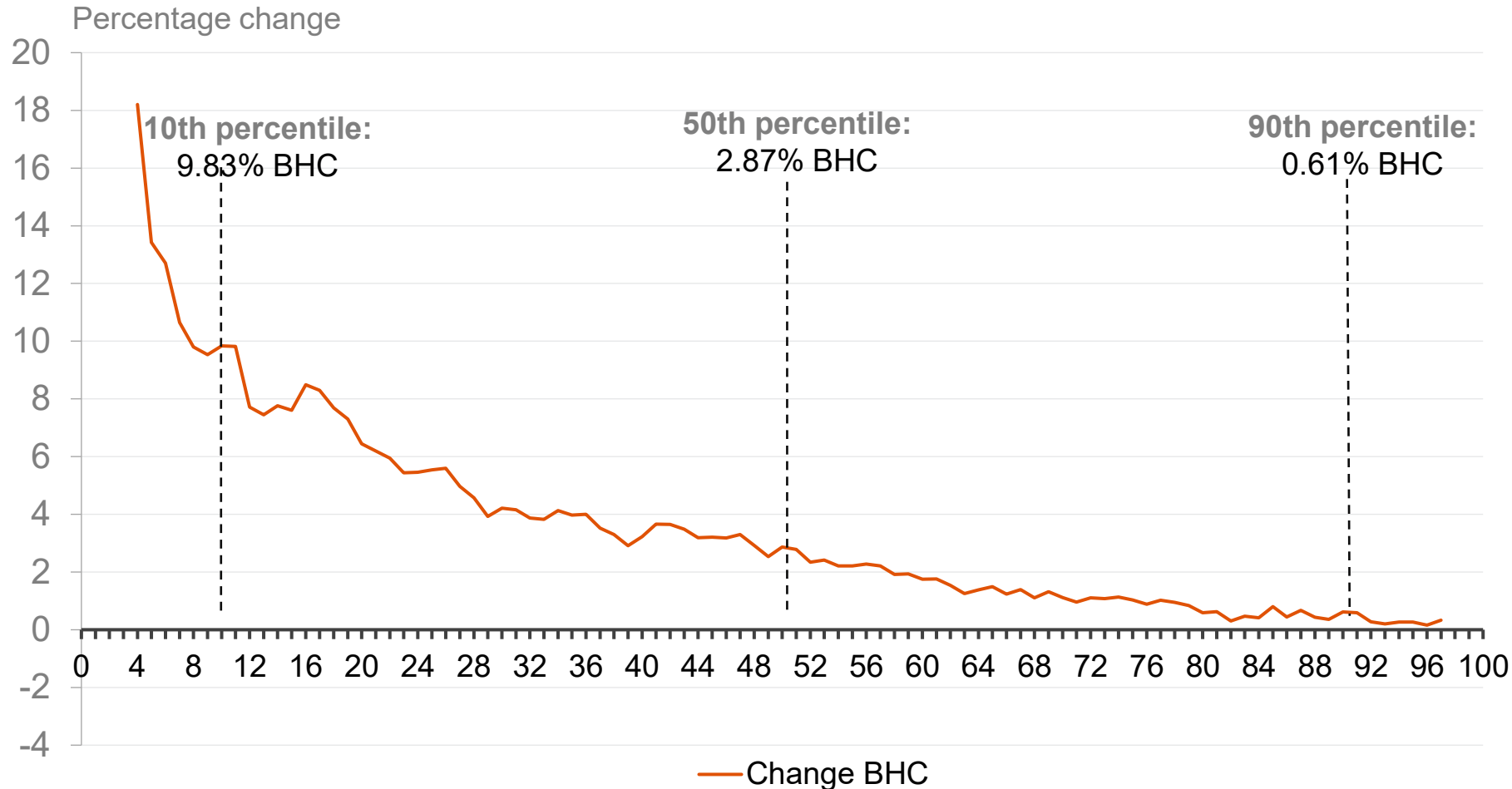
Percentage of children in deep material poverty



Headline results for 2024/25 – Impact of Admin linking for benefits (income distribution)

[Households Below Average Income \(HBAI\) statistics - GOV.UK](#)

Change in income between non-linked published 2023/24 and linked 2023/24 data (*impact of linking on 2023/24*)



- Linking increases reported income levels because it is more common to under-report rather than over-report benefit receipt in the Family Resources Survey.
- Linking has a greater effect on the lower part of the income distribution where a greater proportion of income comes from benefits (including the State Pension).

HBAI 2024/25 publication and forward look

To note for 2024/25 publication:

- **Integration of survey and administrative-linked data:** 2024/25 HBAI publication features an improved approach to using administrative data in place of FRS survey responses for most state benefits. Means key low-income measures have changed.
- **Updates to the back-series to integrate admin data back to 2021/22:** as well as 2024/25, the back-series back to 2021/22 was also updated for admin linking. Updates originally planned back to 2018/19 as well but admin linking for 2020/21, 2019/20 and 2018/19 will now take place in March 2027.
- **Update to the absolute low-income reference year:** necessary due to the break in the series for admin linking, updated to 2024/25 for years that have been admin linked (remains at 2010/11 for years before 2021/22).
- **New Deep Material Poverty measure for children:** Following the [ad-hoc statistical release](#) in December 2025, deep material poverty measure included in HBAI tables for the first time. Important for Child Poverty Strategy. Defined as lacking 4 out of 13 essential items.
- **Smaller scale changes to publication tables, charts, HBAI variables or back-series data:** see [Background, Information and Methodology report](#) for more details.

Developments for 2025/26:

Base FRS developments which could impact on HBAI statistics are:

- **Admin-linking incorporated for further 3 back-series years:** 2020/21, 2019/20 and 2018/19
- **Grossing rebasing:** incorporating population estimates from ONS, based on Census 2021 (2022 for Scotland) into FRS and HBAI and producing a back-series from 2012/13 to 2024/25 for comparability
- **Council Tax Band:** further development
- **Questionnaire changes:** approved in questionnaire consultation

For more information on **future releases** and **development updates** see:

- [FRS release strategy](#) and
- [Households Below Average Income release strategy](#)



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Income Dynamics

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/income-dynamics-statistics>
teamincome.dynamics@dwp.gov.uk

Abigail Holland

Income Dynamics 2010-2024: an overview

Income Dynamics (ID) uses data from Understanding Society (USoc), managed by the University of Essex.

Most of our statistics are longitudinal, and as such differ from HBAI.

The key findings we deliver are:

- Rates of **persistent low income** (in relative low income in any 3 out of 4 consecutive survey waves)
- Short-term **movements into and out of low income**, and **events** associated with these movements (across 2 consecutive survey waves)
- **Income mobility**: movements across the full income distribution (over a longer timeframe)

This year we included data from Wave 15 of USoc, which covered 2023-2024.

ID analysis therefore covered the period from 2010 through to 2024 inclusive.

Key development for the 2010-2024 release: inclusion of USoc's [General Population Sample boost \(GPS2\)](#) into the longitudinal sample used to produce statistics on movements in and out of low income (entry and exit analysis), and events associated with these movements

Income Dynamics 2010-2024: development work

What is the General Population Sample boost (GPS2) and why was it introduced into USoc?

- USoc introduced the GPS2 to improve the study’s representativeness. Specifically, it was introduced to address the effects of attrition and migration over time, and to improve the coverage of minority samples

When was the GPS2 introduced into USoc and what impact did it have?

- The GPS2 was introduced into USoc in Wave 14 (2022-2023)
- Its introduction resulted in an additional 5,761 household interviews in this wave, and research conducted by the University of Essex concludes it ultimately achieved its aim of improving the study’s representativeness

When was the GPS2 introduced to ID analysis and what impact did it have?

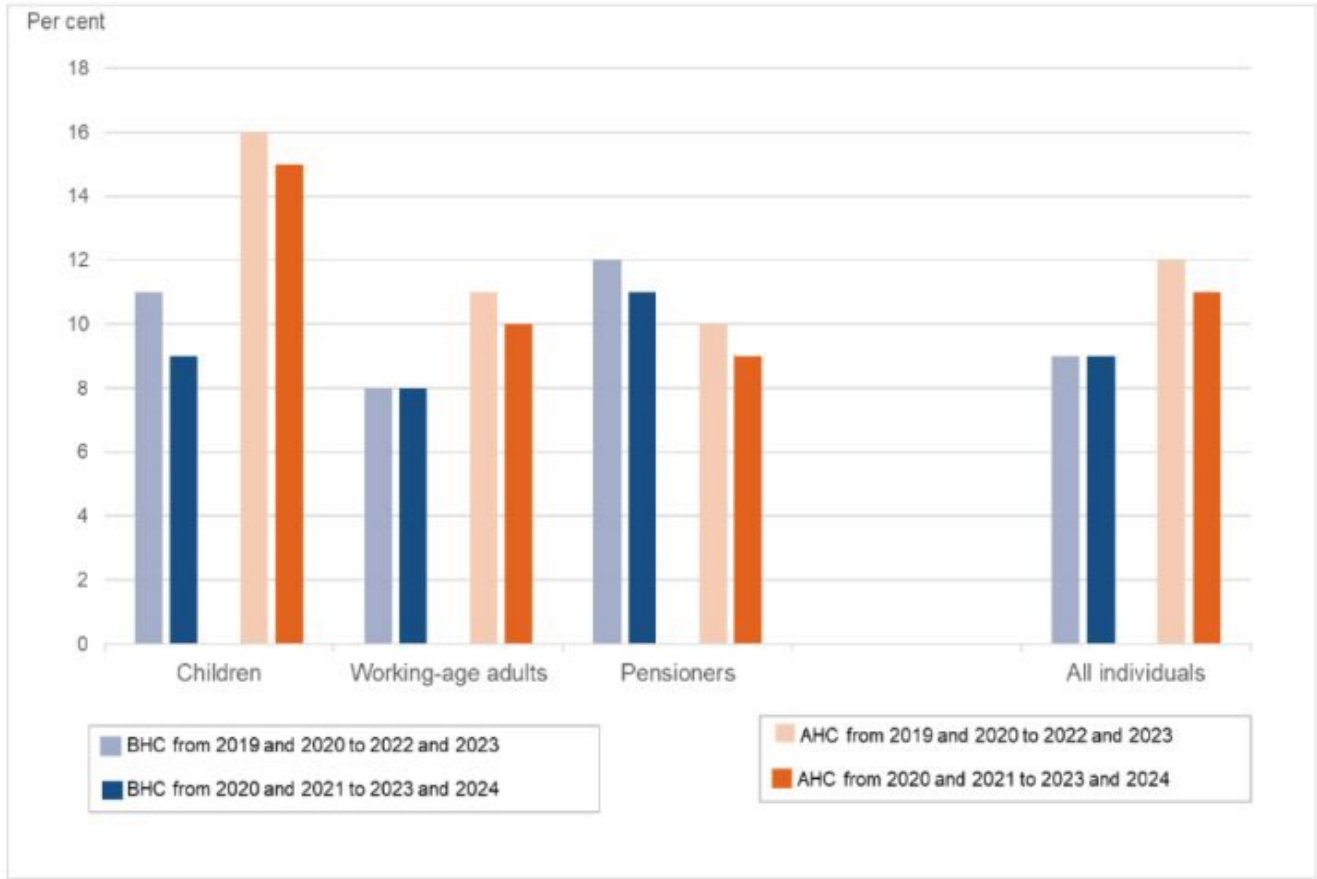
- Members of the GPS2 have been included in ID’s cross-sectional analysis from Wave 14 (2022-2023). This year, we brought them into our longitudinal analysis carried out over the most recent two waves, i.e. Waves 14-15 (2022-2023 to 2023-2024)

Type of analysis	Use of the GPS2
Single wave analysis	Included in cross-sectional income measures from 2022-2023 onwards
Two-wave analysis: Low income entries and exits, and events associated with these movements	Included in cross-sectional income measures from 2022-2023, and in the longitudinal sample across the most recent two-wave period (2022-23 to 2023-24)
Longer term analysis: Persistent low income and income mobility over time	Included in cross-sectional low income measures from 2022-2023, but not yet included in the longitudinal sample

Persistent low income rates in the two most recent four-wave periods

Rates of persistent low income across the two most recent four-wave periods by population group

Before Housing Cost (BHC) rates are lowest for working-age adults, and higher for children and pensioners. **After Housing Cost (AHC)** rates are highest for children.



Observed changes and possible links to inclusion of the GPS2:

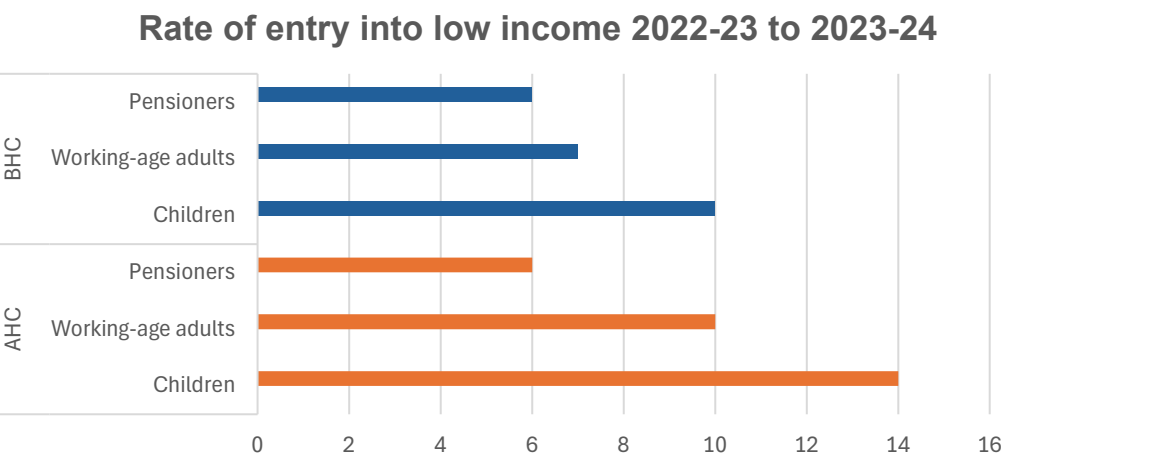
- Rates have changed little since 2010
- Some decreases in both BHC and AHC rates over the past two four-wave periods, particularly among children
- Lower median incomes since the introduction of GPS2 – may be expected given the groups targeted by the boost
- Median income values are used to measure who is in relative low income in each wave
- Some small decreases in estimates of persistent low income may therefore be expected given lower thresholds in two out of four waves and an otherwise unchanged longitudinal sample (currently excluding boost members)

Persistent low income definition: in relative low income for any 3 out of the 4 most recent waves.

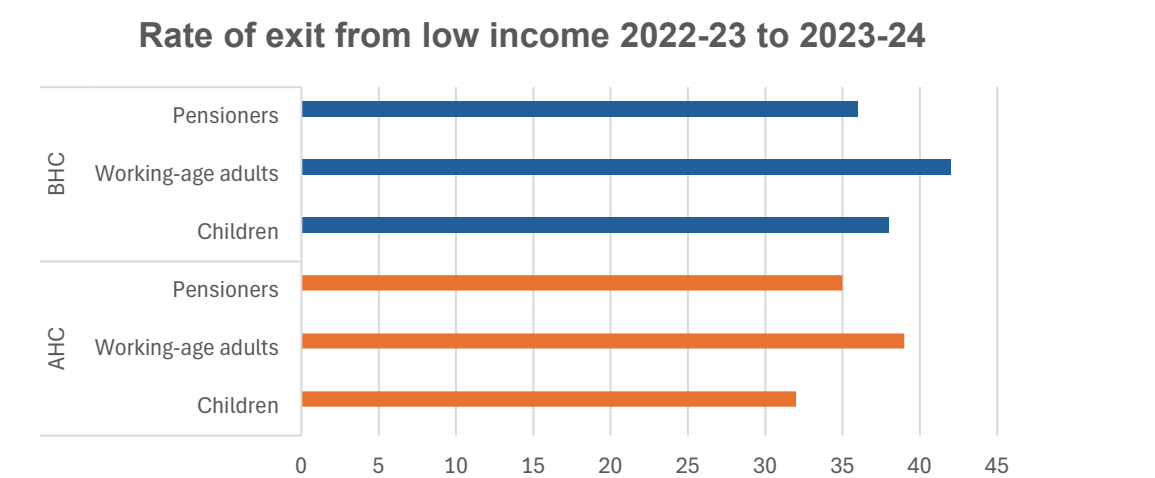
Movements into and out of relative low income over the two most recent survey waves

Over time, and both before and after housing costs:

Children are more likely to enter low income than working-age adults or pensioners



Working-age adults are generally more likely to exit from low income than children or pensioners



Similar numbers of individuals move in and out of low income each year. Exit rates are higher than entry rates: based on a smaller sized population.

Observed changes and possible links to the inclusion of the GPS2:

Across the most recent two-wave period (2022-23 to 2023-24), entry rates increased for all three main population groups, BHC and AHC.

At the same time, there was a decrease in exit rates both BHC and AHC for these groups, apart from pensioners BHC. With the inclusion of sample boost members in the longitudinal sample, this adjustment might be expected.

Wider DWP Developments

Analysts from across DWP



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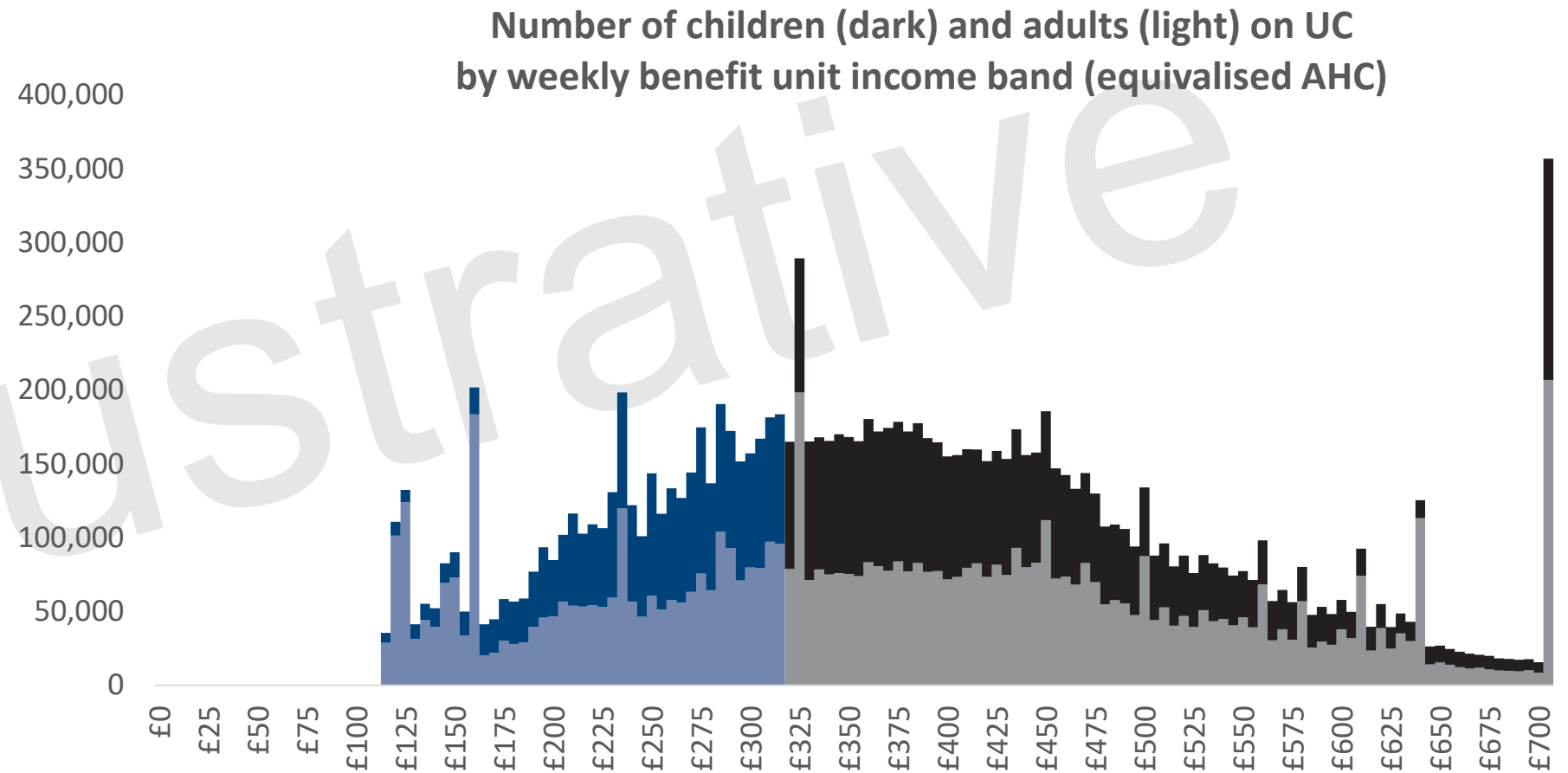
Universal Credit Low Income (UCLI) Statistics

stats.consultation-2018@dwp.gov.uk

Neil Sorensen

UC Low Income Statistics – Income Distribution

- UC admin data includes substantial income and housing costs data and hence can be used to estimate family incomes and whether families on UC are in poverty or not.
- Hence, can be used to provide local-level poverty estimates and with much better timeliness than CiLIF/HBAI.
- DWP will publish these estimates as Official Statistics in Development in the coming months, then on a quarterly basis (Feb/May/Aug/Nov).



UC Low Income Statistics – Potential Format

Table X: Number and Percentage of Children and Working Age Adults in Families receiving Universal Credit (UC) and living in Low Income After Housing Costs, by Local Authority, May 2026, Great Britain

Local Authority	May 2026 (similarly for other quarters)							
	Children				Working Age Adults (WAAs)		All people (Children and Working Age Adults)	
	Number of Children in Low Income and in families receiving UC	As % of all children in families receiving UC	Number of under-16s in Low income and in families receiving UC	As % of all children under 16	Number of WAAs in Low Income and in families receiving UC	As % of all WAAs in families receiving UC	Number of people in Low Income and in families receiving UC	As % of all people in families receiving UC
Great Britan	A	D%	G	J%	M	P%	S	V%
County Durham	B	E%	H	K%	N	Q%	T	W%
Darlington	C	F%	I	L%	O	R%	U	X%
Etc.								

- Separate tables with Local Authority, Region and Parliamentary constituency breakdowns
- Separate tables for Relative and Absolute After Housing Costs (AHC) poverty
- Information & Methodology document to explain similarities and differences with HBAI and CiLIF

Thank you for listening

Any Questions?

Contact Details:

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