



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

REPORT

Child poverty: final report of the income maximisation action plan

Report summarising what we did to help maximise the income of families living in poverty between 2020 and 2021.

First published: 28 June 2021

Last updated: 13 July 2021

This document was downloaded from GOV.WALES and may not be the latest version.

Go to <https://gov.wales/child-poverty-final-report-income-maximisation-action-plan-html> for the latest version.

Get [information on copyright](#).

Contents

Ministerial foreword

Introduction

Summary of achievements

Future next steps and priorities for the future

Ministerial foreword

The Welsh Government has always put children and children's rights at the heart of everything it does.

The coronavirus pandemic has had a profound impact on our economy, our society and our communities. It has exposed and worsened existing inequalities with some of the most vulnerable in society being the hardest hit.

Never has there been a more important time to do all that we practically can to mitigate the impacts of poverty. Our most recent data shows us that 31% of children are living in relative income poverty (after housing costs).

During the last Senedd term, the First Minister made a commitment to re-engineer existing funded programmes to ensure they have the maximum impact on the lives of children living in poverty. This led to the development of the **Child Poverty: Income Maximisation Action Plan** (IMAP).

The IMAP contained a set of practical actions that would help maximise the incomes of families living in poverty in Wales and support them to build their financial resilience.

This document was downloaded from GOV.WALES and may not be the latest version.

Go to <https://gov.wales/child-poverty-final-report-income-maximisation-action-plan-html> for the latest version.

Get [information on copyright](#).

The impact of this Plan is being assessed so that the lessons learnt will help inform future work, ensuring we continue to take the most effective actions to tackle poverty in Wales.

We will continue to be bold, ambitious and progressive in our pursuit of a Wales free of child poverty.

Jane Hutt MS

Minister for Social Justice

Introduction

The **Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010** provides the legislative framework for tackling child poverty in Wales. It places a duty on Welsh Ministers and named public bodies to publish a Child Poverty Strategy which sets out objectives for tackling child poverty and the actions they will take to achieve the objectives.

The Welsh Government's current **Child Poverty Strategy** was published in 2015. The priorities identified in the Child Poverty Strategy are based on what the evidence tells us around where we can have most impact in terms of improving outcomes for low income families. They also reflect the policy levers available to the Welsh Government. The objectives focus on:

- reducing the number of children living in workless households
- increasing the skills of parents and young people to enable them to secure well paid employment
- reducing the inequalities which exist in the education, health and economic outcomes of children and families living in poverty
- using all available levers to create a strong economy and labour market which supports the tackling poverty agenda and reduces in-work poverty in Wales
- supporting families living in poverty to increase household income through debt and financial advice and action to address the “poverty premium”.

This document was downloaded from GOV.WALES and may not be the latest version.

Go to <https://gov.wales/child-poverty-final-report-income-maximisation-action-plan-html> for the latest version.

Get [information on copyright](#).

The IMAP highlighted our continued focus and investment in tackling poverty using the levers available to us. The IMAP had four key objectives which were:

- families in Wales are supported to claim all the financial support they are entitled to
- the cost of sending children to school is reduced
- the cost and accessibility of public transport for young people is addressed
- families in Wales are supported to be financially resilient.

This report summarises some of the achievements achieved during the duration of the IMAP and highlights our next steps and priorities to continue to maximising the incomes of families living in poverty in Wales.

Summary of achievements

Below is a summary of the actions / initiatives across the four objectives that combined new and existing work, focusing on delivery between November 2020 and March 2021.

Objective 1: Families in Wales are supported to claim all the financial support they are entitled to

National benefit take-up campaign

- Delivered the first national benefits take up communications campaign in Wales, promoting awareness of the available benefits and other financial support that people can access.
- The campaign resulted in an additional £651,504 claimed by those entitled to benefits.

Advice services

- Invested £800,000 in an advice services project helping those most at risk of poverty, including the delivery of a project offering free benefit awareness-

This document was downloaded from GOV.WALES and may not be the latest version.

Go to <https://gov.wales/child-poverty-final-report-income-maximisation-action-plan-html> for the latest version.

Get [information on copyright](#).

raising training for people who work with households who ought to otherwise be claiming benefits.

- The pilot projects engaged with 1,440 households supporting them to claim additional income of £2,468,052.

Best Practice Toolkit

- Developed a **Best Practice Toolkit** for Local Authorities to consider how they could simplify their application system for devolved benefits making them more accessible to people in need of this support.

Objective 2: The cost of sending children to school is reduced

Pupil Deprivation Grant Access (PDG-A)

- Through targeted media channels and via local authorities and consortia we delivered a communications campaign promoting uptake of the PDG-A grant (a grant is available for learners who are eligible for free school meals to help buy school uniform, equipment, sports kit and kit for activities outside of school for children).
- For academic year 2020 to 2021, we extended the PDG-A grant to two additional school years in Primary school and three additional years in secondary school.

Free School Meals (FSM)

- £11 million was made available to local authorities to put in place measures to ensure children eligible for free school meals continue to benefit from provision during school holidays up to and including Easter 2021 - £700K of this funding was allocated to support colleges with the equivalent provision for eligible learners.
- Provided an additional £23m funding to make free school meal provision available during school holidays during the 2021 to 2022 financial year.

This document was downloaded from GOV.WALES and may not be the latest version.

Go to <https://gov.wales/child-poverty-final-report-income-maximisation-action-plan-html> for the latest version.

Get [information on copyright](#).

- From January 2021 local authorities were given the opportunity to claim funding to provide year 7 pupils who are eligible for FSM with an additional breakfast allowance. Welsh Government is working with the Welsh Local Government Association to monitor uptake.

Period Poverty

- Over £3.3m was allocated for 2021 to 2022 to ensure free period products were made available to all those who need them in schools, colleges and communities across Wales. The funding remains at the same level as in previous years, demonstrating our continued commitment to addressing period dignity and tackling period poverty.

Whole School Framework Guidance

- Launched the framework on embedding a **whole-school approach** to emotional and mental well-being.
- The Framework is intended to support schools, including pupil referral units (PRUs) and education settings in reviewing their own well-being landscape and in developing plans to address their weaknesses and build on their strengths.

Objective 3: The cost and accessibility of public transport for young people is addressed

- Launched the **Llwybr Newydd: a new Wales Transport Strategy**

Fflecsi Pilot

- Extended the Flecsi pilot scheme in Pembrokeshire, Conwy, Blaenau Gwent and Newport - the scheme provides a local demand responsive bus service to enable more people to use public transport.
- Over 42,000 passenger journeys have been made on Fflecsi services across Wales. The majority of passengers are booking their journeys using the

This document was downloaded from GOV.WALES and may not be the latest version.

Go to <https://gov.wales/child-poverty-final-report-income-maximisation-action-plan-html> for the latest version.

Get [information on copyright](#).

digital app platform.

Objective 4: Families in Wales are supported to be financially resilient

Single Advice Fund (SAF)

- During 2020/21, Single Advice Fund (SAF) services helped over 127,000 people to deal with 286,666 social welfare problems. (The Welsh Government introduced the SAF to encourage better collaboration amongst advice providers and ensure more people throughout Wales have access to the information and advice that they need).
- Advice services are invaluable in helping people navigate through the benefit system to understand what they may be entitled to and how to claim. The benefit advice services delivered through the Single Advice Fund supported people to gain additional income of over £43 million.

Credit Unions

- To build financial resilience we awarded £2.5m to credit unions in 2020 to 2021 to provide fair and affordable credit and worked based payroll savings schemes’.

Food Poverty

- Provided £2m EU Transition funding to local authorities to support community food organisations to increase their reach, build their resilience and apply learning from the Covid-19 pandemic. The funding supported an increased number of people facing food poverty by strengthening community food initiatives across areas including focussing on activity that helps to address the root causes of food poverty.
- Funding was used to provide specialist support for initiatives such as outreach work, training for volunteers (e.g. food handling qualifications) and to build community resilience through the development of community hubs

This document was downloaded from GOV.WALES and may not be the latest version.

Go to <https://gov.wales/child-poverty-final-report-income-maximisation-action-plan-html> for the latest version.

Get [information on copyright](#).

which co-locate a range of support services such as debt and housing advice, social enterprises and advice services, built around community food provision such as holiday hunger schemes, food banks and community cafes.

Fuel Poverty

- An advice pilot to proactively support lower income households to reduce the cost of energy needed to maintain a satisfactory heating regime began in January 2021 and will run until end September 2021.
- The pilot has 113 households who are receiving energy advice and support. Whilst we await the findings will measure the impact the intervention has on participating households and will reduce the number of people living in or at risk of fuel poverty.
- Launched the [Tackling Fuel Poverty Strategy 2021-2035](#).

Future next steps and priorities for the future

We are committed to maximising the incomes of families living in poverty and are working at pace to identify what additional interventions could help alleviate child poverty in Wales in the longer term.

As part of our ongoing commitment we will continue to engage with Local Authorities and Health Boards, as well as the third sector, public organisations and key stakeholders all of whom have a key role to play in reducing child poverty and the effects it has on children's health and wellbeing.

Some of the actions in the plan will provide us with the evidence and data needed to inform future development of policy and strategy in this area. The new Senedd provides us the opportunity to focus our efforts on:

- co-ordination of cross-Government activities linked to tackling child poverty
- continuing our work with local authorities, looking at further improvements to develop a simplified system for delivering devolved benefits
- continuing to relieve the school-related financial pressures on families

This document was downloaded from GOV.WALES and may not be the latest version.

Go to <https://gov.wales/child-poverty-final-report-income-maximisation-action-plan-html> for the latest version.

Get [information on copyright](#).

- delivering the Llwybr Newydd: a new Wales Transport Strategy with the overarching vision being ‘a more accessible and sustainable transport system’
- reviewing the findings from the IMAP pilots with a view to developing and delivering more long term actions later in 2021 onwards.

This document was downloaded from GOV.WALES and may not be the latest version.

Go to <https://gov.wales/child-poverty-final-report-income-maximisation-action-plan-html> for the latest version.

Get [information on copyright](#).

About this document

This document is a copy of the web page [Child poverty: final report of the income maximisation action plan](#) downloaded.

Go to <https://gov.wales/child-poverty-final-report-income-maximisation-action-plan-html> for the latest version.

This document may not be fully accessible, for more information refer to our [accessibility statement](#).

Get [information on copyright](#).

This document was downloaded from GOV.WALES and may not be the latest version.

Go to <https://gov.wales/child-poverty-final-report-income-maximisation-action-plan-html> for the latest version.

Get [information on copyright](#).