

State of Child Health 2023

Dr Camilla Kingdon
President, Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health



The context

A whole range of existential threats

The poorest and weakest will bear the brunt

The world is interconnected and interdependent

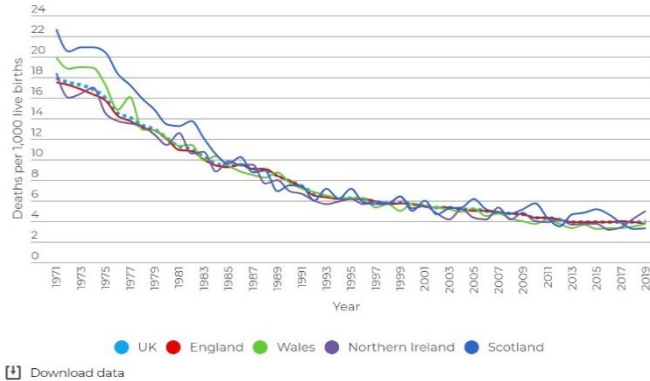
We need collaboration like never before



The size of the challenge

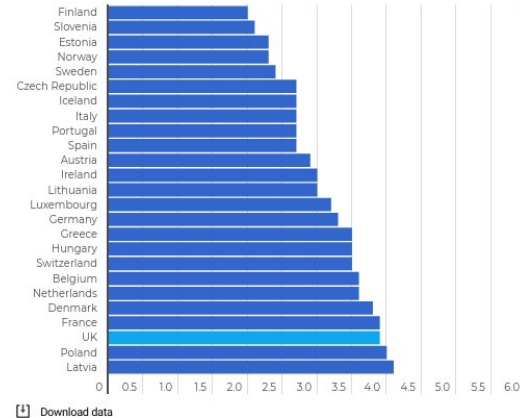
What does the data show us?

Infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births, UK



Source: Vital statistics in the UK: births, deaths and marriages, ONS (accessed Mar 2021)

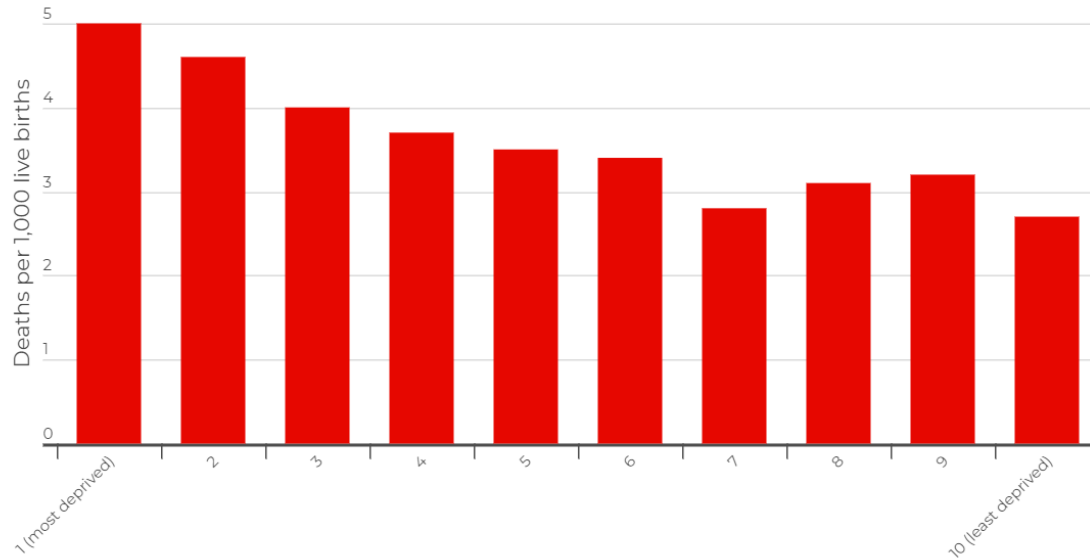
Infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births in comparable countries



Source: OECD (2020), Infant mortality rates (indicator). doi: 10.1787/83dea506-en (accessed December 2019)

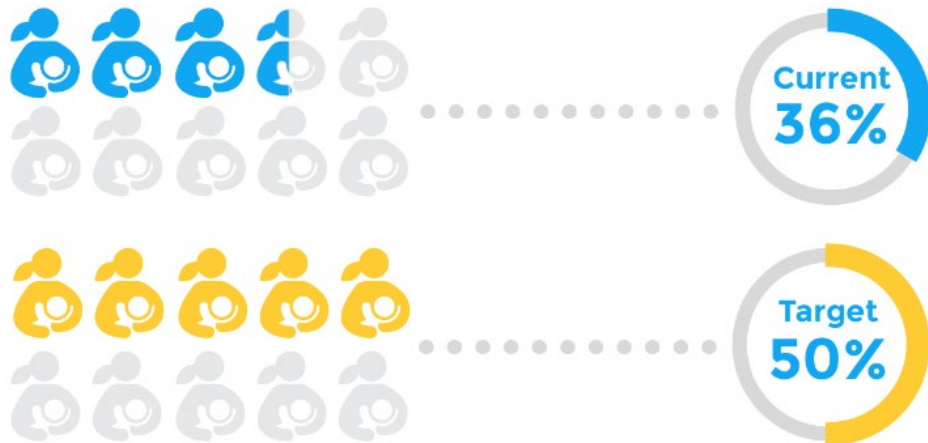
Impact of social deprivation

Infant mortality rate by Index of Multiple Deprivation, England, 2017

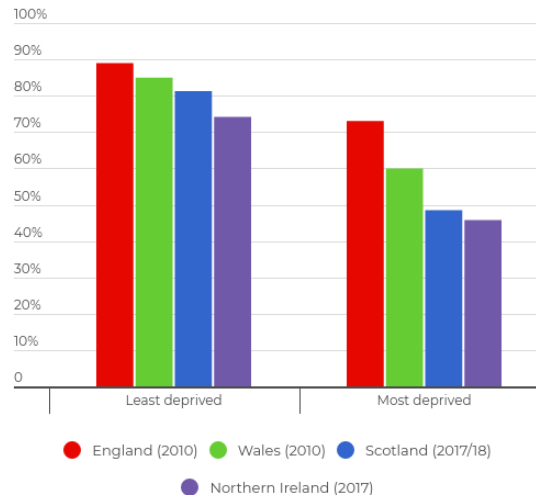


What does the data show us?

Women breastfeeding at 6-8 weeks



Portion of women breastfeeding by deprivation category, UK



[Download data](#)

England and Wales Source: NHS Digital. 2012. Infant Feeding Survey - UK, 2010.

Scotland Source: ISD Scotland. 2019. Breastfeeding Statistics Scotland.

Northern Ireland Source: Public Health Agency. 2019. Statistical Profile of Children's Health in Northern Ireland.

Obesity

Hard to shift

England, prevalence of obesity in year-six schoolchildren*, %



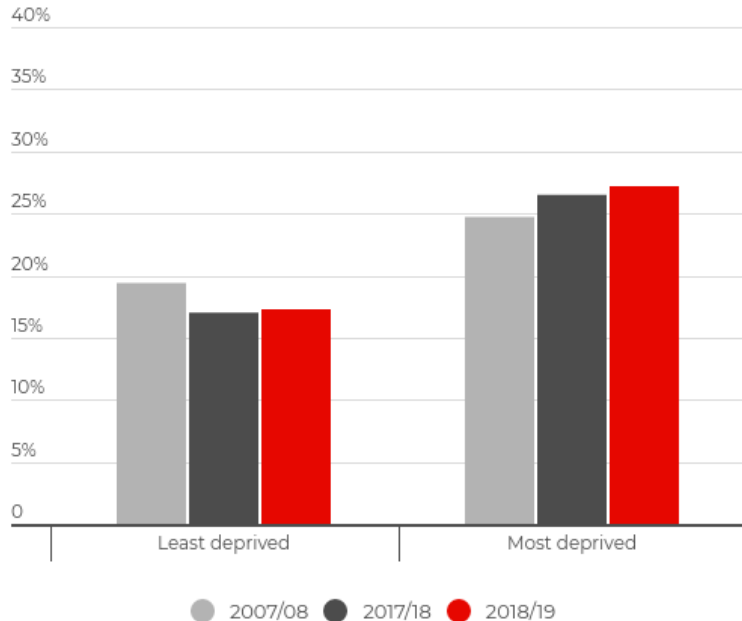
Source: NHS Digital

*Aged 10-11

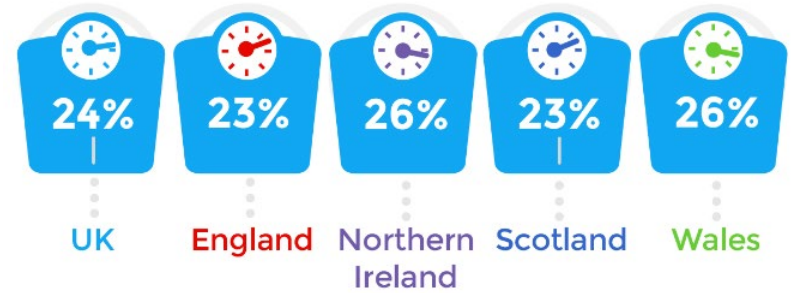
What does the data show us?

Proportion of children aged 4-5 who are overweight or obese, by deprivation category

England



Overweight at 4-5 years old



Trends in mortality

The Impact of Social Deprivation on Child Mortality in England

Professor Karen Luyt

Child Mortality Analysis Unit

University of Bristol

National Programme Lead NCMD

@KarenLuyt

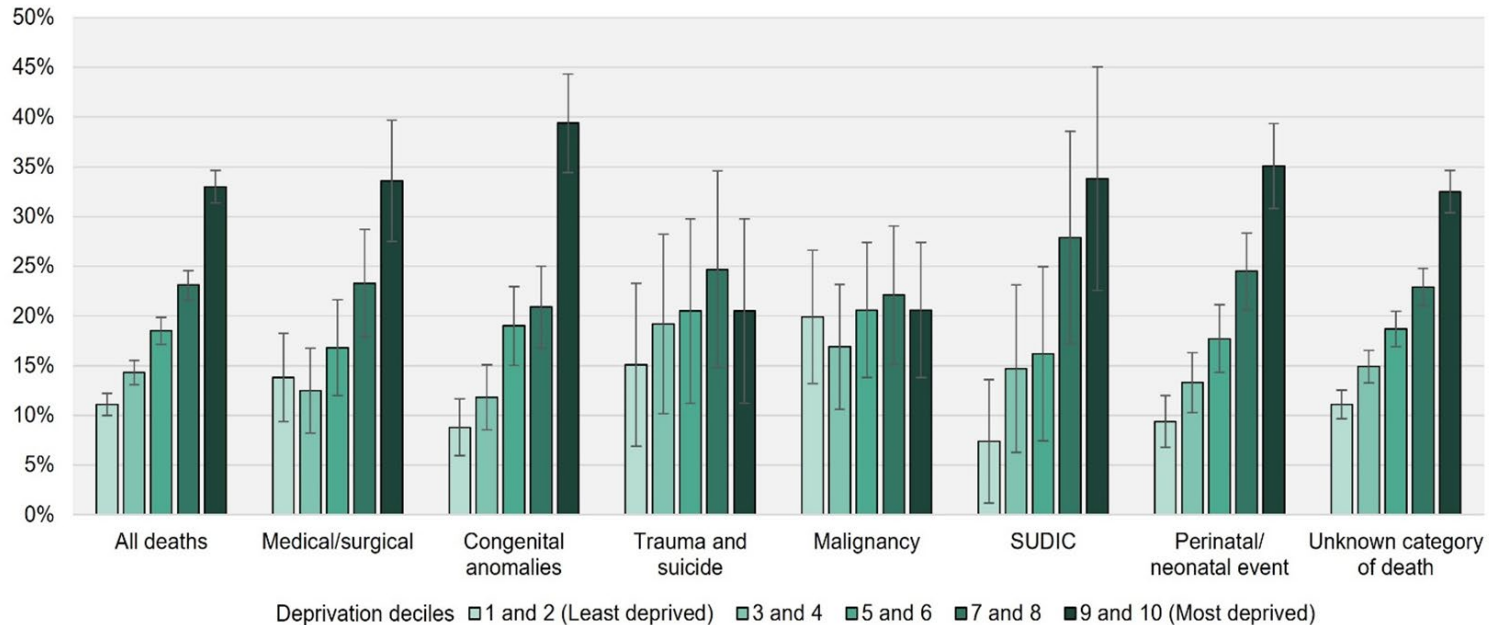
May 2021

NCMD

National Child Mortality Database

Knowledge, understanding and
learning to improve young lives

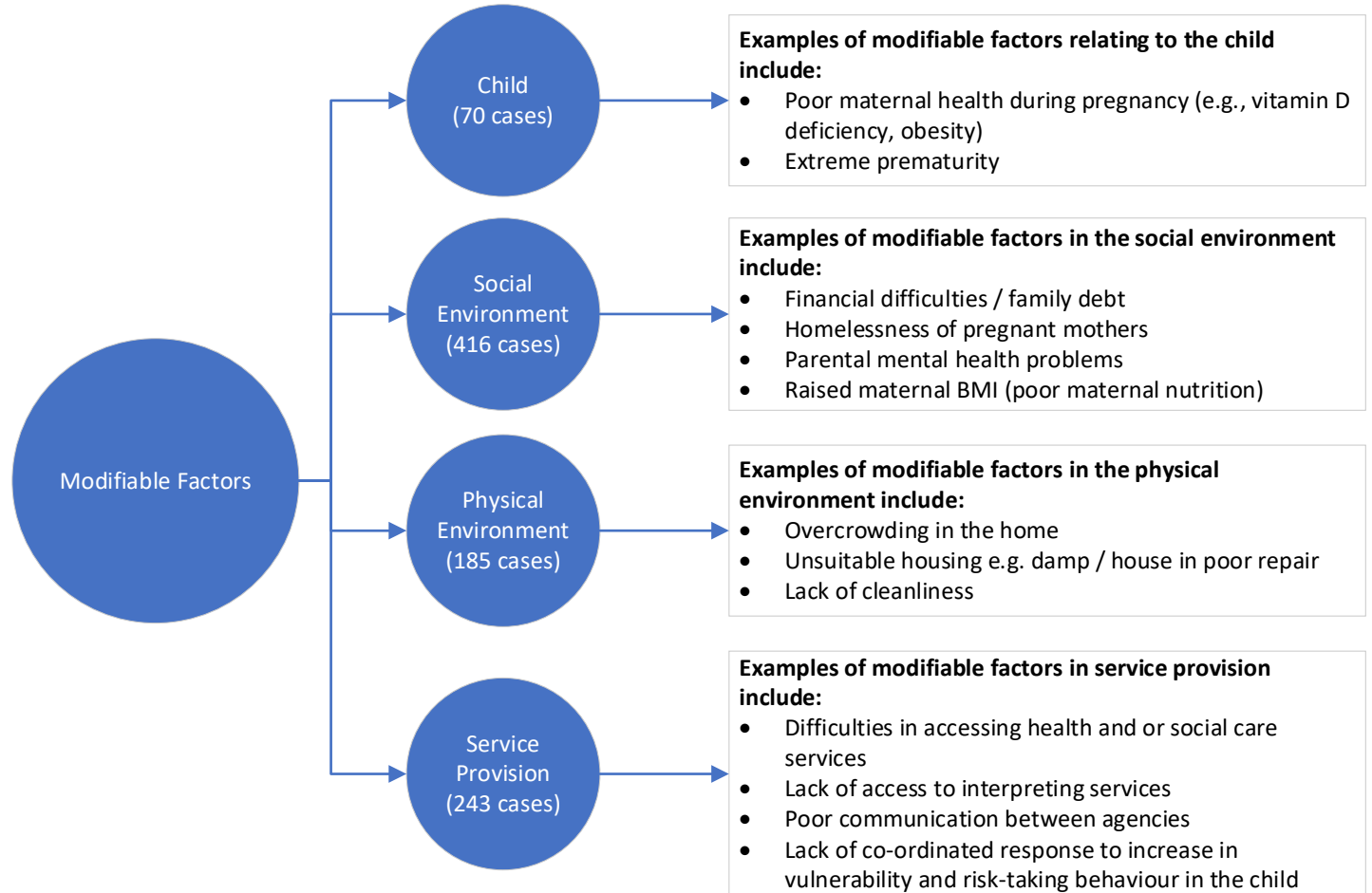
The proportion of deaths in each pair of deprivation deciles for all deaths and across each category of death, including 95% confidence intervals



Death by suicide

- Deep dive NCMD report published in Oct 2021 (cases 1/4/19 to 30/3/20)
- No link to deprivation or geography
- 62% had experienced a significant personal loss
- >1/3 had no previous contact with MH services
- 16% had a confirmed neurodevelopmental diagnosis
- 25% had experienced bullying – in person or cyber

Numbers and examples of modifiable factors identified





What can we do?

Don Berwick (Dec 2022)

- “It is not a smart investment for society to keep running health care as a repair shop without also moving upstream to the real generators of illness, injury, injustice, and disability.”
- “We only have one life, and our kids have only one future.”

Doing nothing is not an option



Kalahari San mother imploring the stars to take the heart of her child and in return give him something of the heart of a star Because the heart of a star is one that seeks with courage and finds the nourishment that is needed for life

Importance of Voice

[Home](#) | [Work we do](#)

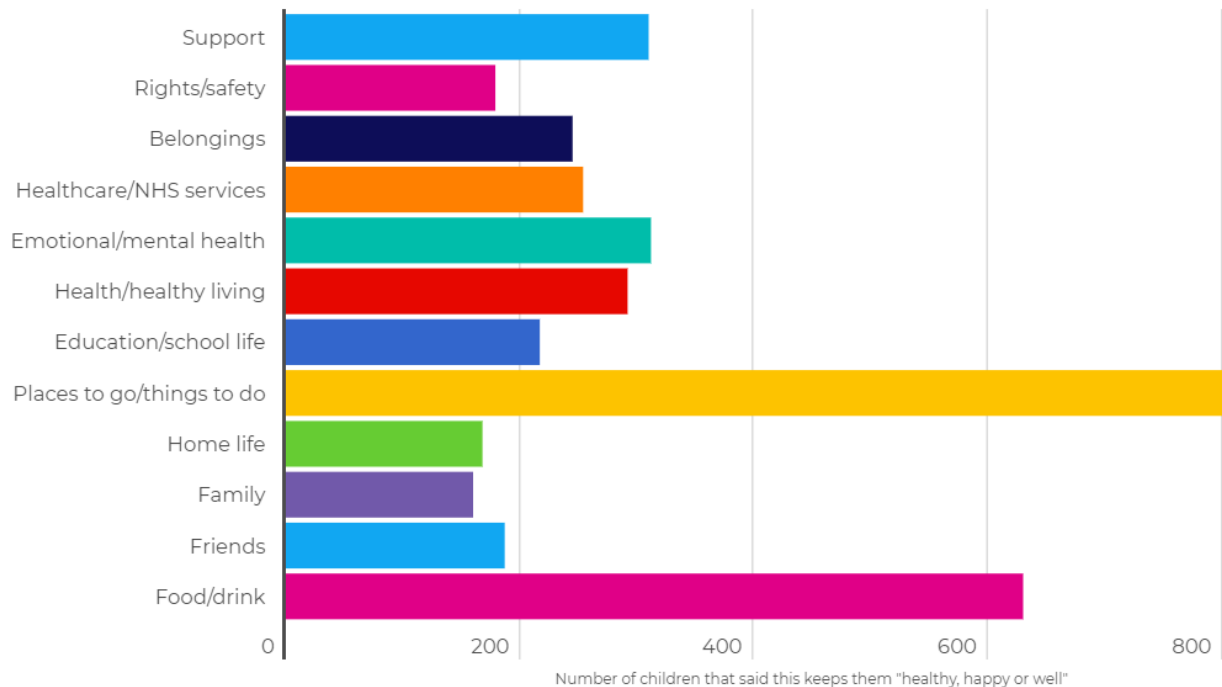
RCPCH &Us - for children, young people and families

Can you help us improve health services for young people like yourself? See how you can get involved and make a difference! And, take a look at our resources, created with and for children, young people and parents.

[Sign up to RCPCH &Us!](#)



What keeps children healthy, happy and well?



RCPCH Health Inequalities Toolkit

RCPCH & Us
The voice of children,
young people and families

Every one deserves the world

Dear Reader,

Everyone deserves the world. This is important because everyone is entitled to being healthy, happy and well, to be loved, not be hungry and be looked after.



RCPCH & Us asked 500 children and young people across the UK what helps them to stay healthy, happy and well and to think about why some children and young people might have things going on that stops this from happening.

The things that they said that could stop them from being as healthy as they could be were:



We asked them for their big ideas that can could make a positive difference like:

Having places to go and things to do, access to clothes banks, bed banks, food banks, cheaper holidays, more money, having services in one place so you don't have to travel and having help with housing as well as physical and mental health.

“Everyone deserves the world”

- >500 children consulted
- “What stops you staying happy, healthy and well?”

Child Health Inequalities #ShiftTheDial

[Home](#) | [Key topics](#)

Child health inequalities

The influence of poverty on children's health and wellbeing is undeniable. With insight from paediatricians, children and young people, we outline our position on health inequalities to Government, and provide paediatricians with a toolkit to make a difference. It's time to #ShiftTheDial

Our position - the evidence and policy recommendations for UK



Health inequalities are the systematic differences in health outcomes between

[Read our position statement](#)



1 - Improve your understanding of child poverty



2 - Develop skills for talking to families

Collaboration focusing on hunger

CPAG IN SCOTLAND | LOG IN

ASK AskCPAG | SHOP | TRAINING & EVENTS | MAKE A DONATION

ABOUT CPAG | CHILD POVERTY | WELFARE RIGHTS | POLICY & CAMPAIGNS | NEWS & BLOGS | HOW YOU CAN HELP

TIS THE SEASON

CPAG Christmas cards on sale

SHOP NOW



The Food
Foundation

Our vision is a sustainable food system which delivers health and wellbeing for all.

Our Vision

Our Initiatives

Recent Reports

JAMIE OLIVER'S FOOD REVOLUTION

Collaboration with dentists to focus on oral health

BDA analysed 109 pouches aimed at under 1s

- >25% contained more sugar by volume than Coca Cola
- Some products aimed at 4+ months contain up to 2/3 of an adult's RDA of sugar
- Active promotion of weaning from 4 months



Intersection of health inequalities and climate change



Child rights

- UNCRC
- SDG 3
- UN (Nov 2021) the right of children to breath clean air



Our responsibility

- Listen
- Amplify messages
- Act



Exposure to air pollution in pregnancy

- Fetal development is a critical window of exposure to environmental pollutants
- Exposure to air pollution is a “modifiable risk factor for miscarriage”
- Air pollution particles have been shown to reach the fetal side of the placenta
- Evidence of adverse impacts on maternal health (pre-eclampsia, infertility and diabetes)



References: Lancet Miscarriage Matters series (2022)
RCOG Outdoor air pollution and pregnancy in the UK (2021)

Exposure to air pollution in childhood



What makes children especially vulnerable?

- Breathe faster
- Smaller and shorter
- Less well developed immune systems
- Developing organs

50% of adults with COPD enter adulthood with reduced lung function

What can health professionals do?



What can health professionals do?

We've highlighted specific, practical actions that individuals or teams can take to improve matters for children and young people seen in clinical settings. We want to help you to advocate locally for the children you treat.

- Be aware
- Make every contact count
- Be aware of local services for disadvantaged families
- We need data to make our case

“

**Be kind, inclusive and
compassionate. Always smile
– it puts everyone at ease.**

RCPCH &Us

”

Let's work together – we all have a role
