

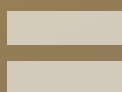


York:
Human
Rights
City

York Human Rights City Network Indicator Report

HUMAN RIGHTS IN YORK: SEEKING TO REBUILD

#7, 2022



Equality and
Non-Discrimination



Education



Decent Standard
of Living



Housing



Health and
Social Care

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:

The Right Honourable Lord Mayor of York
at the declaration event at the Merchant Taylors' Hall,
on Monday 24th April 2017

Acknowledgements

This report was written by Fionn Toland, with sections contributed by Marilyn Crawshaw and Stephen Pittam. The York Human Rights City Network is very grateful to all those who participated in the preparation of the report. In particular we thank the following individuals for their contribution to this report. Sian Balsom, Will Boardman, Niamh Boyle, Paul Gready, Claire Fox, Oliver Harris, Caroline Hunter, Ursula McArthur, Fiona McCulloch, Nicholas Pleace, Adam Raffell, Gerardo Hidalgo Rodriguez, Alison Semmence, Sophie von Stumm, Pauline Stuchfield, Barbara Swinn, India Wheatley and Jo Williams.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2022, headlines were dominated by the unfolding cost-of-living crisis. Whilst still coming to terms with the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic, the effects of rising inflation and the impact of the war in Ukraine began to register in York. These crises have highlighted some of the problems the city faces, but also the determination that exists to tackle them, along with the generosity of many of York's residents.

In this year's report, we have tried to capture these different issues. As with previous years, we have referred to a set of social and economic indicators, which provide a sense of how the city is performing in terms of the protection of five human rights: the right to equality and non-discrimination, the right to education, the right to health and social care, the right to housing, and the right to a decent standard of living. We also provide comparative data so that we can get a sense of how York is performing compared to the rest of the UK.

Unfortunately, for some of our indicators, the latest available data are for the 2021/22 financial year or earlier. They therefore do not capture the full impact of the cost-of-living crisis. In order to address this issue, we have tried to supplement the information provided by the indicators with more recent data, in order to give a greater sense of how the dramatic rise in inflation has

been impacting York's residents.

We know that York is an unequal city, with some residents struggling to meet their needs. The cost-of-living crisis has pushed many further towards poverty. This is most starkly captured in our indicator which measures foodbank use. In the first ten months of 2022, an estimated 6,672 people had been provided food through the Trussell Trust foodbank in York. This was an 82% increase on the same period in 2021. This statistic of course fails to capture the number of people who are being fed through informal food networks, which have proliferated in the city in recent years.

Other indicators also highlight the issues of poverty and inequality in York. 2022 saw a significant rise in the number of children living in temporary accommodation. The statistics regarding the private rental sector show the ongoing problems regarding housing affordability in the

city, with rental prices in York above regional and national averages. The gender pay gap has continued to grow and is now more than double the national average.

Despite these grim statistics, there has been progress in other areas. There was an improvement in the number of service users stating that they had sufficient social contact, and the number of 16–17-year-olds who were not in education, employment or training continued to fall in 2022. Despite the city's housing issues, the number of people sleeping rough remains relatively low. There was also good news in relation to the earnings gap, with evidence that the disparity between low and median wages in the city is narrowing.

As with previous years, our report also focuses on other areas in which work is being carried out to protect human rights in York. We highlight the efforts made to widen access to digital information in the city, and discuss the impressive efforts made by the Council, civil society organisations, and York residents, to welcome refugees into York. We also note the important work of the city's Poverty Truth Commission and look forward to hearing more from the group in 2023.

Finally, we would like to highlight the ongoing efforts to rebuild the Network's relationship with the City Council, after the decision to prevent Blue Badge holders from using their badges to enter central areas of the city. The Network is fully supportive of those individuals and organisations who have worked tirelessly to ensure that the issue maintains a high profile, and to raise awareness about the human rights issues involved. We hope that the ban will be reversed in 2023. Despite our frustration with the Council's position regarding the Blue Badge ban, we have sought to reset our relationship with the authority in recent months. After a number of meetings, the Council has agreed an action plan which was presented to a meeting of the Council Executive in January 2023. In the plan, the Council recommits to its 2017 declaration that it will work towards becoming a Human Rights City. Further, it has committed to work with the Network to create a new structure to replace the Human Rights and Equalities Board, and to review the 'Community Voices' project, to ensure that it is meeting its objective of working with the marginalised residents of York. We hope that the plan provides a path forward for the Council and the Network to work together to protect human rights in York.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Earnings Gap

The cost-of-living crisis has had the greatest impact on those who are on low incomes. We therefore welcome this year's decrease in the earnings gap between those on median wages and those on low wages. We also note that there has been inclusive wage growth in York in the past decade or so, meaning that the wages of the lower-paid have been increasing at a faster rate than those on median wages. *In order to continue this trend, and in order to make the city more resilient to economic shocks such as the cost-of-living crisis, we recommend that employers in York work towards paying their employees the Living Wage Foundation's Real Living Wage (£10.90 per hour). We also recommend that the Council does what it can to encourage this.* This wage is linked to cost-of-living figures and so ensures that employees earn enough to get by. This could further help to reduce the earnings gap in York and to create a more equal city.

Gender Pay Gap

In last year's report, we highlighted the alarming increase in the gender pay gap that had taken place in 2021. We noted that this increase was likely linked to the fact that a higher

proportion of female employees had been placed on furlough during the pandemic. However, this year the gap has continued to widen. Although the Office for National Statistics has warned that pandemic related issues may still be impacting the available figures, given that the gender pay gap in York far outstrips regional and national averages, efforts need to be made in order to understand the dynamics that have led to there being such a substantial gender pay gap in the city. *We recommend that the Council carry out research into the particular issues underlying wage inequality in York, so that strategies can be developed in order to tackle this issue. We also recommend that economic policy planners ensure that the problem of tackling gender-related wage disparity is foregrounded in their work.*

Attainment Gap

We note in our report that greater efforts are needed to promote educational policies which can help to overcome the attainment gap between socially disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged primary school students. We also observe that the child poverty figures in York remain similar to those previously reported, and that the cost-of-living

crisis has had a severe economic impact on families in the UK in 2022. One area which can be particularly expensive for families is costs related to schooling. Indeed, financial issues can prove to be a significant barrier to the achievement of the right to education. The Child Poverty Action Group has developed a series of resources aimed at tackling these barriers.¹ They promote initiatives such as the implementation of affordable and inclusive uniform policies, and the widespread provision of free school meals. *We encourage the Council to build upon its efforts to lower the attainment gap in York, and recommend that it consider whether greater efforts could be made to tackle the financial barriers to education.*

Disaggregated Data

Much of the data for our Indicator Report come from the York Open Data initiative, run by the City Council. The initiative provides a wealth of useful information which can be used to measure the city's performance, including its efforts to monitor human rights. Many of these datasets are impressively detailed. For instance, the data collected regarding the reasons people present as homeless tell us much about why the problem emerges. Appropriate measures can then be developed in order to

tackle this issue. However, there is less information on other topics. As noted above, we know little regarding the underlying reasons for the increasing gender pay gap in York. The more information we have on different issues, the better prepared we are to tackle them. This is true not only for the City Council, but for civil society groups who are also trying to tackle the issues the city faces. *We therefore recommend that the Council work with civil society groups, and others, to identify areas where there are gaps in information, and to determine what new kinds of data are needed.*

Accessible Information

In this year's report, we place special attention on the issue of digital inclusion and the right to accessible information. The speed at which digital technology has taken over our lives has had a profound effect on the way in which we communicate with each other, with organisations, and with state bodies. Increasingly, we interact via digital means rather than through face-to-face encounters. This process was accelerated by the pandemic, with many public services being placed online during this period. Whilst many people have easily adapted to these changing circumstances, we must also be aware that there are others who have found the transition more

difficult. We therefore welcome the Council's endeavours to increase digital inclusion in York. We urge the authority to devote the requisite resources to that project so that those who wish to interact with public services through digital means have the capacity to do so. However, not everyone has the capability, or the desire to interact in this way. We therefore encourage the Council to make all efforts to ensure that a variety of formats are available through which York's residents

can interact with the public sphere. Of course, the Council is already engaged in such efforts. However, we would like to see greater focus being placed on this issue. This might involve trying to avoid providing services exclusively through digital means, improving awareness of the support available to those who are struggling to access information, and developing a method through which we can measure the extent to which vulnerable and marginalised groups are being catered for.



EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

The Right

International Law	Domestic Law
<p>European Convention on Human Rights, 1950, Article 14</p> <p>International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966, Articles 2.1 and 26</p> <p>International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966, Articles 2.2, 3, 7.a.i, 10.3</p> <p>Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006, Articles 4, 5, 6, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28, 29, 30</p>	<p>Human Rights Act 1998, Schedule 1, Part 1, Article 14 (the Human Rights Act domesticates the European Convention on Human Rights)</p> <p>Equality Act 2010, Section 149</p>

The Indicators

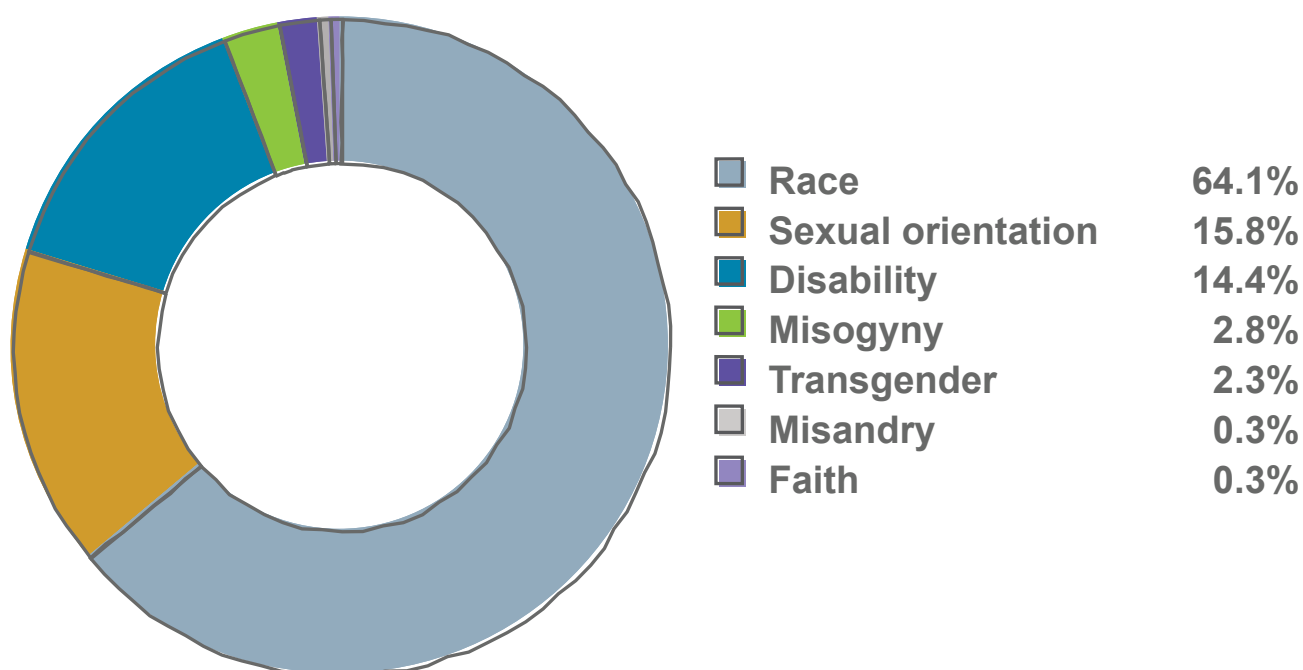
Hate Crimes Recorded

According to statistics provided by the North Yorkshire Police, 2022 saw a reduction in the number of hate crimes recorded in York (see Graph 1). In the period from October 31st 2021 until October 31st 2022, there were 354 reported hate crimes.² This was down from 402 in the previous 12-month period, an 11.9% decrease. The highest proportion of hate crimes were again race related (64.1%), followed by sexual orientation

(15.8%), disability (14.4%), misogyny (2.8%), and transgender related crimes (2.3%).

In last year's report, we noted the link between the night-time economy and hate crimes, and that relation can again be seen in the statistics provided by North Yorkshire Police for 2022. 27.7% of hate crimes recorded took place between 12 and 1 am. Around 38% of reported hate crimes occurred in the Guildhall and Micklegate areas of the city. According to

Graph 1: Breakdown of Hate Crimes Recorded in York between 31 October 2021 and 31 October 2022 (Source: North Yorkshire Police)



the Hate Crime Working Group, the hate crimes that took place in these areas were predominantly race-related and involved offences committed against staff working in the night-time economy.³

The identification of specific victim groups is important. If the issue of hate crime is to be tackled, the data collected needs to be disaggregated, so that we know which groups are being victimised and why. This enables the development of targeted policies and actions which have a greater chance of success. For example, if we know that many race-related hate crimes are committed against staff working in the night-time economy, a bespoke plan that seeks

to tackle this specific issue can be developed. In a positive move, the Working Group has identified the development of an intelligence-led approach to hate crimes as a key priority.

Such an approach of course must be underpinned by a robust system for reporting hate crimes. In last year's report, we highlighted the intention of the Working Group to set up third party Hate Crime Reporting Centres, so that victims of hate crimes can report to community organisations that they know and trust. It seems that there have been some difficulties with the process, as the community organisations involved have found the requirements of

acting as a reporting centre overly demanding. A simpler and less onerous system has been proposed, with the intention of completing the setup of the centres in 2023.

In last year's report, we also noted the low rate at which hate crimes were prosecuted. Unfortunately, this issue, which is not peculiar to York, continues to be a problem. Of the 354 hate crimes reported in the past year, 195 were still under investigation as of 31st October 2022. Of the 159 incidents which had been investigated, 5 resulted in cautions and 8 were dealt with by community resolution. 78.6% had no resolution due to issues with obtaining evidence, with the identification of suspects being a particular problem.

One welcome addition to York's human rights infrastructure this year has been the newly formed 'Inclusive Equal Rights UK 3.0' (IERUK), a group which aims to tackle discrimination within the city.⁴ The organisation was set up after the Council passed a motion in October 2021, declaring its intention to make York the North of England's first anti-racist and inclusive city. The motion, which our network supported, resolved to facilitate the setting up of an independent working group which will seek to develop and help implement a long-term anti-racism and inclusion strategy within York.

The working group, which IERUK has convened, is developing an action plan to tackle instances of institutional racism in the city, and to ensure that minority groups have equal access to public services, are better involved in civic life, and are fairly represented in local government.

The group is working alongside the Institute of Social Justice at York St. John University, in order to carry out research into the extent to which people from minority groups in York are subjected to racism and discrimination at individual and/or institutional levels. They will publish a report outlining their strategy in 2023. The group will then seek to implement their proposals, in collaboration with the Council.

"Working with the city's diverse communities and groups, IERUK will develop a long-term anti-racism and inclusion strategy and action plan for the City of York. The action plan will provide an evidence-based set of initiatives to tackle and dismantle casual and systemic racism; promote equality and fairness; and champion diversity and inclusion in the City of York."

Inclusive Equal Rights UK 3.0

Gender Pay Gap

For this indicator, and for the earnings gap indicator discussed below, we use data provided by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). The statistics come from their Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings.⁵ It must be noted that the published figures are provisional and are subject to revision. Further, the ONS has stated that their estimates are still likely somewhat impacted by pandemic related disruptions, as difficulties in collecting data have meant that sample sizes have been smaller and therefore less reliable.⁶ These caveats should be kept in mind when reading the following statistics, as well as those related to the earnings gap.⁷

In last year's report, we highlighted the large increase in the gender pay gap in York. We remarked that this

increase was likely due to the fact that a higher proportion of female employees were placed on the pandemic furlough scheme, which ran from March 2020 until September 2021. However, if the hope was that the gap would start to reduce this year, disappointingly, it has increased again.

This report has previously used two measures to indicate the gender pay gap, which we rely upon again this year. The first is the median, full-time, gross weekly wages of men and women working in York⁸ (see Table 1). The second is the formulation used by the ONS, which defines the gender pay gap as the difference between average hourly earnings (excluding overtime) of men and women as a proportion of average hourly earnings (excluding overtime) of men⁹ (see Table 2 and Graph 2).

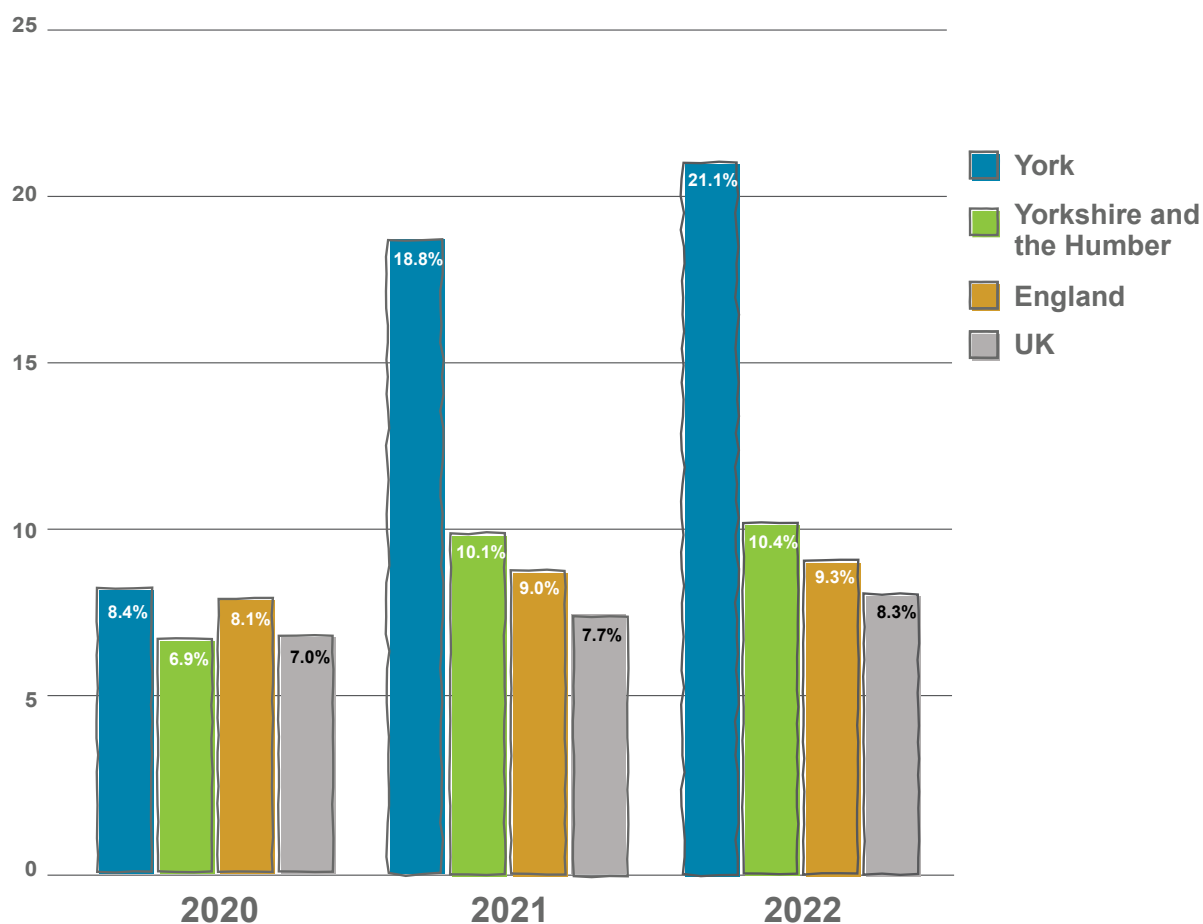
Table 1: Median Gross Weekly Wages and the Gender Pay Gap in York
(Source: Office for National Statistics)

	2020	2020	2020	2021	2021	2021	2022	2022	2022
Area	Male	Female	Gap	Male	Female	Gap	Male	Female	Gap
York	£613.9	£540.2	£73.7	£717.1	£569.9	£147.2	£705.4	£542.5	£162.9
Yorkshire and the Humber	£572.3	£491.1	£81.2	£601.1	£497.3	£103.8	£627.2	£520.4	£106.8
England	£626.2	£544.5	£81.7	£659.7	£557.6	£102.1	£689.9	£584.5	£105.4
UK	£617.5	£543.5	£74	£650.7	£558.5	£92.2	£683	£584.1	£98.9

**Table 2: Average Gross Hourly Wages and the Gender Pay Gap in York
(Source: Office for National Statistics)**

Area	2020	2020	2021	2021	2022	2022
	Full-Time	Full-Time and Part-Time	Full-Time	Full-Time and Part-Time	Full-Time	Full-Time and Part-Time
York	8.4%	15.4%	18.8%	22.5%	21.1%	23.7
Yorkshire and the Humber	6.9%	14.7%	10.1%	15.9%	10.4%	16.5%
England	8.1%	16%	9%	15.9%	9.3%	15.6%
UK	7%	14.9%	7.7%	15.1%	8.3%	14.9%

**Graph 2: Average Gross Hourly Wages and the Gender Pay Gap in York
(Source: Office for National Statistics)**



If we look at the first measure, set out in Table 1, we see that, in 2022, the median weekly wage for men in York was £705.4. This is down from £717.1 in 2021. The weekly median wage for women in York was £542.5. This is down from £569.9 in 2021. This means that the gender pay gap has gone from £73.7 in 2020, to £147.2 in 2021, and to £162.9 in 2022. The gap in York is now 41.6% higher than the figure for Yorkshire and the Humber as whole, where the gap is £106.8. It is also higher than in England (£105.4) and the UK (£98.9).

As noted, the second measure, set out in Table 2 and Graph 2, examines the difference between average hourly earnings of men and women as a proportion of average hourly earnings of men. The table above uses *median* hourly earnings as the measure, and provides statistics for full-time work, and for full-time and part-time work combined.

If we first focus on full-time earnings, it emerges that in 2020 men in York earned 8.4% more than women, and in 2021 this had risen to 18.8%. In 2022, men now earn 21.1% more than women in York. This compares with 10.4% in Yorkshire and the Humber, 9.3% in England, and 8.3% in the UK as a whole. Looking at two cities often used in comparisons with York,

Cambridge and Oxford, we see that the gender pay gap in York is higher than in either of these areas. In Cambridge the gap is 17.8%, whilst in Oxford the figure is 9.1%.

If we consider full-time earnings and part-time earnings together, a similar picture emerges, with a large jump in the gender pay gap in York between 2020 (15.4%) and 2021 (22.5%), and a smaller rise in 2022 to 23.7%. Again, the 2022 figure for York is higher than for Yorkshire and the Humber, England, and the UK as a whole.

Given the caveats mentioned above regarding the ONS data, it is difficult to determine whether the continued rise in the gender pay gap in 2022 is a sign of a broader trend towards increased pay disparity, or is the result of pandemic related disruptions. Due to the distorted nature of the data from the past years, the ONS has recommended that the focus should remain on longer-term trends, which have shown a modest narrowing of the gender pay gap nationally.

However, it is clear that the gender pay gap in York is much higher than England and UK averages. Unfortunately, there does not seem to be a great amount of research into why this is, something that needs to be addressed if progress is to be made in this area.

Update: Reverse the Ban

In our 2021 report, we produced a case study on disabled people being excluded, since November 2021, from using their Blue Badges to enter large parts of the city centre. There is now a coalition of 27 disability and age-related and allied organisations – including York Human Rights City Network – working to overturn this ban.¹⁰ Sadly, the ban remains in place but there have been some notable successes, strengthening confidence that the ban will be revoked in 2023.

The Reverse the Ban coalition, which is non-party political, has worked hard at maintaining a local, regional and national media profile throughout the year – including with the BBC and ITV and questions in Parliament – with considerable impact. It has the support of both Rachael Maskell MP (York Central, Labour) and Julian Sturdy

MP (York Outer, Conservative). The Labour Group and the Conservative Group on the Council have committed to overturning the ban, if elected to run the Council at the May 2023 local elections. The Green Group have said it should be reviewed once the permanent barriers are installed. The Liberal Democrats believe it needs to stay in place.

Over the summer, the coalition collected almost 3,000 postcards urging the Council Leader to overturn the ban, many with wide-ranging comments about its impact. The postcards were presented as a petition to a full Council meeting on October 20th 2022 and a peaceful protest of disabled people and allies was held outside. The same Council meeting voted unanimously to adopt a social model approach to disability issues, even though some speakers defended the ban! The petition was



then discussed at a meeting of the Customer and Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee on November 7th. Its members voted unanimously to ask the Council's new Monitoring Officer to review the legal advice given at the time of the permanent ban being considered; for the implications of a court judgment against Westminster Council to be considered¹¹; and to recommend that an Officer Report addressing the petition's request, and the many comments, be made to the full Council Executive.

On Wednesday November 16th, after representation from members of the coalition, the city's Health and Wellbeing Board voted unanimously

to pause the city's application for World Health Organisation (WHO) Age Friendly City status, on the grounds that it was not appropriate to go ahead while the Blue Badge ban remained in force.

Postgraduate human rights students at the University of York chose to carry out a case study on the coalition. In Spring 2023 the students will report on (i) the Council's approach to consultation on this issue, and (ii) on how to address counter-terrorism and security concerns without discriminating against disabled people.

These are all major developments.

CASE STUDY: Refugees in York

As well as being the UK's first Human Rights City, York is also a City of Sanctuary, meaning that it is part of a network of towns, cities and organisations which seek to create a welcoming atmosphere for refugees and asylum seekers who come to the UK.

In 2022, citizens in York showed remarkable compassion and generosity in their efforts to welcome refugees into the city. In the spring, those fleeing the war in Ukraine began arriving in the UK. Over the course of the year, over 300 Ukrainian refugees came to York.¹²

The City Council, York City of Sanctuary (YCS), Refugee Action York (RAY), and other groups and organisations, co-ordinated efforts to welcome refugees to York and to integrate them into the life of the city.¹³ York City of Sanctuary group, in partnership with the Council, set up the York-Ukraine Support Team (YUST).¹⁴ The team has helped implement the Government's 'Homes for Ukrainians' scheme, which encourages individuals and organisations to offer Ukrainian refugees accommodation for 6 to 12 months. YUST has helped to



coordinate this effort by identifying hosts and matching them with incoming refugees. Here, the Council has assisted by checking that the accommodation offered is appropriate, and by doing background checks on hosts. The Council and YUST have offered continuing support to the Ukrainian refugees, partly through a network of Ukrainian people who were already living in York.

Other organisations have also assisted in the process of welcoming the refugees. York Citizens Advice have hired a Ukrainian to act as a translator, interpreter and advisor.¹⁵ Drop in centres were set up by York City Church and York Explore, at which advice is offered to refugees by a number of organisations.¹⁶ Efforts have

been made to ensure that the refugees have access to health services, and to find places for Ukrainian children in York's schools. English language classes and translation services have also been provided.

"It has been a privilege to welcome a refugee child to our school. It has been important to give him a sense of belonging and he has really settled in well. He is learning English rapidly and has made lots of friends. It has been a great experience for us all and he has become a valued member of our school community."

York Schoolteacher

There have also been obstacles to overcome. These include issues with the lack of suitable and affordable accommodation in York, especially for larger families,¹⁷ and once original hosting arrangements have come to an end.¹⁸ It has been challenging to find employment opportunities for the refugees, as their qualifications are often not recognised under UK law. Further, those who have hosted refugees have faced difficulties, with many being placed under financial pressure due to the cost-of-living crisis.¹⁹

However, overall, the process of welcoming Ukrainian refugees to York has been a success. The coordination between the Council, YCS and other groups and organisations has been impressive, as a well organised plan was quickly put in place. The generosity of hosts and other citizens has been extraordinary, with great efforts being made to ensure the refugees have felt welcome in York.

Efforts were also made to welcome a different group to York in December 2022, as a number of asylum seekers from Africa and the Middle East were brought to York, so that they could be provided with temporary accommodation. Unfortunately, the Government failed to provide the same level of

funding or support for this group, and they have had to be housed in a hotel in the city rather than being integrated into the community.

Nonetheless, the Council has sought to coordinate support amongst the city's community and voluntary sector.²⁰ Refugee Action York (RAY), an organisation which has considerable experience in assisting asylum seekers, has led the way in helping to welcome this group into the city. In November and December, RAY held a successful drive for donations so that clothes and other items could be provided to the asylum seekers.²¹ They have worked together with One Voice York in order to put together 'welcome packs' for those arriving in the city.²² Thus, despite the lack of funding, the citizens of York have again shown their generosity, and have shown that York is a welcoming City of Sanctuary.

"This has been a real team effort from a wide range of people in York, to set up a service of support and welcome those fleeing the war zone in Ukraine."

Paul Wordsworth, York City of Sanctuary.

EDUCATION

The Right

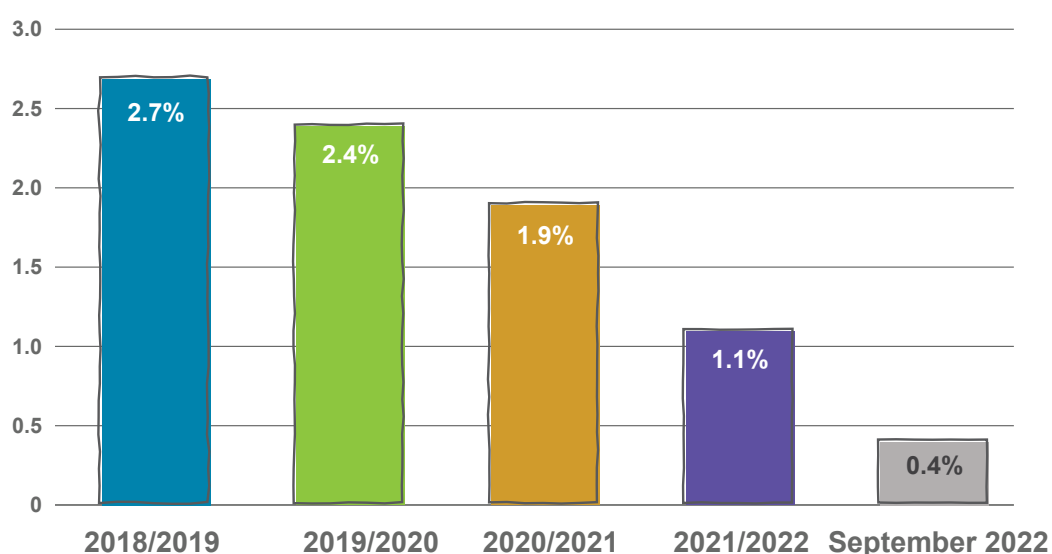
International Law	Domestic Law
International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 1966, Article 13	Human Rights Act 1998, Schedule 1, Part 2, Article 2
Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989, Article 28	Equality Act 2010, Part 6, Chapter 1, Section 85
	Education Act 1996, Section 13
	Education and Skills Act 2008, Part 1, Chapter 1

The Indicators

Proportion of 16-17 Year-Olds Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETS)

2022 saw a further, welcome decrease in the proportion of 16–17-year-olds not in education, employment or training²³ (see Graph 3).

Graph 3: Proportion of 16-17 Year-Olds in York Not in Education Employment or Training (Source: York Open Data)



In the 2018/19 period, 2.7% of 16-17 year-olds in York were not in education, employment or training. This reduced to 2.4% in 2019/20 and to 1.9% in 2020/21. For the 2021/22 period, which ended in March of 2022, the number had dropped to 1.1%, and by September of 2022 it had reached 0.4%.

This decrease has accompanied a general reduction in unemployment in York since the Covid-19 pandemic. In a quarterly economic update

presented to the City Council in May of 2022, it was reported that the number of people claiming out of work benefits had decreased for 12 consecutive months, from February 2021 to February 2022.²⁴ According to the Centre for Cities, by October of 2022, the unemployment rate in York had dropped to 1.7% of the working age population.²⁵ This was significantly below the national average of 3.6%. Further, it was reported that youth unemployment was at 1.2%, whilst the national average was 3.7%.

CASE STUDY: Equity in Education

In 2022, researchers from the University of York published a paper which explored the relationship between children's socioeconomic background and their academic performance.²⁶ Unlike our indicator, which focuses on attainment levels at the end of primary education, this research had a broader lens, considering achievement levels throughout the primary education period.

Alarming, the research, which analysed previous studies of this relationship, found that the link between socioeconomic status and children's primary school performance has remained relatively constant over the past 95 years in Britain, suggesting that efforts to improve the academic



performance of those from disadvantaged backgrounds have been unsuccessful.²⁷

The researchers argue that this failure is a result of too much focus being placed on ensuring “equality of opportunity in education”, that is, on providing the same learning opportunities to children, “regardless of their difference in ability, skills and interests.”²⁸ This approach, they argue, fails to account for the fact that those

Overall, therefore, York has fared comparatively well in terms of cutting unemployment. However, as the country is expected to enter into recession in 2023, we would expect that the city will see a rise in unemployment figures.

People Attaining Expected Standard or Higher in Reading, Writing and Maths at the End of Primary Education (End of Key Stage 2: Aged 10-11) – Disadvantage Gap

The attainment gap compares the percentage of economically disadvantaged children reaching the expected standards for reading, writing and maths at the end of primary education, to the percentage of non-economically disadvantaged children reaching those standards. In 2019/20 and 2020/21 data were not collected for this indicator due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Although data has been collected this year, at the time of writing the figures are yet to be published.

from disadvantaged backgrounds are often unable to take advantage of educational opportunities to the same extent as their peers.

Instead, educational policy should be focused on ‘equity in education’, on “tailoring educational provisions to students’ individual characteristics and needs...”²⁹

One example of such an approach is the ‘Early Talk for York’ programme. Developed in response to a 2017 Department of Education report³⁰ which revealed that only 46% of disadvantaged children in York were reaching a good level of development, the programme is designed to help improve the speech, communication and language of children aged from 0-5 years.³¹ The approach involves training childminders and staff working in early years settings and

primary schools, in how to assess the speech and language skills of young children, so that they can identify any problems. Professionals, such as speech therapists, are then brought in to address any issues which have been identified.

During a pilot project, launched in 2019, it emerged that children who were part of the programme showed significant improvements in their speech and communication skills compared to those who did not receive comparable support. As a result, a city-wide rollout of the programme was approved by the Council in November of 2022.

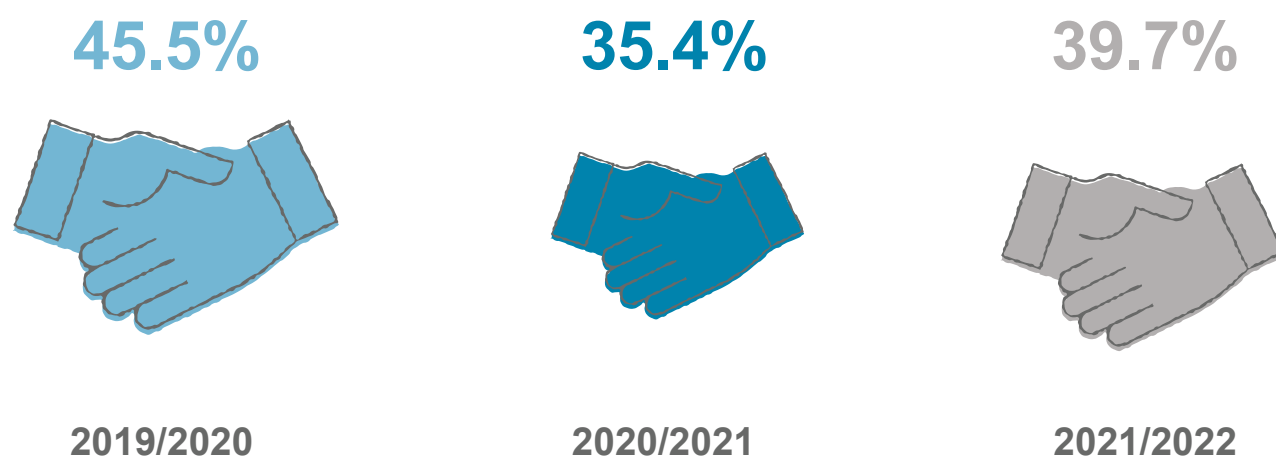
The success of this initiative, which focuses resources on those children with the greatest learning needs, could help point the way for future educational policies in the city.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

The Right

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

Graph 4: Proportion of Service Users in York Who Have as Much Social Contact as They Would Like (Source: York Open Data)



The Indicators

Proportion of Service Users Who Have as Much Social Contact as They Would Like

Loneliness is often linked to mental

health issues. In order to get some sense of the extent of this problem in York, we consider the proportion of social care users, defined as those eligible for assistance under the Care Act 2014, who report that they have as

much social contact as they would like (see Graph 4).

In last year's report, we noted the significant drop in the number of service users who had sufficient social contact. Only 35.4% reported that they had adequate social contact in 2020/21, compared to 45.5% in 2019/20. This, of course, was impacted by the pandemic, but also the crisis in the care sector.

In 2021/22, there has been a recovery of sorts, with 39.7% of service users stating that they had as much social contact as they would like.³² However, this number is still over 5% lower than that reported in 2019/20. This means that almost two thirds of users of social care do not

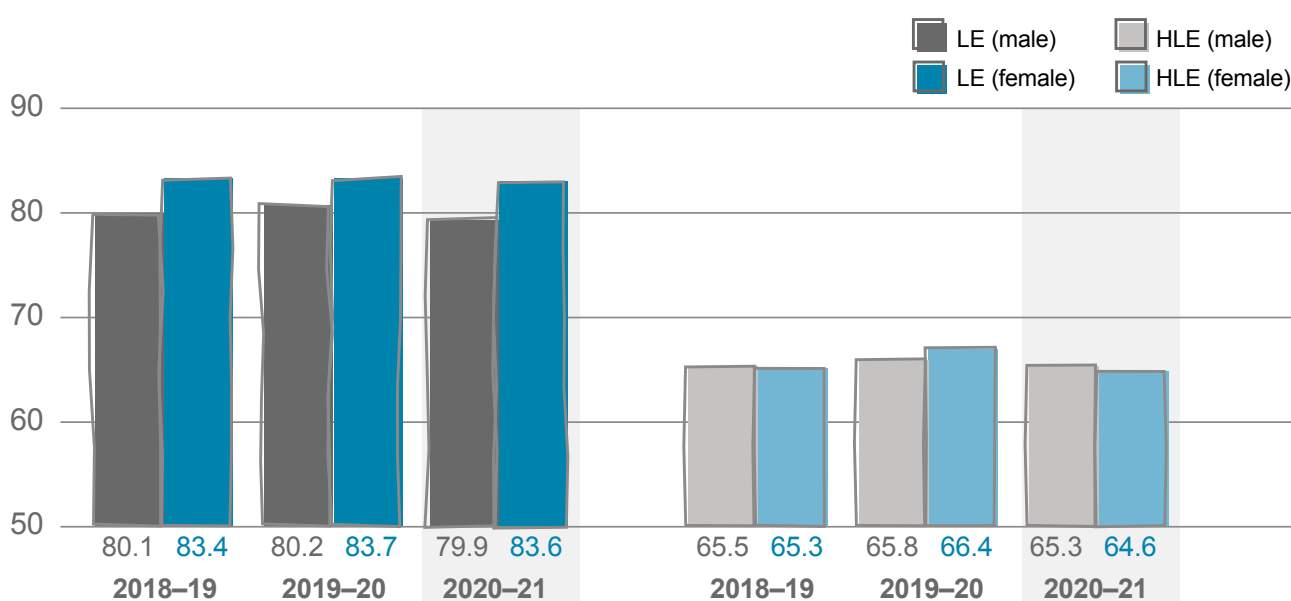
have as much social contact as they would like, an issue which needs to be addressed.

Life Expectancy and Healthy Life Expectancy

The most recent life expectancy and healthy life expectancy numbers are taken from March 2021 (see Graph 5). Each of the indicators has seen a decrease compared to the previous year. Life expectancy for men was 79.9 years, down from 80.2 years in 2019/20.³³ Life expectancy for females was down to 83.6 years, compared to 83.7 years in 2019/20.³⁴

Healthy life expectancy is defined as the average number of years that an individual is expected to live

Graph 5: Life Expectancy and Healthy Life Expectancy in York
(Source: York Open Data)



in a state of self-assessed good or very good health. Here, we again see decreases. In 2021, healthy life expectancy for men was 65.3, down from 65.8 in the previous year.³⁵ Healthy life expectancy for women also saw a decrease between 2019/20 and 2020/21, down from 66.4 to 64.6, an almost 2% decrease.³⁶

Earlier this year, the Institute for Fiscal Studies published a report on health inequalities in the UK, and their link to life expectancy.³⁷ The report noted the general slowdown in progress in terms of life expectancy for men and women in the UK since 2010.³⁸ As of 2019, the UK ranked 24th in the OECD in life expectancy, behind nearly all countries in Western Europe.³⁹

Prior to 2010, the main driver for improving life expectancy in the UK was advances in the treatment for cardiovascular disease.⁴⁰ These advances also explained the narrowing gap between men and women, in terms of life expectancy, over the past 50 years, as men die from cardiovascular disease at much higher rates than women. It seems that a slowdown in the progress against this disease, has been accompanied by a slowing in the rate of improvement regarding life expectancy in the UK.

The report also highlighted regional disparities relating to life expectancy. Prior to the pandemic, those born

in London and the South-East had a life-expectancy of over two years higher than those born in the north of England.⁴¹ Life expectancy gains faltered for men and women in the north of England after 2012, but continued to improve for those born in London.

The authors of the report noted the significant link between levels of education and rates of mortality.⁴² They also highlighted that mortality rates are higher in more deprived places. Generally speaking, those in poor health have less education and are on lower incomes. Interestingly, a study by Cookson from 2015, which was mentioned in the report, found that the largest and most systematic differences between rich and poor in terms of healthcare was to be found in preventive procedures, particularly in relation to cancer, with those on higher incomes more likely to access such services.⁴³

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the report notes that the most promising approach to improving the health of the population is to focus on the health and well-being of children. Good childhood health is linked to better developmental and education outcomes.⁴⁴ This is linked to higher earnings in later life, which is itself linked to better health outcomes.

CASE STUDY: Digital Inclusion and the Right to Accessible Information

Digital exclusion is the process through which individuals are denied the right to meaningfully participate in society, either due to a failure to provide non-digital communications alongside digital ones, or a failure to assist individuals who wish to access digital communications.

This exclusion has been linked to issues such as isolation, loneliness, and mental health concerns.⁴⁵ It may be caused by several factors. First, digital access can be costly, as it involves paying for digital services such as broadband and buying digital equipment. Health related factors may also play a role, as, for example, some disabled people may require adapted equipment and/or the use of personal assistance, which can be difficult to access. Some find it challenging to develop digital literacy and the confidence to access digital resources. And, of course, some people have no desire to acquire equipment or skills.

With services and information sources increasingly being moved online, access to resources that enable community participation and independent living is potentially being denied to a section of society.

After York Council began moving many of its services online, a discussion began in the city about how to tackle digital exclusion.⁴⁶ The problem was magnified by the Covid-19 pandemic, and issues have persisted since, with many services not being returned to either their original 'in-person' format, or a blended format.

In 2020, and in response to some of the issues highlighted in our Indicator Report, a partnership that is now called 100% Digital York was formed by a number of organisations, in order to develop strategies to reduce digital exclusion in the city.

This partnership has recently adopted the community-based model, used successfully by 100% Digital Leeds, as a basis for its pilot programme in Acomb, which began in 2022. This approach has involved:

- Engaging with groups already embedded within the community, in order to identify and reach those at risk from digital exclusion.
- Having discussions with these groups about the ways in which digital inclusion may help them to achieve their particular goals.



- Encouraging these organisations to work with experts in order to develop bespoke digital inclusion strategies which take account of the particular needs of service-users.
- Providing training to the community groups so that they can help their members or service users to become digitally connected and/or more confident in accessing the information and services that they need.
- Providing digital education fora, such as digital cafés, which offer opportunities to teach digital literacy, but also pathways for people to access other services.

The partnership also works with the Good Things Foundation, a charity which works with internet providers to connect those who currently have no internet access, and with the York Community Furniture Store, in order to provide affordable digital equipment to those who need it.

The recognition of digital exclusion as an issue in York is to be welcomed. However, it is also important to acknowledge, as the 100% Digital York partnership has, that there will always be some people either unable to connect digitally, or who are exercising a choice not to do so, and therefore that the need for traditional

means of service provision and communications will remain.

People have different needs and capacities when it comes to accessing information and therefore multiple formats must be made available. Failure to do so means that individuals may have to rely on others in order to communicate with service providers, potentially leading to misunderstandings, and to diminished privacy and independence.

Access to information is therefore essential so that people can participate in society. Accordingly, it has been recognised as a component of the right to freedom of expression and opinion. It has been developed, for example, through Article 9 and Article 21 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which place various obligations on states to ensure access to information.

In the UK, there are a number of regulations which aim to protect this right. For example, the *Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018*⁴⁷, require public sector bodies to make their website and mobile apps accessible by making them “perceivable, operable, understandable and robust.”⁴⁸

Organisations providing National Health Service care or adult social

care in the UK are legally required to follow the *Accessible Information Standard*.⁴⁹ The standard aims to ensure that anyone with an impairment or sensory loss is provided with information that they can easily understand, so that they can communicate with health and social care services.

Despite the presence of this standard, Healthwatch York stated, in a 2022 report, that many service users in North Yorkshire and York still have information and communication related problems when dealing with health organisations.⁵⁰ The body called on such organisations to prioritise accessibility of information.

Clearly, this is an area which requires monitoring, and York Human Rights City Network will aim to place a particular focus on this issue in future Indicator Reports.

“...whilst some people are keen on using technology for information and communication, for others, digital is not the most appropriate or accessible option meaning it should not be the default.”

Healthwatch York, Accessible Information Report, 2022

THE RIGHT TO HOUSING

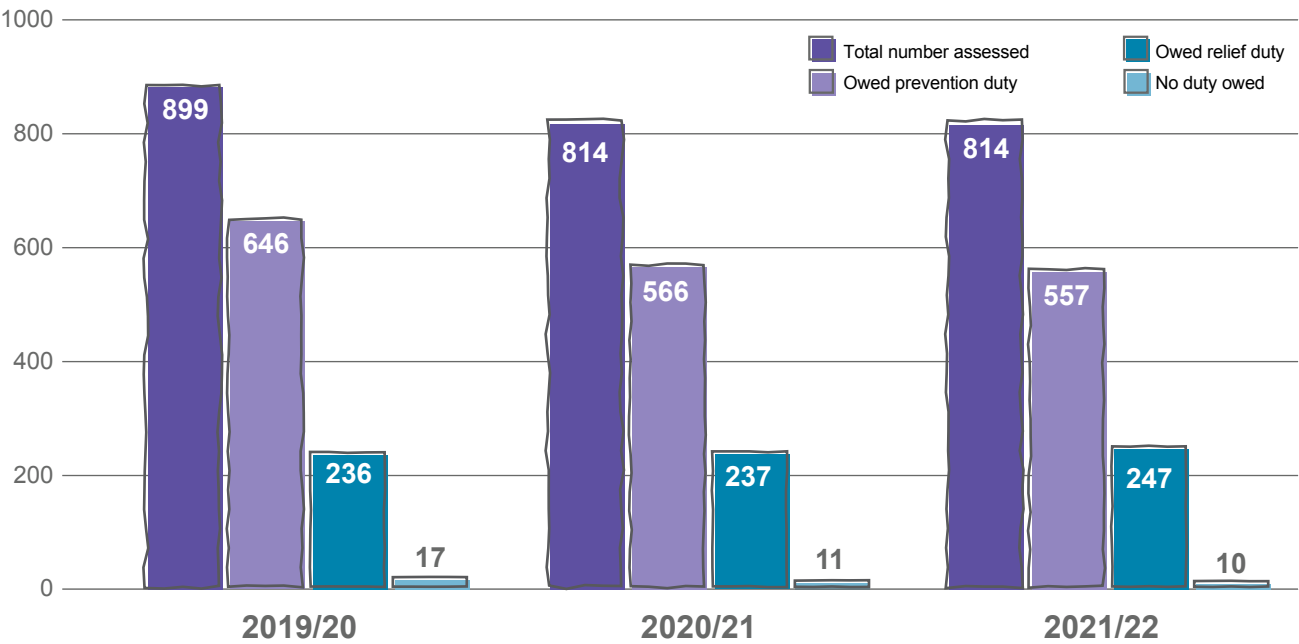
The Right

International Law	Domestic Law
International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 1966, Article 11	Human Rights Act 1998, Schedule 1, Part 1, Article 8
Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989, Article 27.3	Housing Act 1996, Part 6 and 7
	Protection from Eviction Act 1977
	Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

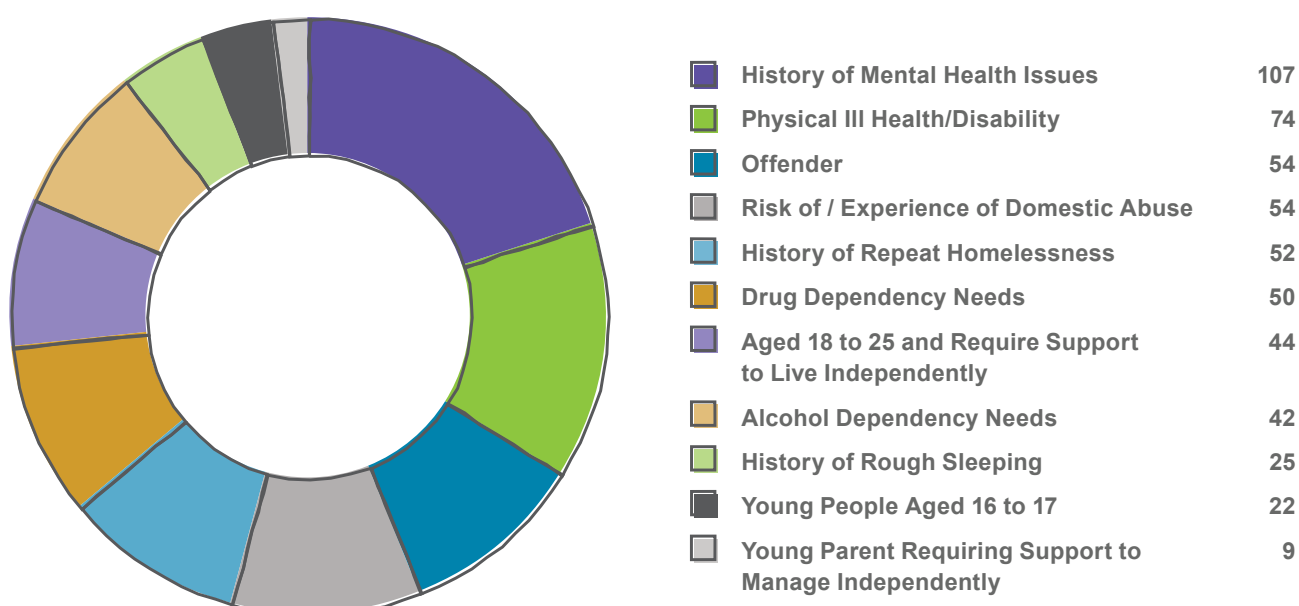
We know that housing affordability has been an ongoing issue in York. Unfortunately, that trend has continued in 2022. According to the Halifax Price Index, York had the highest increase in

house prices in the UK in 2022.⁵¹ High housing costs can compound issues associated with the cost-of-living crisis, pushing more people towards poverty and potentially homelessness.

Graph 6 – Statutory Homelessness Assessments in York by Financial Year (Source: Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities)



Graph 7: Homeless Support Needs in York – 2021/22
(Source: Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities)



The Indicators

Statutory Homelessness

When someone is assessed for homelessness, there are three possible outcomes. First, the person may be assessed as being homeless. In that case the local authority is deemed to have a relief duty towards the person. Alternatively, the person may be assessed as being at risk of homelessness. In that case, the local authority is deemed to have a prevention duty. Finally, a person may be assessed as not being at risk of homelessness, in which case the local authority is deemed not to have any legal duty towards that person.

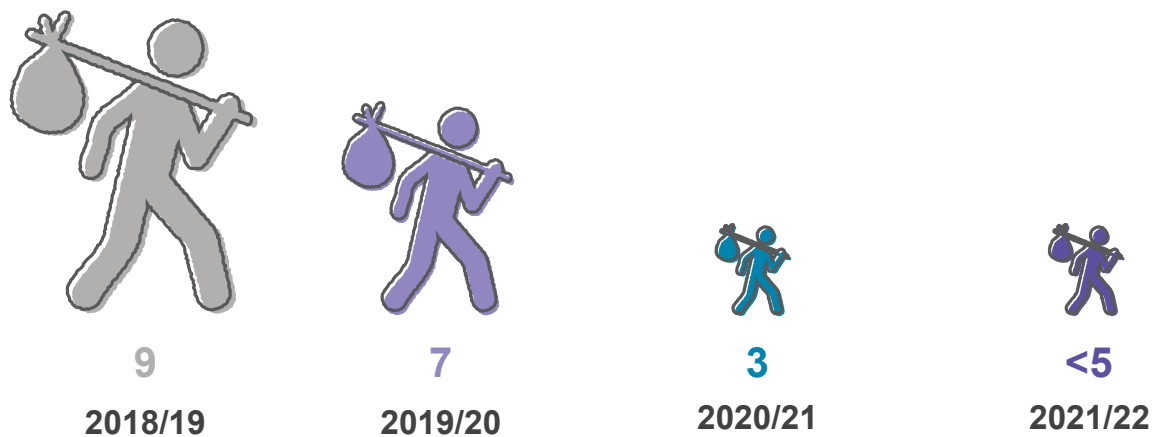
There was a notable reduction in the number of people who were assessed for homelessness between

2019/20 and 2020/21, from 899 down to 814 (see Graph 6). In the past financial year, these numbers have remained stable, with 814 people again being assessed for homelessness in the period between April 2021 and April 2022.⁵²

Across the three years, a very high percentage (around 98%) of those who have been assessed for homelessness have been deemed to be owed a statutory duty by the City of York Council.

In 2022, of those deemed to be owed a duty by the local authority, the majority (69.3%) have been judged to be at risk of homelessness, and therefore owed a prevention duty, whilst 30.7% have been judged to be actually homeless, and therefore owed a relief duty.

Graph 8: Number of People Sleeping Rough on a Single Night in York
(Source: York Open Data)



Unfortunately, we only have figures regarding statutory homelessness in York up until April 2022. These statistics therefore don't capture the impact of the cost-of-living-crisis. The next round of figures should tell us whether the rise in inflation in 2022 has pushed more of York's residents towards homelessness.

In the financial year 2021/22, 581 households in York were identified as having support needs⁵³ (see Graph 7). Support needs are areas of additional need that mean the household requires support to acquire and sustain accommodation. They give an indication of the additional services local authorities need to provide, to prevent an individual becoming homeless, or to stop the cycle of repeat homelessness.

The breakdown of support needs in York in 2021/22 is roughly

comparable with the previous financial year. Across the past three years, 'history of mental health' and 'physical ill health or disability' have consistently been the most common support needs in York.

Rough Sleeper Count

This indicator (see Graph 8) is based on the number of people sleeping rough on a particular night of the year. Due to a change in the way in which the numbers are reported, we don't know what the exact number was for 2021/22, but we do know that it was less than five.⁵⁴ The number is therefore relatively low, as it has been in the past number of years.

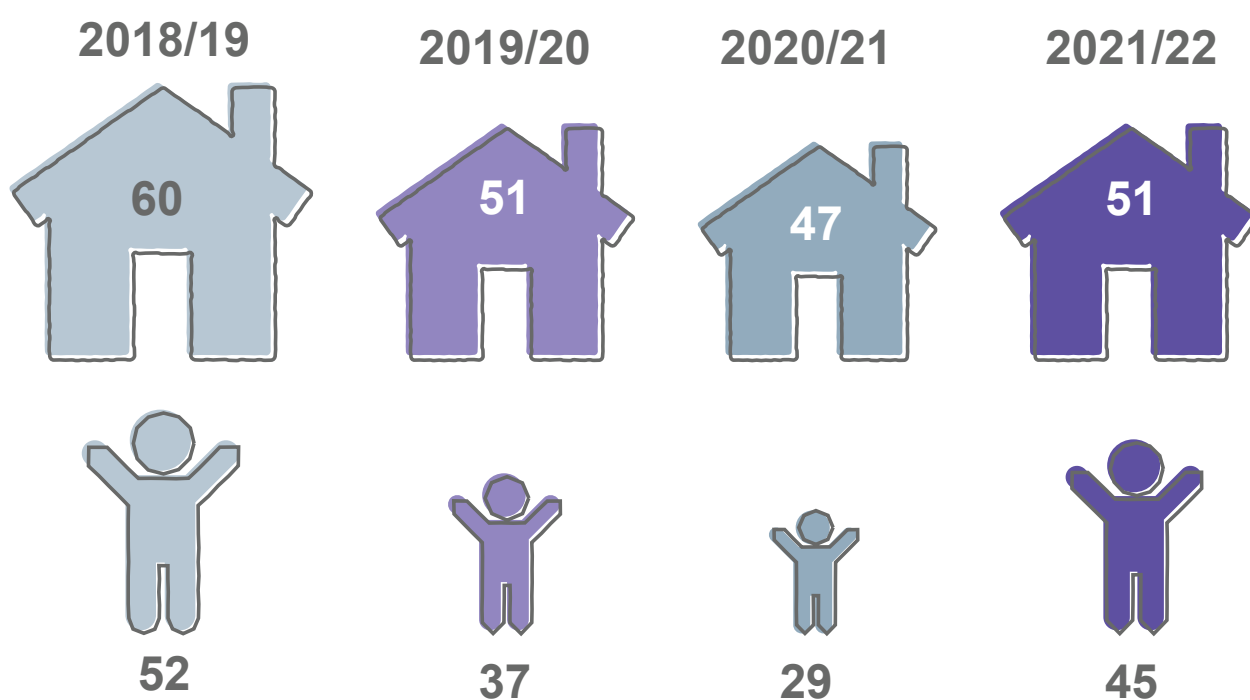
Number of Households Living in Temporary Accommodation

This indicator provides an average for the number of households, and the number of children, living in temporary

accommodation in York throughout the financial year.⁵⁵ After three years of decreases, 2021/22 saw an increase in both the number of households,⁵⁶ and the number of children,⁵⁷ in temporary accommodation (see Graph 9). It is likely that this increase is due to the lifting of Covid-related measures, particularly the moratorium on evictions which ended in May of 2021. As the available data only covers the period up until April 2022, the impact of the cost-of-living crisis is not captured. It is likely that York's temporary housing system has been put under considerable pressure in 2022.

Although there is a considerable amount of data available regarding the reasons why people in York become homeless, and are therefore in need of temporary accommodation, we don't have information regarding how long individuals and families are made to stay in temporary accommodation before more permanent housing is found. Given that temporary accommodation is often unsuitable for longer-term use, it would be useful to know how quickly permanent options become available, as this is a key part of tackling the homelessness issue.

Graph 9: Number of Households / Children Living in Temporary Accommodation in York (Source: York Open Data)



CASE STUDY: The Private Rental Sector in York

Rental prices for private tenancies continued to rise in York in 2022.⁵⁸ Data from the Office for National Statistics show that in the 2021/22 financial year, the median monthly rent for a room in a shared house in York was £460 (see Table 3). This is an 8.2% increase compared with the previous year, and is higher than the figure for Yorkshire and the Humber, which was £375, and the number for England as a whole, which was £425. The median monthly rent for a two-bedroom house in the city was £795, a 3.9% increase on the year prior.

Again, this number was higher than the regional and national figures.

Many of those renting in York's private sector are low-paid and are dependent on benefits to meet their housing costs. In February 2022, Citizens Advice York stated that high rental prices in the city mean that it is becoming increasingly difficult for those on benefits to rent private accommodation, as housing allowances are too low.⁵⁹ Further, in September 2022, Citizens Advice York reported that some landlords in York were engaging in discriminatory practices, by refusing to rent to low paid workers who were claiming benefits in order to top-up their

Table 3: Median Monthly Rental Prices in York
(Source: Office for National Statistics)

	2020/21	2021/22
Room in a Shared House		
York	£425	£460 (8.2% increase)
Yorkshire and the Humber		£375
England		£425
Two-Bedroom House		
York	£765	£795 (3.9% increase)
Yorkshire and the Humber		£595
England		£769

income.⁶⁰ This was happening despite the fact that it is illegal for landlords to refuse to rent to someone on the basis that they are receiving benefits.

The cost-of-living crisis will put further pressure on people renting in York, increasing the risk that they will be unable to meet their housing costs, and possibly leading to evictions and homelessness. Due to the pandemic, a moratorium on evictions was introduced in March 2020. Since this moratorium was lifted on May 31st 2021 there has been a dramatic increase in eviction levels in the UK. According to Ministry of Justice figures, landlord repossession figures were 106% higher in the third quarter of 2022⁶¹ than they were for the same period in the previous year.⁶² Evictions from the private rental sector are the leading cause of homelessness in the UK. It is therefore vital that measures are taken to ensure that low-income households, that are renting privately in York, are given as much support as possible.

“It is illegal to refuse to rent to someone because they receive benefits, but some landlords still do this. Many York residents are also finding it difficult to find a suitable home due to housing shortages, especially with the cost-of-living crisis ...”

Citizens Advice York

CASE STUDY: Traveller Accommodation in York

Another issue which we would like to highlight is the provision of suitable accommodation for York’s Gypsy and Traveller communities.

York Travellers Trust (YTT) has recently written to the Council to express its profound disappointment at the failure of the Council’s Local Plan to include suitable accommodation for York’s Gypsy and Traveller communities. At the local hearings in front of the Planning Inspectors, the Inspectors twice asked the Council’s planners to meet with YTT.

Yet the Council failed to do this and proceeded with a policy that YTT is convinced is not workable. Within the context of York having declared itself a Human Rights City, and aiming to become an Anti-Racist and Inclusive City, YTT considers this lack of engagement as incomprehensible.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission has written to the City of York Council to remind it of its duties under the Equality Act to its Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

A DECENT STANDARD OF LIVING

The Right

International Law	Domestic Law
International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 1966, Article 11 Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989, Article 27 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2006, Article 28 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women 1979, Article 14 European Social Charter 1961, Article 4 (1)	There are no domestic laws specifically relating to the right to a decent standard of living

The Indicators

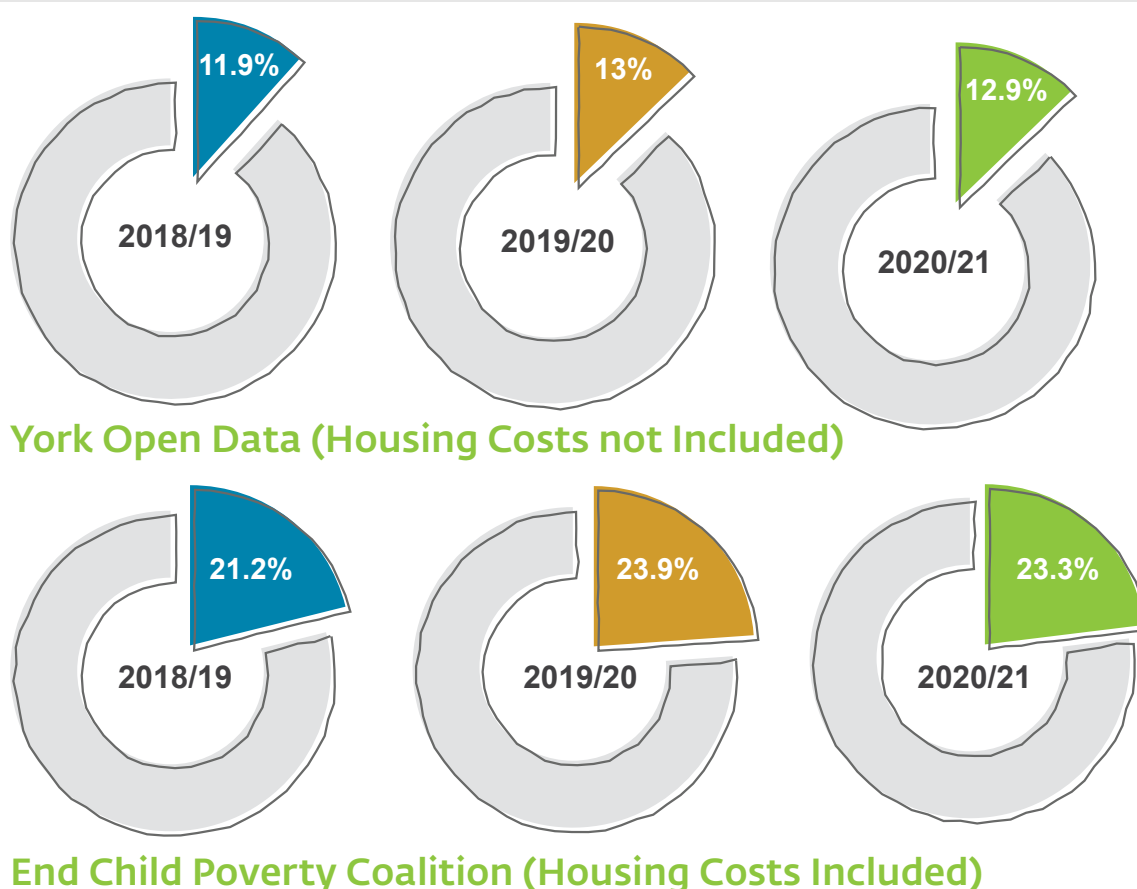
Child Poverty

Child poverty is measured by looking at the number, or proportion of children living in families whose reported income is less than 60% of the UK median. We use two sources to measure child poverty in York. The first is data provided by the City of York Council. The second is information provided by the End Child Poverty Coalition. Unfortunately, the latest data from both sources are only available for the 2020/21 financial year, and therefore do not capture the impact of the cost-of-living crisis.

According to the statistics provided by York Open Data, child poverty levels remained relatively stable in 2020/21, compared to the previous year⁶³ (see Graph 10). 12.9% of York's children were living in poverty in 2020/21, compared with 13% in 2019/20. This stabilisation comes after York experienced a 1.1% increase in child poverty between 2018/19 and 2019/20.

Unlike the Council data, the statistics provided by the End Child Poverty Coalition take account of housing costs.⁶⁴ Given the high costs associated with housing in York, the Coalition's data show a substantially higher proportion of children living in poverty. However,

Graph 10: Child Poverty in York Before and After Housing Costs
(Sources: York Open Data and End Child Poverty Coalition)



the information tells a similar story to the Council data with regard to yearly fluctuations, with child poverty levels remaining relatively stable between 2019/20 and 2020/21, after seeing a rise between 2018/19 and 2019/20.

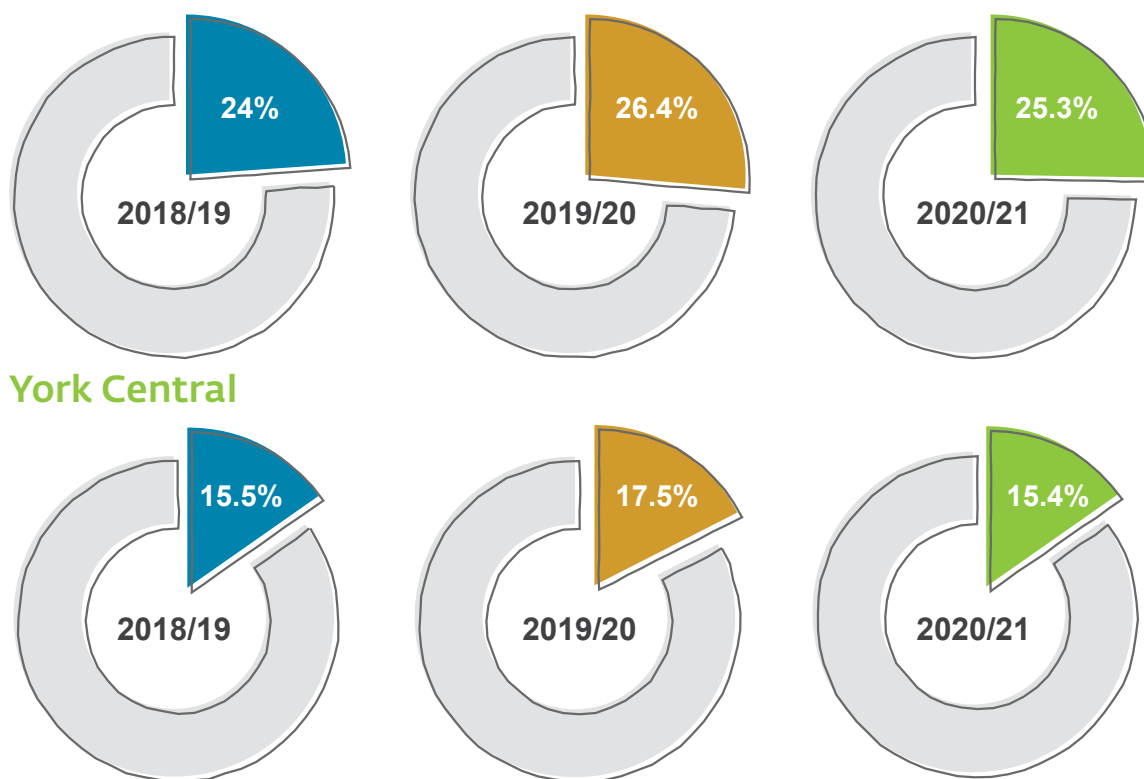
The coalition reports that in 2020/21 there were 7,443 children living in poverty in York, or 23.3%. This is similar to the 2019/20 financial year which saw 7,482 children living in poverty, or 23.9%.

When the numbers are viewed in terms of electoral constituency it

becomes clear that child poverty is significantly higher in York Central, compared to York Outer (see Graph 11). In the former, 25.3% of children were living in poverty in 2020/21, compared to 15.4% in York Outer.

As noted, the data sources used for the child poverty indicator do not capture the impact of the cost-of-living crisis. However, a report by the Child Poverty Action Group, published in November 2022, gives some sense of the pressures families have been facing at the national

Graph 11: Number of Children Living in Poverty in York by Electoral Constituency (Source: End Child Poverty Coalition)



York Outer

level.⁶⁵ The group stated, in their Cost of a Child report, that 2022 has seen by far the biggest deterioration in families' living standards since they began publishing their reports ten years ago.⁶⁶ This is due to the fact that incomes have failed to keep up with rising costs, and therefore the 'real' income of families has fallen.

According to the report, for those not in work, the benefits freeze from 2015 until 2020 caused a gradual widening of the gap between income and costs over the past number of years.⁶⁷ However, the past year has seen a dramatic increase in this gap, due to

the ending of the Universal Credit uplift and due to the failure of benefits to keep pace with inflation. Benefits cover less than half of what a family with two children requires in 2022. This is down from around two thirds in 2012.

The report states that even working families cannot count on having enough income to meet minimum needs. For example, a family with both parents working full time on the minimum wage will fall short of meeting their needs by 6%. For a lone parent, even a median wage is now not enough to get to an adequate income, as they fall 12% short. With

both of these examples the families would have been able to cover costs in 2021.

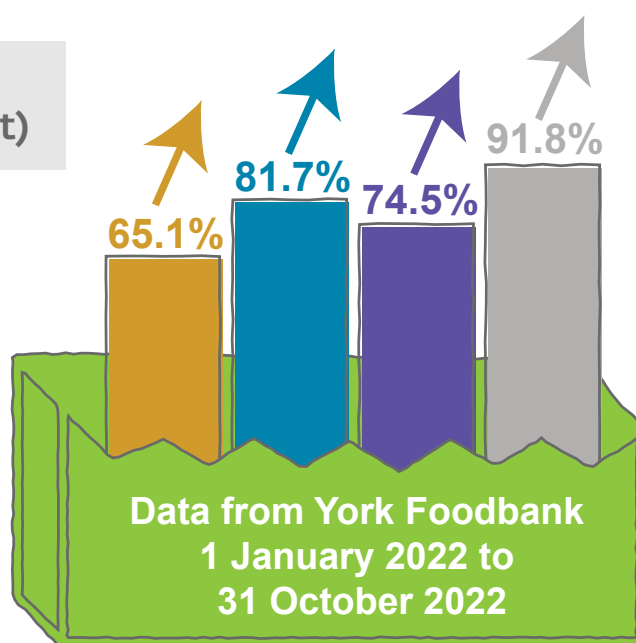
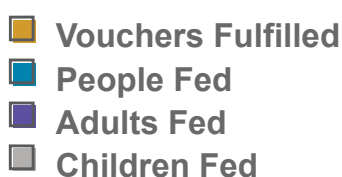
Another report, released in 2022 by the All Party Parliamentary Group Child of the North, highlights the regional dynamic to child poverty.⁶⁸ The report notes the disparity between the north of England and the rest of the country, with child poverty levels growing at a faster rate in the former between 2014/15 and 2019/20.⁶⁹ Despite evidence of a drop in relative child poverty levels nationally, between 2019/20 and 2020/21, due to a lowering of median incomes, and the temporary universal credit uplift during the pandemic, the authors note that in Yorkshire and the Humber and the North East, child poverty levels actually rose in that period.⁷⁰ Child poverty levels in these regions are now at their

highest since 2000/01. This regional disparity is attributed to labour and housing markets, availability of well-paid jobs, issues with childcare and transportation, and the design of the social security system.⁷¹

Foodbank Use

Foodbank use has steadily risen in the UK in recent years, spiking during the Covid crisis. National figures from the Trussell Trust show that they delivered 2.2 million food parcels in the UK in the 2021/22 financial year.⁷² In Yorkshire and the Humber, the Trust delivered 156,000 parcels in that period. In August, Independent Food Aid Network UK announced that nearly 90% of the foodbanks in their network were experiencing higher demand, and that over half of their foodbanks were reporting that 25% or more of the

Graph 12: Data from York Foodbank (Source: Trussell Trust)



people they were now supporting had not used their services previously.⁷³

The Network also noted that foodbanks were experiencing a drop in donations, and were having supply issues.

The latest data for York, from the Trussell Trust, shows a dramatic increase in foodbank use in the city in the past year⁷⁴ (see Graph 12). In the period between January 1st 2022 and October 31st 2022, York Foodbank fulfilled 2,402 food vouchers. This is compared to 1,454 in the same period in 2021, a 65.1% increase. These vouchers helped to feed an estimated 6,672 people, compared with 3,672 in 2021, an 81.7% increase. Of these people, 3,576 were adults and 2,916 were children.

We know that the York Foodbank, run by the Trussell Trust, is only one of many around the city, with a number of informal food shares emerging in York in recent years. These networks operate on a non-referral, community-based model, where people are encouraged to take what they need or pay what they feel. In a positive move, the City of York Council has made efforts to map these informal food shares and to find ways to support them.

As part of our efforts to understand the dynamics of foodbank use in the city, York Human Rights City Network has interviewed a number of key

stakeholders in the past year.⁷⁵ Several issues have come up, including the stigma associated with foodbank use. Some stakeholders noted the difficulty that people have in talking about the fact that they are struggling financially. As a result, some foodbanks in the city have been offering food discreetly or have been distributing food in settings that have the feel of a regular café, so that people feel more comfortable using them. However, some of the interviewees felt that there is also a need to encourage a more open and honest discussion about poverty in the city.

Another issue that emerged from the interviews was the social function that foodbanks serve. A number of the interviewees noted that foodbank users often discussed the fact that they were experiencing loneliness, and that the foodbank was a place to which they could go in order to socialise and find company.

“Given the context of the cost of-living crisis, lots of people are starting to need food. There is widespread and growing hardship, many, many people can’t afford the basics and life is becoming increasingly tough.”

Dr Maddy Power (Research Fellow at the University of York and founder of the York Food Justice Alliance)

Researchers in the University of Leeds have collaborated with the consumer organisation Which?, in order to develop a Priority Places for Food Index.⁷⁶ The index aims to identify neighbourhoods in the United Kingdom that are most vulnerable to increases in the cost of living, and which have a lack of accessibility to affordable, healthy, and sustainable sources of food. The index uses a number of variables to calculate vulnerability, including income deprivation, car access, levels of fuel poverty, and proximity to supermarket retail facilities. There were no areas in York identified as being in the top 10% of most vulnerable areas in the UK. However, the index does identify parts of New Earswick, Clifton Moor and Huntington as being in the top 20% of areas which have a lack of accessibility to cheap and healthy food.

Earnings Gap

The earnings gap measures the difference in gross, full-time weekly wages between those earning median (mid-point) wages, and those on low wages (25th percentile).

In 2022, the median, full-time weekly wage in York was £621.7⁷⁷ (see Graph 4). This was down from £637.9 in 2021, but was higher than the figure for 2020, which was £578.8. York's median wage is higher than that of Yorkshire and the Humber, which is £579.1, but lower than that of England as a whole, where the figure is £645.6.

The reduction in the median full-time wage in York is alarming, although it should be read with the caveats regarding recent ONS statistics

Table 4: Earnings Gap in York (Source: Office for National Statistics)

	2020	2020	2020	2021	2021	2021	2022	2022	2022
	Median Full-Time Weekly Wage	25th Percentile	Earnings Gap	Median Full-Time Weekly Wage	25th Percentile	Earnings Gap	Median Full-Time Weekly Wage	25th Percentile	Earnings Gap
York	£578.8	£410.1	£168.7	£637.9	£443.2	£194.7	£621.7	£455.6	£166.1
Yorkshire and the Humber	£537.6	£401.6	£136	£563	£424.5	£138.5	£579.1	£448.5	£130.6
England	£590	£432	£158	£613.3	£456.8	£156.5	£645.6	£483.8	£161.8
UK	£585.7	£429.4	£156.3	£609.8	£453.9	£155.9	£640	£480.2	£159.8

mentioned above. However, the statistics tell a similar story to that provided by the Centre for Cities, which reported that mean wages in York grew only slightly (1.5%) between April 2021 and April 2022, one of the worst rates of the cities included in their study.⁷⁸

The wage of those on the 25th percentile was £455.6 in York in 2022. That is up from 2021, when the figure was £443.2. The 2022 figure for Yorkshire and the Humber is £448.5, and for England it is £483.8.

This means that in 2022, the earnings gap in York was £166.1, down from £194.7 in 2021. It is larger than that of Yorkshire and the Humber, at £130.6, and that of England, where it is £161.8.

In its new 10-year economic strategy, the Council noted that, since 2008, York has seen inclusive growth, meaning that those on lower wages have seen larger percentage increases in their pay than those on higher earnings.⁷⁹ This finding matches what we have seen in the statistics. In 2008, the median, full-time wage in York was £462, meaning that it has increased by 34.6% in the past 14 years. The wage of those in the 25th percentile was £329.1 in 2008, meaning that there has been a 38.5% increase. However, the superior percentage increase of 25th percentile wages has not been

enough to narrow the earnings gap in absolute terms. The earnings gap in York was £132.9 in 2008, compared to £166.1 in 2022. Thus, even greater inclusive growth is needed in order to see a narrowing of the earnings gap.

CASE STUDY: The Cost-of-Living Crisis and York

For many of our indicators we only have data up until early 2022. These indicators, therefore, do not capture the full impact of the cost-of-living crisis, which has made life increasingly difficult for those on low incomes. The cost of living crisis is, of course, driven by historically high levels of inflation, the rising cost of goods and services. As prices are growing at a quicker rate than wages, the relative value of wages is decreasing.

Food and energy have been amongst the goods which have seen the biggest price rises in 2022. In the Autumn of 2022, researchers in the University of York forecast that, by October, 35.4% of households (829,000) in Yorkshire and the Humber would be in fuel poverty, defined as having to spend more than 10% of net income on fuel.⁸⁰ They predicted that this number will have risen to 62.5% by April 2023, when the 'energy price guarantee' is to end, unless there is further government intervention.

According to the Office for National Statistics, food and non-alcoholic beverage prices rose by 16.9% in 2022.⁸¹ Our 'foodbank use' indicator shows that there has been a large increase in people using such facilities. We also noted above, that the Priority Places for Food Index identified neighbourhoods in New Earswick, Clifton Moor and Huntington as being in the top 20% of areas which have a lack of accessibility to cheap and healthy food.

The Centre for Cities has also produced information that highlights the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on Yorks' residents.⁸² The Centre has tried to determine how inflation is impacting particular towns and cities in the UK. It has done this, first, by

examining the particular consumption rates of various inflation-impacted products in individual cities, and secondly, by looking at the rate at which wages have grown in these cities. For example, if a city has a large amount of energy inefficient housing, residents will, on average, be consuming more gas and electricity in order to heat their homes. The price of gas and electricity has risen dramatically in the past year and therefore the residents of that city will be hit particularly hard by rising costs. If this is coupled with poor wage growth, the purchasing power of the cities' residents, their ability to buy goods and services, will be impacted.

As of October 2022, York was calculated as having an inflation rate



of 11.4%, the 14th lowest out of 62 towns and cities examined. However, as noted above, the Centre for Cities also reported that wage growth in York has been poor in the past year. The Centre stated that the net result of this was that, by July 2022, workers in York were, on average, £121 a month poorer than they had been in the previous year.

Update: Poverty Truth Commission

2022 also saw York's Poverty Truth Commission begin its work. Poverty Truth Commissions are civil society based initiatives which aim to address poverty and the associated violations of economic and social rights.⁸³ They are founded on the conviction that those with lived-experience of poverty must be directly involved in developing strategies aimed at overcoming it.

The process involves bringing together people who have experienced poverty.⁸⁴ These participants, known as 'Community Commissioners', share accounts of how poverty has impacted their lives, and identify specific issues and difficulties that they face due to their socio-economic status. The aim is to identify the causes and effects of poverty.

After identifying particular issues, the group is widened to include 'Civic Commissioners', individuals such as

politicians, civic leaders, and people from the business community, who have the power to make decisions which impact policy formulation. The aim is to build relationships of trust between those who are experiencing poverty and these decision-makers, so that they can work together to bring about meaningful change. This change may range from ensuring better information provision, to simplifying administrative processes, or reallocating resources, but the direction the commission takes is always driven by the Community Commissioners.

A number of Poverty Truth Commissions have been set up across the UK. Toward the end of 2021, York CVS facilitated a number of meetings regarding the possibility of bringing the initiative to the city. Two co-ordinators were subsequently appointed, and in 2022 a number of Community Commissioners were recruited. They have been meeting regularly for a number of months and have been using creative processes to map out their experiences of poverty. The group has also begun to identify areas in which they would like to see change.

In 2023, the Commission will recruit its Civic Commissioners. The participants will then begin the collaborative work which will hopefully lead to positive change being brought to the lives of those who are experiencing poverty in York.

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York: Human Rights City Network

York Human Rights City Network (YHRCN) is a civil society partnership hosted jointly by York CVS (Centre for Voluntary Service) and the Centre for Applied Human Rights (CAHR) at the University of York. York CVS roots the Network within York's vibrant civil society. CAHR roots the Network in the human rights discourse. The network was formed in 2011, and has grown organically over the intervening years. Our Steering Group comprises representatives from civil society organisations working in each of the five priority rights areas. Our aim is to be a catalyst for York people, business and organisations to champion a vibrant, diverse, fair and safe city. We have in the past worked closely with representatives of the public sector in York, most notably the City of York Council, York NHS Teaching Hospital Foundation, Tees Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust, North Yorkshire Police and Explore York.



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Rights
City

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