

PIW 10

Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee

Inquiry into: Poverty in Wales Strand 4

Response from: Equality and Human Rights Commission



Christine Chapman AM

Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee

National Assembly for Wales

Cardiff Bay

CF99 1NA

January 28 2015

Dear Chair,

Response to Inquiry into poverty in Wales

We welcome the opportunity to provide advice to inform the Committee's Inquiry into community-based approaches to tackling poverty.

In 2012, the Equality and Human Rights Commission's Scotland Office published ['Hard-to-Reach' or 'Easy-to-Ignore'? - A rapid review of place-based policies and equality](#). While the report is Scotland-focused, many of its findings and recommendations are directly relevant to the situation in Wales.

The research shows that many equalities groups – disabled people, minority ethnic groups, lone parents, older people - may experience high levels of poverty but won't necessarily benefit from place-based approaches because there is no 'flex' built in to accommodate their needs.

The research shows that there is not always a link between the poorest places and the poorest people. While many of those experiencing the greatest poverty do live in the poorest areas, some do not. This means that policies which target particular areas, or 'place based policies', do not always benefit everyone equally.

3rd Floor
3 Callaghan Square
Cardiff CF10 5BT

3ydd Llawr
3 Sgwâr Callaghan
Caerdydd CF10 5BT

Tel/Ffôn: 029 2044 7710
Fax/Ffacs: 029 2044 7712
wales@equalityhumanrights.com

Further key findings include:

- Overall, in place-based policies, socio-economic inequality is much easier for policy-makers to understand and focus on, compared to the complexities of exclusion and deprivation faced by equalities groups.
- Place-based policies can explicitly focus on equalities groups, but often in a negative way – e.g. disabled people as a group needing to gain employment to reduce welfare benefits expenditure.
- The holistic nature of place-based policies means they are often associated with improvements in wellbeing and place attachment outcomes.

The experience of equalities groups in place-based policies

The report looks at the impact for equalities groups of place-based policies in the UK, focusing specifically on Scotland. Findings include:

- The outcomes for equalities groups are mixed and the evidence is unclear.
- There is some evidence women have a disproportionately negative experience of place-based policies.
- Community engagement with equalities groups in place-based policies has often been ignored or difficult to achieve.
- Place-based policies are often 'blind' to equalities issues or just see dimensions of equality, such as disability, as problems to be tackled.

We trust the report will assist the Committee's work. Our Scotland colleagues are due to publish an update to the report shortly, which we will share with the Committee when possible. I understand Peter Matthews, co-author of 'Hard to Reach...', is submitting evidence to your Inquiry, which builds on the report's findings and relates them directly to Wales.

If you have any queries, please feel free to get in touch.

Yours sincerely,


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3 Callaghan Square
Cardiff CF10 5BT

_____, _____ JWR
3 Sgwâr Callaghan
Caerdydd CF10 5BT

Tel/Ffôn: 029 2044 7710
Fax/Ffacs: 029 2044 7712
wales@equalityhumanrights.com

Kate Bennett, EHRC National Director for Wales

3rd Floor
3 Callaghan Square
Cardiff CF10 5BT

3ydd Llawr
3 Sgwâr Callaghan
Caerdydd CF10 5BT

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