

Cross Party Group on Poverty (sponsored by John Griffiths AM), 6th February 2019, Conference
Room A, Ty Hywel

Meeting Note

1. Introduction

John Griffiths (AM) welcomed everyone to the meeting and roundtable introductions took place

2. Appointment of Chair and Secretariat

John Griffiths (AM) was nominated and seconded as Chair and Oxfam Cymru was nominated and voted in as Secretariat.

3. Context

John Griffiths explained that the Future Generations Commissioner was scheduled to attend and answer questions but do a conflicting diary appointment on the part of her office she was no longer able to attend, it is intended that she will be at the next meeting. Minister for Local Government and Housing, Julie James had committed to step into the breach but unfortunately was also absent due to illness. The meeting therefore had two halves, the first half focusing on the lack of a Welsh Government overarching strategy/ dedicated Ministerial portfolio for tackling poverty and the second half to an overview of the South Wales Food Alliance Food Poverty report.

4. Welsh Government strategy and leadership

Discussion took place on the need for a clear strategy and leadership from Welsh Government clarifying each Minister's responsibility in terms of tackling poverty and the way in which policies can be poverty proofed. It was felt that such a strategy was needed for the sector in setting out Welsh Government powers and intentions in order to progress with the tackling poverty agenda, as well as enable better scrutiny and accountability of Welsh Government efforts in this area.. Some members also argued that the absence of a specific Minister for tackling poverty has resulted in the lack of a clear figurehead to take this agenda forward and risks losing the complexity of the issue.

Members agreed that the group would write a letter to the First Minister, outlining these concerns and calling for clarity. John Griffiths, Suzy Davies, Dawn Bowden and Mark Isherwood agreed an individual members debate would also be beneficial in raising this issue within the Assembly.

5. Food poverty report

Rachel Cable provided an overview of the key findings and recommendations of the South Wales Food Poverty Alliance Report. All recommendations were welcomed by members. Specific support was given to the recommendation concerning improved data collection and understanding the drivers of poverty. Discussion also took place in relation to the need for the real Living Wage for all, education around nutrition and healthy cooking skills and the volume of children going without three nutritious meals a day, particularly in the school holidays.

6. Next meeting

The next meeting of the group will be scheduled in April or May 2019.

ACTIONS:

Letter to be sent to the First Minister on behalf of the cross party group to raise concerns on Welsh Government strategy and leadership on tackling poverty.

John Griffiths to work with other AMs to table an individual members debate

OXFAM CYMRU