

4 in every 10

Disabled children living in poverty



The
Children's
Society

1. Summary

This report reveals that 4 in 10 disabled children live in relative income poverty, once the additional costs of their disability is accounted for. This means that 320,000 disabled children are living in low income families, lacking the resources they need to engage in the kinds of normal social activities that other children take for granted.

This shocking statistic means that disabled children are disproportionately likely to live in poverty – when compared with around 3 in 10 of all children.

We are extremely concerned that this figure could become worse as a result of cuts to support for disabled children to be introduced under the Universal Credit. These cuts will mean that around 100,000 disabled children will lose up to £27 per week under the new benefits system. We strongly recommend that the Government reconsider this proposal, which could have a damaging impact on an already vulnerable group.

2. The analysis

This report is based on analysis of the Family Resources Survey. Unlike official poverty statistics, our study deducts additional benefit entitlement (Disability Living Allowance) paid specifically to help cover the *additional* costs of living with a disability (which may include such things as adjustments to the home and higher transport costs) from overall household income for families with disabled children.

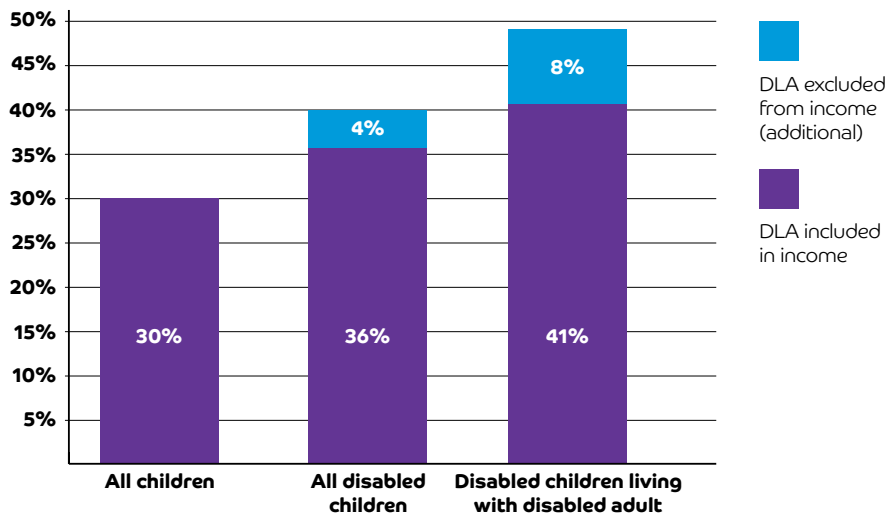
This gives a more accurate reflection of real child poverty rates among disabled children.

Rachel cares for her 16 year old daughter, Anna, who has Down's syndrome as well as other disabilities. Rachel has significant additional costs as a result of Anna's disabilities – for example, Anna needs the house to be warmer and her travel is expensive. Rachel told us that she receives the maximum amount of DLA to cover these costs but that this is still not enough to pay for everything Anna needs.



3. Key results

Results indicate that 40% of disabled children (320,000) live in poverty, this is 4% higher than previous analysis suggests. Around half of disabled children with disabled parents live in poverty. These compare to a poverty rate of 30% across all children in the UK.



Results also indicate that 14% of disabled children (110,000) are in 'severe' income poverty (living in households on less than 40% of median income). And one in five disabled children with disabled parents are in severe poverty. These compare to a severe poverty rate of 11% across all children in the UK.

A combination of factors contributes to these increased poverty rates, including high levels of worklessness for families with disabled children and lower average hours and pay for working families with disabled children.

4. Policy recommendations

- 1) Official statistics need to reflect the additional costs incurred by families with disabled children, when measuring child poverty rates for this group.
- 2) The Government needs to invest more in ensuring that all families with disabled children take up their full entitlement to disability benefits, which are crucial to ensure that families can afford to provide for their children.
- 3) The Government should establish a road map to the eradication of poverty among disabled children by 2020.
- 4) The Government must not reduce the level of support to families with disabled children paid under the Universal Credit – current plans could see support cut by up to £27 per week for 100,000 disabled children.

For more information on this study, please contact Sam Royston, Poverty and Early Years policy adviser at: sam.royston@childrenssociety.org.uk. For more information on the analysis and methodology, please contact David Hounsell, economic adviser at: david.hounsell@childrenssociety.org.uk

For more copies of this report and the summary, please visit: www.childrenssociety.org.uk/policy

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