

# European and External Affairs Committee

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## Purpose

1. This paper provides background information about the Bevan Foundation's planned activities for the European Year 2010 Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion.

## Background

2. The Bevan Foundation was set up in 2001 to encourage debate and develop new ideas about social justice in Wales. It carries out research, organises conferences, seminars and other events, and publishes articles, pamphlets and reports. It is funded by a mixture of membership subscriptions, grants and commissions to undertake specific projects, and a small grant towards core costs from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. It is a registered charity no. 1104191.

3. The Foundation has a long track record of undertaking work on different aspects of poverty including:

Research on fuel poverty funded by the Scottish Power Energy People Trust (ongoing).

A study of child poverty for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation in 2009.

A report on 'the poverty premium' funded by the Welsh Assembly Government New Ideas Fund in 2009.

An analysis of 'in-work' poverty in 2007.

4. We also have substantial experience of organising conferences and events including:

A conference celebrating International Women's Day in Merthyr Tydfil on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2010 (65 delegates)

A conference on equality and education in Swansea on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2010 (60 delegates)

A conference on equality and employment in Treforest on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2010 (60 delegates)

A 'question time', lecture and concert to mark the 170<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Chartist Uprising in Newport in October 2009 (300+ delegates).

5. As we are a small organisation, we aim to work in partnership with others and have worked successfully with, amongst others, National Energy Action Cymru, RNIB Cymru, Save the Children Cymru, Prime Cymru, to name a few.

## European Year 2010 Plans

6. The Foundation submitted a proposal to the Department for Work and Pensions, who are managing the EY2010 project, to run the year's activity in Wales. We were advised our proposal had been successful just before Christmas 2009. Following a meeting with DWP in February, we hope to finalise the contract by the end of March so the project can begin on 1<sup>st</sup> April.

7. The activities we will undertake are as follows:

Organise a major conference in September 2010 (approximately 100 participants)

Commission a short film about poverty in Wales which will be screened at the conference and uploaded onto YouTube

Publish conference papers in a book.

8. The thinking underlying the activities is:

To ensure there is a legacy from the activity in Wales in the form of the film and the book.

To focus on tackling the underlying causes of poverty (e.g. worklessness, education and disability and ill-health) rather than on the symptoms of poverty or different categories of poverty.

To support people experiencing poverty to contribute to the book, film and conference proceedings on an equal footing to others.

9. We plan to work with a wide range of different partner organisations to ensure the participation of people experiencing poverty, including RNIB, Age UK Cymru and Children in Wales. We have already been approached by other organisations (including Learning Disability Wales) who wish to become involved.

10. We will be pleased to take on board the views of the Committee, within the constraints of the contract with DWP.

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