

Child Poverty Benchmarking

Children in Low Income Families

On 25 March 2021 the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) published "[Annual Official Statistics on the number of children living in low income families across the UK for financial years ending \(FYE\) 2015 to 2020.](#)" This publication provides the number and percentage of children (aged under 16) living in both Relative and Absolute low income families for Local Authorities and wards for the FYE 2015 to 2020.¹ **It is very important to note that there is no material impact of COVID-19 on the data used in this release.**

The difference between Relative and Absolute low income is:

Relative low income is defined as a family in low income Before Housing Costs (BHC) in the **reference year**. A family must have claimed Child Benefit and at least one other household benefit (Universal Credit, tax credits or Housing Benefit) at any point in the year to be classed as low income in these statistics.

Absolute low income is defined as a family in low income Before Housing Costs (BHC) in the reference year in comparison with incomes in **financial year ending 2011**. A family must have claimed Child Benefit and at least one other household benefit (Universal Credit, tax credits or Housing Benefit) at any point in the year to be classed as low income in these statistics.

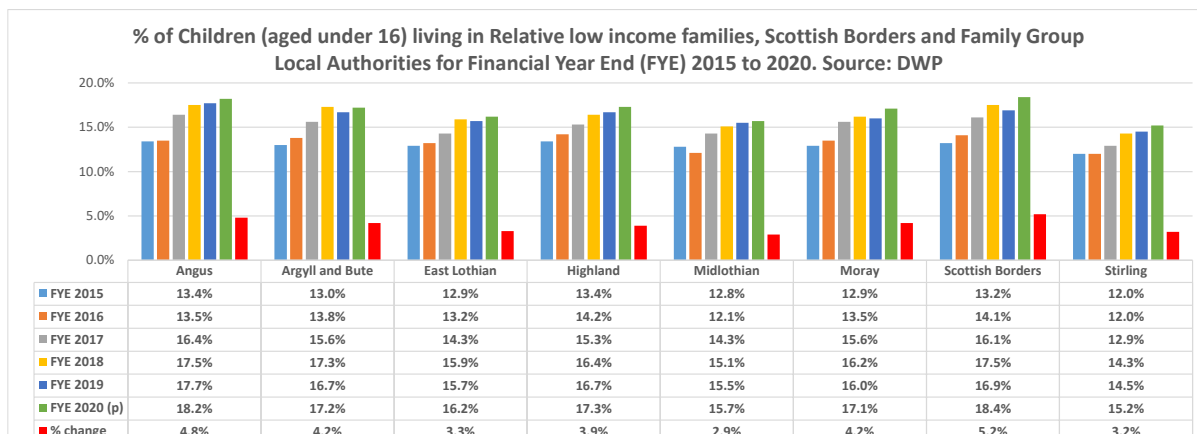
The table below show the proportion of children in Relative and Absolute low income families for the financial years ending (FYE) 2015 to 2020. Note that there has been a greater change in the Scottish Borders compared to Scotland for both relative and absolute. The table below also shows the figures for Dumfries and Galloway, showing the challenges for the South of Scotland Region.

Type	Area - Type	FYE 2015	FYE 2016	FYE 2017	FYE 2018	FYE 2019	FYE 2020 (p)	% Change
Relative	Scotland	14%	15%	16%	18%	18%	19%	4.5%
	Scottish Borders	13%	14%	16%	18%	17%	18%	5.2%
	Dumfries and Galloway	16%	17%	18%	21%	20%	22%	6.0%
Absolute	Scotland	14%	14%	13%	15%	15%	16%	1.3%
	Scottish Borders	13%	13%	13%	14%	14%	15%	1.6%
	Dumfries and Galloway	16%	16%	15%	17%	16%	19%	2.2%

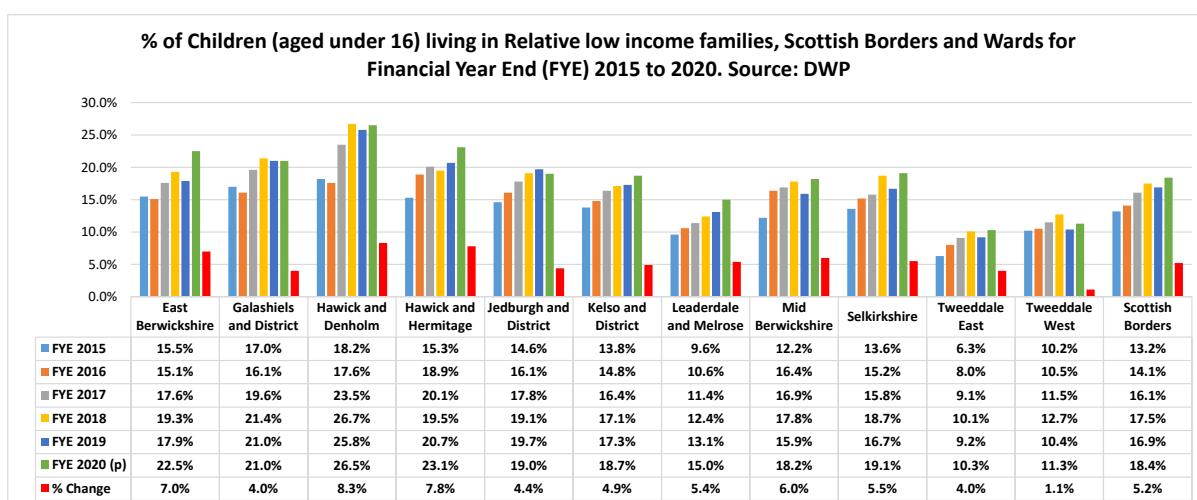
Source: DWP / NRS

The Scottish Borders is in a Local Government Benchmarking Group with seven other Scottish Local Authorities. The graph with table below show the proportion of children in Relative low income families FYE 2015 to 2020 and the percentage change between 2015 and 2020. It should be noted that the Scottish Borders has had the largest increase children in Relative low income families of 5.2% compared to the others. In FYE 2020 the Scottish Borders had the highest proportion of children in low income families of 18.4% compared to the family group.

¹ The figures for Scotland have been derived from summing up the Scottish Local Authorities numbers and applying the NRS aged 0 to 15 population.



Within the Scottish Borders the percent of children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families ranges between 10.3% for Tweeddale East compared to 26.5% for Hawick and Denholm for FYE 2020. The graph with table below show the proportion of children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families for each ward in the Scottish Borders between FYE 2015 and 2020 as well as the change between 2015 and 2020.



This is before the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic is taken into account which is likely to make the situation worse.

[Local Government Benchmarking Framework](#)

The LGBF is a high-level benchmarking tool designed to support senior management teams and elected members to ask questions about key council services.

The framework provides high-level 'can openers' which are designed to focus questions on why variations in cost and performance are occurring between similar councils. They do not supply the answers. That happens as councils engage with each other to 'drill down' and explore why these variations are

happening. Throughout the year, there are several workshop events which cover all aspects of LGBF where professionals from service areas discuss results and approaches. At this time, this does not specifically focus on Child Poverty.

The Scottish Borders can be benchmarked against all councils in Scotland and specifically against seven similar councils ([family group](#)). Within the LGBF there are several indicators that show where deprivation (poverty) may influence educational attainment and outcomes. These include:

- % of pupils gaining 5+ awards at level 5
- % of pupils gaining 5+ awards at level 6
- % of pupils from deprived areas gaining 5+ awards at level 5 (SIMD)
- % of pupils from deprived areas gaining 5+ awards at level 6 (SIMD)
- Overall average total tariff
- Average total tariff SIMD quintile 1
- Average total tariff SIMD quintile 2
- Average total tariff SIMD quintile 3
- Average total tariff SIMD quintile 4
- Average total tariff SIMD quintile 5
- % of P1, P4 and P7 pupils combined achieving expected CFE Level in Literacy
- % of P1, P4 and P7 pupils combined achieving expected CFE Level in Numeracy
- Literacy Attainment Gap (P1,4,7 Combined) - percentage point gap between the least deprived and most deprived pupils
- Numeracy Attainment Gap (P1,4,7 Combined) - percentage point gap between the least deprived and most deprived pupils