

# Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee

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Meeting Venue:

**Committee Room 2 – Senedd**

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Meeting date:

**Wednesday, 19 November 2014**

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Meeting time:

**09.00**

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Cynulliad  
Cenedlaethol  
Cymru

National  
Assembly for  
Wales



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## Agenda

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At its meeting on 13 November, the Committee agreed a Motion under Standing Order 17.42 (vi) to resolve to exclude the public from item 1 of today's meeting

**1 Consideration of the Legislative Consent Memorandum – Modern Slavery Bill (09.00 – 09.15) (Pages 1 – 5)**

**2 Introductions, apologies and substitutions**

**3 Inquiry into Poverty in Wales – evidence session 4: Children's organisations (09.15 – 10.15) (Pages 6 – 74)**

**Save the Children**

Mary Powell-Chandler, Head of Save the Children

**Barnardo's Cymru**

Dr Sam Clutton, Assistant Director Policy, Barnardo's Cymru on behalf of End Child Poverty Network (ECPN)

## **Children in Wales**

Catriona Williams, Children in Wales End Child Poverty Network Cymru and  
Commissioner on the UK Social Mobility Child Poverty Commission

**Break (10.15 – 10.30)**

## **4 Inquiry into Poverty in Wales – evidence session 5: Women's organisations (10.30 – 11.30) (Pages 75 – 85)**

**Women's Turnaround Service, Changing Lives**  
Miriam Merkova, Service Manager

## **Chwarae Teg**

Natasha Davies, Policy Partner  
Christine O'Byrne, Policy and Research Lead

## **5 Inquiry into Poverty in Wales – evidence session 6: The Trussell Trust (11.30 – 12.00) (Pages 86 – 91)**

**The Trussell Trust**  
Tony Graham, Foodbank Network Manager (Wales)  
Adrian Curtis, UK Director

## **6 Papers to note (Pages 92 – 179)**

**To access:**

CELG(4)-31-14 Paper 8 – Annexe 2:

[http://www.sportwales.org.uk/media/1513296/active\\_adults\\_survey\\_2012\\_-\\_statistical\\_release\\_\\_2.xlsx](http://www.sportwales.org.uk/media/1513296/active_adults_survey_2012_-_statistical_release__2.xlsx)

CELG(4)-31-14 Paper 8 – Annexe 3

[http://www.sportwales.org.uk/media/1196240/school\\_sport\\_survey\\_2013\\_-\\_tables\\_of\\_statistics.xlsx](http://www.sportwales.org.uk/media/1196240/school_sport_survey_2013_-_tables_of_statistics.xlsx)

**7 Motion under Standing Order 17.42 to resolve to exclude the public from the remainder of the meeting and from item 1 of the meeting on 3 December 2014 (further consideration of the LCM for the Modern Slavery Bill)**

**8 Inquiry into Poverty in Wales: discussion of evidence received in sessions 4, 5 and 6 (12.00 – 12.10)**

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# Agenda Item 3

By virtue of paragraph(s) vi of Standing Order 17.42

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## **Save the Children response to the National Assembly for Wales' Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee inquiry into poverty in Wales**

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**Save the Children believes that no child should be born without a chance to thrive and fulfil their potential. Through our policy work and our programme work on the ground, we offer solutions to the challenges the UK's poorest children and families face.**

We welcome the opportunity to respond to Strand I of the Communities, Equalities and Local Government Committee's inquiry into poverty. Save the Children believes that the rights of the child must be at the heart of everything we and the government do, and that it should be recognised that poverty has a disproportional impact on children. Evidence has shown that poverty can blight a child's life prospects, but that timely action by governments and other service providers can have lasting benefits for the child and the wider community. We urge the Welsh Government to do all it can to continue to focus maximum resources and energy to tackle this issue and remind Welsh Government that in accordance with Article 3 of the UNCRC Rights of the child, Governments are required to make decisions that are in the best interests of the child. We believe that the Committee in undertaking this inquiry has an important opportunity to assess the success of the Welsh government's declared aim: to coordinate the various policies and budgets in responding to, and prioritising poverty-reduction in Wales. There are positive moves by the Welsh Government, and we acknowledge these. The creation of the Children's' Commissioner, and incorporation of the UNCRC are good examples of this prioritisation. We do however have some concerns that the Cabinet no longer includes a Deputy Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty and that since withdrawing funding from Funky Dragon, there is no clarity as to how Welsh Government will deliver its commitment to give children and young adults a voice with regards to the policies that affect their lives, as required by the UNCRC.

### **I. How effectively the Tackling Poverty Action Plan, Strategic Equality Plan and other government strategies work together.**

Firstly, we at Save the Children believe that whilst one in three Welsh children is living in poverty, more can be done to tackle poverty and protect children's rights. We acknowledge that the Welsh Government's Strategic Equality Plan recognises age as an attribute that should not disadvantage an individual. We refer to the situation that is unique to young people. A 'child and young person growing up in poverty is more likely to have a life with poor health outcomes [...] low paid, unemployed, and welfare dependent'. In short it can have a lifelong impact. The Welsh Government must continue to focus on poverty reduction for children and young people in such a way that the impact of this inequality is mitigated. We welcome the Welsh Government's progress in coordinating its three key anti-poverty programmes – Families First, Flying Start and Communities First including the creation of a common outcomes framework. Involvement in discussions regarding the fit

between the proposed revised Child Poverty Strategy and other plans and strategies, have been very encouraging and it is interesting in particular for Save the Children to note the correlation between the three-yearly Child Poverty Strategy and the annual Tackling Poverty Action Plan albeit we still believe Child Poverty should have distinctive actions within the latter. For optimum effectiveness, there has to be a shared vision and understanding of how all these plans and strategies interrelate so that children and families in poverty access all the support available to improve their life chances.

Secondly, we believe it is important that application and performance of policies and strategies is carefully monitored and outcomes measured, and it is essential that best practice is shared to ensure the most impactful outcomes for all our children living in poverty in Wales. Therefore, we remain convinced that it is vital that strategic direction is provided by the Welsh Government, together with resources and guidance to assist all stakeholders to implement effectively.

## **2. The impacts of poverty, particularly destitution and extreme poverty, on different groups of people.**

A child living in poverty suffers negative impacts on physical health, emotional well-being and cognitive development. For a child this can lead to a life lived in poverty as educational outcomes suffer. The gap between the achievements of disadvantaged compared to advantaged children is significant as early as age three. By GCSE there is a 34% gap in attainment between children living in low income households and their better off classmates. This is something that the administration must do all it can to mitigate. We would therefore like to bring to your attention that out of all the different groups in society, it is children that are the most at risk of the long term effects of poverty because of the importance of early years on lifetime development.

Another area the Welsh Governments Equality Plan should consider is the inequality of the 'poverty premium', that it costs more to be poor. It must be recognised that 'the way that low-income families purchase every day goods and services and due to their limited access to cheap financing options, they can often end up paying more'. For example, a typical annual dual fuel bill could be around 21% (£241) more expensive. Even though poverty is not one of the recognised attributes in the 'Equality Plan', this, perhaps, should be considered an equality issue, especially if one factors in the impact this has on children due to their reliance on their parents economic status, and this reliance is in turn due to their age, which is recognised by the Equality Plan.

Finally, the high cost of childcare has particular impact on those in severe poverty. This includes parents being forced to cut back on food, being forced in to debt, and parents being unable to take advantage of work and training opportunities which perpetuates the poverty trap. The Welsh Government's approach emphasises the dual function of childcare: that it should both nurture the child and support the family. However, our research shines a light on the fact that despite this dual function, many parents in Wales, particularly those on low-incomes, are still struggling to access suitable childcare. This again can be understood as producing an unequally impacted on children as a result of their reliance due to their age. This therefore could also be considered an equality issue and must be tackled.



### **3. How legislation, policy and budgets targeted at tackling poverty and reducing inequality are coordinated and prioritised across the Welsh Government.**

The strategies that the Welsh Government has developed such as the Building Resilient Communities and Building a Brighter Future clearly articulate the Government's commitment to mitigating the link between poverty and education. We strongly support the Welsh Government's decision to make reducing the impact of poverty on educational attainment one of its three national priorities for education in Wales. The budget allocation granted to the Pupil Deprivation Grant to enable schools to invest in those pupils eligible for Free School Meals is something we feel must continue to be given priority. Also, Communities First continues to be a flagship programme, and following its realignment, the three strategic objectives of prosperous, healthy and learning communities strengthen the link between poverty and education. We support Welsh Government's commitment 'to doubling the number of children and their families benefiting from the Flying Start programme from 18,000 to 36,000'. To this end we support and recognise the commitment that an 'additional £55 million funding has been made available over the course of the next three years'.

Further, we welcome the Welsh Government's move to keep part of the Education Maintenance Allowance and absorb the cut in Council Tax Benefit and see these as 'examples of very well targeted spending in Wales'.

As a member of the UNCRC Monitoring Group in Wales, we support the view that Welsh Government should allocate 'the maximum extent of available resources' to eliminate child poverty, with an emphasis on early intervention and prevention, and take all possible steps to increase transparency of public expenditure on child poverty reduction.

#### **Concluding comments**

We would like to thank the committee for giving us the opportunity to submit to this important inquiry. We recognise the progress and work done by the Welsh Government but would like to reiterate some key issues and thoughts.

(1) Children suffer from the impacts of poverty disproportionately due to their age and as such could be considered an equality issue.

(2) Strategic direction should be provided by the Welsh Government, together with resources and guidance to assist all stakeholders to implement policies effectively and in a joined-up manner.

(3) The application and performance of policies and strategies must be carefully monitored, outcomes measured and best practice shared.

- (4) Children's views must be sought and considered with regards to policies that affect them.
- (5) Poverty still has a significant influence on the health, emotional well-being and cognitive development of children, and on current levels of education performance in Wales, potentially leading to a life of poverty.
- (6) The 'poverty premium' disproportionately affects children as well as the high cost of childcare having particular impact on children in severe poverty.
- (7) Welsh Government should allocate 'the maximum extent of available resources' to eliminate child poverty and take all possible steps to increase transparency of public expenditure on child poverty reduction.



**Title:** **Inquiry into Poverty in Wales**

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### **1. Information and working context of Barnardo's Cymru**

Barnardo's Cymru has been working with children, young people and families in Wales for over 100 years and is one of the largest children's charities working in the country. We currently run 88 diverse services across Wales, working in partnership with 19 of the 22 local authorities, supporting in the region of 8,500 children, young people and families last year. Barnardo's Cymru services in Wales include: care leavers and youth homelessness projects, young carers schemes, specialist fostering and adoption schemes, family centres and family support, parenting support, community development projects, family support for children affected by parental imprisonment, domestic abuse and parental substance misuse, short breaks and inclusive services for disabled children and young people, assessment and treatment for young people who exhibit sexually harmful or concerning behaviour and specialist services for children and young people at risk of, or abused through, child sexual exploitation and young people's substance misuse services.

Every Barnardo's Cymru service is different but each believes that every child and young person deserves the best start in life, no matter who they are, what they have done or what they have been through. We use the knowledge gained from our direct work with children to campaign for better childcare policy and to champion the rights of every child. We believe that with the right help, committed support and a little belief, even the most vulnerable children can turn their lives around.

- **This response may be made public.**
- **This response is on behalf of Barnardo's Cymru.**

## **Inquiry submission: Strand 1: poverty and inequality**

Barnardo's Cymru works with families, children and young people across Wales. This work includes provision of Families First services, provision in Communities First areas and work with specific groups who are particularly vulnerable to poverty such as families with disabled children, young carers whose parents are disabled or have issues such as substance misuse, children affected by parental imprisonment, young parents, care leavers and homeless young people.

### **1. Consideration of how effectively the Tackling Poverty Action Plan, Strategic Equality Plan and other government strategies work together.**

- 1.1.** The current Welsh Government Child Poverty Strategy was published in 2011. The final published version of the Strategy was significantly different from the draft that was widely consulted on in 2010. The consultation draft was accompanied by a Draft Child Poverty Delivery Plan which adopted a child rights approach framed within the 7 Core Aims for children and young people which in turn were related directly to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). However a decision was then made that a Child Poverty Delivery Plan would not be issued and that delivery of the Child Poverty Strategy would be included in the Tackling Poverty Action Plan which after numerous delays was published in June 2012.
- 1.2.** The children's third sector and the Children's Commissioner for Wales voiced concerns at the loss of a clear and strong children's rights framework in the final Child Poverty Strategy (2011) and the decision not to publish a specific Child Poverty Delivery Plan. Further, there was criticism that the integration of action on child poverty into the Tackling Child Poverty Action Plan 2012 had resulted in a clear loss of focus on the child within a child's rights approach.
- 1.3.** In 2013 Welsh Government published 'Building Resilient Communities: taking forward the Tackling Poverty Action Plan' and the Tackling Poverty Action Plan 2012-16 that do have a stronger emphasis on children and young people than the 2012 Tackling Child Poverty Action Plan. However a child right's framework directly related to the UNCRC is absent. This is in contrast to the earlier Child Poverty Strategy of Welsh Government (A Fair Future for Our Children, 2005) and the 2010 consultation drafts of the Child Poverty Strategy and the Child Poverty Delivery Plan.
- 1.4.** Welsh Government have recently delayed publication of a consultation on Revised Child Poverty Strategy in light of Ministerial changes. Officials have engaged positively with the sector in the development of the revised Strategy and there is a stronger focus on children's rights and the UNCRC. However in meeting an objective to align the revised strategy with the Tackling Poverty Action Plan the revised Strategy still does not go as far as earlier strategic documents in presenting child poverty as a child rights issue.
- 1.5.** We have recently submitted evidence to the Environment and Sustainability Committee Inquiry on the Well-being of Future Generations Bill in which we raise concerns about the integration of specific strategic planning duties

towards children into a population wide planning model. The Bill provides that the duty to publish Children and Young People's Plan (under the Children Act 2004) and to produce a Child Poverty Strategy (under the Children and Families Measure 2010) will now be covered under the Bill and may be satisfied by inclusion in local Well-being Plans.

- 1.6.** The introduction of Single Integrated Plans (SIPs) provided for the discharge of duties that were previously discharged through the production of Children and Young People's Plans. Children and Young People's Plans used the framework of the Welsh Government's 7 Core Aims for all children and young people which were in turn directly related to the UNCRC. The majority of local authorities fulfilled the duty to have a Child Poverty Strategy through action on Core Aim 7 within Children and Young People's Plans. The Children's Commissioner for Wales published his Child Poverty Strategy Progress report in October 2013.<sup>1</sup> The Children's Commissioner reported that he had assessed the SIPs published by local authorities in terms of how far they demonstrated a commitment to tackle child poverty. The Children's Commissioner found that the majority of SIPs included a focus on child poverty and actions on reducing the number of children in poverty. However he was also found that a small number of SIPs had a focus on poverty but did not specifically prioritise child poverty. The Children's Commissioner for Wales also reported concerns that only around a third of SIPs included reference to the UNCRC and/or Welsh Government's 7 Core Aims.
- 1.7.** We are concerned about the dilution of a clear strategic and implementation framework which specifically addresses child poverty as a child right's issue. Child poverty is the result of family poverty. However, we share the view of the Children's Commissioner for Wales as set out in his Child Poverty Strategy 2012 that: *'A child poverty approach puts the child at the centre of all policy measures and acknowledges the child as a rights bearer with rights that extend beyond the family. Once framed in a child rights context, based on the UNCRC the distinctiveness of a child poverty approach becomes clear and should drive all policy initiatives to combat child poverty.'*
- 1.8.** The Committee will be aware that children are not protected by virtue of age under the Equality Act 2010 although they are protected where they have a protected characteristic. In this regard then the Strategic Equality Plan and objectives 2012-2016 has limited application to children who do not have protected characteristics. The Strategic Equality Plan includes content on the UNCRC and the duty of due regard contained in the Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011. The Strategic Equality Plan also states that *'it is important moving forward that strong links are made between equality, inclusion and human rights with Welsh Government'*. This supports the need for a direct link between tackling child poverty and the UNCRC.
- 1.9.** A person's socio-economic background remains a key factor in determining their life chances and there is a clear link between the risk of socio-economic disadvantage and protected characteristics. The introduction of a socio-economic duty in Wales would contribute significantly to driving forward efforts to reduce the impact of child poverty and to improve equality of outcomes for children and young people in Wales.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.childcom.org.uk/uploads/publications/402.pdf>

## **2. The impacts of poverty, particularly destitution and extreme poverty, on different groups of people.**

- 2.2.** The Welsh Government 'Evaluation of the Welsh Child Poverty Strategy' 2014 evidences that the percentage of children in relative poverty after housing costs (33%) and in-work poverty after working costs (21%) is worse than in the baseline year of 2005. Evidence from the Institute of Fiscal Studies published in 2014<sup>2</sup> suggests that losses from the tax and benefits reforms as a whole will be larger for non-working families, especially among those with children. Non-working lone parents are set to lose £40 per week, non-working couples with children are set to lose £55 per week and single earner couples with children are set to lose £32 per week.
- 2.3.** This suggests that income poverty for families with children is a persistent and growing issue. Members of the Committee will be familiar with evidence on the impact of poverty on children in terms of reduced opportunities for them to realise their rights and enjoy the same outcomes as their peers. There is strong evidence on the relationship between socio-economic disadvantage and gaps in education attainment, poor emotional, mental and physical health, limited opportunities to engage in play and social opportunities related to child development, educational outcomes and health and the impact of environmental conditions such as fuel poverty and poor housing. The Welsh Government 'Evaluation of the Welsh Child Poverty Strategy' 2014 demonstrates that key indicators such as the attainment gap at KS4 are worse now than in 2005.
- 2.4.** Much of the work that Barnardo's Cymu services provide across Wales is directed at improving the well-being of children and young people affected by poverty so that the negative impact of material deprivation on their opportunities to realise their rights and enjoy good outcomes can be mitigated.
- 2.5.** Many of the issues that our Barnardo's Cymu services report in relation to income poverty are well rehearsed in evidence in relation to child poverty. These include for example difficulties coping with school related costs for trips, extra curricular activities and equipment, limited access to play and social activities because of travel and access costs, poor housing conditions, fuel poverty, debt and the impact of not being able to afford travel costs.
- 2.6.** However our services also report a notable trend in increased need in relation to families presenting with food poverty, fuel poverty, inability to afford or to replace essential items (e.g. bed mattresses, washing machines) and children's clothing and school uniform). They are working with families who have been affected by the welfare reforms through the bedroom tax, gaps in benefit following change and the cap on the number of times a family can access the discretionary fund.
- 2.7.** In Cardiff our family support service (which receives Families First funding) delivers support to promote the well-being of children living in areas of

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.ifs.org.uk/publications/7258>

social deprivation and to increase opportunities for better outcomes. Last year the service saw a marked increase in food poverty with more and more families needing support in times of crisis to feed their children. As a result the service applied to Cardiff Food Bank to become authorised distributors of food bank vouchers. Since this time there has been a steady increase in families who access other Barnardo's Cymru services in Cardiff accessing the food bank voucher scheme from the service. The impact of benefit changes and periods during which claims are being processed leaves many of the families with complex needs that we support in cycles of absolute food poverty. The service has also provided essential items for families who cannot afford the basics including bedding, beds, mattresses, school uniforms and sleepwear. One family the service supports was in a position where bed wetting meant that mattresses needed to be replaced but without the means to do this the children were stigmatised in school and this led to a position where a mother and her three children were sharing one bed.

- 2.8.** Barnardo's Cymru are providers of the Merthyr Multiple Intervention Assistance (MIA) (which receives Families First funding) and in 2013-14 poverty was the most common reason for referral into the service. During that period the service accessed grant aid funding to provide direct support to 153 families requiring essential items like school uniform, bedding etc. Families can also access Food Bank Vouchers via the service and 85 families accessed food vouchers in 2013-14. The service is able to evidence improved outcomes in relation to education, parenting, health and well-being, play and leisure and a safe home for a sizable majority of the families supported. Support with food poverty, essential items, accessing benefits, managing housing costs and managing debt are common and growing needs across the families referred into the service.
- 2.9.** Barnardo's Cymru Cabin Bach family support service in Blaenau Ffestiniog reports similar issues among the families it supports however these are further exasperated by the impact of rurality. The towns that the service serves only have more expensive food retail outlets and families do not have access to private vehicles or the cost of public transport to access larger and cheaper super market outlets. There has been an increase in Food Bank use but some families are also unable to access Food Banks because of location and transport costs. Access to the benefits agency and council buildings is also prohibitive in terms of travel costs and families cannot afford internet access or landlines in order to contact these crucial services with many families using our service landline or internet to make essential phone calls of this nature and complete on-line forms etc. Limited gas supply access means that many families are dependent on more expensive forms of fuel which increases fuel poverty yet further and impacts on their ability to keep their homes warm and damp free. The service also notes considerable in-work poverty as a result of seasonal labour demands and low pay in rural areas. The service is working with one family which has four children, including young twins with developmental delay. The children need to access a Ysgol Feithrin to develop their language and interaction skills and Barnardo's Cymru has secured a grant for them to attend as the family are in poverty with considerable debts. However the nearest Ysgol Feithrin is 4 miles away and the bus journey will cost £5 a day which the family cannot afford. These children will start school at a distinct disadvantage if they are unable to access the pre-school education they need.

- 2.10.** Our Up2u Substance Misuse service in Cardiff have reported the issues faced by families where there is parental substance misuse or alcohol misuse. One family they have worked with where both parents had substance misuse issues were unable to secure their own accommodation as a result of debt and lived in overcrowded conditions with relatives, this in turn meant that there were difficulties with their benefit entitlement. The family were only able to meet the children's basic needs and there were issues with travelling to school costs, school equipment requirements and opportunities to pay for community activities for the children. Another family the service have supported involved a father with alcohol misuse issues which lead to a relationship breakdown. The mother found herself with two children under 10 years old, a mortgage and bills to pay and a lost income as a result of the father moving out. This was a source of great stress and anxiety.
- 2.11.** Evidence from a number of Barnardo's Cymru services has been presented here but a similar picture of increasing need in relation to basic needs such as food poverty is clear across our services. For young people such as care leavers and young people who have been homeless coping with the essentials of eating and heating are also becoming more and more difficult. The film 'Hope' was made with young people in Wales struggling to live independently on low incomes as part of Barnardo's ['Below the Breadline'](#) campaign back in 2009. This situation has not changed and in fact the young people we support who are unable to live with families are facing increasing levels of hardship.
- 2.12.** Austerity measures, increased living costs and low wages affect the majority of the families that Barnardo's Cymru support. Our services continue to provide support which aims to secure better opportunities and outcomes for children in living in poverty. However increasingly our services also need to provide direct support to ensure that families can feed and clothe their children.



## END CHILD POVERTY NETWORK CYMRU RHWYDWAITH DILEU TLODI PLANT CYMRU

The End Child Poverty Network Cymru is co-ordinated by



Children in Wales  
Plant yng Nghymru

### Response to the NAFW Communities, Equalities and Local Government Committee Inquiry into Poverty- Strand 1

#### Introduction

The **End Child Poverty Network Cymru** (ECPN) is a coalition focused on the eradication of child poverty in Wales, co-ordinated and managed on a day-to-day basis by Children in Wales. Its steering group includes representation from across the third and statutory sectors and the Network has an increasing supporting membership from a broad cross-section of agencies.

**Steering Group members** include Barnardo's Cymru, Children in Wales, Save the Children Wales, NEA Wales, Action for Children, NSPCC Cymru, WLGA (observers), Citizens Advice, Oxfam Cymru, Public Health Wales, Shelter Cymru, the Buttle Trust, Princes Trust Cymru, TUC Wales (observers), Welsh Women's Aid, Wales Migration Partnership and the Office of the Children's Commissioner for Wales (observers).

Operational since 2001, the ECPN Cymru is supporting the Government's vision that no child in Wales should be living in poverty by 2020, and is working to achieve this by:

- Increased public and professional understanding of child poverty in Wales
- Public and professional support for measures to tackle child poverty

- Ensuring that policies are in place at all levels of Government (local, Welsh Government, UK Government and parliaments – National Assembly and Westminster), which contribute to eradicating child poverty in Wales.

The ECPN Cymru published a manifesto in November 2010 ahead of the National Assembly of Wales elections in May 2011 and this was updated in May 2012. In it we welcomed the introduction of a Child Poverty Duty under the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010, and the Welsh Government's response to the UN Concluding Observations through their National Action Plan Getting it Right. The release of the revised Child Poverty Strategy in February 2011 reinforced the Welsh Government's intention that tackling child poverty remained a national priority and incorporated many of the key issues that the ECPN Cymru had been raising concerns about for many years.

However a new **2014 Manifesto** (attached) was published because the external landscape and situation for many children and families in Wales had changed considerably in recent years, with high levels of worklessness amongst young people, increased personal debt and much uncertainty characterising the lives of a growing number of our population. We believe that solutions can and must be found.

### **ECPN Cymru 2014 Manifesto Recommendations**

- 1. Deliver on the cross party pledge to eradicate child poverty by 2020 through a joined up policy framework supported by appropriate resources**
- 2. Address the implementation gap between policy and delivery**
- 3. Adequately resource, protect and strengthen national programmes and services which have been effectively evaluated and which deliver positive outcomes for our poorest children**
- 4. Ensure that existing duties placed on public sector bodies are subject to robust scrutiny procedures to ensure the delivery of child poverty obligations**
- 5. Work with all sectors, including employers, in the national fight against child poverty**

- 6. Ensure that all national policies, services and programmes are developed and delivered within a child rights framework**
- 7. Engage effectively and consistently with the UK Government at all levels around child poverty matters that are non-devolved**
- 8. Provide Wales with an open, transparent and accountable government that ensures equality of opportunity and seeks to free all children from a life of poverty**

ECPN will be responding to the new consultation document from Welsh Government (November 6th 2014) on the Revised Child Poverty Strategy for Wales.

### **Response to Consultation Themes**

- ***how effectively the Tackling Poverty Action Plan, Strategic Equality Plan and other government strategies work together;***

We remain profoundly concerned that the impact of the changes to the Welfare Benefit System, being implemented by the UK Government, pose a serious threat to the vision of eradicating child poverty. The Welsh Government must accelerate the opportunities at their disposal through the reconfiguration of the Communities First programme, alongside the enhancement of Flying Start and Families First. The current Tackling Poverty Action Plan with a stronger focus on child poverty and the Welsh Government Early Years Framework, should also provide clear roadmaps to help lift children and families out of poverty, if implemented effectively. The creation of a Welsh Government Early Years Partnership Board has been a welcome development although still in its early stages.

Whilst the Flying Start programme has been positively evaluated and benefits many young children in poor households, the visibility of children and young people in the Communities First programme and the Families First programme varies considerably. There is also confusion and duplication in some areas. We therefore welcome recent moves to have a more coherent approach to these three programmes.

Children are not protected under the Equality Act 2010 unless by virtue of protected characteristics – ie not by ‘age’ alone. The UNCRC and the Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011 are critically important and must be more closely linked to the Tackling Poverty Action Plan.

Finally it is important to recognise that Government ‘programmes’ are a small proportion of the funding that goes to public services and on to the front line. A major challenge is to ensure mainstream policies and strategies are coherent, joined up and address the issue of child poverty.

➤ ***the impacts of poverty, particularly destitution and extreme poverty, on different groups of people;***

We believe that the programme of action for tackling child poverty in Wales must be underpinned by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and that delivery of the children’s rights agenda in Wales is key to success in tackling child poverty. Children and young people are disproportionately affected by the austerity measures and the impact of poverty on them is lifelong. This starts from a very young age because children under five living in poverty are less likely to be ready for school than their peers and this results in poor educational outcomes.

Member agencies of ECPN have numerous examples from their work of the major impact that growing up in poverty has on children and young people. Their health, educational outcomes and overall well-being are negatively affected.

Recent reports from members of ECPN such as Children in Wales’ – ‘*Child and Family Poverty in Wales - A snapshot of key issues raised by families*’ (attached) indicate that the combination of increased fuel and housing costs combined with welfare reform sanctions and payment delays, as well as the scarcity of legal aid in family breakdown situations, are causing particular distress and hardship. Difficulties in accessing food-banks in rural areas or to childcare, especially for families with disabled children are also frequently cited.

➤ ***How legislation, policy and budgets targeted at tackling poverty and reducing inequality are co-ordinated and prioritised across the Welsh Government.***

The statutory obligation to tackle child poverty must be observed and children, young people and families must not bear the brunt of austerity measures being imposed on the local authority.

*Difficult times, difficult choices*

We accept that public spending is under pressure and Welsh Government, local authorities and Local Health Boards are being required to make difficult decisions with consequences for other sectors, particularly the Third Sector, as well as for children, young people and families in the community. As austerity measures are biting even harder, efficiency savings alone cannot bridge the funding gap and hard choices are inevitably being made.

It is for this reason that decisions around cutting budgets and making savings must be informed by a robust evidence base. We all need to be satisfied that future resources are being targeted to their maximum effect based on sound evidence.

We also need to be assured that decisions are not being driven by economic considerations alone. The correct approach has to take into account the social dimensions and the direct impact on individuals, especially those most vulnerable. They also need to take into account the consequences for future generations.

Welsh Government, local authorities and other public sector bodies must meet their social obligations rather than solely focusing on their economic responsibilities. Though there may be economic savings, the potential negative consequences on the population in the medium and long term should be considered in advance of policy changes as well as the short term, with alternative solutions sought where services are being withdrawn.

Social impact assessments should be undertaken to inform the development and implementation of programmes. It is essential that this knowledge is captured in

advance so that decision makers have full knowledge and understanding of the consequences of their actions when either budgets are cut or programmes are implemented.

**Equality Impact Assessments** should also be undertaken in advance and made available to help inform the public's response to cuts. Ensuring that disproportionate cuts are not affecting particular groups in society is essential.

Finally, and most importantly robust **Children's Rights Impact Assessments** (CRIA) need to be made by Welsh Government in relation to policies and programmes.

The **European Commission Recommendation 20 Feb 2013 'Investing in Children: breaking the cycle of disadvantage'** reinforces the importance of ensuring that the well-being of children is prioritised. This is for their individual successful development, but also for society as a whole, as these children and young people will in time become the workforce who will be responsible for supporting the increasingly ageing population.

*Impact on children, young people and low income families*

We are especially concerned about the impact of budget reductions on services for children and young people, and the impact this will have on their overall well-being. In particular, we have concerns around the impact on children and young people in low-income families who may not have recourse to alternate support and services.

There is a growing independent evidence base which is showing that children, young people and their families are struggling the most in these times of austerity, with the impact of UK Government changes in respect of Welfare Reform is disproportionately hitting households with children the hardest. Yet, it is children, young people and their families who will shoulder the burden of many of the proposed cuts outlined here.

*There is a statutory duty to tackle child poverty*

The Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 places a duty on all local authorities to take action to tackle child poverty at a local level. This statutory obligation can be discharged through the local Single Integrated Plan. The SIP needs to explicitly address how authorities are tackling child poverty.

Tackling child poverty and narrowing the education attainment gap are two of the biggest challenges facing Wales and are being held up as key priorities for the Welsh Government.

The link between child poverty and education attainment cannot be disputed, with education having a major role in helping to break the cycle of disadvantage. School attainment levels can at best be described as 'mixed' with many schools showing good results and others less so. Wales has not performed well enough internationally and is behind in the UK. **Investing in children now** will not only serve to enhance their immediate well-being but also be an investment for the future community and economy.

Catriona Williams OBE  
Chief Executive Children in Wales  
on behalf of ECPN Steering Group

**END CHILD POVERTY NETWORK CYMRU  
RHWYDWAITH DILEU TLODI PLANT CYMRU**

**The National Child Poverty Coalition for Wales**

# **Child Poverty: A Programme Towards Eradication Manifesto (revised 2014)**

The End Child Poverty Network is  
co-ordinated by Children in Wales



**Children in Wales**  
**Plant yng Nghymru**





## End Child Poverty Network Cymru

The End Child Poverty Network (ECPN) Cymru is a coalition of organisations focused on the eradication of child poverty in Wales, co-ordinated and managed on a day-to-day basis by Children in Wales. Its Steering Group includes representation from across the voluntary and statutory sectors, and the network has an increasing supporting membership from a broad cross-section of agencies.

Steering Group members include:

Barnardo's Cymru  
Children in Wales  
Save the Children Wales  
National Energy Action Wales  
Action for Children  
NSPCC Cymru  
Citizens Advice  
Public Health Wales  
Oxfam Cymru  
Shelter Cymru  
The Prince's Trust Cymru  
The Buttle Trust  
Welsh Women's Aid  
Wales Migration Partnership

Observers:

The WLGA  
The Wales TUC  
The Office of the Children's Commissioner for Wales

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January 2014

## Introduction

The End Child Poverty Network (ECPN) Cymru coalition remain deeply concerned that levels of child poverty are sharply increasing in Wales, as more children and their families struggle to provide the basic necessities. Today we hear of children going cold, without food or adequate clothing. This is not the kind of society we envisaged when the coalition was formed in 2001. With levels of child poverty predicted to increase further in the short term, all levels of government must redouble their efforts to get back on track and work towards the cross-party target of eradicating child poverty in Wales by 2020.

The ECPN Cymru published a manifesto in November 2010 ahead of the National Assembly of Wales elections in May 2011 and which was updated in May 2012. In it we welcomed the introduction of a Child Poverty Duty under the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010, and the Welsh Government's response to the UN Concluding Observations through their National Action Plan Getting it Right. The release of the revised Child Poverty Strategy in February 2011 reinforced the Welsh Government's intention that tackling child poverty remained a national priority and incorporated many of the key issues that the ECPN Cymru had been raising concerns about for many years.

However, the external landscape and situation for many children and families in Wales has changed considerably over the past few years, with high levels of worklessness amongst young people, increased personal debt and much uncertainty characterising the lives of a growing number of our population.

**We believe that solutions can and must be found.**

Whilst we remain profoundly concerned that the impact of the proposed changes to the Welfare Benefit System, being advanced by the UK Government, pose a serious threat to our vision, the Welsh Government must act to

the opportunities at their disposal through the reconfiguration of the Communities First programme, alongside the enhancement of Flying Start and Families First. The current Tackling Poverty Action Plan with a strong focus on child poverty and the new early years framework, should also provide a clear roadmap to help lift children and families out of poverty, if implemented effectively.

We believe that the programme of action for tackling child poverty in Wales must be underpinned by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and that delivery of the children's rights agenda in Wales is key to success in tackling child poverty.

We look forward to continuing to work constructively with Welsh Government and local partners to support the joint vision that no child in Wales is living in poverty by 2020.

This Programme towards Eradication, developed by the ECPN Cymru coalition, outlines the areas of activity to support this target.

Sean O'Neill  
Chair, End Child Poverty Network Cymru

## **Eight Overarching Priorities**

**We expect the Welsh Government to commit to:**

**1.**

**Deliver on the cross party pledge to eradicate child poverty by 2020 through a joined up policy framework supported by appropriate resources**

**2.**

**Address the implementation gap between policy and delivery**

**3.**

**Adequately resource, protect and strengthen national programmes and services which have been effectively evaluated and which deliver positive outcomes for our poorest children**

**4.**

**Ensure that existing duties placed on public sector bodies are subject to robust scrutiny procedures to ensure the delivery of child poverty obligations**

**5.**

**Work with all sectors, including employers, in the national fight against child poverty**

**6.**

**Ensure that all national policies, services and programmes are developed and delivered within a child rights framework**

**7.**

**Engage effectively and consistently with the UK Government at all levels around child poverty matters that are non-devolved**

**8.**

**Provide Wales with an open, transparent and accountable government that ensures equality of opportunity and seeks to free all children from a life of poverty**

**A programme of action should always be underpinned by the UNCRC and take account of the UN Concluding Observations**

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## Education

**Overarching call: EVERY child and young person in Wales has a RIGHT to good quality education that gives them opportunities to realise their potential**

### **1. Education must be inclusive and all children and young people should have the opportunity to realize their potential through education**

The Welsh Government should ensure that every child in Wales has the opportunity to realise their potential through education. This must include sustained action to break the unacceptably strong link between poverty and low attainment, which blocks too many children in Wales from realising their potential and fulfilling their RIGHT to education. In accordance with Article 12 of the UNCRC, the Welsh Government should establish mechanisms to allow pupils to be involved in making decisions, planning and reviewing actions that affect them.

Breaking the cycle between low educational achievement and poverty in adulthood should continue to be a top Government priority throughout this Assembly term.

### **2. Improving the school experience**

Alongside efforts to reduce the impact of poverty on attainment, Welsh Government should also ensure that the education system recognises the importance of supporting and addressing the social and emotional needs of all children, especially the most vulnerable and at risk of poverty. Whilst attainment levels and qualifications are important for future life chances, children and young people should experience other benefits from participating in school with raising and meeting the aspirations of children a key objective for success.

The development of a wider set of outcome indicators than academic achievement should be developed for schools, which focus on pupil wellbeing. This would help to monitor this area and ensure that children are receiving the right support at the right time during their school experience.

### **3. Sustainable Funding**

We welcome additional investment through the School Effectiveness Grant and the Pupil Deprivation Grant to provide support to schools to make progress on the three national education priorities, and specifically welcome the focused support they provide for reducing the impact of poverty on pupil's attainment. The announcement of an additional £2m Communities First Pupil Deprivation match-fund is also welcome to support community engagement.

Welsh Government should commit to a continuation of Pupil Deprivation Grant funding for the rest of this Assembly term and consider the sustainability of promising interventions that have been funded by the grant, going forward. Welsh Government should also review the criteria for eligibility of the Pupil Deprivation Grant to include those eligible for Free School Meals at any point in the last six years, and extend the allocation of the Pupil Deprivation Grant to Nursery Schools in Wales with funding in accordance with an early intervention approach.

Funding for the Pupil Deprivation Grant should be at a sufficient level to make a real difference. Funding should be set at an amount that would enable schools to introduce the necessary package of additional support for the poorest pupils that will make a real difference to their education. Welsh Government should carry out a costing exercise for recommended interventions and increase the Pupil Deprivation Grant accordingly. However, we would emphasise that how the funding is spent is crucial. Robust monitoring and inspection arrangements should be put in place to ensure that schools are utilising the funds for their intended purpose, and are achieving noticeable results for individual pupils.

All school funding should be spent on interventions that are cost-effective and have the strongest evidence base to support their efficacy. Schools should be supported to develop a strategic plan that shows how they will use the resources that have been made available to reduce the impact of poverty on student achievement.

#### 4. Removing the additional costs of education

All financial barriers to education should be removed. This is all the more important in the context of unprecedented pressures on family budgets. Welsh Government must ensure that schools and local authorities continue to support children living in poverty, by eliminating the costs associated with education in line with the duty placed upon them in the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010.

Children and young people consistently report how poverty can limit their ability to fully participate at school, by missing out on expensive school trips and activities arranged both in and out of school. Welsh Government should ensure that all schools fully adhere to equal opportunities principles and that no additional costs are made for activities and essential items required for school, such as costly school uniform policies, equipment and materials for Art, Design and Technology and Home Economics classes. Financial barriers for children's participation lead to children feeling stigmatized and 'different,' and increase the potential for bullying.

Funding allocated under the Welsh Government's School Uniform Grant should continue, and the level allocated should be assessed in line with growing pressures on family budgets.

#### 5. Maintain key entitlements for children and their families

Free School Meals (FSM) and Free Breakfasts are both important entitlements for children and

their families in Wales.

Data shows that the performance of pupils eligible for FSM is lower than those not eligible at every stage of their education experience. The introduction of Universal Credit will mean that the current criteria for identifying entitlement for FSM will no longer apply. Any revised eligibility framework should not result in the reduction of the number of children eligible for support. Rather, the Welsh Government should take the opportunity to extend entitlement to include other children in low income households not currently entitled, commit to increasing uptake and address on-going issues of stigma that surround current arrangements. The replacement system should not undermine existing arrangements for monitoring and tracking the attainment of poorer pupils, and the allocation of funding which are based on FSM eligibility.

Though we welcome the Welsh Government's commitment to continue the provision of Free Breakfasts, we note that the School Standards and Organisation Act 2013 outlines a move from a ring-fenced grant to the RSG. We are concerned that this could jeopardise the commitment to safeguard free breakfasts and possibly threaten universal provision. We recommend that the Welsh Government review this decision and continue to monitor the number of schools engaging, noting that 29% of schools in Wales still do not provide free breakfasts after six years of the scheme, and the uptake amongst families from low-income backgrounds. At the very least, the Welsh Government should ensure that Free Breakfasts are available for children living in Community First Cluster areas.

### 6. Prioritise narrowing the poverty gap in education and addressing educational outcomes

The Welsh Government's stated objective to improve standards for all learners is welcome and we are also pleased that the Welsh Government has made 'reducing the impact of poverty on educational achievement' one of three national priorities for education. That progress on the other two strategic priorities on Literacy and Numeracy are envisaged to have a cumulative impact to help bridge the poverty gap in education is also welcome. We welcome the recent address by the Minister for Education that tackling the link between poverty and poor academic achievement must become one of the top Welsh Government top priorities.

Welsh Government should strengthen their guidance for schools and local authorities. Guidance should draw on evidence of best practice and promote the sharing of knowledge of 'what works' in reducing the impact of poverty on education. Welsh Government should work with Local Authority Education Consortia to ensure that in the challenging work they are remitted to undertake with schools, they have as one of their core priorities reducing the poverty gap in schools. This should also include training on the effects of income poverty on children in school, for head teachers, teachers and school based staff.

Schools should be supported to utilise the comprehensive data sets they have available to monitor and evaluate the impact of their plans on individual student outcomes and achievements. Additional support for pupils should be in place to support the transition from primary to secondary education.

### 7. Schools for the Community

A growing body of research suggests that solutions for reducing the poverty gap in education lie in the development of holistic and mutually reinforcing approaches encompassing schools, parents and communities. While schools can have a significant impact on improving the achievement of disadvantaged students, they cannot do it alone and will

require both direction and support.

Welsh Government can aid the process by providing comprehensive guidance which makes clear ways in which communities, families and schools can work together to tackle the link between disadvantage and achievement. This should build on learning from the progress made through the Community Focused Schools Programme. Approaches must also be responsive to local contexts.

Drawing on recent findings by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and the Sutton Trust, Welsh Government interventions such as community mentoring and increased out of hours and after school activities (which do not exclude low-income families due to their cost, especially admission fees and transport costs) should be considered as key interventions that could act as conduits for a holistic approach.

Strategies for more holistic working across local programmes and initiatives should be built into local child poverty strategies as part of Single Integrated Plans being delivered at local level. All schools should be strongly involved in this process.

### 8. Parental engagement and life-long learning

Parents, carers and families play a vital role in a child's educational success with 85% of a child's success at school depending on the type of support and stimulation that their parents provide for learning in the home. Parental involvement is increasingly found to be central to children's academic performance. Supporting parents to ensure that their children do not fall behind is one of the key ways to break the poverty cycle and help children to develop to their full potential.

The Welsh Government should redouble efforts to work with local and third sector partners to support and promote initiatives that focus on boosting parental improvement in children's learning. The Welsh Government should continue to engage with evidence-based

programmes and activities that are supporting children in Wales' most deprived areas.

Building on earlier calls for a holistic, community focused approach to education; Welsh Government should actively support opportunities for parents to become re-engaged in education and promote lifelong learning opportunities, ideally through contact with local schools and FE/HE colleges.





## Health & Well-Being

### Overarching call: EVERY child and young person in Wales has a RIGHT to be free of ill health

#### 1. Preventing ill-health and tackling health inequities

The Welsh Government should ensure that the priorities outlined in the Fairer Health Outcomes for All: Reducing Inequities in Health Strategic National Plan are sufficiently resourced and fully implemented. This will be key to mitigate the effects of poverty and to help close the gap. Universal services must be fully protected and recognised as the foundation for improving the health and well being of the whole population and addressing the significant lifestyle challenges presented in the Welsh Health Survey 2012. Effective, evidence based targeted programmes for those most vulnerable and at risk should also be in place within this universal context. Health inequities cannot be tackled in isolation or through a single policy, programme or service and will require a cross departmental approach across Government and the concerted commitment from all partners. As evidence has shown, the combined impact from a number of complimentary programmes and services will achieve greater success than any one single programme or initiative alone.

#### 2. Food Poverty Strategy for Wales

Evidence is showing that food poverty is an increasing problem for low income families in Wales, underlined by the increase in the growth of foodbanks throughout Wales and in the number of families accessing crisis food provision. Whilst foodbanks are serving a much needed emergency function in the current economic climate, the Welsh Government should develop a robust social policy response to the problem of food poverty in Wales. Through working with local and regional partners, the Welsh Government should develop and identify sustainable solutions. A holistic food poverty strategy and a national food poverty indicator should be developed which could include existing provision and programmes through schools but would also need to address access to

food in school holidays and the accessibility of fresh, nutritious food locally. Working with local authorities, co-operatives and third sector partners, 'eating well' principles should be extended to all settings that cater for children and families, such as leisure centres, youth clubs and childcare facilities and maximum compliance should be sought and monitored.

#### 3. School meals: Extending entitlement and increasing uptake

The Welsh Government should ensure that all schools meet the nutritional standards set for school lunches and ensure that effective information and advice is provided around eating healthily and Free School Meal entitlement. In light of changes announced through Universal Credit, the progress made by the Scottish Government in extending their free school meals service to areas of disadvantaged, and proposals currently being considered in England, it would be timely for the Welsh Government to give full consideration to extending free school meal entitlement to all pupils through a phased implementation process from April 2014. This would not only eliminate the costly and bureaucratic administration process but would also help increase uptake and contribute to improving health outcomes of the poorest through children receiving at least one healthy meal a day. The recognised existing problems around registration and uptake of free school meals under the present system would also be addressed together with the stigma associated with current arrangements.

#### 4. School Breakfasts – Increasing uptake (schools and pupils)

We welcome current proposals under the Healthy Eating in Schools (Wales) Measure 2009 to ensure that school breakfasts meet expected minimum nutritional standards and ensure that children have an opportunity to eat healthily throughout the school day. Whilst we welcome

the Welsh Government's continued commitment to free school breakfasts, we remain concerned that 29% of schools still do not provide free breakfast provision and there is no clear roadmap with milestones or targets to ensure that free breakfasts are universally available for all primary school age children as policy is intended. Recent research by Cardiff University underlines the significant health benefits for children accessing free breakfasts and this holds the potential to alleviate pressure on family food budgets. Yet this Welsh Government flagship programme is still not available in all schools. The Welsh Government should develop an outcome focused action plan which reinforces its commitment to the Free Breakfast scheme and which includes achievable milestones towards increasing the universal participation of all primary schools and works to improve the uptake of the free breakfast scheme for children in low income families in schools which currently participate. At the very least, the Welsh Government should ensure that Free Breakfasts are available for children living in Community First Cluster areas. Progress should be reported annually.

### 5. Child Safety Strategy for Wales

The Welsh Government's commitment to develop a dedicated Child Safety Strategy for Wales is welcomed and should be supported by a robust plan of action with key objectives, milestones and timescales for full implementation to achieve positive change. The Strategy should include priorities across all Government departments and give particular attention to the strong evidence base in respect of the groups most at risk and over represented in accidental injury statistics. The impact of transport on health inequalities is particularly significant in relation to child deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents. Evidence shows that the rate and severity of accidents significantly increases for children from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

The Welsh Government should work with local authorities to extend the number of

20mph zones and traffic calming measures in areas of high risk for children and young people particularly around schools, parks and leisure facilities. This would better safeguard children from accidents and also contribute to improving health outcomes by providing safer play opportunities. The Child Safety Strategy should also pay particular attention to identifying solutions to tackle home accidents and drowning.

### 6. Paid Parental Leave

The Welsh Government should promote the importance of paid paternal leave which is associated with better maternal and child health, lower rates of maternal depression, lower rates of infant mortality, fewer low birth weight babies, more breastfeeding and more use of preventative healthcare. This highlights the importance of parents having access to paid parental leave during the whole of the first year as well as the availability of good quality childcare and flexible employment thereafter.

### 7. Health Promotion and Prevention Programmes

A life course approach to health promotion should be adopted. The Welsh Government should ensure that all children and their families have access to Health promotion and prevention programmes with a strong emphasis on the early years and pre birth period, with additional targeted support to those most vulnerable and at risk of poor health outcomes, eg, looked after children, care leavers and children in low income families. A universal healthy child programme for all health visitors should be in place as a priority alongside ensuring there is sufficient capacity to deliver. This should lead to improvements in breast feeding rates, a reduction in childhood accidents in the home, earlier detection of child protection concerns, greater support for maternal mental health and earlier signposting to other sources of help and advice. In addition we would advocate the extension of Antenatal classes, using a format that is non stigmatised, well used and accessible to all.

## Family and Parenting Support

### Overarching call: EVERY child and young person in Wales has a RIGHT to support

#### 1. Greater focus on universal assessment and targeted early intervention services

Universal services that are accessible to all children and families are essential to tackling early need, and in making sure children and families are able to access targeted support earlier.

Welsh Government, local government and local health boards must deliver the step-change towards early intervention by continued development and investment, to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty and deprivation. Local authorities and local health boards must work together effectively to deliver a spectrum of preventative services through fully integrated, multi-agency working. Local authorities and local health boards must have a shared focus on robust early assessment of the health and emotional well-being of children and young people and needs of parents/guardians to ensure they receive the support they need.

#### 2. Parenting

Parents have a pivotal role in helping children and young people to attain language and cognitive development, health, social and emotional wellbeing. The UNCRC recognises that they deserve support and this is a right enshrined under Article 18. Research has shown that parental stress and consistency are the two variables most associated with child outcomes and that the negative effects of low income are mainly mediated by parenting factors. Support, information, preventative action, and a network of parenting and relationship support can be crucial in helping families cope.

Local authorities and local health boards must work together to ensure all parents have access to information about local universal services, whatever their financial situation. Welsh Government should work with local

partners to develop further Flying Start outreach, to ensure families on low incomes outside Flying Start areas are able to access support.

#### 3. Targeted, evidence-based services

We welcome the development and expansion of targeted programmes such as Flying Start and Families First. Quality of staff and training is essential to the successful delivery of evidence-based programmes. Family support policies must always take into account the needs and rights of children as individuals as there are circumstances when the family setting may not be best for a child's safety, welfare and long term outcomes.

Welsh Government should support local authorities and their partners to take a long-term view of responding to the spectrum of need, and translate this into service responses which are not hampered by short term commissioning and which have time to forge local partnerships and deliver a sustained difference to children and families. Welsh Government should ensure guidance to local authorities and partners is clear that the needs of the child should not be over-looked within a family-focussed model.

#### 4. Childcare

Parents and carers must not be forced into employment if they do not have the support in place or access to quality, affordable childcare. This may compel them to rely on inadequate childcare or to leave children alone at home before they are emotionally or practically able to cope, with serious consequences for safeguarding and well-being. Childcare provision must be clearly focused on the needs of the child. Some parents face additional barriers for specialised childcare, particularly for disabled children and within rural areas and during school holidays. Particular gaps have

primary and lower secondary school age and provision through the medium of the Welsh language.

The Welsh Government must honour their commitments in the Tackling Poverty Action Plan and ensure there is sufficient provision of affordable, accessible, flexible, quality and appropriate childcare support across Wales. Programmes such as Families First and Communities First cannot succeed without this and credible actions for tackling the severe childcare deficit across the whole of Wales much be prioritized.



## Early Years

### Overarching call: EVERY child and young person in Wales has a RIGHT to have the best start in life

#### 1. The best possible start for all children and targeted support for early years health, education and social care

We welcome the additional funding for the Flying Start programme and the expansion of the service to enable more children and parents in low income areas to benefit. The WG should continue to support and invest in the Flying Start programme and continue its commitment to fully fund the four areas of the program for each child. There should be no erosion of entitlement nor should the program be diluted in anyway. The WG should also investigate ways in which entitlement can be further extended for poorer families to access beyond the existing catchment areas.

Both the Flying Start and the Foundation Phase early education programmes are key policies that are giving children a better start to their education in Wales. Inequalities in children's educational outcomes become apparent from the early years. By age three poorer children can already be a year behind their better off peers. Investment in the early years is therefore crucial and sustained investment for the Foundation Phase is essential

Evidence shows the importance of the early home learning environment to children's prospects. Therefore, despite attempts to target additional Flying Start provision to concentrations of families living in Income Benefit households, we believe there is a strong case for further action on early interventions and family support. We recommend that Welsh Government support early years education by enabling all low-income parents to be able to have access to proven programmes that help them support their child's early learning and development. We also see the Pupil Deprivation Fund as a potential avenue for expansion to provide additional investment for nursery and pre-school services.

The Welsh Government should also investigate ways of ensuring the sustainability of Integrated Children's Centres (ICC) in Wales. Whilst much progress has been made in establishing these as centre of excellence, the commitment to funding the integrated nature of the provision remains uncertain. The WG should be clear on what the future development of the ICC model is to be, and issue guidance to enable centres to follow common approaches and thus work more efficiently. It would be informative to conduct research into the current funding arrangements and financial health of the ICC's in Wales and to assess if there has been a loss of services over the past two years.

#### 2. Universal services for parents of 0-3s: Ante-natal and Post-natal support

There is growing evidence in Wales of there being insufficient ante natal sessions available to meet the demand. In order to support all new mothers and fathers in the most effective way possible to minimize the worst effects of poverty related issues, this support should be widely available and accessible to parents wherever they live. Through well timed intervention at this crucially important time, families needs for support with issues like smoking cessation, diet and nutrition, substance and drug use, housing and debt could also be more routinely identified and addressed.

Research should be undertaken to ascertain how accessible ante natal support is to all parents across Wales in every Local Health Board area. Anecdotal evidence suggests that despite recommendations in Government guidance there is a severe shortage of ante natal support in some areas of Wales particularly outside Flying Start areas.

### 3. Early Years Education and Childcare

The benefits of high quality free part time pre-school education for two year olds is well documented and the WG should plan a phased approach to making this entitlement far more widely available to all two-year-old children in Wales. The current minimum provision of 10 hours of free Early Education for all three year olds in Wales should be extended to at least 15 hours a week. Ideally this provision should be delivered in a flexible manner that allow a parent to combine this offer with their other childcare needs, enabling this to service as part of their package of childcare, for example childminders providing playgroups that offer extra day long care and education, day nurseries and wrap around provision where the offer is given in schools.

Whilst there has been growth and much improvement in the standards and accessibility of childcare and early Education provision in Wales over the past decade, it is essential that this investment is continued and enhanced. The targets set for Flying Start of having at least one leader per setting qualified to a level 5 NVQ/ Diploma should be rolled out as a target for all pre school settings in Wales, with funding made available to support the on going training of Early Years practitioners. Primary schools should be encouraged to support the childcare and Early Years settings that feed them and it is hoped that the Early Years Assessment Framework currently being developed by Welsh Government for children from 0-7 years old will present renewed expectations that this does happen

It is imperative that the funding requirements of the non statutory childcare sector is secure to avoid any degradation in the quality of services, and to ensure small voluntary organisations and small businesses are fully integrated and receive up to date information and advice. This is particularly important considering the reduction in the statutory CSSIW visits from yearly to bi-annually.

Wales has a particular shortage of services that meet the needs of Welsh speaking children and families and families who wish to introduce Welsh as second language to their children. Welsh Government should place a minimum requirement on local authorities as a percentage of their overall childcare places, to suit the percentages of children who currently access Welsh medium education in their area.



## Safeguarding and Child Protection

**Overarching call: EVERY child and young person in Wales has a RIGHT to be safe**

### 1. Addressing child protection issues

Research has found that adults who suffer abuse or neglect as children are more likely to go on to have low socio-economic status and experience unemployment and poverty. The stress suffered by an abused child can impair cognitive, behavioural and physical development. Childhood sexual abuse has been linked to childhood and adult mental health issues including anxiety, depression. It can impact on behaviour and relationships, including risky or harmful sexual behaviour, crime and parenting, limiting future opportunities and leading to further adversities later in life. Dealing with the consequences of childhood sexual abuse also has a significant economic cost to the Wales and the UK.

Therefore effective safeguarding and child protection measures are essential tools in helping to prevent abuse and neglect which can make children more vulnerable to poverty in late life.

### 2. Therapeutic services for vulnerable children

Local authorities and their partners must ensure better provision of therapeutic services for particular groups of vulnerable children, such as looked-after children and care leavers to overcome the abuse and neglect these children have experienced. Investment is necessary in services that support children and young people in the care system who have experienced trauma and emotional distress, particularly in therapeutic and mental health services.

Such services are an essential part of the toolkit in helping those who have been abused to overcome their trauma and would lead to significantly improved outcomes and improved resilience to poverty.

services must also be available to vulnerable children to help keep them safe by ensuring they have a say about their care and the services they receive.

### 3. Accredited Training Framework

Welsh Government must develop outcomes supported by an accredited training framework which ensures all agencies (whether working with children or adults) are sufficiently resourced and that professionals are appropriately trained to identify when a child may be at risk of abuse or neglect and know what action to take.

### 4. Added support and sensitivity to children and young people who've experienced Domestic Abuse

Children and young people who have experienced domestic abuse should be given extra support especially if they've had to leave their locality to be safe. A high percentage of children and young people who've experienced domestic and/sexual abuse have a lower educational achievement. Schools and colleges should ensure that children and young people are supported in narrowing the attainment gap.

## Play and Leisure

**Overarching call: EVERY child and young person in Wales has a RIGHT to play**

### 1. Implementation of the Duty

In view of the importance of access to play and leisure opportunities in terms of cognitive and social development and emotional wellbeing for children and young people it is crucial that the duty under the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 is properly implemented and resourced. There must be robust scrutiny of developments in meeting this duty and action is needed to ensure that access to play does not suffer as a result of the current financial pressures on local authorities. Statutory Guidance to support local authorities in assessing for sufficient play opportunities for children is in place and local authorities must make use of the toolkit to aid compliance.

### 2. Accessible play opportunities for young people and for children and young people with protected characteristics

It is essential that sufficient play opportunities are in place and accessible for older children, disabled children and young people with protected characteristics. Access to inclusive mainstream play opportunities should be regularly monitored and level of uptake is captured. The needs of some disabled children and young people for specialist play provision should be prioritized.

### 3. Removal of barriers to structured play and leisure opportunities

There is considerable divergence in term of structured play and leisure opportunities in Wales with increasing concerns surrounding the sustainability of free or affordable summer holiday play schemes. Many previous schemes funded through Cymorth are no longer in place and a lack of provision in many rural areas. It is essential that existing structured play opportunities which provide stimulating and enjoyable environments for children and young people are prioritized and safeguarded by local authorities when making budgetary decisions. Community First clusters must also ensure that play and leisure opportunities are prioritized

their action plans given the contribution play can make to ensuing communities are healthy and learning environments in which to live.

### 4. Affordable access to swimming - through the Free Swimming Scheme for children and young people under the age of 16

Swimming offers children and young people an opportunity to participate in an activity, which has a great positive impact on mental and physical health. It can promote a lifelong trend in healthy living. However, children and young people from low income and benefit households often face barriers to participation due to admission and transport costs. The ECPN Cymru's Working Paper on Swimming Opportunities offers recommendations to remove these barriers including for Welsh Government to:

- Undertake a full evaluation of the Free Swimming Scheme to date which includes an analysis of the issues raised in this working paper
- To work with local authorities to address the different application of the scheme in terms of its availability (Times/days etc)
- To work with local authorities and explore the cost of swimming sessions outside the Free Swimming Scheme
- To work with schools to address any additional costs for children participating in swimming sessions within the curriculum
- To monitor the impact of any leisure centre closures or public/private sector partnerships on the Free Swimming Scheme

### 5. Access to the arts and cultural events and opportunities

The Welsh Government's continued commitment to support free entry to museums in Wales and subsidizing the entry cost for heritage sites is welcome. However, many children, young people and families are unable



attend cultural events such as the National Eisteddfod and arts and culture opportunities due to high entrance fees. We would welcome representation being made by the Welsh Government to those organisations which receive some level of funding by Government in respect of the need to re-examine entry costs and consider concessionary rates for low income families.



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## Disabled Children

### Overarching call: EVERY disabled child and young person in Wales has a RIGHT to live a full life

#### 1. Improve the provision of short breaks

Section 25 of the Children and Young People's Act 2008 in Wales places a duty on Local Authorities to provide short breaks for families with disabled children and work with statutory and voluntary agencies to ensure increased access to services across Wales. This duty must be fully implemented and subject to robust monitoring arrangements. There should be a range of short break opportunities offered to ensure that families access short breaks that best fit their own needs. There is now a real opportunity through the Social Services and Well-being Bill to begin to address the need for enhanced provision of short breaks for families with disabled children. to look to consider

#### 2. Support in education: additional learning needs

We broadly welcome the forthcoming changes to the SEN process but feel that children, young people and their families should be involved in the new definitions and processes that are being planned. We are concerned that the right to appeal against decisions regarding level of additional learning needs has not been given to parents. According to the report 'An anatomy of Economic inequality in Wales' 2011 (EHRC) pupils eligible for free school meals are 2.5 times less likely to achieve grades A\* to c in core subjects, whilst people defined as either DDA disabled or having a work limiting condition are 3 times as likely to have no formal qualifications than their non disabled peers. This suggests that any initiatives to increase educational attainment must address the attainment gaps experienced by disabled young people and those living in poverty. This report cites that 74% of disabled adults are not employed.

To improve life chances, the Welsh Government must place a higher emphasis on the need for disabled young people to study for qualifications wherever possible and enable

proper work experience placements. The national statistics for Wales (February 2013) cites that pupils with SEN account for more than half of all permanent and fixed term exclusions and that those pupils who access school action and have an SEN have the highest rates of exclusion. Work must be undertaken to support teachers in teaching pupils with SEN and initiatives need to be crossing cutting so that they address issues of disability and poverty. We welcome the work the Welsh government has undertaken to find out more about illegal school exclusions, but feel that recommendations from the research they have funded needs to be put into practice with immediate effect. We have concerns regarding the number of disabled children and young people who report identity related bullying and would call upon the Welsh Government to implement a statutory consistent approach for recording bullying within schools so that data is available regarding the level and types of bullying within schools. This would be consistent with the ethos of Single Equalities Act 2010 and its subsequent action plan.

#### 3. Extend access to post-16 further education

We welcome the recommendations of the Ministerial Task Group on additional learning needs in post 16 education to improve access to further education and increase the choice of courses for disabled students is part of the legislative framework for special educational needs. This needs to be monitored and evaluated, particularly access to on job training and apprenticeships. Many disabled young people are NEET and therefore should access the same support for training as their non disabled peers. The Welsh Government should work with local authorities to create new provision for students with complex needs in Wales to reduce expensive residential placements in specialist colleges.

### 4. Transition key workers

The Welsh Government should highlight the benefits having a transition key worker has to a disabled young person and encourage local authorities to fund this important role. Many local authorities have implemented various types of key working, particularly through the Early Support initiative and the European funded Real Opportunities project. Knowledge from these initiatives should be accumulated to support existing good practice in key working and enable key workers to be in place at all stages of transition, in all areas of Wales.

### 5. Access to early years and play provision

Disabled children in Wales do not access the same number of preschool play sessions as their non-disabled peers. Referral schemes run by MM Wales and Wales PPA enable children with additional needs to access their local pre-school setting. Improved funding will help address the longstanding inequality of access to pre-school childcare and play for disabled children across Wales. Mainstream settings, such as integrated children's centres should monitor the number of disabled children that use their service to ensure that they are serving this population and to enable them to be aware of gaps in their service provision

### 6. Access to Play and Leisure opportunities

The 'Fair play for disabled children' (2011) report highlights the difficulties faced by many disabled children and young people in accessing play and leisure opportunities. From issues of bullying to lack of personal support, disabled children and young people often have no activities outside of school and few friends, impacting upon extra curricula learning, social skills and peer relationships. We call for mainstream youth and play provision to be more accessible for disabled children and young people and for innovative schemes including peer mentoring or community connecting to widen the leisure opportunities currently

available for disabled children and young people. Mainstream play and youth clubs should monitor the protected characteristics of participants so that they have accurate data about gaps in access to their provision, which can then be addressed.

### 7. Benefit uptake and Welfare Reform

Changes to the UK benefit system are having major implications for families with disabled children. The Welsh Government must ensure that all income maximization programmes and benefit advice schemes meet the needs of families with disabled children in Wales to take up their benefit entitlements. The Welsh Government should continue a benefit uptake campaign to mitigate to effects that welfare reform is having on families with disabled children. We are disappointed that the draft Social Services and Well Being Bill does not include any mention of citizen direct support. Direct payments are often a mechanism that can enable disabled children and young people to access lifestyles that their non disabled peers take for granted and can enable widened play and leisure opportunities whilst enabling parents to have a short break from their caring role.



## Income, Employment & Post-16 Education

**Overarching call: EVERY young person in Wales has the RIGHT to a meaningful employment and post-16 educational provision**

### 1. Investing in young people for the future

Targeting young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) must remain one of the Welsh Government's top priorities. Supporting young people at the right time and with the right early interventions can transform an individual's prospects for the whole of their working career and for the economy of Wales. Support must acknowledge the complex additional difficulties and financial barriers that many young people have to overcome in order to engage with education, employment or training. Much of the progress made by Welsh Government on supporting young people into employment has been targeted at those who are 'job ready' through flagship programmes such as Jobs Growth Wales, Pathways to Apprentices and Young Recruits. The Welsh Government's Youth Engagement and Progression Framework should bring together all support and provision for young people with a 'Pathway to Work' covering programmes from apprenticeships to Jobs Growth Wales.

### 2. Addressing barriers to employment

The outlook for the labour market is extremely bleak and it remains the case that it is harder for young people to find work now than was the case in 2007. Unemployment in Wales has remained above the UK level and underemployment represents a significant lag in the economy and acts as a barrier to employment for many. In Wales 19% of part time workers need more hours. As public sector budgets are cut and private sector demand remains low, this lag is creating a substantial barrier to employment for those seeking work.

The biggest causes of child poverty are jobless households and income poverty. Measures to create jobs and generate employment must go hand in hand with measures that reduce

most challenging barriers to employment. A lack of affordable childcare, disability or life-limiting illness, and lone parenthood remain persistent challenges to employment, particularly in some of the most deprived parts of Wales. Holistic long-term work is often needed to assist parents and vulnerable young people to a point where they have the confidence to engage in education and training, and to aim for employment that is not low paid.

Welsh Government should increase the pressure on employers benefitting from Welsh Government support to encourage better pay (at least a living wage) and new jobs through major spending commitments. Specifically, employers that benefit from Government investment with major capital budgets should be encouraged to employ arrangements similar to community benefits to deliver jobs and training.

### 3. Addressing In-work Poverty, Living Wage and tackling the gender pay gap

Employment should always be seen as a route out of poverty, yet with more than half of all children in poverty living in households with at least one working adult, many families rely on in-work state benefits to top up their low pay. The Welsh Government should therefore pursue all avenues in the quest to address in-work poverty and develop an agreed national minimum income standard or equivalent for Wales. As an immediate practical measure, the Welsh Government should urgently pursue its Living Wage manifesto commitment. In isolation, this commitment will not alleviate poverty for families but it will be a positive step towards mitigating, shrinking and/or withdrawn welfare payments and closing the gender pay gap for the lowest paid women in Wales. As a matter of urgency, the living wage should be implemented across the public sector as well as being promoted with a major publicity campaign to encourage private sector buy in.

An ethical procurement policy should also include a Living Wage clause on public sector contracts.

#### **4. Ensure that post-16 qualification framework and Further Education opportunities are relevant and progressive to the needs of young people**

The continuation of the Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) in Wales is welcome as it enables young people (16-18) from low income families to remain in full time education beyond post 16 compulsory level. Initiatives such as the retention of the Assembly Learning Grant for Further Education (19+) also enable young adults to continue, or further with education post 19. The Development of the 14-19 Pathways is also a positive step for those at Key Stage 4 and Post 16. Traineeships (16-18) and Steps to Employment (18+) are in existence under the Work Based Learning Model. The 14-19 Learning Pathway should include clear and accessible advice and support for students wishing to pursue vocational opportunities. It is vital that this approach is given parity of esteem with conventional academic routes to FE and employment thereafter.

As laid down in the Review of Qualifications 14-19 year olds report (Nov 2012), Welsh Government should work to develop a coherent high quality, robust and national qualification curriculum framework. There is also a need to ensure that any Welsh based qualifications framework is transferable and comparable with the rest of the UK so that they offer portability. Access to Higher Education should be based on the ability to learn rather than the ability to pay and we welcome the funding support in relation to tuition fees.

#### **5. Welsh Government work in partnership with local authorities, leading employment agencies and the Third Sector to increase job opportunities post 16**

Jobs Growth Wales is a very positive start for 16-18 year olds and will provide a route into employment for 4,000 young people. It is also positive to see that these jobs are at or above the national Minimum Wage.

Poverty rates in worklessness families remain high (58%) considerable above national 22% average and a joined up approach should be developed to ensure that young people from these families are aware of opportunities to gain skills and gain employment. There should be greater emphasis on job opportunities for young people being at the core of the larger employers in Wales (such as Councils, Health Boards etc) and that they should be mandated to provide a number of apprenticeships per year.

#### **6. Support for young people who have Dyslexia and other Special Educational Needs to access training and employment**

Young people who have Dyslexia and other SEN are more likely to need extra support when applying for employment and will often need more time to read and complete an application form. It is very particularly challenging for them to be able to concentrate for any length of time and this is exacerbated with the greater emphasis towards on-line application forms. Failure to fill an application form will often result in being penalized and their benefits stopped which can lead to greater poverty.

The Welsh Government should ensure that all agencies, which are contracted to deliver careers and employment support, the Work Programme should have dedicated training in how to support people who have Dyslexia in an understanding, sensitive and suitable way. Correspondence from official bodies should always take into account the specific needs of the recipients of the information.

### 7. Flexible Working Arrangements

The Welsh Government should continue to work with employers to ensure that flexible working is available to new and existing employees, and the right to request such arrangements under statutory legislation is upheld.



## Financial Inclusion

### Overarching call: EVERY child and young person in Wales has a RIGHT to a decent standard of living

#### 1. Supporting, co-ordinating and targeting Income Maximisation programmes

Income maximisation is a critical element of the child poverty agenda and helps to reduce the shortfall in take-up of the full range of benefits, tax credits and rebates many families are entitled to. The value of benefits not being claimed is considerable and boosting income in this way can have a significant impact on household finances.

The Welsh Government fund a number of income maximisation programmes and we would urge the continuation of work to improve the way this is targeted and co-ordinated. Linking this work with financial education, including the Money Advice Service, would also help to provide a more holistic service. The Discretionary Assistance Fund has been established to help families access financial grants in an emergency or where there is an immediate threat to health or well being. The Welsh Government must monitor the performance of the fund and ensure that families are aware of their entitlement and are able to readily access assistance.

With the biggest changes ever to the Welfare system being implemented, it is essential that families understand these changes and their entitlement to benefits. As incomes for the most vulnerable families will be reduced, it is essential that provision is made to equip people with the skills to manage on a reduced income. As the cost of living increases, there is a much bigger call on the services of food banks to help support families as they struggle to choose between eating and heating. Closer collaborations between welfare benefit advisors and energy efficiency advisors in respect of fuel poverty and energy efficiency matters must also be developed. The Welsh Government must support projects to help mitigate the impact of child poverty.

#### 2. Access to support through financial/ debt advice services (prevention)

The Welsh Government should continue to see the value and importance of free, unbiased and independent specialist advice services that help ensure that people get support with applications and that they are helped to challenge the system where appropriate.

Debt advisers recognize that one problem often causes or results from another, so rather than addressing a single issue at a time, they look at a clients situation holistically. This way other potential problems can be identified early or pre-empted to prevent them escalating into anything more serious. Debt advice is a central part of the broader income maximisation programme and an important prevention measure that can support people to reduce household outgoings by negotiating realistic repayment plans with creditors etc.

People also need to be able to access prevention focused money advice services that helps them address changing situations in their lives such as bereavement, loss of employment and separation. Money Advisers can provide this advice which can help avoid a more serious debt situation from escalating and which can help ensure people are taking up the benefits to which they are entitled. ECPN Cymru member Citizens Advice currently provides a pan-Wales face to face money advice service currently funded by the Money Advice Service until March 2014. It is recommended that the Welsh Government encourages the Money Advice Service to continue the funding both in terms of duration and in terms of the quantity in any one year as demand continues to outstrip provision.

#### 3. Improving financial literacy

Providing children and young people with clear, comprehensive information on money matters helps to give them a critical life-long skill, and the right knowledge and confidence to manage

their financial affairs into adulthood. The establishment of the Welsh Financial Education Unit within the Welsh Government has helped to provide and co-ordinate support for teaching financial education in schools and empowering young people to manage their finances and make financial decisions. However, the future role and funding of the Unit is uncertain. We would urge that the strategic role of this Unit is sustained and built upon over the coming years to help improve the delivery of financial education both in schools and within the wider community by providing financial capability projects via third party organizations

#### 4. Access to affordable credit

Due to the current financial climate, more and more families are having to turn to high-cost lenders on the high street and door step in order to make ends meet and cope with the increase in the cost of living. Changing the way people think about borrowing is a big challenge which we must all play a part in addressing. The Tacking Homelessness through Financial Inclusion project funded by the Wales Government needs to be continued post 2013.

Building sustainability into more affordable lending approaches, such as credit unions, and raising awareness of these services is critical so that they can continue to provide affordable small-scale loans, savings facilities and other financial products that are more appropriate to the needs and circumstances of people living on a low income. The Welsh Government have committed to finance credit unions until 2013 and the support for this type of service must continue.

#### 5. Monitoring the impact of welfare benefit changes

Welfare Reform is already having a detrimental impact on households with children in Wales and the pressure on low income families is predicted to escalate further. The Welsh Government should monitor and report on the impact of announced changes to the benefits system on households with children in Wales.

It is crucial that the outcome from these announcements is measured to ensure that the Welsh Government are sufficiently informed of the impact and are able to effectively lobby and engage with UK Ministers. An impact assessment should also be undertaken.





## Housing and Homelessness

**Overarching call: EVERY child and young person in Wales has a RIGHT to a secure and decent home**

### 1. A new approach to homelessness

The Welsh Government should ensure that homelessness services meet the needs of homeless families in an effective way. As well as access to high-quality prevention services, families may need appropriate support services to help them maintain tenancies. We welcome the new homelessness prevention duty and urge the Welsh Government to focus on positive outcomes for homeless families, including minimizing the number and length of stays in temporary accommodation.

Many households involved in Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) include children and their needs must be a priority in developing policy solutions to address any risk of homelessness. Action to address the root causes of ASB will lead to better outcomes for children than a punitive approach that destabilises families without assisting them effectively to tackle the source of their difficulties.

The Welsh Government should incorporate Leaving Home Education into the National Curriculum to help children protect themselves from the negative consequences of leaving home in an unplanned way.

### 2. Investing in decent homes

While the target to increase the supply of affordable homes is ambitious and welcome, this commitment still falls short of the 4,000 new affordable homes a year that the Holmans Report identified. The Welsh Government should still aim to provide as many affordable homes as possible, over and above that already promised, to meet need to the greatest extent possible. Consideration should be given to prioritising some of the £227 million capital expenditure consequential to build one- and two-bedroom affordable homes in the social rented sector.

however we believe the Welsh Government should demonstrate the impact it has made on provision of affordable homes, as opposed to housing generally. More and more families with children have no option but to be housed in the Private Rented Sector (PRS) and the Welsh Government's policy response should focus on the needs of these households. Families require stability and it is highly questionable whether short-term accommodation in the private rented sector can deliver this. The Welsh Government should consider carefully whether the discharge of the main duty in PRS accommodation is suitable for families with children.

### 3. Local Housing Allowance, Housing Benefit and Welfare Reform

The Welsh Government should aim to minimise homelessness as a result of welfare reform changes announced. In particular the Welsh Government should seek agreement with social landlords not to evict households for Bedroom Tax arrears accrued through no fault of their own. Landlords should pursue Bedroom Tax debt by alternative means to possession action.

The Welsh Government should consider how it can give a degree of financial protection to social landlords that agree not to evict for Bedroom Tax arrears. Local authorities should ensure that any family evicted for Bedroom Tax arrears will not be deemed intentionally homeless. Local authorities should fully top up Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) budgets to alleviate hardship from welfare reform. If every local authority fully topped up the DHP pot there would be £15.3 million available to assist those hit the hardest. Families who are within two years of being eligible for the property they currently occupy should be prioritized for DHP which would help avoid the need for multiple moves and the disruption this would cause for children in terms of their

We welcome the Houses into Home scheme, Pack Page 03 as well as social and support networks.

## Fuel Poverty

**Overarching call: EVERY child in Wales should enjoy the RIGHT to a warm home, adequately heated for health and comfort**

### 1. Integrate policy to ensure no child lives in fuel poverty

The Welsh Government should ensure it further integrates work on child poverty and fuel poverty. All divisions need to share mutual responsibility and accountability for delivering the shared outcome of ensuring that no child lives in fuel poverty given the implications for the Health, Housing and Education policy agendas of children living in cold and damp environments. Households that need to spend a large part of the family income on keeping warm often have less to spend on other parts of the family budget, including food, clothing and leisure activities. Children whose homes are warm have 30% less illness at 3 years old and 20% fewer days off school in childhood.

### 2. Fully implement the Fuel Poverty Affordable Warmth actions and the Fuel Poverty Strategy 2010

The Welsh Government must implement the calls of the Fuel Poverty Coalition as a matter of urgency and deliver on the commitments outlined in the Fuel Poverty Strategy. The number of households experiencing fuel poverty has not only doubled in recent years but is also deepening with more children likely to have fallen into severe fuel poverty. Recent official figures from Welsh Government show that 30% of households (386,000 homes) in Wales were living in fuel poverty in 2012 and increase of 4% since 2008.

### 3. Effective targeting of the NEST energy efficiency programme

There is a need to ensure that the Welsh Government's flagship energy efficiency NEST programme is effectively targeted and reaching low income households with children. This should be robustly monitored and reported. A communication and marketing

strategy must set out how the programme will reach low income families that meet the qualifying criteria and the mechanisms for publicizing the entitlements for energy efficiency improvements. Engagement between NEST providers and third sector organizations must be improved and more robust joined up work between NEST and Communities First, Flying Start and Families First must also take place.

### 4. Workforce Development

The Welsh Government should work with partners to support a training and education programme which helps frontline workers effectively engage with vulnerable families and signpost to appropriate advice, support and energy saving programmes. Health professionals such as health visitors in particular can have a key role in supporting families in fuel poverty and awareness raising training sessions should be in place which aids their involvement.

### 5. Address the needs of fuel poor households living in rural areas

Fuel poverty is a problem that affects all parts of Wales, but one of the factors that distinguish fuel poverty from other types of poverty is its concentration in rural areas. Many homes in rural areas are not connected to the mains gas and are considered hard-to-treat because their built-form precludes installation of measures such as cavity wall and loft insulation. As a matter of social justice, we believe the Welsh Government should ensure schemes such as Arbed prioritize households of those vulnerable children living in rural fuel poor households. The promotion of local schemes which enable customers to collectively bulk buy oil should be encouraged.

## Transport

### Overarching call: EVERY child and young person in Wales has a RIGHT to access and movement

#### 1. Improved access and flexibility

The Welsh Government should continue to work with local partners to ensure there is sufficient investment in public transport provision with high frequency and quality network in urban areas and to ensure there is integration of services. An improved and more frequent main bus service with demand responsive provision for more remote and rural areas is also required. Lack of suitable transport remains a major barrier to employment and training opportunities for many parents and young people. This is particularly acute for parents who have to accommodate childcare drop off and collection around their working day. Public transport should be fully accessible for all disabled children.

#### 2. Addressing the cost and affordability for young people

Through the 'refresh' of the Tackling Poverty Action Plan, there was the opportunity for the Welsh Government to commit to introducing a Wales-wide national public transport discount card for young people 16-21 year olds which would have eased cost and affordability issues for young people in their quest to access employment, training and education. This opportunity has been missed. We would urge the Welsh Government to give urgent consideration and bring forward a commitment to a scheme to help young people on a national basis.

#### 3. Non-car transport choices

The Welsh Government should work with local partners to improve the environment for pedestrians and cyclists, including more use of well-enforced speed limits of 20mph or less and quality cycle routes. The passing of the Active Travel Bill which will enhance walking and cycling networks across Wales is to be welcomed and the Welsh Government should now ensure that there is sufficient funding in place to help local partners realise the plans.

#### 4. Safe Routes to School

The Welsh Government should continue to support the Safe Routes to School networks in Wales and to ensure that the scheme is properly marketed and there is sufficient advice and information available.

#### 5. Improved Safety

The Welsh Government should continue to work with local partners to increase safety measure to ensure that children and young people feel safe and secure when travelling at all times. This in response to data that highlights that children and young people are the most likely victims of crime.



## Rurality

### Overarching call: EVERY child and young person in Wales has a RIGHT not to be disadvantaged by geography

#### 1. Ensure that all policy documents are Rural Poverty proofed and Child Poverty proofed, and to ensure that there is interface between the two separate activities

The ECPN welcomes the independent review of rural proofing, which will be completed in December 2013 and that its recommendations will be included in the Delivering Results process. However, there should be an interface between child poverty and rural proofing to help ensure that children and young people from low-income households in rural areas are not especially disadvantaged.

#### 2. Addressing the Communication Gap

The Welsh Government should continue to work with local partners and private sector providers to improve access to broadband and mobile phone communication in rural areas. This would help alleviate social exclusion among children and young people and break the digital divide, assist with children's learning and education as well as improve the success of rural businesses.

We welcome the Welsh Government's Broadband Support Scheme, which aims to provide minimum 2Mbps broadband services in rural Wales. We are also encouraged that the Welsh Government in its Next Generation Broadband for Wales, has committed to invest in areas where the private sector will not reach. However, the Welsh Government must ensure that broadband providers do not charge more for this service than they do for services provided in urban areas.

#### 3. Reconfiguration of Communities First

As the Welsh Government move towards delivering the integrated Tackling Poverty Action Plan and the reconfiguration of the Communities First Programme moves forward, it is essential that specific rural child poverty

Programme have lost their status under the new programme and we remain concerned that a gulf in support for rural areas will emerge. We would urge the Welsh Government to give full consideration to how the challenges facing low income families in rural Wales will now be met.

#### 4. Children, young people and their families living in rural Wales should be able to live their lives through the medium of Welsh

There is a lack of access to services and leisure activities through the medium of Welsh in many rural communities. Children, young people and families should be able to access services through the medium of Welsh and should be able to participate in Welsh medium social activities in rural Wales.

#### 5. Ensure that young people and parents in rural Wales are able to be employed and access training in their locality

The levels of unemployment among young people and families in rural areas are higher than the national average. It is essential that young people are able to access employment and training opportunities in their localities. Support should be given to help them to find work, fill application forms and undertake work experience. The next phase of the Rural Development Grant and European Social Fund should be better utilised to meet the growing needs of young people and families struggling to access employment, training and skills opportunities in rural areas.

#### 6. Ensure that children, young people and their families are able to live in affordable homes in their locality

It is imperative that housing stocks meets the needs of local people in rural Wales. There is a lack of one and two bedroomed homes in these areas. The introduction of the 'bedroom tax'

compounds the situation. Many houses are second homes or self-catering accommodation in rural areas. This increases the prices of challenges are addressed. Areas of Special Interests under the former Communities First homes. This and low employment opportunities and income means that many families are forced to leave their locality because of the lack of affordable housing. There is also a lack of social housing in rural Wales. Building new affordable housing, both private and social, would also ensure that villages in the Welsh language heartland would retain families who are Welsh speakers.

### **7. Ensure that there is a good public transport network, which is affordable and meets the needs of children, young people and families**

A robust and affordable public transport infrastructure is essential for the sustainability of rural areas. Many families rely on public transport to take them to schools, colleges, place of work including childcare, health care and social activities. Children, young people and families often cite poor and expensive transport services as a barrier to social inclusion. Social exclusion and isolation will often lead to poor mental and physical health.





Children in Wales  
Plant yng Nghymru

## **Child and Family Poverty in Wales**

### **A snapshot of key issues raised by families**

#### **Executive Summary**

##### **Introduction**

This research project was conducted by Children in Wales, between January and March 2014, to explore key poverty related issues raised by families in Wales for discussion at Assembly Member (AM) and Member of Parliament (MP) surgeries and with representatives at Citizens Advice Bureaux across Wales.

This pilot research forms part of a planned wider study into the area of key factors impacting upon child and family poverty in Wales. Children in Wales recognises that this is a small scale study and, as such, the results are not widely generalizable, however it does provide an important snapshot that highlights emerging issues related to poverty for families with children in Wales in the current economic climate.

The information will be used to inform Children in Wales' members and the United Kingdom Government and Welsh Government about emerging trends, in order to identify potential areas for the development of additional support for families experiencing poverty in Wales.

##### **Research Methodology**

All Welsh Members of Parliament and Assembly Member offices were invited to take part in the research via a telephone interview (or a self-completion questionnaire). Twenty responses were received from AMs, MPs and their case workers across Wales; five were members of the Conservative party; four were Liberal Democrats; four were Plaid Cymru and seven were from the Labour party. Responses were received from across Wales denoting a good representative sample in relation to geographical spread covering north, south, west and mid Wales, as well as urban and rural locations. In addition, to provide supplementary information, Case workers from six Citizens Advice Bureaux across a range of geographical areas of Wales were interviewed.

The research sought to identify key issues being raised by families in relation to poverty. In particular, issues resulting from:

- the UK Government Welfare Reforms, including, removal of the spare bedroom subsidy, or 'bedroom tax'
- rising food, energy costs

- redundancy/unemployment
- debt
- childcare costs

The research also wanted to explore geographical trends in relation to poverty issues and social deprivation affecting families. For example:

- urban poverty
- rural poverty

### **Summary of Research Findings**

There are worries over what the future holds, including concerns about job security, on-going changes to welfare benefits and increases in the general cost of living, and this is causing difficulties for many.

The most common poverty-related issues raised by families were reported as:

- The impact of welfare reform/changes to the benefit system, particularly in relation to a general lack of knowledge about changes to welfare reforms; and concerns about sanctions/delays in the Department for Work and Pension (DWP) payments
- There is a general lack of knowledge about the Discretionary Assistance Fund to assist people living in hardship, and the impact of this lack of awareness was felt to be exacerbated for people living in rural areas
- Housing – in relation to availability of sufficient social housing to accommodate demand, or appropriately meet family needs (particularly for larger families or those with complex needs); and poor quality housing (both private and social) lacking in adequate insulation, resulting in high fuel costs
- Spare bedroom subsidy removal or ‘bedroom tax’ – over half of the respondents indicated that this was having a major impact on families, particularly for parents of children with a disability or for those with complex needs. The spare bedroom subsidy removal or ‘bedroom tax’ is also an issue for larger families with children of different genders and ages
- Food poverty – over half of those interviewed reported an increase in the use of food banks (50% of these cases resulted from hardship associated with welfare reforms, delays in benefit payments and sanctions)
- Debt – a quarter of interviewees reported an increase in the number of families presenting issues around debt, especially pay day loans
- Rising cost of living/concerns about rising energy costs - is a concern raised by families, even those who are in paid employment. Families are struggling to pay utility and food bills, and are faced with the dilemma of ‘eating versus heating’

- Child Support and Legal Aid – was reported as having an impact by one fifth of respondents, particularly in relation to child care custody cases. The complicated nature of the system related to child support was felt to have a negative impact on children of separated or divorced parents

Other issues emerged as common trends:

- Rural poverty – several issues were felt to impact upon and exacerbate the effects of poverty in rural areas, and was affecting a broad range of demographic groups. For example, poor quality housing (both private and social) which was inadequately insulated and expensive to heat; poor and limited access to support services because of a general lack of transport (both public and private) or because public transport is too expensive
- Lone parents - especially single mothers (with two or more children) were felt to be a particularly vulnerable group by a quarter of respondents, with an observable trend of referrals to food banks where single parents were working and still struggling to make ends meet
- Parents’ of children with disabilities/complex needs – 15% of respondents indicated an observable trend towards issues being raised by families with complex needs, eg, with caring responsibilities for a child/children with disabilities. In most cases the enquiries related to changes in benefits or the removal of the spare bedroom subsidy or ‘bedroom tax’
- Parents with larger families (more than three children) - there was an observable trend in poverty related issues raised by families with three or more children

### **Recommendations**

Children in Wales, makes the following overarching recommendations:

#### **Recommendation 1: Awareness raising of UK Government Welfare Reforms**

There is a need to provide sufficient information, signposting, advice and support in respect of Welfare Reform changes, including funds through Welsh Government payment programmes. The Welsh Government, local authorities and other public bodies need to actively develop analysis and actions to mitigate the worse effects of the UK Government’s reforms.

At a local authority level, Children in Wales supports the recommendations set out in the report of the End Child Poverty Network (ECPN) May 2014, that:

- There is comprehensive awareness raising about the implications of changes to the Welfare Reform system, so that individuals understand these fully;



- Individuals and families are fully informed in relation to knowledge of all benefits and funds to which they are entitled. This includes educating people about how and where to access funds or who they can approach if they require assistance in accessing funds.

The Welsh Government fund a number of income maximisation programmes and Children in Wales urges the continuation of this work to improve the way it is targeted and co-ordinated, by:

- Linking this work with financial education, including the Money Advice Service, who would also help to provide a more holistic service

The Discretionary Assistance Fund has been established to help families' access grants in an emergency, or where there is an immediate threat to health or wellbeing. Children in Wales recommends:

- that the Welsh Government must monitor performance of the Discretionary Assistance Fund and ensure that families are aware of their entitlement and are able to readily access assistance

In addition, the Welsh Government should:

- monitor and report on the impact of announced changes to the benefits system on households with children in Wales;
- promote the exchange and sharing of good practice and knowledge, to encourage roll-out of tried and tested intervention models where there is evidence that existing programmes are achieving positive outcomes and impact as intended.

Children in Wales, also supports the recommendations of the End Child Poverty Network (ECPN) May 2014, that the Welsh Government:

- strengthen the interface between the equality and child poverty policy agendas by ensuring that existing programmes are placing a sufficient focus on the needs of protected characteristic groups, including gender and disability given the link with socio-economic disadvantage;
- place greater expectations on local authorities to undertake social impact assessments in advance of budgetary cuts which impact on essential services

It is crucial that the outcome from these announcements is measured to ensure that the Welsh Government are sufficiently informed of the impact and are able to effectively lobby and engage with UK Ministers.

**Recommendation 2: The need to address food poverty and hunger**

There is a need to address food poverty and hunger by gaining a greater understanding of causation so that sustainable solutions can be identified and developed.

For Local Authorities and other public bodies there needs to be:

- closer collaboration between welfare benefit advisors and energy efficiency advisors in respect of fuel poverty, and energy efficiency matters must also be developed
- a requirement for transport departments to liaise with local food bank providers to ensure that food banks are accessible by public transport, particularly in rural areas

Through working with local and regional partners, the Welsh Government should:

- develop and identify sustainable solutions. A holistic food poverty strategy and a national food poverty Indicator should be developed. These should include existing provision and programmes through schools and address access to food in school holidays and the accessibility of fresh, nutritious food locally.
- work with local authorities, cooperatives and third sector partners, so that 'eating well' principles are extended to all settings that cater for children and families, such as leisure centres, youth clubs and childcare facilities and maximum compliance should be sought and monitored.

Children in Wales supports the recommendations of Oxfam and Church Action on Poverty 2013, that at a UK Government Level:

- the House of Commons Work and Pensions Select Committee conducts an urgent inquiry into the relationship between benefit delay, error or sanctions, welfare reform changes and the growth of food poverty.
- the Department for Work and Pensions publishes data on a regular basis on the number and type of household who are deprived of benefits by reason of benefit delay, error or sanctions; the numbers leaving and returning to benefits after a short period of time, and the number of referrals from Jobcentre staff to local food banks.

**Recommendation 3: Debt – the need for better financial literacy and to build more sustainable and affordable approaches to lending**

There is a need for better financial literacy and to build more sustainable and affordable approaches to lending.

At a local level:

- building sustainability into more affordable lending approaches, such as credit unions, and raising awareness of these services is critical so that they can continue to provide

affordable small-scale loans, savings facilities and other financial products that are more appropriate to the needs and circumstances of people living on a low income.

- a possible mechanism for providing loan schemes would be for local authorities to partner with providers of affordable credit in their area, such as credit unions (possibly in partnership with Communities First clusters). This may provide an opportunity to boost affordable credit

The Welsh Government have committed to finance credit unions and Children in Wales recommends that the support for this type of service must continue.

#### **Recommendation 4: Rural poverty**

There is a need to improve access and availability of services to ameliorate the impacts of poverty.

At a local level:

- In order to provide adequate support services in rural areas that can ameliorate the impact of poverty, local service providers liaise closely to plan service provision in order to meet existing and potential service user needs. This should also include public and private transport providers in rural areas

That the Welsh Government:

- ensure that strategic links are made across the different departments with responsibility for rural matters, and that the needs of those who are experiencing child poverty and social exclusion are given full consideration when developing future policy guidance and strategies
- that Welsh Government and its partners work with rural Communities First 2.0 Partnerships and others to support the transfer of good practice in delivering community focussed services in rural areas

#### **Conclusion**

This pilot research study has provided a useful snapshot of current key issues and concerns relating to poverty in Wales for children and families. Children in Wales' recommendations are intended as possible suggestions for putting in place a mechanism on a local, Wales and UK level for providing interventions that could potentially prevent or ameliorate the impact of these issues on children, young people and their families.

We recognise that the study is small scale and has the weakness of its findings not being generalizable to the wider population within Wales. In order to address this we recommend

that more research is conducted which has a broader range and scope, and could include the social impact of local authority budgetary cuts and their impact on essential services.

In addition, further research could explore the potential scale of existing programmes to enable more children and families to access support, where there is evidence that existing programmes are achieving positive outcomes and impact as intended. This would ensure that best practice is grown and replicated, particularly in relation to successful initiatives.

**Children in Wales, June 2014**

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## **Changing Lives' response to the Welsh Government's Inquiry into Poverty (September 2014)**

**CHANGING  
LIVES**

### **Introduction**

Changing Lives provides specialist support services for thousands of vulnerable people and their families, every month. Through our pioneering and innovative work we help people to make positive, lasting changes in their lives. We work with people experiencing homelessness, addiction and a range of other problems by reaching out in to our communities. We offer specialist support services for women and families, and provide employment opportunities for our clients.

The Women's Turnaround Service (WTS) , funded by the National Offender Management Service (NOMS), is an all Wales service that offers a holistic service to women in Wales aged 18 and over that have offended or are at risk of offending. Our trained staff provides information, guidance and support tailored to the individual's needs in a friendly and women-only environment. We work with women on a one to one basis and deliver group programmes.

We offer support and advice on:

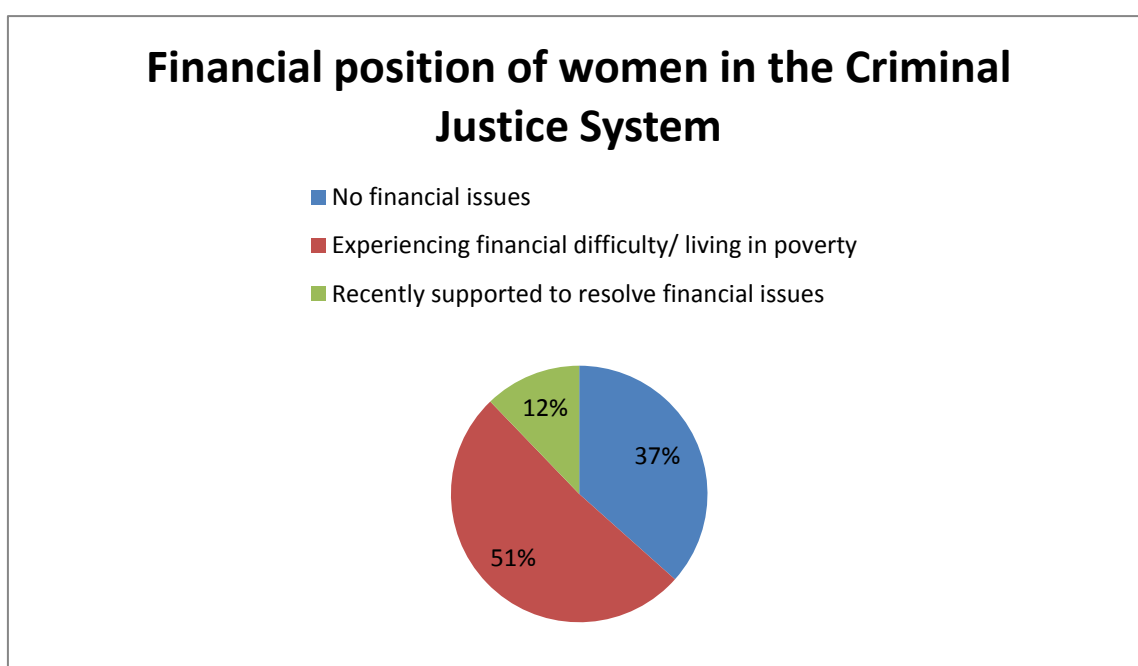
- Health & Well-Being
- Finance & Debt
- Children & Families
- Domestic Abuse
- Skills and Employment
- Substance Misuse
- Housing
- Attitudes, Thinking and Behaviour
- Support for Sex Workers

The focus of our response is on the impacts of poverty, particularly destitution and extreme poverty, on women in the Criminal Justice System. We are concerned about the impact of extreme poverty and destitution on the women that we support and would like to highlight to the Welsh Government the extent of poverty and their causes amongst our service users. As an indication, we provide 10 food parcels a fortnight to our service users in Cardiff alone and we are also aware that many of them also receive support from local food banks.

It is acknowledged that women commit more acquisitive crime rather than being perpetrators of serious violence, criminal damage and professional crime<sup>1</sup>. Their criminal activity is often linked to their poverty, as well as previous and current experiences of abuse and violence. Women are also more likely to be the primary carers, which means that their financial circumstances and incarceration will impact directly on their children.

## 1. Prevalence of poverty

The women that we support have multiple and complex needs often across a number of the nine pathways for reducing reoffending. However, the pathway focusing on *Finance, Benefits and Debt* features quite highly in women's lives. In the last financial year (2013/14), WTS worked with 47 women who identified debt and finances as their first and main priority need. In addition, during a snapshot look at the needs of women supported by WTS in July 2014, just over half of our service users (21 out of 41) faced poverty and/or destitution.



## 2. Causes of poverty

Some of the main issues that place the women that we support in poverty and or destitution are:

- **Impact of the Welfare Reform**
- **Domestic abuse and financial exploitation**
- **Lack of appropriate support mechanisms for women released from custody**
- **Substance misuse**
  
- **Impact of the Welfare Reform**

The impact of the Welfare Reform on women's lives has been significant. In the above chart, 12% represents women who had received support from WTS with their finances. This includes women who had their benefits sanctioned, required support to apply for

the appropriate benefits or were impacted on by the Housing Benefit size criteria restrictions.

- **Domestic abuse and financial exploitation**

Over three quarters of the women supported by the WTS have current or previous experiences of a form of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) including domestic abuse, sexual violence and involvement in prostitution. In addition, in our July 2014 snapshot, a third of women who were experiencing poverty this was directly linked to domestic abuse or financial exploitation by family members. Some examples include:

- Women who are left with liabilities and debts in their names once they've left long-term controlling relationships.
  - Women who have lost (or have never been allowed to acquire) the life skills to manage their finances, tenancies etc. They accumulate debt, face eviction and end up with in custody for non-payment of Council Tax, acquisitive crime etc. Women with learning disabilities in particular are overrepresented in the Criminal Justice System (20–30%)<sup>ii</sup> as they are particularly vulnerable and require additional support to prevent them from offending and/or reduce their chances of re-offending.
  - Women who support their adult children to the detriment of their own financial stability and wellbeing. For example, one of our service users lives in complete destitution due to her son's gambling addiction.
- **Lack of appropriate support mechanisms for women released from custody**

Women released from custody receive a limited release grant that is often not sufficient for their survival over the period required to reinstate their benefits. The below case study is representative of many women that the service supports upon release from HMP Eastwood Park. This situation is often compounded by the fact that many women do not have any family or social support networks that they can rely on for support.

Claire (not her real name) is a 30 years old woman living in the Swansea area. She was sentenced to 22 months in prison for intent to supply and whilst she was in prison she completed the 12 step programme to stop using heroin. Claire has multiple and complex needs including previous childhood abuse, violent domestic abuse, substance misuse and self harming. As a result of the domestic violence, Claire was not able to protect her young son and he was removed from her care.

On release from prison on 8<sup>th</sup> July 2014, Changing Lives staff picked up Claire from the gate and continue to support her to the present day. Due to her circumstances and mental health needs Claire was claiming ESA prior to going to prison and on the day after her release made a claim for ESA benefit with the support of Changing Lives staff.

On the same day, she was supported to present herself as homeless at housing options where she was given emergency B&B accommodation in Swansea.

Claire had a £47 discharge grant on release, to sustain her until her benefits claim was processed and paid. However, Claire did not receive her benefits until 28<sup>th</sup> July, which meant that she was had to survive on £46 for 20 days (£2.30 per day).

In addition, Claire did not manage in B&B accommodation. She came in contact with previous associates and she was not mentally well enough to be on her own in accommodation that did not feel a safe option for her and where she had no money or food. She started sofa surfing and borrowing money from family and friends to survive.

Because of the circumstances of her release with very little access to money, appropriate accommodation and her mental health problems, Claire has relied on her violent ex partner for money and a place to stay. She is in a cycle of borrowing money, paying it back, then borrowing again. She is living in poverty and this is impacting on her mental health and life choices regarding accommodation and finances.

Currently Claire is being supported to make changes to her circumstances; a new homelessness application has been completed and she has been supported to access and attend mental health services. She has also been referred to a domestic violence specialist. Poverty remains an issue where little changes have taken place for Claire. It is very difficult to help and support with this when a person is entrenched in a cycle of borrowing to survive; this undoubtedly impacts on the other issues she faces.

- **Substance misuse**

Substance misuse adds an extra barrier to women's journey into financial stability and a lifestyle away from crime. Women who are in co-dependent relationships are particularly vulnerable as often their partners rely on them to secure the funds for drugs and alcohol.

### **3. Recommendations**

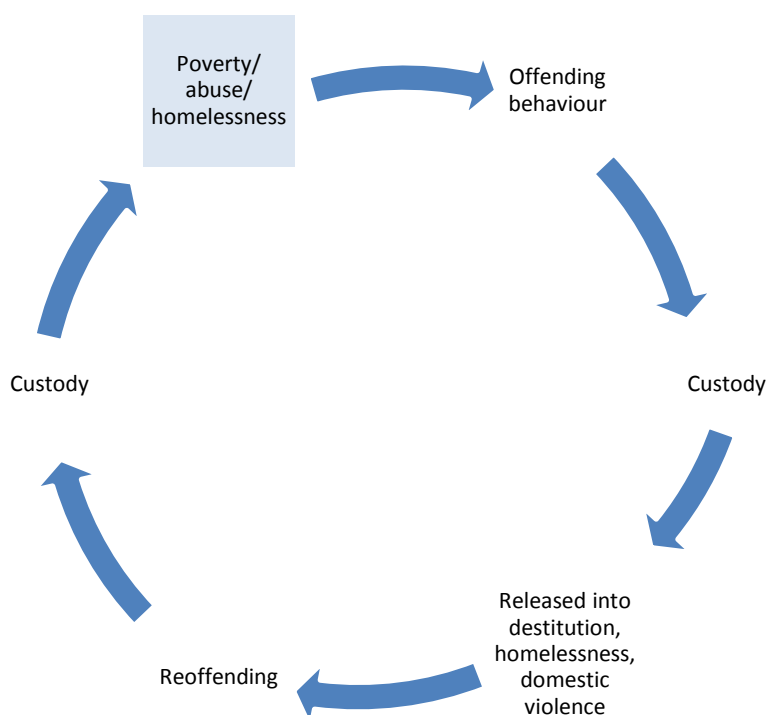
Seven years have passed since the publication of the Corston report into the vulnerabilities of women in the Criminal Justice System. However, despite its recommendations, many women still are not in receipt of appropriate support that would prevent them from offending. Whilst gender based violence and offending intertwine, more joined up approaches are required to provide women with the right support at the right time. A more collaborative approach to supporting women in the Criminal Justice System would allow a seamless transition between specialist services.

Housing is a key criminogenic need that can lead to recidivism of criminal activity. However, provision is often patchy and unsuitable to the needs of vulnerable women. Some of our service users have been faced with the stark choice of being inappropriately housed, sofa surfing, returning to abusive relationships, exchanging



sexual favours for accommodation or rough sleeping. For some of our service users, custody seems like a safer option to having to survive in destitution. The human cost of incarceration to the women and their families as well as the cost to the public purse (between £38,643 to £53,438 per annum) <sup>iii</sup> is immense. We are further concerned by the impact of the upcoming Housing Bill that will remove priority for women released from custody.

Many of our service users are trapped in a cycle of abuse, poverty and offending that our service helps them break out of.



However, there are many barriers and limitations ingrained in the system such as long waiting times for benefits to be reinstated, strict eligibility criteria for accessing housing, unsuitable housing provision, lack of specialist services for people with a dual diagnosis (mental health and substance misuse), to mention a few. We feel that a cross party commitment at a policy level is required to address some of the issues that prevent women from receiving appropriate statutory support upon release and when they are in crisis. Providing enhanced packages of support to women at an early stage will reduce their chances of reoffending, it will improve their health and wellbeing and it will ultimately lead to the reduced use of public services, generating savings for the state.

<sup>i</sup> Corston, J. (2007) *The Corston Report – A report by Baroness Jean Corston of A review of women with particular vulnerabilities in the Criminal Justice System*, Home Office

<sup>ii</sup> Loucks, N. (2007), *No One Knows: offenders with learning disabilities and learning difficulties*, Prison Reform Trust

<sup>iii</sup> MoJ (2012) *Judicial Engagement, Women in the Criminal Justice System – A briefing for Probation Trusts*

**Response to NAFW Communities, Equalities and Local Government Committee inquiry:**

## Poverty and Inequality

September 2014

### Introduction

Chwarae Teg exists to deliver our vision of a Wales where women achieve and prosper. We do this by working with women to broaden horizons and build confidence and skills; working with employers to create modern workplaces that are successful by harnessing everyone's contribution; and working with influencers, educators and decision makers to build a society that values, supports and benefits women and men equally.

In this response we will address the three questions outlined in the Terms of Reference with a focus on how poverty effects and is experienced by women.

Poverty is a gendered issue. The risks, causes and experiences of poverty are different for men and women, with women's position in the home and the workplace being key factors in determining these differences. As part of wider action to reduce poverty levels it is vital that a tailored approach is taken to address the distinctive features of women's poverty.

### Recommendations

1. Strengthen the coordination between the Tackling Poverty Action Plan and Strategic Equality Plan in practice and in progress reporting to highlight areas of success and areas that require further intervention.
2. Ensure robust Equality Impact Assessments are carried out consistently on **all** new programmes and initiatives with continued monitoring and improvement of this process.
3. Expand the definition and measurement of poverty to look within households and to understand the gender differences in risks and experience of poverty.
4. Ensure that all Welsh Government departments prioritise action to tackle poverty and inequality and are aware of the need to tackle women's inequality as part of this.
5. Utilise gender budgeting tools to inform funding decisions and new initiatives so that gender impacts are avoided at the development stage rather than being highlighted at the consultation and engagement stage.
6. Tackle the underlying causes of women's poverty by:
  - a. Tackling the perception that women are carer's first and earners second

- b. Ensuring that affordable and accessible childcare is available, regardless of income
- c. Exploring better support mechanisms for lone parents to enable them to access quality employment opportunities
- d. Encouraging modern workplace practices, including part time and job sharing, at more senior levels, so that women are not forced to work below their potential
- e. Making Wales a Living Wage nation

## Detailed Response

### 1. How effectively the Tackling Poverty Action Plan, Strategic Equality Plan and other government strategies work together

- 1.1 Poverty and inequality are inextricably linked making it impossible to tackle one without addressing the other.
- 1.2 The dovetailing of the Tackling Poverty Action Plan and Strategic Equality Plan is welcome but could be strengthened to make the links more explicit and support a more coordinated approach to tackling poverty and inequality.
- 1.3 Equality Impact Assessments are a vital tool in supporting this approach. In some cases these are not being carried out consistently and are not taking account of the different employment and domestic situations that men and women find themselves in.

## Recommendations 1 and 2

### 2. The impacts of poverty, particularly destitution and extreme poverty, on different groups of people

#### 2.1. Women are more likely to live in poverty and suffer longer and recurrent spells of poverty than men

- 2.1.1. Women's poverty rate stands at 22% compared to 20% for men.<sup>1</sup> This is in part due to the fact that single, female headed households are more likely to live in poverty.<sup>2</sup>
- 2.1.2. The true extent of women's poverty could be hidden as poverty is measured at a household level on the assumption that resources and income are shared equally and low income statistics include childcare support as income but do not deduct the costs.
- 2.1.3. While defining poverty in monetary terms is an important and useful approach it ignores wider implications such as "poverty of decision making, poverty of time and poverty of self-determination."<sup>3</sup>

## Recommendation 3

<sup>1</sup> Poverty and Social Exclusion (2012) "Poverty and Gender: Initial Findings PSE 2012"

<sup>2</sup> Fran Bennett via Open Democracy (2014) "Gender and Poverty in the UK: inside the household and across the life course"

<sup>3</sup> Oxfam International/ European Women's Lobby (2010) "Women's Poverty and social exclusion in the European Union at a time of recession: An Invisible Crisis?"

## **2.2. Women are more at risk of falling into poverty than men and experience different risk factors.**

- 2.2.1. A report completed for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation argues that there are 3 factors which interact to leave women at a higher risk of poverty: Family, Market and State.<sup>4</sup>
- 2.2.2. In terms of family the structure, availability of resources and distribution of responsibilities within the family and level of dependence all affect a woman's risk of poverty.<sup>5</sup>
- 2.2.3. Women continue to be seen as carers first and earners second, a perception which can drastically limit women's employment options to low paid, part time work and prevent them from accessing education and training opportunities.
- 2.2.4. The amount and intensity of unpaid care work can be even greater for those living in poverty due to a lack of public services and adequate infrastructure in their locality and a lack of resources to pay for care services.<sup>6</sup>
- 2.2.5. Being the second earner in a household can also leave many women financially dependent on their partner. This can leave women more at risk of poverty especially if the relationship were to break down.
- 2.2.6. For lone parents, risk of poverty is even greater, with females headed households much more likely to be in poverty than those headed by men.<sup>7</sup>
- 2.2.7. The pressure of balancing work and care is also more acute with many lone parents only being able to work part time. This does not guarantee a route out of poverty as 1 in 3 lone parents who work part time are living in poverty.<sup>8</sup>

### **Recommendations 6a, 6b, and 6c**

- 2.2.8. In terms of the market, education and skills levels, labour market engagement, part time work and low pay, leave and flexible working and importance of locality all need to be considered.<sup>9</sup>
- 2.2.9. Women are over represented in the types of work associated with higher rates of poverty including low paid, part time, precarious or temporary employment.<sup>10</sup> 22% of women are living on a persistent low income compared with 14% of men<sup>11</sup>, women occupy 80% of all part time jobs in Wales<sup>12</sup> with 14.1% of UK part time workers living in poverty compared with 6.5% of full time workers.<sup>13</sup>
- 2.2.10. Of the 1.4m people working on a zero hours contract 55% are women.<sup>14</sup> Many working on this basis are working part time (64%), would like more hours (35%) and face varying hours and therefore income from week to week. The instability of these contracts and potential impact on benefit entitlement risk pushing women further into poverty.
- 2.2.11. All of this contributes to the growing problem of in-work poverty, which is also gendered. Men are more likely to experience it due to their family situation,

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<sup>4</sup> University of Oxford (2014) "Poverty through a Gender Lens: Evidence and Policy review on Gender and Poverty"

<sup>5</sup> Ibid

<sup>6</sup> United Nations (2013) "Report of the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights"

<sup>7</sup> Fran Bennett "Gender and Poverty in the UK"

<sup>8</sup> Gingerbread (2013) <http://www.gingerbread.org.uk/news/200/Part-time-poverty>

<sup>9</sup> University of Oxford "poverty through a Gender Lens"

<sup>10</sup> JRF "Employment, Pay and Poverty"

<sup>11</sup> NUT "Women and Poverty"

<sup>12</sup> Women Adding Value to the Economy (2014) "Working Patterns in Wales: Gender, Occupations and Pay"

<sup>13</sup> JRF "Employment, Pay and Poverty"

<sup>14</sup> Office for National Statistics (2014) "Analysis of employee contracts that do not guarantee a minimum number of hours"

including having a partner with no income of their own, while women are more likely to due to their own employment situation, i.e. low paid, part time work.<sup>15</sup>

## **Recommendations 6d and 6e**

- 2.2.12. The role of the state relates mainly to welfare and services. Gendered poverty risks are affected by whether benefits are individual or joint and to whom they are paid and how, while services are particularly important to those with caring responsibilities for children or ill, disabled or elderly adults.<sup>16</sup>
- 2.2.13. Women are more reliant on benefits than men with a higher proportion of their income coming from the state. As a result women, particularly lone parents, are much more vulnerable to welfare reform and are at a higher risk of falling into poverty as a result.

### **2.3. Women's experience of poverty also differs from men's due to their different positions in the home and in work**

- 2.3.1. A report compiled by the Women's Budget Group (WBG) and JRF in 2008 outlined the experiences of women living in poverty from across the UK.<sup>17</sup> While the political and social context has changed in that time the experiences described by these women remain relevant to a discussion on poverty and inequality.
- 2.3.2. The report showed that many women experienced poverty as a "constant sense of financial insecurity and instability and the lack of any real opportunity to improve their situation."<sup>18</sup>
- 2.3.3. Many people who experience poverty live in areas with high deprivation which has well documented problems. These areas generally have little investment and suffer with poor quality housing and inadequate service provision. There is also a long standing link between living in deprivation, poor educational attainment and poor physical and mental health. This experience was reflected in the WBG report.
- 2.3.4. While some of these experiences will be shared with men living in poverty, the burden of care and importance of accessing services can leave women more vulnerable to the effects of poverty.
- 2.3.5. Poverty can also lead to a lack of independence and disenfranchisement. Women living in poverty remain a highly marginalised political group<sup>19</sup> and while this continues policy discussions at all levels will suffer as the experiences and views of this group will remain invisible.

### **2.4. For women who are also part of another protected group the realities and risks of poverty can be felt even more harshly**

- 2.4.1. Women over 65 are on average over one and a half times more likely to live in poverty than men of a similar age in OECD countries overall.<sup>20</sup>
- 2.4.2. This can be the result of a lifetime of low income, interrupted work patterns and the loss of a partner on whom they relied for financial security.
- 2.4.3. A further pressure for older women, especially for those in low income communities, is the increasing reliance on grandparents for informal support,

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<sup>15</sup> University of Oxford "Poverty through a Gender Lens"

<sup>16</sup> University of Oxford "Poverty through a Gender Lens"

<sup>17</sup> Women's Budget Group and JRF (2008) "Women and Poverty: Experiences, empowerment and engagement"

<sup>18</sup> Ibid

<sup>19</sup> Ibid

<sup>20</sup> University of Oxford "Poverty through a Gender Lens"

particularly in providing childcare.<sup>21</sup> Many grandmothers are reducing their hours in order to support their families with an obvious impact on their ability to add to their pension fund.

- 2.4.4. There are also additional risks for some groups of younger women. Teenage mothers have been highlighted as being 3 times as likely to be living in poverty as a mother in their 30s.<sup>22</sup> Teenage births are also higher in areas of deprivation, suggesting that poverty is not only a risk for teenage mothers but may also be a contributing factor to teenage pregnancy rates.<sup>23</sup>
- 2.4.5. Census data shows that BME women are over represented in the poorest households in the UK.<sup>24</sup> Women from these communities experience the same risks of poverty as White British women but also face additional barriers to accessing quality, well paid employment such as poor English language skills, more traditional gender roles within the household and a lack of appropriate childcare.<sup>25</sup>
- 2.4.6. Location can be a particular problem for ethnic communities who live in some of the most deprived areas of the country.<sup>26</sup>

### **3. How legislation, policy and budgets targeted at tackling poverty and reducing inequality are coordinated and prioritised across the Welsh Government**

- 3.1. Poverty and inequality are inextricably linked and require a coordinated approach across all Welsh Government departments if both are to be eradicated. The TPAP, SEP and Budget Advisory Group for Equality (BAGE) are all indications that WG have recognised this and are committed to such an approach.
- 3.2. Further steps could be taken such as exploring gender mainstreaming and making use of gender budgeting tools which could ensure unnecessary gender impacts are avoided at the policy development stage rather than being highlighted at the consultation and engagement stage.
- 3.3. Most importantly it is vital that all departments understand the need to prioritise action to tackle poverty and inequality. This paper demonstrates how far reaching the risks and impacts of poverty are for women. A robust, coordinated approach that takes full account of the gendered nature of poverty is vital if WG want to effectively tackle poverty and inequality/ build a Wales that is free from both poverty and inequality.

#### **Recommendations 4 and 5**

### **Conclusion**

Poverty is a gendered issue that is inextricably linked with inequality. Women and men's risks and experiences of poverty are different and poverty cannot be reduced unless these differences are understood.

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid

<sup>22</sup> Ibid

<sup>23</sup> Ibid

<sup>24</sup> Oxfam (2011) "Exploring BME Maternal Poverty: The financial lives of ethnic minority mothers in Tyne and Wear"

<sup>25</sup> Ibid

<sup>26</sup> Centre on Dynamics of Ethnicity Briefing Paper "Diversity or Deprivation: research evidence and policy recommendations from the University of Manchester"

For women, their risk and experience of poverty is largely defined by their position in the workplace and at home. Being viewed as carer's first and earner's second, being unable to access work that is flexible enough to enable them to balance work and care and having to opt for lower paid, less secure employment means that for many women, work does not provide the route out of poverty that it's purported to.

A gender neutral approach to tackling poverty will not work. To be successful poverty strategies must also address the causes of women's inequality.

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Chwarae Teg would be happy to discuss any of the above in more detail. Please contact:

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## **Submission to the Assembly Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee (September 2014)**

### **(Strand 1) An Inquiry into the links between tackling poverty and addressing inequality**

Prepared by: Tony Graham  
Wales Manager  
The Trussell Trust



## **Poverty and Inequality**

1. It has become evident through the work of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation that there is a clear link between poverty and inequality. They have in recent months/years produced a number of papers addressing this issue and it is assumed the Committee will want to seek oral evidence from JRF. In addition Victoria Winkler at the Bevan Foundation has provided comment on the specific issues that are faced in Wales and may also provide helpful evidence to the Committee.

2. The Trussell Trust in Wales is represented by its Regional Manager, Tony Graham, on the WCVA Third Sector Anti-Poverty Taskforce (the Taskforce) and we are aware that written evidence has been provided by that group and we suggest that account is taken of that evidence.

### **Initial Views of the Trussell Trust**

3. As the Committee will be aware the Trussell Trust oversees the largest network of foodbanks in the UK and across Wales. Between April 2013 and March 2014 we provided emergency food aid to 79,919 individuals in Wales, which was a 124% increase on the previous year (35,650).

4. The first foodbank in Wales started in 2008 in Ebbw Vale and we now have 35 foodbank hubs that oversee nearly 80 distribution centres in every county and most cities and towns across the country. As a consequence we work closely with many of the communities most impacted by the effects of poverty and are able to confirm the devastating consequences of poverty and inequality across our nation. Thousands of volunteers assist in the running of our foodbanks each year and tens of thousands of people contribute to their local foodbank either through donations, supermarket collections or indeed providing financial support. The foodbank network is supported by and effectively operated by the local communities to serve those individuals in each community who find themselves in need.

5. We have stated in previous papers provided to the Deputy Minister for Poverty (prior to the most recent reshuffle) that we welcome and commend the Welsh Governments desire to tackle poverty in Wales. Even the establishment of a Minister for Tackling Poverty is a clear statement of intent regarding the priorities of the Welsh Government.

6. In addition there have been attempts to strengthen the relationship between the third sector and Welsh Government and particularly in the current climate this is to be welcomed. We believe a greater level of cooperation will be essential in the coming years as budgets are tightened and the capacity to achieve previous levels of service will be reduced.

7. This Committee is also to be commended for taking the opportunity to scrutinise and challenge the work being undertaken by the Welsh Government in this area.

8. This strand of the Inquiry considers the relationship between poverty and inequality and comments are invited in 3 areas. We will address each area in turn although if an area lies outside our area of expertise we will reference the Taskforce's comments.

### **How effectively do the Tackling Poverty Action Plan, Strategic Equality Plan and other government strategies work together.**

9. Helen Wilkinson on behalf of the Taskforce has made detailed comments on this area and we would reference that paper. However, we have had some concerns at the lack of conversation that has occurred between Ministers, officials and front line Practitioners. This was brought home to us starkly when the last 'refresh' of the Tackling Poverty Action Plan in 2013 made no mention of food poverty or the massive increase in the rise/use of foodbanks across Wales at a time when numbers using foodbanks had more than doubled. This seemed, to us, a glaring omission in the plan and could have been avoided.

10. We have no doubt that the last Deputy Minister for Poverty (who had been nothing but helpful and courteous to the author) and his officials have much on their plate but there can be a perception that the conversation between Government and the Third Sector is conducted very much on Government terms and we would welcome conversation as an organisation and as a sector around areas of policy development and implementation.

11. To be fair to the Minister and officials a recent meeting was held and a conversation has commenced that give us cause for hope. How the most recent reshuffle will affect these conversations remains to be seen.

### **The impacts of poverty, particularly destitution and extreme poverty, on different groups of people**

12. The Trussell Trust runs a network of 35 foodbanks in Wales (and over 400 across the UK), operating 80 local foodbank distribution centres and over 1200 across the UK. It is at these satellite distribution centres where most food is given out. Foodbanks are spread across a range of locations, including urban centres (Cardiff, Wrexham, Newport and Swansea) and rural areas (Powys, Anglesey and Cardigan), and can be found in areas of high deprivation such as Pontypool, New Tredegar and Neath as well as more affluent areas, including Monmouth, Abergavenny and Chepstow.

13. Rural poverty can be particularly difficult as increased living costs and access costs are compounded by insecure and low-wage employment. Low income households in rural locations may struggle to make ends meet where their urban counterparts might manage to get by.

A regional breakdown of Trussell Trust's latest figures can be found at [www.trusselltrust.org/stats](http://www.trusselltrust.org/stats).

14. How do Trussell Trust foodbanks work? Trussell Trust foodbanks provide three days' nutritionally-balanced emergency food and support to people in crisis. Over 90 percent of the food given out by foodbanks is donated by the public. Every foodbank recipient is referred by a frontline professional. Foodbanks also refer recipients to other agencies to help resolve the underlying cause of the crisis.

15. How do foodbank referrals work? Everyone who comes to a Trussell Trust foodbank is referred by a frontline organisation: people cannot receive food if they are not in possession of a food voucher. Over 28,000 professionals across the UK currently refer people to Trussell Trust foodbanks and over 50% of these are statutory agencies. Referrers include doctors, social workers, school liaison officers and Citizen Advice Bureau advisers, amongst others. These professionals assess the need and make sure that people they refer to foodbanks are in genuine crisis.

16. How many times can people be helped? Trussell Trust foodbanks are designed to address short term hunger and help people out of crisis. Trussell Trust foodbanks are structured to avoid long term dependency: no self-referral; no drop in service; time-limited support. Trussell Trust foodbank clients may redeem three foodbank vouchers in a row at which point the foodbank manager will contact the referral agent about putting together a support plan to help the client break out of poverty. Longer term support from the foodbank is available in exceptional circumstances as agreed between the foodbank manager and referral agent.

17. Do Trussell Trust foodbanks provide more than food? The Trussell Trust foodbank model aims to help stop short term hunger whilst also helping people to resolve the underlying cause of their crisis. Signposting people to local agencies and charities is a core part of what we do e.g. if a client is referred to the foodbank with debt problems, we will put them in touch with a local debt charity.

18. Our foodbanks make time to listen to people, and to understand their situation. Often foodbank clients tell us 'the emotional support was almost as good as the food'.

**Trussell Trust figures and reasons for foodbank use.**

19. How is Trussell Trust data collected and what does it measure? The Trussell Trust provides the only Wales-wide data on foodbank use. Trussell Trust foodbanks operate a voucher system. Put simply, every client is given a voucher by the referral agency. This includes data such as the number of adults and children in need of emergency food, as well as the main reason for the referral e.g. benefit delay or low income. Each foodbank inputs this data into an online data collection system. The Trussell Trust is therefore able to generate nationwide statistics.

20. Trussell Trust figures record the number of times three days' food has been given to people in crisis. This does not mean that each user is necessarily unique, but sample surveys of individual foodbank data indicates that 65% of foodbank clients have only one voucher in any six month period and less than 10% have four or more.

21. Why are people being referred to foodbanks? Static incomes, rising living costs, low pay, underemployment and problems with welfare are significant drivers of the increased demand experienced by foodbanks in the last year. Half of referrals to foodbanks in 2013-14 were a result of benefit delays or changes.

Primary referral causes to foodbanks

	Benefit Delay	Benefit Change	Low Income	Debt	Other
2011/12	29.59%	11.47%	19.46%	9.10%	30.38%
2012/13	29.69%	14.65%	18.45%	9.52%	27.69%
2013/14	30.93%	16.97%	20.29%	7.85%	23.96%

22. It is our experience that the welfare system has historically been slow to respond to sudden changes in people's circumstances or to process new welfare claims, resulting in a significant proportion of Trussell Trust foodbank referrals. It is concerning to see the proportion of people affected by these issues remaining significantly high and those affected by sudden changes to payments increasing significantly over the past few years. Many of these referrals are caused by inefficiencies in the system itself and are therefore preventable. A more thoughtful approach to welfare, and especially sanctions, would therefore prevent some of these referrals.

We will say more on the impact of Welfare Reform during the later strands of this inquiry.

**Increased living costs and static incomes**

23. *'[We have] seen an increase in those coming who have been sanctioned by the job centre. Also seen a switch in statistics, we used to see the majority for debt, now it is low income, people just are not coping.'* – Foodbank Manager

24. The evidence collated by Trussell Trust both in terms of anecdotal evidence from foodbank managers and our data has shown that many people have been struggling to cope with rising prices and static incomes in the last year. This trend has been evidenced by many other organisations and charities too – see joint paper by Oxfam, Church Action on Poverty and Trussell Trust 'Below the Breadline'.

<http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/below-the-breadline-the-relentless-rise-of-food-poverty-in-britain-317730>

25. Insecure work, and low-income zero hours contracts in particular, make people particularly vulnerable to a financial crisis. Problems with low paid and insecure work have increased in the last twelve months.

26. A survey that The Trussell Trust did with parenting website Netmums conducted in March 2014 revealed that *more working families are struggling to make ends meet*.

27. The survey of 2,178 working families showed that:

- One in five working parents had had to choose between paying an essential bill or putting food on the table in the last 12 months.
- 78% of parents in working families had cut spending over the last 12 months. 56% admitted to buying cheaper, lower quality food.
- 43% of those surveyed admitted that they are only 'just about coping' with balancing their family budgets and a quarter stated they have suffered stress as a result of not eating properly.
- Only 1 in 40 had turned to a foodbank for help, with more than 70% saying that they would only do so as a last resort. This reinforces evidence from the government's recent DEFRA report which states that turning to a foodbank is very difficult for many. It also reinforces the fact that Trussell Trust foodbank figures only reflect part of the problem of UK food poverty.

29. A recent survey by Bristol University, 'Poverty and Social Exclusion in the UK' found that the number of households living below the minimum standard of living has risen from 14% to 33% in the last 30 years, despite the economy doubling. We would refer the Committee to statistics from JRF/Bevan Foundation on standards of living in Wales.

30. It highlighted that in 93% of households where children suffer from food deprivation, at least 1 in 4 adults have skimped on their own food to allow others in their household to eat and that half a million children live in families who can't afford to feed them properly.

Full report: <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/news/2014/june/poverty-study.html>

31. There are issues with seasonal variations which will be touched upon now but expanded on in later evidence.

32. Winter can cause challenges for families struggling to make ends meet. As the cost of heating increases this stretches budgets even further. Some foodbanks have reported children sleeping fully clothed or families sleeping in one room so they only have to use one heater in the house.

33. Christmas can be a huge challenge for families who want to give their children presents. Some Foodbanks report parents going without food to give a small present to a child or eating beans on toast for Christmas dinner.

34. Summer holidays can cause different pressures. During term time families may be entitled to free school meals which may for many be their only hot meal of the day. When that is not available for 6 weeks many parents struggle to make up the shortfall. As a response many foodbanks have introduced holiday schemes to assist families who struggle during this period.

35. Responses from both care professionals and beneficiaries confirm that foodbank's timely interventions in situations of dire need prevent the escalation of short term crisis into crime, housing loss, family breakdown and mental health problems.

36. Whilst many clients are initially reluctant or embarrassed to go to a foodbank, with many only turning to them as a last resort (as evidenced by DEFRA's report on food poverty and by research by Netmums), foodbank clients regularly give very positive feedback about the way in which they have been listened to

and treated with dignity. Many foodbank clients leave feeling much better equipped to cope with their situation because of the personal interaction they have had with volunteers, and the signposting to other local services. Foodbanks deliberately create a warm, welcoming environment to help recipients to feel at ease. They make time for people, which is something state-run services like Jobcentres rarely have the resource to do. Foodbank volunteers are trained to provide a listening ear over a cup of tea and sometimes this makes the biggest difference.

37. Various AM's and MP's who have visited Foodbanks have commented on the warm and friendly environment provided for some of the most vulnerable members in society.

*xxxx told us: 'Getting food from the foodbank really helped to reduce stress but it wasn't just the food, it was the welcome that was brilliant. Just talking to someone who genuinely cared for ten minutes changed my perspective. It gave me the confidence I needed to keep on applying for jobs and now I've got one. Without the foodbank I'd still be homeless and on the dole. The foodbank is the best thing in the world.'*

38. In conclusion, the Trussell Trust believes that its foodbanks provide a vital emergency food assistance service that is valued by large numbers of frontline agencies across Wales. Trussell Trust foodbanks help to prevent crime, housing loss, family breakdown, neglect of children, mental and physical ill health.

39. Foodbanks are a local community based service and we want to see a foodbank in every community to ensure help is genuinely accessible when someone is in crisis. However, the Trussell Trust has become increasingly alarmed by the dramatic growth in the numbers of people in local communities who find themselves in crisis and the increasing frequency with which this occurs. Put simply too many people need foodbanks. The evidence suggests the prevalence of food poverty has risen significantly. The Trussell Trust believes far fewer people should need foodbanks.

40. Ultimately what the Trussell Trust sees in its foodbanks, and what we have attempted to describe in this submission, are the consequences of an increasingly unequal society where more than twice as many households today compared to thirty years ago, cannot afford minimum living standards. We applaud the Committee for asking the questions of how poverty and inequality continue to be so prevalent in a relatively wealthy country and for seeking to explore what should be done to address it.

41. We hope that the problem of food poverty will be given due prominence by politicians. The Trussell Trust remains committed to sharing its experiences with policy makers seeking to better understand hunger in Wales.

### **How legislation, policy and budgets targeted at tackling poverty and reducing inequality are coordinated and prioritised across Welsh Government**

42. In view of the limits placed by the Committee regarding the length of submission we refer to the comments prepared and submitted by the Taskforce.

# Agenda Item 6

19 November 2014 – Papers to note cover sheet

Paper No:	Issue	From	Action Point
<b>Public papers to note</b>			
8 Annexe 1 Annexe 2 (accessed via links) Annexe 3 (accessed via links)	Welsh Government draft budget 2015-16	Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism	In response to the Chair's letter from the meeting on 9 October.
9 Annexe 1 Annexe 2	Welsh Government draft budget 2015-16	Minister for Finance and Government Business and Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty	In response to the Chair's letter following the meeting on 9 October.
10 Annexe 1	In-year scrutiny	Minister for Public Services	In response to the Chair's letter following the meeting on 25 June.
11 Annexe 1 Annexe 2	Consideration of the annual report 2013- 14	Welsh Language Commissioner	In response to the action points from the meeting on 23 October, the Commissioner has provided their responses to the Planning (Wales) Bill.

Ken Skates AC / AM  
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Diwylliant, Chwaraeon a Thwristiaeth  
Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Christine Chapman AM  
Chair  
Communities, Equality and Local Government  
Committee  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1NA

7 November 2014

Dear Christine,

Thank you for your letter dated 9 October 2014 following my attendance to answer questions on my draft budget proposals for culture and sport for 2015-16. I respond to the issues where you have requested specific responses as follows. My responses also incorporate the actions which arose from the meeting and which were communicated to us separately.

## 2. The arts sector

I set out below a list of the key performance indicators for Arts & Business Cymru as requested. ACW manage this funding, and are responsible for evaluating their performance. They monitor progress during the year, and formally review the position on an annual basis.

The key performance indicators for the current year are:

- Develop the income generating and business skills of the arts; deliver a service to the arts which will strengthen management, develop essential skills and aid sustainability in a direct and tangible way;
- Increase arts memberships by 5% to 157 including both artists and major institutions within 2014-15, ensuring activity levels are carried out across Wales complying with the organisation's business plan targets;
- Continue to develop the Professional Development Programme, focusing on Skills Bank, Mentor Bank & Board Bank, to achieve at least 35 matches in 2014-15; and

- Establish and develop investment programmes similar to the Culture Steps, Arts & Kids initiative, engaging socially disadvantaged young people with the arts, making tangible difference to the lives of young people across Wales.

There was also an action point from the Committee meeting which asked us to provide a note on the expected outcomes provided to the Arts Council of Wales in the annual remit letter, and their progress against these outcomes. I attach this information at Annex A – showing their achievement against the remit letter for 2013-14.

### **3. Museums, archives and libraries**

I am pleased to inform you that I have accepted the recommendations outlined in your report on public libraries and all Committee members will have received a copy of the Expert Review Panel report. This Report was launched at a joint seminar with the WLGA on 22 October 2014 to discuss the future of our public libraries, and I would like to thank Mike Hedges AM for representing the Committee during the Panel Session.

My officials in CyMAL division will develop an action plan to progress the recommendations of both reports which will include the regular collection of information from local authorities on the delivery plans of individual local authorities.

I am also concerned about proposed decreases in the level of funding of local museums in Wales as non-statutory services. As a consequence, I have instigated a review of local museums services to monitor the current position and to provide advice on more sustainable delivery models. Dr Haydn Edwards, Vice President Amgueddfa Cymru-National Museums Wales, will lead the review which will report to me during the Spring 2015.

My officials in CyMAL have completed an initial survey of the funding position for local authority archives services and are continuing to monitor the situation of individual services. CyMAL is maintaining support for collaborative activities including discussions around the establishment of a North Wales service, audience development activities, on-line access to archival material and digital preservation strategies.

### **4. The historic and natural environment**

#### *Digital donations in free-to-visit unstaffed sites as a means of increasing revenue receipts*

My officials in Cadw have reviewed and identified the potential scope for digital donations and have given me proposals for a pilot.

#### *Visitors from disadvantaged groups*

Every September, the Open Doors programme provides entry to heritage sites not normally open to the public, or which normally charge an admission fee. Cadw's approach has been to seek to reach as wide a market as possible – young people, families and under represented audiences. Interim findings suggest that in 2014, around 9,000 people attended 1,045 events at over 300 venues.



Previously, Open Doors was managed by the Civic Trust for Wales. In 2014, Open Door was run in-house by Cadw for the first time, representing an estimated saving of £14,000. The cost of marketing, managing and administering the programme was taken from existing budget lines and staffed by Cadw staff and volunteers.

Cadw provides free admission to “self-led” learning visitors to all of its sites, free access to disabled people and their carer, and also to foster families. Cadw also offers concessionary rates to senior citizens, students, children and refugee and asylum seekers. All Cadw sites are free to enter on St David’s Day. Administering these measures is cost neutral – and while there might be an impact on income, they are aimed at people who wouldn’t attend otherwise.

#### Monitoring visitors to Cadw sites by socioeconomic groups

Cadw uses its visitor survey outputs to inform policy on access, particularly by those in the “C2DE” socio-economic group. This policy is used to target events and activities in deprived areas, such as Blaenavon and Segontium, Caernarfon.

There has also been change in the tone of Cadw marketing messages and dissemination through digital and social media in aiming to reach wider audiences. Since April this year, there are 18,000 people following Cadw’s social media channels, 30,000 following custodians’ social media channels, 26,000 registered to the e-newsletter database, and 40,000 views of Cadw films on YouTube. Cadw also currently has 13,500 members, the highest number since 2007, and since January 2014 significant increases have been seen in young persons (+59%) and child (+456%) membership categories - traditionally under-represented audiences at Cadw sites.

## **5. Media and publishing**

### Changes to the commissioning procedure

During the last five years the Welsh Books Council, through its Publishing Grants Panels, has placed greater emphasis on supporting a wide range of publications in order to extend the reach of books from Wales in both languages. Within the sector of books for adults the Welsh Books Council has been able to support a limited number of classic texts representing the best writing from Wales and the richness of our literary tradition, a varied list of literary fiction from contemporary authors and a series of popular titles including biographies of celebrities from the field of sports and the arts.

The same emphasis has been placed on books for children in order once again to extend the reach of books from Wales and to sustain sales.

The indications are that this strategy is proving successful, with sales through the Welsh Books Council for 2013-14 showing an increase of 5% on the previous year, and sales during the first five months of this year also showing a slight increase.

Despite the challenges facing the WBC as a result of the reduction in its budget, we therefore remain confident that the Council will continue to support the publishing industry in both languages.

## **6. Sports and physical activity**

My officials are continuing to develop an on-line toolkit and I will provide you with a progress update in due course including how its usage and effectiveness will be monitored.

Turning to your request for figures on the difference in participation levels in sport and spending in sport between genders, Sport Wales advise that this information is currently unavailable in terms of funding by gender. They are considering how this information may be extracted in the future.

Breakdowns of participation figures by sport and gender are attached – separate tables for children/young people, and adults.

Should you require any further information, please contact me.

Yours Ever,



**Ken Skates AC / AM**

Y Dirprwy Weinidog Diwylliant, Chwaraeon a Thwristiaeth  
Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism

### **Arts Council of Wales: Progress against expected outcomes set out in their Remit Letter for 2013-14**

#### *Deliverable/Outcome: Completion of new Arts Strategy*

The renewal of ACW's Arts Strategy – including extensive public consultation – has now been completed. Its new strategy, *Inspire: Creativity and the Arts*, is different both in tone and style. ACW has attempted to produce a document that will engage a wider readership as the Remit Letter identified the importance of reaching more broadly a fuller range of communities across Wales.

The strategy is currently being translated and will be published on its website soon. It will also be available in 'easy read' and digital formats to improve accessibility.

#### *Deliverable/Outcome: A report on the progress made by Revenue Funded Organisations in increasing their self-generated income, and in achieving greater efficiencies*

ACW makes a number of demands of its revenue funded organisations (RFOs). However, it believes that funding reductions – both in ACW's own budgets and those of its local authority partners – is now having an impact. In terms of the headline figures for attendance and participation, the figures are as follows – based on the most recent year for which ACW has accurate and complete data, 2012-13:

<b>RFO attendance and participation</b>		
	<b>2011/12</b>	<b>2012/13</b>
Attendance	4,233,230	4,219,400
Participation	1,023,070	1,033,894

There has been a slight decrease in levels of attendance, although participation has increased.

Comparing 2012-13 with the previous year, ACW has noted the following:

- in terms of attendance there has been a 10% decrease in the number of events since 2011/12 from 18,397 to 16,513. However, this is partly due to the decrease in film screenings which can be attributed to change in the way the Film Cymru Wales is now recording its data
- in line with the decrease in activity there has been an overall decrease in attendances to events but this is less than 1% (0.3%), from 4,233,230 to

4,219,400. The decline is due to falling attendance at exhibitions and film screenings (down 8% and 10% respectively). Attendance at performing arts events has increased.

- overall participation in the arts is showing a decrease in the number of sessions run, down 9.3%, but there was an increase in participation in these sessions of 1.1%
- participatory sessions run for children and young people is the only area in which there has been a decrease in attendance - of 4.6%, from 641,932 attendances to 612,093 attendances, while attendances to open access participatory sessions and targeted sessions have increased by 7.6% and 40.6% respectively.
- arts events presented through the medium of Welsh have increased overall (up 11.9% year on year). While there was a drop in the number of Welsh language film screenings there was an increase of 43 Welsh language performances by touring companies in 2012-13 (an increase of 11%). The audience for these performances did not show any increase – attendance fell from just over 44,500 in 2011-12 to 33,400 in 2012-13 (a fall of nearly 25%).
- arts venues presented 90 more Welsh language events in 2012-13 compared to 2011-12 attracting an audience in excess of 60,000 which was an increase of 31.5% year on year, but Welsh language participatory activity targeted at children & young people has decreased both in terms of the number of sessions and levels of participation
- during the 2012-13 year there were 4,851 people professionally employed within revenue funded organisations, a drop on the previous year of just under 230 people

ACW hasn't yet finalised the full year RFO Survey for 2013/14. However, figures are available for the first six months in that year. When comparing April to September 2013 with the same period in 2012, attendances have decreased by 16% compared to the same reporting period in the previous year. Participation increased by 12%.

Whilst ACW welcomes the increase in participatory activity, such activity is usually free (although it obviously has a cost to the organisation), the decrease in attendances will have an impact on overall income.

Over recent years ACW has emphasised the need for RFOs to diversify their income base and to become less reliant on Arts Council funding. The table below indicates that dependency has actually increased slightly over the past three years.

Financial Year	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Arts Council Revenue funding as a % of overall turnover	25%	26%	27%

ACW suspect this is a reflection on the difficult economic climate, reductions in local authority funding and the challenge of commercial sponsorship/fundraising.

*Deliverable/Outcome: Maximise attendances & increasing and broadening engagement and participation*

#### Equalities, Access and Community Engagement

ACW provides regular updates on the two National Assembly Committee inquiries which have looked at arts matters: the accessibility of arts and cultural activities; and, participation in the arts. ACW is also contributing to the current discussion on implementation of the Culture and Poverty report.

Engagement and participation are now firmly embedded within its work as Council priorities. This work is underpinned by strategies for Equalities and the Welsh Language with specific action plans in each of these areas. ACW has also developed plans around Family Arts and a number of initiatives will be rolled out during the current financial year.

*Deliverable/Outcome: A Compact and action plan with the Welsh Government's Department for Education and Skills, which addresses the recommendations arising from the 'review*

#### Arts in Education

ACW has been pleased by the Government's response to the recommendations contained in the Arts and Education Review. It looks forward to working closely with Government to implement the Review recommendations.

*Deliverable/Outcome: An update report on progress in implementing the Child Poverty strategy*

This work is currently in progress and an update is awaited.

*Deliverable/Outcome: Partnership and Collaboration with Local Government:*

During 2013-14 local authorities made significant reductions in their spending plans. This has had a number of consequences, including:

- cuts in funding to key organisations, a number of them jointly funded with the Arts Council

- the potential closure of local authority managed venues or services
- attempts to contract out services or to locate them within an external trust
- the curtailing of arts development grants
- the downgrading or abandonment of local authority posts with responsibility for the arts.

ACW continues to work closely with local authority colleagues and it is trying to encourage, wherever possible, joint approaches to future funding issues. An example of this would be its joint approach, with Flintshire County Council, to look at the future funding needs of Clwyd Theatr Cymru.

*Deliverable/Outcome: Projects to develop cultural relations with WG 'priority countries' and with the British Council*

Welsh culture on the world stage/Major Events

Through its international division, Wales Arts International, ACW maintain a busy programme of activity both with the British Council, and in the Welsh Government's priority countries.

Three major international projects have dominated ACW's attention during the year: preparation for WOMEX 2013, Wales' presence at the Venice Biennale (featuring Bedwyr Williams) and the Dylan Thomas 100 Festival (which includes an international dimension).

WOMEX 13 achieved a number of key outcomes:

- it brought 2,153 delegates and more than 300 artists from 98 countries to the Welsh capital
- it resulted in well over 30 hours of regional, national and international broadcast coverage from BBC, S4C and the European Broadcasting Union
- presented over 30 top Welsh musicians to delegates from around the world
- contributed £2.9m to the local economy
- delivered media coverage of £800,000 in equivalent commercial value

And Bedwyr Williams at the Venice Biennale:

- attracted nearly 23,000 international visitors
- achieved over 100 mentions in the UK and international media (the average value equivalent of the coverage is estimated to be in excess of £530,000)
- a typical Google search on '*Wales Venice Biennale 2013*' now yields over 100,000 returns
- featured artist, Bedwyr Williams, secured significant opportunities to create new work for Glasgow International opening April 2014, and with galleries in Ireland, Germany and France as a result of his presence in Venice

*Deliverable/Outcome: Successful preparation and launch of projects to promote Dylan Thomas 100*

This project is currently ongoing.

Jane Hutt AC / AM  
Y Gweinidog Cyllid a Busnes y Llywodraeth  
Minister for Finance and Government Business

Lesley Griffiths AC / AM  
Y Gweinidog Cymunedau a Threchu Tlodi  
Minister for Communities & Tackling Poverty



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref SF/JH/3548/14

Christine Chapman AM  
Chair, Communities, Equality and Local Government  
Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

10 November 2014

Dear Christine,

Thank you for your letter of 24 October in which you set out a number of matters following the evidence session we attended.

## 1. Budget Reductions

Throughout the Budget scrutiny we have been open about the challenges we face as a result of the long period of sustained reductions and delivering our priorities against this backdrop. As resources go down and demands for services go up, the reality is that we cannot continue to fund all services at the level we might like. We recognise the importance of investing in programmes today to avoid problems tomorrow. That is why our focus on preventative measures and early intervention has shaped our entire approach to the Budget. Health spending is vital in this context. As well as preventative interventions which can have immediate beneficial effects, such as public health measures, health spend in other areas, such as services funded by the core allocation to LHBs to support major health conditions, is an important element of our preventative approach.

But this approach is also about investing for the long term and actions to help support our ambitions for achieving a better quality of life for our own and future generations. Our investment in the health service fully supports this ambition and is central to our commitment to improving longer term health and wellbeing outcomes for the people of Wales.

In developing our plans, all Ministers have focused on managing reductions in a way that minimises the impact of reductions in the short term and continues to support us to deliver our outcomes for the longer term. Clearly this is not just about the level of funding but about how we can work differently, and more collaboratively, to deliver



our objectives. This was a key message that emerged from the Minister for Finance and Government Business' Budget Tour and we are committed to supporting all Ministers to work with their delivery partners to continue to drive a shift towards preventative approaches.

This approach is particularly important in the context of the Supporting People Programme. As the Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty highlighted when she gave evidence to the Committee, in considering the impact of reductions to this budget, the Welsh Government has worked very closely with stakeholders, including Local Authorities and the programme's National Advisory Board. This included sharing a range of figures to support early planning and consideration of the best approach.

In terms of any further work to consider the impact of budget reductions, it is important to remember that the responsibility for deploying the grant effectively rests with Local Authorities and other members of the Regional Collaborative Committees, as they are best placed to identify local needs and priorities. Whilst we recognise that budget pressures mean they too will face tough decisions, effective collaboration between all organisations involved and a strategic approach to deploying the budget and managing budget reductions, will help to minimise the impact on the availability of services.

In this regard, the Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty was clear during our evidence session that she would continue to engage with all stakeholders to ensure the best possible use is made of the funding and to mitigate the impact of budget reductions where these have had to be made. As indicated at Committee, we will consider the impact of the Supporting People Programme further as more information becomes available on how reductions are being managed, including any efficiency savings generated to help mitigate the impact of reductions. We would be happy to share this information with the Committee when it is available.

We also note your concerns regarding the impact of reductions to post 16 education and Careers Wales, particularly on those who are not in education, employment or training, black and minority ethnic groups and disabled people. We recognise the importance of ensuring that our decisions, as far as is possible, do not disadvantage these groups.

In line with this, we will continue to work closely with our stakeholders and delivery partners to see where and how we can mitigate the impact of these cuts, including the impact of decisions on those who are not in employment, education or training, black and minority ethnic groups and disabled people. This may, in some cases, include further work to assess impact of decisions. For example, employers and providers of our apprenticeship programme are required to have equality and diversity policies and to demonstrate through self assessment and supporting evidence that they are implementing the policies, monitoring participation and support for protected groups. These assessments will be vital in terms of managing reduced budgets in a way that protects disadvantaged groups as far as possible.

We will also be working with our partners to manage reductions in a way that maintains high quality services. For example, in terms of Careers Wales we are focusing on making the best use of available resources by considering new delivery mechanisms, such as making greater use of web-chat, phone and web-based services. This approach also fits in with how many young people like to access information. Careers Wales services play an important role in supporting the Welsh Government to achieve its broader policy objectives with regard to reducing those not

in education, employment or training and, while no final decisions have been taken yet on the remit for Careers Wales in 2015-16, we anticipate that, as far as is possible, capacity will be maintained for targeted services which are focused on those at greatest risk of disengagement.

## **2.The Budget Advisory Group on Equality (BAGE) and the Strategic Integrated Impact Assessment (SIIA)**

Turning to the Budget Advisory Group for Equality (BAGE), we welcomed the useful discussion we had on BAGE at the evidence session and we are happy to provide further clarity and information in response to the issues set out in your letter.

As we discussed during Committee, the Minister for Finance announced the establishment of the BAGE during the scrutiny of the Draft Budget 2013-14, in order to support the Welsh Government in developing and improving its approach to the impact assessment of the Budget. The BAGE also makes an important contribution to improving the evidence on inequalities in Wales, which supports the Welsh Government in considering the impact of its spending decisions. We attach at Annex 1 the Terms of Reference for the BAGE.

As you will see from this, its remit is to support the Welsh Government as it works to improve the equality considerations undertaken throughout the budget setting process, in line with protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010. To that end, the BAGE has helped to inform the process we undertake to consider equality impacts, in order to support Ministers to make decisions in an informed way. In that sense, the Strategic Integrated Impact Assessment provides a clear and focused account of the impacts of the Government's key decisions. However, this process does not stop with the publication of our spending plans and, in the context of impact assessments, discussions at the BAGE continue to influence and inform our approach to policy development and decision making throughout the year. The BAGE has, of course, made an important contribution to the presentation of information and the format of the Strategic Integrated Impact Assessment. However, in line with our commitment to evidence based and informed decision-making, it is the focus on the approach we take to consider equality throughout the development of our budget proposals that is of paramount importance.

In addition to considering the Welsh Government's approach to the impact assessment and the supporting evidence, over the last two years the BAGE has also considered a diverse range of topics, including discussions on the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Bill, the Tackling Poverty Action Plan, the implications of Welfare Reform and the Wales Investment Infrastructure Plan. The outcome of these discussions has been cascaded back to Departments at official level to inform Ministerial considerations as part of the budget process.

As requested, we have also providing at Annex 2 a copy of the minutes for all of the BAGE meetings, including those of the most recent meeting, where the Draft Budget 2015-16 and SIIA was discussed

With regard to your suggestions for the future role of BAGE, we are due to discuss its Terms of Reference and its role going forward at its next meeting in January. This will provide an opportunity to consider these points further.

This response has been copied to the Chair of the Finance Committee.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line above the first few letters.

**Jane Hutt AC / AM**

Y Gweinidog Cyllid a Busnes y Llywodraeth  
Minister for Finance and Government Business

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lesley Griffiths". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line above the first few letters.

**Lesley Griffiths AC / AM**

Y Gweinidog Cymunedau a Threchu Tlodi  
Minister for Communities & Tackling Poverty

## **THE BUDGET ADVISORY GROUP FOR EQUALITY** **TERMS OF REFERENCE AND MEMBERSHIP<sup>1</sup>**

### **1. BACKGROUND**

1.1 The primary purpose of this group is to assist the Welsh Government with its commitment to embed equality into the budgetary process. The Budget Advisory Group for Equality will be accountable to the Minister for Finance and Leader of the House.

1.2 The name of the group will be the Welsh Government Budget Advisory Group for Equality (BAGE).

1.4 The Minister for Finance and Leader of the House is committed to improving the equality evidence base and analysis to improve the equality impact assessment and equality considerations in future budgets. The BAGE will report to the Finance Minister and Leader of the House.

1.5 The BAGE will not only consider evidence and impact on protected characteristics as detailed in the Equality Act 2010; it will also consider the evidence and impact of public spending on different socio-economic groups. The Welsh Government is committed to taking this broader approach to better understand the nature of inequality and to ensure alignment with the Welsh Government's Tackling Poverty Action Plan.

### **2. THE REMIT FOR THE BUDGET ADVISORY GROUP FOR EQUALITY**

2.1 The remit of the Budget Advisory Group for Equality is:

- to provide advice and support to improve equality considerations for successive budgets;
- to help to map and improve the equalities and socio-economic evidence base in order to inform future budgetary equality and socio-economic considerations (both in partnership and in separation);
- to assist in the analysis of equality evidence and strengthen the understanding of inequalities in Wales in order to improve Welsh Government's future Equality Impact Assessment of its Budget;

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<sup>1</sup> The Terms of Reference were agreed by the BAGE on 15 July. They have not yet been amended to reflect changes in the membership or format of the group. For example, the BAGE is now jointly chaired by the Minister for Finance and Government Business and Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty. The BAGE has also agreed to meet on a quarterly basis. The BAGE is due to discuss the Terms of Reference at its next meeting in January.

- to contribute to increasing the commitment and awareness of mainstreaming equality and poverty considerations in future budgets across the Welsh Government and wider Welsh public sector; and,
- to assist in the continued review required in order to ensure the Equality Impact Assessment of the Budget remains a live, representational document, accurately reflecting the impacts of the Welsh Government spending decisions.

### **3. MEMBERSHIP**

3.1 Membership of the BAGE will include: -

- Minister for Finance and Leader of the House
- Amelia John, Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion division, Welsh Government
- Jonathan Price, Chief Economist, Welsh Government
- Jo Salway, Head of Strategic Budgeting, WG
- Bethan Bateman, Head of Child Poverty Unit, WG
- Caroline Joll, Economist, Cardiff University
- Representative from WEN Wales
- Helen Wilkinson, WCVA
- Andrew White (Stonewall), WCVA Coalition
- Martyn Jones (AGE Cymru), WCVA Coalition
- Paula Walters, NHS Centre for Equality and Human Rights
- Naomi Alleyne, Director for Equality & Social Justice, WLGA
- Julie Cook, Wales TUC
- Aliya Mohammed (Race Equality First), Ministerial Advisory Forum for Race
- Rhian Davies (Disability Wales), Ministerial Advisory Forum for Disability

**As required:**

- Kate Bennett, EHRC National Director for Wales

**Secretariat:**

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Division

### **4. WORKING ARRANGEMENTS**

4.1 The group will be accountable and report to the Minister for Finance and Leader of the House. The Minister of Finance and Leader of the House will attend at least one meeting of the group during the year.

4.2 The dialogue between the Budget Advisory Group for Equality, Welsh Government's Strategic Budgeting team and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

will assist in the development of the group and contribute to the continuous improvement agenda.

4.3 The group members will be reviewed annually.

4.4 There will be at least two meetings of the group each year.

DC/JH/00080/13

**Budget Advisory Group for Equality**  
**Monday 11 March 2013**  
**Conference Room 21, Ty Hywel, Cardiff Bay**  
**14.30 – 16.30**

**Attendees**

Jane Hutt AM – Chair	Minister for Finance & Leader of the House
Jeff Andrews	Specialist Policy Adviser
Amelia John	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Division, Welsh Government
Jonathan Price	Knowledge & Analytical Services, Welsh Government
Jo Salway	Strategic Budgeting, Welsh Government
Bethan Bateman	Child Poverty Unit
Naomi Alleyne	Welsh Local Government Association
Wayne Vincent	Equality and Human Rights Commission
Martyn Jones	Age Concern
Paula Walters	NHS Centre for Equality and Human Rights
Aliya Mohammed	Race Equality First
Rhian Davies	Disability Wales
Caroline Joll	Cardiff University Business School
<b>Secretariat</b>	
Gemma Smith	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Division, Welsh Government

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

- 1.1 The Minister for Finance and Leader of the House welcomed the group and thanked them for their agreement to join the forum.
- 1.2 There was a round-table introduction.
- 1.3 Apologies had been received from:

Adele Baumgardt, WENWales  
Jessica McQuade, WCVA  
Andrew White, Stonewall Cymru  
Julie Cook, TUC

**2. BAGE Terms of Reference & Remit**

- 2.1 The Minister for Finance and Leader of the House said that it was intended that this forum would provide support to the Welsh Government in their role of equality impact assessing the budget. The Minister then requested that Amelia John take the group through the Terms of Reference of the BAGE.
- 2.2 Amelia John took the group through the Terms of Reference and suggested remit for the group that had previously been circulated. Comments were invited from the group.

- 2.3 The group accepted the suggested remit. The question was raised however, as to whether there was a role for the group in the assessment or monitoring of the Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) of the budget going forward?
- 2.4 The group also queried the link between the protected characteristics and socio-economic groups and that whilst these will inherently sit together, there is a need for the impacts to be considered separately. It was agreed that this separation should be visible throughout the assessment process.
- 2.5 The Minister agreed that the Terms of Reference would be amended to allow for the suggested amendments.

**Action: EDID to amend and re-circulate the Terms of Reference to provide for the monitoring function of the group and to ensure the distinction between poverty and equality impacts is strengthened.**

### **3. Budget Basics**

- 3.1 The Minister outlined that the work of the group will be used to inform both herself as Minister for Finance and Leader of the House and, in turn, Cabinet. As such the group needed to be aware of the budget setting process that the Welsh Government is subject to, especially as in the current climate, with reduced budgets which is expected to continue and which makes the work of this group even more vital. At this point the Minister introduced Jo Salway, the Head of Strategic Budgeting, to present to the group on the budget setting process
- 3.2 Jo Salway presented to the group an Introduction to the Budget, giving a detailed overview of the budget process which was broken down into three separate sections:
- **UK Public Expenditure Framework**
  - **How the Welsh Government gets its money**
  - **Welsh Government Budget Process**

The presentation slides will be circulated to the group. A key message of the presentation was that the Budget publication reflected the strategic decisions that were made to allocate at Main Expenditure Group (MEG) level. Detailed decisions were then taken throughout the year by individual Ministers.

- 3.3 The group asked where the EIA would sit within the budget setting cycle. Jo Salway said that whilst work was undertaken to factor EIA considerations in at all stages, in reality much of the work was often done towards the end of the process. Work is continuing to strengthen the process and Jo outlined a commitment to improving the EIA and stated that a key consideration for that was finding ways to help the EIA to inform all stages of work. She said that the Welsh Government was keen for the group's involvement to assist in improving the process and an open dialogue with the group was needed to achieve this, and to allow for earlier engagement with relevant groups, to ensure for a more robust assessment.



- 3.4 The Minister explained that the Welsh Government was the first UK Government to undertake and publish an EIA of their entire Budget for 2011-12, and that the Welsh Government has improved assessment year-on-year since. The Minister requested that the first Budget EIA undertaken and the 2013-14 assessment to be issued to the group for their information. The Minister outlined that in assessing the equality impacts of the Budget the Welsh Government aims to be transparent in the decisions it takes surrounding its spending plans, and summarised that it is clearly visible in the 2013-14 EIA how decisions were made to protect people with certain protected characteristics. The Minister said that these decisions are then subject to scrutiny through the Communities, Equality and Local Government (CELG) and Finance Committees.
- 3.5 The Minister also outlined that there are political pressures that will also factor into the spending decisions made by the Welsh Government. The budget must remain in keeping with the political manifesto and the Programme for Government Commitments. Further, as a minority Government, it is often the case that agreement must be sought with other political parties when agreeing the Government Budget and that these factors must also be taken into account when considering the Welsh Government Budget.

**Action: EDID to circulate the 2011-12 Draft Budget EIA and the 2013-14 Draft Budget EIA to the group for their information.**

#### **4. Learning from the Appreciative Inquiry & Looking Forward to the Budget**

- 4.1 The Minister informed the group as part of how we look to proceed with the task of improving the Budget EIA process, we need to consider the Appreciative Inquiry undertaken at the request of the EHRC and to ensure we are all aware of the recommendations. At this point, the Minister asked Amelia John to chair the remainder of the meeting as she had to leave for another engagement. The Minister thanked every-one for their commitment to the group.

**Note: the Minister left the meeting at this point**

- 4.2 Amelia John explained to the group that the Appreciative Inquiry was undertaken by GVA who were commissioned by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) and fully supported by the Welsh Government, who also partly funded the Review. The Inquiry highlights the improvements that the Welsh Government has already made to their EIA of the Budget, and also produced 10 recommendations for the Welsh Government. Amelia John outlined these recommendations to the group and said that these need to be considered fully as Welsh Government proceeds with the EIA of the Budget.
- 4.3 Jo Salway then took the group through the discussion paper that had previously been circulated. She highlighted how the previous EIA of the budget had focused on additional allocations and how the previous budgets themselves had been centred around jobs and the economy as key themes, which had influenced the budget allocation. Without knowing the focus of the next budget, growth and jobs continued to be a Government priority.

- 4.4 The group agreed in principal that it would not be possible to accurately undertake an EIA of the entire £15bn Welsh Government Budget. Jo Salway indicated to the group that we therefore need to consider at what level we actually undertake the EIA, so that it can inform spending decisions taken. The group agreed to this and that there was a need for the EIA to actually influence the decision, as earlier approaches appeared to give the impression that the EIA had been undertaken in isolation from the actual budget making process. The group queried as to whether we should consider looking at a multi-layer approach of consideration and assessment, as there are certain larger elements of the budget over which there is no opportunity for discretion, which may not necessarily be worth assessing for equality impact. An ongoing EIA process at a below strategic level, which would not be so restricted by the budget setting time frame, but could still feed into penultimate spending plans. It was suggested that this would allow for a stronger narrative to accompany the budget, but that which is more focused at the strategic level.
- 4.5 The group accepted that the ability to improve the EIA of the budget would be a long term objective, rather than something which will be able to deliver significant improvements immediately.

## **5. Securing a Relevant & Accurate Evidence Base**

- 5.1 The discussion from agenda item 4 naturally led into a discussion around the evidence base.
- 5.2 The group had concerns about the use and visibility of the evidence that influences the EIA and subsequent spending decisions of the Welsh Government. It was felt that the evidence that is already available is under-used and is not always collated to allow conclusions to be drawn. It is intended that one of the focuses of this group could be to bring attention to other information that is available but that the Welsh Government is unaware of.
- 5.3 Jonathan Price, the Chief Economist at the Welsh Government, also outlined that in order to provide a much more detailed background to our decision taking, there is a need for very specific evidence centred around each of the protected characteristics, which is currently not available. It would be too costly to generate the large scale research projects required to remedy this, but there are steps that can be taken, such as evidence sharing across the Welsh Government and between public sector organisations, and gathering evidence through policy delivery. As such it was agreed that the development of the evidence base is a long term objective to which the group can contribute significantly.
- 5.4 It was suggested that there are areas where potential comparisons may be made based on the 'ceteris paribus' principle ('all things being equal'), for example in considering how local authorities spend their allocation of the Revenue Support Grant (RSG) and monitoring the impact of that. It was expressed that there are however severe capacity constraints facing the Welsh Government and across public authorities in Wales which would make this difficult alongside the significant costs that would be required to increase sample sizes to allow for the protected characteristics to be focused on, and

the limited confidence that might result from this. However, it was accepted that local authorities and other public services must have evidence that could be utilised by the Welsh Government when considering the impacts of our decision-making, and as such there is a critical need for the Welsh Government to liaise at a local level at an early opportunity.

- 5.5 Agreement was given that separate evidence needs to be considered for the protected characteristics and poverty and that whilst it is accepted that there are often inherent links between the two, we need to be aware of why an impact takes the form it has and that for the two issues there may be conflicting forms of intervention required to remedy the impacts.
- 5.6 The group expressed the view that this long-term objective to build in evidence would also be required to provide effective monitoring of the Budget EIA and in order for it to withstand challenge. Evidence and data are required in order to maintain the live format of the EIA.

**Action: All attendees to consider potential evidence sources they feel may feed into the evidence base and to circulate to the other group members.**

#### **6. Date of the Next BAGE Meeting**

- 6.1 Whilst it was agreed that the group would meet twice annually, and that the next meeting should take place in September, the group raised concerns that six months seemed too distant and that there was the risk of losing momentum of the issues raised in terms of the timing of the next budget and the EIA of it. It was agreed that a date would be considered for the end of July.
- 6.2 Amelia John thanked everyone for attending the first meeting of the BAGE and closed the meeting.

**Action: The Welsh Government to organise a date for the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the BAGE in July 2013.**

#### **Summary of actions**

- 1. EDID officials to amend and re-circulate the Terms of Reference to provide for the monitoring function of the group and to ensure the distinction between poverty and equality impacts is strengthened.**
- 2. EDID officials to circulate the 2011-12 Draft Budget EIA and the 2013-14 Draft Budget EIA to the group for their information.**
- 3. All attendees to consider potential evidence sources they feel may feed into the evidence base and to circulate to the other group members.**
- 4. The Welsh Government to organise a date for the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the BAGE in July 2013.**

**DC/JH/00080/13**

March 2013

**Budget Advisory Group for Equality**  
**Monday 15 July 2013**  
**Conference Room 23, Ty Hywel, Cardiff Bay**  
**14.00 – 16.30**

**Attendees**

Jane Hutt AM – Chair	Minister for Finance
Jeff Cuthbert AM	Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty
Jo Salway	Strategic Budgeting, Welsh Government
Katie Marsden	Strategic Budgeting, Welsh Government
Claire McDonald	Head of Equality, Welsh Government
Jonathan Price	Knowledge & Analytical Services, Welsh Government
Rhian Davies	Disability Wales
Caroline Joll	Cardiff University Business School
Bethan Bateman	Child Poverty Unit, Welsh Government
Richard Self	Welsh Local Government Association
Kate Bennett	Equality and Human Rights Commission
Jessica McQuade	Welsh Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA)
Paula Walters	NHS Centre for Equality and Human Rights
Jeff Andrews	Specialist Policy Adviser
Chris Roberts	Specialist Policy Adviser
<b>Secretariat</b>	
Gemma Smith	Fairer Futures Division, Welsh Government

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

1.1 The Minister for Finance welcomed the group and thanked them for their attendance at the second meeting of the Budget Advisory Group for Equality (BAGE).

1.2 Apologies had been received from:

Adele Baumgardt, WENWales  
 Aliya Mohammed, Race Equality First  
 Andrew White, Stonewall Cymru  
 Martyn Jones, Age Concern  
 Amelia John, Welsh Government

1.3 The Minister for Finance informed the group that since the first meeting of the BAGE, the outcome of the UK Government's Spending Round was now known. She outlined how this confirmed that the Welsh Government would face some exceptionally difficult decisions in delivering their priorities in the coming months and years ahead. The Minister for Finance explained that this economic environment meant that the BAGE had a greater role to provide evidence and dialogue to assist the Welsh Government in taking advantage of all available opportunities and to ensure effective equality considerations are built into this decisions making.

## **2. Ministerial Portfolio Changes**

- 2.1 The Minister for Finance informed the group that there have been changes to Ministerial portfolios since the first meeting in March. Whilst she had retained responsibility for the Welsh Government Budget, responsibility for Equality sat within the Communities and Tackling Poverty portfolio, which was the responsibility of Jeff Cuthbert. She took this opportunity to welcome and invite the Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty to introduce himself to the group.
- 2.2 The Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty introduced himself to the group, outlining that he was on a learning curve in terms of the Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) of the budget. The Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty confirmed that equality was at the heart of all of the Welsh Governments actions. He indicated that his previous Ministerial role as Deputy Minister for Skills, was closely aligned to his new responsibility, as it was vital that equality of opportunity surrounding skills was available to all. He confirmed the importance of the group and his role within the group.
- 2.3 The Minister for Finance reaffirmed her commitment to the Equality duties in Wales and to the process of Equality Impact Assessment.

## **3. Matters Arising – Action Points**

- 3.1 The Minister for Finance asked Claire McDonald to update the group on the progress made against the action points from the previous meeting of the BAGE.
- 3.2 Claire said that the terms of reference of the BAGE had been amended to reflect the monitoring function of the group and to ensure the distinction between the poverty and equality impacts had been strengthened. The amended terms of reference had been approved by the Minister and had been circulated to the BAGE Members.
- 3.3 Claire advised that both the 2011-12 and 2013-14 EIAs of the Draft Budget had been circulated to the group for information.
- 3.4 Claire advised that the group had been issued with a formal call for evidence with regards to the EIA of the Budget 2014-15, asking members to bring forward evidence and data sources that may be useful to assess equality impacts of the Budget and for difficulties in sourcing evidence to also be shared. What had been provided had been circulated to the group and would be discussed later in the meeting under agenda item 5.

## **4. Spending Round 2013 – Implications for Wales**

- 4.1 Jo Salway presented to the group, providing an update on the outcome of the Spending Round 2013, and the implications this is likely to have for Wales. The severity of the financial future highlighted by the Minister previously was further confirmed, as Jo Salway reported to the group that Wales will receive a cash-flat budget, and that in real terms, when considered against the inflationary pressures and costs we face, this is represented as a real term

decrease of 2% in our revenue funding. These difficulties are further enhanced as we have had a continual range of small real term reductions to our Budget over the last few years, which independently we have been able to manage, but when considered in the full term, these indicate a significant scenario that needs to be addressed.

- 4.2 Jo outlined to the group the limitations that the Welsh Government has in setting the Budget process (and subsequently in the decisions that we can impact assess). Firstly, she outlined to the group that 2/3 of the Budget is protected, which means that if these protections continue, any reductions need to be found from within the remaining one-third of the budget. As such, any impacts to these areas are likely to be significant. She also explained how the Budget we receive via the Barnett Formula, reflects the UK Government's spending priorities.
- 4.3 Jo indicated that 12% of the capital budget available to Wales has been earmarked for financial transactions meaning that there are restrictions on its use, which will further constrain the Welsh Government's ability to use the resources available to support its priorities.
- 4.4 Jo confirmed that indications suggest that the current trend of reduced budgets and austerity measures are set to continue. As such, she expressed the need for the Welsh Government to move away from what we have continually be doing year on year, in trying to absorb each small reduction. The cumulative impact of these cuts cannot feasibly be managed in this manner and preventative action would not be effective. Therefore, in order to effectively manage the reductions we face, we need to allow this forum to provide meaningful discussion and suggestions to come forward, which can be used to feed into the Welsh Government's decisions surrounding the Budget. At this point Jo invited comments and suggestions from the group.
- 4.5 The group acknowledged the severity of the situation faced, and indicated that this would prove it difficult to protect everyone. As such, it was felt this indicated a need to focus resources where possible on who we can protect, and those areas of expenditure that provide potential long-term savings. This required long-term investment but early intervention should be focused on children and young people, for example through education, in order to prevent intergenerational cycles and start long term changes.
- 4.6 The Minister for Finance accepted these comments and said that the Budget will have a very strong preventative spend and tackling poverty theme, and that these themes have also driven the budget plans that we currently have. The Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty echoed this commitment and outlined how it was supported by both the Tackling Poverty Action Plan and our plan for this budget to be illustrative of the consideration given to sustainable development.

## **5. Draft Budget 2014-15 Preparations – Priorities and Evidence**

- 5.1 Jonathan Price was invited to discuss the commission for evidence. He outlined that we had received sources of information and evidence from the EHRC and the NHC CEHR. He also stressed that in evaluating the evidence available it was apparent that there are significant difficulties in collecting and using evidence in this area. Firstly, he outlined that in many scenarios it is difficult to establish impacts on the protected groups and that there is difficulty in disentangling those protected group impacts from the socio-economic impacts. .
- 5.2 Further he outlined that whilst we wanted to consider the long-term impacts and effects of our spending plans, it was very challenging to do so. The evidence we have and currently hold, will not provide decisive conclusions on such long-term considerations and we have to use a large element of judgement when we do so. Jonathan Price also advised that a further difficulty we faced was that there was an inevitable lack of evidence to illustrate the impacts of our decisions when taken at the high strategic level of the setting the budget, since the impacts will be determined by the details of how those changes are actually implemented. Accordingly, the evidence we do have access to, is more limited to considering impacts at our actual policy making level.
- 5.3 Jonathan outlined that further to the evidence already circulated to the group, he had previously identified two alternative sources which he felt would prove useful in the analysis of the impacts of our budget spend, even though they were related to the UK level : Mainstreaming Public Services and the Impact on Neighbourhood Deprivation (a report undertaken by Bromley et al, outlining who might potentially benefit from public spending); and, the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) report on the distributional impact of public spending in UK. This evidence was held at a UK level only but by focusing on disadvantage in general, it does offer the potential for use in considering spending impacts. Jonathan acknowledged that whilst these did not eradicate issues with information that he had highlighted previously, they did give an indication of potential impacts we might face, and should not be overlooked. At this point Jonathan invited the group to consider whether they agreed with his interpretation, during which the following points were raised.

**Action: Fairer Future officials to circulate the additional evidence sources discussed within the meeting, to all group members.**

- 5.4 The group accepted the difficulties outlined in both sourcing and the use of evidence to inform our decisions, in particular at the budget setting level. As such, the group felt there was potential that the EIA should be considered as a 'stop and think' check in the budget setting process, providing an opportunity for effective engagement to be undertaken in order to feed into and support the evidence base. It was highlighted that there are potential risks in that limited or no engagement would result in decisions being made that are based on the lifestyles or experiences of the decision maker, rather than the end-user. It was advised that there was a need to link our spend to 'need' within Welsh society.



- 5.5 It was argued that the EIA should be viewed as the opportunity of giving people a voice, rather than as an iterative process. The success of this was felt to be dependent on the stage at which it is brought into the process. If considered early enough, it was felt that this may provide for further options to be considered, such as co-delivery through both third sector groups and the public sector.
- 5.6 It was argued that this should be supported through effective monitoring and review. The requirement to monitor impacts, will ensure evidence collection is established at the start of the process, addressing certain evidence gaps at the first instance. Claire McDonald informed the group that policy officials across the Welsh Government had improved his area but that this was a requirement built into current EIAs process.
- 5.7 The Minister for Finance took the opportunity to reaffirm the commitment of the Welsh Government to building equality into the Budget Process and informed the group that she saw it as a means of setting and establishing the 'Priorities for Wales' and as such the Budget for 2014-15 would carry that name. The budget would focus on key issues such as health and the continual funding of domestic abuse policies, and would support to our legislative programme which was essential to protecting and delivering the best for the people of Wales.
- 5.8 It was requested that given the difficulties faced in using specific detailed evidence and the reliance we have on a certain level of judgement, the EIA should reflect this in its narrative, making it a process of influence. The EIA should be transparent not only about the decisions to be taken but also about how we have conducted it and what judgements have been undertaken. In doing so, the Welsh Government would be able to manage the expectations of the EIA held by external stakeholders. It was suggested that further work be undertaken to supplement the EIA and to rectify the difficulties faced when considering relevant evidence with the use of effective case studies at the detailed decision-taking level.
- 5.9 Jo Salway took the opportunity to confirm the timetable of the Welsh Government budget process to the group. The Draft Budget would be published on the 8<sup>th</sup> October. It would be subject to a debate on 19<sup>th</sup> November, and subject to Final Debate on 10<sup>th</sup> December. This process provides the Government with the opportunity to reflect on the proposed spending decisions. The Finance Committee would scrutinise the budget, including the equality impacts of the budget. A call for evidence had been issued, but the group was informed in previous years, there has been very little direct response to this. It was outlined that it is very difficult to involve more scrutiny before the draft budget stage due to the short time-frame operated within. As such the BAGE was seen as vital to the scrutiny process.
- 5.10 The Minister for Finance said that in light of the views provide at the meeting, the engagement process will need to start immediately. She outlined that it should be an item for discussion at the various forums available, including the Disability Advice Forum and the Race Wales Forum, which should be used as a platform to contribute on the budget discussions. The Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty, also took the opportunity to outline that the EIA of the Budget was a key objective of the Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) and

as such was cross cutting in its nature. The Framework for Action on Independent Living, for example, had provided an opportunity for early engagement and discussion, much of which had provided views towards budget priorities and impacts.

**Action: Fairer Future officials to organise a future meeting of the BAGE to coincide with the scrutiny stage of the EIA of the Draft Budget.**

## **6. Equality Impact Assessment – Approach for Draft Budget 2014-15**

- 6.1 The Minister for Finance invited Claire McDonald to update the group on the Welsh Government's proposed approach to the EIA of the 2014-15 Draft Budget. Claire informed the group that the Welsh Government has learnt a lot from previous EIA of its Budget and also through the open interaction and discussions that the Welsh Government has invited on them. The recommendations of the Appreciative Inquiry and of the Finance Committee would be addressed in the approach this year with the Welsh Government's formal response to the EHRC's Appreciative Inquiry, contained within the Assessment report.
- 6.2 Claire advised how the EIA this year was intended to better enhance our impact assessment and decision making, and that the approach this year will also allow for consideration to be given to the sustainable development impacts, impacts on the Rights of the Child, and a continued consideration of the socio-economic impacts. Claire outlined how this would then be supported through an annex in which the cumulative impacts on each protected group would be narrated, allowing ease of reference for the reader.

## **7. Date of Next Meeting**

- 7.1 The Minister for Finance further outlined the need for the group to meet again during the scrutiny stage, and that the next meeting of the BAGE should be scheduled for early November.
- 7.2 The Minister for Finance thanked the group for attending and for their continued contributions to this group.

### **Summary of actions**

- 1. Fairer Future officials to circulate the additional evidence sources discussed within the meeting, to all group members.**
- 2. Fairer Future officials to organise a future meeting of the BAGE to coincide with the scrutiny stage of the EIA of the Draft Budget.**

**Budget Advisory Group for Equality (BAGE)**  
**Monday 21 October 2013**  
**Conference Room 24, Ty Hywel, Cardiff Bay**  
**10.30 – 12.30**

**Attendees**

Jane Hutt AM – Chair	Minister for Finance (attending 11.30am onwards)
Jeff Cuthbert AM	Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty (attending 11.30am onwards)
Amelia John	Fairer Futures Division, Welsh Government
Jo Salway	Strategic Budgeting, Welsh Government
James Burgess	Tackling Poverty Unit, Welsh Government
Sharon West	Fairer Futures Division, Welsh Government
Caroline Joll	Cardiff University Business School
Christine O’Byrne	Chwarae Teg, Women’s Equality Network Wales (WEN Wales)
Kate Bennett	Equality & Human Rights Commission (EHRC)
Richard Self	Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA)
Rhianydd Williams	TUC
Aliya Mohammed	Race Equality First, Ministerial Advisory Forum for Race
Rhian Davies	Disability Wales, Ministerial Advisory Forum for Disability
<b>Secretariat</b>	
Sian Lewis	Fairer Futures Division, Welsh Government

Apologies had been received from:

Paula Walters, NHS Centre for Equality & Human Rights  
Andrew White, Stonewall  
Ceri Cryer, Age Cymru  
Jonathan Price, Welsh Government  
Gemma Smith, Welsh Government

**BAGE Pre-Meet**

**1. Matters Arising – Action Points**

- 1.1 Amelia John opened the meeting and thanked members for their attendance.
- 1.2 Amelia confirmed that both actions from the previous meeting had been completed. The additional evidence sources discussed within the previous Budget Advisory Group for Equality (BAGE) meeting had been circulated to all group members. The third meeting of BAGE had been organised to coincide with the scrutiny stage of the Draft Budget, including consideration of the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA).

## **2. Draft Budget 2014-15**

- 2.1 Jo Salway presented to the group, providing an update on the Draft Budget 2014-15 and the implications this is likely to have for Wales. Jo raised the following key points:
- By 2015-16, the Welsh Budget would be £1.68 billion lower in real terms than it was in 2010-11.
  - Budget changes for Wales were determined by the Barnett formula which reflected the UK government priorities, not the priorities of the Welsh Government.
  - The Welsh Government had continued to protect budgets for schools and universal benefits and retained a focus on growth and jobs.
  - The NHS was a key priority in the budget with additional funding of £180 million in 2014-15 and £240 million in 2015-16.
- 2.2 Jo explained that a thematic approach to the Draft Budget had been adopted. This was in part a reflection of discussions around improving the impact assessment of spending decisions. It allowed the Government to focus more on its strategic priorities and ensured that decisions reflected the impact at each stage.
- 2.3 Jo outlined some of the measures and spending commitments of the Welsh Government in relation to growth and jobs, educational attainment, and supporting children, families and deprived communities.
- 2.4 She concluded by focusing on the EIA and stressing how important it was that equality considerations were integrated into the budget process and every decision-making process from the outset. She explained that steps had been taken in this year's EIA towards an integrated approach to impact assessments, covering equality, socio economic disadvantage, children's rights, Welsh Language and sustainable development and departments would build on this for future EIAs of the Draft Budget.
- 2.5 At this point, Jo invited comments and suggestions from the group.
- 2.6 Members of the group thanked Jo for an informative and succinct presentation. The group acknowledged the severity of the situation arising from the budget constraints and accepted that resources would not allow for all that was desired to be realised.

### **3. Draft Budget 2014-15 EIA**

- 3.1 Amelia John said that the EIA document “Draft Budget 2014-15: Assessing for Equality Impacts” was published as a stand alone document on 8 October as part of the Draft Budget package. She summarised the changes in approach this year: the assessments followed a thematic approach to align with the Draft Budget; an overview of the impact of the budget on each of the protected characteristics was provided as was the Welsh Government’s response to the Appreciative Inquiry. She invited comments on the approach.
- 3.2 It was acknowledged that much time and effort had been taken by the Welsh Government in producing the document and the commitment to equality was recognised and welcomed. Some members of the group requested that a less detailed, shorter document be produced which took a more strategic view and provided more overview of the potential negative impact of the budget and how this would be mitigated.
- 3.3 As an example it was suggested that where the Welsh Government cannot know the impact, because for example there is a reduction in funding to a third party, then the EIA should simply state that the Minister would require the partner body to impact assess their spending decisions, rather than speculate on what the impacts might be.
- 3.4 Amelia highlighted the challenge of producing a document which would meet the needs of all interested stakeholders in an accessible way.

### **4. Future Role of BAGE**

- 4.1 Sharon West suggested ways in which the BAGE could move forward which included meeting on a quarterly basis and including a workshop approach based around specific themes or policies. Sharon suggested future themes could include: the Future Generations Bill, the Tackling Poverty Action Plan, Capital and Infrastructure spend and EU funding. She proposed that future meetings should be held in January, April, July and October 2014 and that the outcomes of the meetings should continue to be communicated to the Minister for Finance and the Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty; with Minister’s attending at least two meetings.
- 4.2 Members of the group agreed that more frequent and focused meetings would be beneficial. However they would like the meetings to retain an overview of strategic plans and an update on the stages of the budget process. There was a discussion around the benefits of gender budgeting and whether a workshop could consider lessons that could apply to other protected characteristics. It was suggested that the areas considered in Caroline Joll’s paper should also be considered by the group, possibly as part of a workshop on Tackling Poverty.

## **BAGE Ministerial Meeting**

### **5. Ministerial Welcome and Introductions**

- 5.1 The Minister for Finance welcomed the group and thanked them for their attendance at the third meeting of the Budget Advisory Group for Equality. As there had been some changes to membership, the Minister asked for round table introductions.
- 5.2 The Minister for Finance informed the group that, since the previous meeting of the BAGE, the Draft Budget proposals had been published which set out the spending plans for the next two years. The Minister for Finance also confirmed that the Equality Impact Assessment document had been published which set out the approach taken to consider the impact of spending decisions.
- 5.3 The Minister for Finance welcomed the meeting as an opportunity to discuss the budget decisions made to support the priorities for Wales. She explained that the spending plans had been shaped by the challenging financial context and difficult choices had to be made when setting budgets. However, she confirmed that the Government's priorities continued to be health, schools, universal benefits and continued support for growth and jobs.
- 5.4 The Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty endorsed the comments of the Minister for Finance. He explained that in his current and former role, as Deputy Minister for Skills, he had ensured that his spending decisions promoted equality and protected those who were most disadvantaged. He reaffirmed the importance of the Equality Impact Assessment within the Draft Budget and welcomed the opportunity to work with the group to further develop the EIA.

### **6. Feedback from Pre-Meeting**

- 6.1 The Minister for Finance asked the group to feedback the conclusions from the pre-meeting. Amelia John confirmed that the discussion had been both constructive and worthwhile.
- 6.2 The group accepted that the budget posed significant challenges but welcomed the Welsh Government's approach.

- 6.3 The group summarised the discussion in the previous meeting. They acknowledged the difficulty of producing the EIA and the challenge of meaningfully assessing the budget. However the group agreed that the document was too long and provided too much context. They would welcome within a more focused approach, a strategic overview of the positive and negative impacts of budget decisions on equality. One suggestion for shortening the document would be to avoid speculating on the potential impacts of lower level decisions and confirm that the Minister would require that those decisions were also impact assessed. The group suggested that a substantially shorter document containing less background information and more focus on key strategic decisions and their positive and negative impacts would be more publically accessible.
- 6.4 The Minister for Finance acknowledged that the EIA was long. She explained that one reason for adopting a thematic approach had been to enable impacts to be explored across portfolios which allowed all Ministers to examine the best ways to reflect their priorities. She reiterated the importance of preventative investment, such as tackling violence against women and free prescriptions, and identified the EIA as the most appropriate way of focusing on this. She felt that the background detail was important. She suggested that a summary document could also be provided alongside, or as a part of, the main document.
- 6.6 The Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty also considered the detail contained within the EIA document as necessary. He stressed that the document should be accessible and that the next one should be as publicly focused as possible. He accepted that, as the process embeds itself, lessons would be learned and departments would undertake impact assessments as a matter of routine.

**7. How does Government spending on public services affect inequality?  
Caroline Joll, Cardiff University**

- 7.1 Caroline Joll presented to the group, providing a summary of the available evidence regarding how government spending on public services affects inequality (papers and presentation in Annex).
- 7.2 Caroline confirmed that little research had been conducted in this area and provided an overview of the work undertaken by Tonkin (2013), Sefton (2002) and Bramley (2005). She accepted there were limitations to the research as it equated benefit of spend with level of expenditure and these did not necessarily correlate.
- 7.3 She identified that all progressive programmes were pro-poor but not all pro-poor programmes were progressive. Caroline suggested that more case-related research would be useful when determining the cost-benefit relationship.

7.4 The Minister for Finance thanked Caroline for the work undertaken and her informative presentation. She agreed that more research was required in this area, particularly in respect of the protected characteristics. She reiterated the need to focus on the outcomes of spending to ensure maximum impact.

## **8. Future role of BAGE**

8.1 Amelia John explained that the suggestion had been put forward for quarterly meetings, in the form of workshops, to cover specific policy and programme themes. She considered this approach would support a more focused and meaningful discussion.

8.2 The Minister for Finance supported the suggestion for more frequent and subject-led meetings and suggested that they use Caroline Joll's paper as underpinning evidence. She reiterated her commitment to engaging with the group in order that their knowledge and expertise be shared to inform equality considerations of the budget.

8.3 The Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty also welcomed this approach and suggested that workshop on the Future Generations Bill would allow for worthwhile discussion around both the intent and practicalities. He also felt EU funding would be a key area as it represented a huge opportunity for pro poor policy making.

8.4 The Minister for Finance reiterated her commitment to engaging with the group and to work with them on progressing pro-poor policies. She reiterated her desire to follow-up and take forward the work undertaken by Caroline Joll in order that it provide the context for what is trying to be achieved.

## **9. Date of next meeting**

9.1 It was agreed that the next meeting of the BAGE should be scheduled for January 2014.

9.2 The Minister for Finance stressed the importance of continued membership and representation on the group. She thanked the group for their attendance and for their continued contributions to the group.

## **Summary of actions**

- 1. Fairer Futures officials to organise a future meeting of the BAGE in January 2014.**



**Budget Advisory Group for Equality**  
**Tuesday 21 January 2014**  
**Room 4.08, Cathays Park, Cardiff**  
**14.00 – 16.00**

**Attendees**

Amelia John	Deputy Director Fairer Futures Division
Andrew Charles	Fairer Futures Division, Welsh Government
Steven Marshall	Chief Social Research Officer
Katie Marsden	Strategic Budgeting, Welsh Government
Sharon West	Fairer Futures Division, Welsh Government
Jonathan Price	Chief Economist, Welsh Government
Rhian Davies	Disability Wales
Caroline Joll	Cardiff University Business School
James Burgess	Child Poverty Unit, Welsh Government
Richard Self	Welsh Local Government Association
Wayne Vincent	Equality and Human Rights Commission
Rhianydd Williams	Trade Union Cymru
Paula Walters	NHS Centre for Equality and Human Rights
Andrew White	Stonewall Cymru
Eleanor Davies	WEN Wales
Ceri Cryer	AGE Cymru
Alan Blighe	Knowledge & Analytical Services, Welsh Government
<b>Secretariat</b>	
Gemma Smith	Fairer Futures Division, Welsh Government
<b>Apologies</b>	
Aliya Mohammed	Race Equality First
Naomi Alleyne	WLGA
Jo Salway	Welsh Government
Kate Bennett	EHRC
Julie Cook	TUC

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

- 1.1 Amelia John welcomed the group and thanked them for their attendance at the Budget Advisory Group for Equality (BAGE). Amelia invited the group to introduce themselves to other group members.
- 1.2 Amelia outlined that at the last meeting of the BAGE, it had been agreed that the twice yearly meetings would be supplemented with workshop style meetings on specific topics and themes. This meeting would be the first of these workshops and would focus on current work on the Future Generations Bill.

**2. Budget Update**

- 2.1 Katie Marsden provided an update on the Welsh Government's Final Budget 2014-15. She outlined to the group that there had been very minimal changes

between the Draft and Final Budgets 2014-15. She highlighted that the Final Budget 2014-15 had been published on 3 December and as such, did not reflect the changes in the UK Government's Autumn Statement, which was announced on 5 December.

- 2.2 Katie explained that Ministers were considering options following the Autumn Statement but that importantly, increases in expenditure could not be replicated without also replicating the decreases that the UK Government had made to Departmental Budgets.

### 3. Impact Assessment Draft Budget 2015-15

- 3.1 Sharon West gave an update to the group on considerations for improving the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) of the Draft Budget for 2015-16. She explained that Ministers had made a commitment to move towards a more integrated approach, which would include a more robust assessment on the Rights of the Child, Welsh Language, socio-economic impacts and sustainable development impacts. Sharon confirmed to the group that there would be no dilution of equality considerations within this approach.

- 3.2 Sharon explained that an internal workshop had been held within Welsh Government with officials from across Departments to examine the lessons learned from experiences of developing impact assessments of the Budget. She said that they had taken on board the views raised by the BAGE at their meeting on 21 October: that the EIA of the budget had been too long and provided too much context; and, that a more focused approach would be welcomed with less background information and more focus on key strategic decisions. Officials were considering options for improving the Budget EIA including:

- providing an integrated impact assessment based on the duties set out in the Future Generations Bill;
- making the document more accessible to the reader by providing a shorter summary of key decisions supplemented by chapters detailing decisions and their impacts by department; and,
- providing an evidence annex which would be developed by Knowledge and Analytical Services (KAS) throughout the year to ensure that it is robust and consistently used by Departments.

- 3.3 Sharon invited the group to provide their comments and ideas which would be used to help advise the Ministers of the forward look of future draft budgets.

**Action: Group members to reflect further on thoughts of how future EIA's should look and steps at how we can report in a more integrated manner.**

- 3.4 The group asked if it was possible for them to see the future Draft Budget EIA as a work in progress, giving them the opportunity to provide suggestions and

advice throughout the drafting process. It was outlined to the group, that whilst every effort would be made to share templates and the direction of travel with them, due to the strict time frame within which to draft the assessment, combined with the highly confidential nature of the information being assessed at that time, to have a completely open approach would not be possible. However, the BAGE would be fully consulted on the approach being taken towards the EIA.

- 3.5 The group asked how the Welsh Government monitored the outcome of individual Budget decisions and their subsequent equality impacts and how this could be demonstrated. Jonathan Price confirmed that whilst such monitoring and evaluation was desirable, it would be very difficult to do so in practice. Ongoing evaluation should take place in order to provide effective monitoring of our assessments, but this is impeded by a lack of available data and how the majority of the impacts are not necessarily apparent in the immediate future.
- 3.6 The group requested that the evidence base that was used should be more visible within the assessment itself. Data and evidence should be used to annotate and support the assessment throughout, taking the form of tables and diagrams wherever possible.
- 3.7 The group felt that the EIA should be transparent where Welsh Government have been unable to gather the necessary evidence and why. It was felt this would allow us to prioritise and identify where more effort was needed to undertake and commission data gathering. It was also expressed that where there was a lack of empirical data, non-statistical evidence should be given greater consideration, including the life experiences of protected groups. Age Cymru advised that there was a report on Bus Travel that would be of use to the group.

**Action: Group members are requested to share any identified information with BAGE members and flag to the Welsh Government sources of info that might help us with our impact assessments.**

#### **4. Developing the Evidence Base for Draft Budget 2015-16**

- 4.1 Jonathan Price informed the group that the Welsh Government was committed to developing a robust evidence base on a continual basis to underpin spending decisions. He stressed that any evidence that the BAGE members could share would be valuable, and requested that they highlight where they felt key evidence sources were missing.
- 4.2 Jonathan raised the limitations of the existing evidence base, with regards to certain protected characteristics because of the limited financial information available for them; and that the evidence used tended to rely on general assumptions built in regarding the average association between disadvantage and protected characteristics for these groups. Jonathan outlined the range of

analysis available from the Census 2011 which could contribute useful new information on the socioeconomic characteristics of protected groups.

- 4.3 Steven Marshall confirmed that the Welsh Government wanted to make more use of the fresh evidence source provided by the Census 2011. (A summary of 2011 Census outputs relating to Equality which included releases from the Office for National Statistics, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and the Centre on Dynamics of Ethnicity had been circulated to BAGE members prior to the meeting).
- 4.4 Steve outlined how the Welsh Government was actively involved in exploring the potential to use data generated by linking various administrative datasets. He said that this was the most realistic way to obtain information on smaller population groups. An additional benefit was that it would provide detailed information on an ongoing basis as well as the possibility to look back in time. Existing data linked in this way is largely NHS data but other important information has already been included such as the individual public census data.
- 4.5 Steve informed the group that the potential for making use of administrative data in this way was restricted by the existing legislation governing the use and sharing of data. However, the UK Government were developing legislation specifically on data sharing and the Welsh Government was keeping a close eye on this. He would continue to update the group on progress.

## **5. Future Generations Bill**

- 5.1 Andrew Charles introduced himself to the group. He outlined the context of proposed Future Generations Bill, the commitment in the Programme for Government and the Welsh Government's commitment to sustainable development as a central organising principle. A presentation was made to the group, providing an update of Welsh Government's current thinking on the Future Generations Bill. He stressed that the presentation provided indications of current proposals and that this should be regarded as confidential at this stage.
- 5.2 Andrew outlined:
  - the intergenerational sustainable development challenges Wales faces, such as demographic changes, poverty, climate change and inequality.
  - how taking a more sustainable approach to these challenges can realise opportunities such as green growth and more resilient communities.
  - these challenges and opportunities can be best addressed through a concise list of goals.
  - these Goals can only be achieved through shared responsibility across the public, private and third sector in Wales.
- 5.3 Andrew outlined to the group the Sustainable Development Charter initiative, and how it was a best practice network for organisations who had made a voluntary commitment to put sustainable development at the heart of their organisation. When asked, no external members of the group were previously aware of the charter and Andrew encouraged the group to visit the website.

**Action: Fairer Future officials to circulate the information regarding the Sustainable Development Charter including web links to all group members.**

Website :  
Welsh Government  
<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/sustainabledevelopment/uksusdev/sdcharter/?lang=en>  
Sustainable Development Charter  
<http://www.sd-charter.net/>

- 5.4 Andrew outlined to the group that named public service organisation would be placed under a new sustainable development duty and that there would be mechanisms in place to measure progress.
- 5.5 Andrew advised how this placed an importance on evidence, a large part of which would be gathered through engagement. .
- 5.6 Andrew outlined the 'National Conversation Cycle' that was proposed to be established by the Bill. The Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty had asked the current Commissioner for Sustainable Futures to pilot a national conversation on 'The Wales we want'. This would be launched on 18<sup>th</sup> February and members of the group were encouraged to get involved in the conversation.

**Action: Fairer Future officials to keep the group updated of the National Conversation pilot and to share details on previous engagement strategies.**

**Action: Group Members are invited to participate in the National Conversation and feed their views into the process.**

- 5.7 The group asked whether there would be checks on organisations' compliance and what acts of enforcement would be used if required. Andrew advised that accountability was proposed to be delivered through a number of mechanisms. This would include indicators, audit (through the Wales Audit Office) of the new Commissioner for Future Generations, reporting and indicators. The role of the Commissioner was to be an advocate for Future Generations and to provide support and guidance to organisations.
- 5.8 Andrew reiterated that equality was a key cross-cutting theme and a requirement for sustainable development. The group were questioned on their views of how equality sat within the Future Generations Bill and how it fitted under the umbrella of sustainable development. The group identified potential benefits that the Bill could provide, for example the opportunity to build momentum on the issue of equality within established networks. It was also raised that there was the potential for the Commissioner's role to cover all sectors and themes including equality, strengthening the enforcement of giving consideration to equality issues by organisations.

- 5.9 Concerns were raised by the group, that with the pending challenges, it was essential that we work closely together in order to ensure equality was captured correctly within the Bill and was not diluted in its importance. Wales already has an equality duty and it was essential that the Future Generations Bill and subsequent additional duty placed on organisations would not contradict each other and should instead each support the other. The group recognised that any partnership working would be pivotal on the actual goals prescribed and any supporting indicators developed. The Draft Budget 2015-16 would take place before the introduction of the Bill, and as such should be treated as a test for the proposals and act as evidence for the Bill design. It was also suggested that there may be lessons to be learnt from the European Funding Programme and that the Bill should perhaps be aligned to this.
- 5.10 The group questioned whether there has been any engagement with the Wales Partnership Council? Andrew responded that it had not yet but would be in the future. Andrew advised how current discussions and engagement had been taking place through the Sustainable Development Charter network, with the Wales Council for Voluntary Action and through various breakfast meetings. Further information on this engagement along with future plans would be shared with the group.
- 5.11 Andrew closed the item, thanking the BAGE members for their views and thoughts on the current Future Generations Bill. He informed that any feedback would be greatly welcomed and encouraged future participation in the National Conversation.

## **6. Date of Next Meeting**

- 6.1 Amelia John thanked the group for attending and for their continued contribution to this group.

## **Summary of actions**

- 1. Action: Group members to reflect further on thoughts of how future EIA's should look and steps at how we can report in a more integrated manner.**
- 2. Action: Group members are requested to share any identified information with BAGE members and flag to the Welsh Government sources of info that might help us with our impact assessments.**
- 3. Action: Fairer Future officials to circulate the information regarding the Sustainable Development Charter including web links to all group members.**
- 4. Action: Fairer Future officials to keep the group updated of the National Conversation pilot and to share details on previous engagement strategies.**

- 5. Action: Group Members are invited to participate in the National Conversation and feed their views into the process.**

Fairer Futures Division  
January 2014

**Budget Advisory Group for Equality**  
**Wednesday 2 April 2014**  
**Conference Room 21, Ty Hywel, Cardiff Bay**  
**9.00 – 11.00**

**Attendees**

Jane Hutt AM	Minister for Finance
Jeff Cuthbert AM	Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty
Caroline Joll	Cardiff University Business School
Aliya Mohammed	Wales Race Forum
Richard Self	Welsh Local Government Association
Wayne Vincent	Equality and Human Rights Commission
Rhianydd Williams	Wales Trade Union Congress
Paula Walters	NHS Centre for Equality and Human Rights
Helen Wilkinson	WCVA
Graeme Francis	Age Cymru
Simon Hoffman	Wales Observatory on Human Rights of Children and Young People UNCRC
Amelia John	Deputy Director Fairer Futures Division
Jo Salway	Deputy Director, Strategic Budgeting
Sharon West	Fairer Futures Division, Welsh Government
Alan Blighe	Knowledge & Analytical Services, Welsh Government
Sarah Dicker	Budget Policy, Welsh Government
Sara Ahmad	Economist, Welsh Government
Beverley Morgan	Tackling Poverty Division, Welsh Government
<b>Secretariat</b>	
David Jones	Fairer Futures Division, Welsh Government
<b>Apologies</b>	
Eleanor Davies	WEN Wales
Andrew White	Stonewall Cymru

**BAGE Pre-meet – 9:00am**

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

- 1.1 Amelia John welcomed the group and thanked them for their attendance at the Budget Advisory Group for Equality (BAGE) meeting. Amelia invited the group to introduce themselves to other members.
- 1.2 Amelia provided an update on the actions from the last meeting. Caroline Joll pointed out that the minutes of the last meeting had not been circulated to BAGE members. Amelia apologised and asked that they be circulated following the meeting.

**Action: Officials to circulate minutes of January’s meeting to the group.**



- 1.3 Jo Salway provided an update on the UK Government's Budget. She explained that this set the context for the Welsh Government's budget for 2015-16, but also included some additional allocations for 2014-15. In total, there was an additional £36.4 million over two years, comprising £7m revenue in 2014-15 and £11.7m revenue in 2015-16 and £13.9m capital in 2014-15 and £3.8m capital in 2015-16. The UK Government had also made an announcement about employer contributions to public sector pensions which would increase the pressures on the Welsh Government's budget.
- 1.4 Amelia made the group aware of Alan Blighe's work to collect and summarise equality evidence. Amelia asked group members to forward any specific research documents focused on protected characteristics in Wales to the Fairer Futures team.

**Action: BAGE members to forward any research documents focusing on protected characteristics in Wales to FairerFuturesMailbox@wales.gsi.gov.uk**

- 1.5 Amelia updated the group on the National Conversation, the precursor to the Fairer Futures Bill. Amelia encouraged the group to join in the conversation.

## **2. Tackling Poverty Action Plan Workshop**

- 2.1 Beverley Morgan delivered a presentation to the group, outlining the background to Welsh Government's approach to tackling poverty and improving the outcomes of low income households. Beverley provided an overview of the Welsh Government's Tackling Poverty Action Plan – highlighting its key themes and the policies and programmes which support their delivery. Beverley emphasised the importance of partnership working, stressing the Welsh Government cannot address poverty alone.
- 2.2 Beverley explained how each Welsh Government department contributed towards the development of the Action Plan, and acknowledged the many challenges presented by factors such as the impacts of Welfare Reform. She put forward a list of questions for BAGE members to consider and invited the group to discuss the Welsh Government's approach to tackling poverty.
- 2.3 As well as a focus on reducing worklessness, Richard Self suggested there could be more emphasis on reducing in-work poverty in the Tackling Poverty Action Plan. Richard also highlighted that there was no single approach to reducing the number of young people who were NEET in Wales. He described the differences between young people who were NEET in the short term and long term.
- 2.4 Helen Wilkinson raised the issue of Rural Poverty. She asked whether there would be a refresh of the Tackling Poverty Action Plan that would take in-work poverty and Rural Poverty into account. Helen asked for an update on the links between Lift and ESF and European programmes. She stressed the importance of timely information to help the third sector plan, engage and help to deliver.

- 2.5 Helen recommended the Welsh Government highlight all the work that it did outside of the Action Plan (to reduce poverty) - as there was a lack of awareness by third sector organisations.
- 2.6 Wayne Vincent asked whether each Welsh Government department had its own plan to tackle poverty. Wayne also raised concerns over zero-hours contracts. Wayne stressed that people in deprived areas were not a homogenous group. He noted the work done by Dr Peter Matthews which drew out that not all people living in deprived areas were poor and not all poor people lived in deprived areas.
- 2.7 Caroline Joll referred to forthcoming reports on persistent poverty. She highlighted that although the risk of living in poverty was higher for workless households – there are fewer workless families in Wales. She stressed that both groups (those living in “in-work poverty” and those living in “out of work” poverty) were important and policies should not focus on one group at the expense of the other.
- 2.8 Graeme Francis asked where older people fitted into the Tackling Poverty Action Plan. He noted the Action Plan seemed to lack focus on older people.
- 2.9 Simon Hoffman raised the issue of using legislation as a lever to address poverty, such as introducing the socio-economic duty.
- 2.10 Paula Walters noted that local authorities were reducing resources for facilities, such as libraries and leisure centres, which could help people find a way out of poverty while at the same time trying to tackle poverty. Paula asked whether the Welsh Government had engaged with Local Government Equality Leads and Equality Champions.
- 2.11 Beverley said that there would not be a refresh of the Action Plan. The focus was on delivering against the agreed actions. The Implementation Board established in 2013 (which is chaired by the Deputy Minister for Tackling Poverty) was the key mechanism for holding each department to account for the commitments they had made (and individual targets and associated milestones). She reminded the group that all Welsh Government departments contributed towards Tackling Poverty, but added that not every action being taken forward by the Welsh Government to improve the outcomes of low income families was specifically mentioned in the plan. Amelia acknowledged the challenge in raising awareness of all the work being taken forward by the Welsh Government. Beverley discussed the importance of tackling in-work poverty and informed the BAGE that the next meeting of the Tackling Poverty External Advisory Group (TPEAG) would also focus on this issue.
- 2.12 Beverley thanked the group for their feedback during the workshop.

### **BAGE Ministerial Meeting – 10:00am**

### **3. Ministerial Welcome and Introductions**

3.1 The Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty joined the meeting and thanked the group for attending. He informed the group that the Minister for Finance would be joining shortly. The Minister invited the group to introduce themselves and then invited Sara Ahmad to give her presentation on the Impact of the UK Government's Welfare Reforms in Wales.

#### **4 Presentation on the Impact of the UK Government's Welfare Reforms in Wales**

4.1 Sara Ahmad introduced herself and then gave an overview of her presentation.

4.2 Sara outlined:

- The policy changes introduced by the UK Government.
- The Welsh Government's three stage programme of research.
- Key findings to date: total loss of income in Wales; the impact on individuals/households in Wales; impact on employment; the impact of devolved public services and the impact on those with protected characteristics.
- Future research to further assess the impact.

4.3 Simon Hoffman questioned the estimated increase in working-age employment of 5000 people in Wales. Simon asked whether there was any indication of the type of jobs they would be moving into and the impact on in-work poverty. Sara explained the research did not give that information.

4.4 Wayne Vincent praised the detail of the research, particularly the individual attention given to each protected characteristic.

4.5 Rhianydd Williams pointed out the links between poverty and violence against women. Rhianydd questioned whether more could be done to help advice services put under strain by Welfare Reforms.

4.6 The Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty thanked Sara for her presentation and welcomed the Minister for Finance to the meeting.

#### **5 Tackling Poverty Workshop Feedback to Ministers**

5.1 Amelia thanked the group for a productive workshop and presented to the Ministers the key points and considerations raised during earlier discussions.

- The need to carefully consider protected characteristics;
- In-work poverty and the need to address low wages and zero hour contracts;
- The need to address those further from the labour markets such as supporting those people who are NEET and those living in Rural Poverty;
- The diversity of people in poverty;
- Levers and legislation available to the Welsh Government to Tackle Poverty;
- The need to raise awareness of the range of work being taken forward by the Welsh Government to Tackle Poverty;

- The need to raise awareness of third sector organisations of ESF funding.

- 5.2 The Minister for Finance thanked the group for the feedback from the Tackling Poverty Action Plan Workshop. The Minister stressed the importance of this work and the need to identify the biggest impacts at this difficult financial period. She said that this was where the EIA had a crucial impact.
- 5.3 The Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty acknowledged the need to focus on in-work poverty and zero hour contracts. The Minister reminded the group of the crucial role of the third sector in the Tackling Poverty agenda. The Minister brought the Rural Development Plan to the attention of the group and its section on Tackling Rural Poverty. The group were encouraged to take part in the consultation but were reminded that the consultation period came to an end in two weeks.
- 5.4 Graeme Francis raised the issue of the lack of public awareness of advice services and the role they played in Tackling Poverty. He observed that many people were not aware of the services available to them.
- 5.5 The Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty assured the group that Advice Services continue to be a priority. The Minister spoke about the role of Advice Services in reducing the reliance on pay-day loans, and the importance supporting independent and sustainable credit unions.

## **6 Minister for Finance Budget Update**

- 6.1 The Minister for Finance informed the group that the UK Budget did not improve the current challenging financial outlook for Wales. The marginal consequential were significantly smaller than the pressures imposed by the pension changes made by the UK Government. These would impact across the whole Welsh Public Sector putting additional pressure on public services and would force us to bear additional costs of at least £70m over the two years from 2015-16. This Budget followed four years of cuts and its impact on Wales would be equivalent to a further cut. The Minister explained that the 2015-16 budget would be 10% lower in real terms than in 2010-11.
- 6.2 The Finance Minister informed the group that she would undertake a series of regional Budget Events across Wales to meet key stakeholders and partners in order to discuss how the financial challenges facing the Welsh Government were translating into the services we delivered to our citizens. The Minister invited the group to attend these meetings as observers.

**Action: Officials to provide BAGE members with information on the Finance Minister's Budget Events**

## **7 Update on the Future Generations Bill**

- 7.1 The Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty informed the group that work on the Future Generations Bill was quickly progressing. The Minister gave some background on the Bill to the group.

7.2 The Minister updated the group about the national conversation on the 'Wales We Want' and stressed this was an opportunity for the people of Wales to let the Welsh Government know what they would like to see in the Future Generations Bill. The Minister invited group members to get involved in the conversation and to encourage others to join in too.

**Action: Officials to circulate information on the Future Generations Bill and National Conversation.**

## **8 Date of Next Meeting**

8.1 The Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty thanked the group for attending the meeting and announced that the next BAGE meeting was scheduled to take place in July.

### **Summary of actions**

- 1. Action: Officials to circulate minutes of January's meeting to the group**
- 2. Action: BAGE members to forward any research documents focusing on protected characteristics in Wales to the Fairer Futures Mailbox: [FairerFuturesMailbox@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:FairerFuturesMailbox@wales.gsi.gov.uk)**
- 3. Action: Officials to provide BAGE members with information on the Finance Minister's Budget Events**
- 4. Action: Officials to circulate information on the Future Generations Bill and National Conversation.**

**Budget Advisory Group for Equality**  
**Thursday 24 July 2014**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room, Ty Hywel, Cardiff**  
**10.00 – 12.00**

**Attendees**

Alan Blighe	Knowledge & Analytical Services, Welsh Government
Caroline Joll	Cardiff University Business School
Ceri Cryer	AGE Cymru
Helen Wilkinson	WCVA
James Burgess	Child Poverty Unit, Welsh Government
Jo Salway	Welsh Government
Jonathan Price	Chief Economist, Welsh Government
Lizz Roe	WEN Wales
Matthew Pizii	Welsh Government
Paula Walters	NHS Centre for Equality and Human Rights
Rhian Davies	Disability Wales
Rhiannydd Williams	TUC
Richard Self	Welsh Local Government Association
Wayne Vincent	Equality and Human Rights Commission
Taha Idris	Race Equality First
Sharon West	Fairer Futures Division, Welsh Government
<b>Secretariat</b>	
Isabel Mortimer	Fairer Futures Division, Welsh Government
<b>Apologies</b>	
Aliya Mohammed	Race Equality First
Andrew White	Stonewall
Kate Bennett	EHRC

**BAGE Pre-meeting 10:00am**

**1 Welcome and Introductions**

- 1.1 Sharon West welcomed the group and thanked them for their attendance at the Budget Advisory Group on Equality (BAGE) meeting. Sharon invited the group to introduce themselves to the other members.

**2 Matters Arising – Action Points**

- 2.1 The minutes of the previous meeting (2 April 2014) were agreed. Sharon provided an update on the actions. Members were asked to continue to forward any research documents focusing on the protected characteristics to Fairer Futures ( the FairerFuturesMailbox@wales.gsi.gov.uk)

- 2.2 Caroline Joll said that she hadn't seen the information on the Future Generations Bill. Sharon said that a link to the National Conversation website would be sent to Caroline.

**Action: Officials to send the National Conversation web link to Caroline Joll**

### **3 Wales Infrastructure Investment Plan (WIIP and Capital Investment Workshop**

- 3.1 Matthew Pizii delivered a presentation to the group, providing an overview of the WIIP, why and how it was created and how the WIIP was helping to improve equality considerations.
- 3.2 Matthew explained that the WIIP was an enabling policy, which supports cross sectoral delivery objectives, boosting investment in key areas, improving the provision and accessibility of services through both social and economic infrastructure. He also noted that in addition the WIIP supports the wider integration of strategic policy objectives aimed at promoting best practice, maximising community benefits and promoting equality across government capital investments. These programmes and projects helped to deliver the equalities agenda and were intrinsically linked to the Tackling Poverty agenda.
- 3.3 Matthew gave examples of this: Housing, where £20 million had been allocated to help mitigate the effects of the UK Government's welfare benefit changes and build 357 smaller, affordable homes across Wales. The funding would help Registered Social Landlords focus on building more one and two bedroom properties which would enable some tenants affected by the "bedroom tax" to downsize.
- 3.4 Another example was the collaboration with all 22 Welsh local authorities to extend the Local Government Borrowing Initiative (LGBI) to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme. Having already raised £170m of additional investment to improve highways in Wales, the LGBI was now being used to inject around £170m of investment into the 21st Century Schools Programme to ensure that it delivered by 2018-19, two years sooner than planned.
- 3.5 This will help deliver improved educational facilities across Wales including schemes such as the Penarth Learning Community – a £47.6m scheme, supported by £33.3m of Welsh Government funding, to fund a learning community, which included a mainstream comprehensive school co-located with a school providing education and care for pupils with a wide spectrum of learning needs. A central theme of this scheme has been ensuring that the local community access to the new specialist facilities. The project had already created work for 105 previously unemployed people, as well as apprenticeship and training opportunities.
- 3.6 A further example was the boosting of capital investment in Health by almost £144m. This investment supported implementation of Together for Health, the WG vision of world class health services in Wales that could be delivered on a long-term sustainable basis.

- 3.7 As part of this further investment in NHS infrastructure, WG has supported schemes including replacement ambulance vehicles and high technology assets through the £25m Health Technologies fund and with an additional £4.5m allocated for tele-health. These investments would help to ensure that across Wales, all citizens would have access to vital health care.
- 3.8 Work has been undertaken to integrate Welsh Government Community Benefits policy into the Wales Infrastructure Investment Plan and all associated investments, to ensure an optimised approach to public procurement in Wales. Through this approach, the Welsh Government was providing opportunities for the people and businesses of Wales to benefit from major infrastructure investments.
- 3.9 To date the first 35 projects worth £466m show that 85% has been re-invested in Wales - £124 million directly on salaries to Welsh citizens, and £277 million with Wales-based businesses, 80% of which were Welsh SMEs. Some 562 disadvantaged people were helped into employment or training, with 15,064 weeks of training being provided.
- 3.10 These results also provided clear evidence that maximum benefit was derived from holistic application of the policy at a strategic level and not just through focusing on discreet elements such as targeted recruitment and training.
- 3.11 Matthew posed three questions to BAGE members;
- At a strategic level, is there more we can do to utilise our Pipeline approach to support equality and tackling poverty considerations?
  - At what level does an Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) have the greatest impact?
  - How can we meaningfully address equality issues when prioritising our major infrastructure investment?
- 3.12 Kicking off the discussion Sharon stressed that the purpose of the EIA wasn't only to mitigate against negative impacts but could also be very valuable as an early opportunity to make the most of positive impacts; for example under the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools programme an EIA could help provide an opportunity to consider how the school estate could be made more accessible.
- 3.13 Paula Walters advised that she sits on the Disability Advisory Group and they had previously had a presentation from WG Planning Department on TAN guidance and the Access Statement. It seemed to her that developers did the bare minimum to meet existing regulations, whereas the WIIP was more of a lever, with more teeth to go further as regards accessibility. If the WIIP wasn't used as a lever in this way it was a missed opportunity.
- 3.14 Rhian Davies described the current situation in Aberystwyth, where the new bus station was not only inaccessible but dangerous. The risk of legal action and the need to put things right would be costly, and had come about because developers had failed to engage with local disabled people to understand their needs. She said that WG had to set the tone, and ensure that 21<sup>st</sup> century Wales was inclusive of all citizens.



- 3.15 Richard Self raised the reconfiguration of health services and said that transport was a huge issue. He agreed with Rhian that engagement was important to make the transport system more efficient.
- 3.16 Caroline Joll said that business cases weren't new and had been around for some time so questioned what was different with the WIIP approach. Jo Salway acknowledged that business cases were best practice and explained that this approach was about aiming for a consistent approach across WG, and prompted departments to think differently because capital funding was becoming a scarce commodity. There were pockets of good practice like Transport, and Matthew noted that the assessment of business cases fed back to departments where they needed to improve the business case.
- 3.17 Wayne Vincent asked how the WIIP aligned with other policies. Wayne asked if the business cases focus on benefits for people with protected characteristics. Did the current business case approach provided enough information to look at benefits through the lens of protected characteristics?
- 3.18 Matthew said that this was still a developing process and engagement with the BAGE would provide better understanding. Jo Salway agreed and asked for views on how WG could improve its approach, while balancing competing requirements. BAGE help, knowledge and experience was being sought regarding evidence and what WG should be doing to improve departmental awareness.
- 3.19 Helen Wilkinson suggested that the WIIP could consider embedding the cross cutting approach used by WEFO. She suggested engaging with Chriss O'Connell to learn from work on cross-cutting themes. When asked what in particular was good about the WEFO work, she welcomed the inclusion of Tackling Poverty and social inclusion as part of the strategic fit for programmes. WEFO was taking the learning of the first wave into the second wave of funding.
- 3.20 Paula reflected that where the EIA was separate to the business case then it would be seen as governance and assurance, as something that was required to get through the system. The EIA should be built into the narrative of projects, putting equality and inclusion considerations into value for money and framed differently to show that positive aspects are far stronger.
- 3.21 Wayne commented that WEFO had demonstrated that information was available on impacts on protected characteristics, there were still gaps, but by looking at anticipated outcomes they could monitor these and then look at the cumulative impact. He mentioned that EHRC had published "Making Fair Financial Decisions" and this could aid impact modelling.

**Action: Officials to circulate "Making Fair Financial Decisions"**

- 3.22 Tahir Idris raised the point that business cases and EIAs had to be integrated and that the business case had to evidence what was on the ground. He said that the example of the poorly designed bus station could also be seen at railway stations. He thought that a business case needed to bring in evidence of local needs. To this, Jo said that it should be good practice to know your evidence base and who the project was designed for. Paula was

also in agreement that with significant amounts of investment thought had to be given about who it was aimed at, who should be involved in the process, what jobs could be created, and how these could be made sustainable.

- 3.23 Rhian commented that no matter how good a business case was, during the building stage compromises were made and there were currently no sanctions for not delivering on access and equality needs; there should be penalties. Jo replied that it would be useful if members could say what from their experiences worked and were successful. Richard commented that it was important to be clear about what was trying to be achieved and who it was intended for. Caroline agreed with this, that it was about maximising the benefits, knowing the value and benefits for people.

### **BAGE Ministerial Meeting – 10.00am**

#### **4 Ministerial Welcome and Introductions**

- 4.1 The Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty and the Minister for Finance joined the meeting.
- 4.2 The Minister for Finance hoped that the group had had an interesting workshop and stated that the WIIP was very important in terms of investment and priorities.
- 4.3 She then updated the group about the recent Budget Tour, saying that it was an extremely valuable exercise and successful in terms of bringing together front-line staff across local authorities, the health service and the third sector. In Swansea she had met front-line staff from libraries and leisure centres through to GPs, and they all had clear ideas about what they thought should influence the budget. A report on the tour would be forthcoming.
- 4.4 The Minister advised that the Nuffield Trust Report on Health had been published and we were working on the implication for future budgets.
- 4.5 On preparations for the Budget, the Minister said that work was under way and this year the Budget would be published a week earlier than usual, on 30 September. This was due to the Assembly wanting a longer period for scrutiny. It was not without challenge but everyone was geared up to deliver it. The underlying message was a 10% reduction in real terms on the 2010-11 Budget. It would be very challenging, because of more pressures and higher levels of demand together with UK Government requirements on pensions where there WG would have to bear additional costs of £70 million over two years. She talked about uncertainty regarding the economic situation that would be a key feature of the fiscal position of the UK Government now and post UK Election.
- 4.6 The Minister emphasised the importance of BAGE, and their help looking at high level principles, outcomes and at justifying priorities. The integrated approach being taken to the impact assessment of the Budget was really important and, in essence, was really looking at the sustainability of decisions.

- 4.7 The Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty (CTP) also welcomed BAGE members adding that there were three substantive items for discussion during this session of the meeting; Sharon would provide an update of the approach being taken to the Integrated Impact Assessment of the Draft Budget, Alan Blighe would talk about the evidence sources for it, and finally Matthew would feedback on the WIIP workshop.
- 4.8 The Minister advised the group on the progress of the Future Generations Bill, now renamed the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) (WFGW) Bill. It had been presented to the Assembly and begun its formal processes, on time. Next term there would be scrutiny sessions, leading to possible amendments in the New Year. The aim was for Royal assent to be granted next spring and the duties would come into force the following year.
- 4.9 This was a very significant Bill, the first of its kind in the UK and Europe, its function being to embed sustainable development (SD) at the heart of all Wales' public services. It would also put local service boards (LSBs) on a statutory basis. Public services subject to the duty would be required to show how they are addressing the goals. He said that Peter Davies, the Commissioner for Sustainable Futures would be continuing the National Conversation.

## **5 Impact Assessment: Approach to the Draft Budget 2015-16**

- 5.1 The Minister asked Sharon to provide an update on the approach being taken for this year.
- 5.2 Sharon said that The BAGE's reflections of last year's EIA of the Budget that it was too long and needed better focus had been taken on board. WG was aiming for a shorter document focussed on key strategic decisions highlighting positive and negative impacts; there would also be signposting to parts of the budget to allow better navigation. The commission had been sent out in June and Departments had been provided with a template for consistency.
- 5.3 The main changes to this year's Impact Assessment would be that it will be an integrated assessment. It would continue to have information on the protected characteristics, but would incorporate, and be supplemented by, the other impact assessments; children's rights, Welsh language, tackling poverty and social disadvantage and sustainable development. There would be an upfront chapter explaining the themes of the Budget and Departments had been asked to provide a stand alone portfolio chapter setting out their 4/5 key decisions.
- 5.4 A workshop had been held the previous week for those providing contributions to work through an example and ensure a shared understanding of the approach.
- 5.5 The Minister for Finance added that Ministers would be scrutinised on their decisions, and that the IIA was integrated, which meant that all aspects would be considered and none took precedence, to which Jo commented that the

Environment Committee had previously expressed its views that there should be a separate SD impact assessment. It was important that the BAGE endorsed the approach that the Government was taking.

- 5.6 Paula added that the integration was the way forward and that compromises would need to be made but following the WFGW Bill co-production and integration would be a key feature and be unavoidable, the environment was part of the WFGW Bill package. It was not possible to use the impact assessment process to ensure that the impact was positive or neutral in areas, there would be conflicts between the different areas which therefore required an integrated approach. Rhian commented that disabled people and environmentalists often clashed over personal transport. Discussions had to be undertaken with environmentalists because it was important for an integrated approach and not about the loudest or strongest voice.
- 5.7 Caroline Joll asked about the timing of the BAGE and indicated that there would be no further opportunity to look at the new style of the IIA, to which Sharon said that as it was so interwoven with the Budget decisions it couldn't be shared ahead of publication. The Minister for Finance suggested a BAGE meeting during the scrutiny period would be valuable.

**Action: Officials to organise the next BAGE meeting for during the scrutiny period.**

## **6 Impact Assessment - Evidence**

- 6.1 The Minister CTP introduced Alan to the group. Alan advised that he would be leading on two reports which would gather known evidence on existing data, inform the evidence on which the Draft Budget could be based and support WG staff to undertake their own EIAs. The first report would be an analytical look at the evidence for the budget, the second looking at cumulative impacts.
- 6.2 This would be the first attempt to pull together reliable and trustworthy sources such as the census, which admittedly was getting old, and the Welsh National Survey. There were gaps, but these would be addressed in future reports, and also any anecdotal evidence would be highlighted. Alan asked that members kept in mind that the reports would be useable but high level and brief, about 80 pages in total each. It would be structured so that staff and the public could easily find what they needed. Evidence would be categorised, there were gaps but Alan would be grateful for any evidence members had to supplement this. Members were asked if they had any questions.
- 6.3 Tahir commented that in terms of equality there was a lot of evidence on protected characteristics in academic research, and highlighted that the 2011 Census was out of date. He thought that qualitative data would be a better option to use. Alan said that due to constraints, mostly quantitative data was used, but there would be a move to qualitative. Wayne advised that "How Fair is Wales" would be updated next year.

- 6.4 James Burgess welcomed the evidence report as a useful piece of work for policy makers who needed robust evidence and it was a positive step to make future EIAs easier. Caroline agreed, and said that the second report would be a quantified assessment and acknowledged that it wasn't an easy job. Richard raised the point that there was a need to look at causes and potential actions. Rhianydd added that much of the evidence that the TUC used was anecdotal or perceptive, but sometimes that was just as significant. She asked if any thought had been given to how this could play a part in the future. Alan said that this was very similar to the qualitative question, and at this stage there was no scope to find novel information, and the tight timescale meant that only published documents could be included.
- 6.5 In closing this item, the Minister for Finance advised the group that Ministers had met with Michael Marmot whose work had supported the WG approach. She said it was important to look at this kind of important and established data.

## **7 WIIP workshop – Feedback to Ministers**

- 7.1 Matthew gave an overview of the workshop and discussions; he summarised the main points made, being:
- Making the most of identified positive impacts was important
  - Use best practice examples such as WEFO's approach to cross cutting themes to make policy integration more than a tick box exercise.
  - Look at business cases and where the EIA would have greatest influence / best fit, and consider engagement at this point
  - VfM should include identification of who benefits
  - Engagement and clarity of investment objectives was key
  - Long term sustainability of investments was important
  - Cumulative impacts of investment should be considered
  - Monitoring and reporting throughout is essential.
- 7.2 The Minister CTP said that the WIIP tallied with the provisions of the WFGW Bill, looking at the long term benefits for the people of Wales, and was a good model on how we spend our money.
- 7.3 Group members highlighted aspects of the previous discussion, including issues with bus stations due to lack of engagement and how the WIIP could be a powerful lever for change.
- 7.4 The Minister for Finance provided an update on her engagement the previous day to launch revised guidance on community benefits and the huge impacts they were having, not only socio-economic like apprenticeships and supply chains, but how children were being involved in the construction of a new school, and being ambassadors for new buildings and design elements.
- 7.5 Matthew thanked the BAGE members and said that discussions had been most helpful, reiterating the main points of the discussion.

## **8 Date of next meeting and suggested future themes**

8.1 In closing the meeting the Minister CTP reminded the group that the next meeting had been agreed to take place in late October during the Budget scrutiny period.

8.2 Items to be discussed would be:

- Budget update
- IIA budget feedback on evidence docs
- Scrutiny of WFGW Bill
- EHRC report on budget
- Feedback on review of Bage

8.3 Also suggested for future meetings was to look at EU funding and learning from the WEFO experience.

### **Summary of actions**

- 1. Action: Officials to send the National Conversation web link to Caroline Joll**
- 2. Action: Officials to circulate “Making fair financial decisions”**
- 3. Action: Officials to organise the next BAGE meeting for during the Budget scrutiny period**

Fairer Futures Division

**Budget Advisory Group for Equality**  
**Thursday 23 October 2014**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room, Ty Hywel, Cardiff**  
**15.00 – 17.00**

**Attendees**

Alan Blighe	Knowledge & Analytical Services, Welsh Government (social researcher)
Amelia John	Fairer Futures Division, Welsh Government
Andrew White	Stonewall
Caroline Joll	Cardiff University Business School (economic adviser)
Ceri Cryer	AGE Cymru
David Phillips	Wales Race Forum/ SEWREC
Helen Wilkinson	WCVA
James Burgess	Child Poverty Unit, Welsh Government
Katie Marsden	Strategic Budgeting, Welsh Government
Lizz Roe	WEN Wales
Nicola Savage	TUC
Rhian Davies	Disability Wales
Wayne Vincent	Equality and Human Rights Commission
Sharon West	Fairer Futures Division, Welsh Government
<b>Secretariat</b>	
Isabel Mortimer	Fairer Futures Division, Welsh Government
<b>Apologies</b>	
Aliya Mohammed	Race Equality First
Bev Morgan	Tackling Poverty Policy, Welsh Government
Catryn Holinger	WLGA
Kate Bennett	EHRC
Jo Salway	Welsh Government
Jonathan Price	Chief Economist, Welsh Government
Julie Cook	TUC
Paula Walters	NHS Centre for Equality and Human Rights
Rhian Croke	UNCRC Monitoring Unit
Richard Self	Welsh Local Government Association

**BAGE Pre-meeting 15:00**

**1 Welcome and Introductions**

- 1.1 Sharon West welcomed the group and thanked them for their attendance at the Budget Advisory Group on Equality (BAGE) meeting. Sharon invited the group to introduce themselves to the other members.

**2 Matters Arising – Action Points**

- 2.1 The minutes of the previous meeting (24 July 2014) were agreed. Sharon provided an update on the actions. Wayne Vincent advised the group of two documents of interest. The EHRC had updated *Making Fairer Financial*

*Decisions* and it had also published a cumulative impact assessment document, which had concluded that assessing the tax and benefit changes was easier than assessing government spending decisions as a whole.

### **3 Budget Update**

- 3.1 Katie Marsden provided an update of the Draft Budget 2015-16. This had been published online and was for 2015-16 only as this was the last year for which we had a firm settlement from the UK Government and budgets beyond 2015-16 would not be known until the next UK Government Spending Review (SR), due sometime after the May 2015 general election. It was suggested it would be useful to have a workshop session on the SR.
- 3.2 Katie explained the constraints during this budget exercise with rising demands and pressures, especially regarding the NHS and the evidence emerging from the independent report from the Nuffield Trust. She then outlined the headline allocations, and set out the protected and preventative budgets. The Draft Budget narrative remained thematic, while the Strategic Integrated Impact Assessment mainly covered reduced budgets, highlighting impacts and mitigating actions. Additional reports and leaflets were available on the Welsh Government website, should the Group wish to see them, the Children's and Young People (CYP) versions being a particular favourite with stakeholders.
- 3.3 Setting out the next steps Katie said the Draft Budget was currently going through the Committee scrutiny period, with Ministers and stakeholders providing evidence. The Finance Committee would publish its report, including findings from all Scrutiny Committees on 11 November. The Draft Budget debate was scheduled for 18 November, with the Final Budget being published on 2 December and debated on 9 December.
- 3.4 Group members had no substantive comments.

### **4 Strategic Integrated Impact of the Draft Budget (SIIA)**

- 4.1 Sharon suggested that members might like to discuss the Draft Budget and the SIIA together. Outlining this year's approach, Sharon said that it was a substantially smaller document, more focused and strategic. Departmental contributions had been collated into the longer working document and boiled down and summarised into the SIIA. The working document had taken on board most of the suggestions made by BAGE to improve the look and contained a small number of graphs and tables. She hoped that this had been translated into a sharper and focused SIIA. She asked for thoughts.
- 4.2 Further clarification was sought on the evidence document, to which Alan Blighe confirmed the document as one policy makers should use in the future. Some of the information had been used as part of the SIIA, and also the SIIA exercise had also identified new sources of information, research and data which had been added into the document. This meant the document provided a good new baseline for evidence.



- 4.3 It was thought the evidence document (the Review of the evidence of inequalities in Wales) was very helpful when read together with the SIIA. Sharon explained the evidence document and SIIA were intended to be read together. It provided the opportunity to reflect on the impacts on protected characteristics based on available data. It was suggested perhaps the SIIA had been over summarised.
- 4.4 Reading both in isolation, the impacts on protected characteristics wouldn't be apparent. Nicola Savage observed the advantages of having the facts and figures in one document, which going forward, would be immensely helpful. She said usually, too much information was given in the impact assessment. She added that the level of detail in this year's SIIA was about right as it provided readers with clarity and direction for example, what was happening in mental health. It. She thought them good user-friendly documents.

15:30 Amelia John joined the meeting as Chair.

- 4.5 Amelia said that BAGE had been keen for the document to be more accessible, so could the members suggest how to find the balance between being strategic and having the level of detail on evidence required. It was thought there was not a need for additional narrative and highlighted a good example of what was particularly liked. The Communities and Tackling Poverty (CTP) chapter provided a more statistical base and offered areas of data. More information on who would benefit was however needed and it was agreed as being an opportunity to look through the lens of protected characteristics.
- 4.6 Caroline Joll said that the main benefit of the SIIA was its length and reader-friendliness. She didn't find it substantially different from last year's in its content and thought there still room to move it forward. It was still compartmentalised by department and didn't pull together the cumulative impacts on protected characteristics across them. She suggested tables might have helped provide brevity and focus.
- 4.7 Amelia noted the appetite for cumulative impacts in future Budget impact assessments, however, the EHRC report *Making Fair Funding Decisions* acknowledged the difficulty in doing so, and that it would be a huge challenge. She suggested that collaboration with BAGE, might achieve it retrospectively, and this had the potential to inform the next Draft Budget.
- 4.8 Stating the tight time constraints as the main factor, Katie confirmed the difficulty in publishing a cumulative impact report with the Draft Budget. Wayne reflected that a retrospective analysis in the New Year would be good, referring to the SR. Information would be more accessible post Budget and such a report would do justice to the work Welsh Government was doing. Katie suggested returning to a thematic approach across Ministerial portfolios within a cumulative report. However, as the move had been to produce an integrated impact assessment it had to look at impacts for the children's rights, socio-economic disadvantage and the Welsh language. It also needed to be based on outcomes, added Caroline.

- 4.9 It was agreed to explore this in more detail at a workshop in January. It would cover the role of BAGE and their thoughts on impacts.

**Action: Officials to develop the workshop outline and objectives for the next BAGE meeting (19 January 2015).**

## **5 Review of Evidence**

- 5.1 This had largely been covered in the discussion on the previous item. Alan set out the current situation, and reported the exercise had gone reasonably well. Systems were now in place, meaning it should be an easier exercise next year, having only to revisit the evidence base, update and add any new data.
- 5.2 It would have been useful to have qualitative data, which would have helped tease out issues. However, the resources to do this hadn't been available. Alan also acknowledged the gaps still needing to be plugged, especially on transgender. Work on this area had been started to supplement the existing data and add to it. Problems with gathering evidence in the future might also be further compounded by a number of surveys not running in 2015-16. These include: the National Survey for Wales, Welsh Health Survey and surveys by Arts Council Wales, Sports Wales, and Natural Resources Wales. These would be integrated into a larger survey to run in 2016-17. This would be consulted on, and members were urged to participate and respond regarding what should be included in the expanded survey. He reiterated previous requests for group members to forward any available data to him to add to the evidence base.

**Action: Officials to circulate details of the survey consultation when they become available and provide an oral update at the January meeting.**

- 5.3 The Review of Evidence document had been published on the Equality Unit webpages. However, it was decided as more appropriate and more easily accessible for it to be moved to the Statistics and Research pages.
- 5.4 Andrew White praised the document for what it had achieved. He did, however, feel it needed to be clearer on where the gaps in evidence existed. He suggested adding a paragraph would make this explicit for Welsh Government staff and stakeholders alike.

## **6 Review of BAGE**

- 6.1 This item had been suggested at the last meeting in July, and was now very timely as the Communities, Equality and Local Government (CELG) Committee had shown a large degree of interest in the group at its Draft Budget scrutiny meeting on 9 October. Amelia, who had attended the evidence session with the Minister CTP and the Minister for Finance and Government Business (FGB), asked if members had seen the session or the transcript and asked for initial thoughts.

- 6.2 Helen Wilkinson asked if the meeting in January could have a brief discussion to feedback on CELG scrutiny session which would help focus discussions on BAGE's remit and future work programme.

**Action: Officials to circulate the transcript of the CELG Committee session on 9 October 2014.**

- 6.3 Caroline suggested that January was an opportunity to look at what the group had done, how it had changed since the start and review this against the current remit. She also thought it might be useful to know what Ministers had found useful. Following this thread, Amelia said all Ministers were aware of the group, the Ministers for CTP and FGB had written to them on the role of BAGE. Now it would be useful to explore how all Ministers could tap into BAGE's expertise.

- 6.4 On the items for consideration at the next meeting, Katie restated the importance of starting work early on the SR, while James Burgess advised the group of the forthcoming consultation on the Child Poverty Strategy. Following the useful workshop in April, he had hoped to engage further with the group before the consultation closed at the end of January. Amelia added into the mix the close links between the Child Poverty Strategy and Strategic Equality Plan (SEP). She hoped to explore how, during the review of the SEP, the group could contribute to ensure the two were better connected.

**Action: Officials to circulate details of the Child Poverty Strategy consultation when they become available.**

- 6.5 On returning to the ToR, Helen was interested in the relationship between the BAGE and the SEP Board and whether it was worth reflecting this in the ToR. She thought perhaps this was an opportunity to look at having one board, as there were apparent overlaps of work. Amelia agreed there were organisations represented on both groups, however, they had different purposes. BAGE had a specific role to advise on how equality could be embedded in the Budget, whereas the SEP Board considered delivery of the Welsh Government's SEP objectives. It would be interesting to consider how the SEP objectives could influence budget setting.

**Action: Officials to circulate SEP Board ToR.**

The Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty (MCPT) joined the meeting and Amelia provided a short commentary on the pre-meeting concentrating on the CELG Committee's interest in the group. It was recognised the focus of BAGE should be to support Welsh Ministers and the programme of work was part-way down this track with presentations on topics from within the CTP and Finance portfolios. The MCTP welcomed the views of the group on the inclusion of Welsh language, as it had been considered as part of the SIIA. The group discussed the arguments on both sides for the inclusion of the language within equality considerations and speculated as it was an integrated assessment it should be included. However they also considered that expanding the remit too far to include all aspects of the SIIA could result in the remit being too unwieldy and membership too broad.

## **BAGE Ministerial meeting 16:00**

### **7 Ministerial Welcome and Introductions**

- 7.1 The Minister for Finance and Government Business (MFGB) joined the meeting and welcomed the Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty (MCTP) to her first BAGE meeting. She emphasised the importance of the meeting during the scrutiny stage of the Draft Budget and understood the earlier discussions had been on the Budget, the SIIA and the evidence paper. She also hoped the group had seen the report on her Budget tour.

**Action: Officials to circulate Budget Tour Report.**

### **8 Feedback to Ministers – Draft Budget, SIIA and evidence**

- 8.1 The MFGB stressed the constraints of the Draft Budget and the scale of reductions during tough financial times with a 10% cut in real terms. Setting out the headline allocations, the Minister confirmed the additional £225m for the Health Service as a response to the Nuffield Report, and an additional £10m for social services. Other key objectives were to protect school funding and early intervention programmes. It was important to tackle the link between poverty and educational attainment using all available levers. She described the Ministers' joint appearance at the CELG Committee as a challenging scrutiny. The Committee was keen to have more information on the role of BAGE, with the idea of BAGE members being invited to the Committee mooted.
- 8.2 Amelia provided both Ministers with feedback on the earlier discussions. The SIIA had been welcomed, being shorter, focused and highlighting key spending decisions. It was found to be user-friendly, and therefore, more likely to be used. However, more work was needed to move it forward in terms of projecting more strongly impacts on protected characteristics, and anchoring the evidence more firmly in the SIIA. There had been recognition of budgets being allocated by portfolio and this was reflected in the SIIA. However, a strong feature could be visually presenting the impacts across departments and society through the use of graphs and tables.
- 8.3 The MFGB requested help on the impacts on protected characteristics, as the SIIA would be a guide to the public sector in their budget allocation decisions, and any examples would be useful.
- 8.4 Lizz Roe underlined the usefulness of the three documents although, in reality, only the SIIA would be read as it was shorter. Users would pull out the headlines and evidence, and use these more.
- 8.5 In reflecting on discussions at previous meetings, Caroline asked what had happened to the proposed overview of impacts by protected characteristic which had been in the previous year's documentation. The MFGB stated that it had been attempted and Amelia advised that it had become a summary list taken from the SIIA, rather than reflecting the cumulative impact report BAGE was anticipating. The Group discussed the potential for revisiting this in the

January meeting where a cumulative report, linked to budget themes could be attempted outside the budget time constraints.

- 8.6 The MFGB suggested that the Group possibly by taking the thematic approach, looking at the Programme for Government and SEP outcomes and identifying where spend should be targeted and looking at the intended beneficiaries and impacts.
- 8.7 Since the last BAGE meeting the EHRC had re-published *Making Fair Financial Decisions*, which assessed the Treasury's 2010 Spending Review. This had acknowledged the difficulty of assessing cumulative impacts. Nevertheless, it had been an opportunity for the research community to come together. The MFGB highlighted how helpful the EHRC had been in the past, mentioning in particular the *Appreciative Inquiry*.
- 8.8 The MFGB invited comments on the Draft budget and stressed the importance for Welsh Government to engage widely on the Draft Budget particularly in difficult circumstances. During times of reducing budgets the impact assessment and the evidence were important determinants of spending decisions. She had been looking to the group to advise where things could have been done better or differently. This had been their opportunity to strengthen their voice. During the Budget Tour frontline staff had been vociferous and very clear on what they wanted.
- 8.9 Caroline said it was for Government to consider their priorities and make the decisions, as all stakeholders would say they needed more money. What was most welcomed was the establishment of the group, which showed Welsh Government's transparency on the Draft Budget. It also allowed key stakeholders to understand why decisions had been made. BAGE was seen as providing the advice and expertise to aid problem solving, allowing Welsh Government to work sharper and share data..
- 8.10 When asked to what extent others had been involved in consulting on the Draft Budget, the group was advised of the MFGB's Budget Tour, Committee scrutiny, voluntary sector meetings and the day to day meetings all Ministers had with their stakeholders as being an ideal opportunity to discuss the budget. The Finance Committee would publish its overall report reflecting Scrutiny Committee findings on 11 November, with the Draft Budget being due to be debated on 18 November.
- 8.11 The MFGB also had scheduled an engagement visit with the Minister for Education and Skills to visit a school to involve CYPs and get their School Council engaged in the budget process. Adding further to her reflections on BAGE's role in the Budget, local government would have to grapple with similar issues and she hoped they were approaching the EHRC for help and guidance. Partnership working was seen as crucial, because it was often local communities who knew how best to spend funding on local services. The Social Services and Well-being Act was a huge opportunity to engage with user-led organisations.

## **9 Review of BAGE**

- 9.1 In establishing the BAGE the MFGB had modelled it on the Scottish Equality and Budget Advisory Group (EBAG). The Scottish Finance Minister had been very positive in describing its role and contribution in the Scottish Government's Budget process. Officials in Fairer Futures would shortly be video-conferencing with the Scottish Equality officials and would ask for an update and short oral evaluation to feedback at the January meeting.
- 9.2 Following feedback of the earlier discussions, the Ministers agreed the format for the workshop in January. This would concentrate on BAGE adding value to the SR and addressing the issue of assessing cumulative impacts. When looking at the future role of BAGE, it was important to include in any deliberations the opportunity additional powers would provide to review changes to the Budget process. The Finance Committee's report on this was drawn from international best practice, including OECD and could provide some useful pointers.

### **Action: Officials to circulate the Finance Committee Report**

- 9.3 BAGE's role in the Budget process was vitally important in the MFGB's opinion, and she and the MCTP had written to Cabinet colleagues reminding them that equality and finance had to be at the forefront of all their considerations. She acknowledged the importance of the January workshop especially in light of the SR not being known until next year. The difficulty of drafting and presenting a Draft Budget was apparent, and much would be guesswork based on the Chancellor's statement and the pre-election spring Budget. The recent party conferences had also provided a flavour of what might be planned by the incoming Government. Austerity would continue regardless of the election result, and things would only get tougher.

## **10 Date of next meeting**

- 10.1 Ministers would not attend the next workshop format meeting on 19 January 2015. Both Ministers thanked BAGE members for their contribution in the process, and all the work they had undertaken. The Ministers also expressed their thanks to Alan Blighe and Lucy Taylor for their work on the Evidence base.

### **Summary of actions**

- 1 Action: Officials to develop the workshop outline and objectives for the next BAGE meeting (19 January 2015).**
- 2 Action: Officials to circulate details of the survey consultation when they become available and provide an oral update at the January meeting.**
- 3 Action: Officials to circulate the transcript of the CELG Committee session on 9 October 2014.**

- 4 Action: Officials to circulate the transcript of the CELG Committee session on 9 October 2014.**
- 5 Action: Officials to circulate details of the Child Poverty Strategy consultation when they become available.**
- 6 Action: Officials to circulate SEP Board ToR.**
- 7 Action: Officials to circulate Budget Tour Report.**
- 8 Action: Officials to circulate the Finance Committee Report**

Fairer Futures Division

Leighton Andrews AC / AM  
Y Gweinidog Gwasanaethau Cyhoeddus  
Minister for Public Services



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Our Ref: MB/LA/4593/14

Christine Chapman AM  
Chair,  
Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1NA

10 November 2014

*Dear Christine,*

I refer to the request for information from Members at Committee on 25 June, regarding the number of Community and Town Councils websites established as a result of Welsh Government funding and long term vacant Community and Town Council seats.

The information is in the attached document.

*Yours sincerely,*



**Leighton Andrews AC / AM**  
Y Gweinidog Gwasanaethau Cyhoeddus  
Minister for Public Services



Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee  
 CELG(4)-31-14 Paper 10 Annexe 1

<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>Number of Long Term Vacant CTC Seats -1</b>	<b>Number of CTC Websites funded by WG -2</b>	<b>Comments / Reminders</b>
Blaenau Gwent	0	3	
Bridgend	8	8	
Caerphilly	4	17	
Cardiff	0	7	
Carmarthenshire	*	31	*They do not hold this information
Ceredigion	8	18	
Conwy	4	18	
Denbighshire	2	34	
Flintshire	0	20	
Gwynedd	*	7	*They do not hold this information
Isle of Anglesey	24	35	
Merthyr Tydfil	0	1	
Monmouthshire	0	9	
Neath Port Talbot	No answer	No answer	No answer on both queries / Reminder sent
Newport	1	6	
Pembrokeshire	No answer	No answer	No answer on both queries / Reminder sent
Powys	*	24	*They do not hold this information
Rhondda Cynon Taf	1	12	
Swansea	9	14	
Torfaen	0	4	
Vale of Glamorgan	4	22	
Wrexham	9	24	

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1- Long term vacant seat = Seat vacant for 6 months +

2- Community and Town Councils that have a website established as a result of the £500 funding (Website now up and running)



Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee  
CELG(4)-31-14 Paper 11

01/09

Clerk to the Committee  
The Environment and Sustainability Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1 NA

7 November 2014

Dear Clerk

**General Principles of the Planning (Wales) Bill: written evidence**

The Welsh Language Commissioner welcomes the opportunity to submit written evidence to the Environment and Sustainability Committee as part of its investigation into the general principles of the draft Planning Bill.

**Context**

Comisiynydd y Gymraeg  
Siambrau'r Farchnad  
5-7 Heol Eglwys Fair  
Caerdydd CF10 1AT

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Correspondence welcomed in Welsh and English

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The principal aim of the Commissioner is to promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language. This entails raising awareness of the official status of the Welsh language in Wales and imposing standards on organizations. This, in turn, will lead to the establishment of rights for Welsh speakers.

Two principles underpin the Commissioner's work:

- In Wales, the Welsh language should be treated no less favourably than the English language;
- People in Wales should be able to live their lives through the medium of Welsh if they choose to do so.

In due course, secondary legislation will introduce new powers allowing the setting and imposing of standards on organizations. Until then, the Commissioner will continue to inspect statutory language schemes through the powers inherited under the Welsh Language Act 1993.

The post of Commissioner was created by the Welsh Language Measure (Wales) 2011. The Commissioner may investigate failure to implement a language scheme, allegations of interference with individuals' freedom to use Welsh in Wales and, in future, complaints regarding the failure of organizations to meet standards.

One of the Commissioner's priorities is to scrutinize policy developments in terms of the Welsh language. Therefore the Commissioner's main role is to provide comments in accordance with this remit and to act as an independent advocate on behalf of Welsh speakers. This approach is used to avoid any possible compromise of the Commissioner's functions in the area of regulation.

## **1. Planning - context**

- 1.1 The planning system in Wales is based on laws enacted in Westminster, such as the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the Planning and Compulsory



Purchase Act 2004. These laws are supplemented by regulations and secondary legislation enacted by the Assembly and Westminster. The draft Planning (Wales) Bill is an attempt to simplify this complex legislative system.

- 1.2 In Wales, all planning authorities must prepare a local development plan for their area. This is a statutory requirement resulting from the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. It is these plans that offer a basis for making decisions on individual planning applications and appeals. Planning authorities are required to make decisions in accordance with the development plans unless relevant considerations suggest otherwise.
- 1.3 The Welsh Government's land use policies are outlined in *Planning Policy Wales 2012*, and the policy is supplemented by a series of technical advice notes providing guidance on specific matters. In preparing their development plans local authorities should consider the national planning policy and the technical advice notes, but that does not mean there is a statutory requirement upon local authorities to implement them.

## 2. Planning and the Welsh Language

- 2.1 The Welsh Government's strategy for the Welsh language, *laith Fyw: laith Byw (A Living Language: A Language for Living) 2012-2017*, states that the planning system is an important means of managing change in communities and the Government's planning policy states that the Welsh language is part of the social fabric of Wales.
- 2.2 Economic policy matters, such as employment and housing affect the sustainability of communities and linguistic sustainability is a matter that needs to be addressed in this context. The Welsh Government recognises the influence of the land use planning system on Welsh communities in *Planning Policy Wales*. For example, section 4.13 of the Policy states:



*“All local planning authorities should consider whether they have communities where the use of the Welsh language is part of the social fabric, and where this is so it is appropriate that this be taken into account in the formulation of land use policies.”*

2.3 The Policy also states:

*“It should be the aim of local planning authorities to provide for the broad distribution and phasing of housing development taking into account the ability of different areas and communities to accommodate the development without eroding the position of the Welsh language”.*

2.4 There are other references to the Welsh language in the Policy too, for example regarding the ability of areas to cope with more housing and the effect on the Welsh language in deciding which sites to designate for housing.

2.5 The document that provides advice and guidance to local authorities on how to do this is Technical Advice Note 20 (TAN20). A new version of the document was published in October 2013 and it outlines the framework for when to consider the Welsh language. Further practical guidance supplementing TAN20 was published in June this year. According to TAN20 the land use planning system should *“where feasible and relevant contribute to the future well-being of the Welsh language by establishing the conditions to allow sustainable communities to thrive”.*

### **3. Shortcomings in terms of the Welsh language's place in the planning system**

3.1 Although there are references to the Welsh language in the national planning policy, unlike other aspects of the planning system, it is not a statutory requirement on authorities to give consideration to the Welsh language. For example, section 62 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires authorities to undertake a **sustainability appraisal** of the development plan and prepare a report on the findings. The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes



(Wales) Regulations 2004 incorporate a directive from the European Union and require authorities to conduct a **formal environmental assessment** when developing specific plans and programmes. There is no comparative statutory requirement for conducting an assessment of the effect on the Welsh language.

3.2 The process of considering the Welsh language in the planning system therefore depends on policies and guidelines. Before the new Technical Advice Note 20 was published in October 2013, the Welsh Language Commissioner carried out a study of the consideration given to the Welsh language by planning authorities as they formulated their development plans.

3.3 As part of the study, planning authorities were asked three questions:

- had they carried out an assessment of the impact of their local development plan or unitary plan on the Welsh language
- did they have supplementary planning guidance on the Welsh language
- had they carried out an assessment of the impact of individual applications on the Welsh language.

3.4 Twenty three (23) of the twenty five (25) authorities responded to the study and the findings suggested that the Welsh language was not being considered consistently under the planning system and that all authorities had not considered the Welsh language in formulating their development plans. Substantial variation was also seen in the content and detail of the authorities' policies on the Welsh language and variations in the process of how and when to conduct a linguistic impact assessment.

3.5 A new version of TAN20 has been published since the study and further practical guidance is available to authorities. However, it appears that a large number of authorities have already adopted their development plans and others have gone too far in the process to be able to give full consideration to the new guidance. The development plans of 14 of the 25 planning authorities had been adopted before the practical guidance on the Welsh language was published by the Government in June 2014.



- 3.6 The new TAN20 also places emphasis on assessing the linguistic impact through the development plan only. Although it is reasonable for the main plan to be the subject of a thorough impact assessment, planning authorities should also have the flexibility to hold impact assessments of individual applications on the Welsh language under some circumstances. This is not supported by the new guidance.
- 3.7 Evidence therefore suggests that planners have been reluctant to follow planning guidelines on the Welsh language thus far, and that there is nervousness about making decisions on the basis of linguistic impact assessments. It is likely that part of the reason for this is that the Welsh language is the subject of non-statutory guidance, rather than robust directions via legislation.
- 3.8 An example of this can be found in the report "*The Welsh Language in Carmarthenshire*" published by a working group of the County Council in March 2014. According to section 3.2 of the report:

*"The present methodology and guidelines (in respect of the Welsh language) for local planning authorities on assessing the impact of development and establishing mitigation measures are not adequate and there is a need to draw up a standard national methodology to support local authorities."*

Also, recommendation 22 in the report calls on the Welsh Government to include the Welsh language as a "material" consideration in part of the Planning Bill.

#### **4. Draft Planning (Wales) Bill**

- 4.1 The Planning Bill offers an unique opportunity to address the lack of consideration currently given to the Welsh language in the planning system. A legal basis is required for the process of assessing linguistic impact. The current system of policy and guidance has not worked so far and it is unlikely that the new TAN20 will change the situation.



- 4.2 There is no mention of the Welsh language in the Bill at present (save for one technical reference in the schedules). This is a missed opportunity to give the Welsh language the same status as already exists for sustainability and the environment.
- 4.3 The Government has argued against including the Welsh language in the Planning Bill on the grounds that it is a structural and framework piece of legislation, and the Welsh language is a policy matter. But in our opinion, structural reasons account for the need to include the Welsh language in the Bill. The Welsh language needs an impact assessment framework in law rather than it being dependent on guidance. Evidence suggests that there is a high risk that a system reliant on guidance alone will not be implemented.
- 4.4 Although there are no references to the Welsh language in the Bill, there are several references in the associated Explanatory Memorandum. For example, section 1 of the memorandum begins with a statement that the provisions of the Bill will create sustainable places that will promote use of the Welsh language. Reference is made to the Welsh language also in section 3 on the aim of the Bill:
- “to deliver a planning system which is positive in outlook and enables development, helping to deliver sustainable places that include homes, jobs and infrastructure, whilst providing opportunities to protect and enhance our most important built and natural environments and support the use of the Welsh language”*
- It is unclear how the Bill will succeed to achieve these objectives unless it includes specific provisions for consideration of the Welsh language in the planning system.
- 4.5 The new system proposed in the Bill offers a structure that includes a National Development Framework; Strategic Development Plans and Local Development Plans. This means that for the first time there will be development plans on land use at national, regional and local level. We have already referred to the need to put a statutory framework in place for considering the Welsh language in local development plans, this should happen for regional and national plans too.





4.6 The Bill also makes provision for “developments of national significance” and the need for “local impact reports”. This is an example of the Bill making new provision for assessing the local impact of major developments, by amending the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. It is disappointing that the Bill as it stands makes no new provision for assessing linguistic impact in a similar manner.

4.7 The Commissioner responded to the Welsh Government's consultation “Positive Planning” on the Planning Bill white paper in February this year. The response included a number of the arguments included in this document. As part of the response, some possible improvements to the draft Bill were suggested. They were examples and initial ideas, but the intention was to provide amendments that would:

- Require Welsh Ministers to assess the effect of the National Development Framework on the Welsh language.
- Require local planning authorities / strategic planning panels to assess the impact of Strategic Development Plans on the Welsh language
- Require local planning authorities to assess the impact of Local Development Plans on the Welsh language
- Require planning authorities to include an assessment of the impact on the Welsh language as part of the local impact assessment of nationally significant developments.

As part of these improvements, it should also be ensured that local authorities have the flexibility to conduct a linguistic impact assessment on individual developments when necessary. Although we support the principle of assessing impact through development plans, circumstances will arise with some individual applications where a specific assessment of the impact on the Welsh language will be necessary.

4.8 Finally, it should be noted that our comments have been restricted to the main matters that need strengthening through the Planning Bill legislation. There are other aspects of Welsh language and planning that are important and need further



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Welsh Language  
Commissioner

consideration, such as the Welsh language on signs and the names of developments and population projections that lead to housing development targets.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on the Committee's investigation into the general principles of the Bill. Please note that I am willing to give oral evidence to the Committee if it so wishes.

Yours sincerely

**Meri Huws**

Welsh Language Commissioner



Comisiynydd y  
Gymraeg  
Welsh Language  
Commissioner

# **Study of local planning policies and the Welsh language**

September 2013

## Background

In response to the recent discussions on revising Technical Advice Note 20, the Welsh Language Commissioner decided to conduct a study on local planning policies and the Welsh language. The aim of the study was to assess to what degree the Welsh language is considered under the current planning system.

The study was conducted in two stages. Firstly, the Commissioner wrote to the 25 local planning authorities in Wales during June 2013 asking three questions:

- did they have supplementary planning guidance on the Welsh language;
- had they assessed the impact of their local or unitary development plan, on the Welsh language; and
- had they assessed the impact of individual applications on the Welsh language.

By the end of September, 23 of the 25 authorities had responded.<sup>1</sup>

Further to this and as a second step, during August and September 2013, consideration was given to the policies on the Welsh language included in the development plans of the 25 authorities.

A summary of the findings is given below.

## Policies on the Welsh Language in local or unitary development plans

A study of planning authorities' current and proposed development plans showed that 14 of the 25 planning authorities had included policies on the Welsh language in their plans. This included 11 county councils and three National Parks.

There was a geographic pattern to the authorities that had included policies on the Welsh language. Every authority in north Wales and mid Wales had developed a policy as had the authorities in south-west Wales<sup>2</sup>, except for Swansea.

Some of the authorities that had not included policies on the Welsh language in their development plans, such as Bridgend and Torfaen, said that they had considered the Welsh language but had concluded that the use of Welsh in their communities was low and that planning and development policies weren't likely to have any further impact on the usage.

<sup>1</sup> The only authorities to fail to provide information were Flintshire county council and Blaenau Gwent council.

<sup>2</sup> i.e. Pembrokeshire county council; Pembrokeshire Coast national park authority; and Neath Port Talbot council.

The policies that did exist on the Welsh language varied significantly. That variation can be explained to some degree by the fact that some authorities continue to implement a unitary development plan whilst others have moved on to adopt a local development plan. Despite this, there were also significant variations in the policies on the Welsh language in local development plans.

For example, **Development Policy 18 of Snowdonia national park authority's Local Development Plan** gave detailed instructions. It clearly stated the following: 'Refusing development which, due to its size, scale or its location, would cause significant harm to the character and language balance of a community'. It provided further instruction on the type of assessment that applicants would be required to submit under different circumstances, including a 'Community and Linguistic Statement' to be submitted with the planning application for a smaller development, and 'A more detailed assessment in the form of a "Community and Linguistic Impact Assessment"' to be submitted with a planning application where developments are of a larger scale. The policy also defined the different levels of development.

**Policy GDP1 of Wrexham Council's Unitary Development Plan** was less detailed and stated that every new development should 'have regard to the need to safeguard those areas that possess a strong Welsh cultural and/or linguistic identity from development that could harm this identity'. But it also defined those areas where the Welsh language was considered part of the social fabric.<sup>3</sup>

The policies of some authorities such as Wrexham (above) and Powys, name the areas where the Welsh language was considered part of the social fabric, but others such as Pembrokeshire county council, Pembrokeshire Coast national park authority and Brecon Beacons national park authority set a threshold for defining where the Welsh language was part of the social fabric. Pembrokeshire county council considered communities with 25% or more Welsh speakers as part of the definition, whereas for Pembrokeshire coast national park authority and Brecon Beacons national park authority, the threshold was 30%.<sup>4</sup>

Some authorities such as Neath Port Talbot gave guidance on the headings of linguistic impact assessments in the policy itself referring also to the supplementary planning guidance on the Welsh language that would give further advice to developers.

<sup>3</sup> The term 'social fabric' derives from Technical Advice Note 20 (2000). Beneath the headline 'Unitary Development Plans', planning authorities were required to consider whether they had areas where the use of the Welsh language was part of the social fabric.

<sup>4</sup> The document Planning and the Welsh Language: The way ahead published by a consortia of organisations in 2005 proposes 20% as a threshold. Some planning authorities have used and developed the methodology proposed in the document in preparing their planning policies on the Welsh language.

Other authorities included policies in their development plans on wider issues regarding the Welsh language. For example, some authorities included a policy on encouraging bilingual signs in line with the guidance in Technical Advice Note 20 and others included statements on development and street names in Welsh.

In general, the assessment of policies outlined significant variation and inconsistency in the way that the Welsh language is treated in different areas. Although some local variation is expected, it is possible that the inconsistency reflects a lack of clarity in the national policy regarding the Welsh language.

## **Supplementary planning guidance on the Welsh language**

Some policies on the Welsh language included in development plans refer to supplementary guidance. This guidance contains further information on how and when to conduct a linguistic impact assessment. Of the 23 responses received to the Commissioner's letter, five authorities responded to say that they had supplementary guidance in place on the Welsh language<sup>5</sup> and four others responded to say that they were in the process of drafting guidance.

Of the 14 Authorities that had developed a policy on the Welsh language in their development plan (see the previous section), four had stated that they didn't have supplementary planning guidance on the Welsh language and one other hadn't contributed towards the study.

## **Impact assessments of development plans on the Welsh Language**

The authorities were asked whether they had assessed the impact of their development plans on the Welsh language since publishing Technical Advice Note 20 in 2000. During that time, two main systems have been adopted, the first being the unitary development plans and more recently, the local development plans, that are gradually replacing the unitary plans.

It became clear that not much consideration was given to the Welsh language overall, during the process of preparing unitary development plans. Only 2 authorities reported with certainty that an assessment of the Welsh language was conducted. The situation with

<sup>5</sup> Anglesey; Gwynedd; Wrexham and Neath Port Talbot councils and Snowdonia national park authority.

local development plans was more positive with six authorities reporting that they had assessed the impact on the Welsh language and three others reporting that an assessment was planned as part of the process of preparing a Development Plan. Despite this, the evidence suggests that there is variation in the way the assessments are carried out.

Another six authorities reported that they had conducted a basic assessment of the Welsh language as part of another arrangement, such as a sustainability assessment or environmental impact assessment. Finally, six authorities reported that they hadn't assessed the impact of their development plan on the Welsh language. This conclusion raises doubts about the degree to which Planning Policy Wales and Technical Advice Note 20 (2000) were considered by these authorities as they prepared their development plans. The findings also raise questions about the role of the Planning Inspectorate responsible for inspecting development plans and ensuring that they are consistent with national policy before they are adopted.

## **Impact assessments of individual planning applications on the Welsh language**

The authorities were asked whether they had assessed the impact of individual planning applications on the Welsh language since publishing Technical Advice Note 20. They were also asked to give an indication of how many assessments were conducted.

The information received varied from concise answers explaining whether or not any assessments were conducted, to detailed answers that included copies of assessments. Eight authorities reported that they had conducted assessments. Of those only three reported that they had conducted more than one or two assessments, with one other authority admitting that it didn't keep information on the number of assessments. Although the evidence was incomplete, it seemed as though there had been a small increase in the number of assessments conducted in recent years.

The number of authorities requesting a linguistic impact assessment from applicants was lower than the number that had included policies on the Welsh language in their development plans. This can be explained to a degree, due to the fact that some of the policies are relatively new, but it raises the question as to what degree policies on the Welsh language in development plans are implemented by some authorities.

## The study's main findings

1. The Welsh language isn't considered consistently under the current planning system.
2. Not every planning authority has considered the Welsh language in preparing its development plan. This suggests that not every authority has complied with Planning Policy Wales<sup>6</sup> and Technical Advice Note 20 (2000).
3. There is variation and inconsistency in the content and detail of policies on the Welsh language in development plans and because of this, the procedure in terms of how and when to conduct a linguistic impact assessment differs. That suggests a lack of clarity in the national policy.
4. There is variation and inconsistency in the supplementary issues on the Welsh language considered in development plans. Some plans include policies on bilingual signs and others include policies on the name of developments. Once again, that suggests a lack of clarity in the national policy.
5. Although over half of the planning authorities had included a policy on the Welsh language in their development plans and even though good practice does exist, the policies are limited and superficial in some cases. Furthermore, not every authority has published supplementary planning guidance to give further guidance on the policy.
6. The number of linguistic impact assessments conducted on individual planning applications is small in the majority of authorities. This suggests that the policies are not being implemented fully in some areas.

<sup>6</sup> Section 4.13 of Planning Policy Wales explains the expectations for considering the Welsh language.





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Gymraeg  
Welsh Language  
Commissioner

Planning Bill Team  
Planning Division  
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25 February 2014

Dear Sir/Madam

### **Consultation Document: Positive Planning and the Draft Planning Bill**

The Welsh Language Commissioner welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the consultation on the Draft Planning Bill.

The principal aim of the Commissioner is to promote and facilitate the use of Welsh. This entails raising awareness of the official status of the Welsh language in Wales and imposing standards on organizations. This, in turn, will lead to the establishment of rights for Welsh speakers. Two principles underpin the Commissioner's work:

- The Welsh language should be treated no less favourably than the English language in Wales;
- Persons in Wales should be able to live their lives through the medium of the Welsh language if they choose to do so.

In due course, secondary legislation will introduce new powers allowing the setting and imposing of standards on organizations. Until then, the Commissioner will continue to inspect statutory Welsh language schemes through the powers inherited under the Welsh Language Act 1993.

The office of Commissioner was created by the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011. The Welsh Language Commissioner may investigate failure to implement a language scheme, interference with the freedom to use Welsh in Wales and, in future, complaints regarding the failure of organizations to comply with standards.

One of the Commissioner's priorities is to scrutinise policy developments with regard to the Welsh language. Thus, the Commissioner's main role is to provide observations in accordance with this remit, acting as an independent advocate on behalf of Welsh

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speakers in Wales who might be affected by the proposed changes. This approach is advocated to avoid any potential compromise of the Commissioner's regulatory functions and should the Commissioner wish to conduct a formal review of the organization's performance in accordance with the provisions contained in the Measure.

The Commissioner's response to the consultation is in two parts. The Government asked respondents to respond to the consultation by completing the questionnaire form provided. A copy of the questionnaire is found in annex 1 with the Commissioner's replies to relevant questions. However, the questions on the whole deal with the minutia of the consultation document; they do not provide the opportunity to express a broader opinion of the planning system and the opportunities that arise from the intention to reform the system. With that in view, this letter contains the Commissioner's general comments on the consultation and proposes amendments to the draft Bill that would strengthen the status of the Welsh language within the planning system.

References to the Welsh language already exist in the Planning Policy Wales 2012 and there is further guidance for planning authorities on the Welsh language in Technical Advice Note 20 (TAN20). The Policy states:

*"All local planning authorities should consider whether they have communities where the use of the Welsh language is part of the social fabric and, where this is so, it is appropriate that this be taken into account in the formulation of land use policies."*<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, the Policy also states:

*"It should be the aim of local planning authorities to provide for the broad distribution and phasing of housing development taking into account the ability of different areas and communities to accommodate the development without eroding the position of the Welsh language."*<sup>2</sup>

There are other references in the Policy concerning the ability of areas, taking cultural factors (including the Welsh language) into account, to cope with more housing, and regarding the need to consider the impact on the Welsh language when determining which sites to assign to housing. It appears therefore that Planning Policy Wales allows and supports the need for local authorities to consider the impact on the Welsh language when drawing up development policies; when considering the extent and the scale of development; and when considering location and development sites.

The document that provides advice and guidance to local authorities on how to do this is TAN20. A new version of the document was published in October 2013 and it outlines a framework for when to give consideration to the Welsh language. The document does not, however, offer a methodology on how to consider the Welsh language, and it is explained that the intention is to publish a detailed methodology during 2014. The framework

<sup>1</sup> 2012 Planning Policy Wales, chapter 4.13.3

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., chapter 4.13.3



proposed in TAN20 suggests that local authorities should consider the Welsh language as part of the Development Plan Sustainability Appraisal. It is explained that a robust evidence base is required in order to reach conclusions in the light of the assessment.

There are gaps in TAN20 as it stands, and until the detailed methodology for the linguistic impact assessment is published, the advice document does not provide the necessary guidance. Having said that, the Government's policy in Planning Policy Wales and TAN20 support the principle that local planning authorities need to take the impact on the Welsh language into consideration in the formulation of their land use policies. But the Commissioner's research shows that the consideration given to the Welsh language in the planning system hitherto has been inconsistent and inadequate. It appears that the consideration given to the Welsh language by some local authorities has been scant and a variety of linguistic impact assessment methods have been used by the remainder. In contrast to other elements of the planning system, there is no statutory duty on planning authorities to comply with the guidance and policy on the Welsh language; therefore they are not compelled to assess the linguistic impact of their development plans. The Commissioner is of the opinion that the Planning Bill is a unique opportunity to resolve this issue by putting a statutory framework in place for the Welsh language. To do so would be a means of ensuring that Planning Policy Wales would be consistently implemented.

The new system proposed in the Planning Bill offers a structure that includes a National Development Framework, Strategic Development Plans and Local Development Plans. This means that there may be, for the first time, development plans for land use at national, regional and local level. It is essential therefore that an assessment of the impact on the Welsh language takes place in accordance with the new framework. It will not be sufficient to consider the Welsh language at the local level alone. It must be ensured that the National Development Framework and the new Strategic Development Plans (as well as the Local Development Plans) are subject to statutory assessments of their impact on the Welsh language.

The Strategic Development Plans will set targets for housing numbers, and this raises questions about the extent to which the impact on the Welsh language will be taken into account when targets are determined for a wide regional area. Doubts already exist about the effect of local housing targets, which are usually based on the Government's population projections, on the Welsh language. There is a risk that the consideration given to the Welsh language, when determining development targets at strategic/regional level, will be even less. If that is to be the pattern in future, then there should be detailed and robust research to support linguistic impact assessments and the findings of the assessments should influence the final policy. Where the evidence suggests a negative effect on the Welsh language, it should be resolved either by changing the strategy or by identifying mitigating measures.

Finally, the Bill refers to developments of national significance. It is explained that the planning authorities will be required to produce a local impact report indicating the effect of the proposed developments on the local area. It is disappointing that the Government has decided to establish a new impact assessment procedure in the Bill, and yet has chosen



not to give statutory recognition to a procedure for assessing the impact on the Welsh language. The Commissioner is of the view that the local impact assessment of developments of national significance should also include a duty to assess the impact on the Welsh language.

The table below proposes amendments to the draft Bill in order to ensure a statutory basis for the process of assessing impact on the Welsh language.

<b>Section of the Bill</b>	<b>The Commissioner's Amendment</b>	<b>The Purpose of the Amendment</b>
Part 2 60A(1)(b)	Add "... including an assessment of the impact on the Welsh Language, and" at the end of the sentence.	To place a statutory duty on the Welsh Ministers to assess the impact of the National Development Framework on the Welsh language.
Part 2 60G(7)(a)	Add "... including an assessment of the impact on the Welsh Language;" at the end of the sentence.	To place a statutory duty on planning authorities to assess the impact of a Strategic Development Plan on the Welsh language.
Part 4 62H(1)(a)	After "the authority submitting the report", add: "including (but not limited to) an assessment of the impact on the Welsh Language".	To place a statutory duty on planning authorities to include an assessment of the impact on the Welsh language within the local impact assessment of developments of national significance.
Schedule 1; Part 1; Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004	Add a new clause: "In section 62 (local development plan), subsection (6) instead of paragraph (a) insert – "(a) carry out an appraisal of the sustainability of the plan, including an assessment of the impact on the Welsh Language;"	To place a statutory duty on planning authorities to assess the impact of a Local Development Plan on the Welsh language.

The inclusion of the amendments above would place a legal duty on the Welsh Ministers and local planning authorities to consider the impact of their development plans on the Welsh language. The amendments would also create a duty to consider the impact on the Welsh language within local impact reports on individual developments of national significance.

It is important that these duties should rest on planning authorities in order to avoid the inconsistency that has existed hitherto in the process of taking the Welsh language into



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account. A statutory duty already exists on planning authorities to conduct a Sustainability Appraisal and there should be a similar duty to conduct an assessment of the impact on the Welsh language. The duty should also give rise to research in order to ensure there is an adequate understanding of the impact of development on the Welsh language and in order to ensure that development strategies and housing targets are based on robust evidence.

The Commissioner is of the opinion that the Planning Bill is a unique opportunity to give the Welsh language a statutory basis within the planning system. Without a legal duty on authorities, supported by appropriate advice and guidance, the uncertainty and the inconsistency will persist. That, in turn, could have a negative effect on the welfare of the Welsh language and Welsh speaking communities.

Yours faithfully

**Meri Huws**

Welsh Language Commissioner