

# Child Poverty in Ireland 2026

All Island Social Security Network


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Louise Bayliss

Head of Social Justice and Policy



## Child poverty has fallen SILC 2025— but that's not the full story

- Recent data shows a decline in overall child poverty
-  Consistent Poverty 8.5% to 7.8%
- Important progress
- But headline figures only tell part of the story

# Limitations of SILC Data

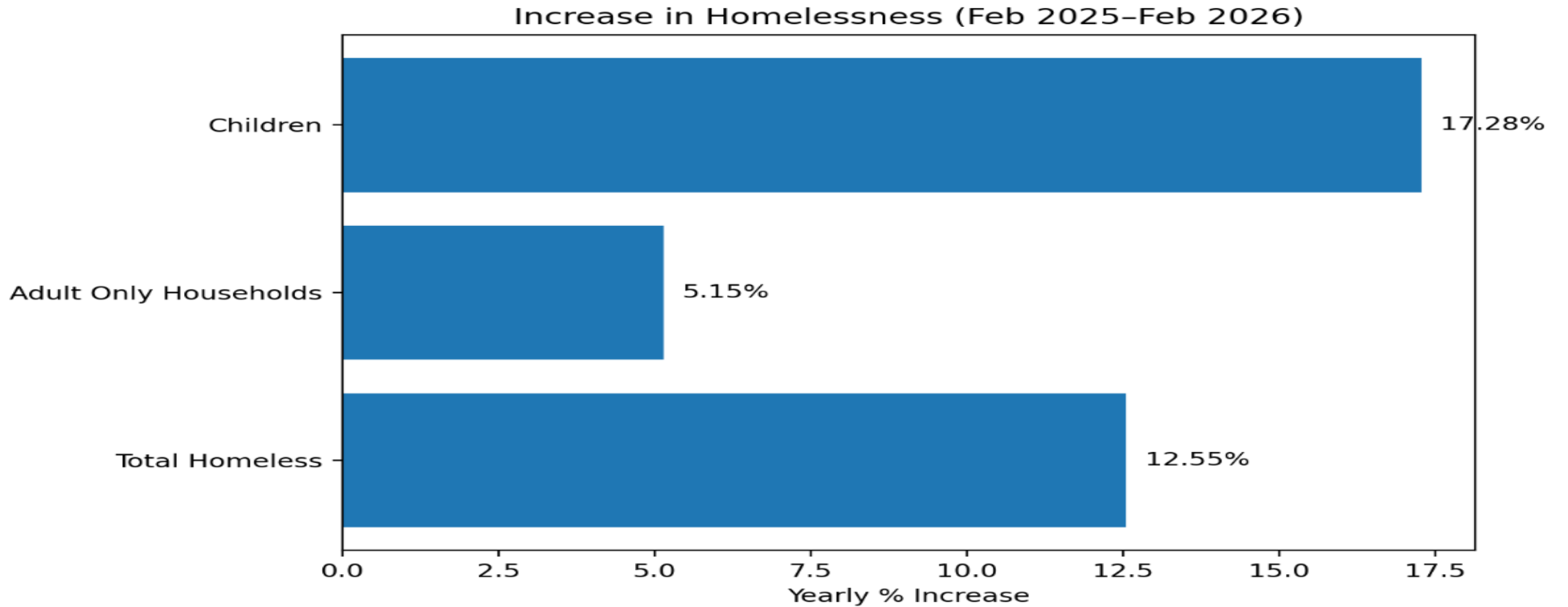
## Limits of the data

- SILC does not fully capture marginalised groups
- Traveller and Roma children underrepresented
- Using one-parent families as example

# Children are not a homogenous group

- Improvements are not shared equally
- Averages can mask inequality
- Different groups experience very different outcomes

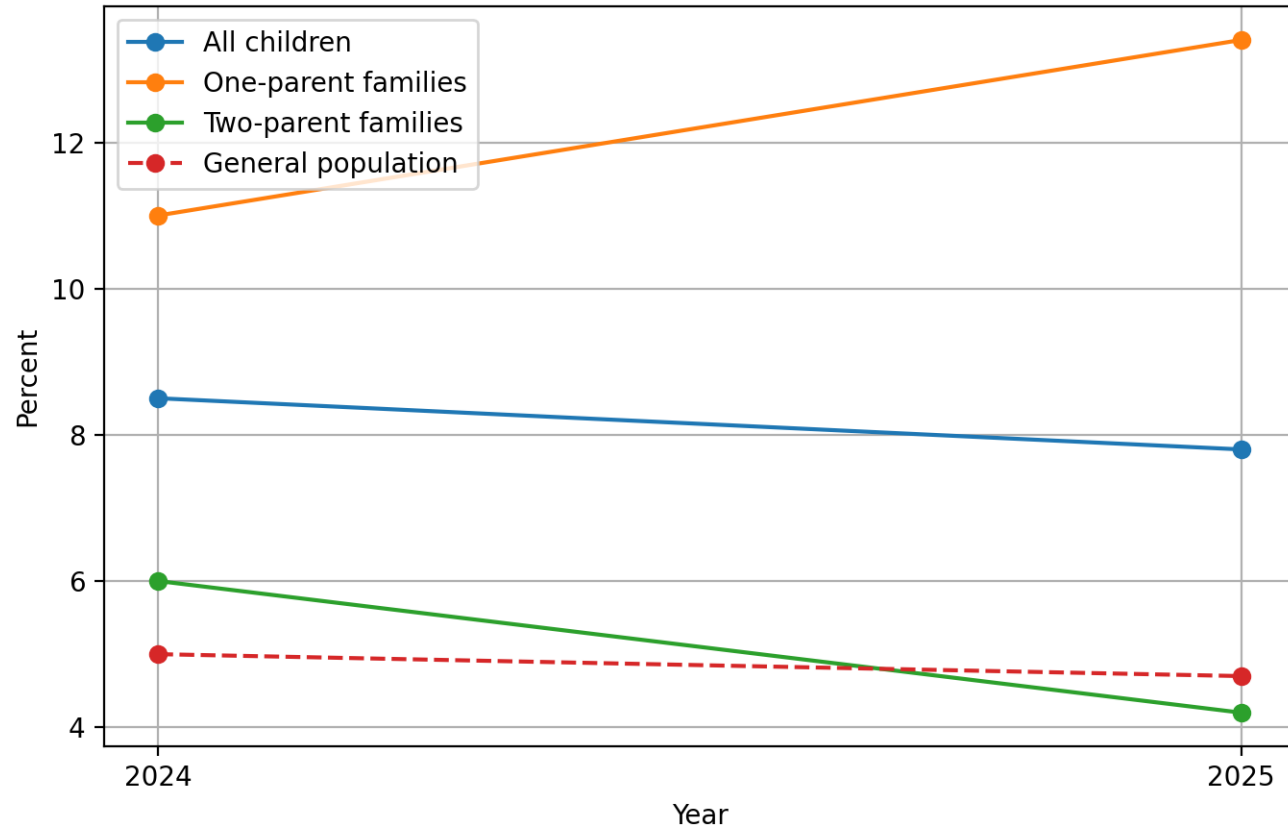
# Child Homelessness Has Increased 5,457 children in Homelessness



# Diverging outcomes within Child Poverty

Divergence in Consistent Poverty Rates

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## Consistent Poverty Rates (2025)

One-parent families: 13.4%

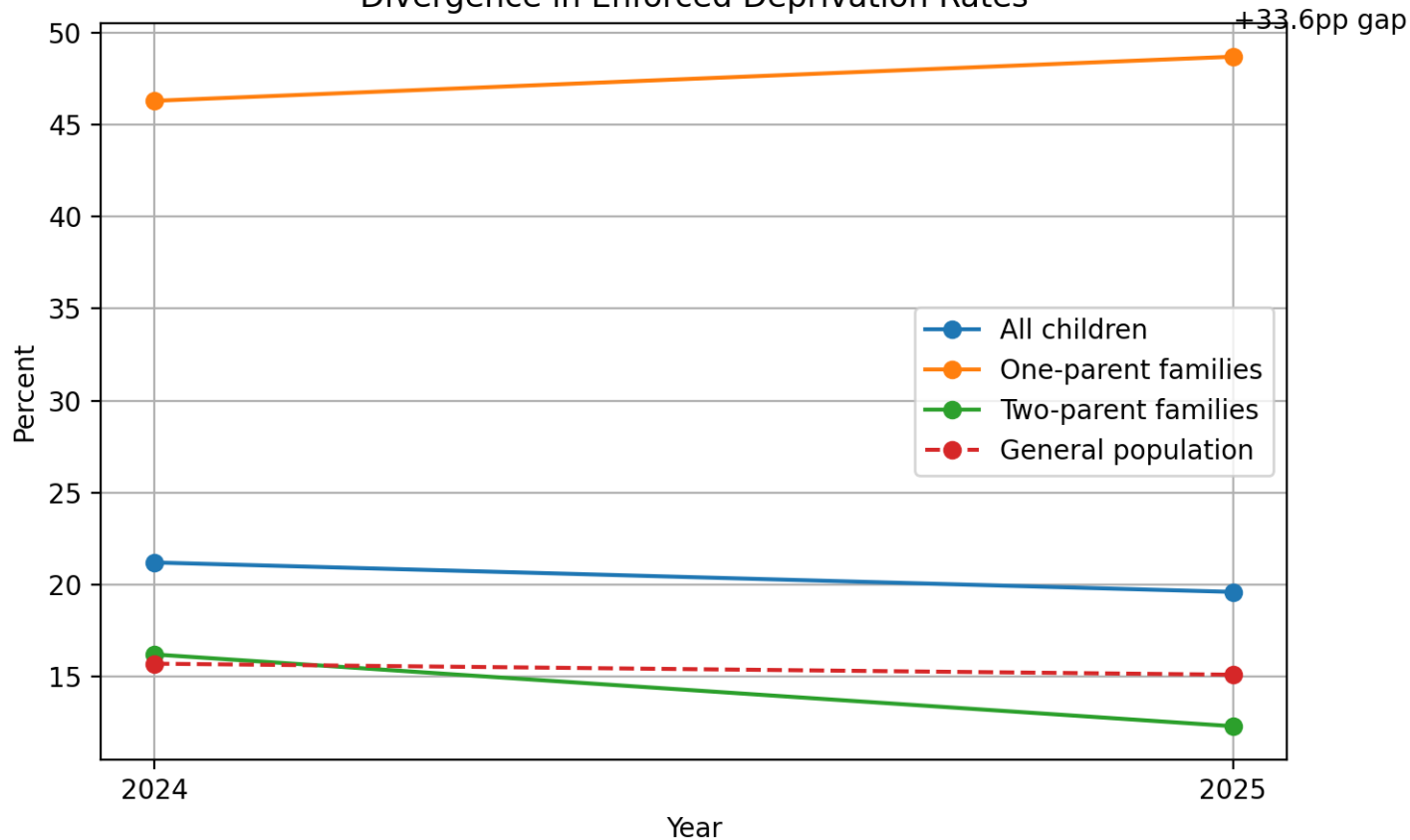
All children: 7.8%

General population: 4.7%

Two-parent families: 4.2%

# Diverging Outcomes within Deprivation

Divergence in Enforced Deprivation Rates



## Enforced Deprivation Rates (2025)

One-parent families: 48.7%

All children: 19.6%

General population: 15.1%

Two-parent families: 12.3%

# Why are outcomes worse for children in one parent families

## 1. Reduction in support from Department of Social Protection

In 1997, when One Parent Family Allowance was first introduced, there was an income disregard of €146.50, today that is €165. In real terms, at introduction, a lone parent could work 26 hours at minimum wage, today a lone parent can work just over 11.5 hours before losing social protection.

## 2. Low prevalence of child maintenance

The ESRI report *Lone parent transitions, employment transitions and poverty outcomes-* October 2024 based on the GUI Data (2008-2017) showed that

- Around 50% of lone parents received no child maintenance at all
- Only 36–38% received maintenance regularly
- A further 11–17% received maintenance irregularly or “when required”

# Why are outcomes worse for children in one parent families

## **3. Housing Costs**

Rents have increased every year for the past 12 years (except for 2020 during Covid-19 pandemic) and are causing considerable strain on low-income households. 50,705 households have been assessed as eligible for social housing are supported through the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) to rent in the private rented sector rather than through the provision of standard social housing and where their housing costs are not based on their ability to pay. HAP rent limits have remained unchanged since 2016 and low income one parent households in receipt of HAP are paying unsustainable top-ups to landlords.

## **4. Childcare Costs**

The National Childcare Scheme has offered support for childcare costs but is only available for children attending formal childcare centres and registered child-minders. There are less than 100 registered child-minder and therefore many lone parents working non office hours in retail, hospitality and care are receiving no childcare support.

# Social Protection Adequacy –MESL 25

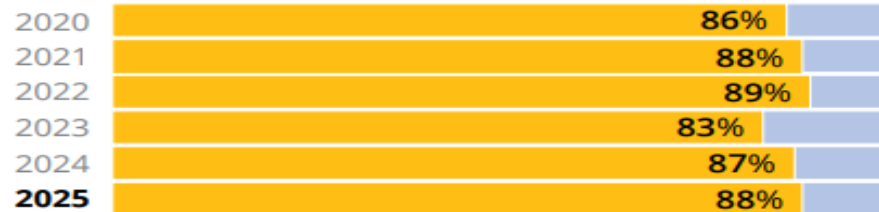
## Infant



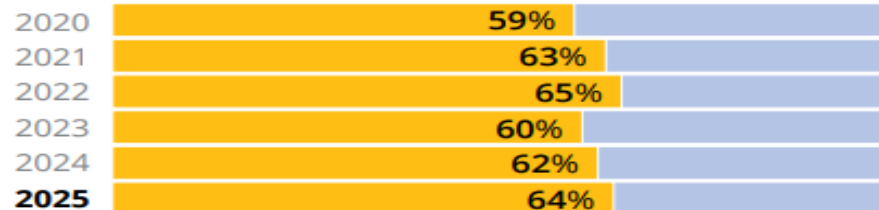
## Pre-School



## Primary



## Second Level



# Development of a new Child Payment

- ✓ Positive that a new Cost of Child Payment is being developed by the Department of Social Protection.
- ✓ Open consultation will be held in the next few weeks and it's important that informed policy makers participate
- ✓ Importance of targeted supports, acknowledging where child poverty lives.
- ✓ Importance of acknowledging the different cost basis for children.
- ✓ Importance of tapering supports and no cliff-edges that create barriers to parents' employment uptake
- ✓ Importance that no child already living in poverty loses income

# Development of a new Child Payment

## IMPACT OF PROPOSED SECOND TIER CHILD BENEFIT PAYMENT

Up to 100,000 children could see losses in household income, while 233,000 would experience gains.

