



POLICY BRIEF:

CHILD POVERTY AND HOUSING

Introduction

A growing body of evidence points to the impact that poor housing has on a child's well-being. It not only impacts on their health but also their education and general development. Those most at risk are those with no permanent home and those living in overcrowded and non-decent homes.

Key housing statistics

- Households in poverty are more likely than average to live in non-decent homes than other households and to live in poor quality environments.
- Householders living in the most deprived areas are more likely to live in overcrowded homes than those in other areas - over two-thirds of over-crowded households in England are in the 10 per cent most deprived areas.
- Those living in the most deprived areas are more likely to be dissatisfied with the area they live in than those in other areas.
- Those living in the most deprived areas are also more likely to say that there is a problem in their area such as drugs.
- As at September 2007, 84,900 households were in temporary accommodation (including 64,020 with dependent children).

Progress

Since 1996 there has been some progress in narrowing the housing disparities between disadvantaged groups and more affluent groups, including major progress in a number of key areas:

- Private sector vulnerable groups and social sector tenants have seen large declines in the proportion living in non-decent homes than other households.
- There has been significant progress in the most deprived districts, with the number of non-decent homes falling by 680,000 in the social sector and 900,000 in the private sector.
- The number of homeless in England continues to fall - between April 2007 and June 2007, the number was nearly a fifth lower than for the same period in 2006.

- The number of households living in temporary accommodation with dependent children is also falling – between March 2006 and March 2007 it fell by 9 per cent.
- There has however been very little change in the overall rate of overcrowding over the past ten years and no significant change in the incidence of poor quality environments since 2003.

Local action

A key priority of the Government is to increase the supply of homes. It is also committed to improving the performance and carbon footprint of new homes. To achieve this ambition, the Government believes that Local Authorities have a strategic role. It expects Local Authorities to:

- assess and plan for the current and future housing needs of the local population across all tenures;
- make best use of the existing housing stock;
- plan and facilitate new supply;
- plan and commission housing support services which link homes to the support and other services that people need to live in them; and
- work in partnership to secure effective housing and neighbourhood management on an on-going basis.

To deliver their strategic role, the Government also expects Authorities to use their full range of housing and planning use powers, in collaboration with a wide range of partners at the local, sub-regional and national level. The Government has further said that it is proposing various measures to help empower and incentivise Local Authorities in carrying out their strategic housing role.

Key websites and reports

Child Poverty Action Group
www.cpag.org.uk

Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion
Inclusion: <http://www.cesi.org.uk>

Shelter
www.shelter.org.uk

Department for Communities and Local Government
www.communities.gov.uk

HM Treasury
www.hm-treasury.gov.uk

Department for Work and Pensions
www.dwp.gov.uk

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Full house? How Overcrowded housing affects families, Shelter, 2005

Where's Home? Children and Homelessness in Bristol, Shelter, 1999

British Medical Association, Housing and health: building for the Future, British Medical Association, 2003

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