

END FURNITURE POVERTY



The Extent of Furniture Poverty 2026

A Public Health Crisis

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CONTENTS

- 4 Gordon Brown Foreword**
- 6 Claire Donovan Foreword**
- 8 About End Furniture Poverty**
- 9 Acknowledgements**
- 10 About the Essential Furniture Items**
- 11 Key Findings**
- 12 Recommendations**
- 14 Context**
 - 14 Poverty in the UK
 - 14 Furniture Poverty
 - 14 Access to Furniture
 - 15 Some Progress Has Been Made
 - 16 What Have EFP Been Doing Since the Last Report?
 - 17 We Have a Long Road Ahead
 - 17 What is Different in This Year's Report Compared to 2022?
- 18 The Scale of Furniture Poverty**
 - 19 The Depth of Furniture Poverty
- 19 What Essential Items are People Missing?**
 - 20 Adult and Child Beds
 - 20 Flooring
 - 21 White Goods
 - 21 Window Coverings
 - 22 Sofa and/or Easy Chairs
 - 22 Dining Table and Chairs
 - 22 Wardrobes or Clothes Storage
- 23 Furniture Poverty by Demographics – What Has Changed Since 2022?**
 - 24 Social Renters
 - 24 People with Life Limiting Disabilities
 - 24 Behind the Numbers Many People Are Still Struggling

25	<u>Geography</u>
26	<u>Who is Most at Risk of Furniture Poverty?</u>
27	<u>Housing Tenure Type</u>
29	<u>Income</u>
29	<u>Ethnicity</u>
30	<u>Disability and Age</u>
31	<u>What Do We Learn From This Analysis?</u>
32	<u>The Consequences of Furniture Poverty</u>
32	<u>How We Measured the Impact of Furniture Poverty</u>
33	<u>Physical Health</u>
34	<u>Mental Health</u>
35	<u>The Poverty Premium</u>
35	<u>The Impact on Children and Young People</u>
36	<u>Deep Furniture Poverty</u>
37	<u>Tenure Type</u>
38	<u>Income and Poverty Threshold</u>
39	<u>Household Type and Age</u>
40	<u>Furniture Insecurity</u>
40	<u>Our Analysis</u>
42	<u>Conclusion</u>
43	<u>Despite Recent Progress, We Still Have a Long Way to Go</u>
43	<u>What Support is Available?</u>
44	<u>What Can We Do About Furniture Poverty?</u>
44	<u>Crisis Support</u>
45	<u>Decent Homes Standard</u>
45	<u>Furnished Tenancies</u>
46	<u>Reuse</u>
46	<u>We Need to Continue to Act on Furniture Poverty</u>
48	<u>Recommendations</u>
50	<u>Methodology</u>
52	<u>Appendices</u>
58	<u>References</u>



GORDON BROWN FOREWORD

Former Prime Minister, President and
Co-founder of the Multibank Charity,
Anti-poverty campaigner

Behind the front doors of millions of homes across the UK are too many families struggling to put food on the table.

Our Labour government is bringing in measures that will bring measurable relief - the lifting of the two-child limit for instance will from April, 2026 begin to alleviate the effects of poverty for 450,000 children.

Supporting children to get the surest start in life we can give them is a basic duty of a fair society, and I welcome the huge commitment being made by the government to reset the dial and prioritise the welfare and healthcare of our youngest

I welcome too the compassion in all of us who are eager to support this government to do more, do it quicker and do it in new partnerships with civil society and charities to prioritise the well-being of all of us.

There is much to be done. 1 in 7 UK households with children - 15% of households - are reported to be suffering from food insecurity.¹ The near 3,000 food banks operating in the UK are seeing demand still increasing.² Trussell Trust tell me that 92% of the near 3 million meals they distributed last year went to first time food bank users.

Food insecurity is like the tip of an iceberg, a surface signal of a more profound but largely unseen poverty peril.

This important report by End Furniture Poverty opens the front door on the lives of discomfort being lived in millions of British homes. The compounded effect of the austerity years means, even when there is food, there may be no table or a chair to eat it from.

How can we expect our children to thrive at school if they are forced to sleep on sofas or share a mattress on the floor with siblings? How can they develop healthily when the evening meal is a takeaway or ready meal because their home has no fridge or cooker? Schools should not need washing machines to clean dirty school uniforms because pupils lack appliances at home.



End Furniture Poverty are clear; furniture poverty is a public health emergency and the severely negative impact it has on the physical and mental health of those affected creates even more pressure on our struggling NHS and other public sector services. It will mean families struggle to function in society, to maintain jobs, seek training opportunities to improve their employability, or maintain tenancies.

This report highlights that the groups most at risk of furniture poverty are the very groups that, as a society, we should always strive to protect, such as those with disabilities, single parent families, care leavers and social housing tenants.

It offers immediate and pragmatic solutions that offer sustainable paths out of furniture poverty. Furniture reuse charities and our Multibanks offer one possible route; utilising quality pre-loved items that families no longer need or new surplus stock from businesses and redistributing them to those who need them.

This End Furniture Poverty report challenges the social housing sector to do more by pledging to furnish at least 10% of their stock. Survivors of domestic abuse or those moving from the care system or homelessness should not be moved into empty boxes.

And it shows the good practice possible to local authorities across the UK if the Government's Crisis and Resilience Fund as deployed by the Scottish Welfare Fund and the Welsh Discretionary Assistance Fund to provide essential furniture and appliances were to be followed.

A house is not a home if there are no furnishings, if there are no chairs, no tables, no beds, and no floor coverings. But as Nelson Mandela said, "Like slavery and apartheid, poverty is not natural. It is man made and it can be overcome and eradicated by the actions of human beings."

We have the means and the will to turn empty houses into furnished homes. It is to overcome the furniture poverty that afflicts six million people that this report is dedicated.

Anton Brown



CLAIRE DONOVAN FOREWORD

Director of End Furniture Poverty

In the three years since our last examination of the Extent of Furniture Poverty, there have been many changes. Our team has doubled from two to four, we are now a registered charity in our own right, the End Furniture Poverty Foundation, and we have expanded our work to include lobbying in Westminster.

Sadly, what hasn't changed is the number of people living in furniture poverty however our commitment to ending furniture poverty is as strong as ever.

We have worked tirelessly to support and encourage the social housing sector to provide more furnished tenancy schemes with successes across the country. We continue to scrutinise the availability of local authority crisis support across the UK with our annual local welfare reports, and we have been focusing on how furniture poverty affects different groups of people, including survivors of domestic abuse and those moving out of homelessness.

We have been heartened by the number of MPs who have been eager to meet with us and who have pledged their support for our work and the willingness of civil servants to engage with us, notably the Decent Homes team in the Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government and the Crisis and Resilience Fund team in the Department for Work and Pensions.

National news organisations including the [BBC](#), [ITV](#), [the Guardian](#), [the Times](#) and more have helped us to raise awareness of the issue of furniture poverty and we are immensely grateful to Gordon Brown for his support for our work.

There are a wide range of charities who we work closely with, including our Crisis Support Working Group and many local charities in Liverpool where we are based.

The entire team at our group of charities, FRC Group, are dedicated to our shared mission and their hard work provides the resources that allow us to carry out our activities so we thank them all.



Now we need ministers to engage with us. To listen to our evidence, to understand that there is not enough support for people living in furniture poverty and to acknowledge the devastating impact that this has on their health and wellbeing which should shame us all.

We need change but we have the solutions. These are pragmatic, sustainable and deliverable solutions that can transform the lives of millions of people in the UK and help them to lead more fulfilling and better lives. People need homes, not empty boxes, homes where they can get a good night's sleep in a comfortable bed, where they can prepare and eat decent food, sit together as a family to relax, eat and study. Homes where they are not walking on dangerous floors and can close curtains at night to feel safe.

The recommendations in this report show how together we can End Furniture Poverty and we are here to lead the way.

ABOUT END FURNITURE POVERTY

End Furniture Poverty is the campaigning and social research arm of FRC Group, a collection of charities and 100% not-for-profit social businesses. FRC Group has been providing furniture, both new and preloved, to people living in Furniture Poverty for over 35 years; reducing and ultimately eradicating Furniture Poverty is FRC Group's core mission.

End Furniture Poverty was created in 2015 to raise awareness of the issue of Furniture Poverty; to improve our understanding of the consequences and the reality of living in Furniture Poverty; and to develop evidence-based solutions to ensure that everyone has access to the essential furniture and white goods needed to participate in society and lead a secure life.

End Furniture Poverty work closely with the grant making sector, the preloved furniture sector and the social housing sector. Currently we are undertaking a campaign to Make a House a Home by ensuring that at least 10% of social housing properties are let as furnished. Information about this campaign can be found on our website, along with a myriad of useful research, guidance and support.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank everyone who took the time to share their stories about the impact of living without essential furniture items. This includes the four people who took part in our in-depth interviews and the ten people who took part in our two focus groups. Sharing personal stories, particularly when it involves reliving traumatic life events or current challenges, is never easy. What you have shared with us will fundamentally help us drive change, so thank you.

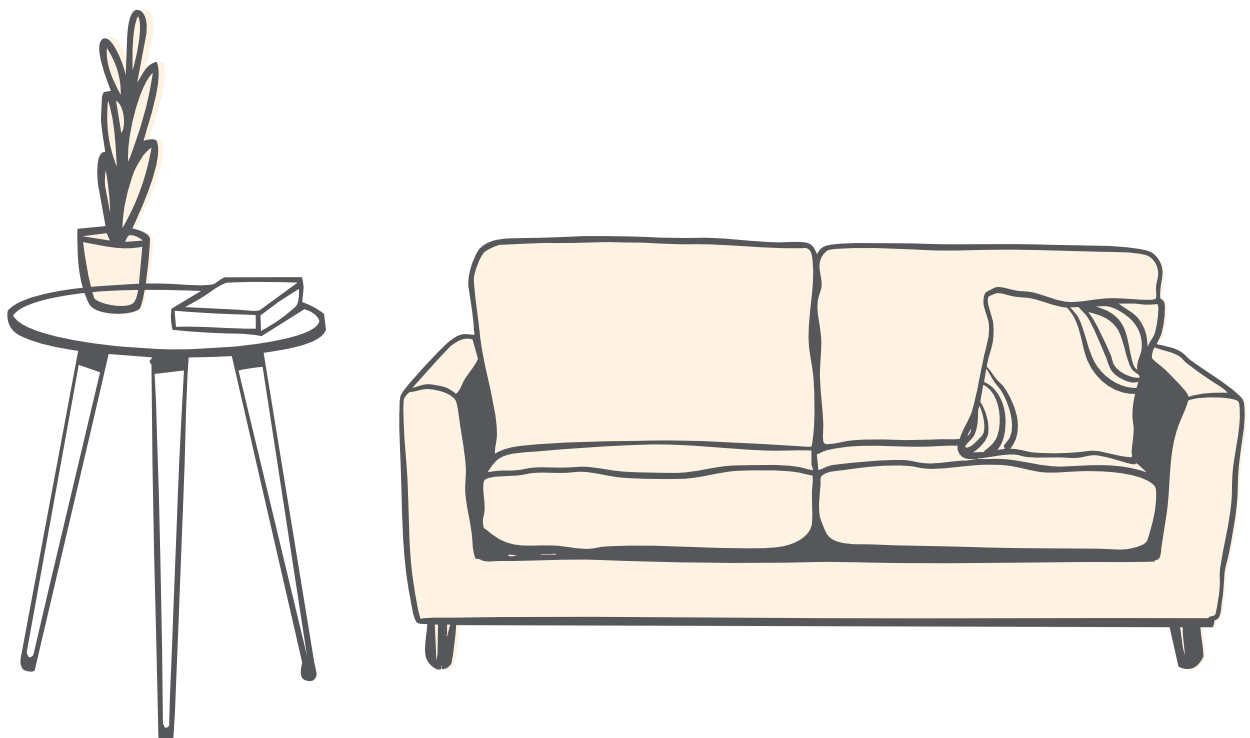
Furnishing Futures, Citizens Advice Manchester and the Magpie Project also shared stories with us which were invaluable additions to our report.

We are grateful to the National Centre for Social Research, who we commissioned to carry out our national survey, as they took a great deal of time to work through the findings with us. Their patience and expertise were very much appreciated.

For their ongoing support, we also wish to thank the Chartered Institute of Housing and Fusion21 Foundation who have consistently worked with and supported End Furniture Poverty in recent years.

It is also important to extend our gratitude to Gordon Brown who has written a foreword for this report and campaigned tirelessly to reduce poverty and support vulnerable people across the UK. Also, Carmel Nolan for facilitating such a fruitful relationship and fostering collaboration for EFP within Gordon Brown's office.

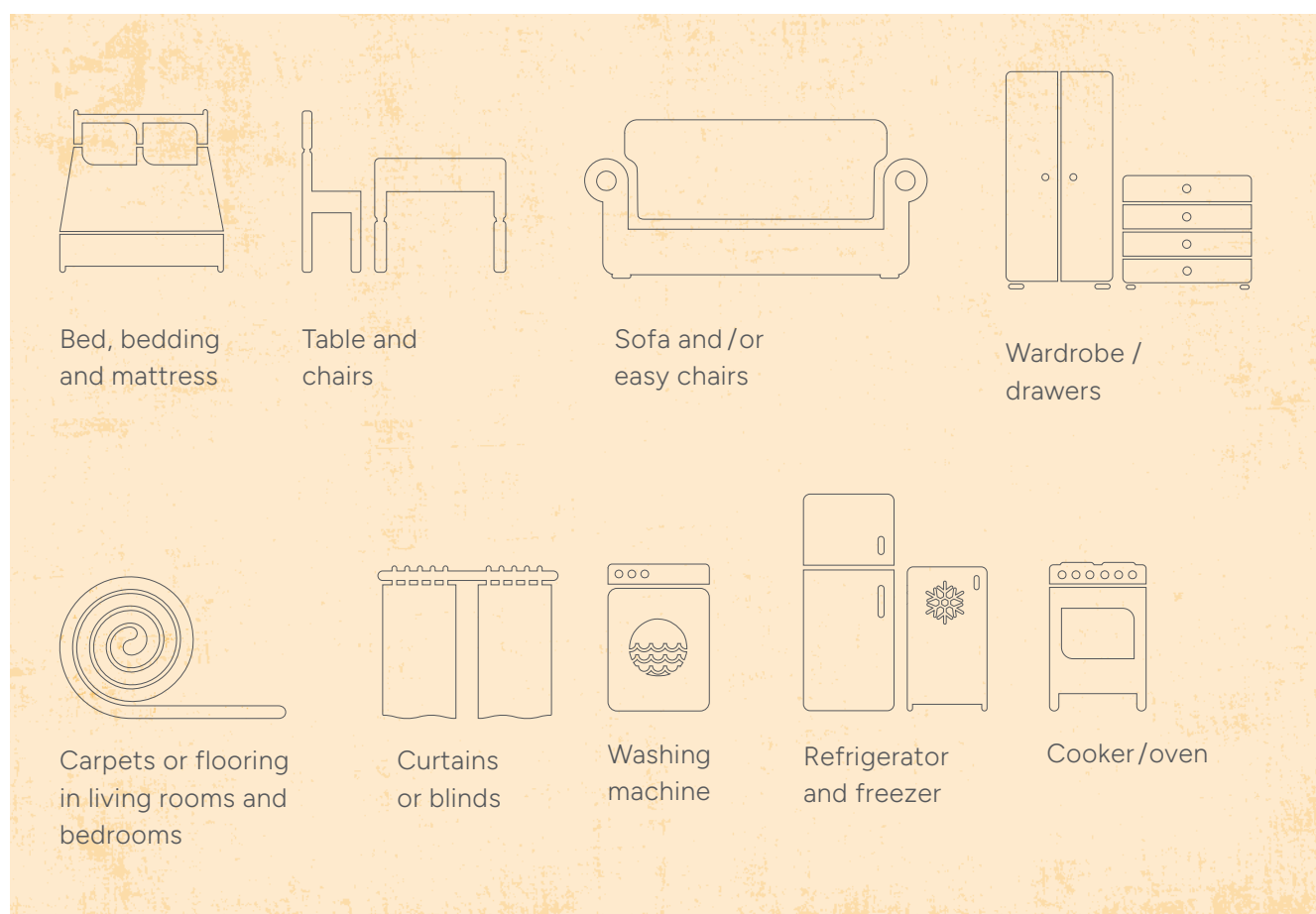
Additionally, we thank Danny Beales, MP for Uxbridge and South Ruislip, and Paula Barker, MP for Liverpool Wavertree, who have championed the work of End Furniture Poverty in Parliament, as well as all of the MPs who have taken the time to meet with us and are supporting our campaign.



ABOUT THE ESSENTIAL FURNITURE ITEMS

End Furniture Poverty's list of the essential furniture items was drawn up through a national survey, to establish an informed consensus on which items are necessary to achieve a basic standard of living.

The Essential Items are:



For a full discussion, please see End Furniture Poverty (2018) 'Essential Items List', Available at: <https://endfurniturepoverty.org/research-campaigns/understanding-furniture-poverty/the-essential-items/>

KEY FINDINGS

- Millions of people are still living without the essential furniture and appliances. When we compare the findings over time, **there is no clear evidence of a change in the overall levels of furniture poverty.** This suggests that furniture poverty is a consistent challenge for many people living in the UK.
- Deep furniture poverty, or the absence of three or more items, continues to persist. It has also not decreased.
- In 2022, we found that 7.85 million essential items were missing from British homes, and in 2025, we found no evidence that this has changed significantly, with 8.1 million essential items missing.
- **Furniture poverty is a public health crisis.** Living without the essential items of furniture causes vast harm to people's physical and mental health.
- Of those in furniture poverty, **27% report severe impacts on their physical health** and **32% report severe impacts on their mental health.**
- Social renters are far more likely to report that furniture poverty has an extremely or very negative impact on their health than other tenure types:
 - Of those in furniture poverty, **51% of social renters** reported extremely or very negative impacts on their physical health compared to **21% of homeowners** and **17% of private renters.**
 - We see similar proportions with mental health. **62% of social renters** report a very negative or an extremely negative impact of furniture poverty, **versus 23% of homeowners** and **21% of private renters.**
- There are certain groups more at risk of furniture poverty than others:
 - **Social renters are four times more likely** to be in furniture poverty than homeowners, and **private renters are three times more likely** than homeowners.
 - People living on **£1,000 per month or less** are almost **four times more likely** to be in furniture poverty than those on **more than £2500** a month. Those on **£1,001–£1,500 per month** are **around twice as likely.**
 - People from **ethnic minority backgrounds** have approximately double the odds of being in furniture poverty than those of a White British background.
 - People with a **disability that affects their day-to-day** life are almost **twice as likely** to experience furniture poverty.
- Many households are teetering on the edge of furniture poverty. **Almost a quarter of households** could not afford to replace broken furniture and **almost 1 in 5** could not afford to replace broken electrical goods.

Our survey tells us a simple story: furniture poverty isn't going away. Without stronger action, it never will.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Our research highlights the level of furniture poverty over time, and it remains persistently high. It is a long-term problem that requires long-term solutions. End Furniture Poverty will continue to work with all relevant partners, politicians, social landlords, businesses and the third sector to develop the necessary solutions. In the meantime, there are some crucial steps that we believe should be immediately implemented:

Government

- The Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF) must have an explicit focus on furniture and appliances, and 20% of the Fund should be ringfenced for this provision.
- However, it is important that the CRF enhances and does not replace Local Welfare Assistance (LWA). Every local authority should retain a stand-alone LWA scheme that is separate to the CRF to secure the future of LWA.
- Local Welfare Assistance needs to be available in every local authority. It should be a mandatory service to shield it from turbulent local government finances.
- The Crisis and Resilience Fund should continue after the Spending Review period of 2028/29 to ensure crisis support can continue in England. LWA has become increasingly reliant on government funding streams, and permanence of the CRF would enable local authorities to plan for the long-term.
- The new Decent Homes Standard sadly failed to include the provision of floor coverings in all habitable rooms as a minimum requirement. The proposed pilot to develop ways the sector can support tenants with flooring and furnishings must be swift, substantive and include minimum requirements for landlords to meet.
- The Government should require social landlords to offer furnished tenancies to all new and existing tenants who are living in furniture poverty and in receipt of full means-tested benefits.

Social Housing

- Our analysis shows that the percentage of social homes let as furnished went from 2% to 3%. The Government and social housing sector need to continue to work together to move towards a minimum of 10% of social housing stock being let as fully furnished.
- The social housing sector should immediately stop the removal of flooring of a reasonable quality from properties when tenants leave, and instead clean and leave it in place for incoming tenants.
- All social landlords should introduce a furnished tenancy service and offer it to all new and existing tenants who are living in furniture poverty and in receipt of full means-tested benefits.
- All social landlords should look at their voids standard and include flooring and decoration as a minimum standard.

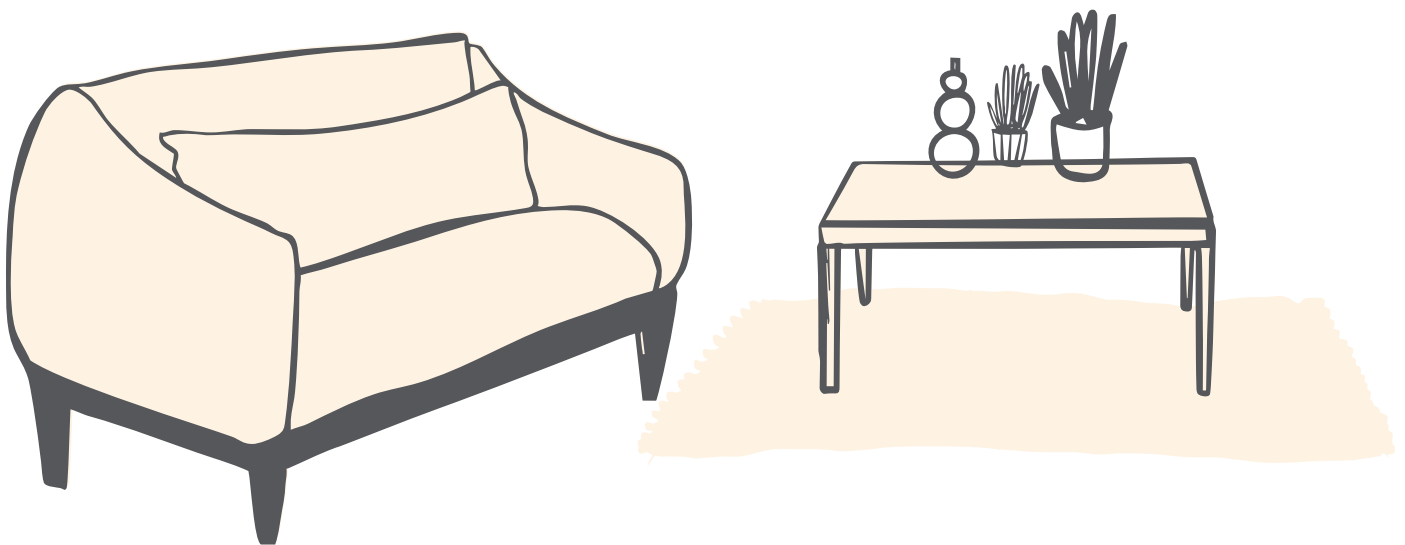
Reuse

- All social landlords should introduce furniture reuse schemes to maximise the utility of furniture and appliances left behind in properties. This may be ideal for tenants missing one or two items of essential furniture.
- Local authorities should develop furniture reuse services as part of their bulky household waste collection contracts to provide a stock of preloved items to gift and sell at low cost to residents. This could be delivered in conjunction with local furniture reuse charities and could include surplus retail stock, working with businesses and charities like The Multibank.

Welfare

The Government have taken vital first steps to reduce poverty in the UK. However, they must still implement the recommendations of the 'Guarantee Our Essentials' campaign, with the requirement that Universal Credit should protect people from going without essentials. This should enshrine in legislation:

1. A legal minimum (the 'Essentials Guarantee') in Universal Credit – the standard allowance would need to at least meet this amount, and deductions (such as debt repayments to government, or because of the benefit cap) would not be allowed to reduce support below that level.
2. An independent process to regularly review the Essentials Guarantee level, based on the cost of essentials (such as food, utilities and vital household items) for the adults in a household (excluding rent and council tax).



CONTEXT

Poverty in the UK

Poverty is a perpetual and ongoing issue in the UK. Millions of people continue to be stuck in hardship with austerity, wage stagnation, and high inflation all contributing factors. The current Labour Government have set out ambitious plans to turn the tide on deprivation, but we are yet to see the full fruits of these policies.

Unfortunately, poverty has become a fact of life for many. More than 1 in 5 people in the UK (21%) are in poverty – 14.3 million people.³ While this has remained broadly stable since the end of the pandemic, this figure also shows how entrenched hardship has become. It has been over 20 years since the last time we saw a prolonged period of falling poverty.⁴ Moreover, this has a human cost. Of the poorest fifth of households, 69% (4.1 million people) stated they were living without essentials. Additionally, 55% of these households (3.2 million people) had cut back on food or went hungry.⁵ This is unacceptable.

Fundamentally, one of the reasons behind this is that earnings have not kept up with inflation. Even though price rises are not as high as they were in 2022, the cumulative inflationary pressure on households means they face a much higher cost of living.

Consequently, real household incomes fell again between 2022/23 and 2023/24, by 2%.⁶ Alongside this, household debt and arrears have ballooned. Citizens Advice have found that 1 in 4 people (27%) are currently behind on at least one bill. Nationally, levels of household debt and benefit arrears have reached an estimated total of £22 billion.

Furniture Poverty

It is important we take in the broader context of poverty in the UK before we discuss furniture poverty. Furniture poverty is the inability to afford or access the basic furniture, appliances and furnishings that provide a household with a socially acceptable standard of living.⁸ We find that people in poverty often address more urgent needs first such as food, energy, and housing before a lack of essential furniture and appliances. Nevertheless, these essential items are vital to lead a fulfilling life.

In this report we address a range of furniture poverty experiences. On the one hand is deep furniture poverty, where a household is living without three or more essential furniture and appliance items. They may even be experiencing furniture destitution, where a household has none or very few of the items they need. On the other end is furniture insecurity, where a household has the essential items of furniture for now, but they would be unable to afford to replace any items that break. Both ends of the spectrum, plus the full range of experiences between these two points, present their own distinctive difficulties.

Access to Furniture

We still have a long way to go before access to furniture meets the demand. EFP have continued our research into the landscape and have found that furniture supply for low-income households has contracted even more since the last Extent of Furniture Poverty report in 2022.

Local Welfare Assistance (LWA) is one of the main routes for people to receive furniture and appliance support at a time of crisis from their local authority, yet LWA has deteriorated year on year. The last Extent of Furniture Poverty report predicted that the number of local authorities who have closed their LWA schemes would rise as local authority budgets were increasingly stretched, and it was right.⁹ At the time of the publication of that report, 2023, 35 local authorities had closed their schemes. At the time of our last report on crisis support in October 2025, that number had risen to 48. This means that the number of people without access to a LWA scheme has risen from 14 million to a staggering 17.9 million people.¹⁰

The Household Support Fund (HSF) has provided much needed extra funding to the crisis support landscape since its inception in 2021, but this does not necessarily mean people have received more help with furniture and appliances. In March 2025, (and on several other occasions), The Minister of State for Housing, Communities, and Local Government Matthew Pennycook MP said that “people in need may be able to get help for essential furniture from their local council through the ‘Household Support Fund’ and other services available locally” while responding to written and oral questions.¹¹ However, EFP’s research has found that this is far from the case. For the financial year 2024/25, we found that only 1% of the HSF was spent directly on this provision.¹² Previous years had similar levels of furniture spend.

Those moving into the social housing sector often enter unfurnished properties. Recent analysis of the Understanding Society survey has shown that in 2021, furnished tenancies in social housing increased from 2% to 3%.¹³ Despite the rise, there are still nowhere near enough furnished tenancies, particularly given that social housing tenants are typically on low incomes and may have come from traumatic circumstances – such as domestic abuse and homelessness.

It is worth remembering that unfurnished social homes are typically empty boxes. Not only do they not have beds, chairs and basic white goods, they also do not have floor or window-coverings.

EFP’s Cost Benefit Analysis of Local Welfare Assistance and Furnished Tenancies shows that helping people to access essential furniture and appliances saves the Government significant sums of money. We commissioned Local Partnerships, who are co-owned by HM Treasury, the Welsh Government, and the Local Government Association to carry out the analysis. It found for every £1 invested in LWA over £9 is saved in reduced demand for homelessness and social services support at local authority level. It also found that over £14 is saved by the wider public purse by reduced demand for other services such as health (NHS), criminal justice, and benefits (Department for Work and Pensions).¹⁴

Furnished tenancies are beneficial for both tenants and landlords. For tenants, there is reduced cost of furnishing their homes and an improvement in wellbeing through living in a stable environment. This means they also have greater capacity to sustain the tenancy. For landlords, tenancies are less likely to terminate if they are furnished, leading to fewer voids and their associated costs, with rental arrears likely to reduce as well.¹⁵

Some Progress Has Been Made

It is important to acknowledge that since the last report we have had a new Government, and with that, new priorities. While the aforementioned poverty figures make for grim reading, there has been positive momentum from policymakers in ensuring that they are reversed. The recently released Child Poverty Strategy has ambitions to dramatically reduce child poverty this Parliament, and one of its flagship actions is the removal of the two-child limit to Universal Credit.¹⁶ This is the result of over a decade of campaigning by the End Child Poverty coalition, of which EFP is a member, and many other charities and campaigners. Getting rid of the limit will lift around 500,000 children out of poverty,¹⁷ the largest decline since the Wilson Governments.¹⁸ Similarly, the standard allowance of Universal Credit will be increased by 6% from April 2026 meaning a single person over 25, for example, will be £300 a year better off.¹⁹

The Government have also changed the maximum amount of debt deductions that can be taken from someone’s Universal Credit from 25% to 15%. This will make a big difference for people struggling to keep up with priority debt, as it will mean an average £420 extra per year in the pockets of 1.2 million people, many of which are in the poorest households.²⁰ All of these reforms to the welfare system promise to make a difference to the lives of people on low incomes.

They are also acting on poorly paid and insecure work. The national minimum wage will be raised by 6.7% to £12.71 per hour in April 2026 and, for the first time, the Low Pay Commission is factoring the cost of living directly into their recommendations to ensure a “genuine living wage”.²¹ Despite row backs on the abolition of zero hour contracts, from 2026/27 employers must offer guaranteed hours to workers on zero or low-hour contracts who regularly work a set number of hours.²²

Furthermore, we have had the introduction of a new Crisis and Resilience Fund which will replace the HSF from 1st April, 2026. It is a multi-year settlement, (albeit only for three years), for local authorities to provide support to vulnerable residents in crisis. Long-term funding was consistently called for in The Future of Local Welfare inquiry, co-authored by End Furniture Poverty, and it was good to see this call heeded.²³

What Have EFP Been Doing Since the Last Report?

As part of EFP’s mission to end furniture poverty, we engage with policymakers and social housing providers to help drive change in policies associated with social housing and action from providers, including the above reforms. Since the last Extent of Furniture Poverty report, we have expanded our work in these areas by dedicating resources to working directly with social housing providers. We work with those who already have programmes in place to support their tenants with the essential items of furniture and those who do not.

This activity has involved increasing the number of close relationships with landlords offering furnished tenancy schemes to showcase their good practice, to support them to further develop their programmes, and to connect them with other providers intending to offer furniture for them to learn from experience. Similarly, we have expanded the resources available on our website to support landlords who are looking to tackle furniture poverty. We have published new guidance and Q&A documents as well as our updated Blueprint for Furniture Provision in Social Housing – which is a comprehensive and detailed guide to establishing furniture provision.

We now have a dedicated team member whose role is to help social landlords to explore furniture provision and to work with them to create new schemes, as well as preparing our range of resources, thanks in part to funding from the Fusion21 Foundation.

We have successfully supported ten social landlords in the introduction of furnished tenancy schemes and have been running a productive ‘housing summit’ model, working with public sector partners and local MPs to bring social landlords together to discuss furniture provision.

We have also engaged closely with policymakers and the team consulting on the modernised Decent Homes Standard (DHS) to make an evidence-based case for floor coverings to be included in the new standard. We are very disappointed that flooring has been removed from the DHS after pressure from the housing sector, as this was a real opportunity for England to move into line with existing provision in Wales. The Welsh Housing Standard already includes flooring provision in all habitable rooms.

There is evidence from Wales to suggest the positive impact flooring has on a tenancy. In Monmouthshire Housing Association, the change in policy to provide flooring in all new lets was initially piloted in flats. The project evaluation showed the impacts of the pilot were both positive and numerous, including increased tenant satisfaction, improved staff satisfaction, reduced refusal rates, targets achieved on void turnaround time, and more bids per advertised property.²⁴ We have also consulted with the DHS team on the inclusion of a best practice guide for furniture provision and we hope to work with them on the production of this in the coming months.

At the end of 2025, the Government released their National Plan to End Homelessness²⁵ and their strategy to end Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG).²⁶ Both policy areas are major priorities for EFP, and we have produced two briefing papers^{27,28} on the ways furniture poverty specifically impacts these groups. Partly as a result of our paper on Furniture Poverty: A Challenge for Domestic Abuse Recovery and Resettlement, the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) bronze accreditation is being updated to include support for survivors to access furniture and appliances.

We Have a Long Road Ahead

Despite this positive work, there is still a long way to go in ensuring those on a low income have access to essential furniture and appliances. Incomes are projected to fall during this Parliament, despite the aforementioned work of the Government, while the cumulative effect of rising prices means households face a much higher cost of living than in 2021.²⁹ The Joseph Rowntree Foundation and Trussell found that, even with the increase coming in April 2026, a single person on Universal Credit will be £1,000 per year short of what they estimate is needed.³⁰

Housing still makes up a significant proportion of people's monthly outgoings and, despite the Renter's Rights Act offering protection against Section 21 notices for private renters, costs have still soared. Analysis from the Resolution Foundation found the average monthly rent in 2024 was more than £200 above affordable levels, showing no sign of decreasing in 2026.³¹ Essentials like food and bills are still unaffordable for many of those on the lowest incomes, with it being unfeasible for those families to spend a large amount of money on an essential furniture or appliance item like a cooker or fridge.

What is Different in This Year's Report Compared to 2022?

In this year's Extent of Furniture Poverty report, we wanted to get a more rounded idea of the impact that living without essential items has on an individual/family's physical and mental health. In 2022, we explored this with an online survey of 343 individuals living without at least one essential furniture item, and we asked how furniture poverty was affecting their physical health, mental health, and social wellbeing. For this report, we included survey questions about the negative physical and mental health impact of living without each essential item of furniture. This helps us to understand the extent to which people are negatively affected by furniture poverty and make the case for preventative public health measures.

We also undertook extra analysis via a logistic regression model to establish who is most at risk of furniture poverty. It looks at the link between different groups experiencing furniture poverty based on factors like tenure type, ethnicity, and income independently from each other. For more information on how this works see Methodology.

Another new addition to the 2026 version of the report is an in-depth understanding of the concept of furniture insecurity. This is data on who would be unable to afford to replace furniture or electrical goods if they broke. It will give us our clearest idea ever about the people teetering on the edge of furniture poverty. This data was gathered via the Understanding Society survey.³²

The most important element of this year's report is the abundant accounts and case studies of furniture poverty that have been shared with us. The figures are shocking, but every experience of living without the essential items has a human story attached. It is vital that these stories drive our report so that the individual experience of furniture poverty is heard, and that its difficulties are acknowledged.

Living without the essential items erodes living standards and escalates costs. Furniture and appliances are often the most expensive items people need to acquire and, as a result, this poverty can be hard to leave behind. Given the Government's impetus to reduce hardship, it is an ideal time to grasp the true scale of furniture poverty, a form of deprivation that is often overlooked.

THE SCALE OF FURNITURE POVERTY

Our survey data has been gathered by the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) as part of their probability-based opinion panel survey.³² It is the most robust research that has been done on furniture poverty in the UK. Comparison between the two surveys has been rigorously checked for statistical significance and the findings can be applied to the general population.

Our surveys show that furniture poverty remains a widespread problem in the UK. In 2022, our research found that around five million adults were missing at least one essential item, with many missing several. In addition, we estimated that around one million children were also experiencing varying degrees of furniture poverty. In 2025, we found no significant difference in the prevalence of furniture poverty in the UK (an estimate of four million adults and one million children, respectively). This shows that for many, furniture poverty is a fact of life, and its severity has persisted since 2022. For a full breakdown of the 2022 and 2025 population estimates and statistical testing, see Appendix 2. Furniture poverty has outlived the surge in inflation in 2022 and the post-pandemic recovery, so it is unlikely that it can be explained by short-term pressures. Clearly, the underlying drivers are stubborn.

Behind the large, headline numbers there are individuals and families who are struggling with furniture poverty.

Rosie spoke to us about her experience of being awarded an unfurnished social home after a period of domestic abuse, and the subsequent furniture poverty. She and her two children, one of whom is disabled, received only basic items from the council, such as carpets and some white goods. However, she had to source most other essential items herself, including a bed, and had to rely heavily on help from family and friends. She said: **“when we moved in, it was awful because I didn’t have the bed for him”. This led to her, her partner who is also disabled, and her son all sharing a bed which disrupted sleep and affected the whole family.**

When asked what impact needing to share a bed with her son when she first moved into her home had on his development she said:

“When he goes to sleep, I put him in his own bed, but he’ll just keep waking up. It’s because of the situation [living without a bed for him initially] ...he squishes [my partner] around, he can’t move. And you can fall off the bed”.

Clearly, Rosie’s son’s development has been disrupted because of this situation.

As previously stated, it is easy to get caught up in the enormity of the figures we are discussing, but it is vital that we remember that furniture poverty affects the lives of six million individuals. Rosie’s story is one example of the enduring reality of life for so many adults and children across the UK.

The Depth of Furniture Poverty

“You just sit there and you’re staring at the wall, and you think, how did I get here?”

– David, EFP interviewee

The differences in the depth of furniture poverty also remain from 2022 to 2025. Some people are missing more items than others, and we say that anyone missing three or more items is suffering from ‘deep furniture poverty’. When we compare the findings of the number of people in deep furniture poverty over time, there is no clear evidence of any substantive change in overall levels. As in 2022, there are one million people missing three or more items of furniture, with many in ‘furniture destitution’.

It is concerning that so many people are experiencing such hardship, particularly as the more items someone is missing the more difficult it becomes to get out of furniture poverty.

What Essential Items are People Missing?

Still, there are millions of households living in furniture poverty and its impact becomes clearer when we look at exactly which items are missing. In 2022 we reported that there were 7.85 million essential items missing from British homes, and in 2025 we have found no evidence that it has changed. Now, there are over 8 million items missing.

These items are not luxuries – they are the basics that make a house a home. Without them, families face practical and emotional hardships: whole families sitting on the floor instead of sofas, walking around on bare floorboards, or unable to eat fresh food due to having nowhere to chill or cook it.

“Not being able to provide my daughter with the basic home necessities, isn’t something I wish on any mother...The larger items like beds, a sofa, flooring and even the blinds - I probably would’ve gone without for a while until I could save up. It probably would’ve taken years. When I was at the refuge, I spent many sleepless nights wondering what would happen when the day came that I was awarded a home. It actually took the joy out of the process, wondering how I would furnish my home with a small child”

– Mandy, a Furnishing Futures beneficiary.

Given that the number of items missing from people’s homes sits at 8 million, the cost of addressing furniture poverty remains huge. When using an average cost of £350 per item, (adjusted for inflation from the last report), EFP estimate we would need £2.8bn to end furniture poverty. While significant, it would only make up a fraction of the UK’s overall public expenditure. Our cost benefit analysis of local authority crisis support found that for every £1 spent on a range of support, including furniture and appliance provision, between £9 and £14 was saved across the wider public purse. Similarly, every £1 spent on a furnished tenancy scheme in social housing saved over double for the public purse.³⁴

Below we examine our estimated range of how many of each item are missing in the UK. We do this using a confidence interval (CI). A CI is the range of values that the estimate of each missing item can fall in. For a full comparison of the central estimates of the number of missing items between 2022 and 2025, please see Appendix 2.



Adult and Child Beds

Between 210,000 and 640,000 adults are missing a place for their child to sleep

Between 210,000 and 720,000 adults are living without a bed for themselves

“The children have been sleeping on the floor with us, which has been very hard. As a parent, having to watch your children go without necessities, you know, things like a bed... having to put their clothes on the floor. It’s just it’s demoralising” – Olivia³⁵

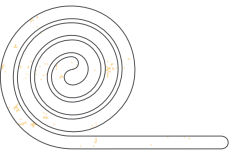
Sleep is fundamental to an individual’s health and wellbeing, perhaps more than anything else. Our mental and physical health are dramatically affected if we are not getting a good night’s sleep (for more detail, go to The Consequences of Furniture Poverty section). When we are chronically tired, it can affect our participation in society at every level.

This is especially devastating to families with young children. A mother and child working with the Magpie Project in Newham were told where they would be moving at around 5pm on the day they were made homeless. When they reached the new property there was no furniture at all, and no prospect of getting any. This meant the mother and child had to sleep fully clothed on the floor under their coats for warmth.

A child not having their own bed to sleep in has a huge impact on their development. Sleep is the time when children’s bodies recharge and retain the information they have learned throughout the day. Sleep is when hormones are balanced, blood pressure is lowered, a child’s immune system is regulated, and illnesses are fought.

Time for Bed is an EFP appeal that has been providing beds to children living within the Merseyside area. A bed has the potential to transform a child’s life by allowing them to thrive in school and fully rest and develop, making them happier and healthier. One of the referral partners of Time for Bed said that securing a bed for one of the children they were working with *“allowed him to feel ‘normal’. He is like all his peers and at his age, 8 years old, that is so important”*.³⁶

Individuals and families being forced to sleep on the floor or all pack into a singular bed is devastating and has wide reaching ramifications. Living without beds for adults and children is a problem that cannot be ignored.



Flooring

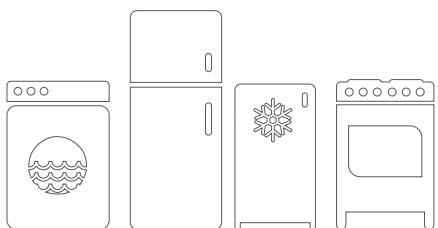
Between 800,000 and 1.6 million people are living without flooring

“When I moved out of my last council property, I had to rip out the flooring I’d only just laid - otherwise I would have been fined!” – Halima, a focus group participant

Living without flooring continues to be a major issue in the UK, particularly in social lets. As Halima explained, it is common practice for landlords to rip flooring out between tenants or force the outgoing tenant to do it for them. Often, the properties are left with cement floors or old floorboards that are hard, dirty and cold. This means millions of people are facing the choice of flooring an entire property on a low income or simply living without. Despite this, the Government has chosen to remove the requirement for flooring provision in the new Decent Homes Standard after pressure from the social housing sector.

The Longleigh Foundation’s survey of social housing tenants found that the costs of fitting floor coverings in tenants’ homes often exceeded £1,000. Of the respondents, 59% were using their own savings to pay for flooring, 24% took out a loan and 13% borrowed from friends or family.³⁷ For many, the steep costs are insurmountable.

Living in a property with no flooring is a significant health hazard, particularly for children and for those with poor mobility. One respondent to the Resident Voice Index Survey reported the effect that this was having on his family: “I feel bad for my children as they kept injuring their feet on the floorboard and nails that were left”.³⁸ It is also very difficult to heat a home that has no flooring at all. Sarah, who was awarded a social home after escaping domestic abuse while pregnant, talked about how much she was spending on gas “because it was freezing with the concrete floors”.



White Goods

Between 120,000 and 540,000 people are living without a fridge

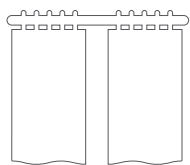
Between 200,000 and 600,000 people are living without a cooker

Between 250,000 and 710,000 people are living without a washing machine

Between 410,000 and 970,000 people are living without a freezer

“I live in a one bed flat and don’t have [a cooker]. I have been here for two years and have been using a microwave and kettle to cook my food” – Fiona

Essential white goods, such as a fridge, freezer, cooker, and washing machine, are vital to achieve a socially acceptable standard of living. Living without can add thousands of pounds to a family’s yearly bill and it can be deeply distressing. We heard of one person who must travel to a family member’s house to wash his clothes or risk spending a large proportion of his income on the laundrette. Linda, an EFP interviewee, lives without a washing machine and said that she cannot afford to wash her clothes elsewhere. “Laundrettes are what? £8, £9, £10 a go. I just can’t afford that. It’s [also] lugging it there and back because I don’t drive. It’s not really an option”. Many people rely on takeaways, cannot batch cook and freeze food to keep costs down, and/or have nowhere to chill medicine.



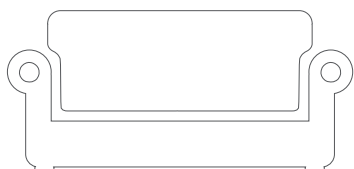
Window Coverings

Between 360,000 and 950,000 people are living without curtains or blinds

“Even blinds and curtains, oh my gosh, they cost extortionate amounts” – Daisy, a focus group participant

Curtains, blinds, or any form of window covering are vital for keeping a property warm and private. Their absence can cause huge distress for people coming from traumatic situations, particularly those fleeing domestic abuse.

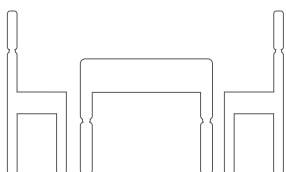
EFP's [Furniture Poverty: A Challenge for Domestic Abuse Recovery and Resettlement](#) policy paper detailed the anxiety and worry survivors go through when living without window coverings. One survivor detailed how unsafe having no curtains or blinds makes her feel: **"the biggest problem is the lack of curtains; I am suffering from PTSD and very paranoid. Our windows are open in front of opposite housing"**.³⁹ Everyone deserves to feel safe, comfortable and relaxed in their own home.



Sofa and/or Easy Chairs

Between 410,000 and 1.1 million people are living without a sofa or easy chairs on which to sit

Having a comfortable place to sit, relax, and unwind is essential for every household. Unfortunately, many people are forced to live without sofas or easy chairs and need to make do with other alternatives. In fact, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities, and Local Government, Steve Reed, talked about his family's lack of a sofa growing up, which meant the family had to sit in deck chairs in the living room.⁴⁰ No sofas or easy chairs mean families have nowhere to come together and it can cause feelings of immense shame and stigma, something explored in The Consequences of Furniture Poverty section.



Dining Table and Chairs

Between 1.8 and 2.4 million people are living without a dining table and chairs

Through our analysis, we found that a dining table is the item most likely to be missing. There are millions of people living without a place to eat, work, study and socialise as a family over a meal. A table and chairs are crucial for a child's development so they have a place to study and do their homework.



Wardrobes or Clothes Storage

Between 880,000 and 1.3 million people are living without clothes storage

Living without a wardrobe or somewhere to store clothes can be incredibly stressful. Imagine having no other option but to store all your clothes or other possessions on the floor, or in bin bags? Rosie, who we heard from at the start of the chapter, does not have a wardrobe for her daughter: **"she's got autism, because her clothes are on the floor, she gets frustrated and I get frustrated with the situation"**.

FURNITURE POVERTY BY DEMOGRAPHICS

What Has Changed Since 2022?

Our latest survey of 2,500 households shows a sobering truth: furniture poverty remains stubbornly consistent. Despite small year-on-year fluctuations, the overall picture is one of persistence rather than progress.

There have been no real major shifts between demographic groups since our last report in 2022. While some changes appear in the data, they are not large enough to be considered significant. However, our analysis suggests that furniture poverty has fallen among those in social housing and for people with life-limiting disabilities. Currently, our data does not allow us to identify the drivers of this change. It is possible that it reflects changes in people's circumstances, short-term support, or movement in and out of furniture poverty over time. Despite this, the problem is far from being solved for either group.

Furniture poverty is not disappearing. With no sign of improvement across most demographic groups, the evidence is clear: without targeted support, furniture poverty is likely to remain a fixed part of life for millions.

Between our surveys in 2022 and 2025, we found that the same groups continue to face the greatest challenges:

- **Income is still the main determinant of furniture poverty**, those on the lowest incomes are far more likely to be missing essential items.
- **Single-parent families** still report higher levels of need than other household types.
- People from **ethnic minority** backgrounds are still more affected than White British people.
- **Renters** are still more likely to experience furniture poverty than homeowners.
- **Unemployed people** are still the most affected economic activity group.
- **Younger people** are still more likely to be in furniture poverty.

These patterns mirror what we saw in 2022, showing that the problem is not shifting-it is stuck.

Social Renters

Although furniture poverty has slightly declined among social housing tenants, there are still too many living without essential items, especially when there are solutions that landlords could utilise. There has been some increased attention to furniture provision within parts of the social housing sector, including work by EFP with housing associations and social landlords. In the previous three years we have worked with landlords including Blackpool Coastal Homes, Riverside, SNG, Onward Homes, Cobalt, and others to help them set up their own furnished tenancy schemes and hardship funds. We have also worked with local authorities such as Liverpool City Council to bring local housing associations together on a furnished tenancy path. However, many social housing tenants remain stuck in furniture poverty which only serves to underline the need for consistent standards across the entire sector.

People with Life Limiting Disabilities

A similar pattern is seen among people with life-limiting disabilities, where furniture poverty has fallen but remains widespread. As outlined above, it is not yet clear what has driven this change.

Wider research continues to show that living with a disability makes you much more likely to experience poverty.⁴¹ Acquiring furniture that may be needed for specialised purposes can also be more expensive and challenging for disabled people on low incomes. People with life-limiting conditions continue to face significant barriers to affording basic furniture.

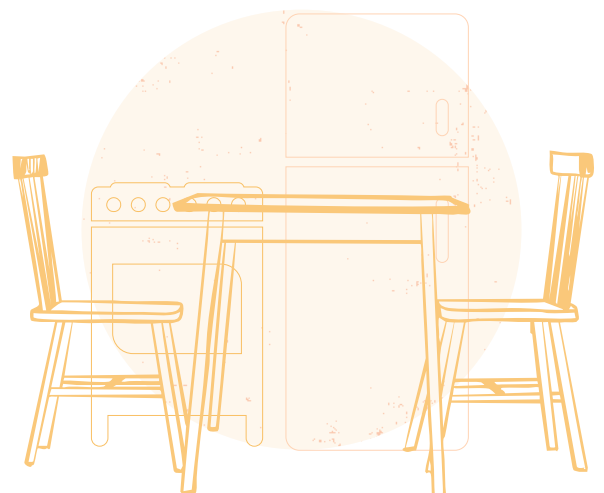
Behind the Numbers Many People Are Still Struggling

It is vital to remember that behind every statistic is a real person – a parent unable to afford safe flooring for their children or someone with no bed who is being forced to sleep on the floor again.

Kimberly, who was helped by Citizens Advice Manchester, was given an unfurnished social housing property – no washing machine, cooker or beds. Her only source of income is Universal Credit and due to multiple priority and non-priority debts she was struggling to furnish her home without support from organisations or access to grants. At the time that she contacted Citizens Advice, she had to travel to a family member's house to wash her clothes and does not have suitable sleeping arrangements. Two young children also live in the property, including a baby.

Kimberly's story of moving into an unfurnished social home is one of many examples that show the ongoing reality of furniture poverty for social housing tenants.

Without urgent action, furniture poverty will continue to trap families in hardship and undermine efforts to create fairer communities.



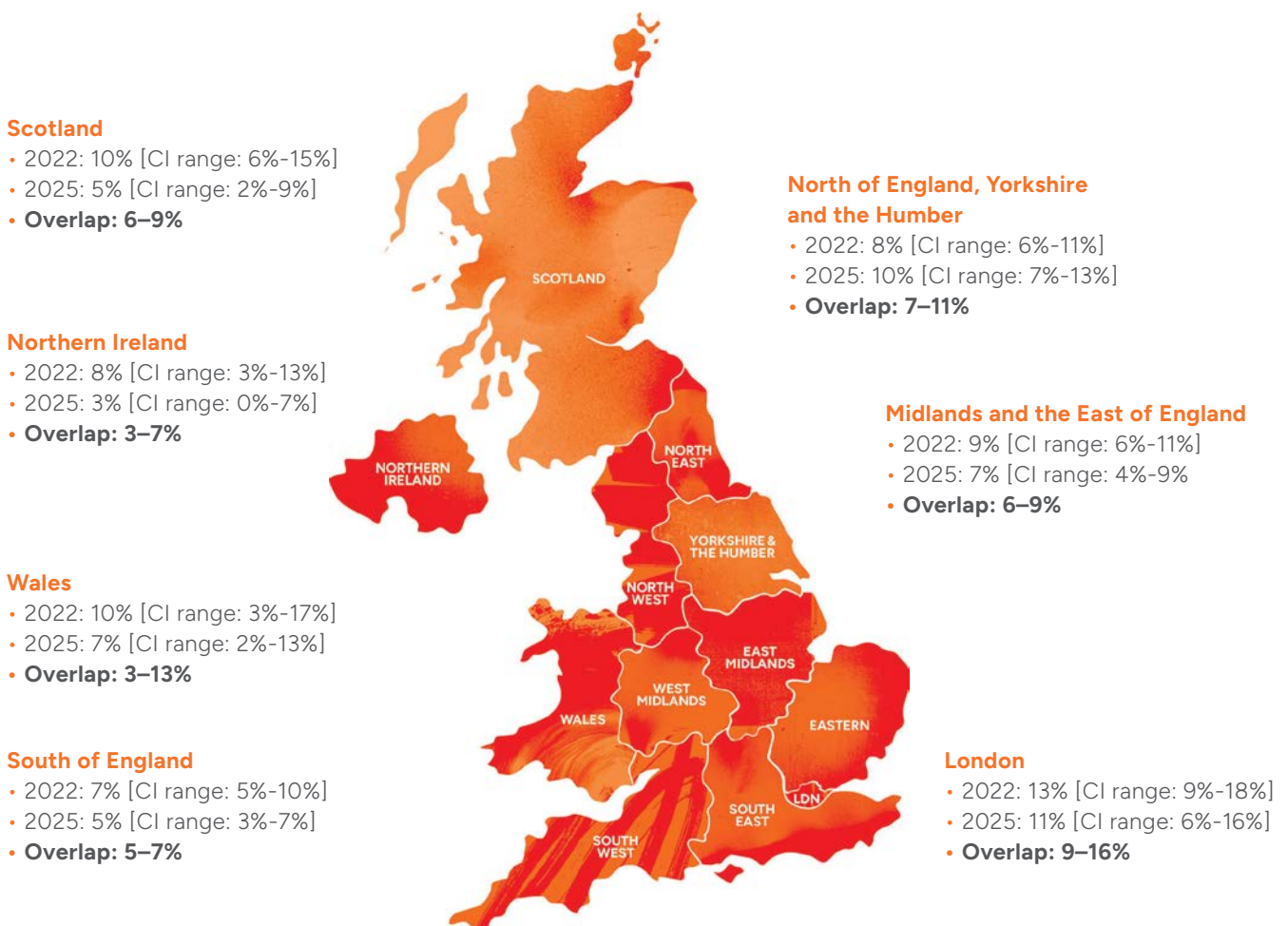
GEOGRAPHY

This section presents the number of adults experiencing furniture poverty by region in the UK. When comparing our results from 2025 to our first survey in 2022, we found no evidence of a statistically significant change in the levels of furniture poverty for any of the measured regions.

Although the regional estimates look different from one survey year to the next, the ranges around those estimates overlap in every region. These ranges (called 'confidence intervals') show how much uncertainty there is in the survey results. Because they overlap, we cannot say with confidence that the changes over time reflect substantive changes in furniture poverty. The differences may simply be due to normal variation that happens when you survey a sample of people. This is often the case for studies trying to measure experiences that affect a relatively small proportion of the population. For more information on this, please see the Methodology.

What our data does tell us is that furniture poverty remains a consistent challenge – a message that EFP encounters regularly in our work with local authorities, social landlords, and other charities. Demand for support remains high, and we are not observing clear signs of sustained improvement on the ground.

For our data to be robust, we combined certain geographic regions to give a larger sample size.



WHO IS MOST AT RISK OF FURNITURE POVERTY?

As shown in the previous section, furniture poverty does not affect everyone equally. People on low incomes, renters, disabled people and people from ethnic minority backgrounds are among the groups most likely to be affected.

The descriptive statistics presented earlier help to understand how furniture poverty is distributed across different groups and the scale of the issue. But many of these factors overlap – for example, people with lower incomes are more likely to rent their homes, and some groups face multiple disadvantages at once. This makes it difficult to identify whether certain characteristics genuinely increase the risk of furniture poverty, or whether they appear important because they coincide with other circumstances.

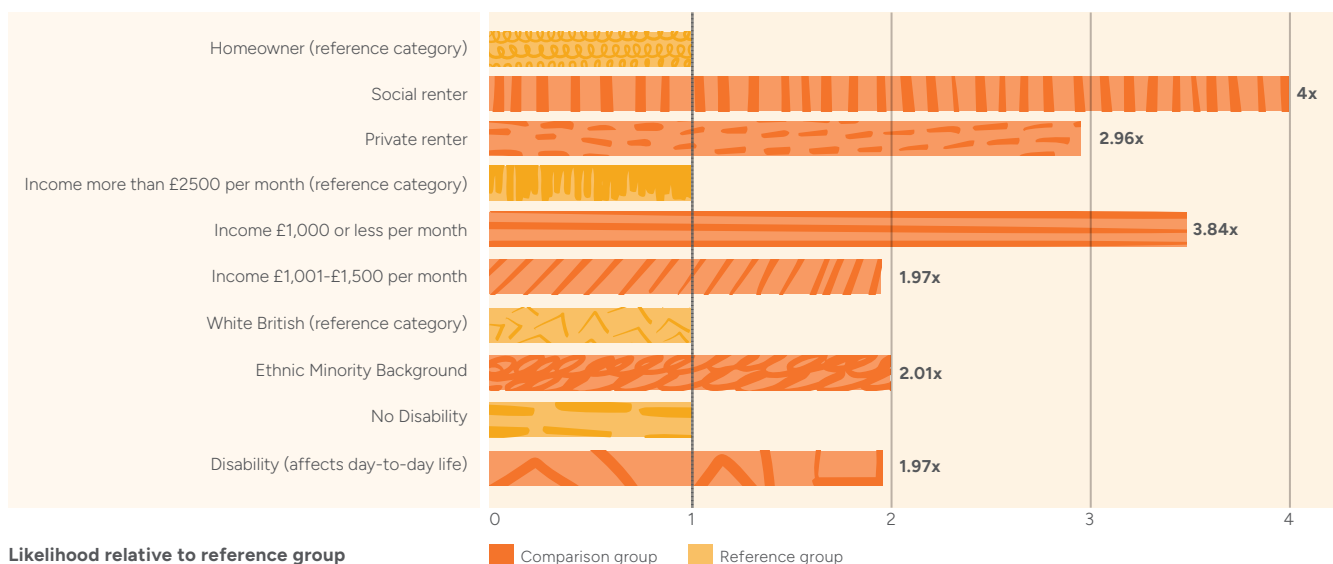
To explore this in more depth, we used statistical modelling that considers different factors together – including income, housing tenure, ethnicity, disability and geography. Our modelling draws on all our survey data currently available to provide the most reliable picture of who is at greatest risk. For more details on this, please see Appendix 3. This approach helps us understand which characteristics independently increase someone’s likelihood of experiencing furniture poverty.

By combining descriptive analysis with statistical modelling, we build a fuller picture of who is affected and why.

- The descriptive statistics show **how furniture poverty is distributed**.
- The modelling highlights **which underlying factors drive this risk**, even when wider circumstances are considered.

This combined approach strengthens the evidence behind our findings and supports more targeted action to reduce furniture poverty.

Figure 1: Who is Most at Risk of Furniture Poverty?



To reach the above results, we used eight variables that we saw as likely to influence whether someone was in furniture poverty (only the significant results were included in Figure 1). This enables us to examine the probability of someone experiencing furniture poverty by each of the key characteristics while holding each other characteristic constant:

- Housing tenure type
- Monthly equivalised income
- Age
- Ethnic group
- Disability status
- Economic activity
- Relationship status
- Urban/rural living

Housing Tenure Type

Housing tenure is one of the strongest predictors of furniture poverty when controlling for all the aforementioned factors.

- **Social renters** face the highest risk. They are around **four times more likely** to experience furniture poverty compared with homeowners.
- **Private renters** also face a significantly elevated risk, being almost **three times more likely** than homeowners.

These findings show the continuing impact of housing insecurity, affordability pressures and the long-term structural disadvantage experienced in the rented sectors — particularly social housing.

Social Renters

Even though the percentage of social renters in furniture poverty has dipped slightly in 2025, our analysis shows that social renters continue to face the highest underlying risk. This is after accounting for the hidden influences of income, employment status, disability status and ethnicity.

EFP has a significant body of research that supports this finding. We have found that the vast majority of social housing properties, (97%), are let as unfurnished, including without flooring. Almost half of the social renters are living without flooring because they cannot afford it, 500,000 people. When faced with the overwhelming cost of furnishing an entire property, they are left with no choice and are forced to live in furniture poverty.

Again, it is vital to remember the reality of what ‘living without’ means for people in social housing. Linda, one of our interviewees, has been living in social housing for eight years. She moved into a property that was entirely unfurnished, including flooring. She managed to buy a second-hand cooker and fridge when she first moved in, but these have since broken. Therefore, she lives without a cooker and a fridge as well as wardrobes, flooring and a washing machine.

On living without a cooker and fridge, she said:

“I’m literally just going to buy a pound a day meal that I can cook in the microwave because obviously the cooker just broke. I’ve got no fridge, so it’s minimum, it’s powdered milk and all that, but it’s been that long, I’m used to it”.

She washes and dries her clothes at her friend's house now, but beforehand she was: **"hand washing and leaving it to dry in the house, which was a nightmare in winter. And obviously the physical bit in the hand washing is quite extreme, isn't it?"**. She has not been able to get help from the local council, so her situation feels hopeless. Speaking on flooring, she said:

"I know myself and downstairs, they haven't got a carpet either. A lot of the lads next door, they've had to buy it themselves. I mean, I don't know how they've afforded it. You can't afford to especially on benefits. To carpet a house on benefits is too much. Each week you'd have to be able to pay but none of us can get credit. So, we're stuck there as well."

People coming into social housing often do so in traumatic circumstances. It may be someone who has been a victim of domestic abuse or transitioning out of homelessness, attempting to rebuild their lives with nothing. As Paula Barker MP so aptly said: **'We cannot in good conscience tell a woman she is safe now, hand her the keys to a flat, and then leave her standing in an empty shell of a home with no cooker, no bed, no washing machine'**.⁴²

The effect of furniture poverty for people in these circumstances can be extreme. We heard from Phoebe who said that she **"considered returning to the abusive relationship so my daughter would have a bed to sleep in"**. The fact that some women are in that position as a result of moving into an unfurnished social home is utterly unacceptable.

Private Renters

It is not just those in social housing who are at risk of furniture poverty; we have found that those who rent privately are three times more likely to be in furniture poverty than homeowners.

Clearly, there remains a consistent gulf between those who own their own home and those who rent. This is also reflected in the national English Housing Survey.

On average, mortgagors spent 19% of their household income on mortgage payments, whereas rent payments, without housing support included in income, made up an average of 39% of household income for both social and private renters.⁴³ For housing to be affordable, it should only take 30% of household income, and so the average of 39% negatively impacts many households.

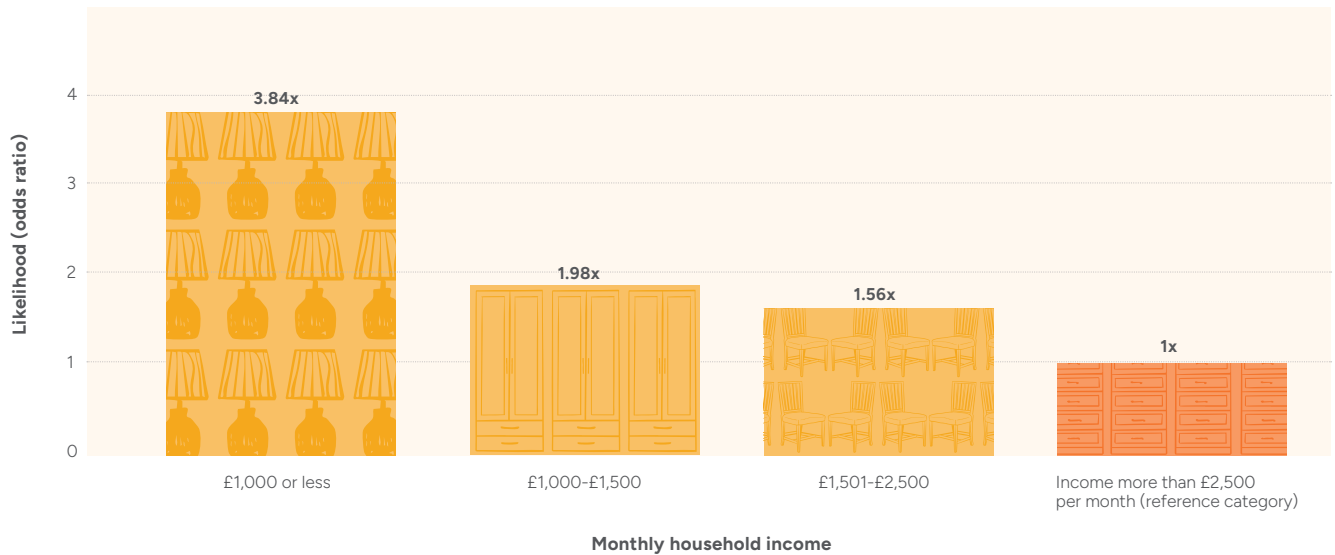
Renters are also much less likely to have savings - 52% of private renters reported that they had savings versus only 27% of social renters.⁴⁴ It is inevitable that renters find themselves living without essential items of furniture given their high housing costs and overall low financial resilience.

We spoke to a private renter, Greg, whose key appliances broke one by one, the cooker, the washing machine, and the freezer. He was not in the position to replace these items due to his significant energy debt, **"I was afraid to mention it to my landlord in case I was evicted, I know I would struggle to get another property at a similar price"**.

The Renters Rights Act, which comes into force in May 2026,⁴⁵ goes some way towards addressing fears like this by abolishing no fault evictions. However, more than 1.2 million private rented households have reported finding it difficult to pay rent,⁴⁶ and the Act does nothing to address the lack of affordable private rentals that could push some families into furniture poverty.

Income

Figure 2: Lower-income Households are Far More Likely to Experience Furniture Poverty



Unsurprisingly, income⁴⁷ is one of the strongest determinants of furniture poverty. Having a higher income consistently and strongly reduces the risk.

- People living on **£1,000 per month or less are almost four times more likely** to experience furniture poverty than those on more than £2500 per month.
- Those on **£1,001 to £1,500 per month** are **around twice as likely** to experience furniture poverty than those on £2500 a month.

This clear income gradient highlights the financial strain facing households with the least resources and reinforces the link between low income and material hardship.

This likely reflects the high upfront cost of essential furniture and the limited capacity of lower-income households to draw on savings or affordable credit, particularly in the context of competing demands such as housing, energy costs, and food. Although unsurprising, the strength of this association highlights income as a fundamental structural driver of furniture poverty and any solutions must bear this in mind.

Ethnicity

People from **ethnic minority backgrounds** have approximately **double the odds** of being in furniture poverty than those of a White British background.

These conclusions reflect those of other poverty research. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation have found that Bangladeshi, Black African, and Pakistani households are much more likely to face deep, long-term hardship compared to white households.⁴⁸ The fact that this disparity does not disappear when removing income from the analysis is alarming and shows that income is not a perfect measure of material and structural inequalities, but that additional measures are needed to explain the difference between ethnic groups in relation to furniture poverty. Our research suggests that structural inequalities affecting ethnic minority groups continue to shape people's ability to access and afford essential household items.

Disability and Age

There are other factors that significantly increase the risk of someone being in furniture poverty that are not a surprise. Those with disabilities that affect day-to-day life and younger people are more at risk of being in furniture poverty than non-disabled people and older people.

Disability

“Me and my daughter are disabled, and my local council doesn’t help with any white goods. I don’t know who else to turn to as I never have any spare money left to be able to afford any furniture for my house” – Maria

Disability has a substantial independent impact.

- People with a disability that **affects their day-to-day life** are **almost twice as likely** to experience furniture poverty.
- Those with a disability that **does not affect daily life** do not show a meaningful difference from non-disabled people.

This reflects how additional costs, barriers to employment, and reduced financial resilience can increase vulnerability for disabled households.

Sadly, this is an expected conclusion from our research and one that tallies with other wider poverty research; being disabled, or living in a disabled household, are some of the strongest predictors of poverty in the UK. Poverty rates for disabled people are 30%, 10 percentage points higher than the rate for people who are not disabled.⁴⁹ Disabled people are also significantly overrepresented at food banks, three quarters (74%) of people referred to food banks in 2024 were disabled.⁵⁰

Acquiring furniture or appliances when having a life limiting disability can be particularly challenging. Local Welfare Assistance, (local authority discretionary crisis support), does not often cater for specialist furniture needs, and they are often more expensive. It is also difficult to get furniture into the home if you have a physical disability.

Furthermore, living in furniture poverty can make pre-existing health conditions and disabilities worse due to the negative impact living without the essential items can have on physical and mental health. EFP often hear reports of the distress and hopelessness this can leave people in. This is one of many examples we received: **“This morning I woke up to my fridge freezer not working and I don’t know what to do as I’m disabled and I need my medicine in the fridge”**. Life living without the essentials can be particularly difficult, and even dangerous, for people also living with a disability.

One of the people we interviewed, David, claims both Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payment since a workplace accident caused significant injuries to both of his hands. He moved into social housing after his accident and **“there’s a kitchen with appliances in, but they don’t work”**. The washing machine **“ripped his clothes to pieces”** when he tried to use it and given the injuries to his hands, he would find it difficult to hand wash clothes himself. As a result, he relies on friends and neighbours, however, most of them are also residing in social housing and living without key items of furniture.

Age

Age has relatively limited impact once income, tenure, ethnicity, disability status, relationship status, economic activity, and urban/rural living are taken into account. Only one age group shows a notable difference: people aged 60 and over are around half as likely to experience furniture poverty compared with young adults.

Other age groups do not differ significantly from the youngest group. This is not surprising given that older people are more likely to have acquired furniture items over the course of their lifetime.

Despite older adults being less likely to experience furniture poverty, they are susceptible to experiencing adverse physical and mental health effects as a result. This is something we will be exploring in the next chapter, The Consequences of Furniture Poverty.

What Do We Learn From This Analysis?

Taken together, these findings show that furniture poverty is not random. It is closely tied to insecure housing, low income, and structural disadvantage in ethnicity and disability status. Without targeted support, people facing these risks are likely to remain trapped without the essential items needed to make a house a home.



THE CONSEQUENCES OF FURNITURE POVERTY

“I’m a diabetic on insulin and I can’t keep my injections cold, so I am getting ill... (and) I’m sleeping on the floor, I’ve got no bed” - Samantha

Furniture poverty is a public health crisis. Not having a comfortable bed to sleep on, for example, can have catastrophic short- and long-term consequences for someone’s physical and mental health – imagine being forced to sleep on a bare floor because there is no other alternative? Similarly, not having somewhere to safely store and cook food can be a debilitating issue, as can a lack of flooring or window coverings or anywhere to sit comfortably. Fundamentally, furniture poverty prevents people from participating in society and achieving a socially acceptable standard of living, something that needs to be at the forefront of this issue.

Further to the unimaginable impact of furniture poverty on individuals, it also has a large cost to the public purse. There is a well-established link between poverty and poor health outcomes, and this burden is felt heavily by the NHS; Trussell and WPI Economics estimated that hunger and hardship cost the NHS £6.3 billion a year.⁵¹

Conversely, we find that investment in measures that help people out of poverty saves the Government significant sums of money. End Furniture Poverty’s cost benefit analysis of Local Welfare Assistance schemes run by local authorities, and social housing furnished tenancy schemes found that, for every pound spent on LWA schemes, over £14 is saved by the wider public purse, and for every pound spent on social housing furnished tenancy schemes, double the investment is recouped.⁵² Investing in ending furniture poverty will not only help individuals improve their health and wellbeing, but it will save a large amount for the NHS and other public services.

How We Measured the Impact of Furniture Poverty

EFP wanted a comprehensive examination of the physical and mental health impacts of furniture poverty, therefore two new questions were added to the NatCen Opinion Panel survey. If a survey respondent was deemed to be in furniture poverty, they were asked to rate the impact of living without each essential item of furniture on their physical and mental health from one to five, with one being ‘no negative impact’ and five being ‘extremely negative impact’. We also undertook subset analysis to examine the physical and mental health impacts of furniture poverty across different population characteristics, such as income, housing tenure, and age.

Percentage of people experiencing extremely or very negative health impacts of furniture poverty

Physical Health Impact
of Furniture Poverty

27.5%

Mental Health Impact
of Furniture Poverty

32.2%

Physical Health

We found that **27.5% of people** in furniture poverty reported that being deprived of at least one item of furniture had a **very or an extremely negative impact on their physical health**. In other words, over a quarter of people experienced the highest forms of distress they were able to disclose due to living without the essential items of furniture and appliances.

The consequences of furniture poverty on your physical health can be wide reaching. Citizens Advice see this regularly with people they support. Hayley Wright, Policy and Communications Manager at Citizens Advice SORT Group said that: **“We hear from people unable to safely store medicine without a fridge, those whose health has declined from sleeping on floors, and families with young children living in properties with unsafe and uncovered floors.”**

Roger connected with the Citizens Advice team for help with debt, and they found he had been living in an unfurnished flat for four years after separating from his wife and, due to his debt, he has never been able to afford to furnish it. He claims Universal Credit and he struggles to find work due to his age. He has no fridge or washing facilities, so relies on family and eating out for food. As well as this, he sleeps on a settee, meaning he rarely gets a good night’s sleep.

People who do not have a proper place to sleep do not get real rest and often live with chronic pain. Greg, a private renter who we heard from earlier, spoke about how he suffers from persistent psoriasis, which has begun to cause arthritis. He is sleeping on a broken bed as he is unable to replace it, and he struggles to sleep due to the pain in his arms and back.

Similarly, there are many people who have had health conditions exacerbated due to how cold a lack of flooring can make properties. Rosie mentioned that her mother, who is in her mid-60s, has pieces of carpet covering her floorboards but they are not fixed in. Her mother has Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), a severe respiratory condition, so she must have constant heating in her home which the loose carpets make incredibly difficult. Rosie said: **“When I come around, she’s there with a dressing gown and all the doors are shut and curtains as well sometimes...the wind creates a draft through the window, so it shuts that out”**. The lack of proper flooring is an issue she cannot escape from.

Living without essential furniture items can also make life unsafe; for example, uncovered floors may have protruding nails, splinters, or uneven surfaces. This increases the risk of injuries, especially for children and the elderly. Rosie’s mother has fragile bones, and the loose carpet has created a severe trip hazard. EFP’s policy paper [More Than a Roof: Why Furniture and Appliances Matter in Ending Homelessness](#) found that a member of staff from Liverpool’s Whitechapel Centre had worked with a family whose child had been hospitalised twelve times due to the splinters in the bare floorboards.

A lack of key appliances can be particularly debilitating. If someone does not have access to a cooker, they must often rely on food that does not need any preparation. This leaves many people living on a diet of solely meal deals, takeaways or microwave food which can often lack nutrients. Linda and David, two of our interviewees, are in this situation; they rely on “pound a day” meals that can be cooked in the microwave or air fryer.

Rhiannon, a participant of our focus group, had this to say about living without a cooker: **“I also have a (physical) health condition, I need to cook at home. Fast food, processed food is not good for my health, and this creates a cycle”**. This perfectly describes the downward spiral of furniture poverty making someone’s physical health worse; it can have a knock-on impact on your entire life.

Mental Health

"I had no idea how I was going to store milk, keep frozen items, or wash clothes. I felt scared, isolated, and overwhelmed in a flat with no curtains, no flooring, and no idea what to do next" – Neringa, a survivor of domestic abuse

The results of the survey are even worse for **'extreme' and 'very' negative mental health** impacts: **32.3% of those in furniture poverty** reported adverse health outcomes. It is not a surprise that living without the essential items of furniture has a detrimental effect on mental health, but the extent to which it was reported is staggering.

Poverty can be a primary driver of depression, anxiety, and general distress. The UK has big problems with both material insecurity and poor mental health, and many studies have shown that the two things are very much linked.⁵³ The same is true for furniture poverty. People often disclose to EFP the huge pressure living without the essential items puts on their mental health. Kelly, who faced starting her life over in an empty flat with concrete floors and bare walls, described how struggling to decorate and furnish the property made her feel **'worthless'**.

Kelly is by no means alone. The toll furniture poverty takes on the mental health of its sufferers was one of the most dominant themes that came out of our case studies. People reported feeling upset and low due to not being able to afford the essential items of furniture. David, who we heard from earlier, was asked about the impact of living in furniture poverty on his day-to-day-life and he said: **"it is distressing. You know, it's like I have to come out of there because I'll get cabin fever (...) it's just depressing to be fair, it's not nice"**. He demonstrates how furniture poverty can take over your whole mentality, given how difficult it is to escape.

Social Stigma and Shame

"This (furniture poverty) affects the whole family and causes everyone problems, it's so embarrassing" – Daisy, a participant of our focus group

Living in furniture poverty also causes significant problems for people from a social wellbeing perspective. People often feel embarrassed to have family and friends' round, children cannot invite their friends over, and it may be a challenge for estranged parents to have their children stay – a situation Greg, one of our interviewees, is in with his children.

Kelly, who we have just heard from, was awarded a social home after fleeing domestic abuse and describes the shame of living in an unfurnished property eloquently:

"We were embarrassed of where we lived and that isolated us from friends and family - we didn't dare invite people over as we didn't even have chairs for others to sit, the chairs we had for us I had borrowed from the local pub".

Furniture poverty is a very visible indication that someone is living without items that make up a socially acceptable standard of living, and many people find the stigma of showing this to their family and friends crippling. Ellie described how she was **"so anxious about neighbours seeing inside and realising I had nothing"**. Embarrassment was a theme that came up regularly in our focus group. Daisy said:

"It does affect you socially. When I was offered my property, my sister was suggesting things for me to buy for my home and all I could think about was how I couldn't afford those things – I was too embarrassed to say that".

David talked about not having anyone over because he has nowhere for them to sit. He said: **“If you have someone around, you’ve both got to sit on the bed. Yeah, it’s just not nice. I mean, the support worker does come around. He sits on the bed. And I’m like “do you mind, it’s my bed”.** For reasons like this, loneliness becomes common among those living without essential items of furniture. Higher levels of loneliness are linked to greater levels of anxiety and depression, and it can even affect an individual’s physical health too.⁵⁴

According to Stop Social Housing Stigma’s interim findings from their survey, stigma occupies a dominant place in many tenants’ lives. Over two thirds (70%) of social housing tenants feel stigmatised living in social housing, and over half (54%) feel stigmatised because of the actions of their landlords. Furthermore, over two thirds (68%) believe the Government has done little or nothing at all to address stigma.⁵⁵ Addressing furniture poverty and the shame of living without is an urgent task and one that cannot be delayed any longer.

The Poverty Premium

As we outlined in 2022, living without key appliances can make life much more expensive. For people who are already on a low income, this can vastly compound the difficulties that they are facing. In 2022, the poverty premium was estimated to be over £200 per year, and almost all (98%) low-income households incur one or more different types of poverty premiums – such as living without both a cooker, which increases food costs, and living without a washing machine, which forces someone to use a laundrette.⁵⁶

Living without the essential items of furniture and appliances is no different. Research in 2019 by Turn2Us estimated that living without a cooker can add £2184 a year onto the food bill of a family of four due to relying on takeaways and ready meals. Similarly, living without a fridge can add £1365 a year due to an inability to store food.⁵⁷ Due to sustained periods of high inflation since 2019, the cost of living without appliances in 2025 is expected to now be much higher. Furniture poverty making life more expensive is something David can attest to. When we asked him if missing a cooker and a fridge makes his living expenses higher, he said:

“It does yeah. Because I can’t eat that much. I can’t cook, can’t do anything like that. I can’t properly store the food. You know, you’ve got to eat out, if you can afford it that is, or you’ve got to buy cheap food that’s already cooked”.

Having the essential items of furniture would enable people to make those long-term savings, get out of debt, or use the money for other necessities like food and fuel. When this is coupled with the benefits that being lifted out of furniture poverty has on physical and mental health, we start to see how foundational furniture and appliances are for a basic good quality of life.

The Impact on Children and Young People

The impact of poverty is not only felt by adults, but by children too. Children born to parents living in poverty are more likely to have a low birth weight and less likely to survive the first year of life. They are also more likely to have poor mental health and are at higher risk of psychological distress.⁵⁸ EFP have amassed a wealth of evidence to show that the impact of furniture poverty is no different, it can be hugely detrimental to young people starting out in life.

The Government’s Child Poverty Strategy uses “deep material poverty” as a key metric. It is defined as children lacking at least four out of 13 essentials (like fresh food and damp-free homes). The aim is to capture severe hardship beyond just income, with the Department for Work and Pensions naming one of the 13 essentials as the ability to replace appliances such as a washing machine, fridge, or cooker if she was to break.⁵⁹

In 2024, two million or 14% of all children in the UK were found to be in deep material poverty.⁶⁰ We can reasonably expect that a large proportion of those children are living in families that are unable to replace key appliances if something were to break. The Government clearly see how important essential appliances and furniture are in a child's life.

EFP see the reality of the impact of material deprivation on children every day. We regularly see reports of children with under-developed muscles due to not being able to have 'tummy time' because of unsafe flooring and older children injuring their feet.⁶¹ Similarly, polling commissioned by Barnardo's and carried out by YouGov found that 11% of children had to share a bed or sleep on the floor in 2023. Of those who had to, 20% said they felt tired the next day during lessons at school.⁶² Expecting children to realise their academic potential while living in furniture poverty is completely unrealistic.

It can also have negative social effects for children. Most of the participants of our focus group mentioned how furniture poverty affects the whole family. Fern told us how "it affects children too. They can be bullied at school if they don't have the right furniture". Maddy told us: "My child was comparing [the flat] to other peoples' houses, saying they have things, but I have nowhere to sleep and play".

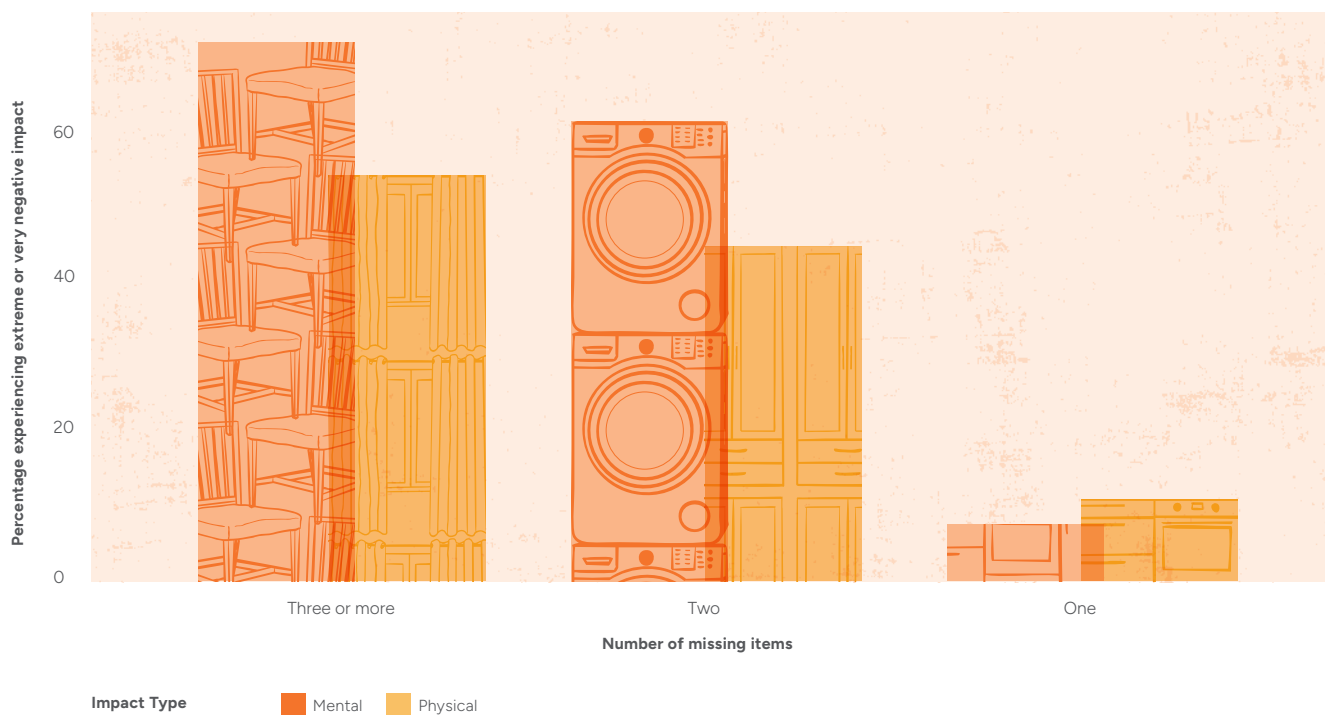
Even the most basic items of furniture can make the world of difference. Lisa is a beneficiary of Furnishing Futures, and she describes the effect receiving a furniture pack had on her children:

"The support has made a huge difference in my children's lives. They are now able to sleep comfortably, and they are now always in a happy mood. They can now focus on their learning better than they had been and I can see the difference this help has given them".

Every young person deserves a childhood unburdened from furniture poverty.

Deep Furniture Poverty

Figure 3: Physical and Mental Health Impacts of Furniture Poverty by Number of Items Missing



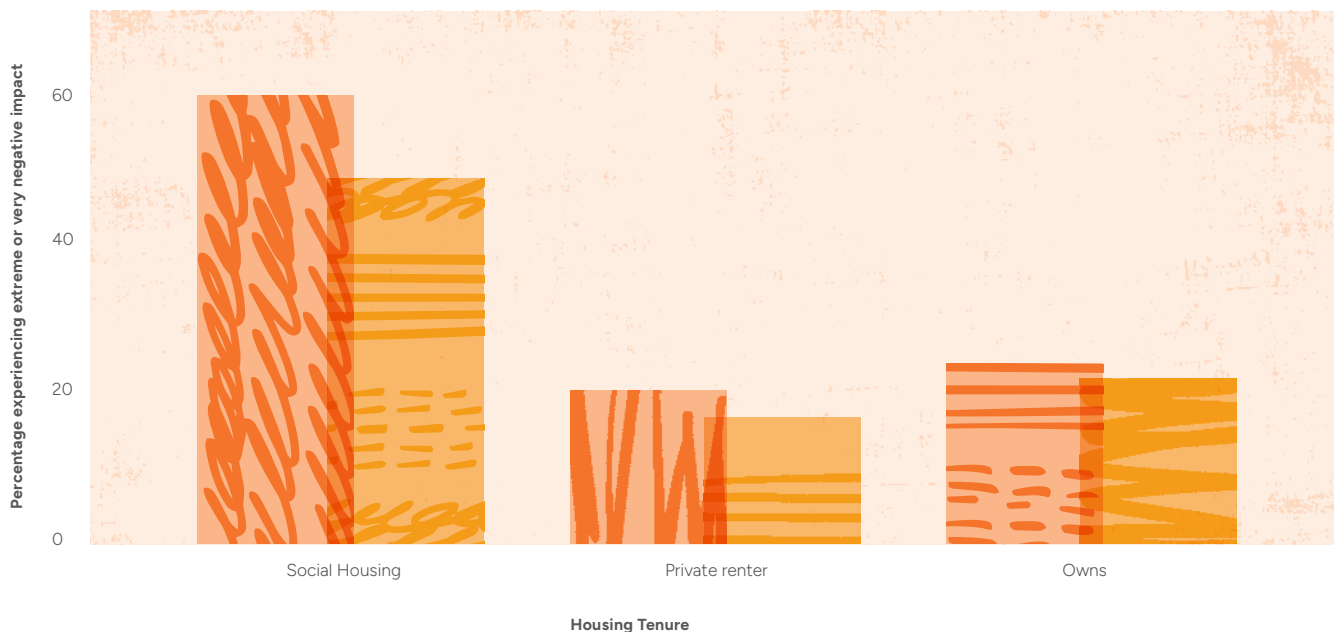
Our research shows that negative physical and mental health effects of furniture poverty become more likely the more items someone is missing. In other words, those living in deep furniture poverty are more likely to experience adverse health outcomes than those missing one or two items.

This result is not surprising, but the severity of the decline was still startling. Of those in deep furniture poverty, **55.8% experienced an extremely or very negative impact on their physical health, compared to 43.3% living without two items and 11.7% living without one item.** The results are even more stark for mental health; those living without three or more items are far more likely to report an **extreme or very negative impact on their mental health, 72.2%.** This compares to **59.7% living without two items and 9.3% living without one item.**

This data clearly displays that deep furniture poverty and furniture destitution, living without most items of furniture, can be exceedingly debilitating. This is the fate that often befalls people newly moving into unfurnished social homes. The aforementioned stories of people facing hardship show how difficult it is to lift oneself out of furniture poverty the more items you are missing – many of our examples are of people who faced furnishing an empty home. Our report in 2022 drew similar conclusions – once you are in furniture poverty it is difficult to get out – and the consequences on health can be catastrophic. Furniture poverty is clearly a public health crisis.

Tenure Type

Figure 4: Physical and Mental Health Impacts of Furniture Poverty by Tenure Type



As expected, social renters are vastly overrepresented in reporting extreme or very negative health effects of furniture poverty compared to other tenure types. This was seen in **just over half of social renters in furniture poverty (51%)** compared to **homeowners (21%) and private renters (17%).** We see similar proportions with mental health. Of those in furniture poverty, **62% of social renters report a very or an extremely negative impact, versus 23% of homeowners and 21% of private renters.**

These findings are consistent with EFP's previous research. We have already detailed the toll moving into a completely unfurnished property has on people in this report. Many face having to equip a completely empty property with great difficulty on a low income or rely on credit and/or family. Will is in the process of moving into an unfurnished council property from temporary accommodation, and he told Citizens Advice that he does not have the funds to buy any furnishings without falling into debt with priority bills.

Many people in similar situations to Will are forced to live without, causing great physical and mental health harm. EFP have heard shocking stories of people in social housing going without essential items of furniture for years which, sadly, is not unusual.

While the level of furnished tenancies has risen slightly since our last report, just over 3% from 2%, it still sits way below the private sector where over 30% of properties are furnished.⁶³

Income and Poverty Threshold

Those on the lowest incomes reported the toll living without the essential items of furniture took on their mental health. Of those in furniture poverty, **46.3% with a household income of below £1,410 a month reported an extremely or very negative impact on their mental health**, compared to **35% earning between £1,411 and £2,560 per month, (pm), and 18.3% earning above £2,561 or more pm**. We see similar results when we look at those residing below the median earnings of the UK, **40% of people in furniture poverty earning below the UK median wage reported an extremely or very negative impact on their mental health** compared to **18.8% above the median earnings**. These differences are statistically significant within the population.

It is easy to see how being in furniture poverty and living on a low income can cause feelings of despair. This is, in part, due to the specific nature of furniture poverty. Furniture and appliances are big ticket items: they are expensive to buy, transport, install and maintain. If someone were to find themselves without an essential item, it takes a significant investment to get it back. Anna moved into an unfurnished home and was helped to equip it by Furnishing Futures. She summed it up aptly:

"Furnishing an entire home on a low income, especially as a single parent, is incredibly hard. I would have had to rely on loans, go into debt - my credit rating has been completely destroyed so I would have had to get high interest loans, if I would even qualify, or slowly save up...it would have been extremely stressful. Living in an unfinished home affects your mood, sleep, and ability to function. I would have been exhausted mentally, emotionally, and physically. The constant reminder of what we didn't have would have made it hard to feel hopeful".

Here we see how immense the pressure of being on a low income and facing the prospect of needing to find the money for expensive items can be. For some groups this challenge is even greater. Those fleeing domestic abuse, coming from homelessness, or the thousands of people coming from temporary accommodation, often have nothing. The average cost of furnishing a home with all the essential furniture and appliances is estimated to be £4000, which can seem utterly insurmountable.⁶⁴

EFP receive hundreds of emails a month from people expressing how this pressure has significantly worsened their mental health. However, the other side of the coin is that when people do have the essential items of furniture they need, they are much better placed to move out of poverty. Anna talked of the transformational effect getting the help she needed from Furnishing Futures had for her and her children.

"This new furnished home has given me confidence, hope, and the space to breathe again. It feels like the start of a new chapter. Having a secure and properly furnished home enables me to focus on work, my wellbeing, and building a positive future".

Here we see clearly that being lifted out of furniture poverty gave Anna a secure footing to rebuild her life. Everyone we spoke to was asked what having a fully furnished home would mean to them, and all said it would vastly improve their quality of life, both mentally and physically. People are better able to address other issues once they have the essential items they need to Make a House a Home.

Household Type and Age

There are other demographics that are heavily affected by furniture poverty according to our survey. Single parent families, single person households, and those with no qualifications report extreme or very negative impacts on their health because of living without the essential items.

Age

We see some interesting results when we look at the age groups on both ends of the spectrum. Of those **aged between 50-59, 39.4% reported extreme or very negative health impacts of furniture poverty** and **34.6% of those over 60 reported the same**. So, while being least likely to be in furniture poverty, those over 50 are more likely than other age groups to experience extreme or very negative physical impacts. One example of this comes from the emails we receive, this person said: **"I suffer with severe depression and PTSD. I will reach pension age this year and my flat doesn't have a carpet, just a bare concrete floor that I am finding very difficult now I am getting older"**. We see this in the reverse with the youngest age group, 18–29-year-olds. While the probability of them being in furniture poverty is higher, they were **less likely to report an extreme or very negative impact on their physical health (8%)**.

Interestingly, the age group most likely to **experience extremely or very negative impacts of furniture poverty on their physical health were 30–39-year-olds – 43.9%**. This may coincide with people raising young children or being at the start of their careers.

Household Make-Up

The above results on the negative impact of furniture poverty on 30–39-year-olds physical health correlate with the following finding relating to household makeup. Over half of **single parent families missing one or more essential item reported an extremely or very negative impact on their physical health (60.6%)** and just **under half of single person households reported the same (42.5%)**. This shows how living as a single adult, particularly with children, vastly increases the likelihood of experiencing poor physical health due to furniture poverty. Dawn, a single mother who fled domestic abuse said that, at one point, she had had to share a bed with her three children because she could not afford beds for them all which severely disrupted her sleep.



FURNITURE INSECURITY

“I was wondering if I can receive any assistance on getting a fridge freezer, mine broke three weeks ago and I’m unsure when I will be able to get one. I am currently living on pasta and very basic meals as I have nowhere to store food” – Andy.

This report examines how many people in the UK are currently living in furniture poverty, who is most at risk of furniture poverty, and who is experiencing negative physical and mental health effects of furniture poverty. This is vital in ensuring we have an up-to-date grasp on how big the problem is.

However, our data does not capture the millions more people who are **living on the edge** of being in furniture poverty – furniture insecurity. They are families and individuals who are one crisis away from facing life without essential furniture or appliance items.

Our section on The Impact of Furniture Poverty on Children and Young People highlighted that the inability to replace appliances if they were to break was one indicator of deep material poverty. The Government have acknowledged that this measure of material deprivation can reflect a broader range of financial pressures that income-based statistics alone do not fully capture – and we believe this should be expanded to adults as well as children.

To get an idea of the scale of this problem, we utilised data from Understanding Society, the UK Household Longitudinal Study. Based out of the Institute for Social and Economic Research, it is a major, long-term research project that tracks thousands of UK households annually to collect data on health, work, income, and family life. It is one of the most robust sources of data currently available in the UK.⁶⁵ This analysis focuses on Wave 14 of the survey which ran from 2022-2024 and included over 35,000 participants.

Our Analysis

Our analysis of the Understanding Society survey shows that **22.2%** of households could not afford to replace essential furniture if it broke.⁶⁶ That is, almost a quarter of people risk moving into furniture poverty if a crisis were to occur, and they lost a bed or a cooker.

There was also a question on appliances, with **almost one in five (18.3%)** households reporting that they would be unable to afford to replace broken electrical items, such as a fridge or washing machine.⁶⁷ We define these households as living in **furniture insecurity**.

These figures are startling and demonstrate the precariousness of life for many households in the UK. As the Government themselves said when releasing the deep material poverty metric, these financial pressures are often overlooked when we solely examine income as an indicator of poverty. Many families may not be living in furniture poverty, that is, missing one or more essential item of furniture, but they may still be struggling and risk easily tipping into furniture poverty.

One or many factors including high living costs, debt, additional costs related to a disability or other financial pressures may prevent people from having the money put aside to stop themselves from falling into furniture poverty. Many people take on unsecured debt to pay for life’s essentials, including furniture, with the Joseph Rowntree Foundation estimating that almost 4 million households are in this situation, and the large majority of these (70%) are currently in arrears.⁶⁸

Again, it is important to remind ourselves of the reality of life for the people who live with such uncertainty every day. EFP get many emails a week from people in crisis who are in positions where they are unable to replace a broken item of furniture. This often has a tremendous knock-on effect to other areas of life.

One email we received illustrates it perfectly: **“this morning I woke up to my fridge freezer not working and I don’t know what to do. I am disabled and I need my medicine in the fridge”**. Another shows the impact of a broken appliance on someone’s food security: **“I am at a loss because my fridge freezer is broken and all the food I had spoiled. Now I don’t know what to do, I cannot afford to buy any more”**.

Greg, the private renter who we heard from in previous chapters, is in a situation where he is unable to replace broken furniture. He laid out what it is like to live without. The sofa that came with his privately rented property is in a very poor condition – it is almost completely sunken down. **“I have placed planks of wood from my Subbuteo table from when I was a kid under the cushions to give the sofa some structure”**. He cannot replace the sofa himself due to energy debt that he amassed after needing to use a fan heater when his central heating was not working. He is also afraid of complaining to his landlord too much in case that makes him vulnerable to eviction.

Greg’s story is a perfect example of how debilitating furniture insecurity can be. He is being forced to live with broken furniture that he knows he is unable to replace. The compounding effect of furniture insecurity and the slippery slope into furniture poverty it creates, when eventually the furniture becomes unusable, is enormous. Someone living in this situation is not having their fundamental basic needs met.

Tenure Type

Greg is one of millions of renters who have experienced the issue of furniture insecurity, as this primarily affects both social and private renters. **Over three quarters** of households reporting that they would be unable to replace furniture if it were to break are rented, with **38.5% being socially rented** and **37.4% private rented**.⁶⁹ We also see this in the question around people being unable to replace electrical goods. Overall, **65% of those who reported that they were unable to replace electrical goods if they could not afford them were renter households, with 35.7% coming from socially rented properties and 31.5% from private rented properties**.⁷⁰

These results from the Understanding Society survey broadly reflect what we have already found in both years of the NatCen Opinion Panel Survey when examining furniture poverty. Renters are more at risk of furniture poverty **and** furniture insecurity. When the Government undertook their study on deep material poverty in children in 2024, they found that 85% (1.7 million) of children in deep material poverty lived in either the social rented sector or the private rented sector. This compares to 46% (6.7 million) of all children.⁷¹

EFP plan to conduct further individual-level analysis of Understanding Society, so we can explore furniture insecurity in other key demographics, such as households with a disabled person or households with someone of pension age.

CONCLUSION

The fact there has been no statistically significant change in the levels of furniture poverty between 2022 and 2025 indicates how deep-rooted the problem has become. It shows that, fundamentally, millions of people living without the essential items of furniture is a structural problem. Furniture poverty cannot be explained by short-term pressures, clearly, the underlying drivers are tenacious. Without targeted support, it will continue to be a fact of life in the UK.

Deep furniture poverty has also not decreased, with approximately a million people missing three or more essential items of furniture. Our research shows that people in deep furniture poverty often suffer the most adverse health effects and it can be very difficult to get out of it once you are in it. In 2022, we found that 7.85 million essential items were missing from British homes. Two years later, we did not find a statistically significant change in this figure with it sitting at 8.1 million.

We also saw who is most at risk of furniture poverty. Renters, those on a low income, ethnic minorities, and disabled people are all the demographics most in danger of living without the essentials when controlling those and other factors. Income levels and housing tenure type were the strongest predictors. These findings show that furniture poverty does not arise from individual circumstances alone but from overlapping pressures that disproportionately impact already disadvantaged groups.

In 2025, we have been able to see how many people in furniture poverty suffer from severe negative health affects as a result. The volume of reports of extremely negative and very negative effects on both physical and mental health because of furniture poverty is startling, but not a surprise. Living without the essential items of furniture and appliances can also have dramatically damaging effects on a person's social and financial wellbeing. We have seen examples of how quickly these issues can be remedied when someone has everything that they need.

As well as a cost to the individual, furniture poverty also has a cost to the public purse. People who find themselves in furniture poverty often need to rely more on healthcare support, social services, or local authority support. They are less likely to look for or gain employment when living without the essential items. [Our Cost Benefit Analysis of Local Welfare Assistance and Furnished Tenancies](#) shows how much the state saves when they invest in anti-poverty measures, and how much it costs when they do not. For every £1 spent on a range of support, including furniture and appliance provision, between £9 and £14 was saved across the wider public purse. Similarly, every £1 spent on a furnished tenancy scheme in social housing saved over double for the public purse.

The report has also widened the scope of analysis beyond furniture poverty and into furniture insecurity. From the Understanding Society survey, we saw that almost a quarter of households cannot afford to replace broken furniture and almost one in five cannot afford to replace broken electrical appliances.

The ability to replace worn-out appliances is one of the Government's key indicators of childhood material deprivation. Households in furniture insecurity conduct life attempting to make the best of things with an appliance that is broken, or they simply live without. This insecurity is itself a type of deprivation, but it also a gateway into furniture poverty.

Despite Recent Progress, We Still Have a Long Way to Go

For the last year and a half, we have had a Government who are trying to act on poverty. The Child Poverty⁷² Strategy promises to tackle the root causes of child poverty and the Labour manifesto committed to reducing reliance on emergency food parcels.⁷³ The Labour Government will raise the national minimum wage by 6.7% to £12.71 in April 2026, they will increase the standard allowance of Universal Credit by 6%, and they have abolished the two-child limit. Hopefully, we will see these measures make deep inroads into the levels of poverty and hardship in the UK.

However, we still have lots of work to do. The country remains fundamentally unequal, with the gap between those who have the most and those who have the least remaining large, particularly since the COVID-19 pandemic.⁷⁴ Similarly, despite income increases, the cost-of-living challenges are not easing. Even though inflation is no longer as high, the cumulative effect of rising prices means households face a much higher cost of living than in 2021. Households that were struggling before the period of high inflation have been most severely affected.⁷⁵ For those families, acquiring the essential furniture and appliances will continue to be hard unless more action is taken.

What Support is Available?

There is still relatively little support for those who find themselves in furniture poverty. Those on Universal Credit and low incomes are unable to save up to buy items, for all the reasons we have already discussed.

Despite the attention crisis support has had in the last year from policymakers, the support for furniture and appliances is still minimal. Local Welfare Assistance (LWA) is one of the main sources of help for people, but this support has dwindled away for several years now. Our latest report on this subject found that 48 local authorities do not have any LWA scheme, with this number set to increase in the next financial year.⁷⁶

The Household Support Fund (HSF) has been in place since 2021, and this tranche of funding is due to be replaced by the Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF) in April. The HSF has historically been more focused on food and fuel than furniture and appliances. Less than 1% of overall funding went towards this provision and over a third of local authorities told EFP they did not offer any support for furniture with their HSF allocation.⁷⁷

The CRF does have a more explicit focus on furniture and appliances. The Department for Work and Pensions have heeded our advice on the importance of cash first but not cash only for people in crisis, with in-kind support that includes the essential items of furniture repeatedly referenced in the guidance.⁷⁸ Local authorities are also being encouraged to use their CRF allocations to enhance but not replace existing LWA schemes, and councils without an LWA scheme are encouraged to set one up.

This measure will act to future-proof the local safety net beyond the current end of the CRF in 2029. We are working hard to develop guidance to help local authorities understand how to deliver furniture and appliance support to encourage them to offer this provision however, only time will tell with regards to whether more support for furniture and appliances will be available in every local authority area in April once the CRF comes in.

Now, the last option in areas where there is no LWA scheme and the local authority does not use its HSF allocation for furniture and appliances is often the third sector. Grant-making charities and furniture reuse charities attempt to plug the gap, but the ongoing cost of living pressures mean they often cannot meet the level of demand. Many charities have struggled or closed over recent years due to rising costs affecting many organisations.

This leaves millions of people without support. Figures this large can lose meaning, so it is important to recognise the toll taken on people's lives. Savannah, a survivor of domestic abuse, relies on a microwave, air fryer, and toaster to prepare meals for her and her two children. She also repeatedly wears the same clothes due to a lack of washing facilities. The family went to Citizens Advice Manchester for help and although some support exists locally, such as vouchers for a food pantry, no assistance is available to help cover the cost of acquiring essential household items. Savannah explored all available options with the Citizens Advice team, but no further help was available.

Savannah is not the only one. Linda and David, who we heard from earlier, both said that they went to their council for help but there was nothing available. This is a shocking situation.

What Can We Do About Furniture Poverty?

There are solutions to make sure that everyone has access to the essential items of furniture and appliances. However, it is important to remember that furniture poverty is but one subset of poverty. To tackle the issue at the root cause, benefits need to be adequate, wages must match the cost of living, and housing should be affordable. Wages and housing also must be stable and secure for people to build a strong foundation for their lives.

Fundamentally, the welfare state should guarantee an essential standard of living for all to ensure people have money available to spend on essential furniture and appliances. The same can be said for work; over a third of people claiming Universal Credit are also in work.⁷⁹ This, we know, is a long-term goal. In the short and medium term, we need to strengthen what is already available for people.

EFPP have long advocated for a blended approach to ending furniture poverty. The Government, social landlords, and the grant making sector all have a role to play.

Crisis Support

Crisis support is a vital part of reducing furniture poverty. It needs to be adequately funded, available in every local authority, and should be protected from turbulent government finances.

There is a real opportunity with the CRF to place furniture and appliance provision front and centre of crisis support. As we have said above, there is more focus on furniture in the CRF guidance than the HSF but there is still much work to be done to ensure everyone in crisis gets access to key furniture and appliances. The benefits of this provision through crisis support are well documented, and the CRF needs to retain an explicit focus on the essential items of furniture when it is rolled out to local authorities in April 2026. This should be monitored by the DWP and those who do not include furniture provision should, if necessary, be required to do so.

The existing Local Welfare Assistance landscape also needs to be protected. It is vital that local authorities retain their LWA scheme alongside the CRF, and local authorities without a scheme must set one up. Our last report found that 66% of funding for LWA schemes came from the HSF, with core council budget spending on LWA reducing year on year.⁸⁰ Subsuming LWA into the CRF would leave LWA in a vulnerable position given that the CRF is still a temporary fund; so, it is important that the CRF enhances, but does not replace LWA.

Decent Homes Standard

We do not need another pilot to tell us that flooring and furniture provision provides great benefits for both landlords and tenants. We need to get on with ensuring, at a minimum, that social homes have flooring in all habitable rooms. England needs to follow the lead of Wales, and the reformed Decent Homes Standard should have included this provision. Sadly, it was removed during the consultation process. This report has outlined clearly how fundamental flooring is to a decent home and the negative physical, mental, social and financial consequences of living without it.

We still hope to work with the Decent Homes team on a strong Best Practice Guide for Furniture Provision, ideally encouraging landlords to furnish a proportion of their stock and we hope the proposed pilot will 'swiftly' develop ways the sector can support tenants with flooring and furnishings in a substantive and comprehensive way. We will be closely monitoring this progress.

Matthew Pennycook, Minister of State for Housing and Planning, said in a statement about the new standard: **"We recognise that some landlords are already providing floor coverings, but many residents struggle to provide their own basic furnishings. As such, we intend to work with landlords and tenants to rapidly identify cost-effective ways in which landlords can better support tenants in need."**

We believe that the fact that residents are struggling to provide basic furnishings should reinforce the need for floor coverings, not negate it. However, we hope to work with the Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government on their proposed pilot which will develop ways landlords can support tenants most in need with flooring, furniture and appliances.

EFP work regularly with social landlords who tell us that they want to ensure flooring is provided in all habitable rooms, but they have many competing priorities that they also need to action. As a result, the issue of flooring can drop down the order of priorities. They have also told us that they know they should be providing furnished tenancies but again, the issue does not make it to the top of their list so they say it would 'be much easier' if the Government could just 'make them do it'.

Disappointingly that opportunity has been missed in the new Decent Homes Standard, but we will continue to search for ways that the Government can legislate for furnished tenancies in social homes. They are essential to improving tenants' wellbeing, reduce poverty related debt, and create safe, dignified homes.

Furnished Tenancies

For the first time, our data provides a clear risk profile of furniture poverty and social tenants are most at risk of all socio-economic characteristics. Our work has shown time and again that, for landlords, the most sustainable method of providing essential items of furniture and appliances to tenants is furnished tenancies. This is because the cost of the furniture is covered through the service charge element of Universal Credit and other legacy benefits.

Our recently updated [Blueprint for Furniture Provision in Social Housing \(2025\)](#) provides a step-by-step guide for landlords to fully understand the opportunities furniture provision can offer to both tenant and landlord. The moral case for furnished tenancies is clear given the evidence we have outlined in the report, but it is important to highlight the financial case too. Our cost benefit analysis for furnished tenancies found that the wider public purse receives double the return on investment, a clear net positive. Furnished tenancies also make residences more sustainable, reduce voids and their associated costs, and mean tenancies are less likely to terminate.⁸¹

All our interviewees expressed that if they had been provided with a furnished tenancy, it would vastly improve their quality of life and help them address problems not directly related to furniture, such as debt. Therefore, we believe that every social landlord should provide at least 10% of general needs stock as furnished.

We also believe that all social housing tenants, new and existing, who are in receipt of full means-tested benefits and living in furniture poverty, should be offered a furnished tenancy for as many items as they need, from a single item up to a full package of furniture. This may take landlords above our very conservative 10% target but if that is the level of need, it must be met.

Reuse

There are millions of items of furniture sent to landfill each year, but there are 8.1 million items missing from UK households. We therefore have a situation where large quantities of good items of furniture go to waste, but there are millions living in furniture poverty.

However, while being part of the solution, reuse cannot end furniture poverty alone. It is not a free option and there can be challenges around the cost of logistics, safety testing, and storage and cleaning, but it can help some people to move out of furniture poverty. We believe that people should always be treated with dignity and respect and they should not be offered items which we would not welcome in our own homes – preloved items must be of decent quality, clean, and fit for purpose.

We believe furniture reuse has a vital role to play but too often it is treated as a diversionary tactic. There can be a misconception by some social landlords that rather than introducing a furnished tenancy scheme, they could instead make use of the items left behind in properties. However, the vast majority of these items have been left behind because they are broken and at the end of their lives. Once a landlord has spent months and resources realising this for themselves, they can conclude that furniture provision is 'too difficult' and continue directing tenants to local authority schemes, (where one exists), or to hard-pressed charities and grant makers.

Surplus stock from retailers and manufacturers can also play a vital role as a part of the solution. Working with furniture reuse charities or with the Multibank model,⁸² they should form part of a blended solution with furnished tenancies and local authority crisis support. Commercial priorities can change; reuse charities can struggle to survive. We should support these routes as much as we can, but they should not be the only option.

We Need to Continue to Act on Furniture Poverty

Ending furniture poverty is going to take consistent, dedicated work. We must continue to advocate for a crisis support system that is well-funded and that is available for everyone in the UK. It is looking likely that furniture and appliances will play a more prominent role in crisis support going forward and we need to make sure they do. It also needs to work well with other anti-poverty initiatives to ensure that it does make an impact on the levels of hardship we still see across the country. We must continue to work with social landlords to get closer to 10% of social housing being let as furnished, and work with the Government to get this target enshrined in legislation.

There is a groundswell of energy around reducing poverty in the UK. The Child Poverty Strategy and recent changes to levels of Universal Credit are a statement of intent from the current Labour Government. This energy needs to continue if we are to see a reduction in the stubbornly high levels of hardship experienced over the last 15 years.

It is vital that furniture poverty retains its distinct place in the conversation. We must remember the vast number of furniture and appliances that are missing and the work we still need to do to bring this down.

Furniture poverty has been regularly discussed in Parliament, included in the development of new policy, and is being covered by mainstream journalists on television and in print. It is being seen as a problem in its own right that has different solutions. This report has shown that furniture poverty is a systemic problem that is a consistent feature of UK society. It will not go away without focused attention, but there is hope if we work together.

We will leave the last word to Nieve, who received some furniture from a charity after fleeing domestic abuse. She said that:

“The furniture they provided me with not only transformed my living space but also had a profound impact on my mental and emotional well-being. It gave me a sense of stability and a fresh start. I began to feel more confident and hopeful about the future”.

This is the transformative impact ending furniture poverty can have, and it is possible if everyone plays their part.

Together we will End Furniture Poverty.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Our research highlights the level of furniture poverty over time, and it remains persistently high. It is a long-term problem that requires long-term solutions. End Furniture Poverty will continue to work with all relevant partners, politicians, social landlords, businesses and the third sector to develop the necessary solutions. In the meantime, there are some crucial steps that we believe should be immediately implemented:

Government

- The Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF) must have an explicit focus on furniture and appliances, and 20% of the Fund should be ringfenced for this provision.
- However, it is important that the CRF enhances and does not replace Local Welfare Assistance (LWA). Every local authority should retain a stand-alone LWA scheme that is separate to the CRF to secure the future of LWA.
- Local Welfare Assistance needs to be available in every local authority. It should be a mandatory service to shield it from turbulent local government finances.
- The Crisis and Resilience Fund should continue after the Spending Review period of 2028/29 to ensure crisis support can continue in England. LWA has become increasingly reliant on government funding streams, and permanence of the CRF would enable local authorities to plan for the long-term.
- The new Decent Homes Standard sadly failed to include the provision of floor coverings in all habitable rooms as a minimum requirement. The proposed pilot to develop ways the sector can support tenants with flooring and furnishings must be swift, substantive and include minimum requirements for landlords to meet.
- The Government should require social landlords to offer furnished tenancies to all new and existing tenants who are living in furniture poverty and in receipt of full means-tested benefits.

Social Housing

- Our analysis shows that the percentage of social homes let as furnished went from 2% to 3%. The Government and social housing sector need to continue to work together to move towards a minimum of 10% of social housing stock being let as fully furnished.
- The social housing sector should immediately stop the removal of flooring of a reasonable quality from properties when tenants leave, and instead clean and leave it in place for incoming tenants.
- All social landlords should introduce a furnished tenancy service and offer it to all new and existing tenants who are living in furniture poverty and in receipt of full means-tested benefits.
- All social landlords should look at their voids standard and include flooring and decoration as a minimum standard.

Reuse

- All social landlords should introduce furniture reuse schemes to maximise the utility of furniture and appliances left behind in properties. This may be ideal for tenants missing one or two items of essential furniture.
- Local authorities should develop furniture reuse services as part of their bulky household waste collection contracts to provide a stock of preloved items to gift and sell at low cost to residents. This could be delivered in conjunction with local furniture reuse charities and could include surplus retail stock, working with businesses and charities like The Multibank.

Welfare

The Government have taken vital first steps to reduce poverty in the UK. However, they must still implement the recommendations of the 'Guarantee Our Essentials' campaign, with the requirement that Universal Credit should protect people from going without essentials. This should enshrine in legislation:

1. A legal minimum (the 'Essentials Guarantee') in Universal Credit – the standard allowance would need to at least meet this amount, and deductions (such as debt repayments to government, or because of the benefit cap) would not be allowed to reduce support below that level.
2. An independent process to regularly review the Essentials Guarantee level, based on the cost of essentials (such as food, utilities and vital household items) for the adults in a household (excluding rent and council tax).



METHODOLOGY

The aim of this research is to uncover the true scale of furniture poverty in the UK. Doing so is vital to understand the problem and advocate for change.

To achieve this the report draws on two original data sources. These are:

- Primary survey data from questions we included in the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) probability-based opinion panel survey.
- Interview data from semi-structured interviews and focus groups with people experiencing furniture poverty.

Our research therefore employs a mixed methods approach, utilising quantitative and qualitative data.

Primary Survey

End Furniture Poverty included four questions on the NatCen Opinion Panel survey, a probability-based research panel that provides high-quality estimates of the target population. It is inclusive of under-represented groups, as NatCen take extra measures to avoid in-built bias and ensure a representative sample.^{B3} During our analysis, the data was weighted to further minimise the impact of bias and guarantee the results are representative of the target population. For our survey, we had a sample size of c. 2500. For further details relating to the data collection process for this project, please see the NatCen Technical Report.

Respondents were asked which of the essential items they did not have and why they did not have them.

- Respondents were considered to be experiencing furniture poverty if they said they needed an item but could not afford or otherwise obtain it.
- They were considered not to be experiencing furniture poverty if they did not have an item because they did not want or need it. Respondents were able to select multiple items, allowing EFP to see the differing 'depths' of furniture poverty.

For some of our results, such as the number of each essential item missing and furniture poverty by geography, we report the confidence interval (CI) rather than the central estimate. A CI is the range of values that the estimate can fall in. When the CIs overlap between survey years 2022 and 2025, we cannot say with confidence that the changes over time reflect substantive changes in furniture poverty. The differences may simply be due to normal variation that happens when you survey a sample of people. This is often the case for studies trying to measure experiences that affect a relatively small proportion of the population.

The rate of furniture poverty in Scotland is a good example: its confidence interval shows that the true level of furniture poverty could be anywhere between 2% and 9%. This wide range reflects the level of uncertainty in the estimate. To reduce this uncertainty - and produce narrower ranges (aka confidence intervals) - a larger survey sample is needed in future research.

For a full comparison of the central estimates of the number of missing items between 2022 and 2025 and for the overall rate of furniture poverty, please see Appendix 2.

For the survey that was undertaken in 2025, we added two questions that did not appear on the previous survey concerning the impact of furniture poverty on physical and mental health. Respondents were asked to what extent living without the essential item they selected had a negative impact on their physical and/or mental health. They were asked to rate the impact on a scale of 1-5:

- 1: Extremely negative impact
- 2: Very negative impact
- 3: Moderately negative impact
- 4: Slight negative impact
- 5: No negative impact

The NatCen Opinion Panel surveys are designed to yield a representative sample of adults aged 18 or over living in the UK. Our survey results therefore only relate to adults (18+) unless otherwise stated. To reach the total number of adults and children experiencing furniture poverty in the UK, we conducted further analysis with NatCen.

We also conducted a logistic regression analysis to examine the factors associated with furniture poverty, measured as a binary outcome where households were classified as either in furniture poverty or not. The model included housing tenure, income, economic activity, ethnicity, disability, age, relationship status, and whether someone lived in an urban or rural environment as the key independent variables. This allowed us to identify which characteristics were independently linked to an increased likelihood of experiencing furniture poverty (after controlling for all the above factors). For more details on this, please see Appendix 3.

Qualitative Interviews

End Furniture Poverty conducted five in-depth, semi-structured interviews and two focus groups of five individuals experiencing varying degrees of furniture poverty. These interviews allowed us to capture a range of different lived experiences of living without the essential furniture items.

Care was taken to ensure the interviewees felt comfortable to share the experiences they wanted, and had their voice heard in a safe environment. All participants were given full anonymity so they could freely express their experiences, and all names have been changed to uphold this anonymity. We received additional comments from people who email End Furniture Poverty asking for advice and guidance.

We were also provided with further case studies of people experiencing furniture poverty from Furnishing Futures and Citizens Advice Manchester.

Understanding Society

This report also draws on analysis of the Understanding Society UK Longitudinal Survey. It is a national study of people across the UK and covers income, wellbeing, care and expenditure amongst other things.⁸⁴ Each wave of the study covers an 18- month period, with the most recent data covering interviews from January 2022 to May 2024. In this wave, over 35,000 people 16 years and older were interviewed and included in the main dataset.

APPENDIX 1:

Frequently Used Terms

Confidence Interval - the estimates presented in this study are generated from a survey and carry a level of uncertainty. The C.I., or Confidence Interval, represents this uncertainty; it is the range of values that the estimates is expected to take in the real population. The C.I. in this report carries a 95% confidence level. This means that, by collecting the data 100 times with different samples, the point estimate would fall between these values 95 times.

Crisis and Resilience Fund - a UK government initiative launching in April 2026, replacing the Household Support Fund with a £1 billion, three-year, multi-year settlement to provide immediate financial assistance to low-income households facing unexpected crises while building long-term financial resilience.

Furniture Poverty - Furniture poverty is the inability to afford or access basic furniture, appliances and furnishings that provide a household with a socially acceptable standard of living.

Furniture Destitution – when someone is living without most or all of the essential furniture items.

Deep Furniture Poverty – In this report we have defined ‘deep furniture poverty’ as when an individual is missing three or more essential furniture items.

The essential items of furniture or ‘the essential items’ are the items of furniture and appliances which you need to achieve a socially acceptable standard of living. This list was compiled as part of a national study in 2016. We believe that the final item, a TV, still has relevance although it could now be interchangeable with a digital device such as a laptop or tablet. It is that connection and link to the outside world.

- Bed, bedding, and mattress
- Table and chairs
- Sofa and/or easy chairs
- Wardrobe/drawers
- Carpets in living rooms and bedrooms
- Curtains or blinds
- Washing machine
- Refrigerator and freezer
- Cooker/oven
- TV

Household Support Fund (HSF) – The Household Support Fund is a government support fund that is available via local authorities across the UK. It was introduced in September 2021 to help vulnerable households afford essentials. It has been extended several times. At the time of writing, it is set to be replaced by the Crisis and Resilience Fund on 1st April 2026.

Housing Tenure – the legal status under which people have the right to live in a property. Typically, owner-occupier, rental from a private landlord, or rental from a registered social landlord.

Local Welfare Assistance (LWA) – Local Welfare Assistance provides emergency, discretionary financial support for people in crisis. It is administered by local authorities and can be used to provide furniture and appliances.

Low Income – Households are classed as low income if they live on less than 60% of the contemporary median UK household income.

Poverty – There are several measures of poverty in the UK. When we refer to poverty in this report, we are referring to relative income poverty unless stated otherwise. Relative income poverty, where households have less than 60% of contemporary median income.

Poverty Premium - the extra costs people on low incomes and in poverty pay for essential products and services. Examples include prepayment energy meters, high-cost credit options and having to use 'non-standard' billing methods rather than direct debits.

Social Housing - housing provided by public or non-profit organisations that is rented at substantially below market rents and is accessible to low-income households.

Socioeconomic characteristics – A descriptive term for the position of persons in society, based on a combination of criteria, including occupational, economic, housing and education.

Acronyms

- C.I. – Confidence Interval
- CPI – Consumer Price Index
- CRF – Crisis and Resilience Fund
- EFP – End Furniture Poverty
- DWP – Department for Work and Pensions
- FP – Furniture Poverty
- HSF – Household Support Fund
- JRF – Joseph Rowntree Foundation
- LWA – Local Welfare Assistance scheme
- NatCen – National Centre for Social Research
- UC – Universal Credit

APPENDIX 2:

Table 1 - Comparison of furniture poverty levels between 2022 and 2025

	2025		2022		2025 vs 2022
	%	NBase	%	NBase	Significant difference?
Level of furniture poverty	7	2500	9	5500	No

Table 1 displays the overall percentages of furniture poverty out of the overall sample size, comparing survey years 2022 and 2025. We found no statistically significant difference between the survey years.

Table 2 - Comparison of furniture poverty population estimates between 2022 and 2025

	2025		2022		2025 vs 2022
	Population Estimates	NBase	Population Estimates	NBase	Significant difference?
Level of furniture poverty	4M	155	4.8M	334	No

Table 2 displays the population estimate comparisons for furniture poverty between survey years 2022 and 2025.

Table 3 - Comparison of missing essential items between 2022 and 2025

		2025	2022	2025 vs 2022
Base: UK population aged 18+ in furniture or appliance poverty		%	%	Significant difference?
Furniture or appliance poverty / Item Missing	Adult beds**	12	7	No
	Child beds**	11	16	No
	Flooring	30	27	No
	Fridge**	8	5	No
	Freezer*	18	20	No
	Cooker**	11	9	No
	Washing machine**	12	10	No
	Window coverings*	17	18	No
	Sofa and/or easy chairs*	18	16	No
	Dining table and chairs	46	51	No
Wardrobe or clothes storage*	22	20	No	
Base sample size		155	334	

* Estimate based on a small sample size (N>24 and <50).

** Estimate based on very small sample size (N<25). Estimates are statistically unreliable and should be interpreted with caution.

Table 4 - Comparison of missing essential items between 2022 and 2025

	2025		2022		2025 vs 2022
	Population Estimate	N Base	Population Estimate	N Base	Significant difference?
Adult beds**	470,000	17	340,000	28	No
Child beds**	420,000	17	740,000	54	No
Flooring	1.2 million	50	1.3 million	102	No
Fridge**	330,000	13	260,000	20	No
Freezer*	690,000	30	950,000	69	No
Cooker**	440,000	21	410,000	33	No
Washing machine**	480,000	22	450,000	41	No
Window coverings*	660,000	25	870,000	66	No
Sofa and/or easy chairs*	710,000	28	750,000	46	No

* Estimate based on a small sample size (N>24 and <50).

** Estimate based on very small sample size (N<25). Estimates are statistically unreliable and should be interpreted with caution.

Tables 3 and 4 present the comparison between 2025 and 2022 survey results for each essential item, both percentages and populations estimates. This was for the section 'The Scale of Furniture Poverty'. For all variables, we found no evidence of a statistically significant change between the survey years. The essential items of adult beds, child beds, and fridge are based on very small sample sizes and should be interpreted with caution.

APPENDIX 3:

Multivariate analysis was carried out for the chapter on 'Who is Most at Risk of Furniture Poverty' section. The likelihood of someone experiencing furniture poverty was analysed across a range of socio-economic elements and demographic characteristics. The table below (Table 1) reports the odds ratio and significance level of the following three models:

- one using only the 2022 data,
- one using only the 2025 data, and
- one using both years combined.

Table 5 - Outputs of regression models

	Both Years	2022 only	2025 Only
Constant	0.014	0.014	0.014
Housing tenure (Ref: Homeowner)			
Social renter	4.00*	5.46*	2.02*
Private renter	2.96*	3.02*	3.13*
Household income			
More than £2500 per month (Reference category)			
£1000 or less per month	3.84*	3.25*	6.19*
£1001 to £1500 per month	1.98*	1.75	2.83*
£1501 to £2500 per month	1.56	1.17	2.69*
Disability status			
No disability (Reference category)			
Yes - affects day-to-day life	1.97*	2.24*	1.61*
Yes - does not affect day-to-day life	1.15	1.81	0.26
Ethnic groups			
White British			
Any ethnic minority background	2.01*	2.18*	1.72*
Age groups			
18-29 (Reference category)			
30-39	1.31	1.47	1.03
40-49	1.09	1.11	1.17
50-59	0.88	0.98	0.69
60+	0.51*	0.47	0.62

	Both Years	2022 only	2025 Only
Economic activity			
Paid work (Reference category)			
Full time education	0.68	0.96	0.34
Other	1.55*	1.98*	0.84
Retired	0.48	0.49	0.43
Unemployed	1.85	2.45*	0.89
Urban/Rural areas			
Urban (Reference category)			
Rural	0.78	0.87	0.56
Latest Relationship status			
Married/civil partnership/living with partner			
Single/Partner not living with	1.23	0.95	2.21*
Separated/divorced/widowed	1.35	1.05	2.54*
Unweighted observations	7788	5537	2251
<i>Pseudo R2 (McFadden)</i>	0.22	0.22	0.22

*Statistically significant ($p < 0.5$)

We decided to report the odds ratios of both survey years combined. The table shows that the differences across the three models are very small, with the key findings remaining relatively stable regardless of which dataset we used.

However, there are some differences that are important to note. For example, those on incomes lower than the reference group (more than £2500 per month) have greater odds of furniture poverty in 2025 than 2022 and both years combined. Similarly, social renters have lower odds of furniture poverty in 2025 compared to the other two models.

Alongside this, single and separated people are statistically twice as likely to experience furniture poverty in 2025, and these results are statistically significant. We find no statistically significant results for relationship status for 2025 or both years combined.

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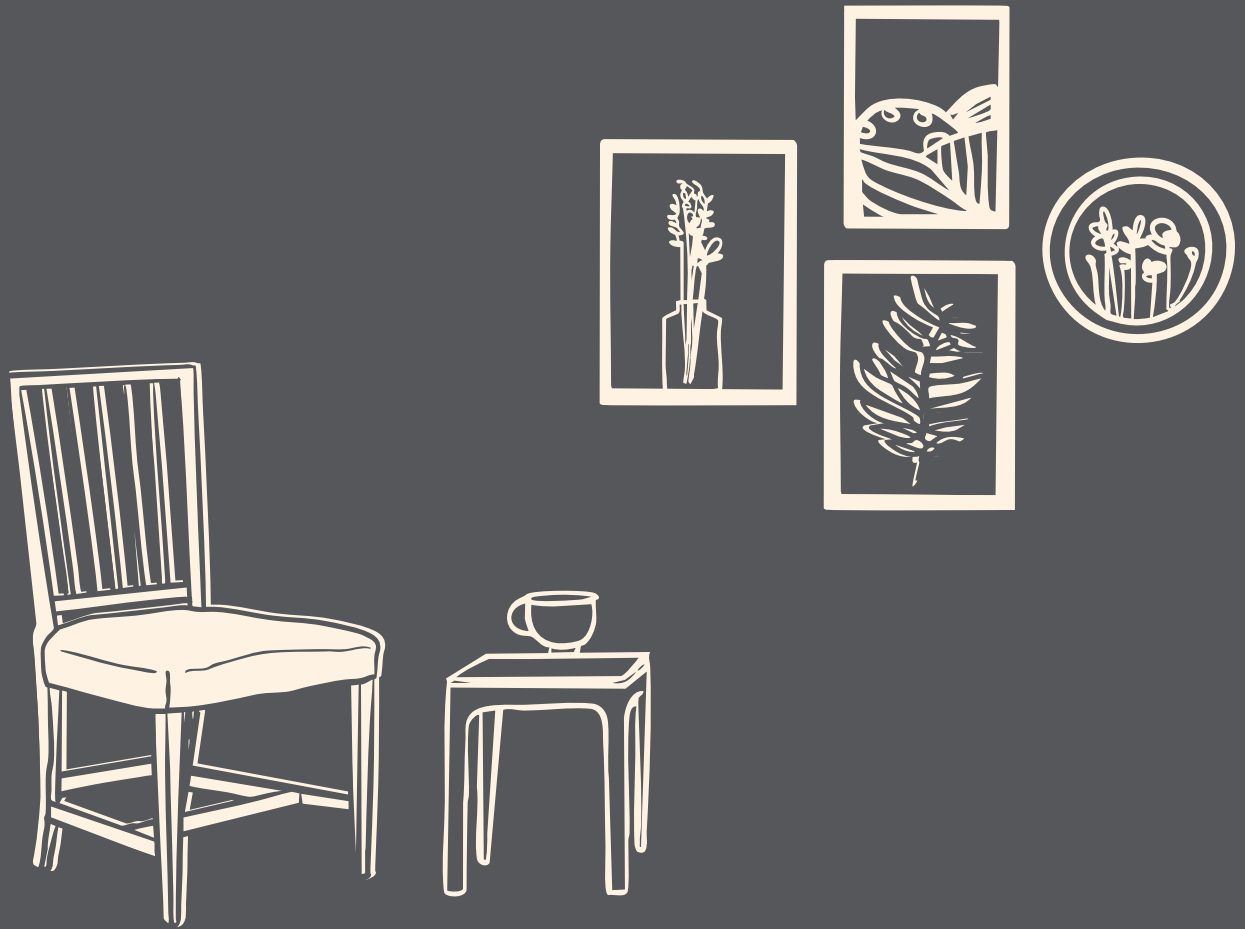
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