

• Annual Published: 17th April 2019

This publication presents annual estimates of the percentage and number of people, children, working age adults and pensioners living in low income households in Northern Ireland (NI). The estimates are used to monitor poverty rates in Northern Ireland. The estimates for all individuals in Relative and Absolute Poverty, both before and after housing costs, are included in the Draft Programme for Government. The data published is for the financial year April 2017 to March 2018.

The high level estimates in this bulletin are in advance of more detailed analysis in the Households Below Average Income Northern Ireland 2017/18 publication, which is due to be released in Summer 2019. **Unless specifically stated, annual changes in the numbers and percentages presented in this report are not statistically significant.**

Poverty Threshold

Relative Poverty Threshold
UK 2017/18 BHC



Absolute Poverty
Threshold UK 2017/18 BHC



Poverty thresholds (based on
equivalised figures) for a Couple
with NO children.

Median Weekly Income BHC

2016/17

£464



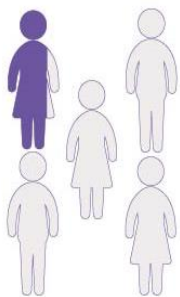
2017/18

£480

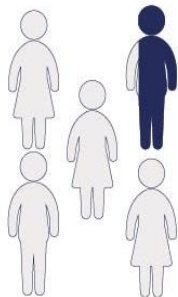


In 2017/18 the average (median) income
in Northern Ireland increased by 3%.

Individuals in Poverty

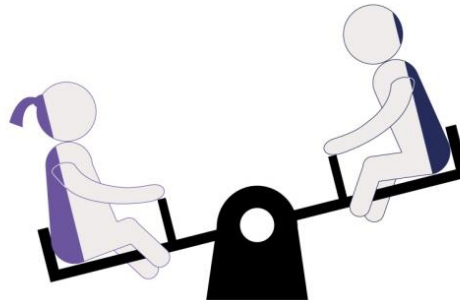


Relative
Poverty BHC
= 16%



Absolute
Poverty BHC
= 14%

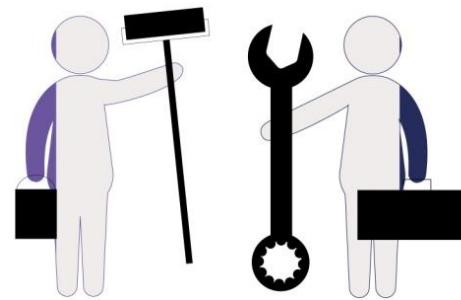
Children in Poverty



Relative
Poverty BHC
= 19%

Absolute
Poverty BHC
= 16%

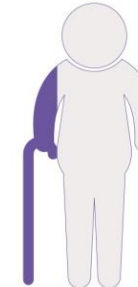
Working Age in Poverty



Relative
Poverty BHC
= 15%

Absolute
Poverty BHC
= 13%

Pensioners in Poverty



Relative
Poverty BHC
= 15%



Absolute
Poverty BHC
= 14%



- An individual is considered to be in relative poverty if they are living in a household with an equivalised income below 60% of UK median income in the **year in question**.
- This is a measure of whether those in the lowest income households are keeping pace with the growth of incomes in the **population as a whole**.
- In **2017/18** the relative poverty threshold for a couple with no children was an income of **£304 per week** (BHC) from all sources.
- For a couple with children the threshold would be higher and for a single person (without children) the threshold would be lower.

- An individual is considered to be in absolute poverty if they are living in a household with an equivalised income below 60% of the (inflation adjusted) **UK median income in 2010/11**.
- This is a measure of whether those in the lowest income households are seeing their **incomes rise in real terms**.
- In **2017/18** the absolute poverty threshold for a couple with no children was an income of **£288 per week** (BHC).

Income Before Housing Costs (BHC)	
Includes the following Components	Does not Include the following Components
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Net earnings from employment; • Profit or loss from self-employment; • All Social Security benefits and Tax Credits; • Income from occupational and private pensions; • Investment income; • Maintenance payments, if a person receives them directly; • Income from educational grants and scholarships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income tax payments; • National Insurance contributions; • Domestic rates / council tax; • Contributions to occupational pension schemes; • Student loan repayments; • All maintenance and child support payments; which are deducted from the income of the person making the payment; • Parental contributions to students living away from home.

Income After Housing Costs (AHC)
Income after Housing Costs (AHC) is derived by deducting a measure of housing costs from the income measure shown opposite.

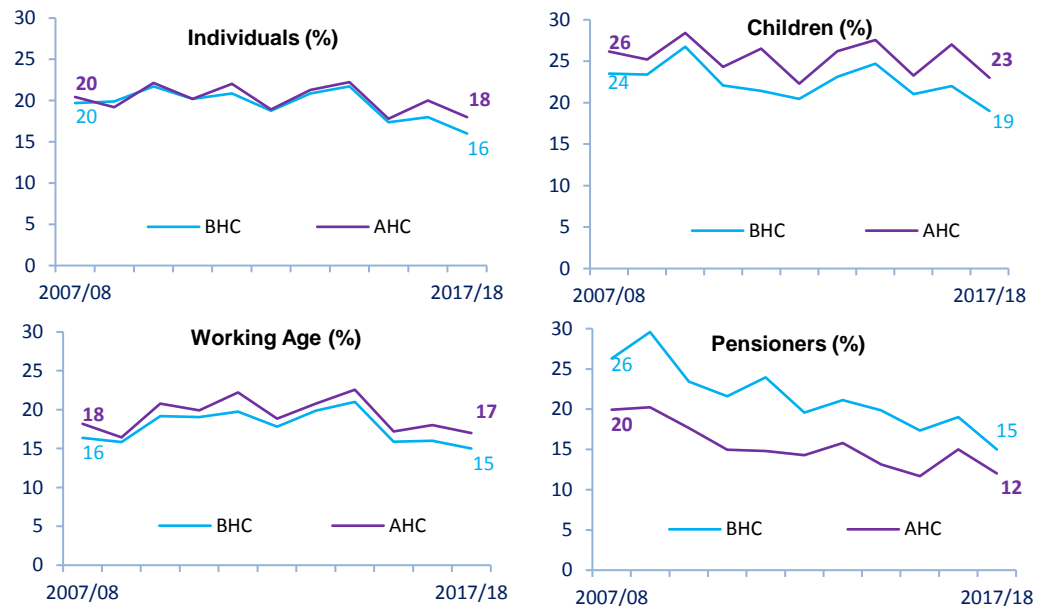
- Housing costs**
 These include the following:
- rent (including housing benefit);
 - mortgage interest payments;
 - structural insurance premiums (for owner occupiers); and
 - ground rent and service charges.

While the AHC measure is comparable between NI and UK, BHC analysis is not. This is due to the difference in the way water charges are collected.

The figures relevant to all the charts in this bulletin are estimates based on a sample survey (Family Resource Survey) and are therefore subject to sampling error. Sampling error is the error caused by observing a sample instead of the whole population. Therefore, **caution should be exercised in the interpretation of year-on-year fluctuations**. Identification of trends should be based on data for several years.

Low Income Indicators

Relative Low-Income levels for Population Groups, 2007/08 to 2017/18, NI



Relative Low Income

The relative poverty figures presented below are **Before Housing Costs (BHC)** in **2017/18**

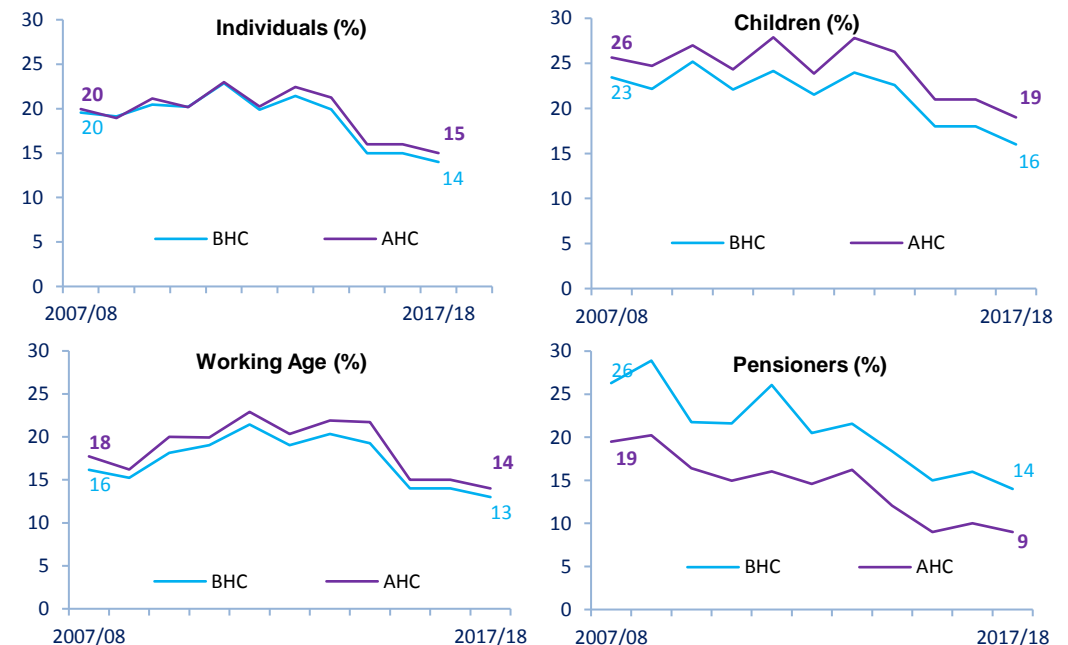
- **16%** of **individuals** were in poverty, approximately **292,000 individuals**. This is comparable to the 2016/17 estimate of 18%.
- **19%** of **children** were in poverty, approximately **85,000 children**. This is comparable to the 2016/17 estimate of 22%.
- **15%** of **working-age adults** were in poverty, approximately **162,000 working-age adults**. This is comparable to the 2016/17 estimate of 16%.
- **15%** of **pensioners** were in poverty, approximately **45,000 pensioners**. This is comparable to the 2016/17 estimate of 19%
- Although relative poverty reduced for all population sub groups from 2016/17 to 2017/18, none of the changes were statistically significant. The overall trend over the past decade has been that poverty estimates are reducing for all sub groups with the exception of the Working age sub group.

Absolute Low Income

The absolute poverty figures presented below are BHC in **2017/18**

- **14%** of **individuals** were in absolute poverty, representing approximately **249,000 individuals**. This is comparable to the 2016/17 estimate of 15%.
- **16%** of **children** were in absolute poverty, representing approximately **69,000 children**. This is comparable to the 2016/17 estimate of 18%.
- **13%** of **working-age adults** were in absolute poverty, representing approximately **139,000 working-age adults**. This is comparable to the 2016/17 estimate of 14%.
- **14%** of **pensioners** were in absolute poverty, representing approximately **41,000 pensioners**. This is comparable to the 2016/17 estimate of 16%.
- Absolute poverty (BHC) estimates reached their lowest levels over the last decade for all four population sub-groups.

Absolute Low-Income levels for Population Groups, 2007/08 to 2017/18, NI



National Statistics Status

In May 2013, the United Kingdom Statistics Authority designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for official Statistics. National Statistics status means the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value.

All official statistics should comply with all aspects of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. They are awarded National Statistics status following an assessment by the Authority's regulatory arm. The Authority considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate.

It is the Departments' responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected of National Statistics. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss any concerns with the Authority promptly. National Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.

Where to find out more

Supporting data tables are available via the following link:

<https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/topics/family-resources-survey#toc-1>

A Quality and Methodology Information Report, is available here

<https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/publications/households-below-average-income-northern-ireland-201617>

For other queries, or to provide feedback on this publication please contact: ASU@communities-ni.gov.uk, or telephone: **Louise Grieve 028 90 823588**.

Other FRS Publications

Northern Ireland Urban Rural report

<https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/topics/family-resources-survey#toc-3>

Northern Ireland households below average income

<https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/topics/family-resources-survey#toc-2>

Family Resources Survey report - Northern Ireland

<https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/topics/family-resources-survey#toc-0>

Pensioners' income series - Northern Ireland

<https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/topics/family-resources-survey#toc-4>

Equivalisation

Income data from HBAI is adjusted (or equivalised) to take into account variations in both the size and composition of households. A more detailed explanation can be found at the following link: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/530659/hbai-low-income-how-is-it-measured-infographic.pdf

Using the FRS for analysis

Coverage

Figures in this bulletin are derived from an analysis of the Family Resource Survey. The FRS is designed to be representative of all private households in the United Kingdom. Therefore certain individuals are not included – for example, students in halls of residence and individuals in nursing or retirement homes.

Sample design

The FRS uses a systematic stratified sample designed to produce robust regional estimates. In some of the reports DfC have had to combine several years of data to produce analysis at Local Government District level.

Sample size

Although the FRS sample of approximately 2,000 NI households is relatively large for a household survey, small sample sizes for particular subgroups may require several years of data to be combined.

Sampling Error

Results from surveys are estimates and not precise figures – in general terms the smaller the sample size, the greater the uncertainty.

Results in this report are subject to a margin of error which can affect how changes should be interpreted, especially in the short term. Latest estimates should be considered alongside medium and long-term patterns.

Non-Sampling Error

Survey data represent the information as provided by the respondents to the survey. If people give inaccurate responses or certain groups of people are less likely to respond this can introduce biases and errors. Non-sampling error is minimised in the FRS through effective and accurate sample and questionnaire design, active fieldwork management, the use of skilled and experienced interviewers and extensive quality assurance of the data. However, it is not possible to eliminate non-sampling error completely, nor can it be easily quantified.