

Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee

Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 3 – Senedd

Meeting date:

Wednesday, 3 December 2014

Meeting time:

09.00

Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales



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Agenda

Private pre-meeting (9.00 – 9.15)

1 Introductions, apologies and substitutions

2 Inquiry into Poverty in Wales (Strand 1) – evidence session 7:

University of Bath (09.15 – 10.15) (Pages 1 – 23)

Professor Jane Millar, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research, University of Bath

Break (10.15 – 10.25)

3 Inquiry into Poverty in Wales (Strand 1) – evidence session 8:

Disability Wales and Leonard Cheshire Disability (10.25 – 11.25) (Pages 24 – 41)

Disability Wales

Rhian Davies, Chief Executive

Miranda French, Policy and Public Affairs Manager

Leonard Cheshire Disability

Glyn Meredith, Director of Operations (Wales)

Rhian Stangroom-Teel, Policy and Public Affairs (Wales)

4 Inquiry into Poverty in Wales (Strand 1) – evidence session 9: Race Council Cymru, British Red Cross and Oxfam Refugee Project (11.25 – 12.25) (Pages 42 – 67)

Race Council Cymru

Uzo Iwobi OBE, Chief Executive

Sam Ali, Race Council Cymru Trustee

British Red Cross

Jeff Collins, Wales Director

Stanislava Sofrenic, Senior Services Manager

Oxfam Refugee Project

Victoria Goodban, Sanctuary in Wales Project Co-ordinator

Betty Nyamwenge, an asylum seeker from Cardiff

5 Papers to note (Pages 68 – 81)

6 Motion under Standing Order 17.42 (vi) to resolve to exclude the public from the remainder of the meeting

7 Inquiry into Poverty in Wales (Strand 1): discussion of evidence received in sessions 7, 8 and 9 (12.25 – 12.35)

8 Consideration of the Supplementary Legislative Consent Memorandum (Memorandum No. 3): Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Bill (12.35 – 12.45) (Pages 82 – 86)

9 Consideration of the draft report on the Legislative Consent Memorandum on the Modern Slavery Bill (12.45 – 12.55) (Pages 87 – 88)

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**Inquiry into Poverty in Wales: The National Assembly for Wales' Communities,
Equality and Local Government Committee**

**Strand 1: poverty and inequality
Evidence from Professor Jane Millar, OBE,
University of Bath, UK
November 2014**

1. This evidence focuses on the second question in strand 1: 'the impacts of poverty, particularly destitution and extreme poverty, on different groups of people'. In particular, this evidence focuses on the impact of poverty in work (rather than the issues of destitution and extreme poverty) because it is among working families that poverty rates are rising and also because poverty in work tends to be somewhat hidden. It is sometimes assumed that paid work solves the problem of poverty, and that tax credits and other in-work support are providing adequate support. Understanding, and addressing, poverty as an 'everyday' experience of working people is a key challenge for any anti-poverty strategy.
2. Data from the 'Households below average income' official series show higher levels of poverty in Wales than in the UK in general. One of the most common measures defines income poverty as people in households with income below 60 per cent of the contemporary median, taking account of household composition, and after housing costs. Using this measure, about 13.2 million people in the UK, 21 per cent of the population, were in income poverty in 2012/13. This included 3.7 million children, 8.0 million people of working age, and 1.6 million pensioners. Children have the highest risk of poverty (27 per cent) and pensioners the lowest (13 per cent). Wales, measured as an average over three years, has higher rates than the UK as a whole for all groups: 23 per cent overall (0.7m people), 31 per cent of children (0.2 m), 24 per cent of people of working age (0.4m), and 14 per cent of pensioners(0.1m)¹.
3. Over the past 20 or so years, the overall levels of poverty have been fairly flat, but pensioner poverty has fallen while poverty among people of working age and children had risen. Thus whereas poverty used to be mainly pensioners and people not in work, increasingly poverty is found among working people. Of course it is true that paid work does protect against poverty, so that for example, just five per cent of single people working full-time with no children are in poor households, compared with 64 per cent of unemployed people.

¹ Source: Department for Work and Pensions (2014) *Households below average income, 1994/5 to 2012/13*

4. But paid work does not always protect against poverty. In fact the majority - six in ten (62 percent) - of working-age people who are living in poor households are living in households with at least one person in work.
5. Thus it is working people who are increasingly experiencing poverty, especially families with children. Having two earners (or with one full-time and one part-time earner) provides the most protection against poverty. But 30 per cent of families with children and just one earner are in income poverty. Working lone mothers - lone mothers – women bringing up children alone – are particularly likely to be in income poverty. The poverty rate for children in lone-parent families where the parent works full-time is 22 per cent and 30 per cent for part-time work. These women tend to suffer a combination of disadvantage – they often work part-time (where hourly rates of pay are lower than for full-time workers), they are women (with on average lower rates of pay than men), they tend to have low qualifications (which again means lower pay), and they are the sole carers for children (which tends to restrict work options and may mean the need to pay childcare costs). Thus lone mothers, even those in paid work, are one of the groups most likely to remain poor for long periods of time. Living in a lone-parent family is thus a key factor in longer-term child poverty.
6. My research, with my colleague Tess Ridge, explored the challenges that face lone mothers in seeking to sustain employment over time. The research involved three rounds of in-depth interviews with a sample of 50 low-income working lone mothers and their children conducted between 2003 and 2008². The main aims of our study were to examine the impact of paid work - and for some job loss - on family life and living standards for lone mothers and their children over time; and to explore how lone mothers and their children negotiated the everyday challenges of sustaining low-income employment over a period of around five years.
7. This project has given us a rare opportunity to understand the dynamics of employment from the standpoint of the families themselves and to explore how they manage financially and in other ways. Overall the women – and the children – were committed to staying in work. The women were keen to improve their incomes and their lives more generally. The experience of living on income support was a big push into work, not only because living standards were so low but also because of the negative connotations and stigma of being out of work and dependent on benefits. The children also felt that it was better for their mothers to be in work (but preferably only during school hours and terms), again for a mix of financial and social reasons. Poverty can have a profound and immediate impact on children's lives, in terms of what they can and cannot do, and the children were prepared for some changes to their lives if this improved material circumstances.
8. However following the families over a fairly substantial period of time highlighted the difficulties that the women faced in securing stable employment, and in making any progress in their situations over time. There was significant job

² Jane Millar and Tess Ridge, (2013) Lone mothers and paid work: The 'family-work project'. *International Review of Sociology*, 23 (3), pp. 564-577; Tess Ridge and Jane Millar (2008) *Work and well-being over time: lone mothers and their children*. Department for Work and Pensions Research Report; No 536.

turnover, in part for job reasons (temporary contracts, redundancy), but also as the women tried to find hours and location of work that fit best with childcare and other family responsibilities and needs. Staying in work over time was a real challenge, and progress in work (in the sense of better jobs to higher pay) was rather rare.

9. Incomes were very complex, and could include wages, child benefit, child maintenance (for some but often irregular), housing benefit, other benefits, tax credits. Several of the women held more than one job at the same time. But even so, the women would not have been able to manage financially on just their wages. Tax credits were an essential part of incomes, and this could cause considerable hardship if payments were delayed or incorrect. And tax credits – being means-tested on income – were also part of the reason why the women found it so hard to improve their financial situation. If wages went up, then tax credits (and other support such as housing benefit) would go down.
10. It was hard for the families to achieve an adequate and secure standard of living in work, even after several years. Only about a quarter of the women at the third interview were sustaining work, feeling better-off and generally financially secure. The others were either just coping, were out of work, or were still moving in and out of work with limited security.
11. Thus well-being and quality of life for many of these families was compromised by the insecurity of jobs and income. One of the changes we observed over time was that the extent of health problems tended to affect more women and to get worse. About a quarter of the women reported periods of substantial stress and depression. This stress was related to their difficult circumstances: debts and financial problems; ill-health among family members; increased caring responsibilities; bereavement (especially the loss of one or more parents); and pressures at work, including bullying.
12. Other studies of poor working families show the same sort of picture. For example, Tracy Shildrick and her colleagues³ explored work and poverty in the north-east of England and also found that many people were unable to escape from ‘churning’ between low pay and no pay, trapping people ‘in vulnerability and insecurity’. Nevertheless, as with our sample of lone mothers, ‘a sense of pride at getting by and coping in adversity was clung to in opposition to the stigma and shame’ of poverty (page 195).
13. Evidence is also starting to emerge on the impact of the ‘austerity’ policies on poor families. Social security benefits and tax credits for people of working age are a key target for the cuts in public expenditure aimed at reducing the budget deficit. Low-income families with children are hit hardest, especially large families, families with young children and families in private rented accommodation⁴. It is estimated that child poverty is likely to increase by about

³ Tracy Shildrick, Robert MacDonald, Colin Webster and Kayleigh Garthside (2012) *Poverty and Insecurity; life in low-pay, no pay Britain*, Policy Press.

⁴ James Browne, Andrew Hood, Robert Joyce (2014) *Child and working-age poverty in Northern Ireland over the next decade: an update* <http://www.ifs.org.uk/bns/bn144.pdf>

one million by 2020, and the recent report from the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission concludes that ‘even world-beating performance on employment levels, hours and wages would not enable the child poverty targets to be hit given current public spending plans and the current design of the tax and benefit system’⁵.

14. Further cuts and benefit/tax credit freezes are yet to come. The hardship is already being felt, as indicated by the growth in the number and use of food banks, by the significant rise in the use of very expensive forms of credit, such as payday loans, and in the stress of those affected by new benefit rules such as the bedroom tax (which reduces housing benefit for those judged to have too many bedrooms) and the benefit cap (which restricts the total amount in benefits for those out of work)⁶. Women, especially women with children, are particularly affected by these cuts.
15. The challenge of poverty in work is likely to become more widespread in the everyday lives of many families over the next few years. This issue should therefore be central to anti-poverty policy. If the level of direct financial state support for working families through the benefit and tax credit system is to be reduced it is important to deliver the financial support that is available in ways that are reliable, stable and secure and also to seek other ways to protect living standards.

⁵ Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission, (2014) *State of the Nation 2014: Social Mobility and Child Poverty in Great Britain* <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/state-of-the-nation-2014-report>.

⁶ Mary O’Hara (2014) *Austerity Bites*, Policy Press; Tom Clark with Anthony Heath (2014) *Hard Times*, Yale University Press

Agenda Item 3

Ymhlithwr Cymunedu, Cydraddoldeb a Llywodraeth Leol
Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee
CELG(4)-32-14 Papur 2/ Paper 2

Disability Wales/Anabledd Cymru Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee Inquiry into Poverty in Wales Strand 1: Poverty and Inequality

1. Introduction

1.1 Disability Wales/Anabledd Cymru is the national association of disabled people's organisations in Wales striving for the rights, equality and independence of all disabled people. Our core role is to reflect the views of our members to government with the aim of informing and influencing policy.

1.2 DW welcomes the opportunity to submit evidence to this important and timely Inquiry.

1.3 DW's Chief Executive Rhian Davies is the Disability Member on the Tackling Poverty External Advisory Group, appointed in April 2013

2. UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled People (UNCRDP)

2.1 The UNCRDP which was ratified by the UK Government in 2009 sets out the legal obligations on States to promote and protect the rights of disabled people. The following Articles are of particular relevance to the Committee's Inquiry:

Article 19: Right to live independently and be included in the community

Article 27: Right to earn a living through work that disabled people freely chose and in workplaces that are accessible and inclusive

Article 28: Right to adequate standard of living and social protection

3. Disabled People and Poverty in Wales

3.1 DW's report *Cap in Hand: the impact of Welfare Reform on disabled people in Wales* (The Bevan Foundation, 2013) outlined the context of disability related poverty in Wales:

- Wales has a higher proportion of disabled people than other nations and regions of the UK
- Disabled people in Wales are less likely to work than disabled people in other UK nations and regions (other than NE England and Northern Ireland)
- Disabled people are less likely to be in employment than non-disabled people. In 2012, across the UK 46% of working-age disabled people are in employment compared to 76% of work-age non-disabled people
- Disabled people in Wales earn less, on average, per hour than non-disabled people, with those who are working full-time earning 7% less than non-disabled people
- Disabled people in Wales are twice as likely as non-disabled people to live in a low income household
- Disabled people face a higher cost of living than non-disabled people, a cost which is rising year on year
- Cuts to local authorities spending and budgets will place considerable pressure on the level of resources they can dedicate to social care provisions for disabled people

3.2 Welsh Government's Framework for Action on Independent Living (2013) expands further on the connection between disability and low income:

- a third of low-income working-age adults without dependent children are either disabled themselves and/or have a disabled partner. Among those with dependent children, this proportion is a quarter.
- disabled people experience additional costs in most areas of everyday life, from major expenditure on equipment essential for independence, to ongoing higher expenses for food, clothing, utilities and recreation; such additional costs may be between 24% and 35% on top of normal expenditure.
- even when employed disabled people have median hourly earnings 20% lower for men and 12% lower for women. This 'disability employment penalty' has grown steadily over the last quarter century

with disabled people with low or no qualifications being particularly strongly affected.

3.3 To summarise disabled people face poverty whether in or out of work as a consequence of the combined impact of low income and high costs associated with lived experience of disability.

4. How effectively the Tackling Poverty Action Plan, Strategic Equality Plan and other government strategies work together

4.1 WG's Strategic Equality Plan includes the following equality objectives of relevance to this Inquiry:

- EO1: Strengthen advice, information and advocacy services to help people with protected characteristics understand and exercise their rights and make informed choices
- EO2: Work with partners to identify and address the causes of the gender, ethnicity and disability pay and employment differences
- EO3: Reduce the numbers of young people not in education, employment or training
- EO5: Tackle barriers and support disabled people face so that they can live independently and exercise choice and control in their daily lives
- EO8: Create a more inclusive workplace that promotes equality of opportunity for staff with protected characteristics

4.2 Objectives 2, 3 and 8 have a focus on the role of employers and employment as a driver in tackling inequality and low income. EO1 is consistently identified by a wide range of stakeholders as fundamental to an informed and empowered citizenship. However such services are underthreat in the onslaught of public funding cuts and may be at further risk during the process of proposed Council mergers, if not sufficiently prioritised.

4.3 Objective 5 is expanded upon in the Framework For Action on Independent Living (2013) which outlines in greater detail Welsh Government's planned actions in tackling barriers to independent living. The Framework also demonstrates how Welsh Government seeks to fulfil its obligations under the UNCRDP as well as in supporting its plans to tackle poverty.

4.4 The aims of the Framework for Action are:

- To set out a positive vision for disabled people in Wales in the challenging context of recession and the UK Government's programme of welfare reform, combined with public expenditure cuts
- To challenge stereotypes and negative attitudes
- To bring together for the first time a strategic approach to disability in Wales bringing together issues that have previously been dealt with separately
- To set out what the WG is doing across portfolios to promote an inclusive and enabling society
- To highlight the key roles of local delivery partners and stakeholders

4.5 The overarching outcome of the Framework is 'an enabling society in which disabled children and adults enjoy the right to independent living and social inclusion'. To achieve progress in this, it outlines actions in the following areas identified as priorities following engagement with disabled people in Wales: access to information, advice and advocacy (which links to EO1); access to housing; control and choice in care and support; access to technology; access to public transport; access to the the built environment; increased employment rates (which links to equality objectives EO2, 3 and 8); and increase in disabled people's access to a Centre for Independent Living.

4.6 The Framework does not have an explicit aim to tackle poverty however it is focussed on addressing structural barriers in society that result in disabled people finding themselves in poverty. For example a Leonard Cheshire Disability Survey found that about half of respondents had turned down a job offer or interview due to lack of accessible transport and half stated that lack of transport had restricted their choice of job - for wheelchair users and visually impaired people these figures rose to 62% and 86% respectively. Thus in improving access to transport, disabled people's opportunities for employment are enhanced.

4.7 The Framework references the Tackling Poverty Action Plan however despite the fact that a third of adults living in poverty are disabled people there is little reference to this in the TPAP itself, let alone targeted action. The Framework is only referenced in relation to transport issues and there

are just three specific actions highlighted in tackling poverty amongst disabled people: the Blue Badge Scheme, free bus passes and the maximum weekly community care charge. These measures while valuable in themselves are unlikely to make any significant inroads to the scale of poverty experienced by disabled people in Wales.

4.8 Furthermore the emphasis in TPAP is on employment being the main route out of poverty coupled with a strategic focus on tackling poverty of place via the Communities First Programme. Not all disabled people are able to work and the evidence above demonstrates that even when they are in work, they are more likely to face in-work poverty. Moreover the disadvantage of a place-based strategy is that programmes are often not sufficiently targeted to address the barriers faced by people with particular characteristics including disabled people and while disabled people face high levels of poverty they do not necessarily all live in the poorest communities served by Communities First.

4.9 In summary, Welsh Government's flagship approach to tackling poverty does not fully recognise or address the needs and circumstances of one third of those for whom persistent poverty is a lived experience namely disabled people.

5. The impacts of poverty, particularly destitution and extreme poverty, on different groups of people

5.1 The impact of poverty on disabled people can be severe particularly when managing the effects of impairment requires a particular dietary regime, maintaining optimal room temperature and ensuring personal hygiene. Inability to afford a healthy and/or specialised diet, adequate heating and lighting and the costs of personal support can result in a deterioration of an individual's health and wellbeing as well as social isolation and limited social, educational and economic opportunities.

5.2 Research undertaken by the charity Contact a Family found there has been a sharp rise in the number of Welsh families with disabled children going without heating and food over the last 2 years.

5.3 More than 210 Welsh families responded to *Counting the Costs 2014 survey*. Of those surveyed:

- 39% going without heating (UP from 25% in 2012)
- 30% going without food (UP from 19% in 2012)
- 41% have taken out a loan
- 30% are worse off as a result of benefit changes – nearly half by £1560 a year
- 63% feel their financial situation will be worse in the next 12 months

The impact for those Welsh families going without and in debt is:

- 62% have experienced ill health as a result
- 21% say their child's health has worsened

5.4 Given the connection between poverty and disability, it is reasonable to assume that disabled people are disproportionately represented amongst those most at risk of destitution and extreme poverty including homeless people, modern slaves, refugees and asylum seekers and members of the Gypsy and Traveller community. More attention is required through research and targeted action on the specific needs and circumstances of disabled people within these groups and which interventions are most appropriate and effective.

6. How legislation, policy and budgets targeted at tackling poverty and reducing inequality are co-ordinated and prioritised across the Welsh Government

6.1 The Welsh Government aims to secure a fairer and more prosperous Wales and as such has highlighted Tackling Poverty as a key policy in its programme. This is reinforced by the appointment of a Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty and for a one year period, a Deputy Minister for Tackling Poverty. The Minister's portfolio brings together both the equality and tackling poverty agenda which affords opportunities for a more joined up approach to both policy areas with the potential for greater synergy between the SEP and the TPAP.

6.2 The UK Government's decision not to implement the Socio-economic duty within the Equality Act (2010) is a lost opportunity particularly in Wales where this requirement would have maximised what has been achieved through the public sector equality duties and arguably could have given the TPAP more teeth.

6.3 Furthermore Welsh Government has introduced an ambitious programme of legislation which has an important bearing on this agenda including the Social Services and Wellbeing Wales Act (2014), the Housing Bill and the Wellbeing of Future Generations Bill.

6.4 The emphasis within the SSWWA on the transformation of social care including greater citizen voice and control, the requirement on local authorities to establish comprehensive provision on information, advice and assistance and the duty to promote co-operatives, social enterprises and user-led services have significant potential to tackle the underlying causes of both poverty and inequality. The Housing bill also includes a duty to address homelessness, whereas the Future Generations bill aims to secure a prosperous; resilient; healthier; more equal Wales; with cohesive communities.

6.5 Nevertheless each piece of legislation reflects the policy emphasis, language and terminology of the sponsoring department and further to the poverty and equality agenda there is greater scope to join them up and present a coherent whole.

7. Recommendations

7.1 Disability Wales offers the following recommendations to the Committee:

7.1.1 Welsh Ministers to exercise due regard for the UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled People and its full implementation across Welsh Government policy and legislation. The National Assembly for Wales and Welsh Government to use the UNCRPD as a tool to measure the effectiveness of policy and legislation in Wales. The National Assembly for Wales and Welsh Government to take appropriate steps to safeguard and promote the realization of rights set out in the Convention including in relation to poverty

7.1.2 Full implementation of the Framework for Action on Independent Living including its adoption by other public bodies such as local authorities as a means to addressing the structural barriers in society that result in disabled people's inequality including poverty

7.1.3 A review of the Tackling Poverty Action Plan and key programmes such as Communities First to incorporate actions that

specifically address poverty among people with protected characteristics including disabled people

7.1.4 A review of the range of employment programmes supported by Welsh Government re their effectiveness for supporting disabled people into work and the extent to which these complement and join up with DWP schemes including proposals in its Disability and Health Employment Strategy re personalisation.

7.1.5 To utilise the opportunity of further European Funding to establish innovative programmes that tackle economic inactivity among disabled people, involving disabled people's organisations in the planning, design and delivery of programmes and which learn from models of peer support that have proved effective in other areas

7.1.6 Prioritisation of the Equality Objective to strengthen information, advice and advocacy schemes as a key strategy in informing people of their rights and support and services available to them

7.1.7 Continuation of programmes to tackle Digital Exclusion as developed via Communities 2.0 including among disabled people as a tool to tackle poverty

7.1.8 Support for benefit take up campaigns including CHC's '*your benefits are changing*'

7.1.9 Review of Community Care Charging Policy to increase the buffer and disregards in the financial assessment to reduce the level of charges for community care recipients on the lowest incomes

8. Appendix

UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled People

Article 19: Right to live independently and be included in the community:

- a. Persons with disabilities have the opportunity to choose their place of residence and where and with whom they live on an equal basis with others and are not obliged to live in a particular living arrangement;
- b. Persons with disabilities have access to a range of in-home, residential and other community support services, including personal assistance necessary to support living and inclusion in the community, and to prevent isolation or segregation from the community;
- c. Community services and facilities for the general population are available on an equal basis to persons with disabilities and are responsive to their needs.

Article 27: Right to earn a living through work that disabled people freely chose and in workplaces that are accessible and inclusive:

- a. Prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability with regard to all matters concerning all forms of employment, including conditions of recruitment, hiring and employment, continuance of employment, career advancement and safe and healthy working conditions;
- b. Protect the rights of persons with disabilities, on an equal basis with others, to just and favourable conditions of work, including equal opportunities and equal remuneration for work of equal value, safe and healthy working conditions, including protection from harassment, and the redress of grievances;
- c. Ensure that persons with disabilities are able to exercise their labour and trade union rights on an equal basis with others;
- d. Enable persons with disabilities to have effective access to general technical and vocational guidance programmes, placement services and vocational and continuing training;
- e. Promote employment opportunities and career advancement for persons with disabilities in the labour market, as well as assistance in finding, obtaining, maintaining and returning to employment;
- f. Promote opportunities for self-employment, entrepreneurship, the development of cooperatives and starting one's own business;
- g. Employ persons with disabilities in the public sector;
- h. Promote the employment of persons with disabilities in the private sector through appropriate policies and measures, which may include affirmative action programmes, incentives and other measures;
- i. Ensure that reasonable accommodation is provided to persons with disabilities in the workplace;
- j. Promote the acquisition by persons with disabilities of work experience in the open labour market;

- k. Promote vocational and professional rehabilitation, job retention and return-to-work programmes for persons with disabilities.

Article 28: Right to adequate standard of living and social protection:

- a. To ensure equal access by persons with disabilities to clean water services, and to ensure access to appropriate and affordable services, devices and other assistance for disability-related needs;
- b. To ensure access by persons with disabilities, in particular women and girls with disabilities and older persons with disabilities, to social protection programmes and poverty reduction programmes;
- c. To ensure access by persons with disabilities and their families living in situations of poverty to assistance from the State with disability-related expenses, including adequate training, counselling, financial assistance and respite care;
- d. To ensure access by persons with disabilities to public housing programmes;
- e. To ensure equal access by persons with disabilities to retirement benefits and programmes.

9. References

Cap in hand? The impact of Welfare Reform on disabled people in Wales (2013) Report by the Bevan Foundation for Disability Wales

Counting the Costs 2014: research into the finances of more than 3,500 families with disabled children across the UK; Contact a Family

Framework for Action on Independent Living (2013); Welsh Government

Working for Equality in Wales: Strategic Equality Plan and Objectives 2012-2016; Welsh Government 2012

Building Resilient Communities: Taking forward the Tackling Poverty Action Plan (2013); Welsh Government

**Consultation Response
Inquiry into Poverty in Wales
November 2014**



1. Leonard Cheshire Disability is very grateful to the Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee for undertaking this important inquiry into Poverty in Wales. We welcome the opportunity to provide oral evidence.

About Leonard Cheshire Disability

2. At Leonard Cheshire Disability we work for a society in which everyone is equally valued. We believe that disabled people should have the freedom to live their lives the way they choose - with the opportunity and support to live independently, to contribute economically and to participate fully in society.
3. We are one of the UK's largest voluntary sector providers of services for disabled people with over 250 services across the UK including care homes, care homes with nursing and homecare services. We aim to maximise personal choice and independence for people with disabilities and all of our services are designed to meet the needs and priorities of the people who use them.
4. This response focuses on issues where we have a specific expertise and knowledge, both as the UK's largest voluntary sector provider of social care services to disabled people and as a leading disability campaigning charity. As such, we have not sought to respond to all elements of the Committee's terms of reference for its inquiry.

General observations on the TPAP and Equality Strategy

5. We understand that the Tackling Poverty Action Plan (TPAP) and Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) have complementary aims and are intended to work in synchrony. We note that a number of the SEP objectives (to close the gender, ethnic and disability gaps in pay and employment; to reduce the number of young people not in education, training or employment; and to create a more inclusive workplace) are directly relevant to the TPAP's aims of helping people into work.
6. This is welcome, but we think more can be done to mainstream disability equality. We believe that TPAP's priorities and actions should systematically address the inequalities experienced by disabled

people. For example, the priority to 'help people into work' should explicitly recognise and address the specific challenges faced by disabled people in finding employment and sustaining that employment once found.

7. In its current form, TPAP recognises that people who are disabled are at greater risk of 'not earning or learning,' but provides only very limited proposals for addressing this risk. In fact, the only two specific actions in TPAP for disabled people are:
 - The provision of a free Blue Badge scheme; and
 - The provision of free bus passes for the disabled.
8. While these schemes are helpful, neither makes a substantial impact on the ongoing financial wellbeing of disabled people. This is despite the compelling evidence that disabled people face specific barriers to escaping poverty in Wales.
9. We note that the primary focus of TPAP is on working-age adults, and families with children. Whilst this is understandable, we believe that disabled people should be included as a named target group for poverty reduction. Only by recognising the additional poverty faced by disabled people, and the unique challenges disabled people face, can real progress be made in this area.
10. We address some of the causes of disability poverty in this paper, focusing on:
 - The additional cost of disability;
 - Employment; and
 - Housing.

The additional cost of disability

11. Disabled people face extra costs related to managing their impairment that amount, on average, to approximately an extra quarter above normal expenditure, compared to non-disabled people. The extra costs can result, for example, from paying for adaptations to their homes, social care support, or mobility and communication aids.
12. Disabled people also face barriers to saving money, with nearly half (49%) of respondents to Leonard Cheshire Disability's 'Disability Review 2007' saying that they had no savings at all.¹ This is in stark contrast to figures from a recent National Savings and Investments 'Savings Survey' found that 12% of the general population had no savings.
13. The effects of these additional costs are chilling. The following statistics are taken from our 2010 report: Disabled Poverty in Wales:²

¹ 'Disability Review 2007', Laidler et al, Leonard Cheshire Disability, November 2007

² Accessible at: <http://www.leonardcheshire.org/sites/default/files/Disability%20Poverty%20in%20Wales.pdf>

- Disabled people in Wales are almost twice as likely as non-disabled people to live in a low income household.
- 33% (130,000) of working age disabled people in Wales live in poverty (a figure higher than anywhere else in the UK). Once the additional costs of disability are factored in that figure rises to over 50%.
- 31% of households with a disabled adult live in fuel poverty.
- Disabled people account for at least 1 in every 3 loan shark victims in Wales.
- Household wealth of the poorest disabled people in Wales is only 22% of the national median.

Employment

14. Across the UK, disabled people are much less likely to be in work than non-disabled people. The scale and character of the ‘disability employment gap’ can be clearly seen across a broad range of measures.
15. Our Disability Poverty in Wales report found that:
- Half of the people in Wales who are aged 25 to retirement, but who are currently not working, are disabled.
 - The employment rate for disabled people in Wales is 9% lower than the UK rate and has fallen sharply since 2007.
16. This further emphasised by the 2012 Labour Force survey found that across the whole UK: “disabled people remain significantly less likely to be in employment than non-disabled people. In 2012, 46.3% of working-age disabled people are in employment compared to 76.4% of working-age non-disabled people.”³
17. Disabled people are also more than twice as likely as non-disabled people to be lacking but wanting work, at all qualification levels:
- Those with Level 3 or above qualifications: 14.4% of disabled people and 5.6% of non-disabled people are lacking but wanting work;
 - Those without Level 3 qualifications: 25.6% of disabled people and 12.1% of non-disabled people are lacking but wanting work.⁴
18. Disabled people are more likely to be low paid than non-disabled people at all qualification levels:
- Those with Level 3 or above qualifications: 16.1% of disabled people and 12.6% of non-disabled people are low paid;
 - Those without Level 3 qualifications: 41.0% of disabled people and 35.5% of non-disabled people are low paid⁵.
19. The evidence suggests that disabled people face discrimination when applying for work⁶ (though there is limited research on the topic):

³ Labour Force Survey, 2012, Q2

⁴ <https://www.google.com/fusiontables/DataSource?docid=1ad4jAxsEQzM8ngxh-ttSqqX1UIVzqndaBYqctOc#rows:id=1>

⁵ <https://www.google.com/fusiontables/DataSource?docid=1ad4jAxsEQzM8ngxh-ttSqqX1UIVzqndaBYqctOc#rows:id=1>

⁶ http://www.forwardmid.org.uk/newsletter_images/september2007/master-discrimination%20doesn't%20work.pdf

- Non-disabled people were twice as likely as disabled applicants to receive a response to a job application.
 - Of those who did receive a reply, non-disabled applicants were invited to twice as many interviews as disabled candidates.
 - Disabled people's applications were rejected at the first stage twice as often as non-disabled applicants.
20. Disabled people experience more discrimination, bullying and harassment in the workplace, and find it more difficult to progress in their roles:
- Disabled people are significantly more likely to experience unfair treatment at work than non-disabled people. In 2008, 19% of disabled people experienced unfair treatment at work compared to 13% of non-disabled people;⁷
 - Disabled employees are twice as likely to be attacked at work and they experience higher rates of insults, ridicule and intimidation;⁸
 - 89% of disabled people feel that there is discrimination and prejudice towards disabled people in the UK;⁹
 - 30% felt they were overqualified for the job that they had;¹⁰
 - 18% said that, due to either barriers relating to their impairment at work, colleagues had lower expectations of them;¹¹ and
 - 19% said they felt they had been passed over for promotion, due to barriers relating to their impairment or the attitudes of their employer or colleagues.¹²
21. Existing Government support to help disabled people into work is highly ineffective:
- More than 93% of disabled people on the Work Programme are failing to find long-term work¹³.
 - Only 41,000 disabled people have found employment via the Work Programme since its launch in 2010¹⁴.
22. There is anecdotal evidence that those in receipt of social care, and those living in care homes, face further barriers to work:
- "Many residents are not even sure if they are allowed to work if they live in a residential service."¹⁵
 - "There is not enough support for disabled people to get into paid work."¹⁶

Housing

⁷ <http://odi.dwp.gov.uk/disability-statistics-and-research/disability-facts-and-figures.php>

⁸ <http://www.hrmagazine.co.uk/hro/news/1076474/disabled-employees-twice-attacked-study-reveals#sthash.KL6rgkAh.dpuf>.

Responses from 4,000 employees – 284 of them disabled

<http://www.hrmagazine.co.uk/hro/news/1076474/disabled-employees-twice-attacked-study-reveals>

⁹ 'Disability Review 2007', Laidler et al, Leonard Cheshire Disability, November 2007

¹⁰ Disability Review 2012', Leonard Cheshire Disability

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmhansrd/cm131014/debtext/131014-0001.htm>

¹⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/more-than-500-disabled-people-a-week-supported-into-work-or-training>

¹⁵ PIO participant in telephone interview with LCD researchers

¹⁶ Bell's Piece focus group participant

23. Disability can also have a ‘hidden’ impact on an individual’s employment prospects - and on their finances and wellbeing more generally. A lack of suitable housing in an area can actively prevent disabled people from taking a job - without suitable housing to move in to, it can become impossible to take up an employment opportunity. And if a person needs to frequently go into hospital, this makes it much more difficult to maintain employment, or can make a business untenable if a person is self-employed. The Building Research Establishment reported in 2010 that 45% of all injuries occur in the home - and that the less accessible someone’s home is, the more likely they are to suffer an injury. This can also result in an increased cost in social care, because a person needs more assistance. Adaptations can improve the accessibility of a home - but only if a home is initially built capable of being fitted with grab rails, stair lifts, etc..
24. While some homes in Wales are fully accessible, or ready for the adaptations that people will need as they age, or become disabled, too many more are simply not disabled-friendly:
- 22% of disabled households in Wales are waiting for an adaptation to be made to their home;¹⁷ and
 - Almost three quarters (72%) of people in Wales report that they live in a home without an accessible front door¹⁸ - meaning that of the tens of thousands of people who acquire a mobility impairment every year, most will have to move house or risk becoming trapped in their own home.
25. A significant proportion of existing Welsh homes can only be adapted to include features such as stair lifts, grab rails or a wet room at significant cost, while for hundreds of thousands of others these adaptations are simply impossible.
26. The severe shortage of adaptable and accessible homes is placing enormous stress on thousands of disabled and older people, as well as the care system and the health service. A single trip to hospital costs an average of almost £1,800,¹⁹ 60% more than the average cost of building a new home to Welsh Housing Quality Standards. Every hip fracture costs the NHS over £28,000²⁰ but many could easily be prevented by the installation of grab bars in halls and bathrooms, for less than a fifteenth of the price.²¹
27. To compound matters, many Welsh councils have no estimate of the number of disabled-friendly homes they need, or the impact the lack of disabled-friendly homes is having on health and care services. Leonard

¹⁷ The Living in Wales Survey, 2008

¹⁸ ComRes interviewed 2,006 GB adults aged 18+ online between the 4 and 6 June 2014. Data were weighted to be representative of all GB adults aged 18+. Welsh sample size: 108

¹⁹ Source: Cabinet Office unit cost database (2011/12)

²⁰ Better outcomes, lower costs: Implications for health and social care budgets of investment in housing adaptations, improvements and equipment: a review of the evidence

²¹ Calculation based on £1800 / £28000 – Source: Cabinet Office unit cost database (2011/12)

Cheshire Disability Freedom of Information research of local authorities in Wales has found that:

- No Welsh councils have analysed the additional costs of inadequate housing to health and social care;²² and
- A third (36%) of Welsh councils either do not have a housing plan, or their plan makes no reference to disability at all.²³

28. Many councils also do not know where the disabled-friendly housing that they have is - only half (55%) of Welsh local councils reported having an Accessible Housing Register²⁴ or similar system.²⁵

29. Despite the obvious impact of housing on a person's health and wellbeing, there is also a lack of integration between health, social care and housing. More than a quarter (29%) of Welsh local authorities said that they did not have a housing representative on their Local Service Boards.²⁶

Case study: Ruby Nash

Ruby lives in Barry in South Wales with her son Cody, who has the degenerative muscle condition Duchenne muscular dystrophy. Cody currently finds it difficult getting up the stairs on his own, and this will only get worse as time goes on and his illness progresses.

Ruby told us that: "I'm very worried about what will happen if we have to stay here once Cody has to use a wheelchair. He won't be able to sleep in his bedroom, or use the bathroom privately, and the impact on his life, our lives, will be enormous.

"There are new developments being built in Barry, but neither the council nor private developers are building enough homes to cater for families like us who need them.

"We are gold priority on the Homes 4U list (the local housing association), but there's not a single available home in the area which is suitable.

"The life expectancy for someone living with Duchenne is only 27 years. Our precious time together shouldn't be wasted struggling to get out of the front door, or get down the stairs, we should be able to enjoy our lives together while we can."

Reducing disability poverty in Wales

²² Based on responses from 14 Welsh authorities (64% response rate)

²³ Based on responses from 11 Welsh authorities (50% response rate)

²⁴ Based on responses from 11 Welsh authorities (50% response rate)

²⁵ Accessible housing registers bring together vital information about disabled-friendly homes such as whether a particular property is wheelchair accessible; the number of steps to the front door; and whether there is a stair-lift or walk-in shower.

²⁶ Based on responses from 14 Welsh authorities (64% response rate)

30. In order to challenge and reduce disability poverty in Wales, there are a number of simple steps the Welsh government must take. We have outlined these below for convenience of access.

A strategic approach to disability poverty in Wales

31. The Welsh Government needs to gather better information on disability issues in Wales and publish an annual Disability Monitor bringing together relevant information. Such a report would include information on the:

- Number of disabled people living in poverty in Wales;
- Comparative employment rates for disabled and non-disabled people;
- Home-ownership and social housing figures for disabled people;
- Number of homes in Wales that meet Lifetime Homes Standards;
- Level of unmet need for housing adaptations;
- Use and availability of adapted housing registers; and
- Educational attainment and percentage of people without qualifications for disabled and non-disabled people.

32. The Welsh Government should also develop and implement a distinct disability poverty strategy aimed at supporting working aged disabled adults in Wales.

The additional cost of disability

- Consider measures to tackle fuel poverty among disabled people, for example, working with UK Government towards extending the Winter Fuel Allowance to disabled adults under the age of 60.
- Ensure take-up of existing support for example through a benefits take-up campaign with a focus on reaching disabled adults who are missing out on what they are entitled to.
- Encourage saving among disabled people by considering establishing a 'disability savings gateway' in Wales.
- Commitment to conduct a formal review into the extra barriers that disabled people face in undertaking further education or training.

Housing

- The Welsh government to make Lifetime Homes the minimum standards for all new-builds;
- Local councils to ensure all large developments are built to Welsh Housing Quality Standards (WHQS), and at least 10% are built to full wheelchair accessibility standards; and
- The development of an accessible housing register or comparable system across all of Wales, delivered and supported by local councils and the Welsh government.

Employment

- Investment in schemes that have a proven record of success in helping disabled people into work.
- Targets for improving the employment rate for disabled people.
- The development of a strategy to eliminate discrimination against disabled people in the workplace and in job application processes
- Action to ensure that the social care system does not prevent those living in residential care from working.
- Building stronger links between existing employment support, and Access to Work funding, to ensure transitions from unemployment to work are seamless, and low risk for employers and employees;
- Providing employer incentives to encourage the employment of disabled people, along with specific support re: employing disabled staff from expert agencies and providers.

Conclusion

33. Addressing disability poverty is not only a means to drive down poverty throughout Wales, it is also an absolute necessity of social justice and inclusion in a civilised society.

34. We hope this paper is helpful to the Committee in its extremely valuable inquiry and we are very happy to provide further information as required as the inquiry develops.

35. For further information, we have attached links to:

- Our 2010 report on [Disability and Poverty in Wales](#); and
- Our UK-wide [Home Truths Campaign](#) launched in July 2014, highlighting the very real housing crisis facing disabled people and their families.

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Agenda Item 4

Y Pwyllgor Cymunedau, Cydraddoldeb a Llywodraeth Leol
Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee
CELG(4)-32-14 Papur 4/ Paper 4

**Submission to the National
Assembly Communities,
Equality and Local
Government Committee**



Strand One - An Inquiry into the links between tackling poverty and addressing inequality

November 2014

Race Council Cymru
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Killay
Swansea
West Glamorgan
SA2 7ES

A. Introduction

1. Race Council Cymru has been elected to represent ethnic minority communities across Wales on the Third Sector Partnership Council (TSPC) facilitated by WCVA. We sit on the WCVA's Third Sector Anti Poverty Taskforce organised by WCVA. The paper draws on discussions and views of our networks. The [Race Council Cymru](#) (RCC) is the overarching/umbrella body established in Wales to bring together key organisations working to combat prejudice, race discrimination, harassment, abuse and violence. The key aims of the RCC are to work towards the elimination of racial discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity and good race relations between people from different racial backgrounds. Integral to the work of the RCC is partnership working with local and national statutory and voluntary agencies.
2. This response has been prepared by the RCC Policy Unit. For further comment in relation to this response, or for clarification regarding any of the content of this paper, Mrs Iwobi can be contacted on email at uzo@racecouncilcymru.org.uk . Mrs Iwobi is also available to provide oral testimony following this submission.

B. Poverty and Inequality

3. The bulk of recent research conducted in the UK, into the correlation between poverty and inequality, has been carried out or commissioned by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF); largely as part of their Poverty and Ethnicity programme. This research has been taken into account in the preparation of this submission, which will compare various Welsh Government strategy and policy documents: Tackling Poverty Action Plan; the Strategic Equality Plan and Equality Objectives; the Communities First programme; and some other relevant government strategies¹.
4. In considering poverty and inequality this response paper will focus on poverty and ethnicity – how Black, Asian, and other Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities are disproportionately affected – and to what extent the various Welsh Government papers and strategies acknowledge and address those issues.
5. In the same way that the diversity represented amongst pupils in a local school will tend to reflect the diversity of the local population, so those children receiving free school meals (prior to the introduction of free school meals for primary age children) will have some correlation with the levels of poverty within the local community. Figures for 2010/11 of primary and secondary school children aged 5 and over in receipt of free school meals (Owen, 2013, p.35) show that just over 18% of white children were eligible for free school meals compared with over 47% of children identifying as Black or Black British. However, this is not representative of all children of BAME communities; for example, the figure is less than 17% for Asian or Asian British children and, breaking that down further, only around 5% for Indian children.

¹ For example: *Getting on Together – a Community Cohesion Strategy for Wales* (2009) and *Child Poverty Strategy for Wales* (2011)

6. According to Platt (2006, p.76) significant differences in educational attainment are indicative of historical issues of access and marginalisation and of future outcomes, i.e. that education is linked with employment and, consequently, with poverty.
7. However, Platt (2006, p.76) goes on to reference further research that has shown that these differences “are relatively insensitive to socioeconomic status as indicated by receipt of free school meals. While all those receiving free school meals do worse than their ethnic group counterparts not receiving free school meals, the differences were much more important for some groups than others.”
8. If poverty is understood to be influenced, somewhat, by employment opportunities, which in turn are influenced, in part, by educational attainment, then this provides at least some explanation for differences in levels of poverty between ethnic groups. However, Platt (2006, p.76) cites research that has also identified “persistent differences that cannot be put down to such human capital causes – however well or variously defined – leaving clear ‘ethnic penalties’ at least for some groups”.
9. Owen's (2013) research describes evidence of the poverty experienced by BAME communities in Wales. In terms of employment, he found that the employment rate, which measures the percentage of the population aged 16 to 64 that is working, was highest for White British people and lowest for Black African, Bangladeshi and Pakistani people (p.14). Owen also describes the unemployment rate as “another indicator of labour market exclusion for minority ethnic groups”. The overall unemployment rate for minority ethnic groups was about one-and-a-half times that for white people. The findings also showed marked variations between individual ethnic groups; e.g. the unemployment rate for Chinese and Indian people was lower than that for White people, but the rates for Black or Black British and mixed parentage people were twice the White rate - a pattern repeated for long-term unemployment – the percentage of people aged over 16 who had been unemployed for over a year. This was highest for people of mixed White and Black parentage, Black Caribbean and Black African people (p.14).
10. Hirst & Rinne (2014, p.9) make reference to Platt (2011) identifying issues central to the Poverty and Ethnicity (P&E) research programme: that of intersectionality (that a combination of factors impact on ethnic groups, often to differing degrees in influencing poverty outcomes); and that the variation in poverty within ethnic groups is often greater than that between ethnic groups.
11. Platt's research (2006) further highlights that employment and income earning opportunities are also affected by racism in the workplace – not necessarily direct or overt racism – whether this is at the point of external recruitment or internal selection for a post, affecting promotion opportunities. Employed people from BAME communities may experience discrimination from colleagues, leading to low self-esteem and isolation, or from clients or customers, resulting in underperformance and potential loss of bonuses (p.77).

12. Holtom et al (2013) conducted a Wales-specific study that found a strong association between poverty and ethnicity, but little evidence that ethnicity is the *cause* of poverty. They identified five factors that were particularly powerful in explaining differences in the levels and experiences of poverty across ethnic groups – place; human capital; social capital; entitlements; and attitudes, thinking and choices (p.7). (The main exception to this was Racism and discrimination, either directly linked to people’s ethnicity, or to their appearance or religion, was the main exception.)The report provides recommendations in relation to all five of these factors, with an important additional recommendation to ensure that strategies to reduce poverty within particular ethnic groups are part of population-wide anti-poverty strategies (p.8).
 13. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation continues to produce research papers on poverty and ethnicity as part of an ongoing phased programme of study into the topic. In one blog on their website, Barnard (2014) discloses that “racism was not something we asked the researchers to focus on. But it emerged as a key theme from every single study.” They found racism had a detrimental impact on social networks, opportunities for work and training, promotion; some BAME people were directed towards work for which they were overqualified; people were intimidated and reluctant to leave their own area for work or to access services; racist bullying and low expectations of BAME children detrimentally affected their education; it affected the take-up of formal care for children and older people amongst BAME people; and racism from front-line staff, such as receptionists, affects access to vital services, e.g. healthcare.
- C. How effectively the Tackling Poverty Action Plan, Strategic Equality Plan and other government strategies work together
14. It is evident from the range of government strategies, programs, and various action plans, designed to improve the quality of life for people in all communities across Wales, that there is a clear intention to recognise the diversity of those communities and acknowledge the potential for greater impact of poverty on people who may be more vulnerable; for example disabled people, members of Gay and Trans communities, people of various faiths or religious beliefs, people for whom English is a second language, and people who have migrated to Wales from Europe or elsewhere, as well as the issues faced by the longstanding BAME communities in Wales.
 15. The Strategic Equality Plan (2012-2016) specifically lists the groups of people covered by the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, and asserts “the Welsh specific equality duties are designed to ensure that public services and employment are fair and accessible to individuals with protected characteristics” (p.3), including of course the protected characteristics of ‘race’ and ‘religion & belief’.
 16. The Foreword by the Minister also affirms the commitment in the Strategic Equality Plan to removing the barriers “which need to be removed to ensure that we all have equal opportunities”. The Minister

asserts that “this plan highlights what the Welsh Government will focus on to deliver this” (p.3).

17. The Strategic Equality Plan makes reference to inclusion and valuing diversity in line with its legislative requirements: “The Welsh Government is working hard to deliver on our commitment to ensure that every citizen has the opportunity to contribute to the social and economic life of Wales. We will focus particularly on those with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation” (p.7).
18. The Strategic Equality Plan also alludes to the Welsh Government’s “track record of commitment to social justice and equality of opportunity” (pp.8-9) and it makes the point that “the current economic and financial climate make it even more important that we retain our commitment to tackling poverty by prioritising the needs of the poorest and protecting those most vulnerable to poverty and marginalisation”. It specifically states that the framework for these endeavours will be The Equality Objectives, together with the ‘Tackling Poverty Action Plan (2012-2016)’, suggesting a positive ‘joined up’ approach.
19. Specific issues affecting BAME people are acknowledged in the Strategic Equality Plan and can be identified in most of the Equality Objectives, such as: improved measures to help people understand and exercise their rights and make informed choices; identify and address the causes of ethnicity-related differences in pay and employment; reduce the incidence of hate crime; put the needs of service users at the heart of delivery in key public services ensuring they are responsive to the needs of people with protected characteristics; improve the engagement and participation of under-represented groups in public appointments; and to create a more inclusive workplace that promotes equality of opportunity for staff with protected characteristics (p.15).
20. The Tackling Poverty Action Plan 2012-2016 makes reference to the Flying Start programme – which provides free quality part-time childcare, health visitors, parenting programmes and applies to children aged 0-3 and their families – targeted on children in the most deprived areas (p.5). Reference is also made to the expansion of Flying Start across Wales to target families of appropriately aged children living in Income Benefit households. The crossover links to the Strategic Equality Plan are that the Flying Start Team will implement new systems to report on take-up of elements of the programme by some of the “hardest to reach” groups, including ethnic minority families (p.9).
21. Usually, when an organisation refers to "hard to reach" groups, it is more an indication of the organisation’s lack of will or failure to recognise that its provision of services to certain sections of the community is disproportionate, rather than the individual members of minority communities being difficult. Where barriers exist, the onus is on the organisation to identify and remove these barriers in order to ameliorate engagement with all sections of the community. Using

language such as "hard to reach" erroneously implies that the fault rests with community members.

22. Educational attainment specifically underachievement within certain minority ethnic groups, such as Pakistani, Bangladeshi, African Caribbean and Gypsy Traveller children, is identified in the Tackling Poverty Action Plan and it states that the Strategic Equality Plan provides detailed actions planned to address this underachievement. This will take the form of information analysis to highlight where “interventions are needed to drive up attainment amongst those ethnic minority groups who are underachieving, including patterns of school exclusions” (p.11).
23. Analysis of information and subsequent identification of where interventions are required is only the first step. Such interventions need to be specifically targeted and individually tailored to be effective.
24. In the Strategic Equality Objectives progress table, under the heading Detailed Actions and Timescales, four main planned actions are recorded, concerning: collection of data on minority ethnic pupil attainment and attendance, assessing the impact of the Minority Ethnic Achievement Grant along with the Grant for the Education of Gypsy and Traveller Children; research on differences in attainment, progress, and exclusions between the different ethnic groups and any link between attainment and exclusion; involvement of local authorities with their local schools regarding intelligent use of data to accomplish targeted interventions; collection of best practice examples regarding minority ethnic achievement.
25. The last recorded update on progress shows “analysis on attainment is nearing completion and further analysis of available evidence will be considered and an appropriate action plan to be devised by March 2013. The impact of encouraging local authorities to collect and utilise appropriate data to target will provide a rolling aggregated outcome. It is envisaged that meaningful data will not, therefore be available for the first three years, but can be reviewed annually thereafter. Best practice case studies will be sought by October 2013. This update implies that the interventions “that are needed to drive up attainment amongst those minority ethnic pupils who are underachieving” are yet to be deployed.
26. Within the Tackling Poverty Action Plan is further cross-reference to the Strategic Equality Plan, reiterating the objective to “reduce the numbers of disengaged young people, including actions tailored to reduce the over-representation of certain ethnic groups [...] among those who are disengaged.” A number of actions are recorded in the progress table of the Strategic Equality Objectives, from data collection and analysis by reviewing public appointments diversity monitoring procedures, working with other agencies or support networks to identify individual potential that can be developed through coaching and mentoring, to looking at prior examples of good practice and achievement. The only recorded comment about progress on each of the actions areas to-date is “Monitoring data is already collected and will be analysed to evaluate

the impact of these actions on both the diversity of applicants and those appointed.” More information is required on progress.

27. The Tackling poverty action plan also suggests “other actions include monitoring traineeship / apprenticeship by ethnic minority and disabled young people as well as young men and young women” (p.15). The positive progress reported in the Strategic Equality Objectives amounts to “Monitor and review Apprenticeship delivery annually from 2013 for gender, ethnicity and disability to ensure it continues to reflect demand and addresses any specific equality issues arising” (p.24).
28. The follow-up document – “Building Resilient Communities : Taking forward the Tackling Poverty Action Plan” – contains several references to traineeships and/or apprenticeships: Traineeships for 16–17 year olds and Steps to Employment for 18 plus; Pathways to Apprenticeship for people aged 16-24 years; Young Recruits Programme, paying a subsidy for employers to increase apprenticeship opportunities; and the Welsh Government’s Apprenticeship scheme, providing Modern Apprentices employment and training opportunities (p.19). There is no reference to monitoring the demographics of people benefiting from these traineeships and apprenticeships and therefore less likelihood of identifying any continued disadvantage for BAME people.
29. The Building Resilient Communities document makes much reference to the Communities First programme which, it says, has a key role to play in “tackling worklessness, by supporting individuals and families within their own communities” (p.11). Clearly, people from BAME communities may benefit from this as much as people from any other part of the wider community, and the extent of this would be evident if appropriate monitoring would take place.
30. The document goes on to say that “Models are currently being developed to further enhance the support the programme can offer in this area [...] by reaching “hard to reach” groups” (p.11). An inference from this sentence is that it would include people from BAME communities although further information on these models and their development is scant. Once more, by referring to “hard to reach” groups, the document uses language usually employed by people from majority groups or organisations to describe people from minority communities traditionally marginalised by the majority groups or organisations; again, the implication being that it is the minority at fault.
31. The Building Resilient Communities document identifies the significant number of parents, “often from black and minority ethnic communities”, for whom English or Welsh is a second language (p.14). It then hints at the development of a new policy “to help these parents so that they can better support their children’s learning and have the confidence to move into work and training”. This will provide a potential route out of poverty. More detail on the development of this policy and its practical application would be useful.

32. The document also reveals that there will be an increase in "the grant available up until 2014" and that there will be changes made to "better support the education of gypsy and traveller and ethnic minority children who are at a higher risk of being in poverty" (p.15). The changes made are not specified and it is not clear how those children from BAME communities who are at higher risk of being in poverty will be identified and/or their progress out of poverty monitored.
33. There is reference to 'Positive weightings', in the Building Resilient Communities document, when appraising grants to support businesses, to allow for the impact of bringing "hard to reach groups back into work" (p.19). Whilst acknowledging that this document outlines a strategic approach, rather than being at a tactical/practical application level, more detail on this would be valuable, in particular around which groups are considered to be eligible, and the recording and monitoring of progress for people from those groups in returning to work.
34. There is a clear link between this document and the Strategic Equality Plan in relation to the almost 20% of young people in Wales aged 16-24 who are not in education, employment or training (NEET): "We know that some [...] minority ethnic young people [...] are less likely to be in employment or training than others in their age group and this is reported in our Strategic Equality Plan" (p.17). The Strategic Equality Plan identifies that "tailored action is required to reduce the over-representation of certain ethnic groups [...] among those who are NEET" (p.38-39), to be included within policy recommendations. This tailored action also includes: data collection regarding delivery of NEET Programmes to ensure information is obtained on protected groups; protected groups to be considered in a review of young people who are NEET; and data/evidence regarding protected groups, including specific equality issues arising, to be collated and incorporated in NEET projects/programmes in 2014/15, highlighting any areas of best practice.
35. The latest update - Building Resilient Communities: Taking forward the Tackling Poverty Action Plan Annual Report 2014 - contains an acknowledgement of "the close links between poverty and certain groups with protected characteristics" (p.8). It advises: "When considering approaches to address poverty it is important to acknowledge and focus on groups with protected characteristics at greater risk, such as [...] some minority ethnic groups" (p.8). This is the only reference in the document to BAME communities.
36. There is an allusion to a 'joined-up' approach and a commitment in the original Action Plan to dovetail with the Strategic Equality Plan (p.8). It also identifies that "Equal opportunities is a Cross Cutting Theme in all key European funding programmes, and provides an opportunity to target those furthest from the labour market with specific action" (p.8). Clearly, this will have the potential for positively impacting on measures to reduce poverty among people in BAME communities, significant numbers of whom could be included in "those furthest from the labour market".

37. It is important that the phrase "equal opportunities is a cross-cutting theme" does not become a bland meaningless "cover-all" concept, which permits complacency and a loss of focus on actions specifically intended to identify and reduce disadvantage amongst people in BAME communities.
38. The Communities First Programme is one of the Welsh Government's principal strategies to tackle poverty in Wales. Despite the evident connection between ethnicity and poverty, we are uncertain that there are any explicit references to minority ethnic communities within the Communities First Programme Guidance 2013. The focus is more on identified clusters of geographical deprived communities, although it does state "there is now increased emphasis on ensuring that the most vulnerable individuals, families and groups in those communities are supported" (p.2) and proposes that Performance Indicators will be used in all areas to measure and evaluate activity and outcomes (p.6).
39. It is appropriate that these Performance Indicators should include a demographic breakdown of the communities, to identify any potential ethnicity-related differences in relation activity and outcomes.
40. Included within the 2013 guidance for the Communities First Programme, is a list of requirements that all Clusters must fulfil (p.10). One of these (with its evident conflict of wording between "should" and "must") is that "Clusters should target resources to the most vulnerable groups". If some of the most vulnerable groups include people from certain minority ethnic communities, then a demographically designed performance indicator would help to address this.
41. A further requirement that Clusters *must* fulfil is that under-represented groups *should* (must?) be involved in the decision-making and management of the work of Clusters as well as being beneficiaries of the programme. It is not clear how under-represented groups would be identified, and therefore the existence of under-representation acknowledged, nor is it clear how representation would be monitored or recorded.
42. The Welsh Government's (2009) publication "Getting On Together - a Community Cohesion Strategy for Wales" recognises that people living with poverty and deprivation may experience exclusion and isolation in a community, as well as prejudice and discrimination towards people now covered by the protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010, but there is no content relating to people from BAME communities and their frequent disproportionate disadvantage.

D. Summary

43. The combination of Welsh Government initiatives designed to tackle poverty, if delivered as intended, will no doubt improve the lives of people across all communities affected by it. The day-to-day experience of living in poverty will feel very much the same, whether experienced by a member of the BAME communities, or by a member of the majority community. If effective, efforts targeting the most vulnerable and disadvantaged people should provide support for individual needs irrespective of their ethnicity. It is evident that poverty affects a greater

percentage of BAME people overall compared with the wider White community. To understand whether government initiatives are addressing this disproportionate situation, it is necessary to maintain a focus on monitoring demographic aspects of the service users receiving support.

- 44. In conclusion, RCC believes that it is vital that Welsh government clarifies how all the proposed initiative designed to tackle poverty – specifically impacts on BAME communities across Wales. There is need for BAME specific data to be produced and analysed to evidence the progress that has been made as a result of the implementation of the tackling poverty action plan and the Strategic Equality Plan. Further, it is imperative that Welsh government works more closely with BAME communities across Wales to engage, consult and determine the effectiveness and outcomes for BAME communities across Wales.**

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Helen Wilkinson WCVA - Submission to the Assembly Communities Equality and Local Government Committee September 2014.

Y Pwyllgor Cymunedau, Cydraddoldeb a Llywodraeth Leol
Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee
CELG(4)-32-14 Papur 5 / Paper 5

British Red Cross in Wales' response to the Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee Inquiry into Poverty in Wales

Contact: Cathrin Manning, policy and public affairs officer
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This response addresses two of the three terms of reference for Strand 1 Poverty and Inequality:

- The impacts of poverty, particularly destitution and extreme poverty, on different groups of people.
 - How legislation, policy and budgets targeted at tackling poverty and reducing inequality are co-ordinated and priorities across the Welsh Government.
1. The British Red Cross helps millions of people in the UK and around the world to prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies, disasters and conflicts. We are part of the global Red Cross and Red Crescent humanitarian network and we refuse to ignore people in crisis. We support more than 90.000 people every year in Wales. Through our work in Wales we are faced with extreme cases of poverty and destitution everyday, particularly amongst asylum seekers living within the dispersal areas of Wales. The British Red Cross provides short-term crisis support to asylum seekers and failed asylum seekers who find themselves destitute, many of whom come to us as a last resort, having exhausted all alternatives, with nowhere else to turn. We feel strongly that the depth of suffering and humanitarian need experienced by those living in Wales, who come to Britain to seek sanctuary, needs to form part of this committee inquiry.
 2. The British Red Cross defines someone who is destitute as:

“ A person who is not accessing public funds, is living in extreme poverty and is unable to meet basic needs, e.g. income, food, shelter, healthcare, and who is forced to rely on irregular support from family, friends, charities or illegal working to survive.”
 3. We support a government's right to control its borders, and to remove asylum seekers who have not been granted protection but stand-by the principle that destitution should not be an outcome of the asylum process. We also

acknowledge that immigration is a non-devolved matter but also celebrate that Wales, as stated in the Programme for Government is a country which is committed to creating ***a fair society free from discrimination, harassment and victimisation with cohesive and inclusive communities*** and ***reducing poverty, especially persistent poverty amongst some of our poorest people and communities, and reducing the likelihood that people will become poor (Programme for Government)***. The Welsh Government has demonstrated this resolve by enabling asylum seekers, living in Wales, access to primary and secondary healthcare. However, we feel that Wales can do more to address the severe suffering of these individuals who find themselves destitute living within our communities.

4. We provide support to asylum seekers in Wales, many of whom are families, who find themselves destitute for a range of reasons. These include people seeking asylum and those who have had their asylum claim rejected and have not returned home or are too frightened to return home. Many failed asylum seekers choose to remain in the UK living a life of destitution over returning to their home country, living with no or very limited access to support from the UK Government. Although asylum seekers are entitled to limited state support, as are failed asylum seekers if they are destitute and taking steps to leave the UK, this amounts to only 50 per cent of standard income support. Many of those who have had their claim rejected and are eligible for Section 4 support experience delays in receiving it or difficulty accessing it leaving them with nothing. Others feel unable to apply for Section 4 support as they fear for their safety if they return to their country of origin.

Unable to work, cope with or access the limited income they are entitled to from the UK Government, many asylum seekers become reliant on the help of friends and support from faith groups and charities. In many cases they experience overcrowded living conditions, street homelessness, physical and mental illnesses and malnourishment.

5. We operate three clinics in Newport, Swansea and Cardiff, where we provide small amounts of money or vouchers and clothing to asylum seekers and failed asylum seekers who are destitute, a maximum of £10 a week per individual for up to 12 weeks. Our destitution support is funded by British Red Cross charitable funds and amounts to £12,000 per year in Wales. Unfortunately, as we rely on

using our own funding, the amount is limited and, therefore, intended to support asylum seekers and failed asylum seekers who have no recourse to public funds.

However, our clinics are regularly attended by refugees who have been granted status but due to delays in the system they are often left for long periods without any state support.

We have also forged strong links with local foodbanks and distribute growing numbers of vouchers directly.

6. Currently, we are relying on British Red Cross charitable funds to support these individuals living in Wales who are unable to buy even the most basic of items to live, when funding and public donations are becoming more and more challenging to secure. In Northern Ireland the Stormont Executive has established a crisis fund for migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. The fund will provide a small amount of money for those who have issues with benefits, unemployment, have suffered family breakdown or domestic violence. The fund follows the success of a short pilot project, which supported 1,252 people, in 2012 and looked at whether small amounts of money could provide a significant bridge to allow people to get back on their feet.
7. We call on the Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee, through this inquiry, to examine the dire humanitarian situation that many asylum seekers and refugees experience on a daily basis in Wales. We ask that the committee consider what else the Welsh Government can do to support asylum seekers and refugees living in Wales who find themselves destitute with no or very limited money to support themselves or their families. We would willingly work with the committee to examine this area of destitution further.
8. **The following case studies are from our destitution support services:**

Case study 1

Mary* escaped Uganda after suffering sexual and physical abuse from her father and other members of the community. On seeking asylum in the UK her claim was refused and her support was cut. She begged for food from friends and received a weekly food parcel from a refugee organisation. After four years, Mary was detained when immigration officials raided a house she was staying in. It came to light that

there had been a mix up by the Home office with Mary's case, which they later admitted. Her case is still waiting to be resolved.

Case study 2

Adam*, a University student in Sudan, fled when problems broke out in Darfur and he was detained and tortured after being accused of inciting fellow students. Adam applied for asylum in the UK but was refused after a year. He now lives in Cardiff and spends his days searching for food by visiting different people he knows. He has no income at all, no regular food or shelter. Adam really wants to support himself and tries to occupy himself by going to language classes and reading at the library. We have only been able to support Adam in a limited way by providing him with a £10 food voucher every week, and clothes and toiletries.

Case Study 3

Ching Lan* along with her two very young children from China were granted refugee status and consequently evicted from their NASS accommodation and rehoused by the council in Swansea. However, the family were not yet receiving any state financial support and had no money to buy food or essentials. We helped her to make a National Insurance application, together with job seekers allowance, child benefit and child tax credit. Ching Lan was required to sign on at the job centre meaning a 12 mile walk with her two small children. We were able to speak to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) who agreed that she could sign on at her local post office. She still had to wait a further four days before she received state support.

Case study 4

Dhari, a 63 year old gentleman from Kuwait was granted leave to remain in the UK and now lives in Swansea. He was receiving no financial support and was unable to support himself with even the basics to survive. He came to us for help in December 2013 and we were still struggling to secure any payments from the DWP by March.

For further information about the difficulties faced by new refugees please read the British Red Cross report 'The Move-on Period: An Ordeal for New Refugees (2014) www.redcross.org.uk/moveonreport

*Names have been changed to protect the identities of these individuals.



Oxfam Cymru written evidence for the Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee of the National Assembly for Wales public consultation, as part of its inquiry into Poverty in Wales.

Strand 1: Poverty and Inequality – September 2014

1. Oxfam Cymru welcomes the opportunity to give evidence to the inquiry. Over the last decade we have accrued a mass of experience in working with partners to help people lift themselves out of poverty and build sustainable livelihoods. We work at grass roots level all over Walesⁱ, while campaigning at national level for positive change.
2. Our projects work directly with people experiencing poverty – most of the evidence given here reflects their voices and their concerns as well as what we are told by our local workers and partners. Oxfam would like to see people living in poverty actively engaged in designing innovative delivery strategies based on the outcomes that matter to them. We would be happy to facilitate an oral evidence session for the Committee with representatives from our partners including local workers, peer mentors and participants.

How effectively the Tackling Poverty Action Plan, Strategic Equality Plan and other government strategies work together;

3. Oxfam welcomes the publication of Building Resilient Communities – Taking Forward the Tackling Poverty Action Plan (TPAP), and recognises the collaborative and positive steps that have been taken. However, TPAP's weakness remains its limited analysis of the key drivers of poverty and its consequently narrow ambitions for change. While it is true that education is vital to help prevent aspects of poverty and that people can be helped to be more work-ready, the fundamental problem is the chronic lack of decent jobs in Wales.
4. Poverty cannot be viewed just as a segmented problem for government to fix, nor will solutions mostly focused on individual development address the substantive issue. Even if every workless Welsh person were highly skilled and motivated, he/she would still be competing in a weak jobs market characterised by low pay, insecurity and poor conditions. Just this week, research from BBC Walesⁱⁱ found that eight Welsh councils were using zero hours contracts.
5. *"For the last few years I have gone from zero hours contracts that never paid enough to live, to temporary contracts to jobs where your hours were cut after a few weeks. The only work round here is agency stuff with no security but you feel you have to take what's offered or lose your benefits. Every time you start over it's a knockback and no way can you plan ahead, buy a house, anything like that. It's like being stuck on a treadmill."*
Lee, single dad, South Wales Valleys
6. The scale of the problem calls for a bold long-term re-alignment of the economy that joins up **all** aspects of Welsh Government policy. We need to find new ways of building a vibrant

'foundational economy' that reflects basic human needs such as food and energy. A great opportunity presents itself with the advent of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Bill. This legislation has the potential to make the crucial links between environmental, economic and social policy.

7. To ensure we work towards a decent standard of living for everyone, while living within environmental limits, Oxfam advocates for – an economic model known as the 'doughnut'. The 'Scottish Doughnut' was published this summerⁱⁱⁱ – the 'Welsh Doughnut' will be available in December 2014 and will form a major part of our vision for the Wellbeing of Future Generations Bill. A road map of how we can build sustainable development within environmental and social boundaries could be the starting point for genuinely progressive policy to turn around the Welsh economy.
8. With regard to the Strategic Equality Plan, we welcome the leadership Welsh Government has shown in ensuring Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) are a statutory requirement of all policies, process and the budget. However, we are concerned about the quality and effectiveness of EIA at a local government level particularly in the assessment of budget cuts.
9. In times of austerity public engagement by public bodies is more important than ever, there is scope for better involvement of people and communities in the decommissioning and commissioning of services through co-production principles; improving the design, efficiency and delivery of public services and in achieving and evaluating service delivery.
10. *"Housing services and environmental services are much worse due to council cutbacks. The grass only gets cut once or twice a year now and the lack of upkeep of local areas is really obvious. Bus services are much worse with fewer buses running."*
Susan, job seeker, North Wales
11. For example, when Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council decided to implement £4.5m of cuts to nursery education they failed in their statutory duty to have regard to the wider implications of the cuts to local employment, the effects on poorer families and worsening educational standards. Local parents had to raise cash for a Judicial Review in May 2014 which found in their favour and halted the cuts.
12. The commitment from the Welsh Government to implement a socio-economic equality duty on public authorities in Wales could be an excellent first step to ensure that government policies and private sector actions have a genuinely positive impact on the most disadvantaged Welsh people and the communities in which they live.

13. Placing a socio-economic duty on public authorities, either as part of the Strategic Equality Plan or Wellbeing of Future Generations Bill would help ensure that state support is conditional on achieving genuine social [and environmental] returns. The duty could be enforced by the independent Equalities Commissioner or Future Generations Commissioner who would ensure spending decisions are poverty proofed and communities wishing to challenge Government policies and private sector action that do not contribute to sustainable development and socio-economic equality are supported.
14. Oxfam welcomes the recent commitment by Welsh Government to revise and update the 2011 Refugee Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan. This is particularly important as many of the delivery agencies mentioned in the Action Plan are no longer supported by public funds and UK Government has cut statutory provision of in-person support choosing instead telephone support via Migrant Help. This has placed a serious burden on third sector support agencies and increased the risk of people becoming destitute. The TPAP makes no mention of the Refugee Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan. We would like to see the welfare of asylum seekers and refugees integrated into the TPAP.
15. As part of procurement and economic regeneration strategies the Welsh Government could do more to strengthen the demand for businesses that offer high quality jobs. Across all sectors employers need to be actively encouraged (for example by linking public sector incentives and procurement to action and outcomes) to pay a living wage, develop low paid staff, create work to learn cultures and offer clear career progression paths.
16. Oxfam recommends that clear references are made in the TPAP on how Welsh Government economic development strategies are designed to tackle poverty through the creation of 'good' jobs in areas that need them.

How legislation, policy and budgets targeted at tackling poverty and reducing inequality are co-ordinated and prioritised across the Welsh Government.

17. We would like to see a greater emphasis on the "invest to save" agenda and to make sure that the mixture of spending from local authorities, Welsh Government, Westminster and Europe works together in an effective way for those who are living in poverty. We must use **all** of the resources available to us to remove barriers to inclusion and reduce inequalities. Preventative spending can reduce costs long term.
18. The majority of actions within the TPAP are targeted at geographically deprived communities to allow resources to be focussed most effectively. It is important to recognise that a significant number of people living in poverty live outside these areas of benefit. Programme based solutions have limited reach and are highly dependent on additional spending. Service redesign

in key devolved areas would embed social justice in our systems and institutions and require less programme-based spending in the longer term.

The impacts of poverty, particularly destitution and extreme poverty, on different groups of people;

19. The TPAP lacks any detail about the role that demographic factors, gender, ethnicity, culture, age, etc, play in people's experience of poverty and how it might influence solutions. TPAP tends to assume that everyone's experience of poverty is the same when this is clearly not the case. A vast range of evidence suggests that experiences of poverty and resulting livelihood strategies are greatly influenced by demographics.
20. In addition TPAP implies that 'poor people' are a fixed group separate from the rest of 'us'. Poverty is a state which people move in and out of with the risk of poverty changing over the life course. This emphasises the need for a dynamic, adaptable approach with suitable interventions for each stage of a person's life.
21. Oxfam works with some of the most vulnerable people in Welsh society, determined by measurable criteria such as social exclusion, access to social and economic capital and employment status. This evidence is only a summary – if asked to supply oral testimony, we can facilitate direct evidence to the Committee from our partners including local workers, peer mentors and participants.
22. The groups our partners work with include:
 - People with substance/alcohol abuse issues: e.g. The Wallich in Ebbw Vale;
 - Families with children in Nurture classes: e.g. Glyncoch Community Regeneration in RCT & Duffryn Community Link in Newport;
 - People with learning difficulties and mental illness: e.g. Caia Park Partnership in Wrexham;
23. *"The letter said 'you have failed your employment support medical and you are not going to get any benefit.' I remember holding it and shaking. Later, an appeal said I should get the money, but in the meantime I had nothing – literally nothing – to live on.
My fridge was empty, there was nothing in the cupboard but some salt and two tea bags. Then my housing benefit got cut – they thought that because I got no benefit I was in a job. So then I had no cash for electric or gas either. I walked the streets, hungry, looking at all the food in shop windows and thinking – what am I going to do?
The food bank was a lifeline, but the whole thing set me back mentally – the stress of it. I felt so upset, worthless and desperate."*

Nia, 22, participant from North East Wales with mental health problems,

 - Older people in rented accommodation: e.g. Denbighshire Council for Voluntary Services in Rhyl;
 - Young people not in education, training or work: e.g. Sylfaen Cymunedol in Caernarfon.
 - The long-term unemployed: e.g. Dove Workshop in the Upper Neath Valley;

24. *“Most of our people really want to work, but the jobs are just not there. Or else they are part-time hours or on zero hours contracts, or temporary, which leaves people worse off in the long run with the benefits they lose and the uncertainty in their lives.”*

Advice worker, South Wales

25. *“They said I was capable of working. I want to work, but there are many days I can’t leave the house. I felt under pressure from the Job Centre, I was threatened with sanctions, so much that I stopped going there. I just couldn’t deal with it. So I stopped claiming and got no money. I didn’t know you could get hardship money and anyway I was afraid to ask. I had bad toothache, but wasn’t a claimant so couldn’t get treatment. I know it sounds strange, but I was ill and I couldn’t cope and was on a downward spiral. So we lived off my mum’s pension. We have no central heating, so we rely on coal. But we couldn’t buy coal and food, so the house went unheated all winter.”*

Jeff, participant from Swansea valleys with mental health problems

- **Refugees and asylum seekers**

26. Our Sanctuary in Wales project is aimed at supporting and advising women refugees and asylum seekers in the four dispersal areas in Wales – Swansea, Cardiff, Newport and Wrexham. Of all the people we help, this group is closest to genuine destitution and absolute poverty.
27. Travel and childcare are the main barriers preventing asylum seeking and refugee women from accessing the training, work experience and community support they so badly need. We recommend that the Welsh Government look at ways of extending existing services to these women and supporting their efforts to build new lives.
28. UK asylum policy has increasingly restricted asylum seekers' access to welfare support, both while their application is being processed and if they are refused. Over recent years, there have been growing concerns about the scale and impact of destitution among refused asylum seekers. There is a serious lack of statistical data on the numbers of destitute asylum seekers in Wales. There is clear evidence however^{iv}, of the survival strategies adopted by destitute asylum seekers in Wales. Their overwhelming lack of institutional, social and economic resources denies them a sustainable livelihood, and results in a life that is robbed of dignity and unacceptable by human right standards.
29. The Welsh Government should follow the lead taken by pledged supporters of the City of Sanctuary^v movement, such as Swansea City Council that have passed a motion against destitution. There should be a clear principle that no-one should be destitute in today's Wales.

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ⁱ <http://www.oxfam.org.uk/cymru/poverty-in-wales>

ⁱⁱ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-29128623>

ⁱⁱⁱ Oxfam research reports: Malcolm Sayers & Katherine Trebeck (July 2014) The Scottish Doughnut – A safe and just operating space for Scotland <http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/The-Scottish-Doughnut-A-safe-and-just-operating-space-for-Scotland-323371>

^{iv} Coping with Destitution: Survival and livelihood strategies of refused asylum seekers living in the UK. Oxfam Research Report by Centre for Migration Policy Research, Swansea University 2011 <http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/coping-with-destitution-survival-and-livelihood-strategies-of-refused-asylum-se-121667>

^v <http://www.cityofsanctuary.org/category/tags/destitution-section-4>

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Strand 1: Poverty and Inequality – November 2014

Oxfam Cymru welcomes the opportunity to submit additional written evidence to the inquiry to support our oral evidence session on 3rd December. As requested this submission provides further detail on our work with asylum-seekers and refugees in Wales. We work extensively in partnership with other organisations, and we are grateful for the information they have gathered which has helped us compile this briefing.

Oxfam has a long history of working with asylum-seekers and refugees, particularly in Wales over the last decade. We are part of the City of Sanctuary movement <http://www.cityofsanctuary.org/> and the Still Human Still Here coalition <http://stillhumanstillhere.wordpress.com/>, which campaigns to end the destitution of thousands of refused asylum-seekers in the UK. We also endorse the Asylum Aid Women's Asylum Charter <http://www.asylumaid.org.uk/data/files/publications/180/Charter.pdf>, the findings and recommendations of which are supported by our programme experience.

Key definitions

An **asylum-seeker** is someone who has entered the process of claiming asylum, or seeking the protection of the United Kingdom. Asylum can be sought by anyone who makes their claim known to the authorities. While waiting for a decision, an asylum-seeker is not allowed to work. There is a special arm of the Home Office, the National Asylum Support Service (NASS), which financially supports individuals who are not able to support themselves while waiting for a decision. A single asylum-seeker over the age of 18 gets £35.13 per week, which is approximately 55% of what someone on Income Support would receive.

A **refugee** is someone who has been judged by the Home Office to have a credible claim to asylum. They are no longer supported by NASS and are regularised into the mainstream support network of JSA, Universal Credit, Housing Benefit, until they are able to find employment and can support themselves.

A **refused asylum-seeker** is someone who has been judged by the Home Office to not have a credible claim to asylum. Refused or 'failed' asylum-seekers can often appeal the Home Office decision.

There is **no such thing** as an **illegal asylum-seeker**. Both the UN Convention and Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights, which the United Kingdom has signed, make the ability to apply for asylum a right enshrined in British law. Asylum-seekers that enter the UK without passing through border controls have the right under Article 31 of the UN Convention not to have that held against them when deciding an asylum claim, if there is good reason as to why they entered the country unlawfully.

The modern asylum system began after the Second World War, when signatories of the *1951 UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees*, including the United Kingdom, vowed to never allow the events of the holocaust to happen again. It set in place the legislative framework to allow those who are in fear of persecution to seek the protection of another country, if their own state is unable or unwilling to protect them.

Very few people travel as far as Britain to claim asylum, most flee to the nearest safe place. Under the Dublin III Regulation (signed by most EU members), the first signatory country that comes into contact with an asylum-seeker must process and decide on the asylum claim, if one is made.

Research¹ conducted on behalf of the Refugee Council demonstrates that most asylum-seekers interviewed did not have the United Kingdom as their final destination when needing to flee their country, nor did they have a clear understanding of what the system of support would be like.

¹ http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/policy_research/research/p2

Sanctuary in Wales Project

Oxfam Cymru is currently co-ordinating a 3 year Big Lottery funded project in the 4 asylum dispersal areas of Wales – Cardiff, Swansea, Newport & Wrexham – alongside our partners Oasis Cardiff <http://oasiscardiff.org/>, African Community Centre <http://www.africancommunitycentre.org.uk/>, Displaced People in Action <http://www.dpia.org.uk/>, BAWSO <http://www.bawso.org.uk/> and Business in the Community www.bitc.org.uk/wales/index.html.

Through previous work looking at gender issues within the asylum system, Oxfam identified a need for women seeking sanctuary (refugees and asylum-seekers) to receive intensive and tailored support in order to build their confidence, to be active within their local communities, and to be ready and able to gain employment. Many women seeking sanctuary often feel isolated from their local communities and marginalised by society at large. Their unemployment rate is 6-10 times the national average. This leads to poverty, poor mental & physical health, inadequate housing, and many other disadvantages for women and their children.

The Sanctuary in Wales Project is focused on enhancing and building upon the skills and experience of women asylum-seekers and refugees, and Business in the Community source and match voluntary placement opportunities for women interested in gaining UK experience. In parallel to these activities, the project engages employers and service providers to inform and support them to ensure the accessibility of sanctuary seeking women. Community English classes and regular women only drop-ins aim to reduce isolation and help sanctuary seeking women build social networks and access support services as well as volunteer-run Friends and Neighbours (FAN) Groups to help foster understanding and friendship amongst the host and sanctuary seeking community.

Our Project Partners

Oasis Cardiff <http://oasiscardiff.org/> has been an active partner of Oxfam's over the past 6 years. As a partner in our current Sanctuary in Wales Project, Oasis's Support & Development Officer provides support to refugee and asylum-seeking women to move into employment, education or training. Working on a one-to-one and group basis, the Support & Development Officer helps individuals to identify their strengths and ambitions and works to source volunteer placements and mentors in sectors of their choosing, with the assistance of partner Business in the Community. A weekly drop-in (with crèche onsite) is run for women and a weekly English class, delivered by women trained by Swansea University as community English teachers.

The Sanctuary, Bethel Community Church <http://www.bethelnewport.co.uk/sanctuary/> has been an active partner of Oxfam's over the past 4 years. Bethel Community Church welcomes asylum seekers and refugees, and includes a significant number of people from asylum seeker and refugee communities as a part of its weekly congregation. The Sanctuary currently runs 3 drop-ins for asylum seekers and refugees of any faith, 2 for women and children and 1 for men and weekly English classes, together with additional social activities and wraparound support.

As part of our Sanctuary Project, **BAWSO** <http://www.bawso.org.uk/> provides support to refugee & asylum seeking women through a dedicate Gender & Refugee Support Officer. BAWSO run a weekly women-only drop-in in Wrexham centre, which is an opportunity for women to improve their English and get involved in informal information and confidence-building activities. The Gender & Refugee Support Officer will also be running a Human Rights Advocacy Course for sanctuary seeking women to equip them with the knowledge and confidence to represent themselves and peers to service providers and others. BAWSO also work with partner organisations to build and maintain support networks for refugee and asylum seeking women in Wrexham. BAWSO will work with Oxfam to develop and deliver a training programme for service providers on how to meet the differing needs of women sanctuary seekers.

The African Community Centre (ACC) <http://www.africancommunitycentre.org.uk/> is committed to breaking down barriers, promoting participation and community cohesion. As part of our Sanctuary Project, the ACC supports refugee & asylum-seeking women to move into employment, education or training. This includes the provision of a weekly drop-in facility for the women and training for a small number of participants (carried out by Swansea University) to equip them to deliver English language classes for other women. Working on a one-to-one and group basis, the Support & Development Worker helps individuals to

identify their strengths and ambitions and works to source volunteer placements and mentors in sectors of their choosing.

As a partner in our current Sanctuary in Wales Project, **Displaced People in Action's** <https://dpia.org.uk/> Support & Development Officer provides support to refugee and asylum-seeking women to move into employment, education or training. This includes support for The Sanctuary weekly women's drop-in facility and training for a small number of participants (carried out by Swansea University) to equip them to deliver English language classes for other women through the drop-in. Working on a one-to-one and group basis, the Support & Development Officer helps individuals to identify their strengths and ambitions and works to source volunteer placements and mentors in sectors of their choosing, with the assistance of partner Business in the Community.

Business in the Community <http://www.bitc.org.uk/> is a national membership organisation committed to transforming business and transforming communities. Their aims are to build resilient communities, diverse workplaces and a more sustainable future. The Placements Officer works with Support & Development Officers in our partners in Cardiff, Swansea and Newport to match sanctuary seeking women to appropriate voluntary and work placement opportunities. They also help to source mentors who can 'job coach' participants and assist them in their chosen career paths.

Policy issues

This is a snapshot of some of the policy issues identified through working with partners, but the list is by no means exhaustive.

- Home Affairs Select Committee Report (October 2013) <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/home-affairs-committee/news/131011-asylum-rpt-published/> outlined the problems with initial decision making (30% of initial decisions are overturned on appeal) which indicates the need for more resources and better decision-making at the initial stage, to give individuals and families a fair hearing and to make the system more efficient. Some of the women we work with in Cardiff have been seeking asylum for more than 5 years, some people elsewhere in Wales have been waiting a decade or more.
- The stripping back of funding for asylum support services (new asylum support contract saw loss of in-person support to telephone/online only since April 2014) is resulting in a lack of appropriate, tailored support for the most vulnerable when it is most needed. The loss of advocacy support with the new contract also means that the amount of advice and support that the new provider can give is limited, and links with other services (social workers, health & education) are more tenuous. Women and their families accessing the project have been left temporarily destitute because of delays in the asylum "move-on" process (the process of movement from 'asylum-seeker' to 'refugee' status) simply because of a lack of connectivity between the Home Office and the Department of Work and Pensions, and to a lesser extent, local authority provision. This is simply unacceptable.
- Housing that is offered to asylum-seekers and its associated support is contracted centrally with private providers with little regard to how local authority and third sector provision of services and support exist. There is limited ability for asylum-seekers to complain about the quality of housing (normal landlord / tenant legislation does not apply), and it is often far below the quality that we would consider acceptable for tenants in social housing, for example. The UK Government's Public Accounts Committee has itself said the COMPASS housing contract "change was poorly planned and badly managed and is unlikely to yield the savings intended." <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/public-accounts-committee/news/asylum-accommodation-substantive/>
- A significant proportion of an asylum-seekers' financial support is spent on transportation between their house and accessing essential support systems that are critical to a successful resolution to their case and to access everyday places of support. Those who are on NASS Section 4 Support, usually refused asylum-seekers who cannot be returned to their country of origin for a range of reasons (this could include women in the last stages of pregnancy) are only given support through a

pre-paid voucher scheme, not cash. These cards cannot be used on public transportation, so it makes movement around the city extremely difficult, if not impossible.

- The need for improved ESOL provision. This includes improvements in the local availability and access to ESOL classes. Barriers exist preventing people, particularly women, accessing ESOL classes including a lack of childcare and transport as well as issues around the timings of classes. With classes commencing annually, individuals who arrive at other times in the year are often forced to wait many months before accessing formal provision, and the provision of more advanced ESOL Level 2+ classes is incredibly limited and not adequate to support the need identified.
- Employability support in Wales needs to be improved. This includes improving the interface between UK Government and Welsh Government-funded employability support, and improving understanding that refugees have many different skills that they bring with them.
- Access to higher education for asylum-seekers is limited by the approach of institutions to treat asylum-seekers as international students in most instances. This limits many of the women we work with and their children from progressing beyond further education (FE) options, thereby effectively excluding them from certain professional work which they may be suited to and previously qualified for. This, alongside patchy childcare provision during full-time FE courses, means limitations on up skilling and preparing for work once given the right to do so.
- In some instances, the lack of skills to be able to gain employment can also act as a barrier to understanding the benefit system, claiming entitlements and raising concerns about barriers to employment with benefits advisors. This situation is likely to be exacerbated by the introduction of Universal JobMatch and Universal Credit, online systems which pose serious digital inclusion issues. The extended conditionality regime being introduced as part of the UK Government welfare reform agenda and issues around digital inclusion are likely to force more people into poverty. It is clear from Oxfam's work that face-to-face support with benefit claims and job search will still be needed for many people. It is essential that the findings from the DWP Universal Credit Pathfinder projects in the north-west of England are disseminated at the earliest opportunity so that best practice in both identifying those in need of face-to-face support and delivering this support can be achieved. Limited access to and use of translation services in Jobcentre Plus has already led to misunderstandings leading to sanctions for people our project supports, where there was no intention to transgress commitments, merely a lack of understanding the process and terminology.

Further Reading

- Oxfam's research on destitution among refused asylum seekers <http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/coping-with-destitution-survival-and-livelihood-strategies-of-refused-asylum-se-121667> documented the humiliating and degrading strategies adopted by destitute asylum-seekers in the UK. Access to publicly funded services is a universal right and a vital part of the safety net for people. No-one in the UK should live in destitution (with no recourse to public funds). Considering the quality of initial decisions, the UK Government should re-consider its policy on how it supports those who are failed asylum seekers and are no recourse to public funds.
- Women for Refugee Women report: *Detained: Women Asylum Seekers Locked up in the UK (2014)* <http://refugeewomen.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/WRWDetained.pdf>. Seeking asylum is not a crime, it is a human right, and whilst a country has the right to control who enters its borders, it is unjust to arbitrarily imprison anyone while resolving if the UK wishes to extend its protection towards them. This report provides an up-to-date and incisive view of how women experience the UK asylum process and the demands that the system places on them to prove that they have experienced gendered forms of violence.

For further information please contact

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Agenda Item 5

3 December 2014 – Papers to note cover sheet

Paper No:	Issue	From	Action Point
Public papers to note			
7	Welsh Government draft budget 2015-16	First Minister	In response to the Chair's letter from the meeting on 23 October.
8	Welsh Government draft budget 2015-16	First Minister	Additional information following the meeting on 23 October.
9	Inquiry into Poverty in Wales (Strand 1)	Chwarae Teg	Additional information following the meeting on 19 November 2014.
10	Inquiry into Poverty in Wales (Strand 1)	The Trussell Trust	Additional information following the meeting on 19 November 2014 – the Trussell Trust Submission to the Smith Commission.



Y Pwyllgor Cymunedau, Cydraddoldeb a Llywodraeth Leol
Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee
CELG(4)-32-14 Papur 7/ Paper 7

Christine Chapman AM
Chair
Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

19 November 2014

Dear Christine

Welsh Government draft budget proposals, 2015-16

I am writing in response to your letter dated 29 October which details points raised by the Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee following a meeting I attended on 23 October 2014.

I will respond to the matters raised in the order they appear in the letter.

1. Reprioritisation of budgets

You have asked for more detailed information about the evidence used to reprioritise budgets for the Welsh language. *Bwrw Mlaen* was informed by a number of developments occurring following the publication of our strategy *A Living Language: A Language for Living* in 2012. As I stated in my appearance before the Committee the evidence collected during and before *Y Gynhadledd Fawr* did form part of the evidence used to inform decisions. The event, the forum and the activities beforehand provided us with a great deal of valuable feedback and information from not only those directly involved in language planning but from the people who use the language and care about its future.

Leading up to *Y Gynhadledd Fawr* a great deal of evidence was collected during a number of activities that took place between May and June 2013 to gather public opinion, this included evidence from:

- Over 400 people attending 21 local discussion groups throughout Wales
- Over two thousand responses from individuals to an online survey
- And over 160 guests at *Y Gynhadledd Fawr* in Aberystwyth on 4 July 2013 representing a general cross-section of different interests and stakeholders

The main messages from *Y Gynhadledd Fawr* were about the need for purposeful action to strengthen the link between the economy and the language; the need to ensure that we build on the successes in the education system; improving the provision for teaching Welsh

in English medium schools; strengthening the link between schools, the community and the workplace; and the need to promote the value of Welsh in order to increase its status socially and in the workplace. I believe that *Bwrw Mlaen* sets us on the right track to address these issues.

Information about the factors influencing Welsh speakers' behaviours and perceptions around the language was obtained through research jointly commissioned by Welsh Government, S4C and BBC Wales, undertaken by Beaufort Research and published in August 2013 (Exploring Welsh speakers' language use in their daily lives). The study found that the majority of those questioned would welcome the opportunity to do more in Welsh, with a lack of confidence to use Welsh and a (mostly unrealised) fear of being judged identified as barriers.

The Review of the Mentrau Iaith, Language Action Plans and the Aman Tawe Language Promotion Scheme (January 2014) undertaken by Cardiff University on behalf of Welsh Government provides a series of recommendations that have informed some of the priorities set out in *Bwrw Mlaen*, including those relating to developing a more holistic approach to language planning and community development.

Over the past year and a half we also saw the publication of number of reports and policy reviews including:

The publication of policy reviews on:

- Welsh-speaking Communities
- Economic Development and the Welsh language
- Teaching of Welsh as a second language
- Welsh for Adults
- the National Eisteddfod.

This evidence as well as advice from officials and practitioners experienced in the field informed the drafting of *Bwrw Mlaen* as well as the subsequent reprioritisation of budgets.

Regarding timeframes, *Bwrw Mlaen* is focussed on delivery over 3 years, bringing us to the end of the lifespan of our Welsh language strategy, 'A Language for Living: A Living Language'. An annual action plan and annual report will be published for 2015-16 in line with the Government of Wales Act section 78 in due course.

The Welsh Government's effectiveness in implementing some of the elements included in *Bwrw Mlaen* will be included in the proposed research and evaluation programme as outlined in the Welsh Language Strategy Evaluation Framework (February 2013). A research study designed to improve our understanding of the factors that facilitate linguistic vitality in the community has been highlighted as a priority for 2014-15, with further studies to be undertaken in future years, as funding for research activity is given further consideration in the context of broader commitments.

Data about Welsh language use in informal and formal contexts will also become available through the Welsh Language Use Survey 2013-15, commissioned jointly by the Welsh Government and the Welsh Language Commissioner. This information will contribute to our assessment of the effectiveness of the policy interventions designed to facilitate the use of the language. It is expected for data from the first year of the Survey to be published shortly.

2. The Welsh language in mainstream budgets and 3. Impact Assessments

The Welsh Government is currently developing its programme of mainstreaming the Welsh language in evaluation and research across policy areas. This involves including an assessment of the effectiveness of programmes in addressing specific Welsh language needs or priorities (for example through the evaluation of the Communities First Programme, and Welsh language skills capacity and use in ESF-funded programmes). Findings from these and other evaluations are intended to inform our understanding of how, and to what extent, our interventions and programmes impact on the Welsh language.

Recently developed Welsh language impact assessments will ensure that the position of the Welsh language is considered in budget decisions, which will in turn help us identify spending on the Welsh language in budgets not directly linked to the language.

Last year, we set out our intention to continue on our improvement journey by moving towards a more integrated approach to the impact assessment of this Budget. To this end, we have taken some important steps this year in the preparation of the Strategic Integration Impact Assessment (SIIA) to consider not only equality and socio-economic disadvantage but also looking at children's right and Welsh Language. All Ministers have considered the impact of their spending decisions on the Welsh language and the SIIA provides a clear account of the Government's key decisions. In developing our future budget plans, we will look closely at ways we can further improve this information, including considering carefully the feedback from this year's scrutiny and on-going discussions at the Budget Advisory Group for Equality

As I stated to the Committee, from 2015-16, in line with the duties imposed in due course under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 ('Measure'), there will be a statutory obligation to consider the effect on the Welsh language when making policy decisions as well as to actively promote and facilitate the use of Welsh. Work is already well underway in preparation for implementing the proposed new Welsh Language Standards.

4. Welsh language Standards

I note the point on considering costs in regard to compliance with Welsh language standards. Organisations required to comply with standards will be required to meet any costs of doing so from their mainstream budgets. This was the assumption made during the passage of the Welsh Language 1993 Act through Parliament in relation to Welsh Language Scheme compliance.

Policy development does not stop during an economic downturn. We need to take action now and work together with our partners in all sectors to safeguard the Welsh language for future generations. The need to take action to protect, promote and facilitate the use of Welsh remains an urgent priority.

We published a consultation on the Regulations to make standards on 7 November 2014. We will consider all comments thoroughly, and will reflect all comments regarding implementation costs when we update the Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA). The updated RIA, which will also include evidence collected from a consultation on the proposed standards in Spring 2014, will be published in the Explanatory Memorandum that will accompany the Regulations when they are tabled before the Assembly in March 2015.

Regarding the outcomes expected, the standards have been drafted with the aim of:

- improving the services Welsh-speakers can expect to receive from organisations in Welsh
- increasing the use people make of Welsh-language services making it clear to organisations what they need to do in terms of the Welsh language

- ensuring that there is an appropriate degree of consistency in terms of the duties placed on bodies in the same sectors

We can expect organisations to offer and provide Welsh Language Services to the general public in a more coordinated, systematic way. It is expected that the successful implementation of standards will raise the demand for Welsh language services as public confidence in organisation's ability to deal with all manner of services grows. The Standards will also be enforceable in a way that Welsh language schemes were not, with penalties for non-compliance.

5. Welsh Language Commissioner's budget

The allocation of the Commissioner's budget was discussed extensively during the Measure's passage through the National Assembly of Wales. Given that the Commissioner is appointed by the First Minister, it follows that the Commissioner should be funded by the Welsh Government. The Measure places a duty upon the Commissioner to prepare an estimate of the income and expenses of the Commissioner's office for each financial year (other than the first), and submit the estimate to the Welsh Ministers. The Welsh Ministers, in turn, must examine the estimate submitted to them and lay that estimate before the National Assembly for Wales. This provides transparency with regard to the Welsh Assembly Government's funding of the Commissioner's office.

The Measure also dictates, in relation to her status, that when exercising functions in relation to the Commissioner, the Welsh Ministers must have regard to the fact that it is desirable to ensure that the Commissioner is under as few constraints as reasonably possible in determining her activities, timetables, and priorities.

Both the Children's Commissioner for Wales and Older People's Commissioner for Wales are funded in this way.

Regarding the submission of the Annual Report, as the Welsh Government was part of the Commissioner's standards investigation, detailed information had been provided to her. Officials also met with the Commissioner on 9 October to discuss the report. Moving forward, the Welsh language standards as drafted specify a date for submitting future annual reports.

6. Welsh in Education budget

There is an overall reduction of £0.6 million to the Welsh in Education budget in 2015-16, primarily as a result of a reduction of £500,000 to the Welsh in Education Grant. The remaining £100,000 is made up of minimal reductions to resource commissioning, planning and research, communications and marketing budgets within the Welsh in Education Budget Expenditure Line. The remaining £5.13 million allocated to the Welsh in Education Grant is being transferred from the Welsh in Education Budget Expenditure Line to the Education Standards Action as part of the process of establishing the proposed Education/School Improvement Grant – a number of grants are being amalgamated, with the aim of providing one simplified outcome focused funding stream for schools worth over £140 million for 2015 16. Activities currently funded via the Welsh in Education Grant will continue to be provided as part of a wider programme of activities, and raising standards of Welsh language teaching and learning is one of the key outcomes of the new grant. Spending plans for the grant will be scrutinised to ensure its establishment does not adversely impact on the support available to schools.

It is important to note that the Welsh in Education Grant (£5.63m in 2014-15), and the contribution that will be made in future by the proposed Education/School Improvement Grant, forms only part of the support offered by the Welsh Government in order to

implement the Welsh medium Education Strategy. Many activities funded through the remainder of the Welsh in Education Budget Expenditure Line (£18.599m in 2015-16), as well as countless other mainstreamed activities across DfES, all contribute to the delivery of the Strategy. Whilst the changes outlined above may have an impact on some activities, these are considered as minor in the context of overall expenditure.

The Welsh Government has specifically required planning processes and, where appropriate, surveys of parental demand for Welsh-medium education to be addressed in Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESPs). Under the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans and Assessing Demand for Welsh medium Education (Wales) Regulations 2013, Welsh Ministers have powers to require local authorities, in certain prescribed circumstances, to conduct a Welsh-medium education assessment. The Regulations also set out the questions and supporting information which must be included in such an assessment. Local authorities are required to review their WESPs annually. Ministers will be considering the revised Plans which emerge from the review process and will decide whether and, if so, how to use the powers to require a Welsh medium education assessment.

The Welsh Government's effectiveness in delivering the outcomes of the Welsh-medium Education Strategy will also be assessed in the light of performance against the Programme for Government's outcome indicators for the Welsh language ('Percentage of pupils aged 5 at the start of the academic year that speak Welsh fluently at home', and 'Percentage of people able to speak, read and write in Welsh').

7. Planning (Wales) Bill

The Practice Guidance which issued in support of TAN 20 was only published in June and so it is still relatively early to gauge the extent to which it is currently being. In July this year a dissemination event was held in respect of the Guidance which was well attended by authorities across Wales, so we know that they are aware of it. Through our routine scrutiny of Local Development Plans (LDP) we will continue to seek to ensure that LDPs are based on robust evidence including the Practice guidance for TAN 20.

I believe that the current policy as set out in Planning Policy Wales and TAN 20 provides a robust framework for the consideration of the Welsh language in the planning system. Our policy requires Local Planning Authorities (LPA) to undertake an assessment of the importance of the language at the start of the plan making process and to ensure that where the evidence supports, that the language becomes part of the fabric of the LDP. By taking a strategic approach to planning and the Welsh language LPAs can shape the future development of their areas to support the language. The Planning Inspectorate are fully aware of the Welsh Government's policy and apply it as necessary when considering LDPs or Planning appeals.

Yours sincerely



CARWYN JONES

Y Gwir Anrh/Rt Hon Carwyn Jones AC/AM
Prif Weinidog Cymru/First Minister of Wales

Y Pwyllgor Cymunedau, Cydraddoldeb a Llywodraeth Leol
Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee
CELG(4)-32-14 Papur 8/ Paper 8



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref:SF/CS/3638/14

Christine Chapman AM
Chair
Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
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18th November 2014

Dear Christine,

I am writing in response to the Committee's request, on the 23 October, for me to explain the Welsh Government's policy relating to the use of household projections in the planning system.

In February 2014 a new set of household projections for Wales, based on 2011 census data, were published by the Welsh Government's Knowledge and Analytical Service. Planning Policy Wales (PPW) sets out how these projections should be used when planning for new homes. PPW states that the latest Welsh Government local authority level household projections should form the starting point for assessing housing requirements and are therefore not an end in themselves. PPW is clear that local planning authorities should consider the appropriateness of the projections for their area, based on all sources of local evidence.

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act requires that Local Development Plans (LDPs) are sound, and integral to this is their coherency and consistency. It is essential that LDP policies and allocations are informed by evidence and are mutually supportive of the Plan's strategy. Therefore, local planning authorities should seek to provide for the level of housing required as the result of the analysis of all relevant sources of evidence rather than relying solely on the Welsh Government household projections.

Yours sincerely

CARWYN JONES

Y Pwyllgor Cymunedau, Cydraddoldeb a Llywodraeth Leol
Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee
CELG(4)-32-14 Papur 9/ Paper 9

**Additional information provided by Chwarae Teg, following the meeting on
19 November 2014**

Figures for Agile Nation achievements overall:

- 2,921 women trained
- Over £400,000 into women's pockets through salary increases
- 504 businesses supported (74% in the private sector)
- 594 educators have received gender awareness training

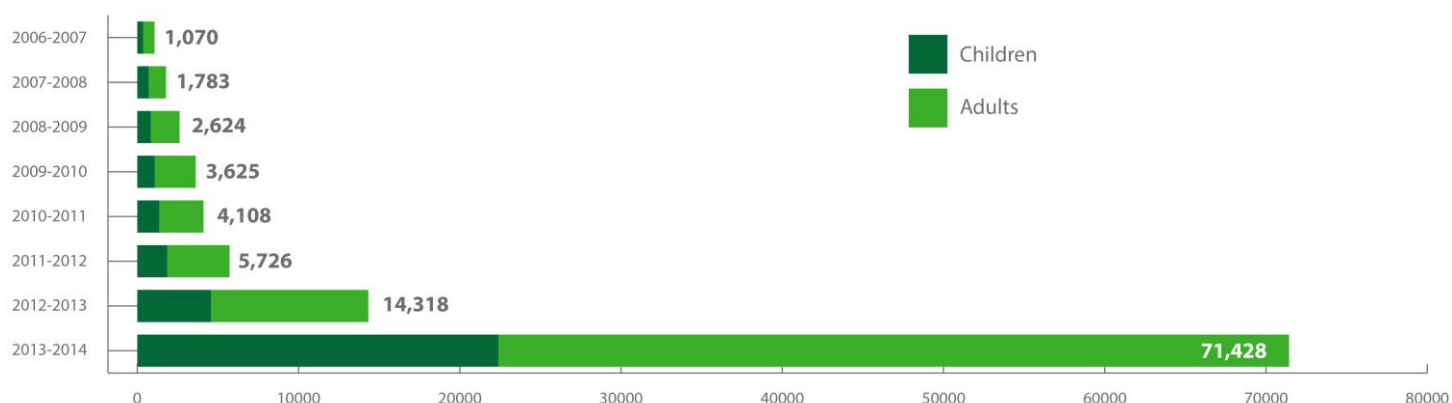
Figures for Agile Nation south east Wales region:

- 179 business attended an Equality and Diversity Workshop
- 74 business engaged with Evolve and developed a Diversity Strategy.
- 1057 enrolled on to the Ascent programme
- 843 women gained an ILM qualification
- 223 women entered into further learning
- 130 progressed to a more senior role
- 26 Educators enrolled onto Fair Foundations
- 20 Diversity Strategies written.

The Trussell Trust Submission to the Smith Commission

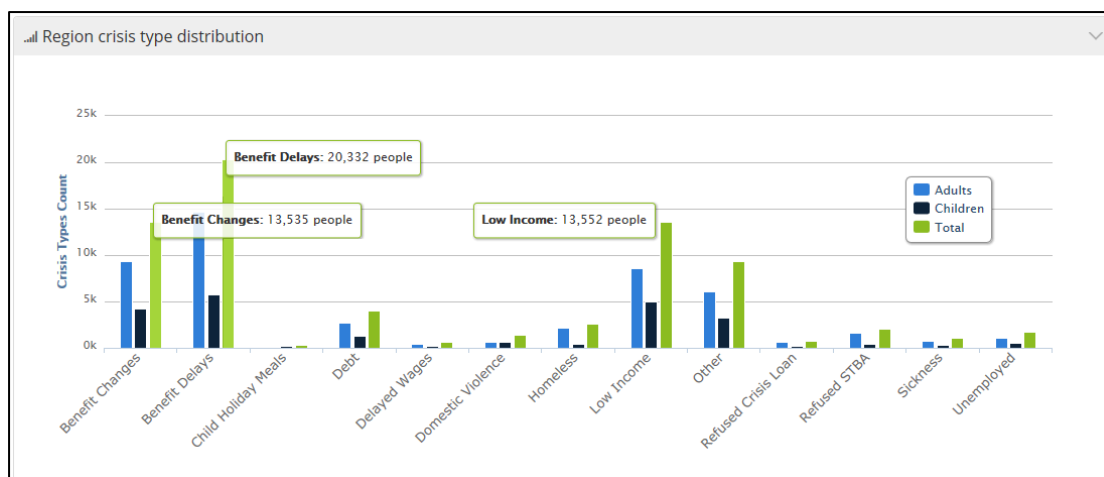
The Trussell Trust provides the only Scotland-wide data on foodbank use. In the following document we outline and detail the rising demand for emergency food relief focusing primarily on the increase over the last two financial years.

Numbers referred to Trussell Trust foodbanks in Scotland



Evidence from Scottish foodbanks indicates that the rising costs of food and fuel, insecure employment for those in work, minimal employment opportunities for those seeking work, problems with welfare (including benefit delays, changes, sanctions and issues with the administration of welfare reform) have been significant drivers of the increased demand experienced by foodbanks in the last year. Almost half of referrals to foodbanks in 2013-2014 were a result of benefit delays or changes and the majority of those referred were from working age families.

Primary referral causes to Trussell Trust foodbanks in Scotland



In 2013-14, 49,041 adults and 22,387 children received a three-day supply of emergency food, totalling 71,428. There was a 400% percentage increase in foodbank use from 2012-13 to 2013-14 but only a 50% increase in the number of new foodbanks joining the Trussell Trust during this period.

The busiest Scottish foodbank is based in Dundee and has been open for nine years. It experienced a 77% increase in demand in 2013-14 compared to previous financial year showing that established foodbanks saw a significant increase in demand.

Benefit delays and changes

Problems with welfare payments have consistently been a principal driver of foodbank referrals. Benefit delays and benefit changes generally relate to:

1. Delays when a new means tested welfare claim is made, often whilst eligibility is assessed. During this time an individual or family can have no income resulting in a referral to a local foodbank. Sometimes a claim can take weeks to be processed.
2. On occasions personal circumstances change or welfare payments are reduced as a result of a change in eligibility criteria. This can include something as simple as a client notifying the benefits office of a change of address, which can lead to a total cessation of benefits and whilst this change is being processed an unexpected shortfall in income can lead to a foodbank referral.
3. Bureaucratic errors by the benefits office leading to delays in payments. This can include decision makers incorrectly logging details that affect a person's claim and leave them without an income for, in some cases, multiple weeks.
4. Lack of flexibility in the benefits system to account for personal circumstances. This includes not reacting fast enough to a change in circumstances, as well as not providing adequate support to people with mental health problems or learning difficulties to assist them in successfully navigating an increasingly complex welfare system.

5. Sanctions resulting in the cessation of welfare payments. This is causing an increasing proportion of referrals to foodbanks and is usually recorded by the referral partner as 'benefit changes' on foodbank vouchers. Some of the reasons given for the sanction appear to be seemingly unfair or disproportionate.

Comparing the figures from the financial years 2012-13 and 2013-14 shows one significant increase. There was only a 1% decrease in those referred because of a benefit delay and 1% increase in those referred due to a low income compared to the previous year. However, benefit changes rose significantly.

In 2012-13, 15% of clients were referred to a Scottish foodbank because of a benefit change whereas the following financial year, after the introduction of a number of welfare reforms, the number rose to 19%. The numerical rise of those referred because of a benefit change was from 2,168 to 13,535. Anecdotal evidence collected from Scottish foodbank managers highlights sanctions as a primary factor influencing this increase.

It is our experience that the welfare system has historically been slow to respond to sudden changes in people's circumstances or to process new welfare claims, resulting in a significant proportion of Trussell Trust foodbank referrals. It is concerning to see the proportion of people affected by these issues remaining significantly high and those affected by sudden changes to payments increasing significantly over the past few years. Many of these referrals are caused by inefficiencies in the system itself and are, therefore, preventable. A more thoughtful approach to welfare, and especially sanctions, would therefore prevent some of these referrals.

Impact of welfare reform

Following welfare reforms in April 2013 the Trussell Trust saw proportionately more people referred to foodbanks because of benefit delays or changes (see above). These included more people referred to Trussell Trust foodbanks who had been sanctioned, including for seemingly trivial reasons. The Scottish Government commissioned and published its 'Overview of Food Aid Provision in Scotland' in December 2013 and stated: "Providers who participated in the study were in agreement that welfare reform, benefits delays, benefit sanctions and falling incomes have been the main factors driving the recent trend observed of increased demand for food aid."

What might prevent people from using foodbanks:

Research commissioned indicates that the following might prevent people from using from using food banks:

1. **Sustain and improve access to emergency financial support:** continue to improve the accessibility of support through the Scottish Welfare Fund and other Local Welfare Assistance Schemes

2. **Increase awareness of emergency financial support:** increase awareness, simplify the claim process and improve data collection to identify the support needs of those utilizing the service.
3. **Reform sanctions policy and practice:** clarify communications about sanctions, mitigate the impact whilst a sanction is being reconsidered, address issues for Housing Benefit and increase awareness of available external support.
4. **Improve support during the appeal period:** ensure claimants are not left without income whilst challenging a decision made because of missing medical certificates or missed appointments.
5. **Ensure the Job Centre provide an efficient supportive service for all clients:** develop the awareness of Job Centre advisors awareness of additional support available and improve their personal awareness and technological ability to respond to those with mental ill-health or learning difficulties.

Difficulty in navigating the benefits system is a common feature of the foodbank user experience. The benefit system is often experienced as complicated, remote and, at times, intimidating, especially when trying to resolve problems that occur with a claim. Lack of clear communication about what help is available or how to access it is a particular problem for people who have always worked and never claimed benefits before.

If the responsibility for welfare policy and implementation were devolved in Scotland The Trussell Trust would press for clarity in communication for and with those using the benefits system. The charity believes that this would reduce the number of people coming to foodbanks as a result of benefit sanctions and delays.

Many people coming to the foodbanks have expressed disappointment at their experience of Job Centre Plus. Job Centre staff have provided wrong or misleading information or failed to give the help or support needed. They have been referred to as 'judgmental' and 'unsympathetic'.

The Trussell Trust would welcome any opportunity to share the experiences of those going to Job Centre Plus with those in government in order to ensure the best possible outcome for those in need.

Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) and impact on the Spare Room Subsidy

The Trussell Trust in Scotland welcomed the devolving by the UK government of the power to set the cap on Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) in Scotland.

The Trussell Trust has noted that the payments have been used by the Scottish government to mitigate the impact of housing benefit changes.

Trussell Trust and government

In April 2014, The Trussell Trust Chairman, Chris Mould said:

“In the last year we have seen things get worse, rather than better, for many people on low incomes. It’s been extremely tough for a lot of people with parents not eating properly in order to feed their children and more people than ever experiencing seemingly unfair and harsh benefit sanctions.

Unless there is determined policy action to ensure that the benefits of national economic recovery reach people on low incomes we won’t see life get better for the poorest anytime soon. A more thoughtful approach to the administration of the benefits regime and sanctions in particular, increasing the minimum wage, introducing the living wage and looking at other measures such as social tariffs for essential like energy would help to address the problem of UK hunger.”

The Trussell Trust is disappointed that the London based Department of Work and Pensions has not engaged constructively with the charity in discussions that, the charity hoped, would achieve policies resulting in fewer people visiting foodbanks across the country.

Offers have been, and continue to, be made to share experience and views in order to better inform those responsible for the formulation of policy.

The Trussell Trust in Scotland welcomes the positive relationships that have been developed with the Scottish Government. The Trussell Trust is extremely grateful that the Scottish Government commissioned and published the ‘Overview of Food Aid Provision in Scotland’ report in December 2013, for the willingness of the Scottish Government to raise a debate on ‘foodbanks’ in the Scottish Parliament in February 2014 and the distribution of over £500,000 to food providers in Scotland.

The Trussell Trust believes that its foodbanks provide a vital emergency food assistance service that is valued by large numbers of frontline statutory and voluntary agencies across Scotland.

Trussell Trust foodbanks help to prevent crime, housing loss, family breakdown, neglect of children, mental and physical ill health. They are community-based services and we want to see a foodbank in every community to ensure help is genuinely accessible when someone is in crisis.

However, the Trussell Trust has become increasingly alarmed by the dramatic growth in the numbers of people in local communities who find themselves in crisis and the increasing frequency with which this occurs.

Too many people need foodbanks. The evidence suggests the prevalence of food poverty has risen significantly and is not expected to decrease in Scotland in the coming months. The Trussell Trust believes far fewer people should need foodbanks. Our experience tells us that a significant proportion of the people who are helped by Trussell Trust foodbanks find themselves in crisis because of benefit delays, changes and sanctions.

If a relationship with Scottish Government, with devolved powers, bore a yet more fruitful result in terms of debate, discussion and engagement, the Trussell Trust would welcome such an outcome. The Trust believes that a number of these particular crises are preventable and that the robust administration of welfare would benefit both clients and taxpayer.

We hope that the problem of food poverty will be given extensive consideration by elected officials in Scotland from across the political spectrum and by any presiding administration. The Trussell Trust remains committed to sharing its experiences with policy makers and seeking to better understand Scottish hunger.

Agenda Item 8

By virtue of paragraph(s) vi of Standing Order 17.42

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