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Discretionary Assistance Fund: analysis report 2025

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Discretionary Assistance Fund:

analysis report 2025

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Views expressed in this report are those of the researcher and not necessarily those of the Welsh Government

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Glossary

Discretionary Assistance Fund (DAF)

The Discretionary Assistance Fund (DAF) in Wales is a government-funded crisis scheme designed to provide financial assistance to individuals experiencing financial crisis with no other means of support. It offers two types of grants: Emergency Assistance Payments (EAP) and Individual Assistance Payments (IAP).

Emergency Assistance Payment (EAP)

Emergency Assistance Payment is a grant provided by the DAF that aims to help all individuals experiencing unexpected financial crisis, by providing small emergency cash payments to help pay for essential costs, such as food, gas, electricity, clothing or emergency travel. Applications can be made directly by any individual over the age of 16 with an address in Wales.

Free School Meals (FSM)

Free School Meals are available to eligible learners in maintained schools. These meals are provided to primary school children from low-income households, ensuring that no child goes hungry while in school. Eligibility is based on household income, and parents can apply for FSM if their children receive certain benefits, such as Universal Credit or Income-related Employment and Support Allowance. The rollout of universal primary FSM was completed in September 2024, aiming to tackle child poverty and ensure equitable access to education.

Individual Assistance Payment (IAP)

Individual Assistance Payment is a grant provided by the DAF that aims to help potentially vulnerable individuals, such as those leaving a care home or institution or those moving homes due to domestic violence to live independently in their home. It can be used to provide 'white goods' (for example a fridge, washing machine) and other home furnishings (for example beds, sofas) when the individual has no access to any other sources of funding. IAP awards must be applied for via a DAF Approved Partner organisation and cannot be applied for directly by individuals.

Universal Credit (UC)

Universal credit is a payment designed to help with living costs for individuals on low income and those who are out of work or unable to work. It replaces several legacy benefits and is paid monthly (or twice a month for some people in Scotland). Eligible individuals will receive a 'standard allowance' along with additional payments based on their circumstances, such as housing costs or health needs.

Summary

The Discretionary Assistance Fund (DAF) is a Welsh government-funded crisis fund designed to provide financial assistance to individuals experiencing unexpected financial crisis with no other means of support. It offers two types of grants: Emergency Assistance Payments (EAP) and Individual Assistance Payments (IAP). IAPs help people live independently in their home or a property that they are moving into. EAPs help pay for essential costs, such as food, gas, electricity, clothing or emergency travel.

This report presents an analysis of the recipients of the DAF and of economic indicators to assess whether the payments of awards were made where the need was the greatest during the period between May 2024 and April 2025.

Main findings:

- 175,000 EAP awards were given to individuals between May 2024 and April 2025, equivalent to £14 million. That is 59,000 fewer number of awards and £5 million less in value compared to the same period a year earlier. Younger individuals, aged 16 to 39, made over 60% of the total applications, while only 5% were made by those aged 60 and above. The 16 to 39 age group were also more likely to receive more than one EAP award.
- In terms of IAP, 9,000 awards were given to individuals amounting to a value of £11 million. That is 6,000 fewer number of awards and £4 million less in value compared to the same period a year earlier. IAP awards were more evenly distributed across age groups compared to EAP awards, with those aged 50-70+ receiving a larger proportion of IAP than EAP awards compared to younger groups.
- EAP awards accounted for 95% of the total number of DAF awards, while IAP represented the remaining 5%. However, the distribution in terms of value was more even: 55% of the total value was spent on EAP awards while 45% was spent on IAP. This was due to the average EAP award value being £79 while the average IAP award value was £1,167.
- Regarding accessibility, 99% of individuals accessed DAF awards online. Where telephone was used, this was more likely among older age groups. In a few cases, the postal route was used.
- The analysis shows there was correlation between the local authorities with the highest number of EAP and IAP awards as a proportion of the population and most of the economic indicators examined, indicating the DAF awards were allocated to individuals in areas of greatest need. For instance, the four local authorities with the highest number of EAP awards per capita in 2024-25 were Merthyr Tydfil, Blaenau Gwent, Newport and Rhondda Cynon Taf. These local authorities also had above average proportions of pupils eligible for Free School Meals, households receiving Universal Credit with child entitlement, and children living in relative low-income families. This indicates that DAF assistance is providing relief to individuals on benefits and to low-income families with children.

1. Introduction

1.1 The Discretionary Assistance Fund (DAF) is a fund of last resort for residents of Wales who are experiencing financial crisis and with no other means of support. It is one of a range of Welsh and UK government support mechanisms that operate in Wales to help those experiencing financial, social or other types of exclusion.

1.2 In the past few years, an increasing number of individuals and households have become financially vulnerable as their financial resilience has been under strain since the Covid-19 pandemic and the cost of living crisis¹. Those who have had their financial situation eroded are particularly sensitive to the wider economic climate including facing continuous cost of living challenges and the rate of consumer price inflation (as measured by the Consumer Prices Index, CPI), which remained mostly above the Bank of England target of 2%² during 2024-25³.

1.3 The combination of these factors, and the additional support provided by the Welsh and UK governments⁴ to help mitigate the adverse effects on financially vulnerable groups, has likely had a direct impact on demand for the DAF. Other decisions relating to support delivered by local authorities and other organisations in Wales may also have impacted on the level of demand for the DAF in this period. Between May 2024 and April 2025, the period analysed in this report, the eligibility criteria for the DAF did not change. However, during the same period the Welsh Government increased the value of off-grid fuel DAF payments to reflect the general rise in energy prices.

1.4 The DAF analysis report covers the period between May 2024 and April 2025, and has two aims. The first is to present an analysis of the recipients of DAF in terms of their age and ways individuals access DAF payments. The second is to examine the DAF awards in the 22 local authorities in Wales to identify any emerging patterns in specific economic indicators that might explain the number of awards in each local authority⁵.

1.5 DAF data is supplied to the Welsh Government by our service provider NEC Software Solutions UK. This management information has not undergone the same level of quality assurance as official statistics and the data may be revised in future⁶. The data in this report

¹ The Poverty in Wales 2025 report from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation shows that poverty has intensified over time, with the proportion of people in very deep poverty rising from 33% in 1994–97 to 47% in 2020–23. According to Citizens Advice (2024–25), over half of people seeking debt advice now have “negative budgets,” meaning their essential spending exceeds income, up from just over one-third in 2019. The Money and Pensions Service’s MoneyView Wales (2025) reports that 29% of people in Wales experience low financial wellbeing, struggling or falling behind with bills/credit.

² [Inflation and the 2% target | Bank of England](#).

³ [CPI ANNUAL RATE 00: ALL ITEMS 2015=100 - Office for National Statistics](#)

⁴ For example during the period between May 2024 and April 2025, the Welsh Government provided the Single Advice Fund, support with emergency food and fuel, and the cost of the school day. The UK Government provided the means tested benefits system and the Warm Home Discount.

⁵ Currently, the data only allows to look at DAF payments by age group, ways of accessing DAF payments and by local authorities in Wales. For future reports, we will consider exploring additional breakdowns, e.g. household size, and analysis of the DAF figures over time, given there will be enough data available without significant changes in eligibility.

⁶ [For regular high level data on DAF payments, please refer to StatsWales](#)

refers to approved applications (not applications which have been paid⁷) between 1st May 2024 and 30th April 2025⁸, except if specified differently. The analysis in sections 4, 5 and 6 is carried out in per capita figures. This means that absolute numbers have been divided by the number of individuals or the number of households, or the number of children according to the different indicators used.

1.6 It is important to note that the explanation behind the number of awards in a local authority is given not by one single factor but a combination of many different indicators. Some of these indicators are captured here, such as “individuals not in employment in receipt of Universal Credit”, “economic inactivity rate”, and “pupils eligible for free school meals”.

⁷ This means the value of payments in this report may differ from the final amount paid to recipients.

⁸ The time period differs from the financial year (April 2024 - March 2025) so it aligned with the period covered in previous reports, so figures were comparable.

2. Emergency Assistance Payments (EAP) awards received by individuals by age

2.1 During the period between May 2024 and April 2025, £14 million was awarded to individuals as EAP awards, this is £5 million less compared to the same period in a year earlier. The £14 million corresponds to 175,000 EAP awards approved this year compared to 234,000 EAP awards in the same period a year earlier.

Table 1: Number and proportion of EAP applications by age group compared to the proportion of the total population in Wales by age group, May 2024 to April 2025

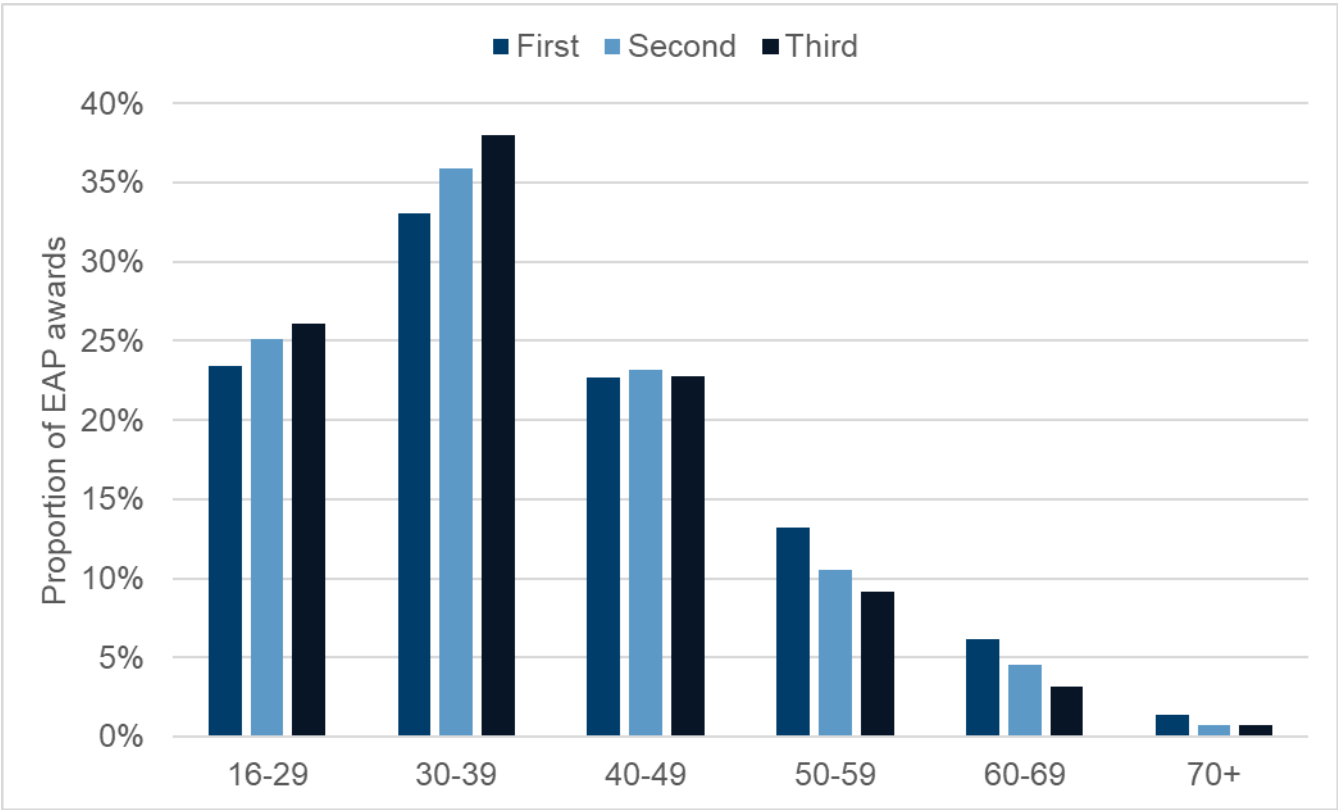
Age (years)	Number of individuals	Proportion of individuals receiving EAP awards (%)	Proportion of total population in Wales (%)
16-29	94,958	26%	17%
30-39	123,998	35%	13%
40-49	80,536	22%	11%
50-59	39,485	11%	13%
60-69	16,105	4%	13%
70+	3,621	1%	16%

Source: NEC Data on DAF awards from 1st May 2024 to 30th April 2025.

2.2 Table 1 reports number of total applications made by individuals and not DAF awards approved⁹. Table 1 shows when breaking down the figures by age, individuals aged 30 to 39 years made the highest proportion of EAP applications in 2024-25, around one in three of all EAP applications. Younger individuals, those aged 16 to 39 years old, made over 60% of the total applications. Only 5% of EAP applications were made by individuals 60 years of age and over.

⁹ The number of applications is larger than the number of DAF awards approved since some applications might be rejected, therefore the total number of applications will be different from the total number of DAF awards given.

Figure 1: Distribution of number of EAP awards approved by age group of EAP recipients, May 2024 to April 2025



Source: NEC Data on DAF awards from 1st May 2024 to 30th April 2025.

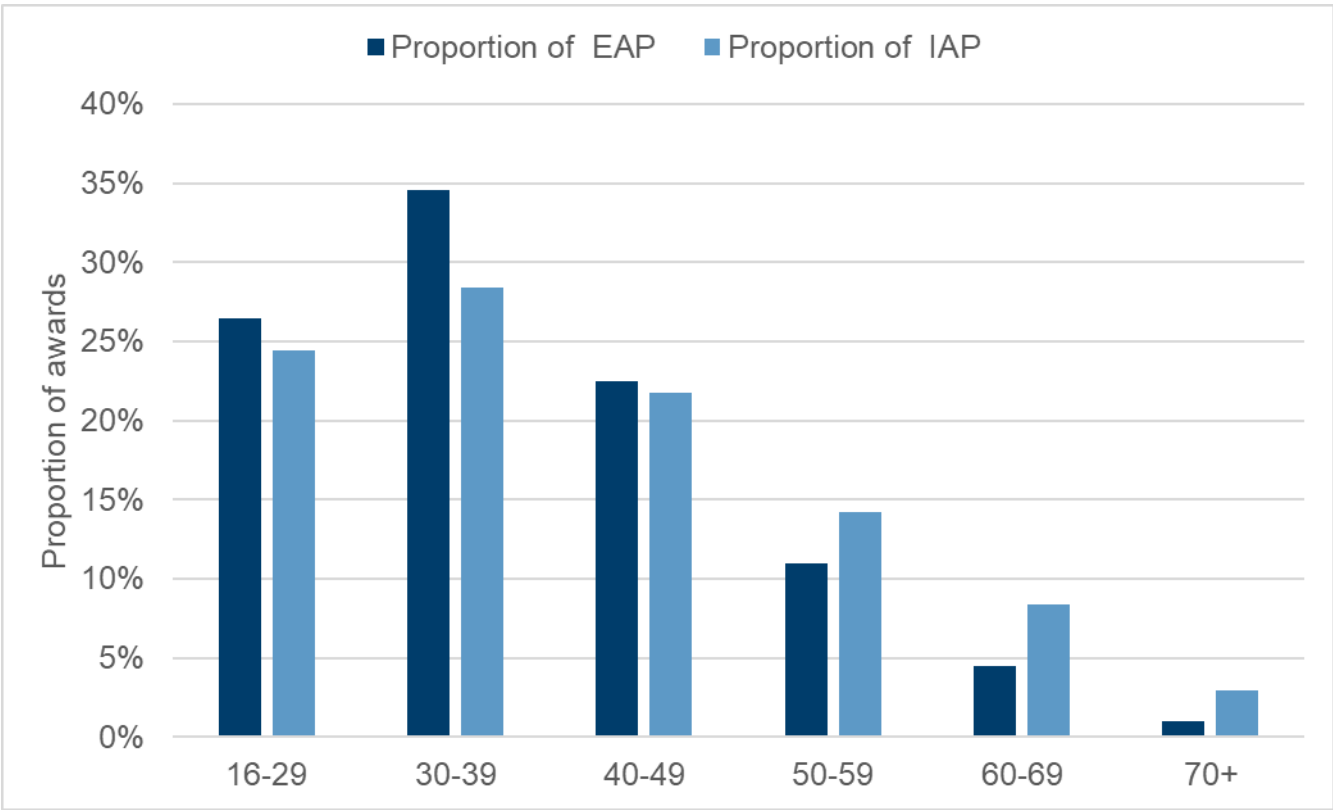
2.3 Figure 1 reports number of awards approved and not number of total applications. In terms of number of payments, Figure 1 shows that younger individuals aged 16-to 39-years-old were more likely to receive two or three EAP awards compared to older groups. For those aged 50 and above, the average number of payments fell as age increases.

3. Differences between Emergency Assistance Payments (EAP) and Individual Assistance Payments (IAP)

3.1 During the period between May 2024 and April 2025, £11 million was awarded to individuals as IAP awards, this is £4 million less compared to same period a year earlier. The £11 million corresponds to 9,000 IAP awards approved between May 2024 and April 2025 compared to 15,000 IAP awards in the same period a year earlier.

3.2. In terms of the distribution of number of DAF awards between May 2024 and April 2025, 95% were EAP awards while 5% were IAP. However, the distribution in terms of value was more even: 55% of the value was spent on EAP awards while 45% was spent on IAP. This is because the average EAP award value was £79 while the average IAP award value was £1,167.

Figure 2: Distribution of number of EAP and IAP applications by age group, May 2024 to April 2025



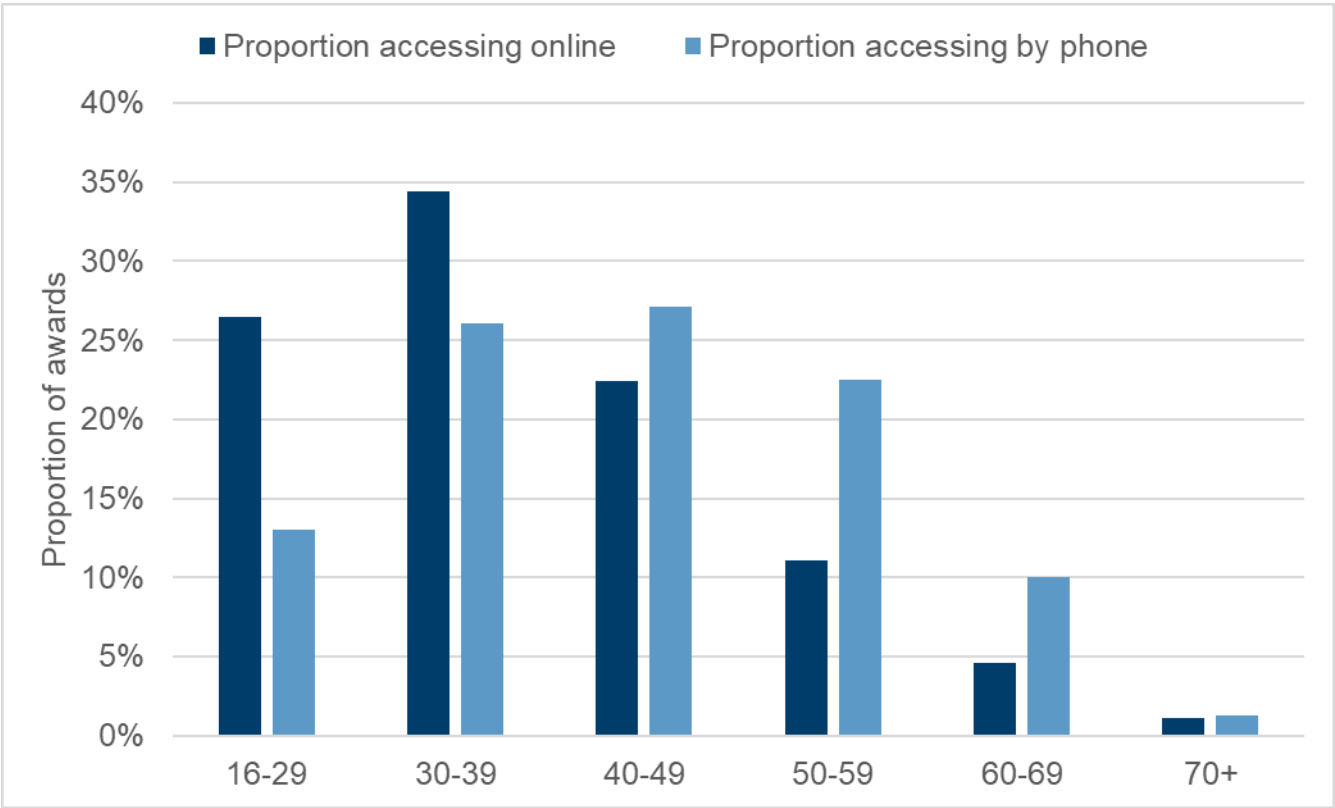
Source: NEC Data on DAF awards from 1st May 2024 to 30th April 2025.

3.3. Figure 2 reports number of total applications made by individuals and not DAF awards approved. Figure 2 shows the distribution of number of EAP and IAP applications across age groups was slightly different. EAP applications were concentrated among younger individuals, with those aged 16 to 39 making over 60% of all EAP applications. In comparison, those aged 50 or over made a larger proportion of IAP applications than EAP.

3.4 The distribution of DAF awards approved by local authorities and age group shows that the mean for each local authority did not differ much from the overall mean for Wales. In

other words, the distribution of total DAF awards approved by age was similar across all local authorities.

Figure 3: Distribution of ways of accessing DAF awards by age group, May 2024 to April 2025



Source: NEC Data on DAF awards from 1st May 2024 to 30th April 2025.

3.5 Figure 3 reports number of total applications made by individuals and not DAF awards approved. Figure 3 shows 99% of individuals accessed DAF awards online. However, when comparing who accessed online versus who did by phone we observed that older age groups (those aged 40 and over) tended to access via phone more compared to younger age groups (16 to 39). DAF applications can also be sent through the post but that was less than 0.01% of all the applications received.

4. Welfare benefits: Universal Credit (UC), legacy and other benefits

4.1 In sections 4, 5 and 6, we identify (shaded in blue) the local authorities with the highest EAP and IAP awards approved per capita, obtained by dividing these indicators by the population¹⁰ of each local authority. We then compare the shaded cells across the DAF awards and other economic indicators to find relevant patterns¹¹. The shaded cells show values above the average¹² for that indicator.

Table 2: Proportion of the population in receipt of DAF awards or certain welfare benefits, by local authority

Some shorthand is used in this table, [h] = higher than average.

Local Authority	DAF EAP	DAF IAP	Individuals on UC not in employment	Personal Independence Payment	Households on UC with housing entitlement
Isle of Anglesey	5%	0.3%	13%	13%	12%
Gwynedd	5%	0.3%	10%	10%	11%
Conwy	5%	0.3%	13%	14%	11%
Denbighshire	6%	[h] 0.5%	[h] 15%	[h] 16%	13%
Flintshire	5%	0.3%	11%	12%	11%
Wrexham	[h] 8%	[h] 0.4%	13%	13%	[h] 15%
Powys	3%	0.2%	10%	12%	9%
Ceredigion	2%	0.3%	10%	11%	10%
Pembrokeshire	4%	0.2%	13%	14%	12%
Carmarthenshire	5%	[h] 0.4%	[h] 14%	[h] 16%	12%
Swansea	[h] 7%	0.3%	[h] 14%	[h] 15%	[h] 15%
Neath Port Talbot	[h] 8%	[h] 0.4%	[h] 17%	[h] 19%	[h] 15%
Bridgend	[h] 7%	0.3%	[h] 14%	[h] 16%	13%
Vale of Glamorgan	6%	[h] 0.4%	11%	12%	11%
Cardiff	[h] 7%	[h] 0.5%	13%	10%	[h] 15%
Rhondda Cynon Taff	[h] 9%	0.3%	[h] 15%	[h] 17%	[h] 14%
Merthyr Tydfil	[h] 13%	[h] 0.5%	[h] 17%	[h] 20%	[h] 17%
Caerphilly	[h] 8%	0.3%	[h] 16%	[h] 19%	[h] 14%
Blaenau Gwent	[h] 12%	[h] 0.4%	[h] 19%	[h] 21%	[h] 17%
Torfaen	[h] 8%	0.3%	[h] 17%	[h] 18%	[h] 16%
Monmouthshire	3%	0.3%	9%	10%	9%
Newport	[h] 9%	[h] 0.5%	[h] 15%	13%	[h] 16%

¹⁰ To calculate the proportions in tables 2, 3 and 4, we used slightly different groups of the population for each indicator, depending on who was eligible and how the indicator was calculated. For DAF awards we used individuals aged 16 and over. For the rest, we used whatever age range of the population was relevant.

¹¹ To note, in tables 2, 3 and 4 the comparison should be made only on whether any cells have been highlighted or not. It is not appropriate to compare the numbers across columns because these might cover different time periods and groups of the population.

¹² The average for each indicator was calculated using the proportion of population for each local authority due to issues with data availability. This should be reviewed in the future.

Source: NEC data on DAF awards from 1st May 2024 to 30th April 2025; Individuals on UC not in employment: DWP benefit statistics (Stat-Xplore) April 2025; Personal Independence Payment and Households on UC with housing entitlement: DWP benefit statistics (Stat-Xplore) November 2024; Household estimations to derive estimations by households: [Households by Local Authority and Year](#), WG, December 2024; Population estimates used to derive estimations per capita taken from [Estimates of the population for England and Wales - Office for National Statistics](#), June 2024.

4.2 Table 2 shows the number of EAP and IAP awards as a proportion of the population in each local authority, alongside the proportion of the population receiving Universal Credit (UC) not in employment, receiving Personal Independence Payment and households receiving UC with housing entitlement.

4.3 The local authorities with the highest proportion of EAP awards per person were Merthyr Tydfil, Blaenau Gwent, Rhondda Cynon Taff and Newport. All four local authorities had above average proportions of individuals receiving UC not in employment and of households in UC with housing entitlement. Blaenau Gwent, Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taff also had an above average proportion of individuals on Personal Independence Payment (Newport did not). Following these four local authorities closely were Neath Port Talbot, Torfaen and Caerphilly also with higher than average EAP awards as well as the other welfare benefits indicators.

4.4 Denbighshire, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil and Newport were the local authorities with the highest proportion of IAP awards per capita. Denbighshire, Merthyr Tydfil and Newport also showed an above average proportion of individuals on UC not in employment. In addition, Denbighshire and Merthyr Tydfil presented a larger than average proportion of individuals receiving Personal Independence Payment. Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil and Newport had a larger than average proportion of households in UC with housing entitlement. It is worth mentioning that Blaenau Gwent, Carmarthenshire and Neath Port Talbot also showed above average proportions of IAP awards per capita alongside higher than average proportions on most of the other indicators.

5. Economic indicators: food parcels to adults, economic inactivity and proportion of average income spent on rent by private renting households

Table 3: Proportion of the population in receipt of DAF awards and other economic indicators¹³, by local authority

Some shorthand is used in this table, [h] = higher than average.

Local Authority	DAF EAP	DAF IAP	Trussell food parcels given to adults	Economic inactivity rate	Proportion of average income spent on rent by private renting households
Isle of Anglesey	5%	0.3%	[h] 6%	16%	21%
Gwynedd	5%	0.3%	4%	19%	[h] 26%
Conwy	5%	0.3%	2%	[h] 20%	[h] 28%
Denbighshire	6%	[h] 0.5%	[h] 5%	17%	24%
Flintshire	5%	0.3%	[h] 5%	14%	24%
Wrexham	[h] 8%	[h] 0.4%	[h] 7%	16%	24%
Powys	3%	0.2%	3%	[h] 21%	21%
Ceredigion	2%	0.3%	1%	17%	24%
Pembrokeshire	4%	0.2%	2%	18%	22%
Carmarthenshire	5%	[h] 0.4%	[h] 5%	[h] 21%	21%
Swansea	[h] 7%	0.3%	4%	[h] 21%	[h] 26%
Neath Port Talbot	[h] 8%	[h] 0.4%	[h] 6%	[h] 25%	18%
Bridgend	[h] 7%	0.3%	4%	[h] 24%	23%
Vale of Glamorgan	6%	[h] 0.4%	[h] 5%	16%	[h] 32%
Cardiff	[h] 7%	[h] 0.5%	4%	16%	[h] 33%
Rhondda Cynon Taff	[h] 9%	0.3%	[h] 6%	[h] 26%	23%
Merthyr Tydfil	[h] 13%	[h] 0.5%	[h] 5%	[h] 25%	[h] 27%
Caerphilly	[h] 8%	0.3%	[h] 7%	[h] 21%	23%
Blaenau Gwent	[h] 12%	[h] 0.4%	3%	[h] 27%	21%
Torfaen	[h] 8%	0.3%	[h] 5%	[h] 22%	[h] 25%
Monmouthshire	3%	0.3%	[h] 5%	16%	[h] 29%
Newport	[h] 9%	[h] 0.5%	3%	[h] 20%	[h] 30%

Source: NEC data on DAF awards from 1st May 2024 to 30th April 2025; Number of food parcels distributed for adults: [End of year food bank stats | Trussell](#) 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025; Economic inactivity rate: Economic inactivity rates (excluding students) by Welsh local area and year (gov.wales) Year ending 31st Mar 2025, [Annual Population Survey: summary of economic activity | StatsWales](#)¹⁴; Proportion of average income

¹³ The Trussell figures about food parcels should be used as an indicator only; these figures relate only to food banks in the Trussell network, and therefore cannot be used to fully explain the scale of food bank use in Wales, or within individual local authorities.

¹⁴ To note, currently there are issues with the reliability of labour market statistics from the ONS, including data from the Annual Population Survey due to lower sample sizes. It is still appropriate to use these statistics, however users should note the increased uncertainty around estimates derived from the APS. [OSR's statement on the Labour Force Survey-derived estimates and Annual Population Survey-derived estimates – Office for Statistics Regulation](#).

spent on rent by private renting households: [Private rental affordability, England, Wales and Northern Ireland - Office for National Statistics](#), 2024. Population estimates used to derive estimations per capita taken from [Estimates of the population for England and Wales - Office for National Statistics](#), June 2024.

5.1 Table 3 shows the number of EAP and IAP awards as a proportion of the population in each local authority, alongside the number of food parcels distributed to adults as a proportion of the population, the economic inactivity rate in the local authority and the proportion of average income spent on rent by private renting households. The shaded cells correspond to values above the average.

5.2 Caerphilly, Merthyr Tydfil, Neath Port Talbot, Rhondda Cynon Taff, Torfaen and Wrexham are the local authorities with an above average proportion of EAP awards and also a higher than average proportion of parcels distributed to adults. It is important to highlight that these figures refer to the percentage of food parcels and not to the percentage of adults receiving food parcels (there could be repeat parcels per adult).

5.3 Blaenau Gwent, Rhondda Cynon Taff, Neath Port Talbot and Merthyr Tydfil were the local authorities with the highest above average economic inactivity rates, which also showed a higher than average proportion of EAP awards. Most of them also had above average IAP awards (excluding Rhondda Cynon Taff) and high proportions of food parcels given to adults (excluding Blaenau Gwent).

5.4 Economic inactivity refers to individuals that are out of the labour market, have not looked for work in the last four weeks and are not available to start work. It includes students, pensioners, people looking after family or home, those with illnesses and those classified as discouraged workers. The economic inactivity rate is estimated by dividing the inactivity level for those aged from 16 to 64 by the population for that age group. For comparison, the economic inactivity rate in Wales (excluding students¹⁵) was 19.9% in the year ending 31 March 2025¹⁶.

5.5 Cardiff, Vale of Glamorgan, Newport and Merthyr Tydfil are some of the local authorities with a higher than average proportion of average income spent on rent by private renting households. They also have at least two other indicators above average, with Newport having four and Merthyr Tydfil having all of them.

¹⁵ In this case, we use the inactivity rate that exclude students given the DAF does not support applications from students as they have access to other support funds.

¹⁶ [Annual Population Survey: summary of economic activity | StatsWales](#).

6. Children in poverty indicators

Table 4: Proportion of the population in receipt of DAF awards and indicators of child poverty, by local authority

Some shorthand is used in this table, [h] = higher than average.

Local Authority	DAF EAP	DAF IAP	Pupils eligible for FSM	Trussell food parcels given to children	Households on UC with child entitlement	Children living in relative low income families
Isle of Anglesey	5%	0.3%	16%	[h] 12%	10%	[h] 26%
Gwynedd	5%	0.3%	12%	[h] 9%	9%	23%
Conwy	5%	0.3%	17%	4%	10%	[h] 25%
Denbighshire	6%	[h] 0.5%	[h] 19%	[h] 10%	[h] 11%	[h] 25%
Flintshire	5%	0.3%	[h] 19%	[h] 12%	10%	20%
Wrexham	[h] 8%	[h] 0.4%	[h] 19%	[h] 11%	[h] 12%	22%
Powys	3%	0.2%	11%	8%	7%	22%
Ceredigion	2%	0.3%	13%	3%	8%	[h] 24%
Pembrokeshire	4%	0.2%	16%	5%	10%	[h] 26%
Carmarthenshire	5%	[h] 0.4%	15%	[h] 10%	10%	[h] 24%
Swansea	[h] 7%	0.3%	[h] 19%	8%	[h] 11%	21%
Neath Port Talbot	[h] 8%	[h] 0.4%	[h] 23%	[h] 10%	[h] 12%	23%
Bridgend	[h] 7%	0.3%	[h] 21%	7%	[h] 11%	23%
Vale of Glamorgan	6%	[h] 0.4%	14%	[h] 10%	9%	19%
Cardiff	[h] 7%	[h] 0.5%	[h] 22%	8%	[h] 11%	22%
Rhondda Cynon Taff	[h] 9%	0.3%	[h] 20%	[h] 11%	[h] 12%	[h] 27%
Merthyr Tydfil	[h] 13%	[h] 0.5%	[h] 22%	[h] 9%	[h] 14%	[h] 27%
Caerphilly	[h] 8%	0.3%	[h] 21%	[h] 13%	[h] 12%	[h] 25%
Blaenau Gwent	[h] 12%	[h] 0.4%	[h] 23%	5%	[h] 14%	[h] 31%
Torfaen	[h] 8%	0.3%	[h] 22%	8%	[h] 13%	[h] 25%
Monmouthshire	3%	0.3%	11%	8%	7%	16%
Newport	[h] 9%	[h] 0.5%	[h] 19%	4%	[h] 13%	[h] 26%

Source: NEC data on DAF awards from 1st May 2024 to 30th April 2025; Pupils eligible FSM: [Schools' census results: January 2025 | GOV.WALES](#), Table 11: Pupils known to be eligible for FSM, January 2025; Number of food parcels distributed for children: [End of year food bank stats | Trussell](#) 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025; Households on UC with Child entitlement: DWP benefit statistics (Stat-Xplore) February 2025; Children living in relative low-income families (Before Housing Costs): DWP benefit statistics (Stat-Xplore) 2023/24; Household estimations to derive estimations by households: [Households by Local Authority and Year](#), WG, December 2024; Population estimates used to derive estimations per capita taken from [Estimates of the population for England and Wales - Office for National Statistics](#), June 2024.

6.1 Table 4 shows the number of EAP awards and IAP awards as a proportion of the population in each local authority, alongside with the proportion of pupils eligible for Free School Meals (FSM)¹⁷, the number of food parcels distributed to children as a proportion of the population, the proportion of households on UC with child entitlement, and the

¹⁷ The rollout of universal primary free school meals was completed in September 2024. However, the way FSM eligibility is reported has not changed.

proportion of children living in relative low-income families¹⁸. The shaded cells correspond to values above the average for that indicator.

6.2 The local authorities with the highest proportion of EAP awards as a proportion of the population – Merthyr Tydfil, Blaenau Gwent, Rhondda Cynon Taff and Newport – had above average rates in at least 3 out of the 4 children poverty indicators. These are the proportion of pupils eligible for FSM, of households on UC receiving child entitlement and of children living in relative low income families.

6.3 Rhondda Cynon Taff and Merthyr Tydfil also showed a higher than average proportion of food parcels delivered to children per capita. The other local authorities with above average food parcels given to children are Caerphilly, Neath Port Talbot and Wrexham, which also have a high proportion of EAP awards per person as well as an above average proportion of FSM eligible pupils and of households on UC with child entitlement.

6.4 Of the local authorities with the highest proportion of IAP awards per capita, Merthyr Tydfil, Newport and Denbighshire also had some of the highest above average proportions of children living in relative low income families across Wales and of pupils eligible for FSM.

¹⁸ Households earning below 60% of the median income for the current period (in this case 2023-24).

7. Conclusions

7.1 During the period May 2024 to April 2025, £14 million was awarded to individuals in the form of 175,000 EAP awards. That is 59,000 fewer number of awards and £5 million less in value compared to the same period a year earlier. Younger individuals, aged 16 to 39, made over 60% of the total applications, while only 5% were made by those aged 60 and above. The 16 to 39 age group were also more likely to receive more than one EAP award.

7.2 In terms of IAP awards, between May 2024 and April 2025, £11 million was awarded to individuals, £4 million less than in the same period a year earlier. The £11 million corresponded to over 9,000 IAP awards, 6,000 fewer than in the same period a year earlier. IAP awards were more evenly distributed across age groups compared to EAP awards, with those aged 50-70+ receiving a larger proportion of IAP than EAP awards compared to younger groups.

7.3 Regarding the distribution of DAF awards between May 2024 and April 2025, EAP awards accounted for 95% of the total number of DAF awards while IAP represented the remaining 5%. However, the distribution in terms of value was more even: 55% of the total value was spent on EAP awards while 45% was spent on IAP. This was due to the average EAP award value being £79 while the average IAP award value was £1,167.

7.4 Regarding accessibility, 99% of individuals accessed DAF awards online. Where telephone was used, this was more likely among older age groups. In a few cases, the postal route was used.

7.5 During the period May 2024 to April 2025, the distribution of total DAF awards by age was similar across all local authorities in Wales.

7.6 The analysis shows there was correlation between the local authorities with the highest number of EAP and IAP awards as a proportion of the population and most of the economic indicators examined, indicating the DAF awards were allocated to individuals in areas of greatest need. For instance, the four local authorities with the highest number of EAP awards per capita in 2024-25 were Merthyr Tydfil, Blaenau Gwent, Newport and Rhondda Cynon Taf. These local authorities also had above average proportions of pupils eligible for Free School Meals, households receiving Universal Credit with child entitlement, and children living in relative low-income families. This data indicates that DAF assistance is providing relief to individuals on benefits and to low-income families with children.