

# Welsh Government Gender Budgeting in Practice



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

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## Learning from Pilot Schemes in Wales



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## Foreword



The decisions we take as a government about how we allocate resources, design services, and shape policy must be rooted in fairness and equity. Since we published *Deeds not Words* in 2019, we have worked to progress our ambition to achieve gender equality in Wales. Gender budgeting is an important tool.

Gender budgeting does not mean having separate budgets for each gender. It does mean that public spending supports our equity goals. It is about understanding how our spending decisions affect people and using that knowledge to improve outcomes for all.

Between 2019 and 2023, the Welsh Government tested different approaches to using gender budgeting in our day-to-day work. These pilots — across skills, employment and active travel — have provided valuable insights into how we can embed gender analysis into the heart of our budgetary and policy processes.

The results are a significant step forward in our journey towards a fairer and more equal society, bringing new tools to our disposal that help ensure public spending reflects the diverse needs of our communities and contributes to a more equal society.

However, the work is not complete. Our challenge now is to ensure the principles are embedded across the Welsh Government, to inform the work of our Welsh Spending Review and future budget cycles.

I am pleased to publish the outcomes of these pilots alongside the 2026-27 Draft Budget, and to set out the next steps we will take to embed the use of gender budgeting across the Welsh Government.

**Mark Drakeford MS**

Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Welsh Language

# Introduction

**This report presents an evaluation of three specific gender budgeting pilot schemes which the Welsh Government undertook between 2019 and 2023.**

The purpose of these pilots was to enhance our understanding of how gender budgeting might help us deliver better outcomes for the people of Wales. We wanted to test the practical application of gender budgeting across a range of different policy areas, which were chosen using the broad criteria below:

- Piloting in policy areas where there may already be a known gender bias as well as in policies where there do not appear to be any bias.
- Piloting across different parts of the Welsh Government.
- If feasible, piloting in both existing policies, and newer policies.

The pilots were selected to reflect a range of policy areas, delivery models, and stages of development. They were not designed to be perfect, but to test, learn, and inform future practice.

Using these criteria we focused on three areas – skills, employment, and active travel – and identified projects where gender budgeting could be incorporated in policy development already underway.

Personal Learning Accounts provide support for employed people on below average salaries to gain higher level skills, helping them access a wider range of job opportunities. Funding is specifically targeted at labour shortages and skills gaps in priority sectors such as health and social care, logistics, green construction and renewable energy. A key objective of the gender budgeting pilot was to help people develop skills in non-gender typical areas.

The Young Person's Guarantee gives everyone aged 16-24 the offer of support linked to work, education, training or self-employment. The gender budgeting approach as part of this work was in recognition of the complex barriers some people may face in accessing support and will help the Welsh Government better target funding and mitigate against unintended impacts.

Active travel is a key part of the Welsh Government's vision for the Welsh transport network. This gender budgeting pilot was specifically focused on the Wales E-Move programme, which operated low-cost community-based e-bike hire and loan schemes in five areas in Wales – most with high levels of deprivation. The Welsh Government worked alongside Sustrans Cymru, who delivered the scheme, to better understand how a gender budgeting approach could add value and inform future delivery.

# What is Gender Budgeting?

Gender budgeting means applying gender analysis to how governments raise and spend money. It is a way of critically reviewing how spending decisions affect the economic and social opportunities of women and men, and it looks to restructure spending decisions to eliminate unequal outcomes. It involves actively identifying the impacts of spending on gender equality.

In practice, this means that when developing policy, we must think about the likely impacts (intended or unintended) different decisions would have on gender, including taking an intersectional approach. We can then use this information to make better, well-informed decisions. Gender budgeting is essentially including gender analysis in the decisions we make about how we use money to deliver public services in Wales.

Gender budgeting can lead to:

- fairer use of public money, through targeted spending
- better policy development, and better allocation of resources, to meet the diverse needs of the population
- increased transparency making it easier to see who benefits from public spending, and helping address the gaps
- a shift towards outcomes-based policy making and budgeting across public services.



## Gender Budgeting

Gender budgeting involves preparing budgets and allocating resources to promote gender equality.

### Key Principles



**Gender Equality**



**Inclusion**



**Accountability**



**Gender Analysis**



**Policy Review**



**Resource Allocation**



**Impact Assessment**

### Benefits



**Reduced Inequality**



**Effective Policies**

# Findings from the Pilots

## Active Travel – E-Move

E-Move was an e-cycle and e-cargo cycle loan scheme operating in several Welsh towns, managed by Sustrans. Gender budgeting was introduced after the initial grant award, to ensure greater gender equity among those benefiting from the scheme.

### Key Actions

The pilot embedded gender budgeting objectives into scheme delivery, including targeted stakeholder engagement, demographic analysis, and legacy planning for asset transfer with gender equity stipulations.

### Findings

- Barriers for women included lack of secure storage, weight of bikes and the need to transport children and luggage.
- To address this, the promotion of the scheme and the bikes on offer were adapted in response to feedback from women. This resulted in 48% of users being women over three years.
- Data collection improved throughout the pilot, with a gender budgeting framework developed for engagement, accessibility, and monitoring.
- Staff and community partners received equality, diversity and inclusion training, and a toolkit was co-designed.

### Challenges

Gender budgeting was initially perceived as an ‘add-on’ and additional burden to those delivering the project. This resulted in lack of early integration. However, final user numbers achieved near gender parity, whereas nationally men are three times more likely to cycle than women.

## Young Persons Guarantee

The Young Persons Guarantee aims to provide all under-25s in Wales with support into education, training, or employment. Gender budgeting was piloted from 2022-23, with a programme board established to oversee integration.

### Key Actions

Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) were improved to consider intersectionality. Funding was provided to create richer data to support decision making. A Female Prisoner Population pilot launched to obtain unique experiences of the skills and employability support provision. The pilot resulted in a range of evidence to inform future delivery of employability programmes.

### Findings

- EIAs rarely considered intersectionality or male/female analysis.
- Embedding gender budgeting is a challenge when flagship programmes are delivered by a wide range of partners.
- Data collection improvements were made and continue, but intersectional analysis remains limited.
- Rapid pace of programme delivery is challenging to balance against a new, unfamiliar approach.

### Challenges

Maintaining momentum, ensuring gender budgeting informs budget processes, and balancing the need for rapid delivery with developing a gender informed evidence base.

## Personal Learning Accounts

Personal Learning Accounts provide upskilling opportunities for employed people, with a relatively even gender split among participants. Gender budgeting was introduced after the programme launch.

### Key Actions

A focus on gendered access to Further Education courses and outcomes. Guidance and contract management processes were updated to emphasise gender budgeting. Quarterly meetings and refresher sessions were held with colleges and partners. Tailored support was developed to address female student confidence when participating in male dominated subjects.

### Findings

- Gender budgeting is not yet fully embedded; understanding and practice vary across delivery partners.
- Monitoring data shows some progress in challenging gender stereotypes and changing participation levels (e.g. increased female participation in construction and ICT).
- There is a lack of clarity of the difference between an inclusive approach to engaging students and gender budgeting, which requires further support and training.

### Challenges

Staff turnover, sustaining focus, and managing expectations about the programme's ability to address sectoral gender imbalances.

## Cross cutting insights

Across the three pilots the following six themes emerged:

### Timing matters

Gender budgeting must be embedded from the outset — not retrofitted. In these cases gender budgeting was often introduced after programme design, limiting its impact and buy-in.

### Data is critical

Disaggregated and intersectional data is essential but often lacking. Improvements in data collection are underway, but consistent, intersectional, and actionable analysis is still developing.

### Capacity and understanding requires support

Delivery partners and staff require more practical guidance, training, and examples to embed gender budgeting.

### Stakeholder Engagement is essential

Engagement with external stakeholders and sharing of learning is increasing but could be further strengthened.

### Sustainability must be considered

Embedding gender budgeting requires ongoing focus, especially through staff changes and programme transitions.

### Cultural change takes time

Embedding gender budgeting requires sustained effort and political will.

# Policy Recommendations

## Mainstream Gender Budgeting from the Outset

- Future development of our approach should focus on how to integrate Gender Budgeting at the earliest stages of programme design or policy review, not as a retrospective add-on.
- New programmes to test our approach further should include gender budgeting objectives, frameworks, and monitoring from inception.

## Build Capacity and Provide Practical Tools

- Develop and disseminate practical toolkits, case studies, and training for delivery partners, drawing on both Welsh and international best practice (e.g., OECD, UN Women).
- Regularly convene learning sessions and communities of practice to share challenges and solutions.

## Strengthen Data Collection and Intersectional Analysis

- Strive to collect and analyse disaggregated data (by gender, ethnicity, disability, etc.) and recommend intersectional analysis in all monitoring and evaluation.
- Look to embed systems and capacity to support robust data analysis and feedback loops into policy development.

## Embed Gender Budgeting in the Budget Processes

- Ensure Treasury guidance promotes gender budgeting considerations and intersectional impact assessments.
- Further consider how to link funding decisions and contract management to demonstrable progress on gender budgeting.

## Foster Stakeholder Engagement and Transparency

- Engage stakeholders (including delivery partners, and advocacy groups) in the design, delivery, and evaluation of programmes.
- Publicly share learning, outcomes, and best practice from further pilots to build momentum and accountability.

## Learn from International Best Practice

- Continue to learn from international leaders in gender budgeting (e.g., Iceland, Canada, Austria).
- Participate in international networks and incorporate global evidence into policy and practice.

## What Happens Next?

**The pilots have laid the groundwork for a more systematic approach to gender budgeting in Wales.**

We will not be carrying out further pilots at this stage. Instead, our focus is on consolidating learning, building capacity, and embedding gender budgeting into the fabric of government. We are capturing the good work being done across Wales and sharing with public sector partners.

The Wales Women's Budget Group has been a critical partner in this work, providing training, challenge, and insight. Their continued support, alongside the support of our Budget Improvement Impact Advisory Group will be vital as we move forward.

Gender budgeting is not a panacea. But it is a powerful tool – one that helps us ask better questions, make better decisions, and deliver better outcomes. These pilots have shown what is possible when we take equality seriously – not just in words, but in deeds.

As we look ahead, our task is clear – to build on what we have learned, to embed gender budgeting across government, and to ensure that every pound we spend helps to build a fairer, more equal Wales.