



Chartered
Institute of
Housing
Cymru

What you need to know about the draft child poverty strategy

July 2023



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Background

The children and families (Wales) measure places a duty on Welsh ministers to set child poverty objectives and report on progress towards those objectives. This draft strategy builds on the investments of the last decade and seeks to refocus the 2015 objectives for supporting families out of poverty. The strategy prioritises actions to mitigate the harmful effects of living in poverty and improve the opportunities for children living in poverty. It sets out five objectives and five priorities to tackle child poverty in Wales.

Defining poverty

The 2011 child poverty strategy for Wales defines poverty as:

A long-term state of not having sufficient resources to afford food, reasonable living conditions or amenities or to participate in activities which are taken for granted by others in their society.

This definition is being retained by Welsh Government to ensure consistency in approach and continuity with exiting actions being taken to tackle child poverty and poverty more generally.

Levels of child poverty and socio-economic disadvantage.

The most recent evidence suggests that currently 28 per cent of children are living in relative income poverty. Children living in households where no adult is working are at the greatest risk of relative income poverty.

However, 81 per cent of children living in relative income poverty lived in working households. There is a 40 per cent likelihood of children whose head of household comes from a Black, Asian or minority ethnic group living in relative income poverty. Compared with a 22 per cent likelihood for those children whose head of household comes from a white ethnic group.

There is a difference between households with or without a disabled person, with 31 per cent of children who lived in a family with a disabled person in relative income poverty. Compared to 26 per cent of those in families where no-one was disabled.

This outlines how deprivation and protected characteristics interact, with certain people and communities experiencing worse outcomes due to their protected characteristics and socio-economic disadvantage.

Five objectives and five priorities

The draft strategy sets out five objectives reflecting the areas Welsh Government will take forward to make a measurable change to the lives of children and young people in poverty. There are also five priorities to deliver against each of the five objectives.



Objective 1: To reduce costs and maximise the incomes of families

Ensuring people are aware of what they are entitled to, making it easier to claim financial support and provide help to access practical support.

This includes supporting people with the cost of food, fuel, and housing alongside essential items.

Priority 1: Entitlement (putting money in people's pockets)

Building on their existing work to tackle child poverty Welsh Government will:

- Work with partners to increase the provision of face-to-face information, advice and support to people on claiming their financial entitlements as part of the wider delivery of income maximisation work.
- Press ahead with the development of a Welsh Benefits system that is delivered with compassion and accelerate work with our partners to passport and streamline the application for Welsh benefits to make them more accessible.

Objective 2: To create pathways out of poverty so that children and young people and their families have opportunities to realise their potential

Throughout an individual's life provide the tools needed to help people out of poverty through education, training, and support into fair work. Tackling child poverty must include supporting parents and carers to develop the skills they need to get a decent wage. We must ensure this is achieved for people who face extra barriers because of discrimination, including that related to gender, disability, ethnicity, or sexuality.

Priority 2: Creating a fair work nation (leaving no one behind)

Welsh Government will sustain and strengthen their work on supporting pathways out of

poverty through our early years, education, and employment policies. Welsh Government will:

- Deliver against the recommendations of the fair work commission and promote fair work through social partnerships and public procurement legislation.
- Increase our focus through the plan for employability and skills to prioritise and consolidate Welsh Government led, national employability support to ensure no one is left behind, to further support those underrepresented and disadvantaged in the labour market.
- Focus work across government to find affordable solutions to childcare and transport costs or remove barriers to work and make work pay.

Objective 3: To support child and family wellbeing and make sure that work across Welsh Government delivers for children living in poverty, including those with protected characteristics, so that they can enjoy their rights and have better outcomes

In Wales we all want the best for our children no matter what their backgrounds are, where they come from, or where they live. Welsh Government has heard from parents and carers about the need for better quality housing conditions and affordable housing. There is also a need for community-based support where the cultural and language needs of local families are understood and met.

Priority3: Building communities (accessible, joined up services to meet community needs)

This does not mean doing things to communities. It means doing things with people in communities, who know what matters to

¹These are payments for individuals which are devolved to the Welsh Government. E.g., the Council Tax Reduction scheme to help households pay their council tax bill, the schools essential grant and free school meals.

them and what they need including children and young people.

Building on existing work Welsh Government will:

- Think community when developing, reviewing, and funding relevant policies and programmes. Promoting one stop shop style multi-agency services in the community to help address the range of interconnected needs and disadvantages people living in poverty face.
- Push forward working with partners on the delivery of more community-based offers together with low-cost family activities to support health and wellbeing.
- Ensure that when developing a communities policy new co-productive and inclusive ways of working are identified, using a community action approach to inform the development of local joined up services to tackle poverty without stigma.

Objective 4: To ensure children, young people and their families are treated with dignity and respect by the people and services who interact with and support them and to challenge the stigma of poverty

There is an expectation that the people and services that provide support to children, young people and their families to operate in a way that does not add to the pressure poverty brings. Pressure that can result in poor mental wellbeing and mental health.

Some families in poverty experience discrimination and stigma both because of their protected characteristics and because of their experience of poverty. This also has a negative impact on wellbeing.

Priority 4: Inclusion (kind, compassionate and non-stigmatising services)

Welsh Government has already committed to promote relationship-based services with

kindness and compassion. In addition, they will:

- Accelerate work with the ACE support team and traumatic stress Wales on an implementation plan for the trauma informed Wales framework which will include the identification of any additional resources requires including help and support for organisations.
- Take a child rights approach to the delivery of our programme for government, in line with the UNCRC, with tackling poverty and inequality as crosscutting policy drivers.
- Make sure that discrimination related to protected characteristic does not make it more difficult for children, young people, and their families to do well.

Objective 5: To ensure that effective cross-government working at the national level enable strong collaboration at the regional and local level

There are limitations on the levers for change here in Wales as such there is a need for the right conditions to be created to allow for change to happen. To drive this change Welsh Government, local government and other public services need to work together to improve the lives of children and their families who are in poor households and reduce poverty in the long term.

The Welsh Government will continue its efforts to work in partnership with the UK Government to tackle poverty in Wales. Calling on them to make changes to the current benefit system rules around local housing allowances, the benefit cap and child benefit restrictions to make a real difference to those households most impacted by the current welfare policies.

Priority 5: Enabling collaboration (at the regional and local level)

The socio-economic duty came into force in Wales on 31 March 2021. It improves decision making and helps those who are socio-economically disadvantaged. This duty gives us an opportunity to do things differently in

Wales. It puts tackling inequality at the heart of decision making and will build on the good work public bodies are already doing.

Welsh Government will:

- Strengthen the Welsh Government approach to integration of policy and funding aims to better enable longer term collaboration at the regional and local level on anti-poverty work.
- Work with public bodies to develop and share innovative examples of good practice and positive outcomes to highlight where the Socio-Economic Duty is relevant, identify new or existing areas of work that the duty could and should be applied to, and advocate for and support the relevance of the duty to wider efforts to tackle socio-economic disadvantage and inequalities of outcome.
- Identify the best approach, with partners, to providing additional capacity to support the coordination of anti-poverty efforts across regional partnership arrangements and to identify and advise on the options to better support collaborative working to tackle child poverty.
- Establish and support a communities of practice approach to provide a forum where colleagues from across public services and across Wales can compare learning and share good practice to support a joined-up approach to the funding, development, and implementation of work to create a More Equal Wales including tackling child poverty.

Monitoring progress

Welsh Government introduced the Children and Families (Wales) Measure, 2010 which places a duty on Welsh ministers to report on progress made in achieving the objectives set out in the child poverty strategy. The current draft strategy has been co-constructed with children, young people families and the organisations that support them. This way of working will continue as the revised strategy is delivered.

In addition, Welsh Government is committed to reducing the poverty gap between people in Wales with certain key characteristics and those without those characteristics by 2035. Welsh Government will provide progress updates against this milestone together with national milestones that help deliver a more sustainable Wales for future and current generations.

Welsh Government is also seeking independent advice on suitable national poverty indicators, data availability and a framework to monitor and report on the tackling poverty progress.



Initial view of CIH.

CIH Cymru welcomes this latest child poverty strategy together with ongoing investment to tackle child poverty in Wales. We know that good work is being done by our members to work with their tenants and communities to mitigate the impacts of the current cost of living crisis and to help those facing financial hardship.

We are aware that Welsh Government has limited levers to tackle some of these issues, especially the issue of universal credit payments no longer covering the essentials for families in receiving this benefit coupled with an ongoing freeze on Local Housing Allowance. We call on Welsh Government to continue to put pressure on UK Government to:

- Restore local housing allowance (LHA) rates to at least the 30th percentile and return to annual uprating
- Remove the shared accommodation rate of LHA
- Remove the benefit cap and two child limit
- Remove the bedroom tax
- Ensure that universal credit can cover the essentials.

Partnership working between organisations and within communities is helping to mitigate the impacts of the current crisis and helping those facing poverty, and we'd like to hear from you about your work in these areas. How are you working with the communities you are based within to mitigate the impact of poverty? This could be a job club, it could be running a youth service, it could be cooking clubs or providing community gardens.

Everyone working together across government, public bodies, and community-based organisations is key to tackling child poverty in Wales. Working together will help us deliver a more sustainable Wales for current and future generations.

Next steps

We will be providing a response to the [consultation](#) on the draft child poverty strategy. We would love to hear examples of your work to tackle child poverty in your area, your views on this briefing and examples of best practice all of which will be incorporated as part of our consultation response. To do this please contact Cerys Clark, policy and public affairs manager at cerys.clark@cih.org.

