



**CHILD  
POVERTY  
ACTION  
GROUP**

A FAIR START  
IN LIFE FOR  
EVERY CHILD  
IN THE UK



# CHILD POVERTY IN THE UK



The UK is one of the wealthiest countries in the world but despite this 3.6 million children – more than one in four – currently live in poverty. And things are getting worse. If urgent action isn't taken, it is estimated that by 2020 as many as one million more children will be living in poverty in the UK.

At Child Poverty Action Group, we strongly believe that child poverty is not inevitable and that with the right policies and political will we can eliminate it.

In our work, we provide evidence of the causes, extent and solutions to child poverty, and campaign for its eradication. Our highly respected knowledge base enables us to provide expert information to those who work on the frontline of family support, so that together we can bring about lasting social change.

Despite improvements in child poverty levels in recent years, the UK still has at least one in four children living in poverty. The increase in child poverty expected in the coming years will have a huge impact on the lives of everyday families:

- **In just two years, we have witnessed a sharp rise in food poverty and the use of foodbanks.** Rather than a last resort, many families now rely on food parcels to survive the week. In the last year alone the number of people using foodbanks has nearly trebled to almost 350,000.
- **Children from low income families are struggling to keep up at school.** By the end of primary school, children receiving free school meals are estimated to be almost three terms behind their classmates. Teachers are increasingly reporting that children are arriving at school hungry.
- **Parents are being forced to make impossible choices.** A large number of poor working families are reported to be skipping meals in order to heat their homes, or are left with no choice but to give up work due to illness or to care for their disabled child.
- **Children are affected by the stigma attached to being poor.** One of the most damaging factors cited by those living in poverty is being treated differently or being excluded from everyday activities. No child should have to be ashamed of the conditions they live in.



# CHILD POVERTY ACTION GROUP

Child Poverty Action Group is an independent charity that exists to promote action to prevent and end child poverty in the UK.

Our belief is that poverty has many causes, but is above all about not having enough money to cope with the circumstances in which you are living. Our views are based on our up-to-date research, policy analysis and expertise in social security. A rise in poverty can be attributed to a number of factors such as rising living costs, the cost of housing and low wages and a lack of affordable childcare. Low incomes in particular have been shown to have a damaging effect on children's health, education, life chances and wellbeing.

Our vision is of a society free from child poverty, where all children can enjoy their childhoods and have a fair chance in life to reach their full potential. We believe this is achievable, and as one of the most basic human rights, is a moral obligation that all governments must meet.

## **Our objective is to prevent and end child poverty.**

We aim to achieve this through two key areas of work:

### **Leading the child poverty debate**

We speak out on child poverty issues, publish the most up to date facts and figures and draw upon the real-life experiences of children living in poverty.

### **Providing expert publications, training and advice**

We are an essential source of information to a national network of frontline advisers, at the forefront of advice provision to low-income families.

CPAG's core purpose is to make clear what poverty means for children's futures, and to campaign for every child's right to a fair chance in life to reach their full potential.

# OUR ACTIONS

**We are a fearless and independent voice on the subject of child poverty**, with a successful track record in campaigning and influencing political debate. We have a strong media presence, frequently representing child poverty issues on television and in radio discussions.

**We provide expert advice, information and training to frontline workers** at a time when they face serious funding cuts and the demand for their services continues to increase at an alarming rate. Our free advice lines support over 3,500 cases a year.

**We produce leading publications, including the essential CPAG benefits handbook**, the 'bible' for welfare rights and advice workers, as well as books on specific areas of interest such as universal credit and debt advice. These are an indispensable resource for advisers to families living in poverty across the UK.

**We bring test cases** that defend the rights of claimants in social security and tax credits cases, calling for the fairest interpretation of the law.

**We work in partnership with other organisations to maximise impact.** We host the End Child Poverty (ECP) campaign, joining forces with other voluntary organisations to hold government to account on targets to end child poverty, to publish hard-hitting reports and a child poverty map of the UK on an annual basis.

# SUPPORTING FAMILIES LIVING IN POVERTY

Austerity measures are hitting the poorest families the hardest, and will lead to a marked increase in child poverty in the UK. Hardworking families on low incomes are now contending with a steep rise in living costs, while trying to find their way around the maze of a dramatically changing social security system.

At the same time, essential advice services are being cut, leaving families with limited access to the right information and advice. This is precisely at the moment when the need for clear support and guidance has never been greater. Britain's poorest children are ultimately paying the price of the cuts, as families are made homeless or rely on foodbanks to ensure they have enough to eat.

At Child Poverty Action Group we are committed to improving the lives of children living in poverty in the UK, and to providing expert information and training to charities and advice agencies as they struggle to meet the rising demand for their services.



# DONATE TO CHILD POVERTY ACTION GROUP

CPAG relies on the generosity of donors to continue its vital work in fighting the injustice of child poverty in the UK. Please support us by making a donation or by becoming more involved in our work.

## MAKE A DONATION

I enclose a cheque for £  payable to **Child Poverty Action Group**

Or, I wish to donate £  by (please tick):

Visa  Switch  MasterCard  Delta  Other

Card number:  Start date:

Expiry date:  Issue number (switch):

Cardholder signature:

**DONATE BY PHONE: 0207 812 5217 DONATE ONLINE: WWW.JUSTGIVING.COM/CPAG**

## CONTACT DETAILS

Name:

Company/organisation (if applicable):

Address:

Postcode:

Email:  Telephone:

## FIND OUT MORE ABOUT:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Training courses                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Making a regular gift                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Our latest campaigns                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Becoming a corporate or legal supporter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Events                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Leaving a gift in your will             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fundraising – request a fundraising pack | <input type="checkbox"/> Our publications                        |

## GIFT AID DECLARATION *(please tick)*

I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for each tax year (6 April to 5 April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all the charities or Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs) that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for that tax year. I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify. I understand the charity will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I give on or after 1 April 2009.

We hold your details on our database to keep you informed of other CPAG activities that may interest you. Please tick here if you prefer not to be mailed.

## CHILD POVERTY ACTION GROUP

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**Twitter:** @CPAGUK

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# CHALLENGING MYTHS AROUND CHILD POVERTY

In the media we hear constant references to a dependency culture, where poverty is linked to worklessness and addiction. Research shows however that the link between addiction and poverty is simply not founded, and that two-thirds of children growing up in poverty live in a household where at least one member works.

An important part of our mission is to lead the counter-narrative, and to dispel those myths that are unsupported by the facts and discriminate unfairly against the most vulnerable in our society.



## MEMBERSHIP

Support our work and stay up to date by joining Child Poverty Action Group as either a Supporting or a Rights member. All members will receive our members' magazine and monthly e-newsletter. Rights membership will also include a free copy of our Handbook and Welfare Rights Bulletin, as well as discounts on training courses. Find out more at: [www.cpag.org.uk/membership](http://www.cpag.org.uk/membership)



## OUR HISTORY

Child Poverty Action Group was set up in 1965 by a group of eminent social workers and sociologists concerned with the prevalence of child poverty in the UK. A letter to the Prime Minister that year urged the Government to take action as soon as possible to "achieve a radical improvement in the standard of living of families in poverty."

Now, almost fifty years on, against a backdrop of economic austerity and unprecedented changes to the social security system that are having an impact on the lives of children living in poverty, our work has never been more relevant.

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