

# Kids 6 times more likely to have development problems based on where they live

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Concern has been raised about the development of toddlers in certain parts of the country – after it emerged a child in Inverclyde is six times more likely to have problems than one in Aberdeenshire.

The postcode lottery has been revealed as part of a study into the health and progress of children aged between 27 and 30 months.

Health visitors assessed more than 56,000 youngsters last year, checking for a range of problems from speech issues to emotional difficulties.

And it's emerged that while just four per cent of children in Aberdeenshire registered such problems, that figure jumped to 24 per cent for the council area of Inverclyde.

On the whole, the report said, a child living in the most deprived parts of Scotland was more than twice as likely to flag concerns as one in the wealthiest.

Across Scotland, of the 56,088 children checked, 7813 had at least one developmental concern.

That's 15 per cent of kids, compared to 19 per cent when the tests began four years ago.

**Scottish Conservative shadow health secretary Miles Briggs said:**

"It won't be a surprise to health visitors that youngsters in more deprived areas are more likely to have developmental issues than those in the wealthiest.

"But the geographical gaps across Scotland are stark.

"It's incredible that a toddler born in Inverclyde is six times more likely to have these problems recorded than one in Aberdeenshire.

"Of course, many of these problems will be addressed and sorted out by the time a child attends school.

"But for others, it will create a huge disadvantage for the rest of their lives.

"Ministers must analyse these important statistics as a matter of urgency and ensure this gap is closed for the better in future years."