

# London Challenge Poverty Week 2024

## Fact Sheet



#LDNChallengePoverty  
#povertyfreelondon

## Some Basic Numbers

- 24% of Londoners are living in poverty after housing costs (Trust for London)
- 34% of Londoners living in nonwhite households are in poverty (Trust for London)
- 47% of single parent households in London are in poverty (Trust for London)
- 29% of single pension age adults in London are in poverty (compared to an average of 24% for the rest of London) (Trust for London)
- 27% - the increase in price that households in London with the lowest incomes would see if they were to buy the same goods and services as they did in the three years to March 2020 ([London's Cost of Living Tracker | Trust for London](#))
- London has the widest variations in constituency child poverty rates in the UK, across the city, 34% of children are in poverty but this varies from 51% in Bethnal Green and Stepney (19 percentage points higher than London's average) to 11% in Richmond New Park (21 percentage points lower than the city's average), according to End Child Poverty Coalition

**Let's all come together during the week to highlight the injustice of poverty in our city, show that we already have many of the solutions to put an end to it and bring the reality of a poverty free London one step closer.**

## Aims of London Challenge Poverty Week

This will be the seventh annual London Challenge Poverty Week. It begins on Monday 14 October and culminates on Sunday 20 October, incorporating the UN International Day for the Eradication of Poverty on 17 October. It is an opportunity for all those who care about tackling poverty in the capital to come together to:



Increase the visibility of the reality of poverty in London;



Encourage positive debate and discussion about poverty; and



Show what is being done to tackle poverty & call for the changes needed to end it.

# Themes for the week

## Monday 14 October: Adequate income, social security and work

*Challenging poverty must start with recognition that everyone should have adequate income to live on.*

- 'In 2021/22 those in the 90th net income percentile in London took home 10 times more than those in the 10th net income percentile (a 90:10 net income ratio of 10.5). In the rest of England the 90:10 net income ratio is 5.2, according to [Trust for London](#)
- 'This [means](#) that the gap between the rich and poor in London and the rest of England is much larger today than it was two decades ago.'
- The Joseph Rowntree Foundations [Cost of Living tracker](#) shows that low-income households in London are more likely to be in every type of arrears and experiencing going without essentials than any other region in the UK.

## Tuesday 15 October: Housing and Homelessness

*Extortionate housing costs are the top driver of poverty in London. Having a secure and affordable home should be the experience of all Londoners.*

- In London, 46.4%, according to Trust for London, is the median proportion of salary that goes towards housing, but this is as high as 75% in some boroughs.
- Out of the 112,660 household reported as living in temporary accommodation by the Government across the UK in December 2023, 63,240 of them are in London. Of that number, 42,870 households have children in them across London (Department for Leveling Up, Housing and Communities).
- 7.9% of London households are identified as being overcrowded.
- For households in poverty across London, 54% of their net income goes towards housing compared with 32% for those in poverty across the rest of the UK.
- Trust for London shows that the poverty rate jumps from 14% before housing costs to 24% after housing costs in London.
- 'The number of people sleeping rough in London more than tripled between 2008/09 and 2020/21 from around 3,472 to 11,018. 2021/22 saw the number fall back somewhat to 8,329 but it increased again in 2022/23 to 10,053' ([Trust for London](#)).

## Wednesday 16 October: Physical and Mental Health

*The huge toll poverty takes on health, both physical and mental is undeniable. Recognising and acting on this fact is essential to the well-being of both individuals and our city.*

- According to JRF and the [Mental Health Foundation](#), 'Poverty increases the risk of mental health problems and can be both a causal factor and a consequence of mental ill health.'
- 'Children and adults living in households in the lowest 20% income bracket in Great Britain are two to three times more likely to develop mental health problems than those in the highest.'

- ‘Those on housing benefit are more than twice as likely to have a common mental health problem than those not receiving it (35.1% vs 14.9%)’.
- Research by the charity [Mind](#) show that stigma and poor health and lack of trust makes it more difficult for those with a mental health illness or who are currently experiencing mental health symptoms to seek out financial support.

## Thursday 17 October: Poverty, dignity and discrimination

*The experience of poverty is often compounded by discrimination, which undermines human dignity. Challenging poverty also means challenging discrimination in all its forms.*

- The Changing Realities project captures diary entries from individuals experiencing the harm caused by poverty and inadequate policy interventions that are supposed to alleviate inequality. Their quotes highlight the stigma and discrimination as well as the powerful work of many to assert their rights and dignity.
  - ‘We are in the same storm but not all of us has access to a suitable boat to survive. Help support us so we can not only survive, but thrive - it's the right thing to do, not as a politician, as a compassionate human being. Redesign the Social Security system so it works for everyone if they fall on hard times. In addition - I want to remind my MP that those of us living in desperate times didn't plan to be living this life. Absolutely anyone can be swept into poverty through circumstances beyond their control - even them. For me it was escaping domestic abuse whilst on unpaid maternity leave, becoming homeless & having to live in a hostel with my 3 children back in 2005. I tried to go back to work but became permanently disabled in 2011. I'm still trying to hang on in 2023. How can that be right? Yet even though I cannot work, I am still worthy of respect, support & have worth’ (Changing Realities (2023), Gabbie S. <https://changingrealities.org/e/9yfoG> (09 Jun 2023)).
  - ‘I had a spat online over the weekend, because someone said that anyone claiming Universal Credit instead of getting a better paid job was "scum". When I said that I had more than one job and still get Universal Credit, they tracked me down on Facebook and tried to shame me for claiming benefits...I don't believe what he said, but it has taken root in my mind with its nasty tendrils. I find myself feeling defensive about my finances in a way I never have before’ (Changing Realities (2023), Marcie M. <https://changingrealities.org/e/5AAGr> (31 Oct 2022)).
  - ‘This town is divided by wealth. A culture of ostracising from friendship groups due to the stigma of poverty and being a single parent. It's 2023 and yes there are people who are small minded. I'm hurting and depressed living in an area where not welcomed’ ( Changing Realities (2023), Bessie J. <https://changingrealities.org/e/7w2o6> (13 Jan 2023)).

## Friday 18 October: Poverty and climate change

*The effects of climate change have a disproportionate impact on those living on the lowest incomes. Addressing and adapting changes to our climate must go hand in hand with tackling poverty and inequality.*

- [Save the Children](#) points out that climate change impacts people experience poverty both directly ‘cheaper and lower quality housing is often lacking insulation or built in areas more susceptible to extreme weather (i.e. on flood plains, or places susceptible to wildfires, colder winters)’ and indirectly as ‘extreme weather affects crop yields leading to resource scarcity which will drive up consumer prices. This disproportionately affects those already struggling to make ends meet.’
- For people living in London, investment in appropriate housing, the reduction of environmental related diseases linked to pollution and adverse weather and investment in reliable, renewable energy sources is key to tackling social justice and climate protection.
- In London, as climate change impacts the costs of essential goods and services, it is those living on inadequate incomes who are forced to live with hunger, cold and illness linked to climate change.

**Details of training and further resources will be posted on the London Challenge Poverty Website. To make sure that you are aware of them as soon as they become available make sure you sign up by filling in the form at the bottom of the page at this [link](#).**

