

One in five Scottish children living in 'persistent poverty'

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ONE in five children in Scotland is still living in extreme poverty, seriously jeopardising health, happiness and education.

Despite a UK Government pledge to end child poverty by 2020, a new Growing Up in Scotland (GUS) report shows only slow progress is being made.

According to the report, a quarter of three and four-year-olds, and a fifth of five and six-year-olds, live in "persistently poor" families.

That figure has fallen consistently over the last four years, but not quickly enough to hit the 2020 target.

A separate study by the Family Resources Survey, Scotland, shows that child poverty actually increased in 2018-19, the first time it had not fallen in three years.



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live with one or two parents, how many brothers and sisters they have, and what age the children are.

It showed that children growing up in poverty are more likely to be obese, suffer more accidents and injuries, and are more than twice as likely to suffer behavioural, emotional and social problems.

Tam Battie, Scotland's Children's Commissioner, said: "The government targets for child poverty are clearly not being met and this is absolutely unacceptable. Child poverty deprives too many children of their rights to survival, development and to a decent standard of living.

"It is closely linked to the lack of properly integrated, early-years services, and these are the two key factors preventing children in Scotland from enjoying their best rights.

"The degree to which councils successfully protect children's services from public sector cuts will impact hugely on Scotland's progress in improving life chances for all of our children and early years.

Minister for Children and Early Years Adam Ingram said: "The early years of a child's life create the foundations for future development, health and wellbeing. The reports published today underline the importance of the approach we are taking with local authorities and the NHS."

Minister for public health Shona Robison added: "Health in Scotland is improving but not quickly enough and unacceptable inequalities continue to blight the lives of our most deprived communities."

MOMS STRESSED

ALMOST a third of Scottish mothers suffered mental health problems in the last four years, the GUS study has revealed.

Women under 20 and single mothers were most likely to suffer problems.

Carol Fleck, projects director at Egender, an anti-sexism organisation in Scotland, said: "I'm not surprised by this. A lot of pressure and stress is placed on mothers.

The pressures of trying to cope are particularly prevalent among lone parents. A lot of pressure is put on young people nowadays, and that flows back on to parents. Having children with disabilities is also a massive problem."