



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Engagement and pre-consultation Have your say about Child Poverty in Wales

Welsh Government is committed to working with partners to drive change in tackling poverty and inequality to make a positive impact on the lives of children and their families in Wales. To support this to happen the Senedd Cymru made a law that means Welsh Ministers must have a Child Poverty Strategy in place for Wales. Tackling inequality will continue to underpin our child poverty objectives, the actions we take and the decisions we make to achieve them.

The current Child Poverty Strategy for Wales has been in place since 2015. Over the past three years families have had extra pressures because of the Covid 19 pandemic and the cost of living crisis. At the same time the Welsh Government budget has been under pressure and we have had to prioritise what we do and how we spend money to support the immediate needs of people.

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. It is there to make public bodies think more about the long term, work better with people and communities and each other, look to prevent problems and take a more joined-up approach. We agree the revised strategy should not be a plan for just Welsh Government action, but a plan for all of Wales. This recognises the contribution that we all must make to deliver the change needed for children and families. It will help us to create a Wales that we all want to live in, now and in the future.

Lots of the changes that can put more money into people's pockets sit with the UK Government. Things like welfare benefits, taxes, and public spending levels.

There are still a lot of things that the Welsh Government and public services in Wales can do to improve the lives of children and their families who are in poor households and to reduce poverty in the longer term. Especially when we all work together. The third sector (voluntary organisations and charities) provides critical support to children, young people, families and communities in Wales and has a key role in tackling child poverty. The private sector (businesses) can also be key for supporting pathways out of poverty through their direct activity as employers and working in partnership through charitable foundations with small and local charities, people and communities.

The Welsh Government is asking children and young people, families and community members, and organisations that support and speak out for children in poverty to help us make decisions about what we should do to tackle child poverty.

This engagement work is the start of work to decide what we will include in a draft Child Poverty Strategy for Wales. This will then be shared as a 12-week formal consultation exercise.

We will then consider all the things people have told us to publish a new Child Poverty Strategy for Wales. We will also use what people have said to complete an assessment of the ways in which the strategy is likely to impact on things like equalities, children's rights and the Welsh Language.

We have already looked at evidence from the Wales Centre for Public Policy, from Audit Wales, from the Children's Commissioner for Wales and from organisations like Children in Wales and the Bevan Foundation. Their evidence has included evidence from children, young people and families living in poverty.

This evidence has helped us to start to think about what we need to talk to people about. A strategy explains what we plan to do, why we plan to do it and how we will know if we are achieving what we want to achieve.

We need your help to decide what to include in a formal consultation on a new Child Poverty Strategy for Wales.

1. What we would like your views on – Areas for discussion



Reducing costs and maximising the income of families so that children and young people have enough financial and material support for what they need.

This means making sure people know what they are entitled to and making it easier for people to claim financial support and help to access practical things. It also means reducing and helping out with the cost of food, fuel and housing, as well as essential items like period products, things for new babies and school uniforms.

We want services and organisations to think about how they can make sure that what they do does makes things easier for children and families. For example, organisations asking people to complete several different forms with the same information for support from individual departments and to attend several appointments at different times about the same issue.

We don't know how long the cost of living crisis will continue and we are worried that the UK is entering a recession that will push more people into poverty. This is about support for children and their families in the here and now as well as in the future.

Thinking about financial and material support, what are the three things that would make the biggest difference to children and their families now and looking to the future?

(Remembering that the tax and benefits systems sit with the UK Government)



Creating pathways out of poverty so that children and young people and their families have enough financial and material support for what they need and reach their potential.

This means making sure children grow up with a better chance to move out of poverty in their childhoods and as adults.

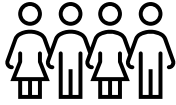
We know we need all partners to focus on those early years for children. Investing in the early years of a child's life can make the difference in better health and developmental outcomes, which in turn influences their later opportunities for life.

We think the best ways to do this are to make education accessible to all, to build a strong economy and better paid jobs. We want to support children and young people to have access to support so they can reach their potential and enjoy poverty free futures. This also means supporting parents and carers to develop the skills they need to get a decent wage and removing the barriers to access to affordable childcare and good transport.

This is about helping children and young people with their education, supporting people into work and making sure work pays so working people, including lone parents do not have to struggle with the cost of living. We know that we need to plan how to do this for people who face extra barriers because of discrimination related to gender, disability, ethnicity or sexuality.

This means doing everything we can to support change in the long term so that less children grow up in poverty in future.

Thinking about pathways out of poverty, what are the three things that would make the biggest difference to children and their families now and looking to the future?



Supporting family wellbeing and making sure that work across Welsh Government delivers for children in poverty, including those with protected characteristics, so that they can enjoy their rights and have better outcomes.

The Welsh Government has a Children and Young People's Plan that explains the part that Welsh Government can play in making Wales a wonderful place for children and young people to grow up, live and work, where everyone feels valued. We believe all our children and young people have the right to:

- Have the best start in life;
- Take part in and enjoy learning, and have the best education possible to expand their knowledge, develop their creativity and fulfil their potential;
- Enjoy healthy lifestyles and be protected from harm, abuse, neglect and discrimination;
- Be able to play and have fun;
- Be listened to and be treated with respect;
- Have a home and a community that is a nice place to grow up;
- Have enough financial and material support for what they need.

We know that poverty can make it difficult for children and young people to enjoy some of these rights. We also know that things like gender, disability and ethnicity make it more likely for children to be living in poverty and the things we need to do to help are different for different children, young people and families.

This means that in all the work we do across government to deliver policies and programmes we need to think about how we can deliver for children and young people in poverty, and about how we make sure that discrimination related to gender, disability, ethnicity or sexuality does not make it more difficult for them and their families to do well.

Thinking about children's rights, equality, and outcomes, what are the three things that would make the biggest difference to children and their families now and looking to the future?



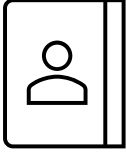
Ensuring children, young people and their families are treated with dignity and respect by the people and services who interact with and support them and challenging the stigma of poverty.

This means that we expect the people and services that support children, young people and their families to operate in a way that meets high standards of public service that does not add to the burden of pressures that poverty brings. We know that these pressures can cause poor mental wellbeing and mental health.

This includes finding ways to simplify systems and make support easy to access. It also means thinking about how services might discriminate or cause stigma and avoiding this.

We believe that part of this work should include making sure children and young people don't feel excluded because their families are on a low income. Local authorities and public services should work with children, young people, their families and communities to identify what matters to them and what needs to change.

Thinking about dignity, respect and stigma, what are the three things that would make the biggest difference to children and their families now and looking to the future?



2. Is there anything else you want us to know?

Is there anything else that we should think about? We cannot promise to include everything that children and young people, their families and communities or organisations tell us needs to happen in the consultation on the strategy, but we will take all of your views seriously.

The new strategy is being developed at a time when the economy is under great strain and the Welsh Government has to make difficult decisions about how to spend public money in the ways that will make the greatest difference in the short and long term as we deliver under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales.

Looking forward we cannot guarantee what funding we will get for Wales from the UK Government. That does not mean that we cannot make a difference by using the money we have in the most effective way possible.

Finally, please let us know how you would like us to feed back to you on what we have learnt from listening and how it has influenced our decisions.

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