

The changing face of early childhood

Early childhood poverty – an essential lens

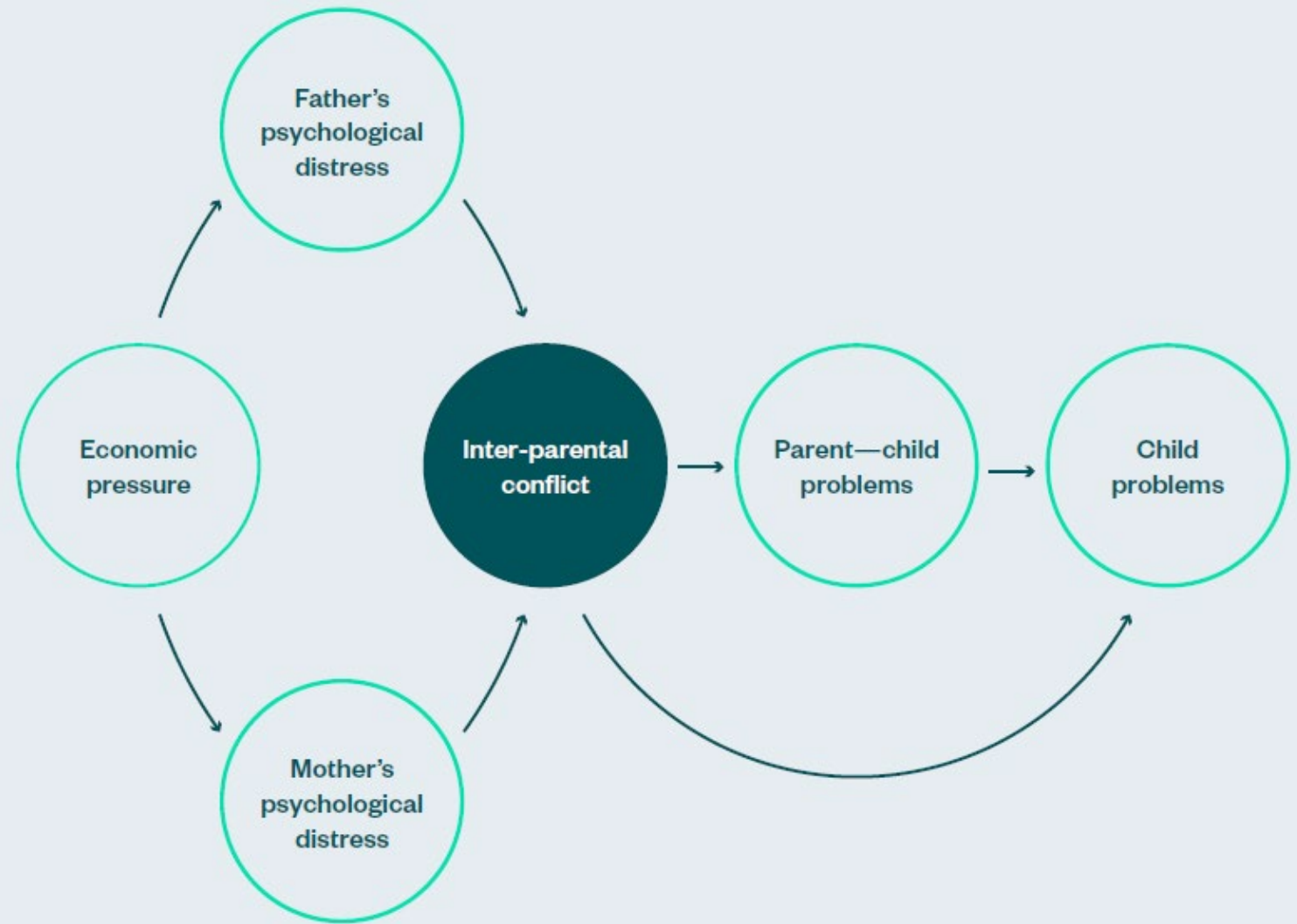




Poverty in early childhood can be highly detrimental

- Gaps begin early and can be long-lasting.
- Family poverty associated with poorer academic attainment and social and emotional adjustment in early childhood.
- Highly detrimental if persistent and experienced in the first three years.
- Combination of different risk factors which is most damaging.
- Causal relationship between income and children's outcomes based on 61 robust studies (Stewart and Reader 2017).
- Poverty influences children's outcomes directly and indirectly.

Poverty – the indirect impact on family relationships, parenting and children



Family stress model.
Adapted from Acquah et al. 2017.

How do we measure child poverty?

DWP Households below average income (HBAI)

- **Relative** poverty:
- Proportion of children living below 60% contemporary median income after housing costs

Lone parent with one child : **£248** per week

Couple with one child: **£342** per week

Look at other measures: absolute poverty, deprivation, destitution

Unit of analysis

Proportion of children living in a family with **youngest child under five** in relative poverty

Higher rates of poverty for families with a young child

In 2019/20, the proportion of children in poverty in families with youngest child under five stood at 36% - compared to 30% in 2013/14.

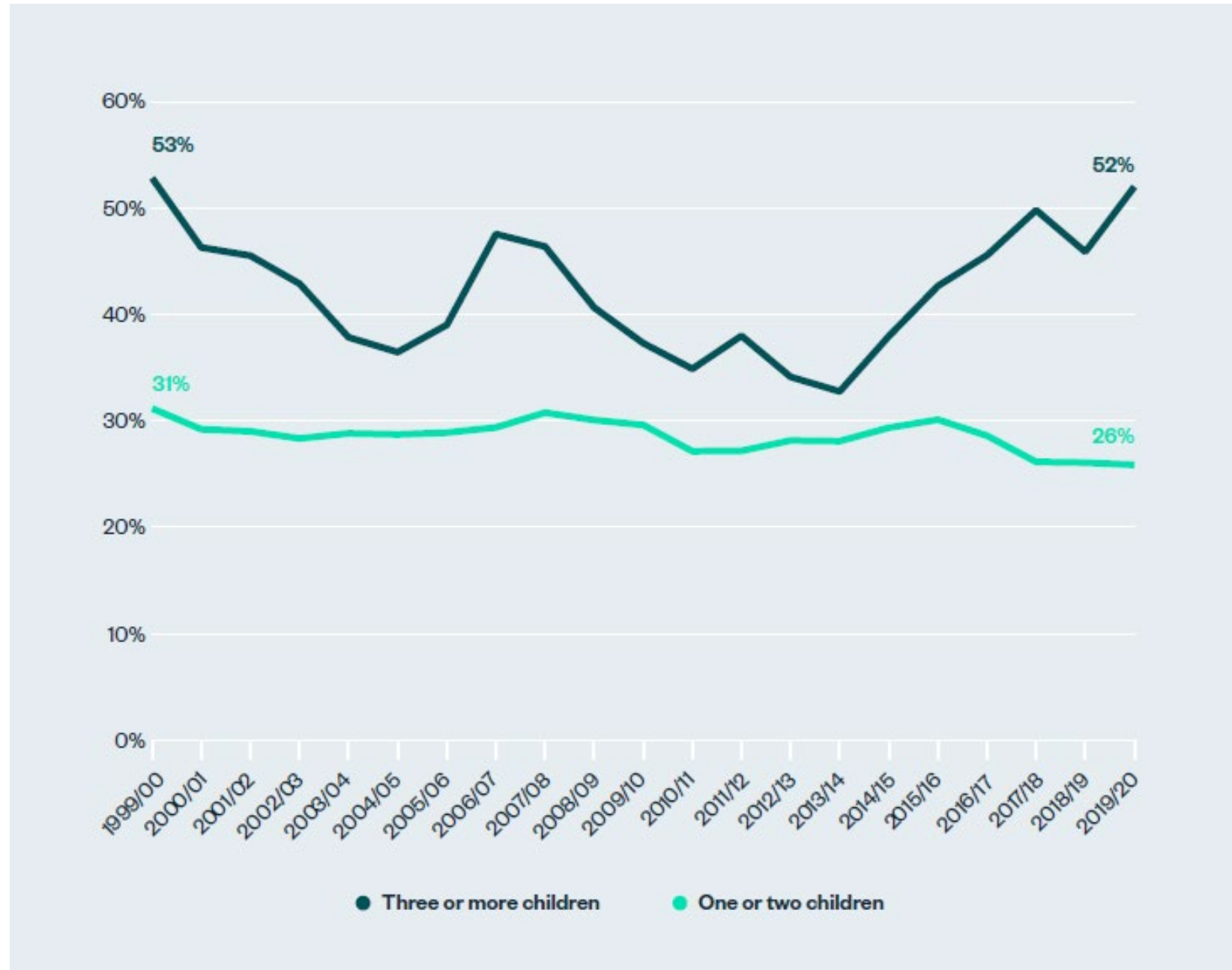
(Stewart & Reader 2021)



Higher rates of poverty for larger families with a young child (3+ children)

Risk of relative poverty for households with youngest child aged 0–4 by number of children in the family.

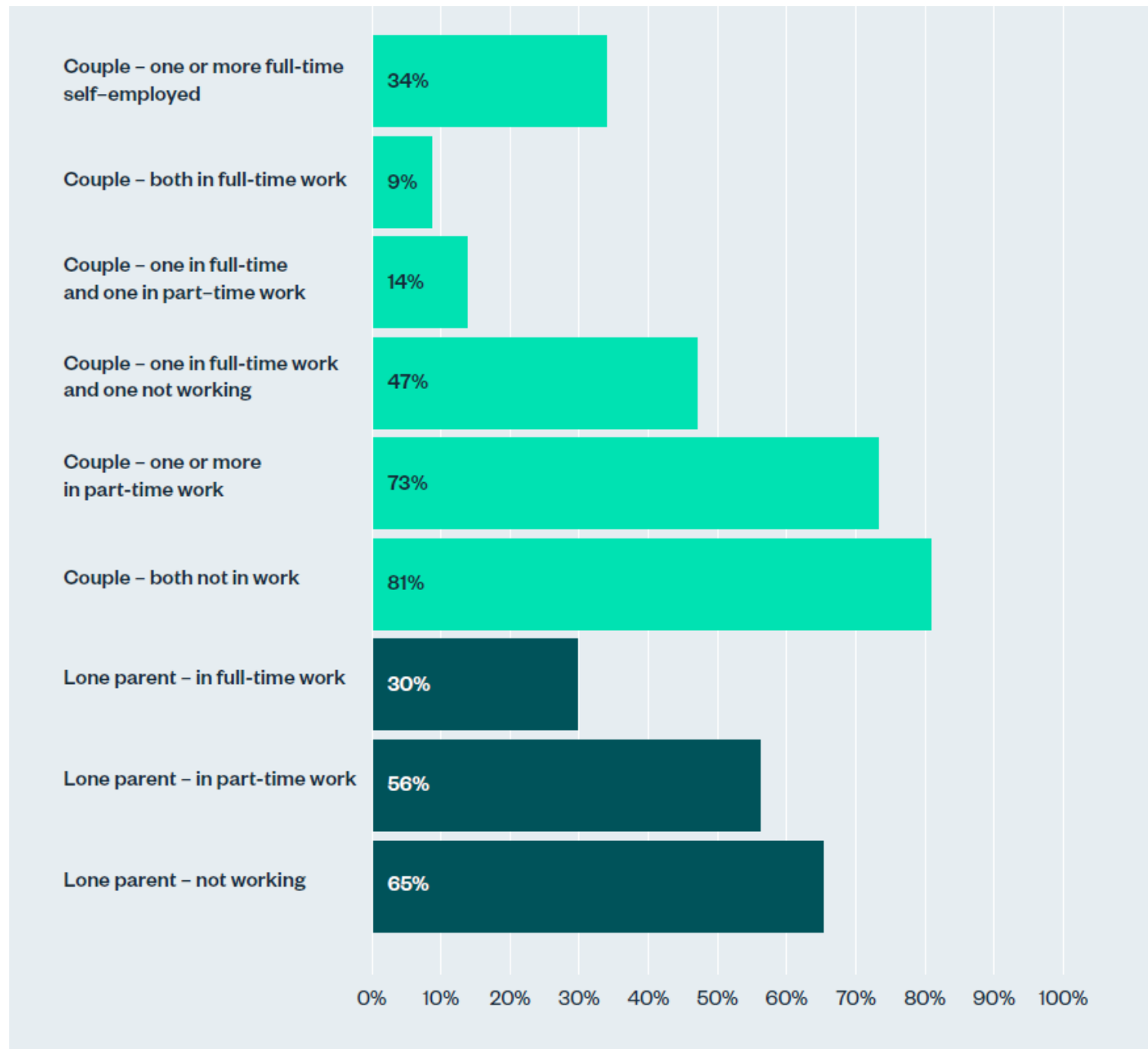
Source: HBAI (DWP 2021).



Having a parent(s) in work doesn't always protect children from poverty

Risk of relative poverty for households with youngest child aged 0–4 by family and economic status 2019/20.

Source: HBAI (DWP 2021).



Increased risk of poverty for those in work

Risk of relative poverty for households with youngest child aged 0–4 by economic status.
Source: HBAI (DWP 2021).

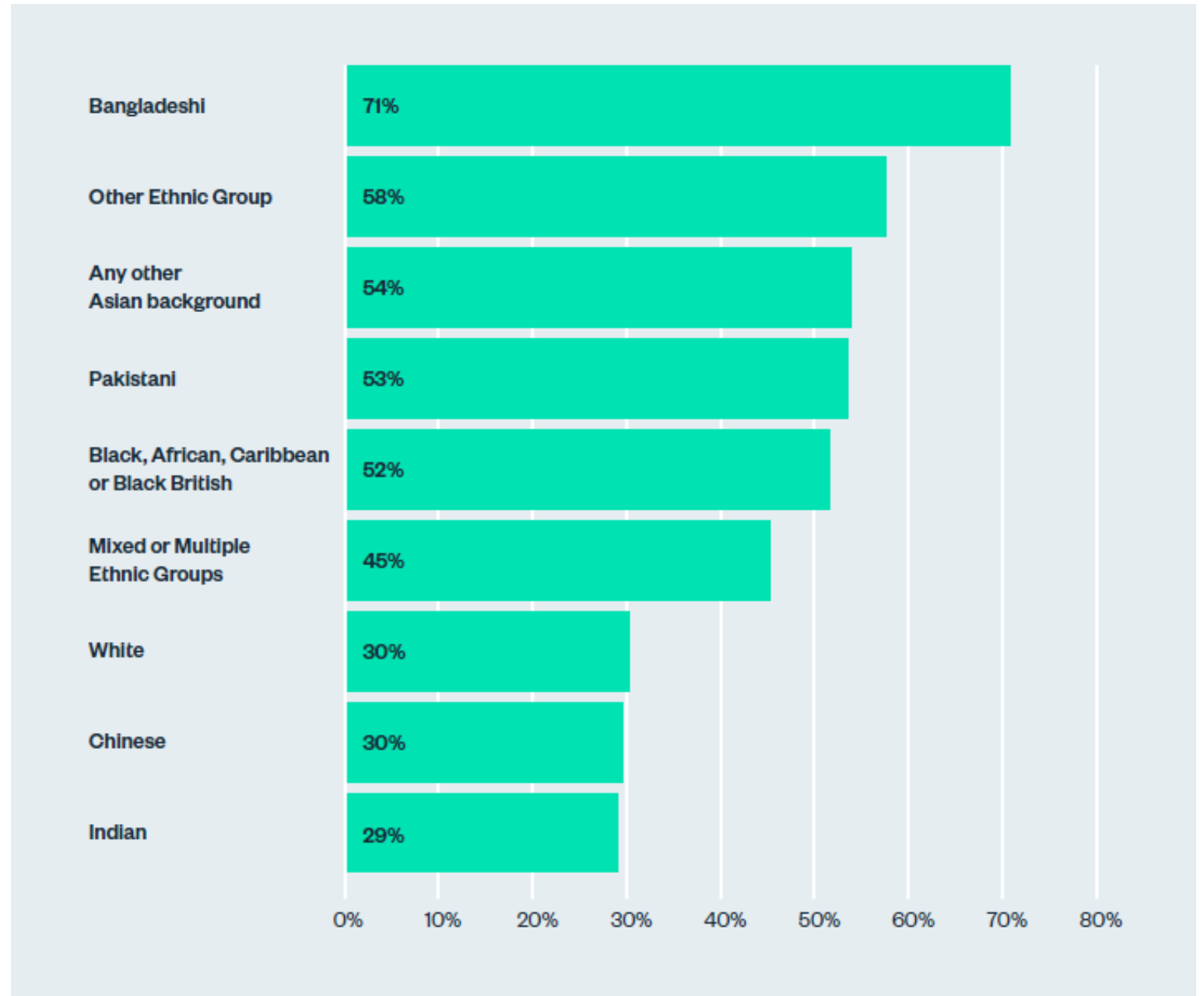




Children from some ethnic minority backgrounds face much higher risks of poverty

Risk of relative poverty for households with youngest child aged 0–4 by ethnicity 2017/18–2019/20 (three-year average).

Source: HBAI (DWP 2021).





Growing proportion of families with a young child in poverty in private rental sector

Proportion of children in households with youngest child aged 0–4 in poverty by tenure type.
Source: HBAI (DWP 2021).





Regional variations – North East with highest rate, followed by London

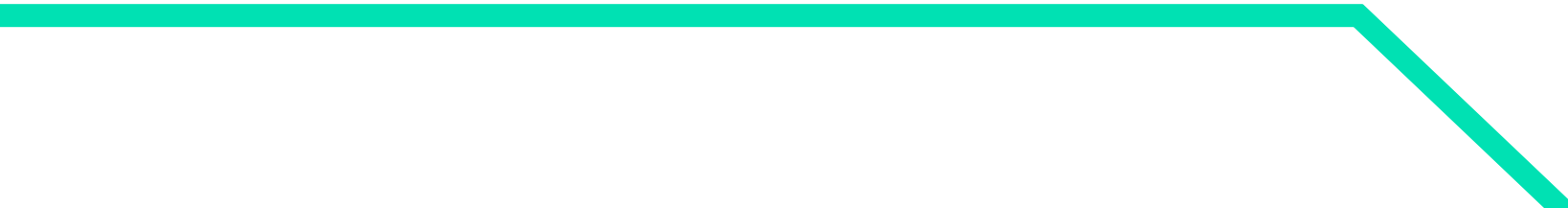
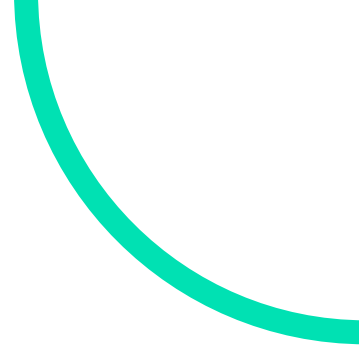
Change in the percentage of children in relative poverty, in households with youngest child aged 0–4 (three-year average).
Source: HBAI (DWP 2021).





Patterns of poverty in early childhood

- Risks of early childhood poverty by group and place
- Limited intersectional analysis
- Some of the most vulnerable children invisible
- Some evidence of intensification
- COVID-19





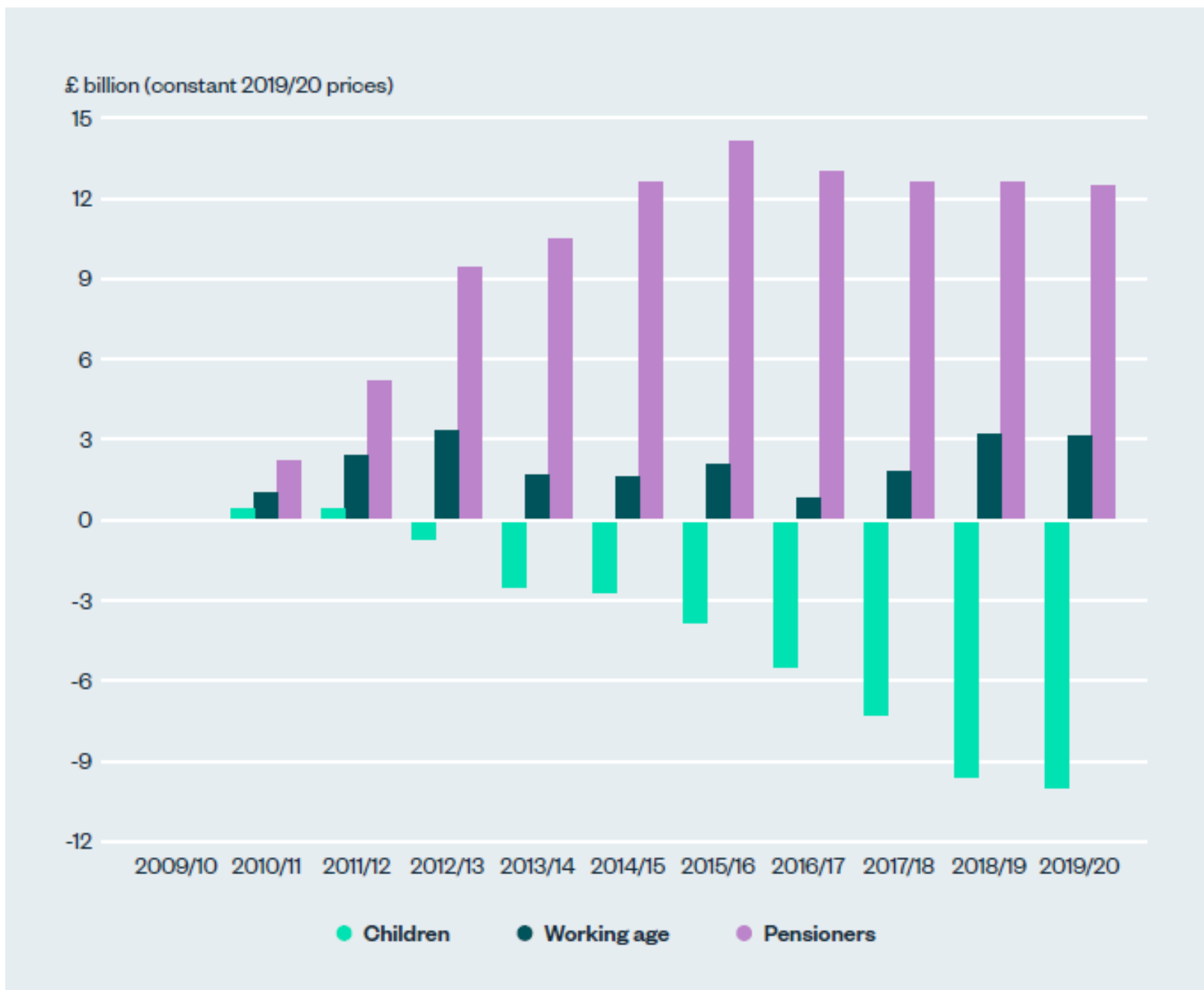
Major shifts in public policy on child poverty shaped by political differences and socio-economic circumstances

- Changing economic circumstances, labour market and employment, family patterns
- Shifting public policy priorities
- Major changes in the pattern of public spending



Major shift in social security and tax credit spending away from children

Cumulative change in social security and tax credit spending since 2009/10.
Source: Vizard and Hills 2021.





Addressing poverty in early childhood

- Multi-dimensional
- Financial bedrock for families with young children on low incomes
- Greater priority for parental mental health and parenting
- Harnessing national and local approaches
- Better understanding of relative effectiveness and costs
- Forging a consensus

