

London Challenge Poverty Week Introducing RAPID: Measuring today's poverty today

Wednesday 16 October 2024



We empower people

Policy

Missing out: £23 billion of support is set to go unclaimed in 2024

[Read our analysis](#)

Practice

Our clients are closing the unclaimed support gap with data

[View our Better Off Platform](#)



Today's speakers



Rachael Walker
Director of Policy
Policy in Practice



Adél Schofield
Quantitative Insight Manager
Joseph Rowntree Foundation



Kate Collins
Policy and Data Analyst
Policy in Practice

RAPID: A rapid introduction

- Collaboration between Policy in Practice and the JRF Insight Infrastructure project
- Original concept goes back to spring 2022
- Live since the early summer and contains data from September 2023

Data analysis shows 1 in 4 London households will be in poverty by April

🕒 March 14, 2022 👤 Mary-Alice Doyle

The UK's official relative poverty estimates are outdated, limiting how useful they are in helping us to understand poverty rates and the current and likely impacts of the cost of living crisis. Administrative data can help fill this gap. Policy in Practice is trialing methods to estimate real-time poverty rates using local authorities' administrative data.

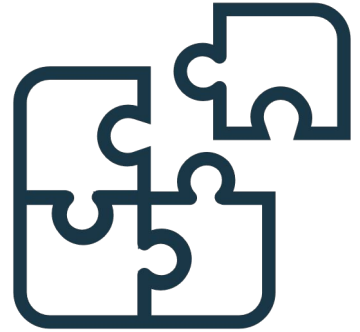
Insight Infrastructure

Adél Schofield
Quantitative Insight Manager
Joseph Rowntree Foundation



Insight Infrastructure is made up of data systems, along with models and technologies to make sense of the data.

We work in open collaboration with the people and communities who use data and are affected by it.





We work towards a future free from poverty.

JRF's Insight Infrastructure team's focus

- Data on inequalities is not **timely**: There is a time lag on official statistics which makes it difficult to use them to tackle inequalities as they are now.
- Not everyone is **represented** by the data
- Not everyone has **access** to the right kind of data
- People who have knowledge of these issues by living through them are often **not at the heart** of understanding what is going on and what might be done to tackle it
- And many great ideas in the sector are **not well-resourced or connected**

What has JRF's Insight Infrastructure team been up to?

- **Grounded Voices:** online qualitative research over 5 months. We're coming towards the end of Wave 2
- **Grassroots Poverty Action Group:** a group of 14 people with direct experience of poverty from across the UK. They meet monthly and work alongside JRF staff on a wide range of topics
- **Social Media listening:** to understand more about online conversations on poverty-related issues

What has JRF's Insight Infrastructure team been up to?

- **Making Sense of Data Gaps:** gathering evidence in who is excluded from official surveys and how we might fill those gaps
- **Income Volatility Dashboard:** A free online interactive dashboard looking to fill a gap in evidence in within-year earnings and income volatility in the UK
- **The role of charity data:** exploring how data collected by charities might be pooled to become a powerful asset informing advice and service provision as well as campaigning and grant-making.

What has JRF's Insight Infrastructure team been up to?

- **Improving access to social care:** exploring the potential AI's role in helping people access the social care they are entitled to and simultaneously gather data on need
- **Cost of Living Tracker dashboard:** Some of the data from JRF's 6 monthly tracker on the financial impact of the pandemic and CoL crisis on households living on a low income
- More info at <https://insightinfrastructure.co.uk/>

R.A.P.I.D. – aims

- The challenge was “could we create a **real-time** measure of overall poverty?”
- Built **in consultation** with various folks in the sector – thank you!
- Aim was to develop something that is intuitive to navigate and can be used to make timely and **better-informed decisions**
- It provides up-to-date insights on poverty, socio-economic risks and financial vulnerabilities for **households on the lowest incomes**
- Rather than scaling up existing data, we decided to focus on actual available data which has more **accurate** information on benefits

R.A.P.I.D. – a missing piece of the puzzle

- R.A.P.I.D. **complements** the broader-view work done on poverty across the whole of London and the UK
- It provides **up-to-date and in-depth** snapshots of poverty rates for low-income households amongst a section of the population that is particularly vulnerable to financial hardship.
- It's a **piece of the puzzle**, not the whole picture: not all households we would like to know about are in the data set (e.g. housing costs, those not claiming benefits)
- Important not to get too bogged down in the various differences between all the different measures. Let's focus on finding **solutions to the realities** they reveal
- Please see [blog on metrics](#) for more detail



R.A.P.I.D. – potential uses

- A year of data now available (up to Aug 2024)
- You can compare different household types, focusing on specific measures
- Policy analysis: for example, the data shows that getting rid of the two-child limit in Universal Credit would go some way to reduce the poverty gap, but it wouldn't be enough
- We are keen to hear from how you use the existing tool and how you think we should develop it further

What's so rapid about RAPID?

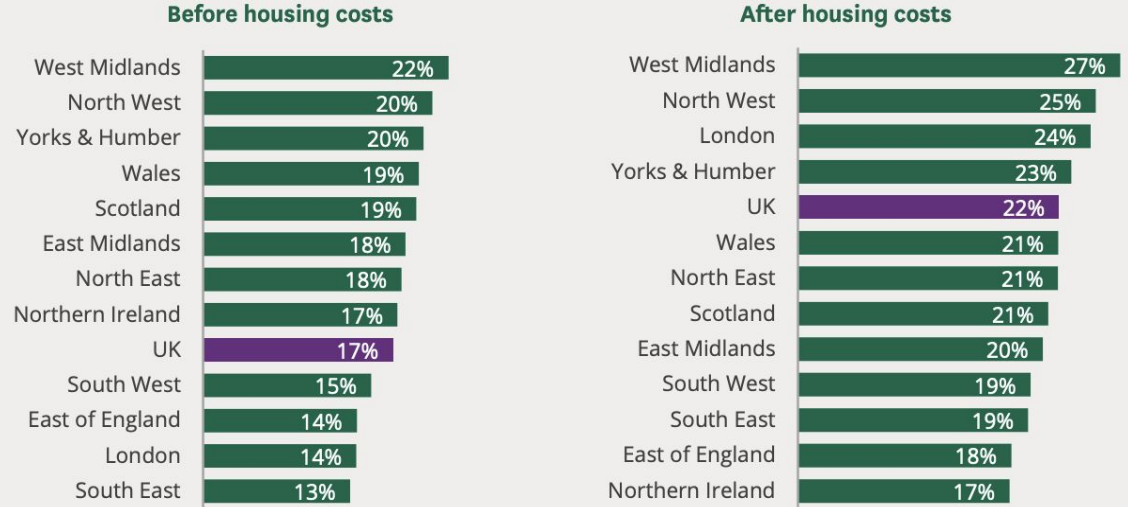
Kate Collins



Poverty in London: the data situation

Percentage of people in relative low income, 2020/21 to 2022/23

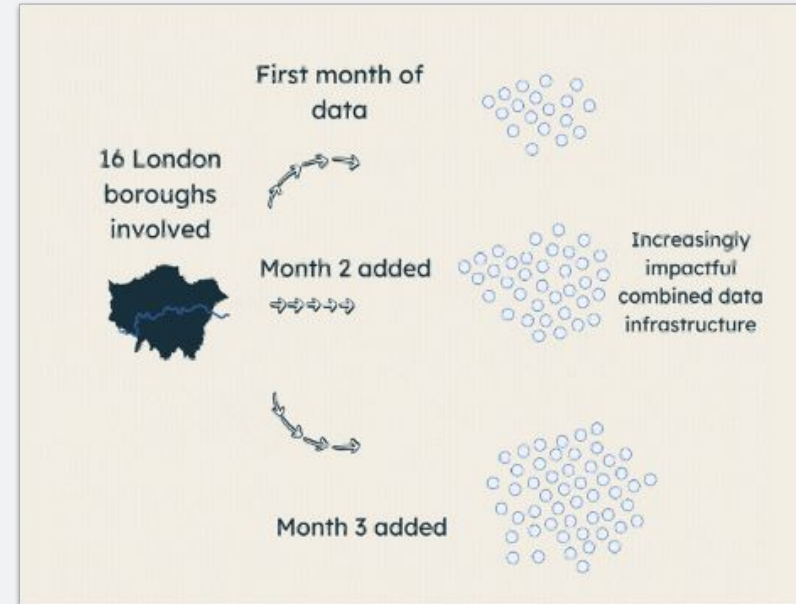
By region and country



- Roughly 1 in 7 Londoners are in relative poverty before housing costs are accounted for - rising to 1 in 4 when housing costs are included **for the latest years for which data is available (2020/21 to 2022/23)**

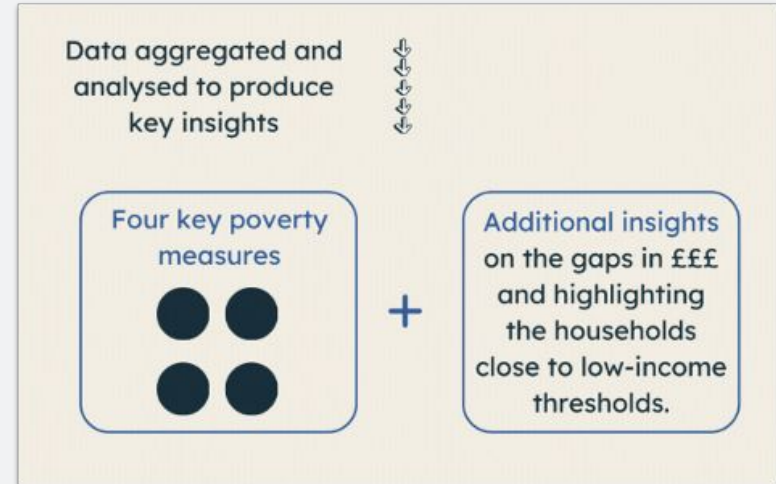
“In the most recent year for which data is available...”

- Latest official statistics on living standards in London come from HBAI for FYE March 2023
- Since then have had two Spring Budgets, one Autumn Statement (and soon to have another!) and one General Election. Figures for FYE March 2024 not expected until Spring 2025
- RAPID provides regular, up to date data compared to other sources of data on poverty in London such as the Family Resources Survey
- RAPID provides current insights on living standards for the lowest income households in London



What is administrative data and why use it?

- Administrative data is generated whenever people interact with public services
- Benefits administration data is collected and verified when local authorities administer local benefits such as Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction
- Dataset offers wealth of information on household circumstances which we can use to enhance our understanding of poverty
- Looking at a subset of the population - we estimate around 23% of total population of participating boroughs present in datasets used by RAPID



What metrics are in RAPID, and why?



Select timepoint:

August 2024

Source: Data provided by 16 London boroughs and processed by Policy in Practice ⓘ

Below absolute poverty line

22%

of the households in receipt of benefits in the 16 London boroughs

This is 79,032 total households in the study, with 72,380 children.

Those below the threshold have average monthly shortfall of £398.

0.0% vs previous month

MORE DETAIL

Below relative poverty line

29%

of the households in receipt of benefits in the 16 London boroughs

This is 101,197 total households in the study, with 94,658 children.

Those below the threshold have average monthly shortfall of £452.

▼ -0.1% vs previous month

MORE DETAIL

Below SMC definition of poverty line

21%

of the households in receipt of benefits in the 16 London boroughs

This is 73,710 total households in the study, with 61,844 children.

Those below the threshold have average monthly shortfall of £360.

▲ +0.1% vs previous month

MORE DETAIL

Below Minimum Income Standard

58%

of the households in receipt of benefits in the 16 London boroughs

This is 205,824 total households in the study, with 175,375 children.

Those below the threshold have average monthly shortfall of £875.

▼ -0.2% vs previous month

MORE DETAIL

Deeper analysis: time and circumstance

Monthly Trends

Source: Data provided by 16 London boroughs and processed by Policy in Practice

Percentage of households in receipt of benefits who are

Below absolute poverty line

Group households by

Age group

Pension age

Percent of households who are below the selected income threshold, of all households who are in receipt of benefits and within this household type



Working age

Percent of households who are below the selected income threshold, of all households who are in receipt of benefits and within this household type



Deeper analysis - over time and by circumstance

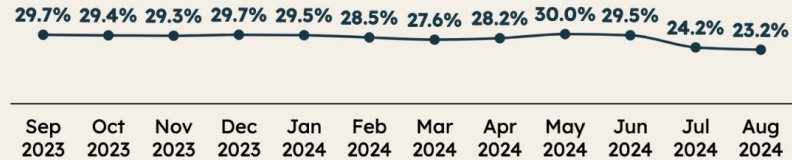
Monthly Trends

Source: Data provided by 16 London boroughs and processed by Policy in Practice ⓘ

Percentage of households in receipt of benefits who are
 Group households by

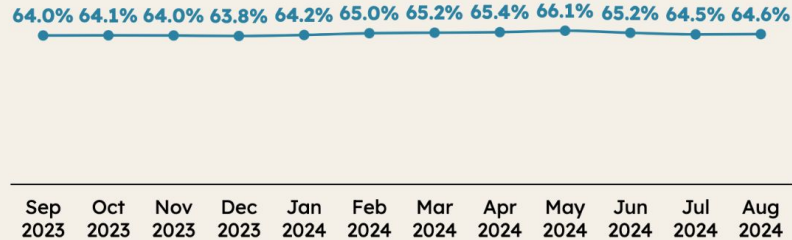
Council tenant

Percent of households who are below the selected income threshold, of all households who are in receipt of benefits and within this household type



Owner-occupier

Percent of households who are below the selected income threshold, of all households who are in receipt of benefits and within this household type



Moving beyond poverty rates

Levels of Poverty

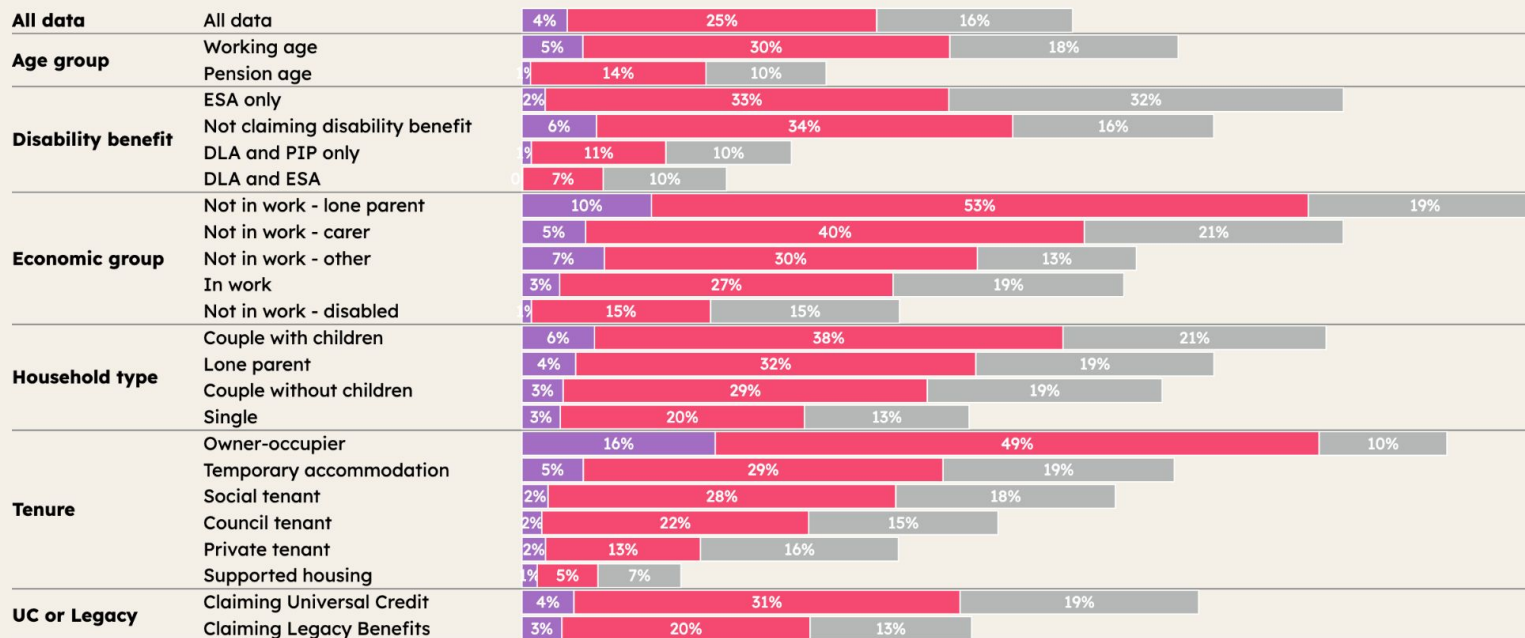
Source: Data provided by 16 London boroughs and processed by Policy in Practice ⓘ

Note - Some groups have fewer households in them. Hover over bar for extra information.

Percentage of households in receipt of benefits in different levels of poverty based on the Relative poverty line ▾


Select time point: August 2024 ▾

Deep poverty ⓘ
 Moderate poverty ⓘ
 At risk of poverty ⓘ



Moving beyond poverty rates

Monthly gap to poverty line

Source: Data provided by 16 London boroughs and processed by Policy in Practice 

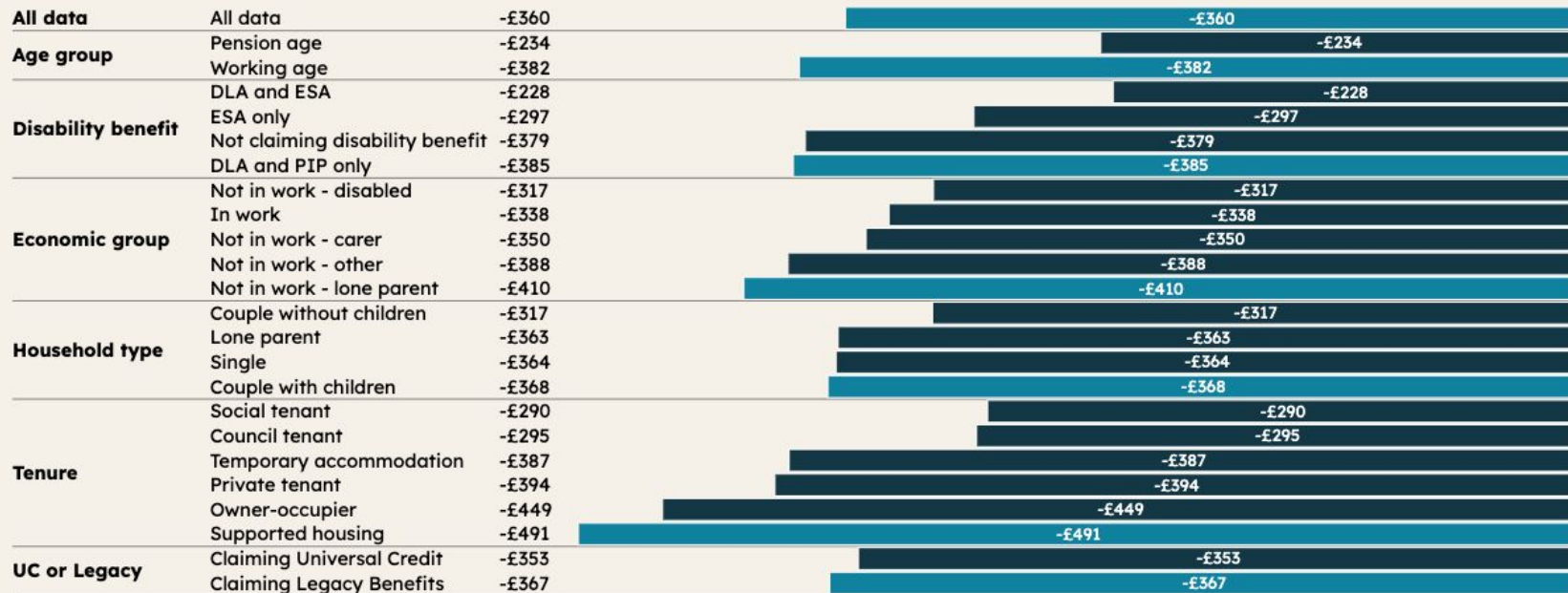
Average monthly amount below threshold for households in receipt of benefits who are below the

SMC definition of the poverty line 

Select time point:

August 2024 

Note - Some groups have fewer households in them. Hover over bar for extra information.



Feedback so far

“RAPID ‘help[s] our organisation to situate its work to address homelessness within the current social, economic and political context ... when we see a recent trend in our own data that shows an increase in people seeking help, it would be possible to use RAPID to explore whether this same trend is observed more generally in London or whether it’s a trend that has more to do with other factors e.g. changes in our service eligibility criteria, changes in how we market our service.”

- David Shalcross, Impact and Evidence Manager, The Connection at St Martins

“RAPID is a leading tool for insight into local and national poverty. The data is not only recent, but it covers a wide array of factors that characterise and shape poverty. Truly this tool will improve how we analyse poverty trends going forward.”

- Policy officer at anti-poverty organisation

“RAPID is ‘[r]eally comprehensive, lots of useful info that we will refer to/use in our work going forward.”

- Senior researcher at national anti-discrimination charity

What next for RAPID?

‘The latest MONTH for which data is available’

- Regional and national representation
- More local authorities, more data, more insights
- Contribute to, and lead, conversations on inadequate welfare levels
- Support research and amplify, support, and complement other metrics
- Continue to gather longitudinal data to track policy changes in ‘real time’
- Increase the use of admin data for policy insight and evidence
- Argue the case for change

Discussion

Next steps

Take our very short survey when the webinar ends to:

- Give us feedback and ask further questions of our speakers
- Book a chat with the team

Register for our next webinars:

- Removing roadblocks: How to simplify application processes for benefits and support on Wednesday 23 October
- Vulnerability, debt and the missing £23 billion: How the credit and collections sector can drive change this winter on Wednesday 6 November
- Unlocking £2 billion: A collective approach to maximising benefits in Wales on Wednesday 13 November



Thank you

Adél Schofield, Quantitative Insight Manager, Joseph Rowntree Foundation

Rachael Walker, Policy Director, Policy in Practice

Kate Collins, Policy and Data Analyst, Policy in Practice

hello@policyinpractice.co.uk

0330 088 9242

policyinpractice.co.uk

