

Young at wrong end of deprivation gap, finds study

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The under thirties have endured most the marked increase in relative deprivation of any age group in England, according to a 11-year study of data from the Office of National Statistics (ONS).

Led by University of Manchester data scientists, the analysis from 2004-2015 also found that over the same period, deprivation fell for the over sixties, who are also less likely to live in deprived neighbourhoods.

Professor Evan Kontopantelis from The University of Manchester said a combination of Government policies, the [financial crisis](#) of 2008, education funding and the increasing cost of housing relative to real wages probably explained the findings.

The data was calculated according to geographical units of 1500 people between 2014 and 2015 -providing one of the most detailed pictures yet of how deprivation affects us across the country.

The research team used the English Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) and 2011 Census data.

The IMD quantifies relative deprivation across income, employment, education and skills, health and disability, crime, barriers to housing and services, and living environment.

According to the researchers, deprivation for those aged 30 to 59 increased over the same period as it did for young adults aged 20-29 and

infants aged 0-4.

On the positive side, small reductions were observed in the relative deprivation gap between White British and all other ethnic groups, though the gaps were much wider in post-industrial regions like the North West than in the South.

The research is published in the *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*.

Professor Kontopantelis said: "We define relative deprivation as a standard of living or quality of life below levels enjoyed by the broader society, to a high enough extent to introduce hardship, with little or no access to resources.

"And on those terms, our findings show that in the under 30s it has increased since 2004.

"We in particular note a worrying rise in deprivation among infants between the ages of 0 and 4.

"People aged 60 or over were not only more likely to live in less deprived areas, but the inequality gaps between those aged 60 or over and everyone else has increased over time."

He added: "Government policies, the financial crisis of 2008, [education funding](#) and the increasing cost of houses relative to real wages are important ways to interpret these findings.

"The housing market is arguably the most important of them: the average house in England and Wales costs 7.6 times the average annual salary in 2016, up from 3.6 times in 1997.

"And these large increases in house prices over a relatively short period of time have provided a large advantage to the older generation, for who it was much cheaper to get on the property ladder.

"Another factor is real pay: it fell sharply after the 2008 crisis, and although it somewhat recovered between 2014 and 2016, the recovery has been negated post-Brexit.

"Pension scheme deficits also play a part: people currently at work not only have their salaries affected, but are also extremely unlikely to enjoy the same retirement benefits as their colleagues who retired in the past, even when accounting for an increasing life-expectancy.

"Socio-economic [deprivation](#) is an important determinant of health and the inequalities this work highlights may have significant implications for future fiscal and healthcare policy.

"And fiscal policy should take into account the increasing resource gap between the young and the old and aim to deliver a fairer society."

More information: The increasing socio-economic gap between the young and old: temporal trends in health and overall deprivation in England by age, sex, urbanity and ethnicity, 2004 to 2015, *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health* (2018). [DOI: 10.1136/jech-2017-209895](#)

Provided by University of Manchester

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