York Human Rights Indicator Report

HUMAN RIGHTS: RECLAIMING THE POSITIVE

#4, 2019
YORK HUMAN RIGHTS CITY DECLARATION

York, in becoming a Human Rights City, embraces a vision of a vibrant, diverse, fair and safe community built on the foundations of universal human rights. This vision is shared by citizens and institutions in our city, including the City Council, North Yorkshire Police, voluntary organisations and faith communities.

We are building on York’s own particular history of democratic innovation, philanthropy and an international outlook, all of which have shaped our commitment to social justice.

This declaration marks an ambition, a significant point in a journey, not a final destination. As the United Kingdom’s first Human Rights City we are committed to making our vision real, putting fundamental rights at the heart of our policies, hopes and dreams for the future.

Signed by
COUNCILLOR DAVE TAYLOR
The Right Honourable Lord Mayor of York
at the declaration event at the Merchant Taylors’ Hall,
on Monday 24th April 2017

Acknowledgements

We are very grateful to all those who participated in the preparation of this report. We would also like to thank the following organisations for their assistance: York Food Justice Alliance; The Trussell Trust; City of York Council; North Yorkshire Police; Citizens Advice York

In addition, we would like to thank the following individuals for their contributions to the development of this report: Dr Gill Main; Dr Helen Graham; Phil Bixby; Fran Hale; Matthew Armstrong; Robbie Humphries
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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to York’s fourth annual human rights indicator report. It has been produced by the York Human Rights City Network for everyone in York, to inspire debate, encourage activism for human rights and challenge discrimination.

Human rights are the basic rights and freedoms that belong to everyone, based on shared values of dignity, fairness, justice and equality. They represent what is important to us to flourish as human beings. They define a set of shared values. They are particularly important for those who are disempowered or are facing disadvantage. In York, we report each year on two or three indicators for each of the five human rights that have been selected as priorities by the people of York. These rights are: equality and non-discrimination, education, health and social care, a decent standard of living, and the right to housing. This year, we include additional information relating to the right to a decent standard of living.

WHAT ARE HUMAN RIGHTS INDICATORS?

- Indicators are pieces of information that can help us to understand how the situation in York is changing over time, how York compares to other places in the UK, and/or how the situation in York compares to the UK in general. In most cases, indicators are shown as numbers or percentages.

- Most of the indicators we present here are taken from publicly available information collected by local or national government to make them straightforward for readers to check. Some data have been collected by local or national organisations working on one or more of the priority rights. Unless otherwise stated, the numbers reported relate to the period from April 2018 to March 2019. Please see the Endnotes section (p.28) for further information about specific indicators.

- Whilst statistics can tell us a great deal about the human rights situation in York, they don’t tell us about the human impact on people when their rights are compromised. In this report, we have focussed on what it means in human terms to have your right to a decent standard of living compromised. We also explore the impacts of poverty and low income specifically in relation to children living in poorer households and look at wage inequality in the city.
KEY FINDINGS

In this section, we provide a brief overview of how this year’s statistics compare to those from last year.

● Positive Progress
  • 16-17 year olds Not in Education, Employment or Training in York is lower than the national average, for the first time since we began reporting on this issue

● Little Change
  • The proportion of children achieving the expected standard of reading, writing and maths at the end of primary school increased, although the disadvantage gap continues to widen
  • The earnings gap has reduced, partly because low wages have increased slightly, but also because median (mid-point) wages have decreased

● Going Backwards
  • Hate Crime recorded by North Yorkshire Police increased
  • Child Poverty has increased in 21 out of 22 York wards; over 10,000 of the city’s children are now considered to be living in poverty
  • The number of households (with and without children) who are living in temporary accommodation is increasing
  • The percentage of social care users who report having as much social contact as they would like has fallen for the second year running

CHANGE OF INDICATOR:

Ward-level Life Expectancy figures are not updated every year because they change very slowly over time. For this year’s report, for the first time, we explore healthy life expectancy, which is defined by the government as “the average number of years that an individual is expected to live in a state of self-assessed good or very good health”, comparing this to overall life expectancy for males and females living in the city.
ACHIEVEMENTS AND IMPACT

In 2019, we continued to build on the momentum created by the 2017 declaration of York as a Human Rights City. Key developments and activities included:

- Changes to the constitution of the steering group to put civil society organisations more firmly in the driving seat

- Working with the Youth Council to create a human rights indicator report based on the priorities of young people in York

- Continuing participation and engagement work with marginalised and disadvantaged groups through our Community Voices programme, which is currently investigating personal and institutional responses to hate crime

- Exploring the need for, and feasibility of, a Disability Human Rights Forum for York

- Continuing support for York International Women’s Week and York International Disabled People’s Week, both of which go from strength to strength

- Continuing our work in secondary schools in partnership with the Independent State Schools Partnership through Opinionate Workshops

- Providing information and support to other cities, both nationally and internationally, as they consider becoming Human Rights Cities
We also offer advice and facilitation to the city’s **Human Rights and Equalities Board**, set up in February 2018 to address issues raised in this report, and to strengthen human rights approaches in the city’s institutions. This has led to:

- A ground-breaking report using a human rights-based approach to extend and challenge policy-makers’ and practitioners’ understanding of the issues in the city that lead to young people being Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)
  - Creation of a task group reporting to the Headteachers’ Forum
  - Repurposing of £50,000 of funding towards developing more appropriate pathways for young people aged 14+
  - A task group working with UNICEF to promote rights-respecting cultures in schools

- A homelessness working group which will report in 2020 on several key issues:
  - How differences in implementation of Housing First in York compared to other cities might affect individual outcomes for those who are homeless and facing multiple complex needs
  - Mapping formal and informal homelessness service provision in York
  - Supporting co-ordinated cross-sectoral collaborations to better support the needs of people whose right to housing is compromised

- An investigation into the feasibility of using international human rights conventions to challenge discrimination and promote equality in the city
EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION INDICATORS

The Right

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>International Law</th>
<th>Domestic Law</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All international human rights treaties recognise non-discrimination as a right e.g. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 1966, Articles 2.1 and 26</td>
<td>Human Rights Act 1998, Schedule 1, Part 1, Article 14 (the Human Rights Act domesticates the European Convention on Human Rights) Equality Act 2010, Section 149</td>
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The Indicators

Hate Crimes recorded by North Yorkshire Police

Figures provided by North Yorkshire Police (NYP) indicate that recorded hate crime in the city increased by nearly 50% in 2018/9 compared to the previous year.\(^1\) Despite this, numbers are still widely acknowledged to be significantly lower than the actual number of hate crimes perpetrated. For example, a survey by the LGBT Forum in York in 2018 indicated that more than 3 in 4 people who had experienced hate crime chose not to report it.\(^2\) Even so, LGBT-related incidents are the second most reported type of hate crime in York, accounting for 17% of all hate crime recorded. In more than half of the recorded hate crimes, racial prejudice was considered the primary causal factor.

Despite North Yorkshire Police becoming the second force in the country to recognise misogyny as a cause of hate crime in 2017, few incidents have been recorded so far. NYP followed Merseyside Police in recognising crimes against sex workers as hate crime in 2019.

2017/2018 | 2018/2019 |
----------|----------|
147       | 213       |
Gender Pay Gap

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights requires “fair wages and equal remuneration for work of equal value without distinction of any kind, in particular women being guaranteed conditions of work not inferior to those enjoyed by men, with equal pay for equal work”.

The weekly gender pay gap for York for the year ending March 2019 shows a reduction compared to the previous two years, although it still

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Male (median)</th>
<th>Female (median)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016/2017</td>
<td>£117</td>
<td>£544.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>2017/2018</td>
<td>£117.30</td>
<td>£469.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>2018/2019</td>
<td>£100.20</td>
<td>£488.70</td>
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Earnings (ASHE, produced by the UK government’s Office for National Statistics) suggests that this may be a temporary reduction and not the start of a trend towards equal wages. For example, in ASHE’s 2019 report, York’s median (mid-point) female full-time gross weekly earnings shows an increase of just 4% (to £488.70), compared to a rise of over 15% (to £649.90) for males working full-time.

Gender pay gap reporting for all organisations employing 250 or more people came into domestic law in 2017. Reported results for five of the city’s largest employers show that there is a higher proportion of women in lower paid than in higher paid jobs, irrespective of whether more men or women are employed in the organisation.
EDUCATION INDICATORS

The Right

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<th>International Law</th>
<th>Domestic Law</th>
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<tr>
<td>Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989, Article 28</td>
<td>Equality Act 2010, Part 6, Chapter 1, Section 85</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Education Act 1996, Section 13</td>
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<td>Education and Skills Act 2008, Part 1, Chapter 1</td>
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</table>

The Indicators

Proportion of 16-17 year-olds not in education, employment or training (NEET)

The proportion of 16- and 17-year-olds in York who are considered NEET has fallen in the last year. Even though it is now below the national average, it remains considerably higher than in cities with similar demographics.

The city’s Human Rights and Equalities Board’s investigation followed up findings from our earlier indicator reports. It highlighted a common assumption amongst educational professionals and others that young people are at risk of becoming NEET because of personal circumstance such as low family income, poor housing, caring responsibilities, and lack of Level 2 qualifications. However employers did not see the latter as critical but were more concerned about young people in general being
inadequately prepared for the realities of work. For example, they often found school leavers had not expected ongoing personal development and training within the workplace.

Interestingly, when the Board’s investigation talked with young people who were or had been considered NEET, it found that they were more likely to link the way their school supported anyone experiencing challenges (bullying, poverty, caring responsibilities) to their likelihood of engagement, academic achievement, and perceptions of available career options.6

I had bad experiences at school... I was bullied and it wasn’t addressed... I felt like the teachers blamed me.

Although the proportion of primary children who achieved the expected standard has increased, the gap between those who are economically advantaged and those not, remains considerable, wider than the national average, and has increased in York.

Root causes of compromised academic achievement are contested. Becky Allen, keynote speaker at the September 2019 ‘Unlocking Talent, Fulfilling Potential’ York Conference highlighted extensive research findings that poverty alleviation is the single most effective approach to improving children’s educational attainment.7 City of York Council’s ‘Early Talk for York’ project in Westfield and Woodthorpe wards focuses primarily on speech, language and communication interventions at age five. More worrying are reported comments attributing the attainment gap to poor parenting, for which there is no evidence base.8

There are no available direct measures that compare the education gap at the end of primary school with that amongst the same children as school leavers. However the fact that there is an even greater education gap in post-secondary education City of York Council data suggests that the adverse effect of economic disadvantage increases during the course of secondary education.
HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE INDICATORS

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<table>
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<th>International Law</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 1966, Article 12</td>
<td>Care Act 2014, Section 1 and 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treaties protecting particular groups (women, children, people with disabilities) also include health and social care protections e.g. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2006, Article 12</td>
<td>National Health Service Act 2006, Section 1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>National Health Service Constitution 2015</td>
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<td>Health and Social Care Act 2012</td>
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The Indicators

Proportion of service users who have as much social contact as they would like

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<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>45.8%</td>
<td>49.5%</td>
<td>44.5%</td>
<td>43.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Loneliness is increasingly being recognised as an early indicator of poor mental health, and studies suggest it also impacts life expectancy and can be as dangerous as smoking and obesity. The decline in this social contact indicator since 2016 is a cause for concern. Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust and local York agencies are participating in a national multi-site study on the effectiveness of a social contact coaching intervention for people with serious mental illness, so we await future results on this indicator with interest.
According to the latest Office for National Statistics figures, life expectancy in York is now 80.1 years for males and 83.4 years for females. That for healthy life expectancy – defined by the government as “the average number of years that an individual is expected to live in a state of self-assessed good or very good health” – is lower: 65.5 years for males and 65.3 years for females. Both life expectancy and healthy life expectancy in York are higher than regional and national averages. However, healthy life expectancy for York women is slightly lower than that for York men and the drop from overall life expectancy for women is much greater than that for men. Thus women can expect to live a greater proportion of their later lives in poor health.  

Since we know from previous indicator reports and from research that inequalities impact life expectancy, we can infer that the explanation for these figures lies in part in gender-related inequalities in the city, which may be wider in York than regionally and nationally.

It is worth noting that healthy life expectancy is lower than the national pension age for men and women.
THE RIGHT TO HOUSING

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<th>International Law</th>
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<tr>
<td>Protection from Eviction Act 1977</td>
<td>Homelessness Reduction Act 2017</td>
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Indicators

Statutory homelessness acceptances

The city’s statutory homelessness acceptances indicate the number of households considered homeless and in priority need. These have continued to fall but it is difficult to estimate how much this reflects changes to legislation and associated service delivery.

Rough sleeping – the most visible form of homelessness – had dropped slightly (to 7) during the annual count in October 2019. Actual numbers are thought to be higher than this and debate remains about the methodology used for counting. For example, people using emergency accommodation on the night of the count were not included. Whilst City of York’s decision to make emergency accommodation available from November to March without waiting for very low temperatures is broadly welcomed, it also means that the number of people living on the streets is harder to estimate. The British Medical Association recently reported an increase of 38% in the
number of homeless people being admitted to York Hospital from 2013 to 2018, suggesting that more people are living on our streets or ‘of no fixed abode’ than appear in the annual count.\textsuperscript{13}

### Indicators

**Number of households in temporary accommodation**

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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>99</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>67</td>
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**Number of households in temporary accommodation with children**

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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>54</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>35</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Numbers of households (with and without children) living in council-provided temporary accommodation increased this year. These can include those not statutorily homeless but in need because, for example, of fleeing domestic violence. It is not known whether annual data are available about length of time awaiting permanent accommodation.
A DECENT STANDARD OF LIVING

The Right

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>International Law</th>
<th>Domestic Law</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 1966, Article 11</td>
<td>There are no domestic laws specifically relating to the right to a decent standard of living</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989, Article 27</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2006, Article 28</td>
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<tr>
<td>Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women 1979, Articles 11 &amp; 13</td>
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<td>European Social Charter 1961, Article 4 (1)</td>
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Key Issues that Impact the Right to A Decent Standard of Living in York

According to the report by Philip Alston, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights and world-renowned human rights expert, one fifth of the UK population now live in poverty, 10% of whom have experienced destitution.\(^\text{14}\)

Although figures specifically for York are not available, the causes highlighted by Alston are the same as those described by people in the city who have either experienced poverty themselves or provide support to those who have.

Austerity and welfare reforms remain the key issues impacting individuals’ ability to achieve a decent standard of living, including those ‘in work’. This can be as a direct consequence of reduced income or an indirect consequence of cuts in local services and a loss of “community” spaces.

Alston highlights that austerity has had a disproportionate effect upon women, racial and ethnic minorities, children, single parents, and people with disabilities.
Key definitions used in this report:

POVERTY:
“The experience of having insufficient resources to meet needs’. There is no single accepted measure of poverty in the UK. The UN Special Rapporteur uses the poverty threshold set by the Social Metrics Commission, which is when a household’s total available resources are 54% of the median amount”.

DESTITUTION:
“The inability to afford to buy the absolute essentials that we all need to eat, stay warm and dry, and keep clean”.

CHILD POVERTY:
“A child is said to be living in poverty when they are living in a family with an income below 60% of the UK’s average, after adjusting for family size”.

FOOD POVERTY:
“The inability to afford, or have access to, food to make up a healthy diet”.

FOOD INSECURITY:
“Limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways”.

FOOD AID:
Refers to a range of support activities aiming to help people meet food needs, often on a short-term basis, and which contribute to relieving the symptoms resulting from food poverty and insecurity.

FOOD BANKS:
A type of food aid commonly associated with food poverty and intended to provide occasional support to those in crisis rather than being a long-term intervention. Typically, food banks provide parcels of non-perishable food, without charge, on a referral or voucher system. Increasingly, food banks provide other non-perishable items, such as toiletries, sanitary products, and food for pets.

EARNINGS GAP:
“The difference in weekly gross earnings between someone earning at the median, or midpoint of salaries, and someone earning at the lower quartile (the midpoint of lower earnings) level”.
In becoming party to international human rights treaties, the UK has voluntarily consented to be bound by international human rights law. This means that national and local authorities have obligations to realise the rights contained within these treaties.

**Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948 (Art. 25):**

Asserts the right of every person to a standard of living adequate for good health and wellbeing, including food, clothing, housing, medical care, and social services, as well as measures relating to social security.

**International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 1966 (Art. 11):**

- Affirms the right of every person to an adequate standard of living, including adequate food, clothing, housing, and continued improvement of living conditions. States must take “appropriate” steps in order to secure these rights for their citizens.

Furthermore, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, set up to monitor countries’ compliance with the Covenant, has issued General Comments explaining the components of this right:

- General Comment 4: the right to adequate housing means the right to live somewhere in security, peace and dignity.

- General Comment 12: the right to adequate food is realized when every person has physical and economic access at all times to adequate food or has the means to obtain adequate food.

- General Comment 19: the right to social security is of central importance in guaranteeing human dignity for anyone faced with circumstances that deprive them of their capacity to fully realize their rights.
Recognises the right of every child to a standard of living necessary for their respective developments, physically, mentally, spiritually, morally, and socially.

Affirms the right of people with disabilities to an adequate standard of living both for themselves and their families, encompassing adequate food, clothing, housing, and the continuous improvement of living conditions. States should take appropriate steps to safeguard and promote this right.

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women 1979 (Art. 11):
Requires states to ensure that women have the same opportunities as men in employment, promotion, training, equal remuneration, social security and safe working conditions.

Requires that states ensure that women have equal rights with men to family benefits, bank loans and other forms of financial credit.

European Social Charter 1961, Article 4 (1)
Recognises the right of workers to a salary which will allow them and their family a decent standard of living.

Domestic law
None relating to the whole of the UK, but a consultation on a Good Food Nation Bill for Scotland was published in December 2018.

In its current form, the bill states it will focus on ensuring the right to food, though this will not be enshrined in law.
Indicators

Child Poverty

Figures for 2018/19 from the Campaign to End Child Poverty organisation show increases in child poverty after housing costs, for both York Central and York Outer.\(^{18}\)

Even without taking York’s high housing costs into account, 6,726 (15%) of York’s children and their families are living in poverty. Once housing costs are factored in, the numbers rise to 10,007, nearly one quarter of children and their families. Children living in York Central are more affected – after housing costs nearly 30% of children are considered to be living in poverty.

Before Housing Costs

<table>
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<tr>
<th>York Central</th>
<th>York Outer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before</td>
<td>After</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4442 (19.3%)</td>
<td>6635 (29%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2284 (10.9%)</td>
<td>3442 (17%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentage point change since 2016/17

- York Central: 0.70%
- York Central: 5%
- York Outer: -0.30%
- York Outer: 1%
The implications for these children are widely agreed. However research often focuses more on the impact on adulthood from being raised in poverty than the impact during childhood itself, and hence the ways in which poverty violates the rights of children as children are liable to be ignored. University of Leeds academic Dr Gill Main, speaking at York Human Rights Indicator Report meeting 10th December 2019, told us:

**children living in poverty are ignored because they are children, AND because they are poor**

According to the Children’s Society, children living in poverty are more likely to experience:

- Poor physical and/or mental health
- A low sense of well-being
- Underachievement at school
- Employment difficulties in adult life
- Social deprivation, bullying, stigmatisation

Innovative participatory research recently completed by the A Different Take Leeds panel found that children develop similar strategies to those of adults to hide the experiences and impacts of living in a low-income household, for example skipping meals.

Children and young people reported high levels of stress both from the impact of poverty on themselves and from witnessing its impact on their parents and carers. They also reported feeling abandoned by society, and feeling shame due to living in poverty, despite recognising its structural nature.

**If you don’t know about those opportunities out there you can’t use it… if there’s no role models to show you opportunities, then you won’t really be able to access them… you might go off the radar**

**If you live in poverty you don’t get a choice… but you still feel bad about it and feel responsible that you must change it**

The child poverty graph shows considerable variation across the city with, for example, more than twice as many children living in poverty in Hull Road and Guildhall wards than in Haxby & Wigginton and Derwent wards. 21 out of York’s 22 wards showed increases in child poverty rates compared with last year. Rates broadly align with the rankings of the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), although the latest IMD data suggests a reduction in deprivation in most wards, and across York. IMD is calculated using several factors contributing to standards of living:
Rising rates of child poverty in the UK have been linked to increases in infant mortality. Similarly, research by UNICEF and Save The Children have linked them to higher hospital admissions in 2018/19 for childhood pneumonia. The Alston report predicts further rises – to almost 40% of children in the UK living in poverty by 2021 – unless the root causes are addressed.

### Indicators

**Foodbank Use**

The graph shows data collected by the Trussell Trust (TT), the largest foodbank operating in York. TT is a network of over 1,200 foodbanks operating across the UK. Whilst the data do not provide us with actual numbers of people experiencing food poverty, they give a useful indication of changes over time to food poverty in York, with the following caveat. In a 2016 UK report, The Food Foundation cited research that food provision by TT foodbanks accounts for only one person in seventeen experiencing food insecurity. It suggested that people use a variety of types of food aid, or, very often, go hungry.
I often skip meals so that I can afford to feed my children a healthy balanced diet. I expect this is the case in many households.

Referrals to TT’s four York foodbanks were slightly down (by 5%) in 2018/9 from the previous year. Over the same period, TT referrals nationally had increased by 19%. We discuss possible links to universal credit changes in a later section.

Almost a third of the referrals in York were attributed to benefit changes or delays, down from 40% in the previous year. Over the same time period, the proportion that were attributed to low income rose from 25% to 32% and the proportion of referrals for single people and couples without children rose from 53% to 57%.

Given the increases in child poverty across the city, this suggests that families may be turning increasingly to informal foodbank provision. Families need food aid regularly but referrals to the Trussell Trust are restricted to three within a six-month period and not all requests meet the eligibility criteria. Stigma and shame can be barriers, and for some people, TT’s religious links can be problematic.

Food aid from foodbanks, whether formal or informal, is often limited to filling, non-perishable items that do not necessarily meet nutritional guidelines. Those experiencing food insecurity often also experience fuel poverty – to avoid the “Eat or Heat” dilemma, they report using food products with minimal cooking times, regardless of nutritional quality.
60% of those supported by the TT foodbanks lived in the five most deprived wards in York, similar to previous years.

The York Food Justice Alliance

The York Food Justice Alliance (YFJA – previously York Food Poverty Alliance) has identified more than thirty providers of community food aid in York, where the food is free, low cost, or pay-as-you-feel. These range from breakfasts provided (mainly) for rough sleepers at Carecent and Kitchen for Everyone, to community cafes and evening soup kitchens. Several community centres have small allotments and provide informal foodbank provision. However, inconsistent or poorly co-ordinated systems across the different food aid providers cause confusion and may be a barrier to some people accessing the help they desperately need.

...I know there is another one in the cafe in Acomb but don’t know if I’m allowed to use it or not.

In line with evidence from the Food Foundation 2016 Report cited above, a study by the Alliance found that the number of people using foodbanks in York is only a small proportion of those facing food insecurity. Of the 24% of households with primary school-age children experiencing food insecurity that participated in the study, only 8% had used a foodbank and most had only done so once. Several reported adversely changing their food habits due to the higher costs of fresh produce, meat and fish and the need to take supermarket offers.

... we have to buy as cheaply as possible, which isn’t always the healthiest option...

Poor nutrition is often assumed to be due to a lack of education about food. However, the study found that affordability and access are instead the key issues to be addressed.

I buy fish as a treat maybe once a month. Lentils and beans are a much cheaper source of protein.

Planning ahead is also challenging for people experiencing food poverty, with meal choices often based on availability of offers and low cost items.

Healthy food is more expensive. The supermarkets always have deals on processed/convenience food.

The YFJA itself co-ordinates a programme of daily lunch and activities provision across the city during school holidays to tackle the growing problem of “holiday hunger”. Nearly 4000 meals and over 400 food parcels were distributed by 11 holiday hunger schemes during school holidays between July 2018 and April 2019.

Just as the right to housing cannot be said to be met by the provision of emergency beds alone, the right
to food is not met through food aid. International law requires the UK to put systems in place that allow people physical and economic access to food and to the means to obtain adequate and nutritious food.

The cost of travel for shopping is often forgotten with most of the big supermarkets being on the outskirts. For people with disabilities, this can be an extra £20 or more per shop.

Between April 2018 and May 2019, the Alliance collated lived experience stories from people accessing food from various providers, in order to better understand the scale of food poverty and insecurity in York. We are very grateful to the Alliance for allowing us to highlight some of their findings as part of this report.²⁵

Universal Credit

The rollout of Universal Credit (UC) has been widely linked to increases in foodbank use and to hardship more generally, both locally and nationally. As well as the time spent waiting for the initial payment, there have been challenges arising from: the shift from weekly to four weekly payments making budgeting difficult; the fluctuating levels of payment for those in work where payment dates or salaries are not fixed; the requirement for payments to go to a single household member; and the continuation of both the ‘two child’ rule and the so-called ‘bedroom tax’, introduced prior to UC and now imported into it.²⁶

Universal Credit has wrecked us. We have just gone on it and I have been told me and my 5yr old will have to go at least 7 weeks with no income at all. We will have to go to food banks and try to get food.

Universal Credit was rolled out in York from July 2017 through ‘natural migration’ as people’s circumstances changed (e.g. people losing jobs, households splitting). This is thought a key driver for the significant increase in Trussell Trust foodbank use in the year to March 2018 and for the national increase following it being rolled out more widely this year.

The ongoing challenges associated with Universal Credit may explain at least in part why TT referrals in York have not dropped back significantly even after the UK government introduced changes aimed at alleviating hardships caused by the wait for the initial payment. Further evidence comes from a survey conducted by The Welfare Benefits Unit (WBU) in York following those changes. This found that 96% of respondents said that they struggled to pay basic living costs during the initial waiting period and nearly half said they had resorted to foodbanks (which foodbanks were used was not specified).²⁷
**Indicators**

**Earnings Gap**

- **York Central**
  - Before Housing Costs: £4442
  - After Housing Costs: £19.3%
  - Percentage point change since 2016/17: 0.70%
  - Percentage point change since 2016/17: -0.30%
- **York Outer**
  - Before Housing Costs: £6635
  - After Housing Costs: £29%
  - Percentage point change since 2016/17: 5%
  - Percentage point change since 2016/17: 1%

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**Earning gap £138.90**

- **2014/2015**: £115.20
- **2015/2016**: £476.90
- **2016/2017**: £521.10
- **2017/2018**: £479.00
- **2018/2019**: £502.30

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**UK minimum hourly rate by age**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>25 and over</th>
<th>21 to 24</th>
<th>18 to 20</th>
<th>Under 18</th>
<th>Apprentice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 2019</td>
<td>£8.21</td>
<td>£7.70</td>
<td>£6.15</td>
<td>£4.35</td>
<td>£3.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(current rate)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2020</td>
<td>£8.72</td>
<td>£8.20</td>
<td>£6.45</td>
<td>£4.55</td>
<td>£4.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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I don’t think it’s the price of food that is the problem. The cost of living in York in general is very high in relation to a lot of people’s wages.

The earnings gap measures the difference in weekly wages between those earning median (mid-point) wages, and those on low wages (25th percentile). For the year ending March 2019, the gap reduced slightly. However, this was due to a marginal increase in low wages and a drop in the median wage.

Young adults (under 25) face particular challenges around low income, as they can be legally discriminated against according to domestic law through lower minimum wages (below) and benefits.

A recent Joseph Rowntree Foundation Report made clear the importance for improving living standards of being paid a wage to cover the cost of living, receiving training and the chance to progress, and flexibility to balance work and caring.²⁸
RECOMMENDATIONS

This report aims to inspire debate and action in York to achieve the vision of fundamental rights at the heart of our policies, hopes and dreams for the future. This year we have focused on the right to a decent standard of living – one of our five priority human rights. The evidence that the report presents provides uncomfortable reading. It shows that many of York’s citizens are struggling to achieve their basic human rights. In this context the key recommendations which arise from this evidence are:

- City of York Council and statutory agencies should review all relevant policies and interventions, such as the CYC Economic Strategy, to place the alleviation of poverty and the right to a decent standard of living at their core. Similar work should be done to address stark inequalities in the city. Our 2017 indicator report warned of the danger of York’s human rights story becoming a ‘tale of two cities’. This report repeats the finding that inequality is a cross-cutting concern, on issues ranging from educational attainment to life expectancy, child poverty and ‘in work’ poverty.

- Statutory agencies should take the lead in the city in reviewing the language and attitudes used in their internal and external communications and policies about poverty. YHRCN will monitor public statements to assess whether those in poverty are treated with dignity and humanity.

- The Human Rights and Equalities Board should support co-ordinated interventions that alleviate poverty, promoting a joined-up approach to the work. Research followed by targeted action, of the kind that has taken place in relation to NEETs in the city, should be explored by the Board as a future priority.

- City of York Council and economic strategy partners should develop rigorous approaches to address the falling median wage, stubborn rates of low pay and high housing costs. Renewed support should be given to encourage employers to adopt the Living Wage Foundation level of remuneration as the minimum wage, and for all employers to pay young adult workers a fair and non-age-related salary. Consideration should be given to co-producing a Good Employment Charter for the city, encompassing fair pay, work progression, union recognition, etc.
Visit York Open Data to explore the statistics and data. York Open Data (2019) https://www.yorkopendata.org/ – unless otherwise stated, data for our indicators has been provided through the Open Data portal, and relate to the period April 2018-March 2019.

1. Data provided by North Yorkshire Police (NYP). Changes in reporting systems in recent years has made comparisons in hate crime over time challenging. For example, City of York Council open data reports hate crime but the figures do not match those of NYP; we have chosen to use NYP data whilst the data transfer issue is resolved; hate incidents have not been included in this year’s report.


3. Our 2017 report showed a gender pay gap of £120.20 for 2016/17; the official data has since been revised to show a 2016/17 gender pay gap of £117.00.


5. https://gender-pay-gap.service.gov.uk/compare-employers/2019; we compared the following five large York employers: City of York Council, York Teaching Hospital NHS Trust, University of York, York St John University, Persimmon Homes. We have not presented data for some other large employers (e.g. Nestle, Aviva, Network Rail) because their reporting covers multiple locations.

6. The Human Rights and Equalities Board Investigation into Young People in York who are Not in Education, Employment and Training – September 2019 (copies can be downloaded from www.yorkhumanrights.org/).

7. Social Mobility York Conference September 2019 – https://www.yorkeducation.co.uk/plusv2/bf853c04-cbf1-45b0-a785-4cb496366246


11. Due to changes in national government data collection, the quarter 4 data usually quoted in this report was unavailable for the housing-related indicators. We have therefore used like-for-like figures to show trends over time – quarter 1 figures for statutory homelessness acceptances and quarter 3 figures for households in temporary accommodation (with and without dependent children).

12. Rough sleeper count data provided by Changing Lives.


20. Dr Gill Main (University of Leeds) presented her research during the public meeting to disseminate initial findings for this report (10th December 2019) – quotations taken from the More Snakes Less Ladders report (Leeds City Council, University of Leeds).

22. David Taylor-Robinson, Eric T C Lai, Sophie Wickham, Tanith Rose, Paul Norman, Clare Bambra, Margaret Whitehead, Ben Barr, Assessing the impact of rising child poverty on the unprecedented rise in infant mortality in England, 2000–2017: time trend analysis https://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/9/10/e029424


24. Data kindly provided by the Trussell Trust in York (for year ending March 2019).


26. Issues linked to Universal Credit have been widely discussed in the media; examples are https://cpag.e-activist.com/page/43566/action/1?chain and https://rightsinfo.org/councils-bedroom-tax-rights-breach/


York: Human Rights City

York: Human Rights City (YHRC) is a network of local people, including representatives from the voluntary and public sectors in York. We want to be a catalyst for York people, business and organisations to champion a vibrant, diverse, fair and safe city.

We include representatives of the City of York Council, York Centre for Voluntary Service (CVS), Citizens Advice York, International Service, Explore York, North Yorkshire Police, Tees Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust, York NHS Teaching Hospital Foundation Trust, York City of Sanctuary, the Centre for Applied Human Rights at the University of York, and York St John University. Our Steering Group now includes representatives from civil sector organisations working in each of the five priority rights areas.

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