

Draft Budget 2024-2025 – A request for further information

Outcomes of the Public Health Wales evaluation of the three pilot schemes on early obesity prevention for children and families

These projects are supported from the Minister for Health & Social Service's portfolio.

Our Healthy Weight: Healthy Wales strategy supports three children and family pilots in Anglesey, Merthyr Tydfil and Cardiff. These pilots, branded PIPYN, aim to reduce obesity in early childhood. The pilots are based on a nested intervention of one-to-one family support within a wider systems-based approach that looks to enable families and their young children to be more active and eat more healthily.

The eight-week intervention is aimed at families with young children (age 3 - 7) who are obese or are at risk of becoming obese. A family support worker will help the family to set and achieve goals that aim to create an environment that supports their child to achieve a healthy weight. These include actions around parenting approaches, food choices and active play. The goals are tailored to the particular family but could include helping the family to put together a weekly meal plan on a budget. The nested intervention is well established within each pilot area, with hundreds of families benefiting from this support to date.

As part of the wider whole system approach, the children and family pilot leads have worked with Nutrition Skills for Life and local schools to establish cooking classes aimed at families with young children in each of the pilot areas. These free classes are available to everyone in the community, but families can also be referred into these classes as part of the one-to-one support.

The three Children and Family Pilots have submitted anonymised data on uptake, activity and outcomes for the nested healthy weight intervention to Public Health Wales for analysis. They have also sent information on pilot related activities such as cooking classes. This information will form part of a wider evaluation report that aims to provide an understanding of the pilots' approaches, progress and outcomes for the development of a healthy weight system.

Interim report on the basic income pilot

The Basic Income for Care Leavers in Wales Pilot Evaluation, Annual Report 2023-24 is currently being finalised ready for publication at the end of February 2024.

Chwarae Teg

Officials have worked with the Trustees of Chwarae Teg and other stakeholders to minimise the impact of the closure of the organisation. Most of the Chwarae Teg activity funded by Welsh Government has now been completed or mainstreamed.

The 2024-25 budget round has been the most challenging in the devolution era. A combination of inflation and UK Government decisions has meant the Welsh Government's settlement for 2024-25 is worth £1.3bn less in real terms than expected at the time of the 2021 Spending Review. This has necessitated a series of difficult choices, with consequences for budgets across the Welsh Government, including that which formerly supported Chwarae Teg. This budget has been cut as part of the savings exercise across Government. The budget has neither been reallocated, redirected nor pooled with central resources.

We remain committed to gender equality and we will be working across Government and with partners to make best use of existing interventions and available budgets, including through our fair work, employability and equality activities.

Breakdown of the funding given to the Welsh refugee consortium

The Wales Sanctuary Service is a Welsh Government-funded service to provide advice and advocacy for sanctuary seekers residing in Wales. The service was commissioned to begin in April 2022 and has a contract until March 2025, with a possibility of a two-year extension. The service is delivered by a consortium led by Welsh Refugee Council and including Ethnic Minorities and Youth Support team (EYST), Bawso, Tros Gynnal Plant (TGP) Cymru, Asylum Justice and Displaced People in Action.

The original contract issued was for £1.065m between April 2022-March 2025. However, shortly after letting the contract the full-scale invasion of Ukraine meant that additional resources needed to be found for the service. In 2022-23 and 2023-24 we have provided contract variations to uplift the value of the contract to a total of circa £1.567m.

In 2024-25 we recognise that there is still an immediate but reducing need for support for Ukrainian Schemes beneficiaries, whilst Home Office plans to widen asylum dispersal into all Welsh local authorities (and increase the overall number of asylum seekers in Wales) creates additional need. As a result, we intend to provide a further uplift of approximately £0.145m in 2024-25, meaning the overall value of the contract will be circa £1.712m by March 2025.

Allocations between partners within the Wales Sanctuary Service consortium are a matter for consortium partners.

Phoenix and Reflect programme

Phoenix and *Reflect* are programmes which the Fire and Rescue Service delivers to vulnerable children and young people (for instance, those at risk of offending or exclusion from school). They are fully supported by direct Welsh Government grant funding which has been maintained in the 2024-25 Draft Budget.

- *Phoenix* is a more intensive programme, for those most at risk, and involves 5 days at a fire station and instruction in using actual firefighting procedures and

equipment to build self-esteem, teamwork and respect for others. Classroom elements of the course promote objectives like anti-racism and awareness of cyber-bullying.

- *Reflect* is a less intensive one-day course aimed at diverting children and young people away from offending and antisocial behaviour, and typically takes place in a school setting (although it has also been run at HMP Parc for children of inmates, with the latter's input).

Both programmes use firefighters as role models, and to promote a positive image of people in authority. In a typical year - *Reflect* has around 3,000 participants and *Phoenix* around 500, depending on referrals from schools, social services and the police.

Equalities, Poverty and Children's Evidence and Support data units

Equality Race and Disability Evidence Units input into budgetary decision

The Equality, Race and Disability Evidence Units (ERDEU) provided an analysis of the evidence available to inform budgetary decisions across all equality characteristics. This was shared with all policy areas to inform decisions and shared with Cabinet as a summary of the cumulative impacts Ministers will be facing in the current budget savings in informing Cabinet's decisions. This information is shown in the Strategic Context section of the Strategic Integrated Impact Assessment (SIIA) of the 2024-25 Draft Budget and included an analysis of the variation in impact of cost of living and levels of poverty, educational outcomes, employment, mental health issues and hate crimes across all protected characteristics. Overall conclusions shared across all policy areas were:

- Those children who depend upon women's or disabled peoples' incomes are at greatest risk of becoming looked after and having poor life chances. These groups are therefore at greatest risk of cuts to services that prevent or address employment and pay inequalities and poverty.
- People with intersecting characteristics of being disabled, from a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic background, or are LGBTQ+ are at greatest risk of loneliness and hate crime, and therefore would be most impacted by cuts to mental health services (in addition to disabled people generally, pregnant women, and children and young people).

The role of the Equality, Race and Disability Evidence Units more generally

The ERDEU sits within the Equalities, Poverty and Children's Evidence and Support division, alongside the Children's and Tackling Poverty evidence team.

The ERDEU are predominantly made up of Government Analysts (including social researchers and statisticians) with a small number of policy and engagement support

officers who work closely with policymakers to ensure the evidence will help inform policy thinking and decisions.

The purpose of the ERDEU is to improve the availability, quality, granularity and accessibility of equalities evidence to enable decision makers across Wales to develop better informed policies and measure their impact. The teams draw on different sources of evidence to address specific evidence questions.

A key aim of the ERDEU is to influence, providing both support and challenge to policy and analysts to ensure improvements are made to equalities evidence. The ERDEU are working closely with other analysts across Welsh Government, UK departments (e.g., ONS, Cabinet Office's Equality Hub and Scottish Government) and academia.

The three distinct Units within the ERDEU (the Equalities Evidence Unit, the Race Disparity Evidence Units and Disability Disparity Evidence Unit) work jointly on many projects. Most of their work which is deliberately cross cutting and aims to improve the evidence base across all policy portfolios and benefits will extend wider into the public sector. Whilst the ERDEU provides additional equalities evidence from existing sources, for example the 2021 Census, many of the projects are long term and aim to make fundamental improvements to the quality and availability of equalities evidence.

In particular, the ERDEU is setting out how we will measure the impact and effectiveness of key equality actions plans (ArWAP, LGBTQ+ action plan and Disability Rights Taskforce actions) and developing new data sources so that we can understand whether the plans are having an impact on people's lives.

Examples of where the ERDEU has delivered additional evidence include:

- Developing a dashboard of information for the ArWAP bringing together all ethnicity evidence in one place.
- Additional analysis of the Census providing breakdown of all key [life outcomes by ethnicity](#) which is central to measuring the impact of the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan (ArWAP).
- Additional analysis of the Census providing breakdown on disabled people which has been key to identifying [outcome disparities](#) and informing the priorities of the Disability Rights Action Plan.
- Led on measuring the Migrant Integration Framework ([Migrant Integration Framework | GOV.WALES](#)), including identifying Wales-level data sources to measure outcomes for migrants.
- Published '[A More Equal Wales](#)' chapter of the Well-Being of Wales Report 2023 providing commentary on progress toward the national indicators with respect to equality. Providing guidance and review of the [ethnicity sub-report](#).
- A macro evidence assessment of the impact of budget decisions on equality groups for BGB and Cabinet to support the Strategic Integrated Impact Assessment.

- Provided evidence to shape and agree priorities for the LGBTQ+ Action Plan and gender action plan.

Examples of longer-term projects which will fundamentally improve the equalities evidence base going forward include, for example:

- Looking at options to boost the sample for the National Survey for Wales so that National Well-being measures can be broken down by equality characteristics.
- Working to secure UK Government data sharing access to allow more granular pay gap analysis on ethnicity, disability and gender.
- Publishing results from a survey of the equality characteristics of the board members of Public Sector Bodies and literature review to influence leadership across PSBs.
- Setting out how information can be collected to measure the social model of disability so that future policy can focus on barriers.
- Research to understand the need for measures for sex and gender in Wales which will support understand the impact of outcomes on gender across all policies.
- Guidance on how research and evidence can be developed co-productively.
- Guidance on how research and statistics can be reported on in ways that are compliant with anti-racist and social model approaches.