

Easy Read



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Child Poverty Strategy for Wales

We want to know what you think



This document was written by the **Welsh Government**. It is an easy read version of ‘**Consultation – Child Poverty Strategy for Wales. An anti-poverty Agenda for Action.**’

June 2023

How to use this document



This is an easy read document. But you may still need support to read it. Ask someone you know to help you.



Words in **bold blue writing** may be hard to understand. You can check what the words in blue mean on **page 31**.



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Contents

How to use this document.....	2
Introduction	4
Priorities and objectives	9
Objective 1. Lower costs and increase the amount of money families have	12
Objective 2. Create new ways out of poverty	17
Objectives 3. Support the wellbeing of children and families	21
Objective 4. Make sure everyone is treated with dignity and respect	24
Objective 5. Make sure local and national governments work together	27
How will check how well we are doing	30
Hard Words.....	31

Introduction



We want to tackle **poverty**. And make life fairer in Wales. As part of our work on this, we have to write a strategy to deal with **child poverty** in Wales.

Child poverty is when a child is brought up without the important things they need to live well. This means they lack things like food, clothing, healthcare and education.



A **strategy** is a plan of action that will help us achieve a certain goal.



Living in **poverty** can impact a child's education, health and **well-being**.

Well-being means a person is happy, healthy and is comfortable with their life and what they do.



We wrote our last **Child Poverty Strategy for Wales** in 2015. This document is the updated strategy.



The **Children and Families Measure 2010** is a law about getting rid of **child poverty** in Wales. It says that every 3 years we must report on how we are to dealing with **child poverty**.



Since 2015, we have invested money to prevent large numbers of children living in **poverty** in Wales. But **poverty** is still a big issue in Wales.



The **cost of living crisis** means the cost of things people need, like food, gas, electricity and petrol is going up. But the amount we earn is not going up. So people have less money.

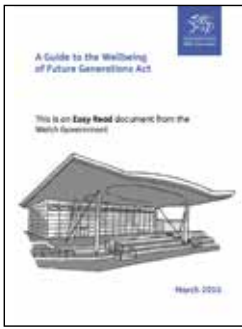


We know that over 1 out of every 4 children in Wales are living in **relative income poverty**.

Relative income poverty is when households have some money, but not enough to afford anything other than very basic items.



Often in Wales, decisions about our money are made by the UK government. This makes it more difficult to make quick changes in Wales.



The **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act** is a law about improving the **well-being** of Wales. We have used this law in our strategy to help tackle **poverty** in Wales.



It makes sure **public services** think about the impact their decision have on people now and in the future.

Public services are organisations that get money from Welsh Government to run services for people in Wales. For example, the NHS and fire and rescue services.



This law also says **public services** should work better together to deal with problems. And should also work more with people and communities.



We gathered evidence and data from people who live in **poverty** or have experienced **poverty** to help up write this strategy.



Your experiences are important to us. Therefore, we have held talking events where you have answered our questions.



It was very important for us to hear from lots of different people including:



- Black, Asian and **minority ethnic** people

Minority Ethnic people are people who live in places where most of the other people are a different race.



- Disabled people



- **Neurodivergent people** – for example those with autism, dyslexia and ADHD



- And **LGBTQ+** people.



LGBTQ+ stands for **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer** or **Questioning** and others. This is a community of people who have things in common because of who they are and who they love:

- **Lesbians** are women who are attracted to other women.



- **Gay** men are men attracted to other men.

- **Bisexual** people are attracted to both men and women.



- A **transgender** or **trans** person is someone whose gender is not the same as the sex they were thought to be when they were born.

- **Queer** has been used as a bad word against **LGBTQ+** people, but some people have started to use it in a positive way. For example, when they feel that words like straight, gay and lesbian do not describe them.



- **Questioning** is for people who are figuring out who they are and how they identify.

Priorities and objectives



A **priority** is something that needs to be done first, because we think it is the most important thing to focus on.



Objectives are the things we want to do to achieve our priorities.



We have 5 **objectives** that we think we need to work on to make positive changes to the lives of children and families living in **poverty**.

Our 5 **objectives** are:



1. Lower costs and increase the amount of money families have



2. Create clear ways out of **poverty** so children, young people and their families can achieve the best lives for themselves



3. Support the **well-being** of children and their families so they can enjoy their human rights and achieve more



4. Make sure children, young people and their families are treated with dignity and respect by services



5. Make sure local and national governments work better together



Under each of our 5 **objectives**, we have also written 5 **priorities** – the things we think are most important to focus on to meet that **objective**.

Our 5 **priorities** are:



1. Put money in people's pockets – make sure people get the support they have a right to.



2. Make sure everyone can get fair paid work.



3. Support our communities – make sure people can easily get services that work together to meet their needs.



4. Make sure everyone is included in services and that people working in services are kind.



5. Support governments and services to work together.

Objective 1. Lower costs and increase the amount of money families have



Priority 1 - Put money in people's pockets – make sure people get the support they have a right to

What we heard



Lots of people are finding the current way of getting help with their money difficult to understand. Including young carers.



People told us that they wanted to talk to advisors in person, not online or over the phone.



Families with disabled relatives told us that they found it hard to claim their disability and carers benefits.



People told us they were worried about the cost of food and that it is too expensive.



People told us that school is too expensive. School uniforms, school meals, sports equipment and school trips are costing a lot of money.

What we are doing about it



We want to make sure that people are able to get the benefits they have a right to.



We fund the **Citizens Advice Bureau** to provide **Advice Link Cymru**. This is a service that can provide advice about things like benefits, employment, housing and education.



We also train staff working in services so they can better support people to get the money support they have a right to.



We have “**Welsh Benefits**”. These are payments that can be made to people for things that Welsh Government control. For example:

- The **Council Tax Reduction Scheme**, which helps people pay their Council Tax.
- Free school meals.
- And the **Discretionary Assistance Fund** – helps people pay for things like fridges, ovens and furniture for their homes.



We will make the Welsh Benefits system easier to access for people who need support.



Since July 2022, we have offered lots of young people who are leaving care and do not have the support of a family £1600 a month for 2 years.



These young care leavers were also given advice and support with how to manage their money.



New parents will get free essential items for new born babies.



People in Wales can get free prescriptions and free parking at hospitals.



We are working with different organisations to make sure people can get healthy, cheaper food.



We are working with organisations to support people who are struggling to pay their household bills, such as central heating.



All children who go to a local authority primary school can have a free breakfast at school. By 2024, Wales will offer all primary school children free school meals.



Families with a low income will be able to get financial support to help with general school costs.



Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)

payments have been increased to help older students in sixth form or college afford things like transport or meals.



We already have free period products in schools. We are aiming to have them in other settings.



We are working with partners to make sure people have the right information, advice, and support.

Objective 2. Create new ways out of poverty



Priority 2. Make sure everyone can get fair paid work

We want every child to have the opportunity to achieve their full potential. We will give all children support in their early years to help with this.



Getting rid of **child poverty** includes supporting parents and carers to get the skills needed for better paid work.



What we have heard

Parents and carers have told us they want:

- Better working conditions.
- Fair pay.
- The chance to be promoted.





Parents and carers told us that they need more affordable childcare so they can keep working.



Lots of people told us that the lack of public transport in Wales and the cost were stopping them from getting jobs.



Children and young people told us that they wanted more work experience and advice about jobs whilst still at school.



Parents and carers of children with additional learning needs told us that they struggled to get support in school for their children.

What we are doing about it



We are working on an '**Early Childhood and Care Action Plan**' to make sure children in Wales have a good learning experience.



We want to give the **Childcare Offer** to more families. The **Childcare Offer** gives parents 30 hours of free education and childcare to 3 and 4 year olds.



We will work with organisations to make sure **poverty** does not impact children's ability to do well in school.



We will make sure education is **accessible** to everyone, including those with additional learning needs.

Accessible means everyone can find, use or understand something easily no matter what their needs are.



We will support unpaid carers in education. We will work with schools and colleges to make sure young carers can go to school whilst caring for their person.



We will make sure all people aged 16 to 24 years old can get education or training. This is called '**The Young Person's Guarantee**'.



We want to give young people more chances to get **vocational qualifications** – these are qualification that give you the skills you need for certain jobs.



We have a **Wales Transport Strategy** that will make sure there will be more public transport for everyone, including students.



We will make sure all workplaces treat their workers fairly and make it a good place to work.

Objectives 3. Support the wellbeing of children and families



Priority 3. Support our communities – make sure people can easily get services that work together to meet their needs



In Wales we want the best for our children. No matter where they come from or where they live.

What we heard



Many parents and carers need better, cheaper housing.



People prefer support face to face, not over the phone or online.



This support would help families access sports, leisure activities and social events for less money.



Organisations working with Black, Asian, and **minority ethnic** families told us families are being **discriminated** against in their community services.

Discrimination is the unfair treatment of groups of people because of who they are.



LGBTQ+ young people felt that services did not understand their needs and they felt **discriminated** against.



Both young people and parents and carers told us that they needed more support with their mental health.

What we are doing about it



Adding to the work we are already doing to tackle **child poverty**, we will think about communities when creating policies.



We will make sure that our services in the community meet people's needs. Such as mental health, money problems, education and family relationships.



We will keep working with organisations to provide more community opportunities. Such as sports, youth clubs, and low-cost family activities.



From September 2023, a lot of road speed limits will be changed from 30 miles per hour to 20 miles per hour. This will make areas safer for people to socialise in.



As we develop our community's policy, we will make sure that it is fully inclusive to everyone of all backgrounds.

Objective 4. Make sure everyone is treated with dignity and respect



Priority 4. Make sure everyone is included in services and that people working in services are kind



Some families have faced **discrimination** or been made to feel bad because they live in **poverty**.



Services must support children, young people, and their families without **discrimination**. They should not be treated differently because they do not earn much or because of who they are.

What we have heard



Lots of people have told us that they have not been treated with respect by support services.



Children, young people, and families told us that they do not always feel listened to.



Children and younger people told us that they feel left out in school because they cannot afford to do things like school trips, or non-uniform days or school discos.



We have been told that schools do not always understand families' situation. Parents and carers of young people with additional learning needs do not feel listened to.

What we are doing about it



We have already planned to give training to staff to be kinder and more understanding of people.



We are going to put more work into the '**Trauma Informed Wales Framework**'. This helps people to be more educated about the issues affecting people.



We will work with organisations to create an education system that includes everyone. So that no child is left out.



As the new school curriculum is taught, schools across Wales will focus more on children's rights.



We will make sure that **discrimination** does not make the lives of children, young people or families more difficult.

Objective 5. Make sure local and national governments work together



Priority 5. Support governments and services to work together



The Welsh Government and **public services** in Wales need to work together to tackle **child poverty**.



We must work together with the **third sector** and the **private sector**.



The **third sector** gives support to children, young people, families and communities in Wales. They have an important role in dealing with **child poverty**. **Third sector** means voluntary organisations and charities.



The **private sector** is also important. The **private sector** is businesses. They can support the work of small local charities. And also provide communities with jobs.



We have set up an advisory group to help us plan how to use our money in the best way.



We do not want local councils to be distracted by lots of paperwork. We want them to focus on helping communities. So we have lowered how much they need to do.



We have created longer term funding for important projects that will benefit children, young carers and families.

We will:



Work with the local authorities to tackle **poverty**.



Work with organisations to share best ways of working with each other to make sure everyone is doing their best to tackle **child poverty**.

How will check how well we are doing



There are national goals in the **Well-being of Future Generation Act** that we will report on.



We will report every 3 years how close we are to achieving our goals.



We will have more research done to tell us how we have done.

Hard Words

Accessible

Accessible means everyone can find, use or understand something easily no matter what their needs are.

Child poverty

Child poverty is when a child is brought up without the important things they need to live well. This means they lack things like food, clothing, healthcare and education.

Discriminated

Discrimination is the unfair treatment of groups of people because of who they are.

LGBTQ+

LGBTQ+ stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning and others. This is a community of people who have things in common because of who they are and who they love:

- Lesbians are women who are attracted to other women.
- Gay men are men attracted to other men.
- Bisexual people are attracted to both men and women.
- A transgender or trans person is someone whose gender is not the same as the sex they were thought to be when they were born.
- Queer has been used as a bad word against LGBTQ+ people, but some people have started to use it in a positive way. For example, when they feel that words like straight, gay and lesbian do not describe them.
- Questioning is for people who are figuring out who they are and how they identify.

Minority Ethnic

Minority Ethnic people are people who live in places where most of the other people are a different race.

Objectives

Objectives are the things we want to do to achieve our priorities.

Priority

A priority is something that needs to be done first, because we think it is the most important thing to focus on.

Public services

Public services are government offered services that are there to help all members of a community.

Relative income poverty

Relative income poverty is when households have some money, but not enough to afford anything other than very basic items.

Well-being

Well-being is how we are doing as individuals. It considers things that happen around us and affect us.