

The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) has published new statistics on the number (and proportion) of children living in low income families across Great Britain by local area.

This briefing summarises the latest figures for relative poverty before and after housing costs, and presents findings for Fife, Areas, Wards, Local authorities and Westminster Parliamentary Constituencies.

Headlines

- 8,455 children (13.9%) are in relative poverty before housing costs (BHC) in Fife in 2025.
- New data shows that 16.2% of Fife's children (9,880) are in relative poverty after housing costs (AHC).
- Fife continues to track above Scotland for relative child poverty, before and after housing costs.
- The proportion of children in relative poverty before and after housing costs varies considerably across each of the local committee areas.
- Levenmouth has the highest rate (19.7% AHC, 17.4% BHC) whilst the City of Dunfermline has the lowest (11.4% AHC, 9.9% BHC).
- At ward level, relative child poverty (before housing costs) continues to be highest in Kirkcaldy Central and Buckhaven, Methil and Wemyss Villages.
- Relative child poverty before housing costs consistently reduced between 2022 and 2024 in Scotland, Fife and all of Fife's Committee Areas, before stabilising or slightly increasing in 2025. Many wards also show a similar pattern.
- Glasgow City has the highest rate of child poverty before and after housing costs, with six of its constituencies appearing in the ten poorest in Scotland.
- While Fife is ranked 7 of 32 local authorities for child poverty, it now has two of its four constituencies in the ten poorest in Scotland (before housing costs): Glenrothes and Mid Fife, and Cowdenbeath and Kirkcaldy.

Notable changes with this release

- For the first time, data is being made available for relative poverty **after housing costs** (AHC) as well as **before housing costs** (BHC)
- After housing costs (AHC) considers a household's expected expenses and can give a clearer picture of what their actual remaining income is likely to be. In contrast, before housing costs (BHC) does not take any deductions into consideration.
- The DWP have changed the methodology they use to calculate household income, by linking administrative records on social security benefits to the Family Resources Survey (FRS), improving the accuracy of income data.
- The newer method produces lower estimates than the previous approach.
- The change has been back dated to 2022 for relative poverty before housing costs.
- After housing costs data is only available for 2024 and 2025.
- Note: poverty rates from the old to the new data release are not directly comparable.
- The reference year used to measure absolute poverty has been updated from 2011 to 2025
- This means that in 2025 there is no difference between absolute and relative poverty.

The Current Picture

In 2025, 8,455 children in Fife were in relative poverty before housing costs. This figure rises to 9,880 after housing costs, as would be expected when household expenses such as rent and mortgage payments are taken into account.

The proportion of children aged 0-15 years, living in relative low income families in Fife remains higher than that of Scotland, both before and after housing costs are taken into account.

Before housing costs, relative poverty in Fife is 1.6 percentage points higher than Scotland (13.9% compared to 12.3%). The difference is only slightly smaller (1.4 percentage points) when comparing the percentage of children in relative poverty after housing costs for Fife and Scotland (16.2% vs 14.8%).

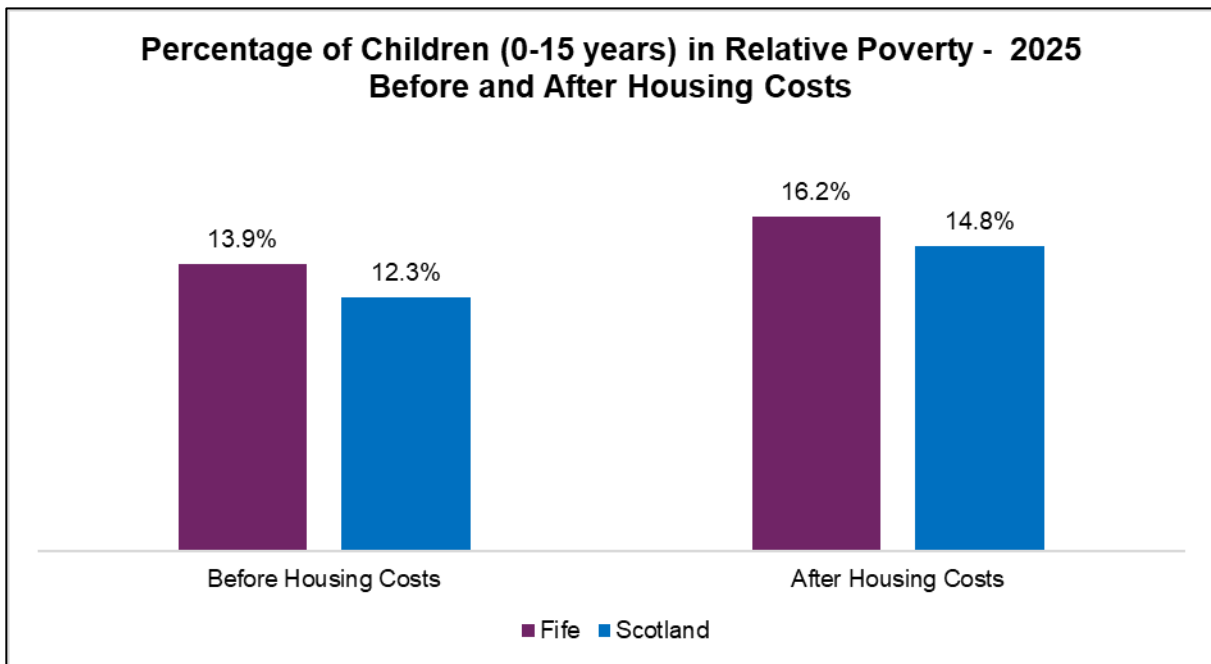


Figure 1 - Percentage of children in low income families in Fife and Scotland, Before and After Housing Costs for FYE 2025

Table 1 – Number and Percentage of Children aged under 16 living in Relative Poverty Before and After Housing Costs in Fife and Scotland, FYE 2025 (Source: [DWP](#))

	Before Housing Costs		After Housing Costs	
	Number	%	Number	%
Fife	8,455	13.9%	9,880	16.2%
Scotland	109,931	12.3%	132,484	14.8%

The Current Picture across Fife

By Area

The proportion of children in relative poverty before and after housing costs varies considerably across each of the 7 local committee areas. Levenmouth has the highest rate (19.7% AHC, 17.4% BHC) whilst the City of Dunfermline has the lowest (11.4% AHC, 9.9% BHC). Levenmouth, Cowdenbeath, Kirkcaldy and Glenrothes Areas all have higher levels of relative child poverty than Fife, both before and after housing costs.

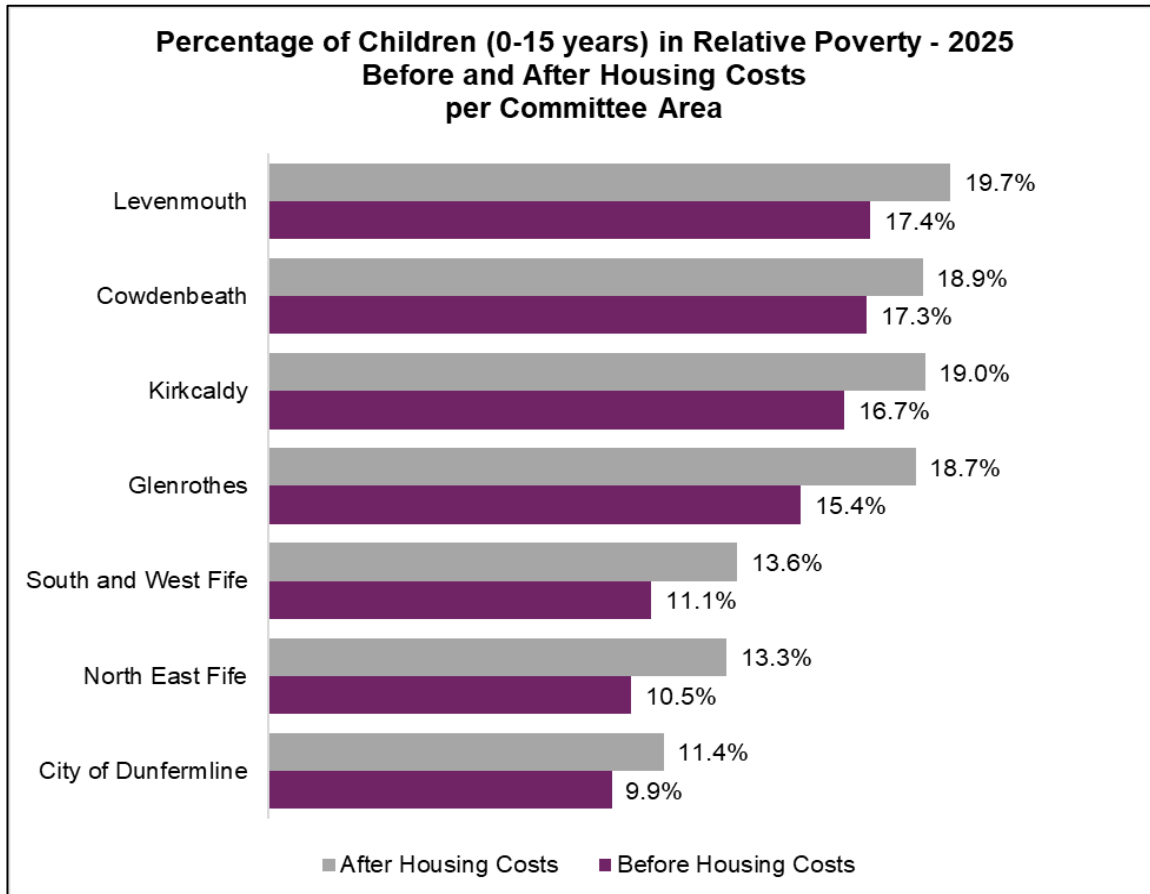


Figure 2 - Percentage of children in relative low income families before and after housing costs, per Committee Area

Table 2 – Number and Percentage of Children aged under 16 living in Relative Poverty Before and After Housing Costs, by Committee Area, FYE 2025 (Source: DWP)

	Before Housing Costs		After Housing Costs	
	Number	%	Number	%
City of Dunfermline	1,079	9.9%	1,242	11.4%
Cowdenbeath	1,301	17.3%	1,423	18.9%
Glenrothes	1,289	15.4%	1,567	18.7%
Kirkcaldy	1,729	16.7%	1,971	19.0%
Levenmouth	1,086	17.4%	1,230	19.7%
North East Fife	1,020	10.5%	1,289	13.3%
South and West Fife	941	11.1%	1,153	13.6%
Fife	8,455	13.9%	9,880	16.2%
Scotland	109,931	12.3%	132,484	14.8%

*Percentages at Committee Area level for 2025 are calculated using mid-2022 population estimates, in line with DWP methodology, to ensure consistency across all geographies.

By Electoral Ward

At ward level, relative child poverty continues to be highest in Kirkcaldy Central (26.0% AHC, 21.6% BHC) and Buckhaven, Methil and Wemyss Villages (25.3% AHC, 21.4% BHC), followed by Kirkcaldy East (22.0% AHC, 19.1% BHC). It is lowest in Dunfermline South (10.0% AHC, 8.7% BHC) and St Andrews (6.6% AHC, 5.2% BHC).

The shaded bars in the table are used to highlight the variations in proportion of children per ward in relative poverty, before and after housing costs.

Table 3 – Number and Percentage of Children aged under 16 living in Relative Poverty Before and After Housing Costs by Ward for Fife, FYE 2025 (Source: DWP)

	Before Housing Costs		After Housing Costs	
	Number	%	Number	%
Buckhaven, Methil and Wemyss Villages	670	21.4%	792	25.3%
Burntisland, Kinghorn and Western Kirkcaldy	288	12.1%	304	12.8%
Cowdenbeath	605	15.4%	645	16.4%
Cupar	220	10.3%	267	12.5%
Dunfermline Central	378	11.3%	446	13.3%
Dunfermline North	248	9.7%	277	10.9%
Dunfermline South	453	8.7%	519	10.0%
East Neuk and Landward	228	12.8%	302	17.0%
Glenrothes Central and Thornton	449	17.7%	550	21.7%
Glenrothes North, Leslie and Markinch	382	12.9%	450	15.2%
Glenrothes West and Kinglassie	458	15.9%	567	19.7%
Howe of Fife and Tay Coast	207	11.3%	263	14.3%
Inverkeithing and Dalgety Bay	228	8.3%	290	10.5%
Kirkcaldy Central	509	21.6%	613	26.0%
Kirkcaldy East	480	19.1%	553	22.0%
Kirkcaldy North	452	14.4%	501	16.0%
Leven, Kennoway and Largo	416	13.4%	438	14.1%
Lochgelly, Cardenden and Benarty	696	19.4%	778	21.7%
Rosyth	367	13.1%	452	16.1%
St Andrews	65	5.2%	82	6.6%
Tay Bridgehead	300	11.0%	375	13.7%
West Fife and Coastal Villages	346	12.7%	411	15.1%

How have things changed?

While the latest release is not comparable with previous data releases due to the change in methodology, the change has been back dated to 2022 for relative poverty before housing costs, which enables us to explore how the rate has changed over time.

Between 2022 and 2025, the proportion of children in relative poverty before housing costs (BHC) has fallen for both Fife and Scotland, although Fife has consistently had a higher proportion than Scotland.

Fife's rate fell from 16.7% in 2022 to 13.9% in 2025 (a reduction of 2.8 percentage points), with the largest drop occurring between 2023 and 2024 (to 13.3%). Scotland also saw a reduction of 2.8 percentage points over the same period. There has been an increase in relative poverty before housing costs in the most recent year for both Fife and Scotland.

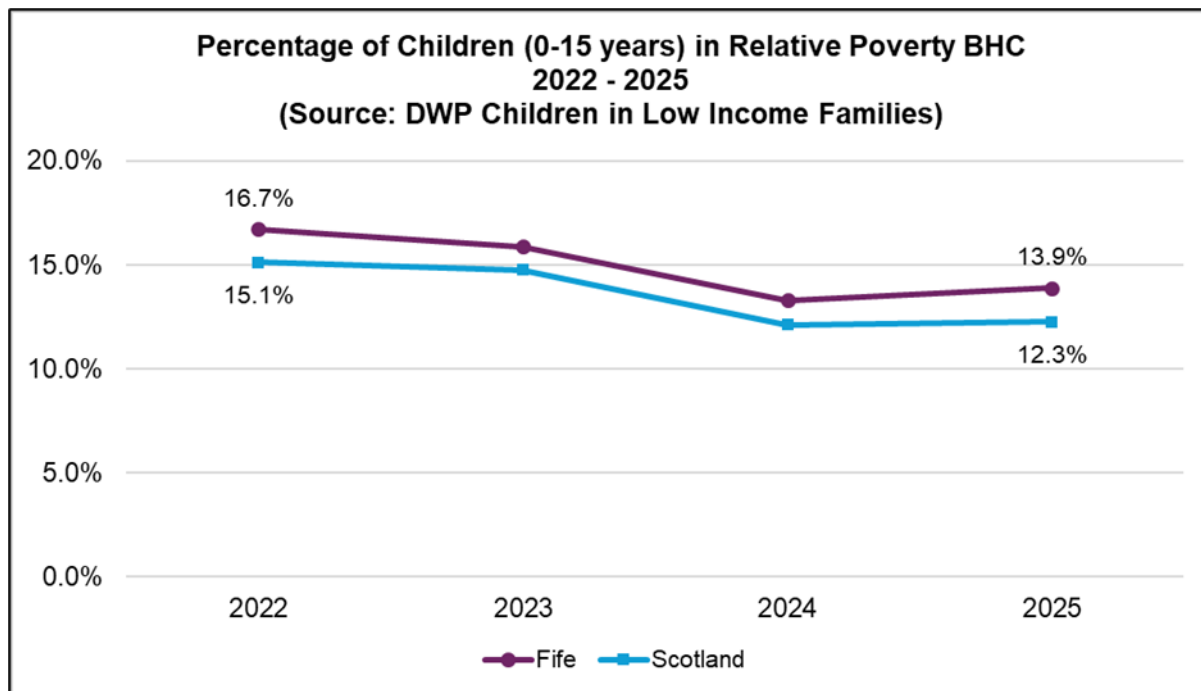


Figure 3 - Percentage of children in relative poverty from 2022 to 2025 for Fife and Scotland

Table 4 – Number and Percentage of Children aged under 16 living in Relative Poverty Before Housing Costs for Fife and Scotland, FYE 2022 to 2025 (Source: DWP)

	Number				Percentage			
	2022	2023	2024	2025	2022	2023	2024	2025
Fife	10,450	9,788	8,173	8,455	16.7%	15.9%	13.3%	13.9%
Scotland	135,088	131,700	108,895	109,931	15.1%	14.8%	12.1%	12.3%

Difference with previously released data

As of the 2025 release, the DWP now calculates low income families by linking administrative data to responses to the Family Resources Survey, providing more accurate income estimates. This revised methodology has been back dated only to 2022. As a result, the updated figures should **not be compared** with previously released figures.

The chart below illustrates the trend in proportion of children living in relative poverty before housing costs, contrasting the previously released data (purple line) with the data based on the new methodology (orange line).

As can be seen, the gap between the two lines highlights the impact of the change in methodology, with the newer method producing lower estimates than the previous approach.

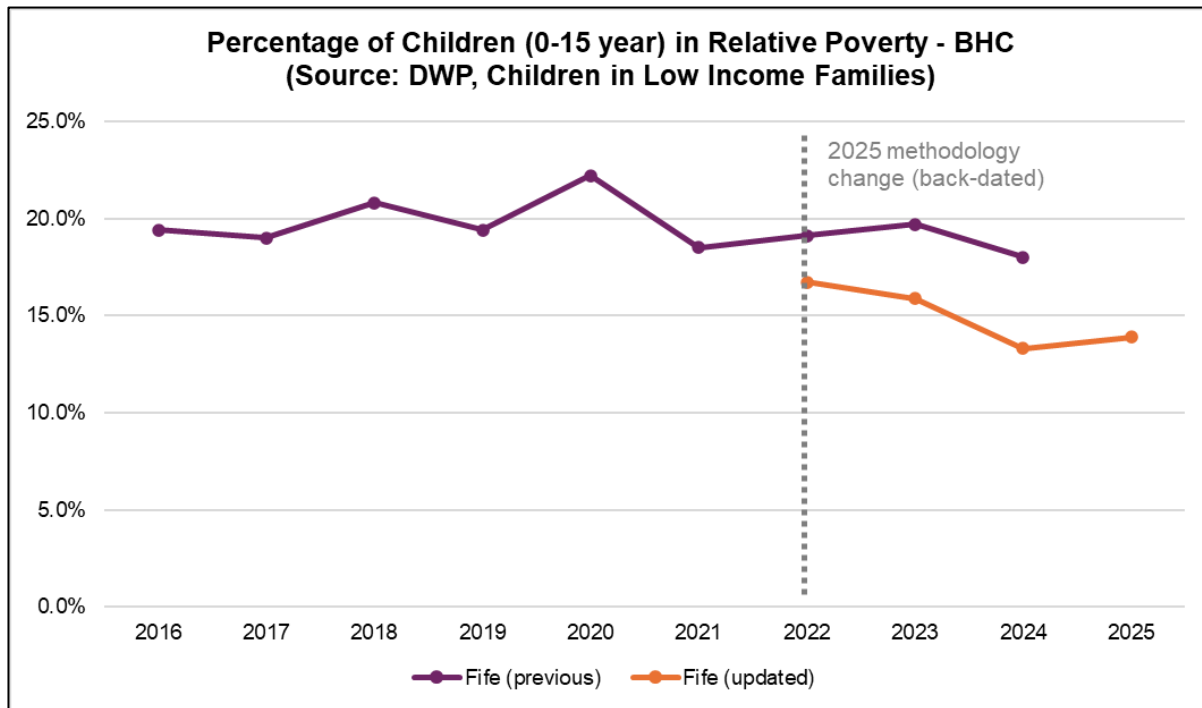


Figure 4 - Relative Child Poverty (Before Housing Costs) – Previous vs Newly Released Data

How have things changed across Fife?

By Area

Relative child poverty before housing costs has consistently fallen across all of Fife’s Committee Areas between 2022 and 2024, before stabilising or slightly increasing in 2025. Levenmouth has regularly recorded the highest rates throughout the period, followed closely by Kirkcaldy, while North East Fife and the City of Dunfermline have had the lowest. Fife as a whole has followed the same pattern across this time period.

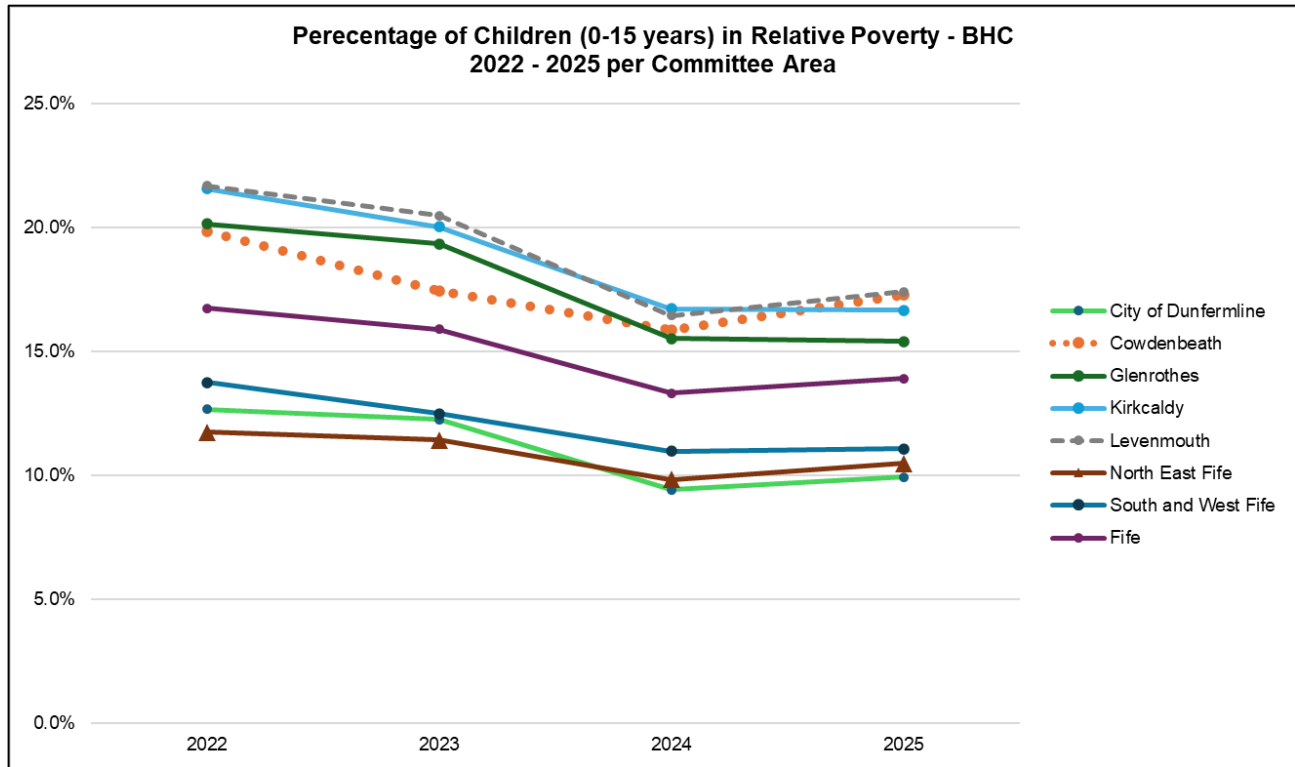


Figure 5 – Change over time in Relative Child Poverty (Before Housing Costs) for Fife and Areas

Table 5 – Number and Percentage of Children aged under 16 living in Relative Poverty Before Housing Costs by Committee Area for Fife, FYE 2022 - 2025 (Source: DWP)

	Number				Percentage			
	2022	2023	2024	2025	2022	2023	2024	2025
City of Dunfermline	1,377	1,332	1,024	1,079	12.7%	12.2%	9.4%	9.9%
Cowdenbeath	1,493	1,312	1,192	1,301	19.9%	17.4%	15.8%	17.3%
Glenrothes	1,687	1,620	1,300	1,289	20.1%	19.3%	15.5%	15.4%
Kirkcaldy	2,238	2,079	1,735	1,729	21.6%	20.0%	16.7%	16.7%
Levenmouth	1,352	1,277	1,025	1,086	21.7%	20.5%	16.4%	17.4%
North East Fife	1,142	1,112	957	1,020	11.7%	11.4%	9.8%	10.5%
South and West Fife	1,169	1,063	933	941	13.7%	12.5%	11.0%	11.1%
Fife	10,450	9,788	8,173	8,455	16.7%	15.9%	13.3%	13.9%
Scotland	135,088	131,700	108,895	109,931	15.1%	14.8%	12.1%	12.3%

By ward

At ward level, relative child poverty (before housing costs) continues to be highest in Kirkcaldy Central and Buckhaven, Methil and Wemyss Villages. Lowest rates are seen in St. Andrew's, Inverkeithing and Dalgety Bay and Dunfermline South.

In line with Fife, many Wards have seen a reduction from 2022 to 2024, then a small increase in 2025.

Table 6 – Number and Percentage of Children aged under 16 living in Relative Poverty (Before Housing Costs) by Ward for Fife, FYE 2024 and FYE 2025 (Source: DWP)

Ward	Number				Percentage			
	2022	2023	2024	2025	2022	2023	2024	2025
Buckhaven, Methil and Wemyss Villages	810	790	658	670	25.9%	25.2%	21.0%	21.4%
Burntisland, Kinghorn and Western Kirkcaldy	404	366	293	288	17.0%	15.4%	12.3%	12.1%
Cowdenbeath	725	632	552	605	18.4%	16.0%	14.0%	15.4%
Cupar	252	252	216	220	11.8%	11.8%	10.1%	10.3%
Dunfermline Central	482	429	323	378	14.4%	12.8%	9.6%	11.3%
Dunfermline North	305	314	246	248	12.0%	12.3%	9.6%	9.7%
Dunfermline South	590	589	455	453	11.4%	11.4%	8.8%	8.7%
East Neuk and Landward	296	257	221	228	16.7%	14.5%	12.5%	12.8%
Glenrothes Central and Thornton	550	518	436	449	21.7%	20.4%	17.2%	17.7%
Glenrothes North, Leslie and Markinch	510	552	401	382	17.2%	18.6%	13.5%	12.9%
Glenrothes West and Kinglassie	627	550	463	458	21.8%	19.1%	16.1%	15.9%
Howe of Fife and Tay Coast	239	233	191	207	13.0%	12.7%	10.4%	11.3%
Inverkeithing and Dalgety Bay	263	231	213	228	9.5%	8.4%	7.7%	8.3%
Kirkcaldy Central	662	665	530	509	28.1%	28.2%	22.5%	21.6%
Kirkcaldy East	651	555	489	480	25.9%	22.1%	19.5%	19.1%
Kirkcaldy North	521	493	423	452	16.6%	15.7%	13.5%	14.4%
Leven, Kennoway and Largo	542	487	367	416	17.5%	15.7%	11.8%	13.4%
Lochgelly, Cardenden and Benarty	768	680	640	696	21.4%	19.0%	17.8%	19.4%
Rosyth	453	445	363	367	16.1%	15.8%	12.9%	13.1%
St Andrews	116	95	65	65	9.3%	7.6%	5.2%	5.2%
Tay Bridgehead	239	275	264	300	8.7%	10.1%	9.7%	11.0%
West Fife and Coastal Villages	453	387	357	346	16.7%	14.3%	13.2%	12.7%
Fife	10,450	9,788	8,173	8,455	16.7%	15.9%	13.3%	13.9%

Note: Geographies have been allocated by DWP and reflect electoral wards as of May 2024.

How does Fife Compare?

By local authority

There continues to be variation in relative child poverty rates before housing costs across Scottish local authorities. Glasgow City has the highest child poverty before and after housing costs (19.8% BHC, 23.3% AHC) whilst East Dunbartonshire has the lowest rates (7.8%, BHC and 6.2% AHC).

In all areas, **after housing costs measures increase the poverty rate**, demonstrating how housing costs push additional families into relative poverty. Many urban authorities, such as City of Edinburgh and Dundee City show notably higher poverty rates after housing costs.

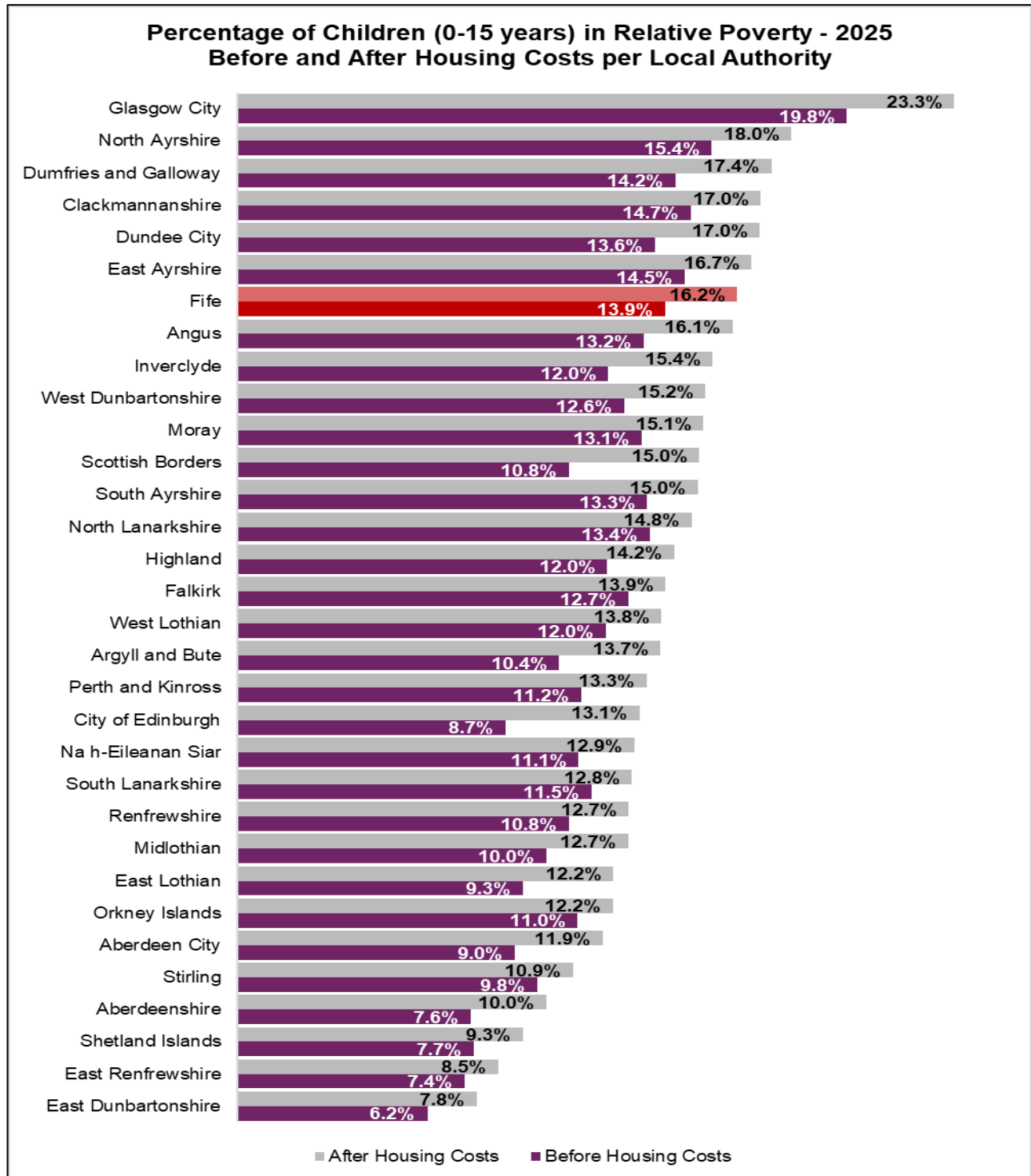


Figure 6 – Relative Child Poverty (Before and After Housing Costs) by local authority, 2025

By Westminster Parliamentary Constituency

Analysis of relative poverty rates across Scotland by the 57 Westminster Parliamentary Constituencies highlights that Glasgow City has six constituencies in the top ten highest child poverty (before and after housing costs) in line with its overall position as the local authority with the highest level of child poverty.

While Fife is ranked 7 out of 32 local authorities for highest levels of child poverty, the Fife figure masks considerable variation within and across Fife. Glenrothes and Mid Fife constituency continues to have the highest rates (20.5% AHC, and 17.6% BHC), while Dunfermline and Dollar has the lowest (12.4% AHC, and 10.6% BHC). All constituencies have seen a slight decline until 2024, followed by a small increase in 2025.

Fife now has two of its four constituencies in the top ten for child poverty in Scotland (before housing costs): Glenrothes and Mid Fife, and Cowdenbeath and Kirkcaldy. Glenrothes and Mid Fife is ranked 6th (before and after housing costs), with 20.5% of children in relative poverty after housing costs, and 17.6% before housing costs. Cowdenbeath and Kirkcaldy is ranked 10th before housing costs (14.9%) and ranked 11th after housing costs (17.1%).

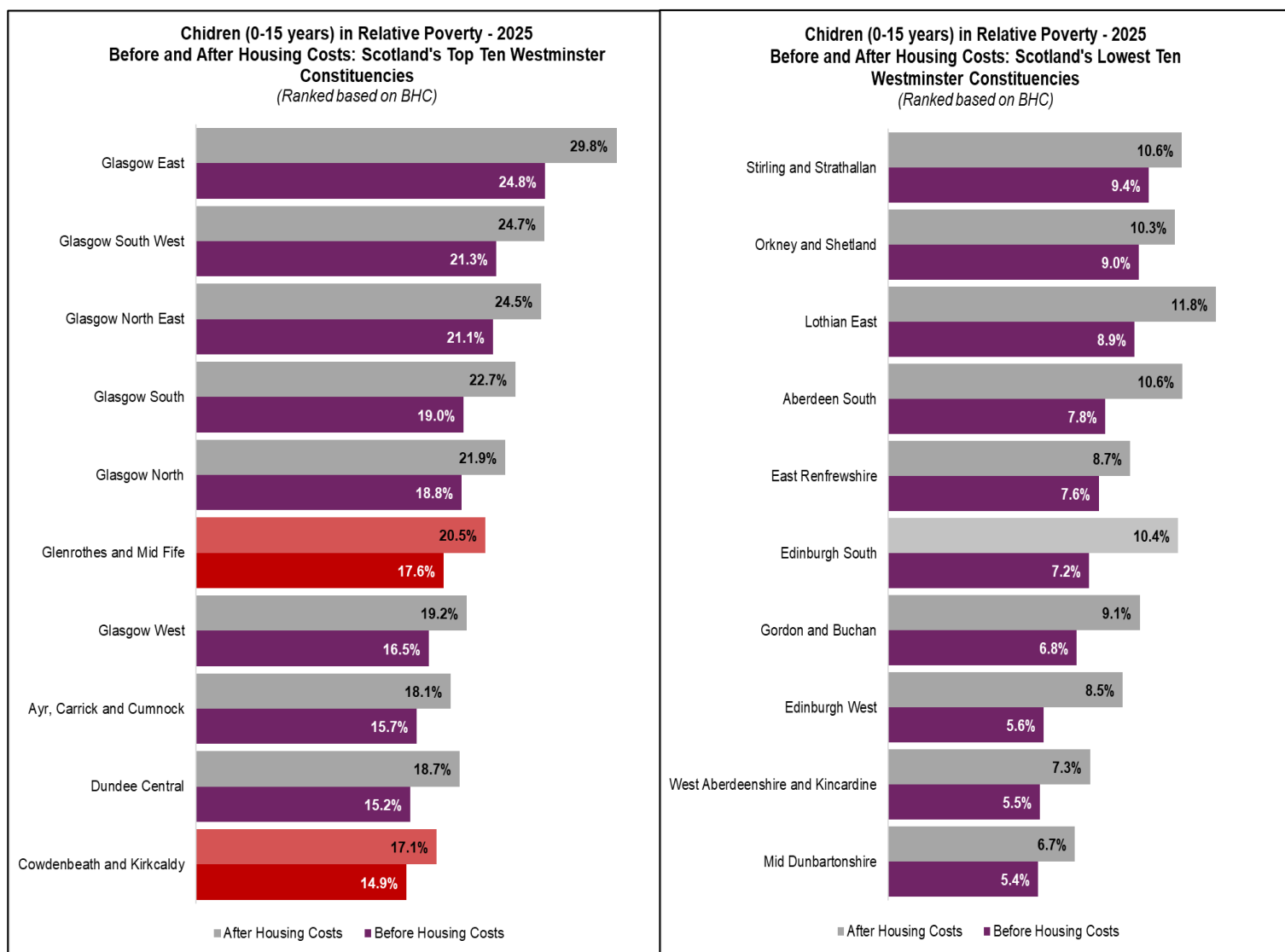


Figure 7 - Percentage of children in relative low income families before and after housing costs, Top Ten highest and Top Ten lowest by Westminster parliamentary constituency

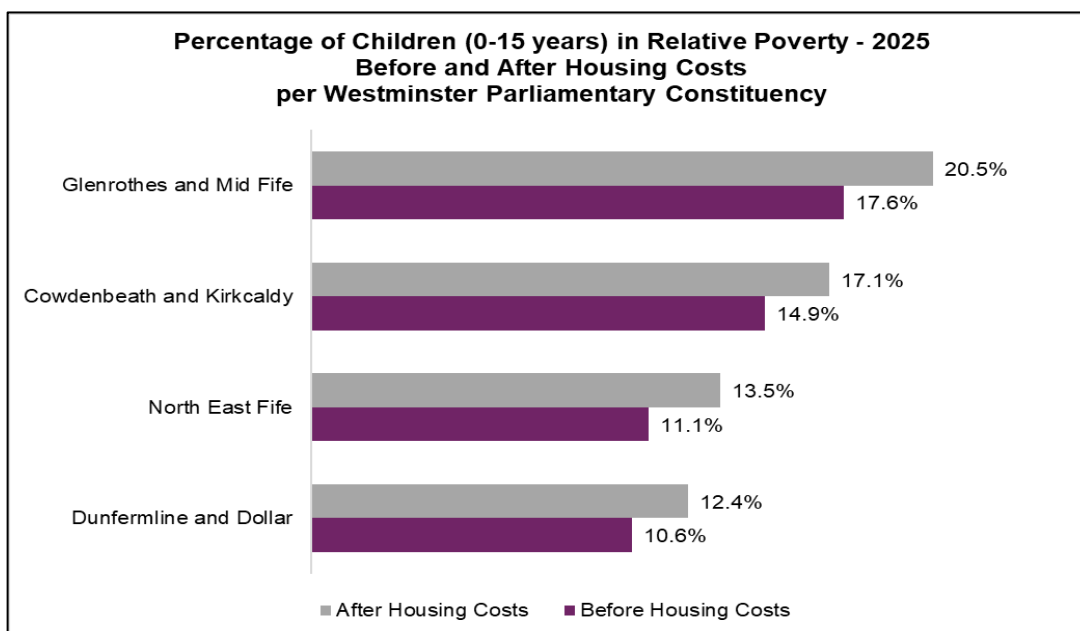


Figure 8 - Percentage of children in relative low income families before and after housing costs, per Fife's Westminster parliamentary constituency

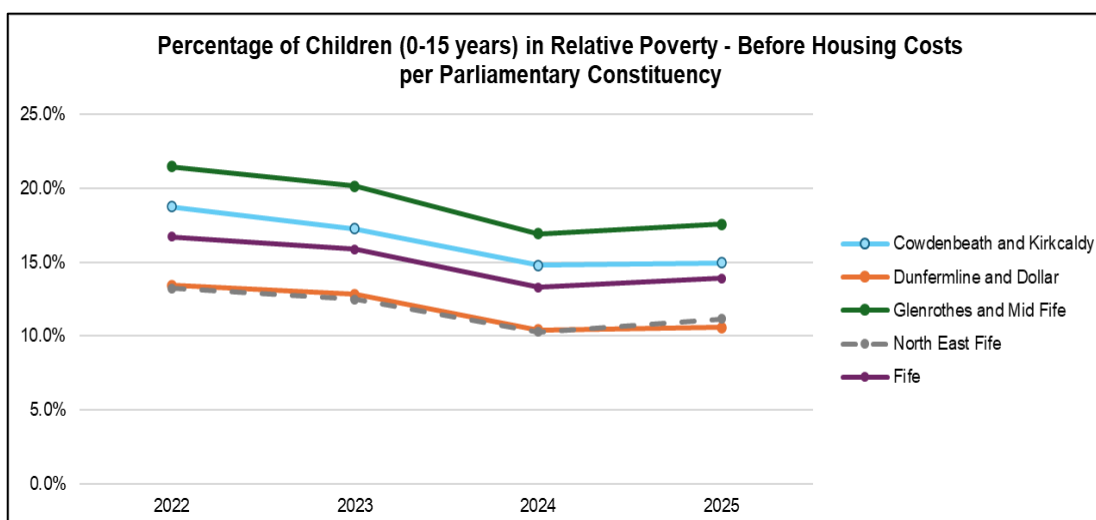


Figure 9 – Change over time in percentage of children in relative low income families before housing costs, per Fife Westminster parliamentary constituency

Table 7 – Number and Percentage of Children aged under 16 living in Relative Poverty (After Housing Costs), by Westminster Parliamentary Constituency, FYE 2024 and FYE 2025 (Source: DWP)

Westminster Parliamentary Constituency	Number				Percentage			
	2022	2023	2024	2025	2022	2023	2024	2025
Cowdenbeath and Kirkcaldy	2,995	2,753	2,360	2,384	18.8%	17.3%	14.8%	14.9%
Dunfermline and Dollar	2,300	2,196	1,784	1,814	13.4%	12.8%	10.4%	10.6%
Glenrothes and Mid Fife	3,504	3,289	2,764	2,869	21.5%	20.1%	16.9%	17.6%
North East Fife	1,695	1,602	1,319	1,429	13.2%	12.5%	10.3%	11.1%
Fife	10,450	9,788	8,173	8,455	16.7%	15.9%	13.3%	13.9%

Note: Boundary changes for Fife's Westminster Parliamentary Constituencies now reflect those from 2024.

Technical Notes

As of the March 2026 release, After Housing Cost statistics for local area child poverty have been included for FYE 2024 and FYE 2025 for Relative low income. Figures prior to this are not available as the proportion of families with unknown housing costs is higher than the threshold for which reliable statistics can be derived.

A key change to this year's data release, is the methodology used by the DWP to calculate household income. Previously, income details were collected from the Family Resources Survey (FRS), however, in the latest release administrative records on social security benefits have been linked to FRS responses, improving the accuracy of income data. This change in methodology has been back dated to 2022.

It is worth noting that the linkage to social security benefits, does not include those benefits administered by Social Security Scotland. Although, as with the release of the 2024 data, Scottish Child Payment is still imputed as a source of income.

The changes in methodology has resulted in differences to both the number and percentage of children identified as living in low income households from what has been previously reported meaning poverty rates from the old to the new data release are not directly comparable.

Further information is available in the [Background Information and Methodology](#) on the administrative sources of housing costs data and on the methodology deployed to develop these new AHC series across the UK.

Revisions have also been made to the back dated data for UK, regional and local areas. These updates reflect changes to how [Households Below Average Income \(HBAI\)](#) estimates are calculated, which now use administrative data instead of Family Resources Survey (FRS) responses.

While the data has undergone extensive quality assurance prior to publication, DWP recommend that users exercise additional caution when using the data, particularly when making comparisons with previous years and when comparing local areas across countries. Figures for the latest year are provisional and will be subject to revision in subsequent releases.

To be classed as low income in these statistics, a family must have claimed one or more of Universal Credit, Tax Credits or Housing Benefit at any point in the year.

The reference year used to measure absolute low income before housing costs (BHC) has been updated from 2011 to 2025. Relative low income measures families (a single adult; married or cohabiting couple; or a Civil Partnership; and any dependent children) in low income (not households) in the reference year, whereas Absolute low income measures families in low income based on what low income looked like year ending 2025. For 2025, these measures are the same.

This is an annual release and the next release will be in Spring 2027.

More information is available at [Children in low income families: local area statistics, financial year ending 2025 - GOV.UK](#)

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