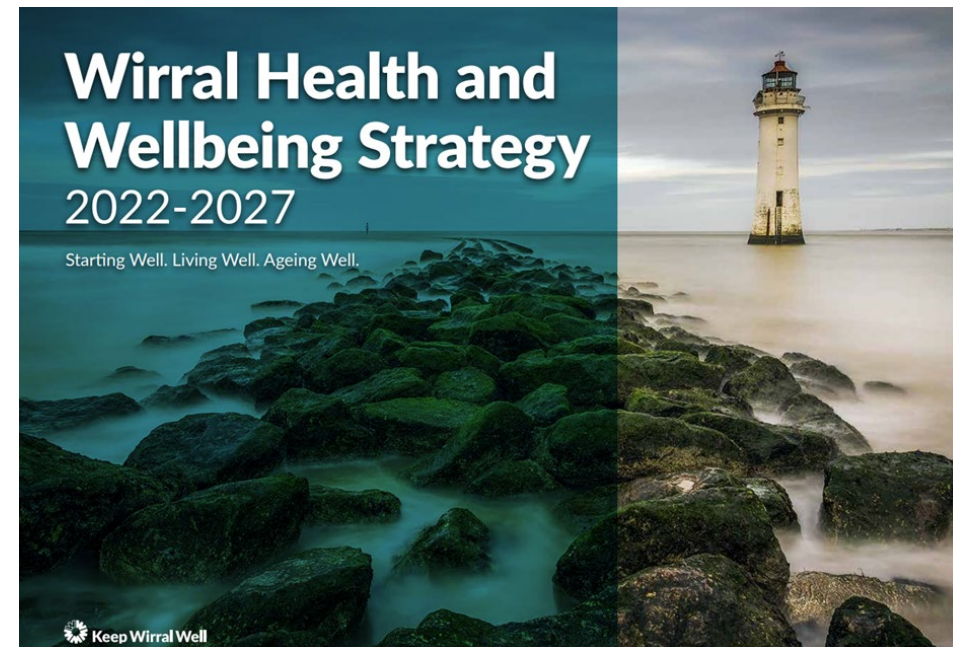


Child & Family Poverty in Wirral

Wirral Public Health Intelligence Team

December 2024



Headline Summary

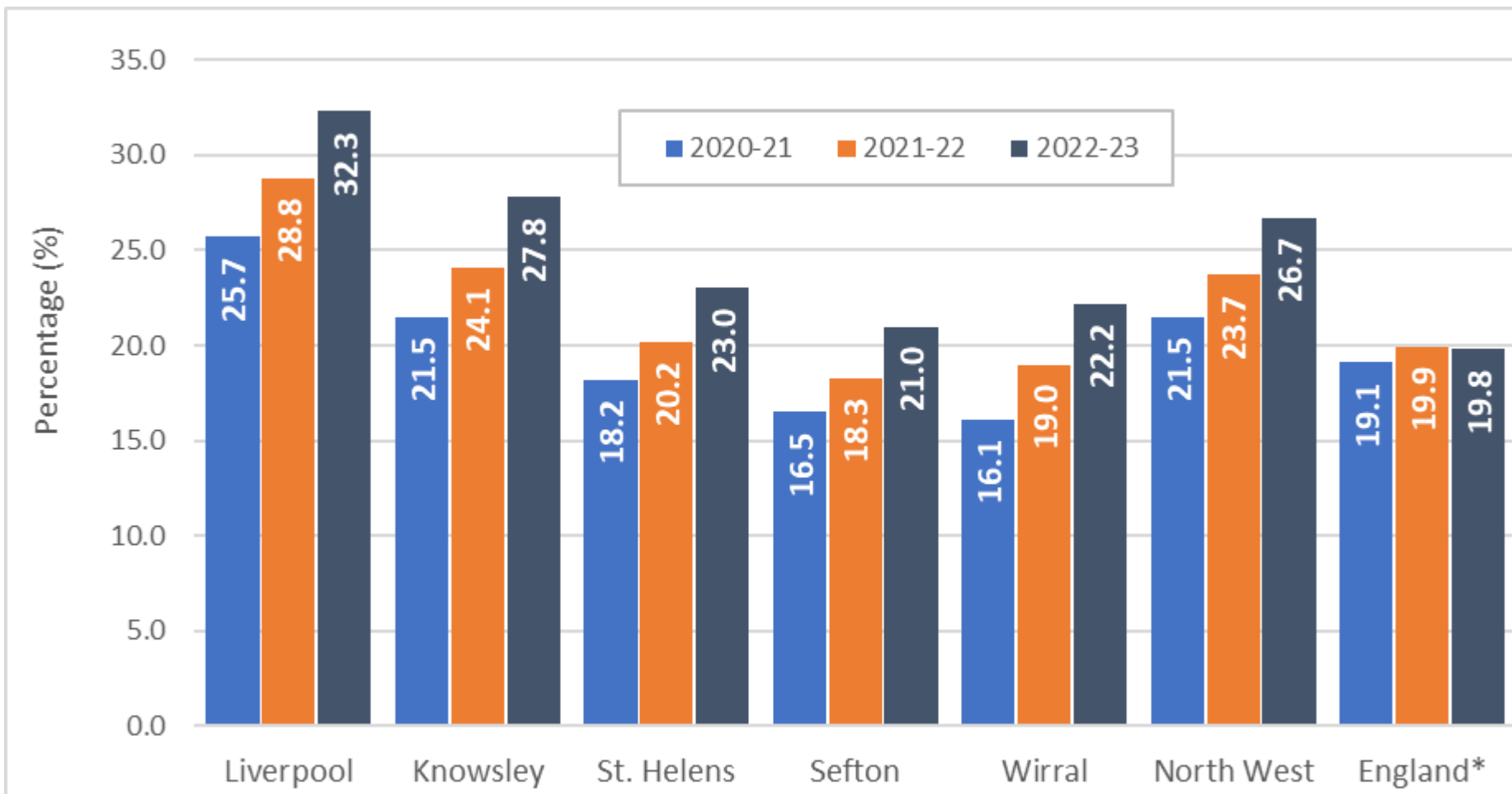
- In Wirral, just over 1 in 5 children (22%) live in low-income families in 2022/23 (the main child poverty measure); this equated to just over 16,000 children
- In Wirral, the highest levels of deprivation and poverty are concentrated in the North and East of the borough, with some smaller pockets elsewhere; these are also the areas in which most children in the borough live
- A range of factors across the life course, from maternal health, birth weight, levels of development at Reception and Attainment, are associated with poverty
- The Vulnerable Families Indicator developed by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (risk of households falling below an acceptable standard of living as a result of rising costs) estimated the Wirral wards at highest risk of vulnerability were Birkenhead & Tranmere and Seacombe wards.

Headline Summary cont...

- There are a much higher % of lone parent families in Wirral compared to England; 24% of families in England, 28% of families in Sefton, vs 32% of Wirral families (this equated to a total of 12,090 lone parent families)
- Average income in Wirral (after housing costs, £28,585) were lower than England (£29,614), but higher than statistical neighbour Sefton (£28,460); within Wirral, this varied from £22,288 in Birkenhead & Tranmere ward, to £39,795 in Heswall.
- The pattern of unsecured personal debt in Wirral indicates ineligibility for mainstream credit products and a higher risk of falling into debt in the areas of deprivation.
- Rates of Universal Credit claimants in Wirral are very similar to England (rose following the pandemic, had not returned to pre-COVID levels as of December 2023); in the 4 most deprived wards however, rates were 3x higher.
- Wirral has consistently had a larger % of workers paid less than the Living Wage than both England and the North-West and this % worsened in 2023 and 2024

Child Poverty; Wirral and comparators

(Trend in children living in relative low-income families, aged <20, before housing costs)



- Chart shows the % of children living in relative low-income families in Wirral and Merseyside comparators (plus the average in England and the North-West) in 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23
- As chart shows, there has been an increase in all areas of Merseyside and the North-West overall
- In England overall, the proportions appear to have remained broadly stable*

Source: LGINform (with statistics from DWP), 2024

*2022-23 provisional figure subject to amendment

Child Poverty

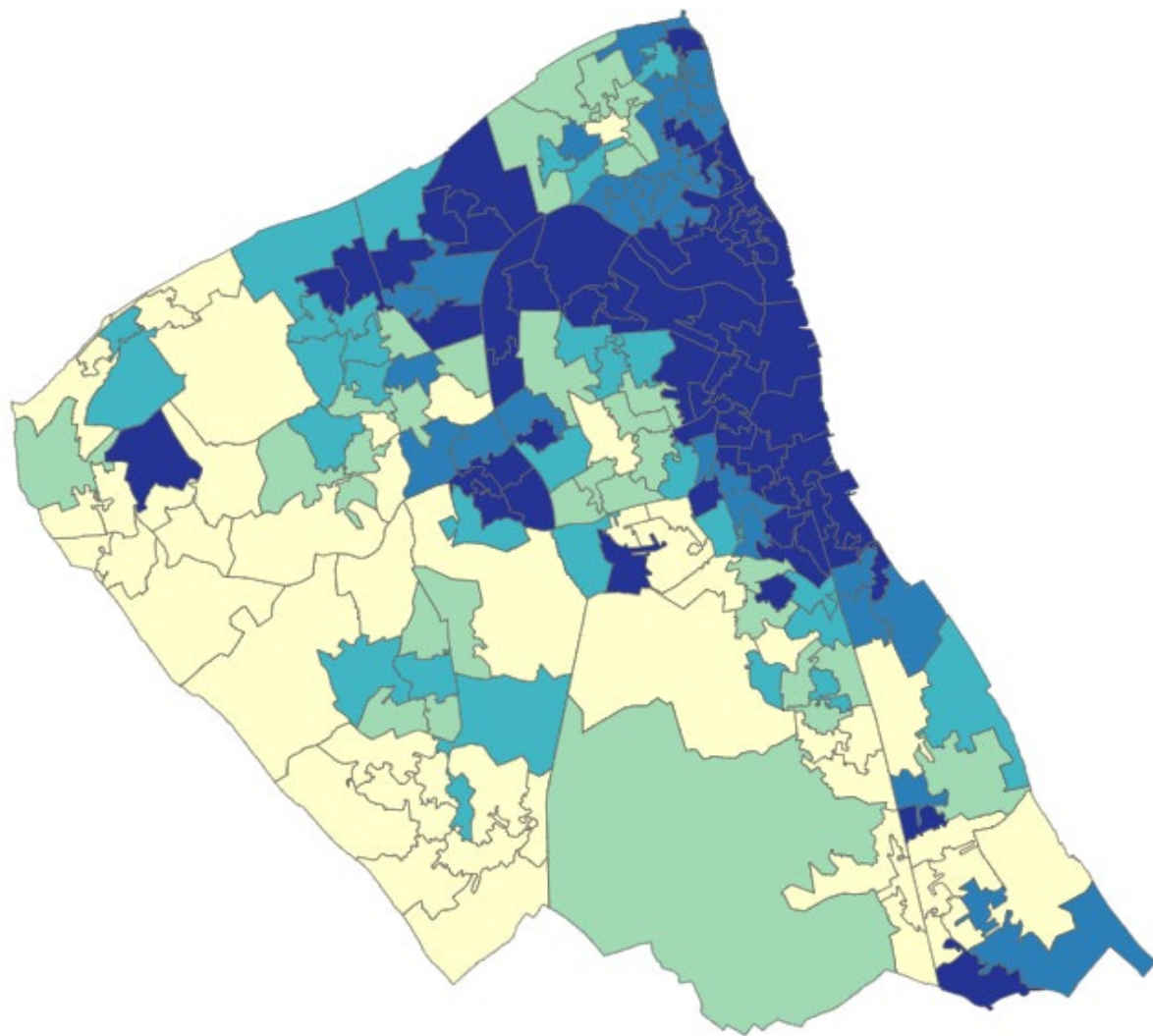
(Trend in children living in relative low-income families, aged <20, before housing costs)

Area Code	Ward	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
E05000972	Birkenhead and Tranmere	1,176	1,263	1,301	1,457	1,545	1,573	1,347	1,617	1,879
E05000955	Bidston and St James	934	1,019	1,116	1,232	1,319	1,340	1,219	1,391	1,717
E05000963	Seacombe	1,002	1,025	1,135	1,166	1,193	1,306	1,143	1,352	1,591
E05000961	Rock Ferry	789	813	859	1,027	1,027	976	963	1,224	1,329
E05000959	Leasowe and Moreton East	643	664	710	774	753	842	739	911	1,129
E05000958	Upton	583	617	634	731	718	702	646	818	976
E05000966	Liscard	664	620	750	766	878	755	684	890	953
E05000964	Bromborough	474	448	531	570	591	634	621	687	858
E05000969	Prenton	419	440	434	469	447	471	488	549	707
E05000954	New Brighton	441	433	465	528	561	504	513	480	604
E05000973	Claughton	414	426	495	478	495	485	457	521	592
E05000960	Moreton West and Saughall Massie	413	400	359	442	396	412	386	459	557
E05000965	Eastham	298	295	362	345	364	384	389	442	495
E05000956	Bebington	325	314	381	358	382	387	381	391	472
E05000975	Wallasey	306	297	359	336	280	301	344	327	403
E05000968	Oxton	267	284	282	297	328	336	258	333	390
E05000974	Pensby and Thingwall	230	240	259	283	288	294	256	258	294
E05000957	Greasby, Frankby and Irby	252	239	209	246	249	221	227	236	276
E05000967	Hoylake and Meols	198	160	177	211	208	223	208	201	254
E05000962	West Kirby and Thurstaston	206	239	232	211	206	199	186	197	215
E05000971	Clatterbridge	153	184	206	186	194	185	157	183	213
E05000970	Heswall	136	139	144	147	140	127	149	134	138
	Total	10,323	10,559	11,400	12,260	12,562	12,657	11,761	13,601	16,042

- Table shows number of children by Wirral ward, living in (relative) Child Poverty over time
- There has been a % change in Wirral overall of +55% in number classed as living in poverty between 2014/15 and 2022/23
- Birkenhead & Tranmere had the largest number of children classed as living in relative low-income families in 2022/23 (n=1,879)
- Overall number of families has increased from 10,323 to 16,042

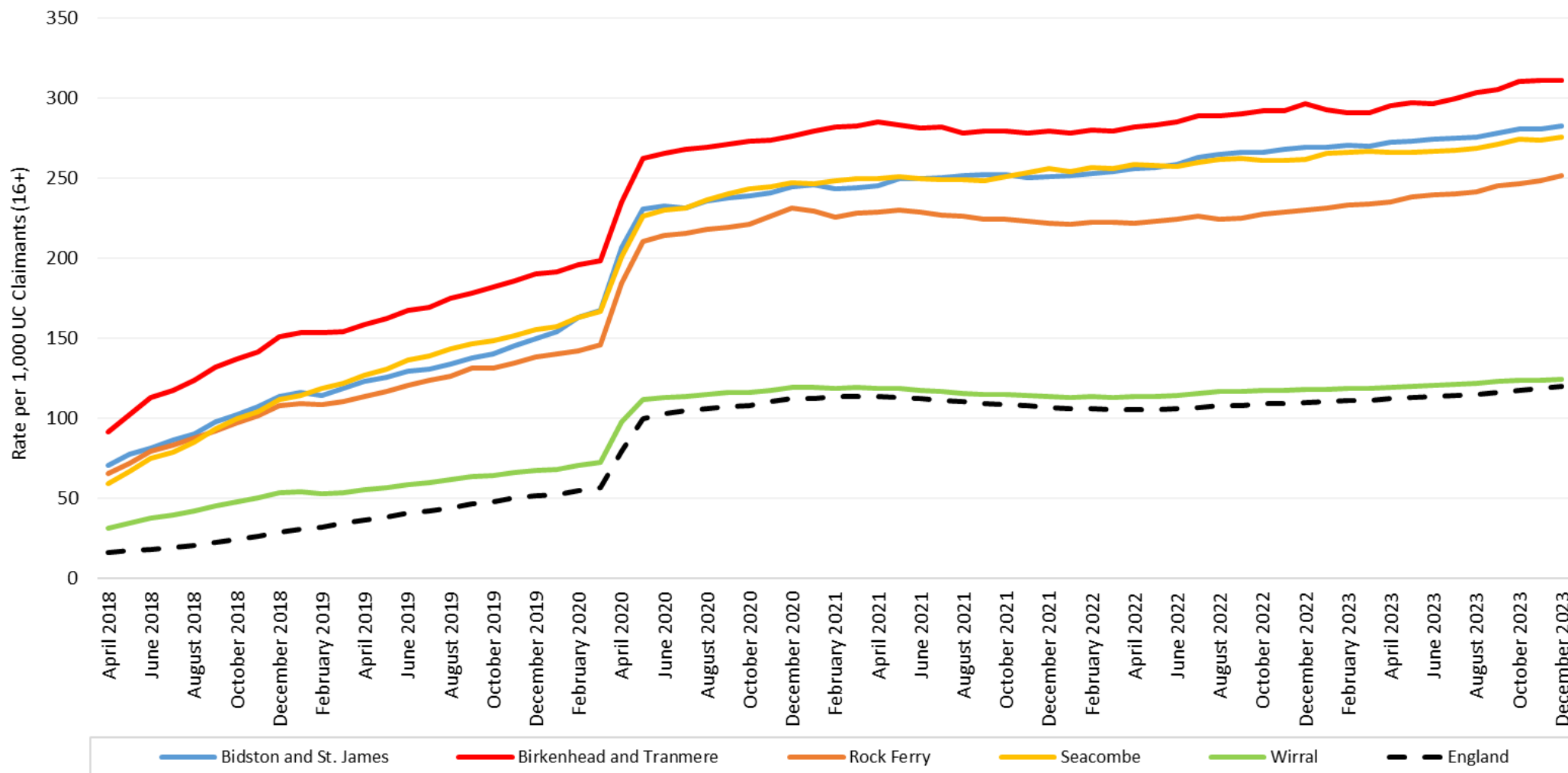
Deprivation: IDACI (Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index) 2019

Deprivation Quintile ● 1 (Most Deprived) ● 2 ● 3 ● 4 ● 5 (Least Deprived)



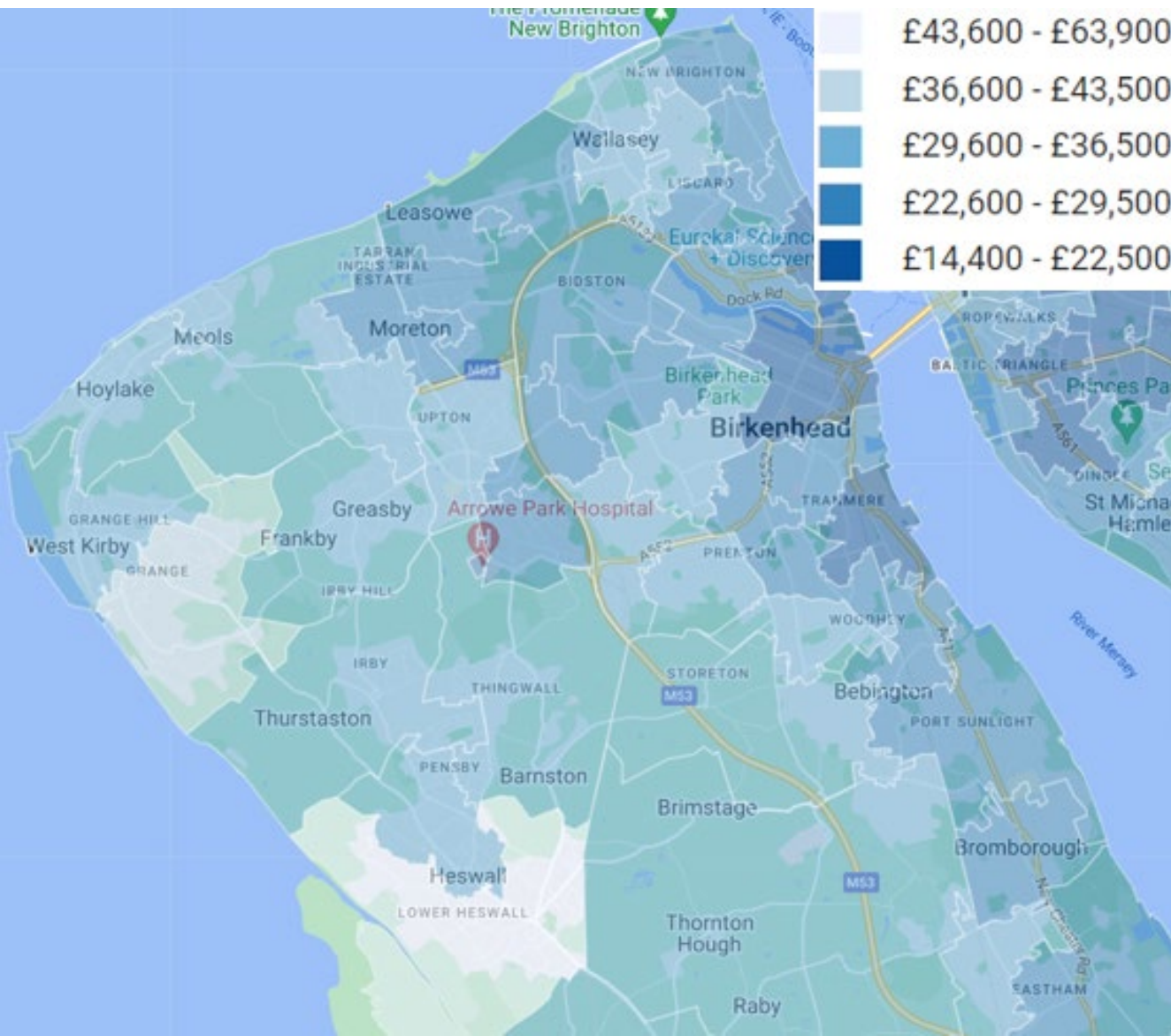
- The Indices of Deprivation 2019 Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) shows the % of children aged 0 to 15 living in income deprived families*
- A higher score (darker colour) indicates that an area is experiencing higher levels of deprivation; in Wirral, deprivation is concentrated in the North and East of the borough, with some small pockets elsewhere
- Overall in England, 17.1% of children are classed as living in income deprived families, compared to 21.8% of children in Wirral
- This equates to 13,000 children in Wirral overall
- This varies within Wirral, from 45.5% (n=1,600) of children in Bidston & St. James ward, to 3.9% in Heswall (n=80)

Trend in Universal Credit claimants



- Rates of UC claimants jumped in March 2020 at the start of the pandemic and have not (as of December 2023) returned back to pre-COVID levels
- As of December 2023 there were 32,896 people claiming UC in Wirral overall
- Rates in Wirral overall mirror national rates closely; rates in the 4 most deprived wards are significantly higher

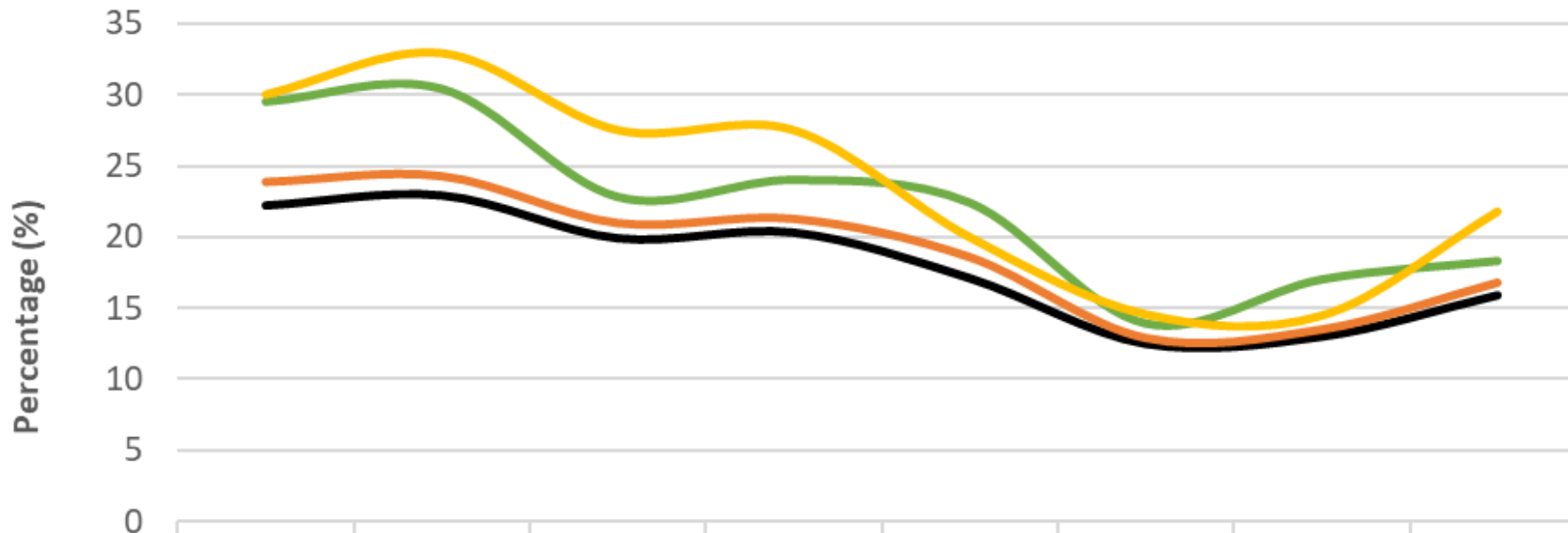
Household income (net, after housing costs)



- Map shows the average annual household income estimates (equivalised to take into account variations in household size) after housing costs are taken into account
- The Wirral average (£28,585) was lower than England (£29,614), but higher than statistical neighbour Sefton (£28,460)
- Within Wirral, the amount varied from £22,288 in Birkenhead & Tranmere ward, to £39,795 in Heswall

Living Wage

(% earning below National Living Wage Foundation rates)



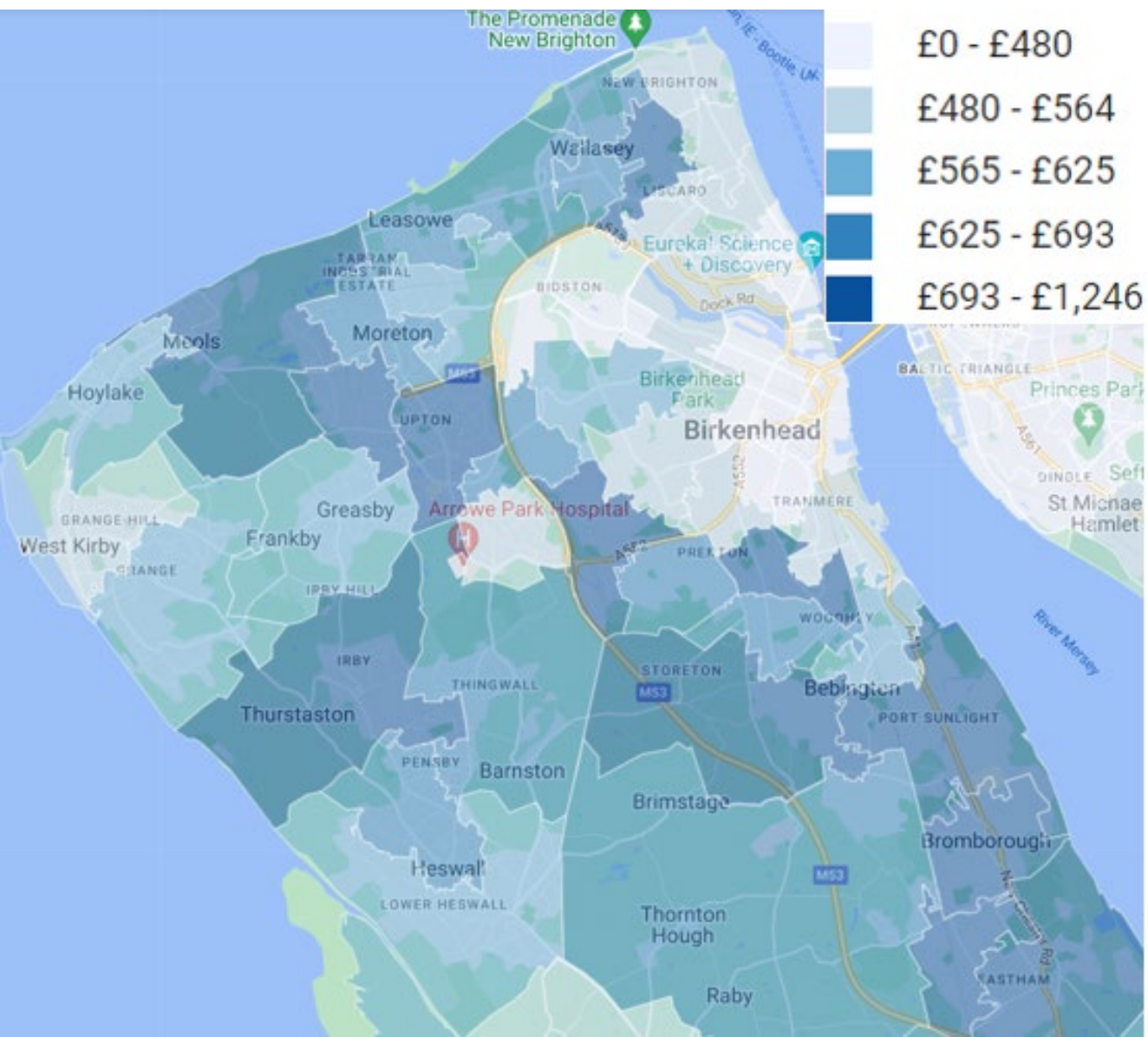
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
— England	22.2	22.9	19.9	20.3	17.1	12.5	13.0	15.9
— North West	23.9	24.3	21.0	21.3	18.6	12.9	13.5	16.8
— Wirral	29.5	30.4	22.8	24.0	22.4	13.9	17.0	18.3
— Sefton	30	32.9	27.5	27.5	20.0	14.6	14.5	21.8

Year	£s
2012	£7.20
2013	£7.45
2014	£7.65
2015	£7.85
2016	£8.25
2017	£8.45
2018	£8.75
2019	£9.00
2020	£9.30
2021	£9.50
2022	£9.90
2023	£10.90
2024	£11.44

- Chart shows the % of the population who earn *below* the National Living Wage in England, North-West, Sefton & Wirral
- Wirral has consistently had a larger number of workers paid less than the Living Wage than both England and the North-West
- In 2022, this had improved to its lowest ever level, almost reaching levels in England, but in 2023 and 2024, worsened again

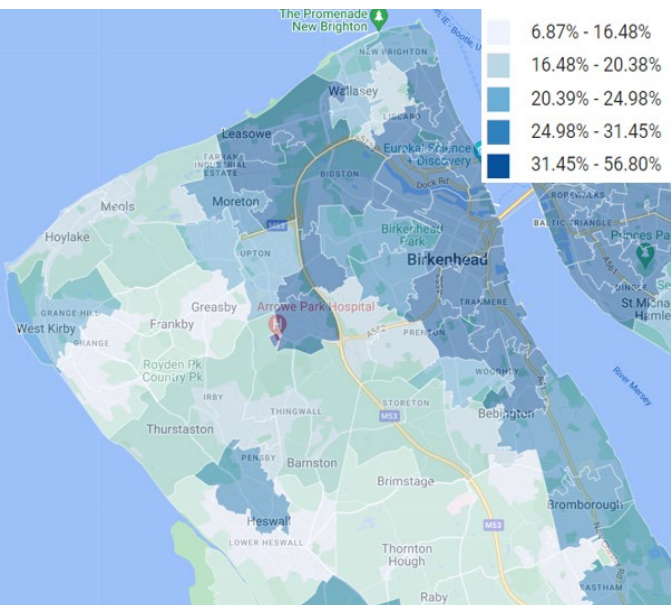
Source: ONS, 2024 (National Living Wage should not be confused with the 'Real' Living Wage, which is higher and not reported on by ONS) * denotes PROVISIONAL data

Debt and financial exclusion

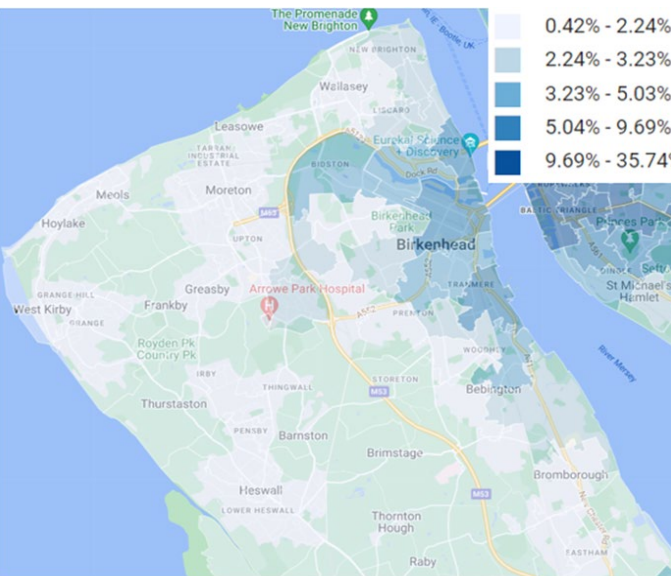


- The map (left) shows the average amount of unsecured personal debt (in £s, per person aged 18+) by area in Wirral
- The low averages in the most deprived areas of Wirral indicates ineligibility for mainstream credit products and a higher risk of falling into debt
- This leaves those in this situation at risk of falling victim to loan sharks
- The Financial Conduct Authority estimated in September 2023, that 2.1% of the adult population of the UK have no bank account
- This equates to an estimated 5,400 adults aged 18+ in Wirral with no access to a bank account
- The overall figure of 2.1% hides large variation; it is 7.0% of those without work, 10% of Muslims, 6% of those with poor financial numeracy, 7% for those with no educational qualifications and 5% of those aged 18-25 (FCA, 2023)

Family characteristics (lone parents and overcrowding)

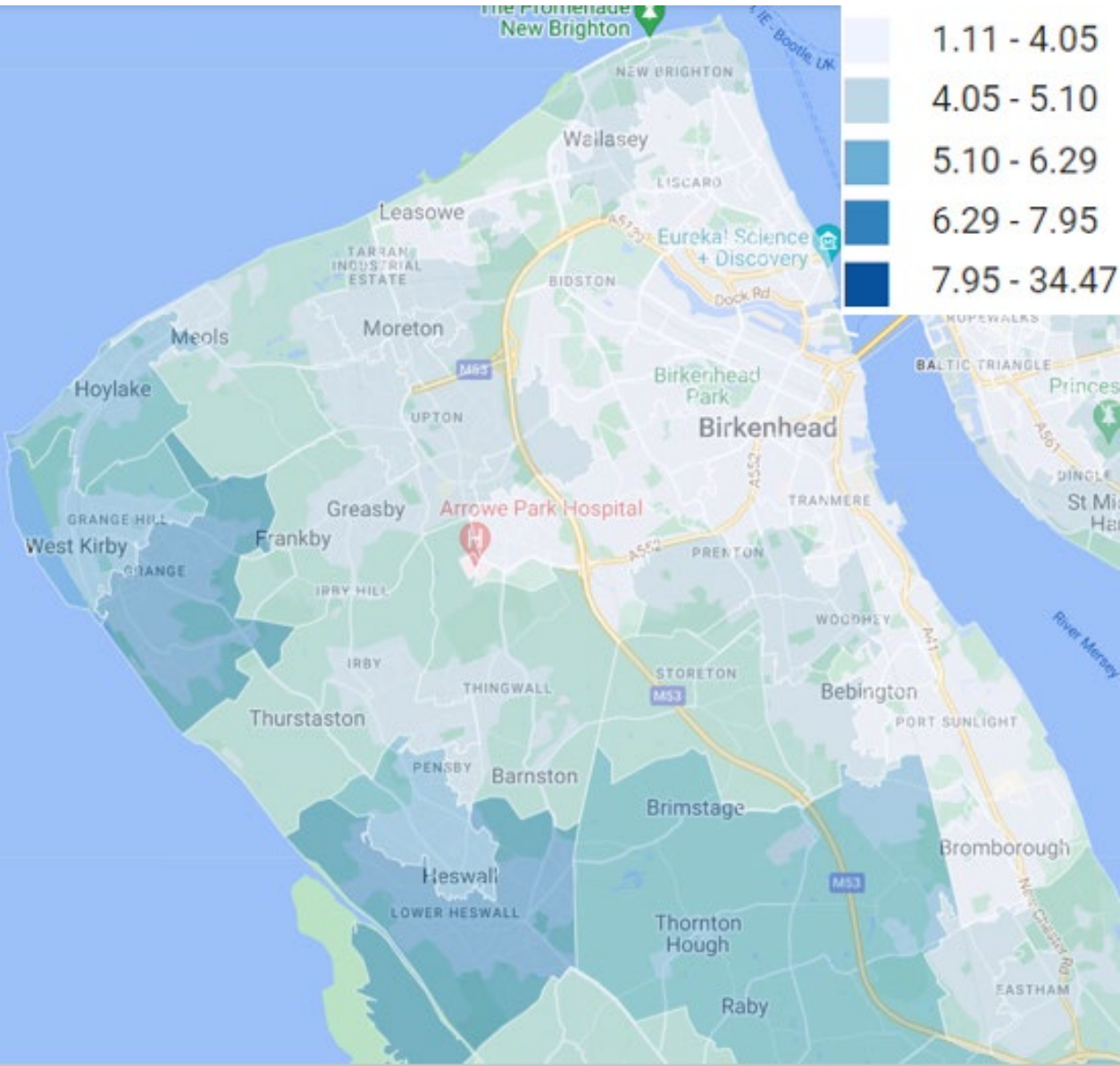


- It is well evidenced that **lone parent families** are more likely to experience financial hardship
- There are a much higher % of lone parent families in Wirral compared to England; 24% of families in England, 28% of families in Sefton and 32% of families in Wirral
- Total of 12,090 lone parent households with dependent children in Wirral (Census, 2021)
- Numbers and %'s vary considerably by ward; Bidston & St. James had highest proportion in Wirral (54.1% of all families in the ward or 1,249 families were lone parents with dependent children, vs Hoylake & Meols (15.6% or 214 families)



- Wirral performs better than England on **overcrowding**; In England, 6.4% of households are classed as overcrowded vs 2.4% (n=3,394 households) in Wirral
- Wards with the highest % of families classed as living in overcrowded housing in Wirral were Birkenhead & Tranmere 5.9% (n=478) and Rock Ferry 4.4% (n=300)
- Average number of people per household in Wirral as of Census 2021 was 2.2
- There were 11,981 living in households (with dependent children) with 6,7 or 8+ people in the household; more prevalent in Birkenhead and Wallasey constituency areas (figures unavailable by ward)

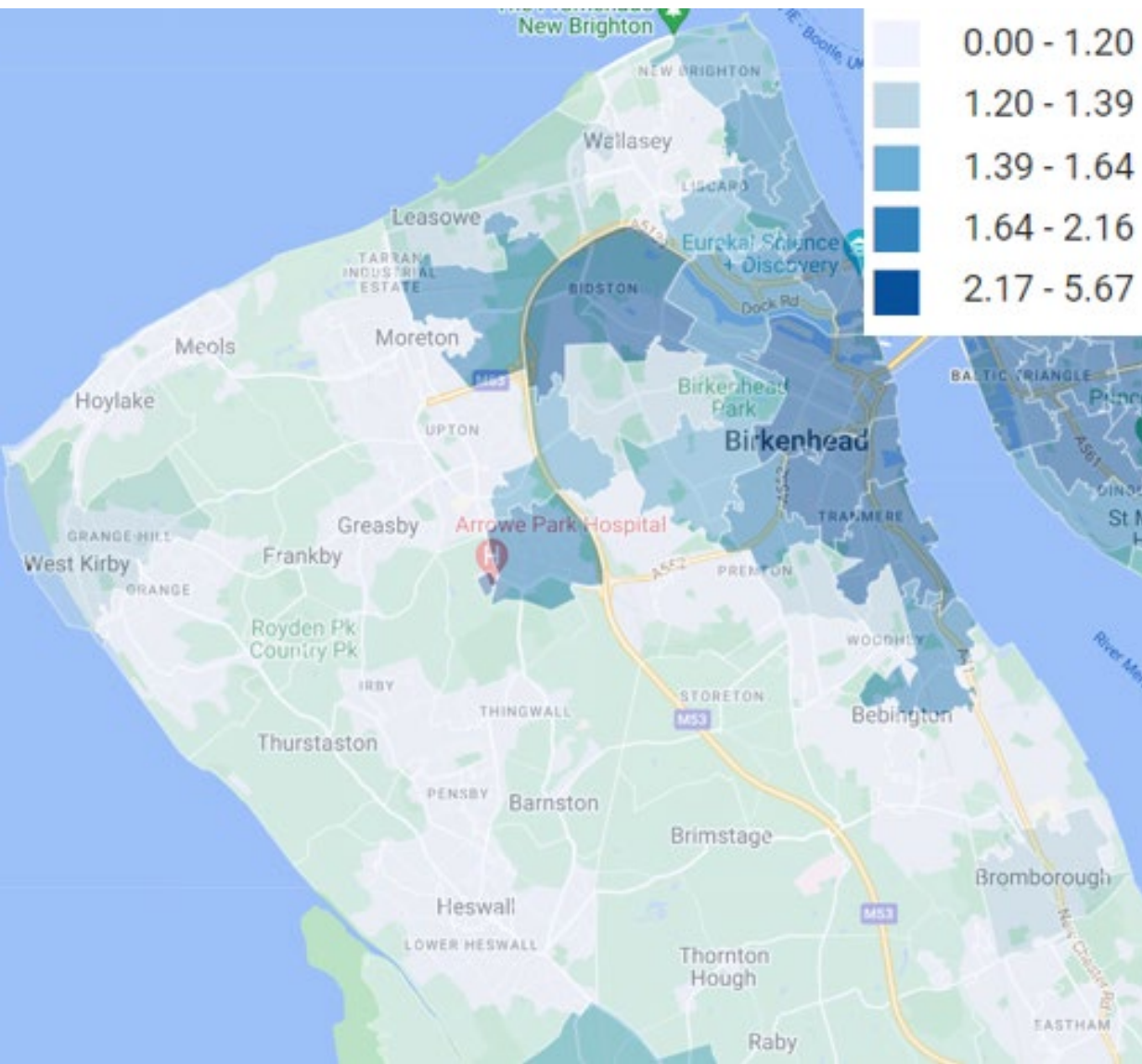
Housing affordability



- Map shows housing affordability at a small area level, based on total average house price, divided by the average (net) annual salary for the area
- It can be interpreted as the amount of years it would take for someone on an average wage to afford to buy a house in their area
- In England overall, the average ratio is 5.50, compared to Wirral which was slightly more affordable with a ratio of 4.27
- The most affordable ward in Wirral was Seacombe with a ratio of 2.99; the least affordable ward was Heswall with a ratio of 6.90

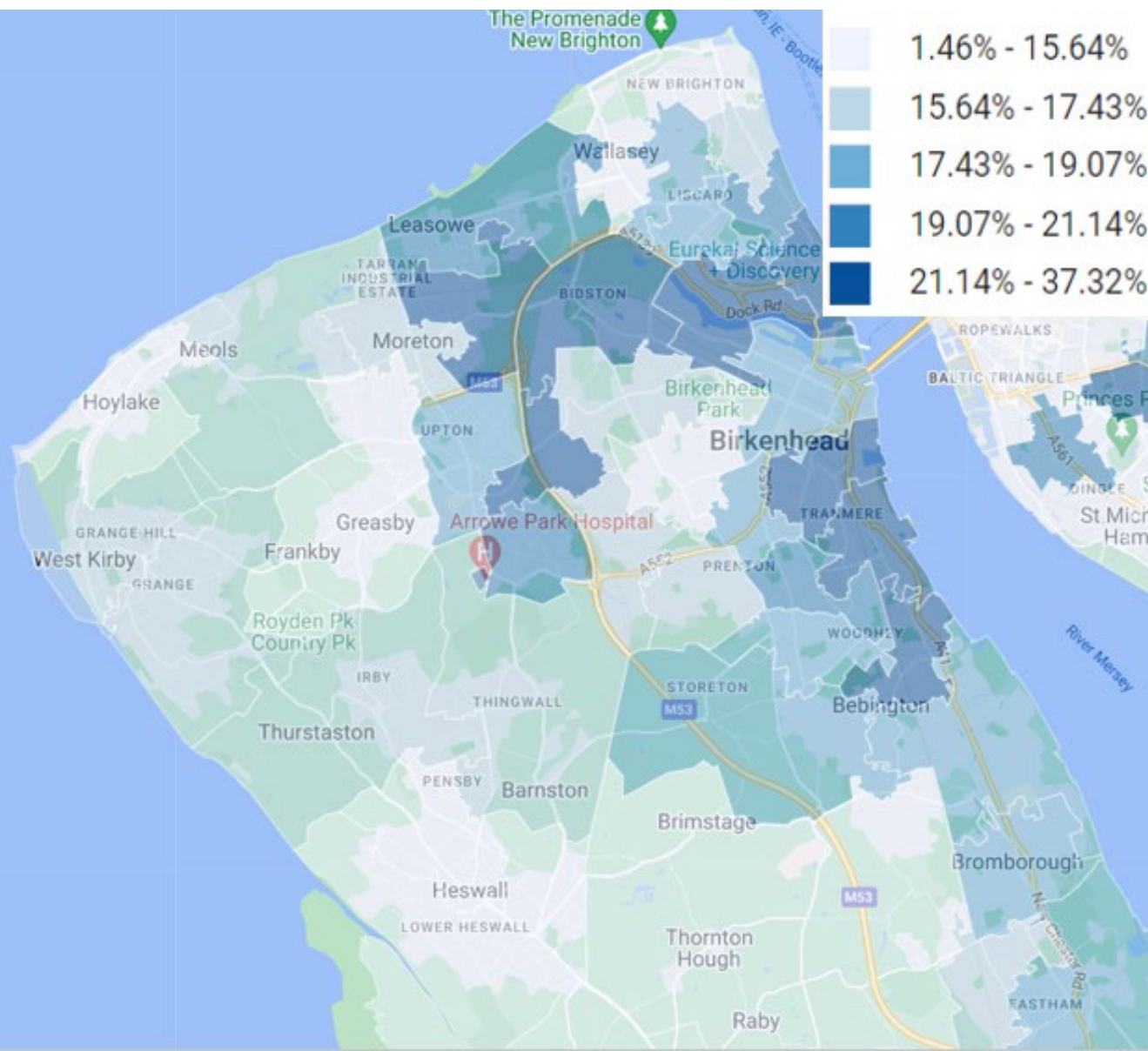
Cost of Living: Vulnerable families indicator

(risk of households falling below an acceptable standard of living as a result of rising costs according to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation)



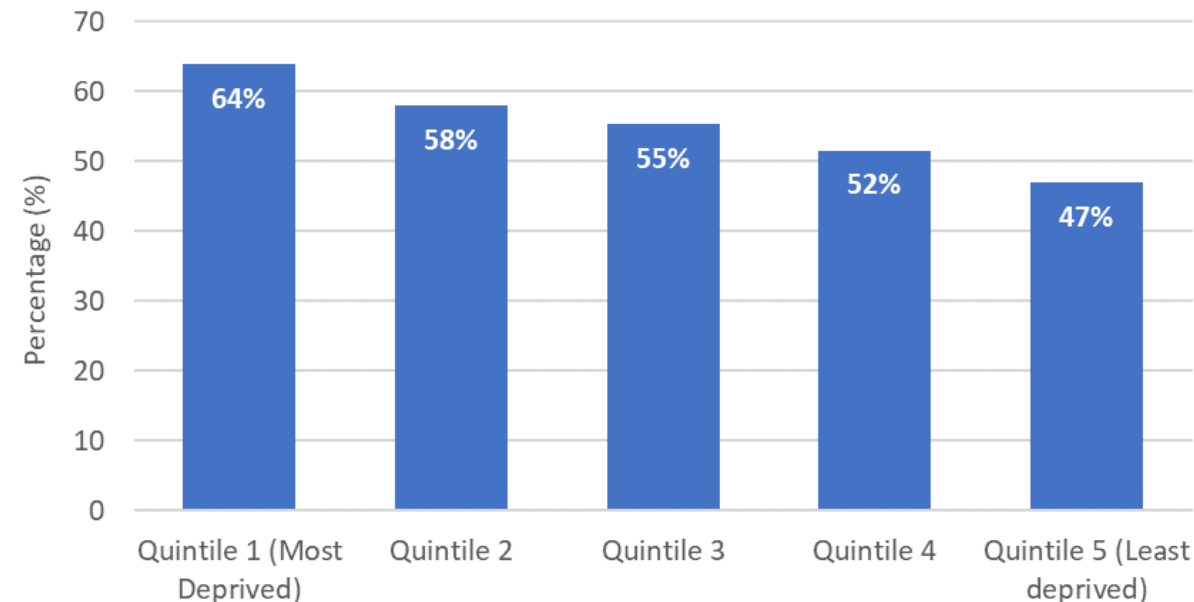
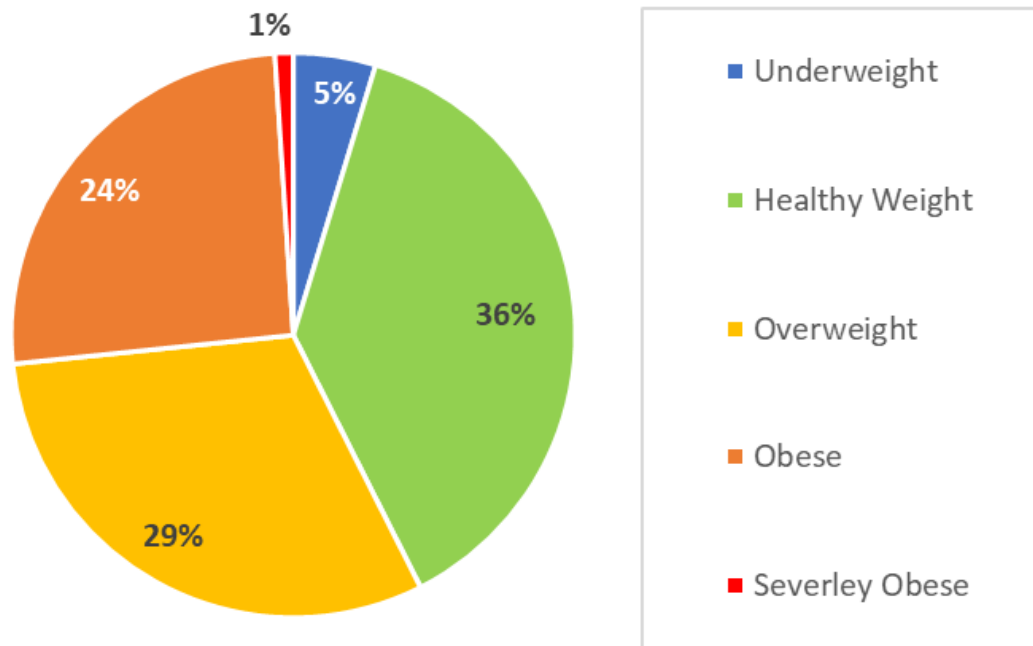
- This dataset captures the relative risk of households falling below an acceptable standard of living as a result of rising costs; higher scores indicate higher vulnerability
- The cost of living is calculated using the 2021 Minimum Income Standard (MIS)
- Score for Wirral is 1.35, compared to 1.53 in England overall and 1.42 in Sefton (indicating lower levels of vulnerability in Wirral compared to Sefton & England)
- Within Wirral, scores ranged from 2.59 in Birkenhead & Tranmere and 2.27 in Seacombe ward (highest vulnerabilities scores)
- The lowest scores (indicating low prevalence of vulnerable families) were in Clatterbridge (0.47) and Heswall wards (0.75)

Population aged 16 and under



- There are just over 58,000 children aged under 16 in Wirral (Census, 2021)
- There are a lower proportion of children aged <16 in Wirral compared to England; 18.6% of population in England vs. 18.1% in Wirral)
- The highest concentrations of children aged under 16 are broadly in the eastern, more deprived areas of Wirral
- The wards with the highest proportion of children aged 0-16 were Bidston & St. James with 23.5% of the population aged 0-16 (or 3,860 children), followed by Seacombe (also 23.5% or 3,500 children)

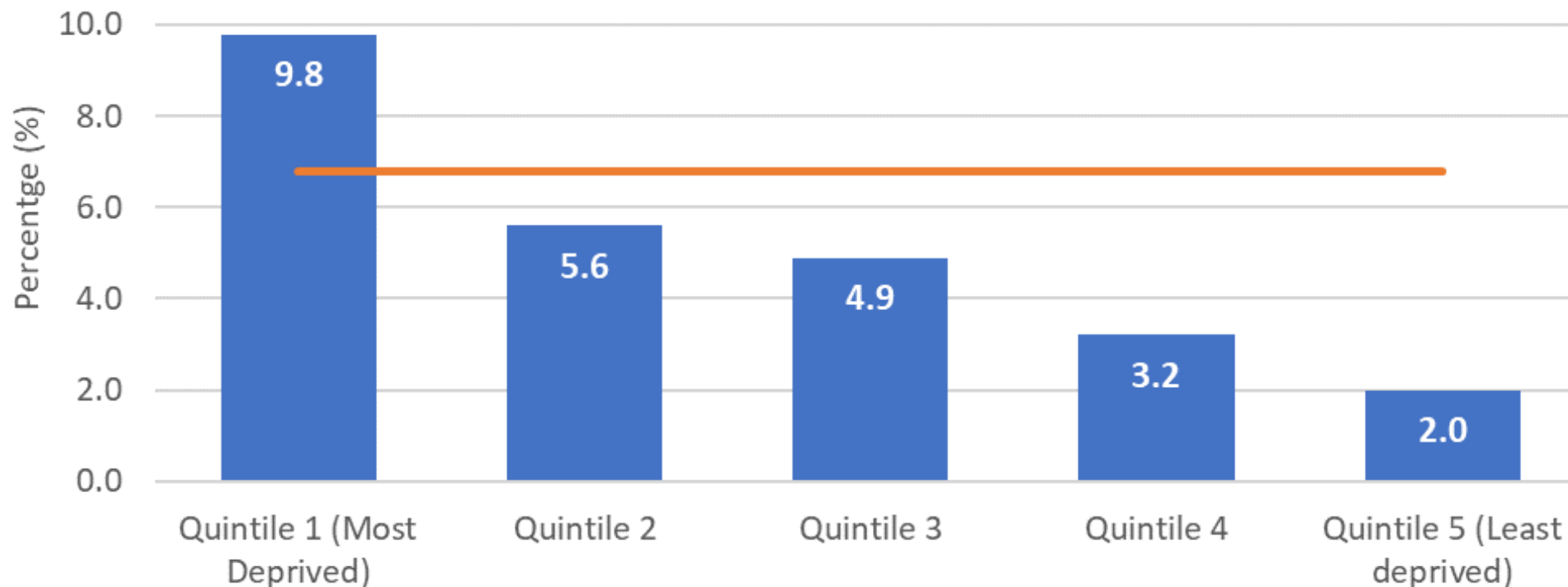
Maternal BMI and deprivation



[Chart shows combined % of Overweight, Obese or Severely Obese]

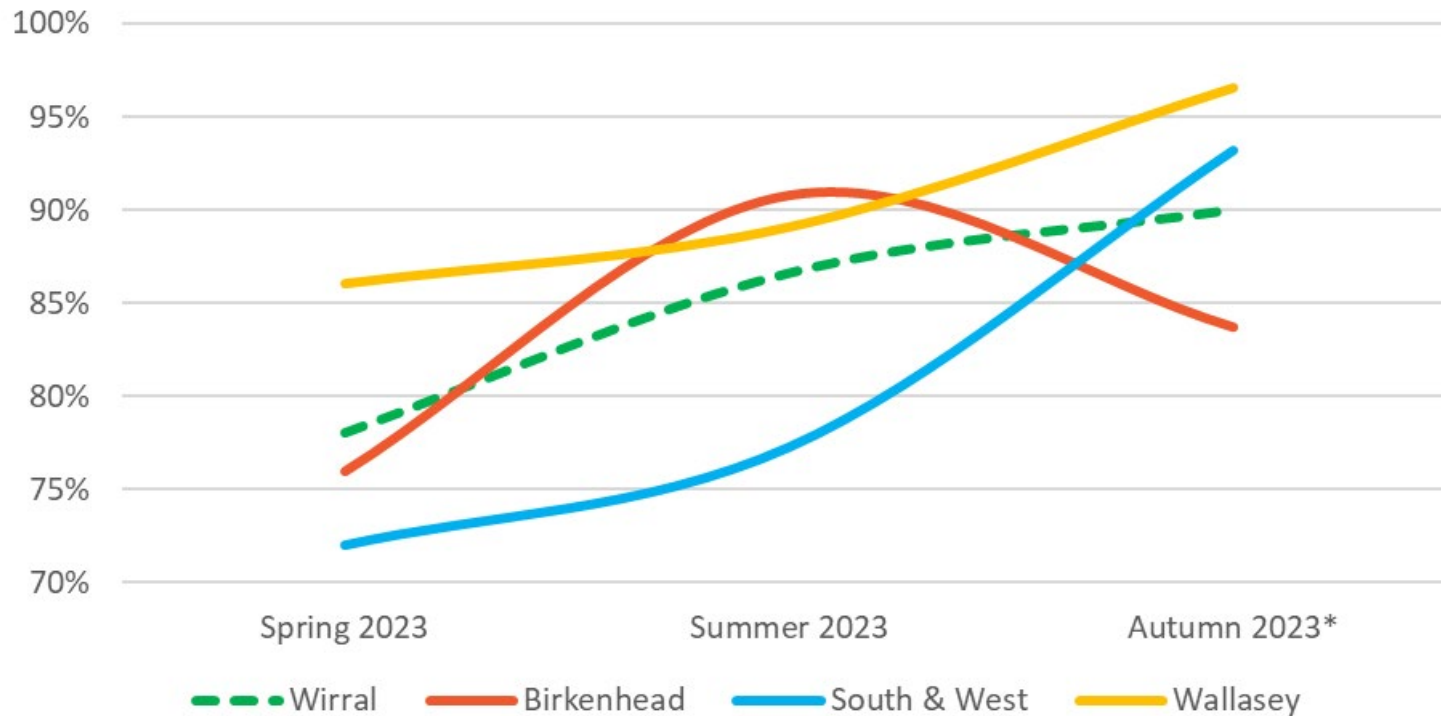
- Just over 1 in 3 mothers (36%) in Wirral in 2022 were a Healthy Weight at booking in
- Over half of all mothers (58%) were either Overweight, Obese or Severely Obese
- This overall figure of hides large variations by deprivation however, as shown by the bar chart (above right); In Quintile 1 (Most Deprived 20%), 64% of mothers were Overweight, Obese or Severely Obese; vs 47% in Quintile 1 (Least Deprived)

Low birthweight & deprivation



- Data above is for 2022 (and is for births at WUTH only); it shows the prevalence of low and very low birthweight by deprivation quintile (orange line denotes Wirral average of 6.8%)
- It shows there are wide inequalities in the prevalence of low birthweight (of all babies)
- Low birthweight is a major factor in infant mortality and has serious consequences for health in later life
- There are wide inequalities in low birthweight and these inequalities are likely to affect future childhood and adult health inequalities

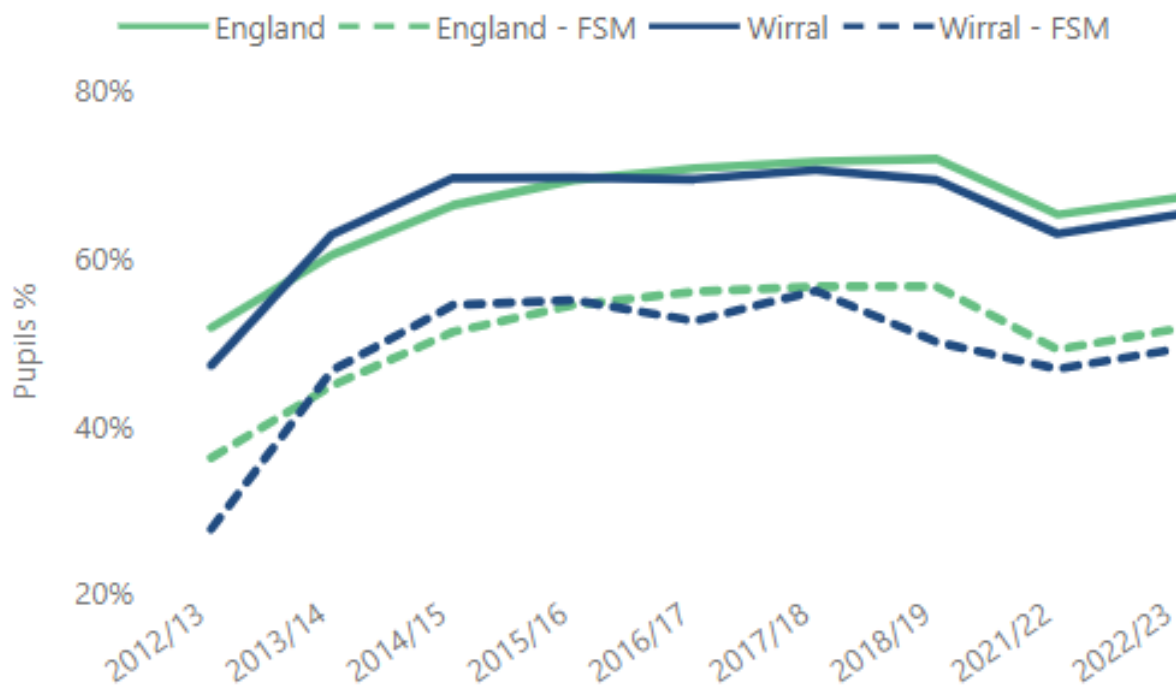
Take up of childcare funding in Wirral



- Chart shows take up of the 15 hours of free childcare for 2 year olds during 2023, by area (and Wirral overall)
- The scheme is available to families on a low income (e.g. specific benefits) or who have a child with additional needs (e.g. an Education, Health & Care Plan or EHC)
- Overall, take up of the scheme rose in Wirral overall during 2023 from 78% of eligible children to 90%
- This equated to just under 1,000 children as of Autumn 2023
- While take up rose overall and in the Wallasey and South & West locality areas, take up in Birkenhead locality showed more variability

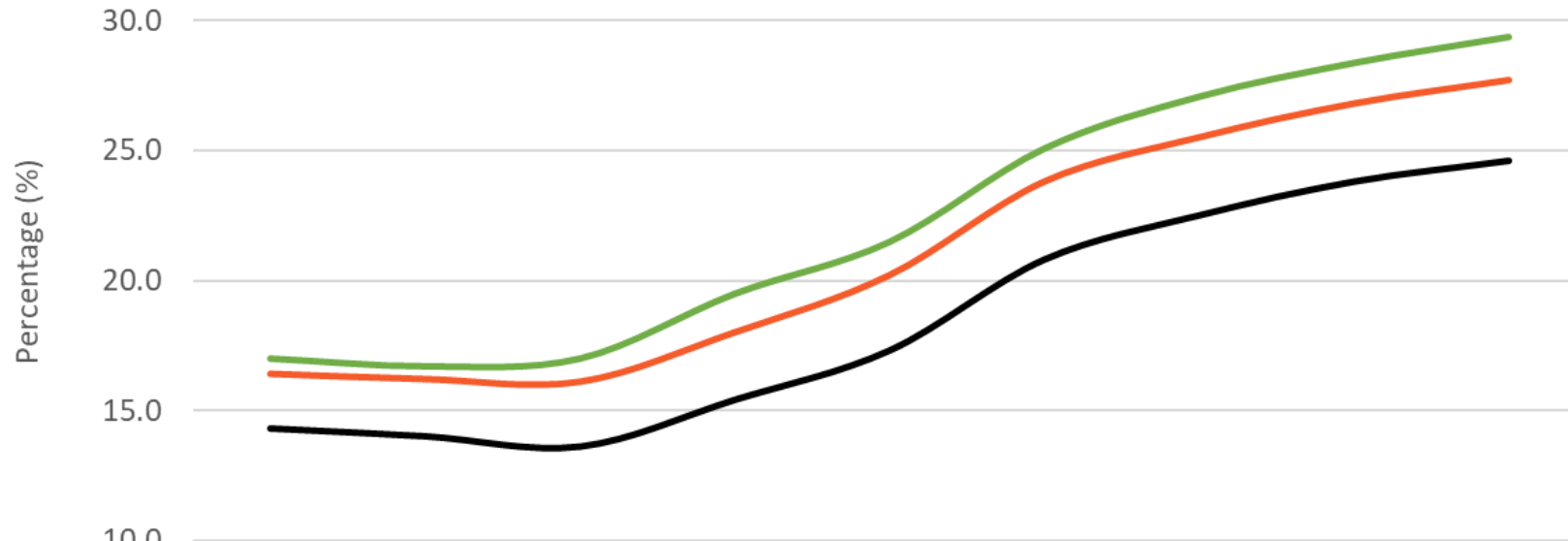
Trend in children achieving a 'Good levels of development' (GLD) by Free School Meal status (FSM)

% of children achieving a good level of development at the end of Reception



- In 2012/13, 47.2% of Wirral children achieved a Good Level of Development (GLD) at the end of Reception
- By 2022/23 this had risen to 65.2% of children in Wirral
- Compared to England, in 2012/13 Wirral had a lower proportion of children achieving GLD; by 2022/23 Wirral was still slightly lower than England (despite Wirral's improvement, England overall had also improved and so remained higher)
- Among children eligible for FSM, the proportion achieving a GLD was considerably lower than the average for all children (this is true in both Wirral and England overall)
- In Wirral in 2022/23, less than half of children eligible for FSM achieved a GLD at end of Reception (49.2%), compared to just over half in England (51.6%)

Trend in eligibility for Free School Meals

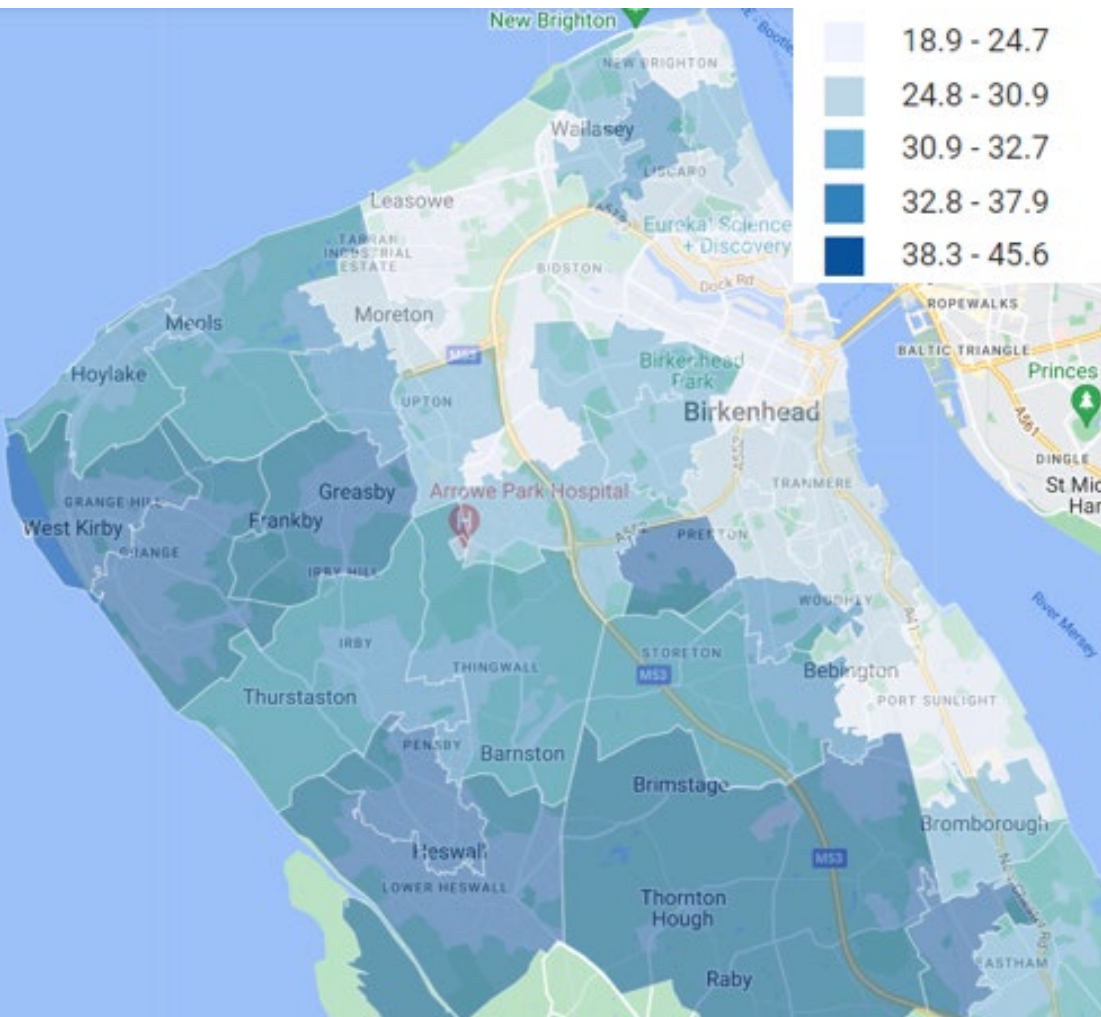


	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
— England	14.3	14.0	13.6	15.4	17.3	20.8	22.5	23.8	24.6
— North West	16.4	16.2	16.1	18.0	20.2	23.8	25.5	26.8	27.7
— Wirral	17.0	16.7	17.0	19.5	21.5	25.1	27.1	28.4	29.4

- Just under 30% of Wirral pupils were eligible for FSM in 2023/24
- Wirral had a higher proportion of pupils known to be eligible for FSM in 2023/24 compared to both the North-West and England
- In numbers, 14,908 pupils were known to be eligible for FSM in Wirral in 2023/24
- The largest number and % were in the Birkenhead and Wallasey localities, where around 40% of pupils were eligible, compared to around 20% in the Wirral South and Wirral West localities
- There has been a 73% increase in eligibility for FSM in Wirral since 2015/16 (72% increase in England)

Educational Attainment

Attainment 8 (2021/22)



Headlines from 2023

Measure	Wirral	National
EYFSP GLD% (good level of development)	65.20%	67.20%
KS1 Reading EXS and above	65.80%	68.30%
KS1 Writing EXS and above	57.20%	60.10%
KS1 Maths EXS and above	68.50%	70.40%
KS1 RWM EXS and above	51.80%	56.00%
KS2 Reading EXP and above	71.20%	72.80%
KS2 Writing TA EXP and above	68.10%	71.50%
KS2 Maths EXP and above	67.50%	73.00%
KS2 RWM EXP and above	55.90%	59.60%
KS4 Attainment 8	45.3	46.2
KS4 Progress 8	-0.11	-0.03
KS4 9-5 English and Maths	43.70%	45.00%
KS4 Ebacc APS (Average point score)	3.96	4.05
KS5 Average Points per A level Entry	33.28	34.05
KS5 Average Pts Score per best 3 A levels	34.68	34.55
KS5 % of students achieving A levels at grades AAB or higher (in at least 2 facilitating subjects)	14.60%	15.60%
KS5 Average Points per Academic Entry	33.41	34.15

- Association with poverty and deprivation is clear, with higher Attainment 8 scores in the west of Wirral vs the East/North