



Roinn an Taoisigh
Department of the Taoiseach

Child Poverty and Well-being Programme Office

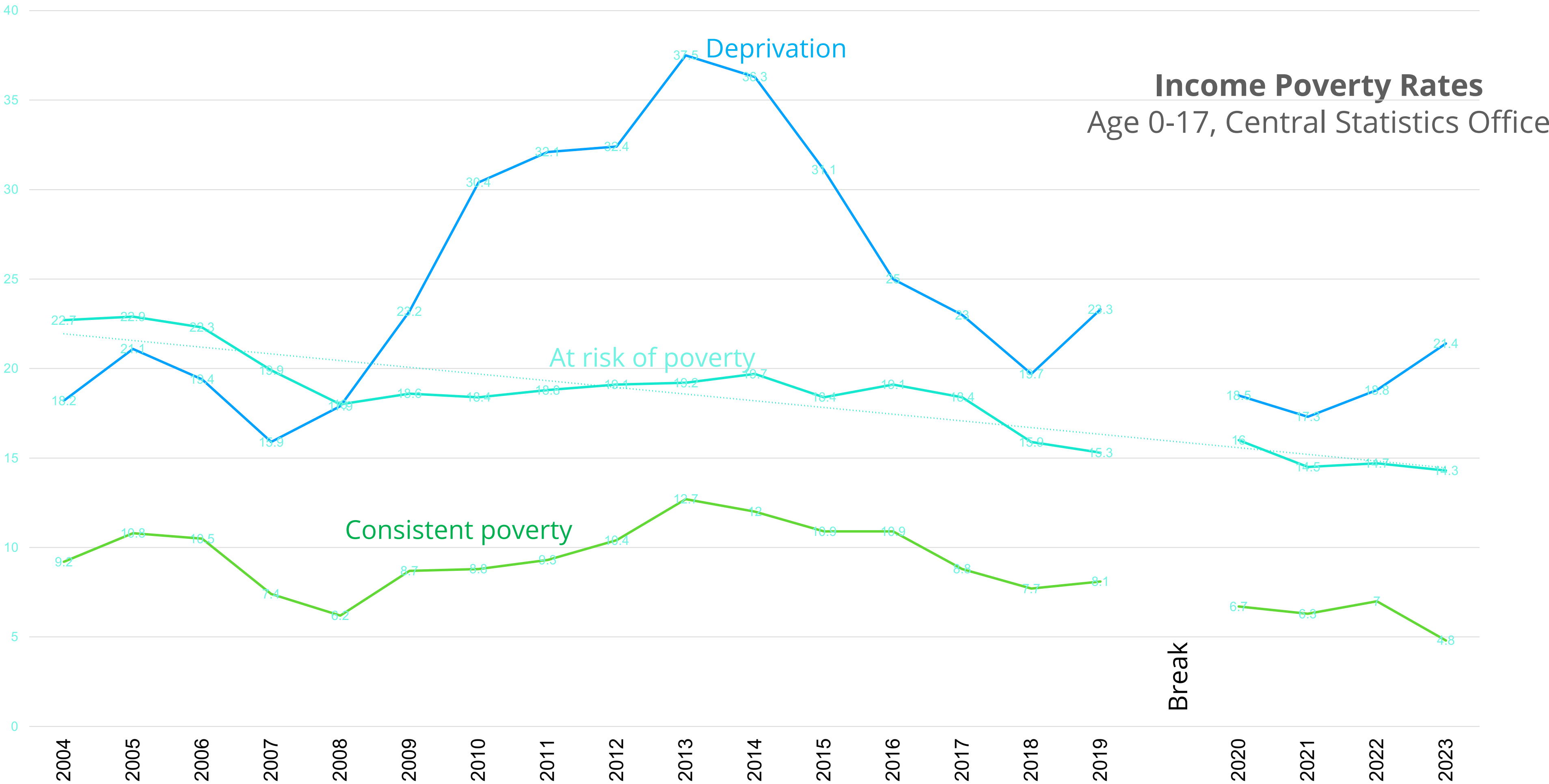
Irish Social Policy Association

10 April 2024





Child poverty rates have gradually declined over the last 10 years, but there is an increase in deprivation since 2021





Child Poverty...

- Children are more likely to be in poverty than adults.
- Child poverty is about more than money.
- Poverty travels across generations.
- Certain groups of children are at much greater risk.
- Child poverty is situated in families and communities.
- Not all poor children live in income poor households.
- There is an established and ambitious policy agenda on child poverty.

Intergenerational nature of poverty...



“... is the private and public transfer of deficits in assets and resources from one generation to another. Poverty is not transferred inter-generationally as a ‘package’, but as a complex set of positive and negative factors that affect an individual’s chances of experiencing poverty in the present or at a future point in their life-course” (Bird and Higgins, quoted in: Shutter et al, 2023)



Poverty has long term consequences

“... exposure to EV [Economic Vulnerability] during childhood is associated with poorer outcomes ... These outcomes cover a range of key dimensions, including **cognitive and educational attainment, school engagement, socio-emotional development, life satisfaction, self-concept, chronic illness/disability, obesity, health behaviours (for example, smoking, drinking for the '98 cohort) and quality of relationships...** In the majority of cases, there appears to be a cumulative effect of exposure ... That said, **even transitory spells of EV are associated with worse outcomes** compared to never experiencing EV” (ESRI, 2021).





“We want all children to be happy and well cared for”

- Reducing poverty has enormous benefit for **each child**
- Saves **money** by reducing demands for social services like welfare, health, crime
- Supports a more dynamic, efficient and productive **economy**, by making sure that everyone has the potential to contribute.
- Will enhance social cohesion and protect **democracy**
- That social cohesion will help support the changes needed for **climate action**, to reduce pressure on the environment
- Enriches us **culturally and artistically** by the conditions for everyone with talent to realise their potential.

1. When a problem is complex and multifaceted... difficult!
2. When a cross government response is necessary
3. Political agenda

Role of the Programme Office



Following an announcement in December 2022, the Child Poverty and Well-being Programme Office was established in the Department of the Taoiseach in Spring 2023 to coordinate and focus Government action on child poverty and well-being.

The role of the Office is to:

1. **Monitor** the delivery of policy commitments by Departments and their Agencies.
2. Undertake a small number of **strategic initiatives** which have the potential to increase the impact of current and emerging measures.

In August 2023, the Office published its initial work programme for the next two and a half years, *From Poverty to Potential: A Programme Plan for Child Poverty and Well-being 2023-2025*.

Six Priority Areas



Cross-Government Initiatives



1. A focus on child poverty in the annual budget
2. Programme to support service integration
3. Tools to enhance policy and implementation focus
4. Child-services workforce development

Governance Structure



Cabinet Committee
on Children and Education

Senior Officials Group
on Children and Education

Young Ireland –
3 spotlights

**Child Poverty and
Well-being
Programme Office**

Cross-Government Network
on Child Poverty

Annual Child Poverty **Summit**



It is my firm belief that child poverty is a barrier that is in our power to remove. Over the past decade, we have demonstrated that this can be the case, that it is not inevitable, and it is not something we have to live with or work around.

My desire [is] to make Ireland the best country in which to be a child and to reduce child poverty and improve wellbeing and opportunity for children.

This will take a sustained effort, and no one part of government can do it alone. Every day, everyone in this room contributes to that ambition.

Taoiseach Leo Varadkar, T.D
19 October 2023



I am also committed to building on the good work of the child poverty and well-being programme office established by my predecessor, Deputy Leo Varadkar. We will make more progress on that in the next budget.

Taoiseach Simon Harris, T.D
10 April 2024



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Thank you

anna.visser@taoiseach.gov.ie

cpw@taoiseach.gov.ie

www.gov.ie/childpoverty