

WELL-BEING COMMITMENTS OF WELSH LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND PUBLIC BODIES TO SUPPORT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE LIVING IN POVERTY

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Introduction

The Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010ⁱ *(Measure)* states that Welsh authorities have a duty to contribute towards the eradication of child poverty in Wales. The authorities which are expected to adhere to this commitment include local councils and Welsh public bodies. This report will identify the ways in which Welsh local authorities and the public bodies named in the Measure are actively working towards eradicating child poverty through the publication of a strategy and/or through local or regional well-being plansⁱⁱ, and how the progression and effectiveness of the actions will be monitored. It will also reflect on how accessible the information is online, and whether support for children and young people living in poverty appears to be an implicit and/or an explicit goal of each authority.

Methodology

The actions taken to inform the content of this report has been through an online search to access the Well-being Plans for each local authority area and to extract qualitative data surrounding the objectives listed to support the wellbeing of children and young people living in poverty. This includes how actions will be delivered and how success will be measured. Further, the webpage of each named Welsh public body in the Measure has been examined to identify actions that will be/are being taken by these public bodies toward supporting the wellbeing of children and young people living in poverty. Information that was deemed most relevant to this objective has been extrapolated to inform this report. This report does not consider the duty placed upon Welsh Government ministers or NHS Wales.

This report is a snapshot of the actions being taken from the information publicly available within relevant plans that we were able to access within a limit time period available to create this report. It is not intended to be seen as a comprehensive in-depth account of all the steps being taken by local authorities and Welsh public bodies in their quest to discharge the duty as prescribed through the Measure. The research carried out has potential to be researcher biased, as information deemed to be most relevant and therefore extracted from each source is at the researcher's discretion.





The main content of this report was produced during the Spring and early summer of 2024.

SECTION 1: 22 Local Authorities in Wales¹

<u>Blaenau Gwent</u> – See Gwent PSB <u>Bridgend</u> – See Cwm Taf Morgannwg PSB <u>Caerphilly</u> – See Gwent PSB

Cardiff - produced by the Cardiff Public Service Boardiii

Overview

- The plan includes an objective on 'Supporting People out of Poverty' (Objective 2) and 'Cardiff is a Great Place to Live' (Objective 1) which is focused on children and young people.
- The plan highlights a priority to gain UNICEF Friendly City Status ensuring every young person's voice is heard.
- Commitment to the prevention and cessation of young people smoking in Cardiff, as smoking is the biggest cause to preventable morbidity and mortality in Wales, and young people from less affluent families more likely to be exposed to and engage in smoking.
- Evidence suggesting children from lower socio-economic backgrounds are more likely to feel isolated and engage in anti-social behaviour and young offending. Cardiff Council is committed to working to continue improving services for children in the youth justice system and reduce the number of children entering the system or reoffending. This will be achieved by developing a robust, integrated, data-led approach to public services working with young people.
- Cardiff Council has prioritised delivering a nurturing, empowering, safe, and trusted approach to emotional wellbeing and mental health for children and young

¹ Where local authorities have published a joint report with neighbouring local authorities through their Public Services Boards, this has been referenced.





people, enhancing preventative services and supporting children presenting in acute psychological distress.

- The plan highlights a commitment to improving childhood vaccination uptake in Cardiff, particularly in the most deprived communities, through a data-led, targeted approach.
- The wellbeing plan also stresses the importance for teachers, health practitioners, social workers, youth workers, third sector and Early Years practitioners to work together to deliver joined-up approaches to help families stay together, responding to the increasing number of children coming into care. This will include developing approaches to identify early those at risk of Adverse Childhood Experiences with preventative responses and interventions to support children and families, including ensuring families are aware of available services.
- Cardiff Council also intends to continue investment in education and support for young people into the world of work through the Cardiff Commitment – strengthening the power of education to transform young people's futures.
- The Move More, Eat Well Strategy 2020-2023 aims to increase the percentage of people with a healthy weight and increase physical activity levels, especially in more deprived communities.

Monitoring

Progress for all these aims will be measured by the PSB assessing the impact on outcome indicators. These include:

- The percentage of children in low-income families.
- The percentage of children aged 4-5 who are a healthy weight.
- The percentage of students aged 11-16 who are physically active for 60+ minutes.
- The percentage of children cycling/walking to school.
- The uptake of MMR2 by age 4.
- ♦ The percentage of students who smoke at least weekly.
- The Year 11 and Year 13 school leavers not in education, employment, or training.
- The number of First Time Entrants to the Youth Justice System.

Progress against the Well-being Plan's indicators and priorities will be reported on annually, as part of the PSB's Annual Report





Reflections

- ♦ The plan is easy to find when searching online for 'Cardiff Council Wellbeing Plan'
- The plan appropriately signposts where to find information on support for both children and those living in poverty, explicitly mentioning ways the authority aims to support children and young people in poverty in detail.
- ♦ The plan includes relevant hyperlinks to strategies and plans.
- ◊ The plan makes reference to `children' `young people' `poverty' and `inequality', and ways in which children and young people will be engaged.
- ◊ The progress assessment outcome indicators are explicit, showing commitment to supporting children of all ages living in poverty.

Carmarthenshire – Produced by the Carmarthenshire Public Services Board^{iv}

Overview

Carmarthenshire Public Service Board propose 5 well-being objectives, one of these being 'Tackling poverty and its impacts'. Other objectives agreed could also implicitly help support children and young people in poverty, and the proposed actions for these other objectives which could deliver this this are:

- To invest in further and higher education and build everyday skills required to support communities.
- To implement fair work practices through employment and services.
- To help young adults in contact with the criminal justice system to build confidence, identify career goals and access training, development, and employment.
- To explore development of a work-based learning / apprenticeship programme across PSB member organisations.
- ♦ To consider the introduction of the Real Living Wage for public services.
- To prepare and publish a Carmarthenshire Food Strategy
- To create an environment that supports well-being and promotes healthy weight as the norm, through implementing the Healthy Weight Healthy Wales strategy.
- ♦ To enable people to be more active in shared open spaces.





- To help build and support the resilience of children and young people in relation to mental health and emotional well-being.
- To further develop Youth Engagement Programmes.

The proposed actions for specifically tackling poverty and its impacts are:

- To build live data to identify groups at risk of poverty and learn about its impacts.
- To build live data in terms of fuel poverty and ensure promotion of home energy efficiency improvements.
- To build community capacity and networks to share information on key support, ensuring advisors across the organisations are collaborating.
- To build upon community-based work, ensuring residents are aware of support and interventions.
- To better understand and develop a plan to increase people's ability to communicate on digital platforms.
- To further develop the 'Claim What's Yours' campaign.
- To support programmes to increase understanding of financial matters.
- To support the Flying Start expansion plans and identify opportunities for further alignment across programmes (support for families with children under 4 in disadvantaged areas, including help with childcare).
- To consider findings from the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment and Play Sufficiency Assessment.
- To consider the impact of their decision making on those who experience socioeconomic disadvantage.

Monitoring

The Well-being plan lists multiple national indicators and milestones by which to assess the effectiveness delivery of proposed actions across each of the objectives which is comprehensive and measurable, linked to the WBoFG Act national indicator set. However, the Milestones linked to the specific objective to tackle poverty is limited to only one. The PSB makes a commitment to work on a transparent way of assessing the effectiveness of the well-being steps in achieving the set objectives so everyone can see progress made.





Reflections

- The plan was easy to find when searching online for the 'Carmarthenshire County Council wellbeing plan' and has its own dedicated website <u>www.thecarmarthenshirewewant.wales</u>
- Obspite an entire objective dedicated to tackling poverty in the areas, the plan doesn't explicitly address ways of supporting children living in poverty, although many of the actions will indirectly benefit children and young people. There is some mention of considering findings and identifying opportunities for children, but no explicit actions are highlighted in the plan.
- Having a transparent way of sharing the measured success and effectiveness of these well-being steps would make this plan significantly stronger.

<u>Ceredigion</u> – Produced by the Ceredigion Public Service Board^v

Overview

- The Ceredigion Well-being Plan focusses on 4 wellbeing objectives; economic wellbeing, environmental wellbeing, social wellbeing and cultural wellbeing.
- Tackling hardship and poverty was identified as needing a specific focus, as it links to each of the objectives. Child poverty in Ceredigion is higher than average, with 3,459 children living in poverty at the time the plan was created, and these children were found to be subject to increased risk of poor mental health and well-being.
- The long-term goal for the PSB is that hardship, poverty, and inequalities are no longer experiences by residents of Ceredigion. The council has highlighted what they will do to achieve this through:
- ◊ The PSB will prioritise tackling hardship and poverty in response to the cost-ofliving crisis.
- The poverty sub-group will act as a voice for those impacted by poverty and hardship. Benefits and resources to mitigate the impact of poverty will be collated and shared to ensure it reaches all those requiring support.
- The poverty sub-group will scrutinise the work of the PSB to enhance the work undertaken to combat poverty across each of the four objectives.
- Other steps the PSB aims to take which will benefit children and young people in poverty are:





- Strengthening apprenticeship programmes and volunteering opportunities that provide skills for employment which will help connect with others and improve mental and physical health.
- Undertake a baseline study focussed on tackling hardship, maintain focus on key hardship indicators including child poverty.
- Develop a Local Food Partnership to address issues of food access and affordability.
- Use an Asset Based Community Development approach to help connect people, including children and young people to create more resident-to-resident relationships, helping support their mental wellbeing.
- Work with housing providers and other stakeholders to ensure good quality, energy efficient and appropriate housing for all.
- The PSB will support the Cultural Strategy for Ceredigion, a community-based strategy to use our culture and history to make people feel they belong to their community, are invested in it, and are valued.
- Community Tension Monitoring meetings held with partner organisations to identify early indicators of developing tensions within communities and implement early intervention and preventative workstreams in those areas.

The performance of these steps will be monitored by the PSB and Ceredigion Council will develop a reporting tool based on project management principles. Indicators will be designed that are suitable to the Plan and relevant to the local area. The Ceredigion County Council Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee is responsible for taking an overview of the overall effectiveness of the PSB by reviewing and scrutinising their decisions and actions. An annual report will also detail steps taken by the PSB to deliver on each of the wellbeing aims.

Reflections

- ◊ The plan was easy to find when searching online for the 'Ceredigion County Council wellbeing plan.'
- The direct focus on addressing and preventing poverty as a response to the Wellbeing Assessment is very positive, but there could have been more direct reference to children and young people, including those living in low-income families. Most of





the focus is on poverty more generally, and opportunities for young people to find work experiences.

The plan does not include a set of indicators to measure progress but informs that these will be produced.

Conwy – Produced by the Conwy & Denbighshire Public Service Board^{vi}

Overview

- O The main objective of this wellbeing plan is to make Conwy and Denbighshire a more equal place with less deprivation. The plan aims to tackle deprivation and issues relating to poverty in the long-term.
- The wellbeing plan highlights that the PSB will assess the impact of their activities and decisions. This will include taking account of short- and long-term needs, applying 'Futures Thinking' to identify and address root causes of the issues faced, and preventing high risk events wherever possible.
- The steps the PSB and its partners will take in the five-year plan which will support families, children and young people living in poverty are:
- Engaging with residents to improve equal access and signposting to the right information, advice, and services to support people with what they need, including education, health and well-being and employment.
- Stimulating and supporting community groups to help people remain resilient, for example providing help with cost-of-living pressures.
- Providing information, advice, and support to those at risk of food or fuel poverty.
- Addressing the well-being needs of communities and encouraging equal access to green and blue spaces.
- Ensuring that those at a socio-economic disadvantage are heard and help shape decisions and services to improve well-being.
- Ensuring that there is improved access to good quality, affordable and energy efficient housing to build resilience against the rising cost of living and fuel poverty.
- Working with schools, colleges and universities to ensure people of all ages are prepared for employment, further education or training.
- Providing greater opportunities for quality volunteering, work experience and apprenticeships.





- Enabling those at a socio-economic disadvantage to access education, employment, services, and activities.
- ◊ Addressing the emotional burden of those living with the effects of poverty, treating them with respect and dignity.

The delivery of these steps will be monitored by the PSB through regular highlight and progress reports, and annual reports will detail the progress made to achieve and deliver the Well-being Plan. The indicators highlighted in the Well-being Assessment will be used to measure the progress of the PSB's activities, and a Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee is responsible for scrutinising the effectiveness of the PSB's governance, decisions, and actions.

Reflections

- The plan was easy to find when searching online for the Conwy County Borough Council and the Denbighshire County Council wellbeing plans.
- Whilst the plan's overarching objective is to make the region a more equal place with less deprivation, the plan makes no reference to 'children' and only referencing young people in relation to employment.
- Most of the focus on supporting those in poverty is targeted more so towards households, such as tackling fuel poverty, poor quality accommodation and help with the rising cost of living.
- There are no indicators to measure progress in the plan, with the narrative making reference to indicators set out in the Well-being Assessment.

Cwm Taf Morgannwg (Bridgend CBC, Merthyr Tydfil CBC & Rhondda Cynon Taf

<u>CBC</u>) - Produced by Cwm Taf Morgannwg Public Services Board^{vii}

Overview

The plan highlights two wellbeing objectives:





- 1. Healthy local neighbourhoods.
- The plan highlights that having safe local spaces and affordable opportunities to be active is important, including play for children and young people. This would benefit children in poverty, as people in deprived neighbourhoods were found to be less likely to use green and blue spaces around them.
- The plan highlights enabling local living as important, providing local access to services, offering shared use of local buildings, and bringing services close to communities. The plan aims to ensure fewer people face long and costly journeys to access services, and affordable, quality food is available locally.
- 2. Sustainable and resilient local neighbourhoods.
- Increasing opportunities for active travel and using public transport can reduce costs, and ensuring more services, businesses and activities are in local neighbourhoods can support families, children, and young people in poverty to have access to these facilities without financial barriers.
- These objectives will be delivered through strong PSB leadership, good governance, accountability, joint resources, delivery plans, collective commitment, community and stakeholder involvement, links to key strategic partnerships and sharing intelligence.

The PSB will use qualitative and quantitative information to evidence the impact on these wellbeing objectives in the area. The delivery plans will include specific steps, outputs, outcomes, and time-bound performance measures that will be used to evaluate progress, and annual reports will be published at the end of each year.

Reflections

The plan is difficult to find when searching online through the websites of Bridgend and Merthyr Tydfil, but easy to find when searching online for the wellbeing plan of Rhondda Cynon Taf. When searching for the Cwm Taf Morgannwg PSB wellbeing plan, this plan is also easy to find. The PSB should therefore seek to aid the public's





search for the wellbeing plan, and individual local authority should ensure that this plan can be accessed through their website with ease. An easy read version is available.

- Considering that the PSB covers 3 local authority areas, the Plan is significantly shorter in length than the well-being plans produced by other PSBs.
- The plan shows which partnerships, organisations, boards, groups, and networks can help them in the delivery of the objectives highlighted in the plan, giving a wider and deeper understanding of how the objectives will be achieved.
- The plan does not make reference to the term 'poverty' and does not directly address supporting children in poverty. People living in deprived neighbourhoods is only mentioned once in the plan. Steps to support children in general are also scarcely mentioned. The wellbeing objectives are very general, and performance measures should be produced to demonstrate how the plan will be measured and the expected outcomes for children and young people living in poverty.

Denbighshire – See Conwy

Flintshire – Produced by the Flintshire & Wrexham Public Service Boardviii

Overview

- The wellbeing plan highlights two objectives in their 5-year plan:
- to build flourishing communities by reducing inequalities across environment, education, employment, income, and housing.
- improve community wellbeing by enabling people of all ages to live healthy and independent lives.
- A page dedicated to Children and Young People to achieve objective (1) reports that the wellbeing assessment found employment, education, community safety and health outcomes were poorer for those living in a low-income area.
- This plan aims to ensure children and young people will thrive through making the most of new skills, training and learning opportunities. This will be achieved through investment and innovation to prepare young people for their future through learning, apprenticeships and building new experiences and life skills.
- A page dedicated to children and young people to achieve objective (2) highlights aims to improve population wellbeing by ensuring a joined-up approach to





prevention and early intervention for all children and families. The wellbeing assessment highlighted a need to focus on reducing Adverse Childhood Experiences, to prevent them from affected the population throughout their lives which could lead to poor health and wellbeing.

- All PSB members will need to ensure prevention is embedded across everything they do, with a strong focus on early years.
- A page dedicated to communities within the 2 counties highlights a commitment to innovating with communities to build good mental health and wellbeing, through accessible, integrated, and well-designed services that work for everyone.

Monitoring

The PSB actions that will be taken to achieve these objectives which will directly help children and young people in poverty are:

- Create a programme of engagement and co-creation, to ensure children's voices and needs are heard.
- Develop a joined-up approach to prevention and early intervention.
- Support the community based Healthy Weight programme.
- Overlop a programme to make sure that good quality and healthy food is affordable and accessible.
- ◊ Use their spending power to build community well-being benefits.

Reflections

- The plan was easy to find when searching for the wellbeing plan for both councils, making wellbeing information easily accessible for the population of the region.
- The plan addressed ways in which it aims to help children and young people, with children prominent across both objectives as one of 3 key themes.
- However, the plan makes very limited reference to `poverty' and does not directly address ways of supporting children and young people in poverty.
- O The Plan does make reference to Wrexham's Prevention and Early Help Strategy for Children, Young People and Families 2023-26 which includes a key priority that no child, young person or family lives in poverty and has access to a good standard of living.





- There is no reference to indicators or how the plan will be monitored other than a set of actions for the PSB which include a commitment to set up three Boards responsible for delivering improvements, including for children and young people.
- The PSB will work with communities and stakeholders to gather thoughts and experiences on the success of their achievements, but there is no reference of where this information will be shared or will inform further improvements.

<u>Gwent – Blaenau Gwent CBC, Caerphilly CBC, Monmouthshire CC, Newport CtC</u> <u>& Torfaen CBC</u>) – Produced by the Gwent Public Services Board^{ix}

Overview

The two wellbeing objectives put forward by the Gwent PSB are:

- ♦ To create a fairer, more equitable and inclusive Gwent for all.
- ♦ To create a climate-ready Gwent, where our environment is valued and protected, benefitting our wellbeing now and for future generations.
- Both objectives aim to support families, children and young people living in poverty. The Gwent PSB recognises children from deprived households typically get poorer school results, increasing the risk of continued life in poverty because of limited opportunities. It also recognises that poverty and inequality challenges are more difficult to address in the face of climate change and environmental degradation.

The Wellbeing plan sets out five steps to help achieve these two objectives. The steps which will provide support for families, children and young people in poverty are:

- ♦ Taking action to reduce the cost-of-living crisis in the long term.
- Growth in local renewable energy production and use could provide better jobs and potentially cheaper energy for everyone.
- Services could be provided differently, making sure any changes in the way people access services is designed around their needs and uses new technology to support them.





- Providing and enabling the supply of good quality, affordable, appropriate homes.
- Making homes more energy efficient and better insulated would help people to stay healthy, reduce energy use and therefore reduce costs, tackling both climate change and fuel poverty.
- Taking action to address inequities, particularly related to health, through the framework of the Marmot Principles.
- Using this framework, the Gwent PSB will focus on the central issues that affect fairness, health, and wellbeing to identify how to address the root causes of poor health and inequity across Gwent, and what actions can be taken to reduce these inequities.
- Enabling and supporting people, neighbourhoods, and communities to be resilient, connected, thriving and safe.
- Poverty has been exacerbated by Covid-19 and the cost-of-living crisis, and many people do not feel as welcome, safe, or supported as they should. Communities need safe, affordable, suitable homes, access to sport, leisure and cultural activities.
- Communities need decent, reliable transport that enables people to access services, get to decent work, attend events, or visit family and friends in a safe and affordable way.

During the first year of this plan, the Gwent PSB will be preparing detailed delivery plans, working with partnerships, communities, Community Councils, voluntary groups, and others to achieve this, and these delivery plans will form the basis of the first annual report.

Reflections

The wellbeing plan was difficult to find for each individual local authority when searching online for the Well-being plan through each website but was accessed with ease via the Gwent PSB website. The population of this region should be made aware of this collaboration to aid their search for the Plan.





- Considering that the PSB covers 5 local authority areas, the Plan is significantly shorter in length than most well-being plans produced by other PSBs.
- The plan provides sufficient detail on the areas that have been identified for focus and improvement but does not yet provide detail of how these steps will be taken forward and how the overall objectives will be achieved.
- The plan does not mention any steps to support Early Years' needs, so this could be an area for attention.
- The plan does not give detail of how the overall effectiveness of its objectives will be monitored and assessed.

<u>Gwynedd</u> – Produced by the Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Service Board^x

Overview

- The wellbeing plan highlights an aim to develop understanding of how poverty affects the area, ensuring work across public bodies is more effective in mitigating long-term effects of poverty, developing the Wellbeing Assessments to understand where lack of access to services is more challenging due to poverty.
- The PSB also plan to provide preventative services and activities to support families before the need for intensive intervention arises.
- In the 5-year plan, the 2 local authorities' objectives are:
 - Understand groups in the population and geographical areas that are most impacted by poverty and why this occurs.
 - \circ $\,$ Map out support services to tackle poverty.
 - Undertake a gap analysis to identify contributors to support universal and targeted approaches.

These steps will be undertaken to achieve these objectives:

- Act as a voice for those impacted by poverty and hardship in the area, understanding what they need.
- Promote access to fair work for all to support families in poverty, and offer diverse, quality, well-paid jobs.
- Scope the development of an Early Years Strategy and implement plans to address gaps in service provision and support.





- Ensure children, young people and families are resilient and prepared for employment, further education, or training.
- Promote strategies to support children and families to maintain a healthy weight.
- Raise awareness in the system about impacts of Adverse Childhood Experiences and trauma, and opportunities to prevent exposure, mitigate risks and address harms, and commit to being a Trauma informed PSB.

The plan informs that a detailed work programme with short, medium, and long-term actions for the well-being objectives will be developed. An annual report on the progress of the plan will also be produced. A suite of measurable indicators to accompany the detailed delivery plan will be developed.

Reflections

- ◊ This plan was easy to find when searching online for the Well-being plan for both local authorities.
- The plan is short in length. The steps outlined in the plan lack detail and are fairly high level, focussing more on ways in which their objectives could be delivered, alongside 'ideas' for how their ambitions could be achieved.
- The plan has identified the need to mitigate the effect of poverty and to improve the well-being of children, with reference to both throughout the plan.
- ♦ There is no suite of measurable indicators to assess the effectiveness of their proposed steps; this is something that they intend to develop.

<u>Merthyr Tydfil</u> – See Cwm Taf Morgannwg PSB <u>Monmouthshire</u> – See Gwent PSB





<u>Neath Port Talbot</u> – Produced by the Neath Port Talbot Public Service Board^{xi}

Overview

The Neath Port Talbot PSB have highlighted 4 main objectives in their Well-being Plan, the first of which is ensuring that all children have the best start in life.

The steps that will be taken to ensure this are:

- ◊ Taking a co-ordinated approach to supporting the mental health and well-being of children and young people so they can flourish and thrive.
- Ensuring that when the youngest children start school, they are confident and ready to learn (data indicates a direct link between weaker skills and poverty/deprivation).
- Ensuring better alignment of early intervention services to meet the needs of children, young people, and their families.
- Support and advise school leavers to increase access to employment, education, or training (this can support children out of poverty by supporting them in discovering prosperous career paths and developing useful skills for future employment).

Other steps to achieve the other objectives that can support children in poverty are:

- Making sure those who need help and support with the cost of living know what support is available and how to access it (this includes the extension of free school meals to some children of primary school age, and the expansion of childcare facilities).
- Resetting strategic objectives and actions to address the root causes of poverty now, revisiting work undertaken prior to the pandemic, with the support of the Bevan Foundation.
- ◊ Identifying gaps in help and support and how these can be addressed.
- Increasing the number of apprenticeship, traineeship and work placement opportunities and support more people to access them (this could help young people to realise potential career paths that could support them out of poverty in the future).





The PSB plan to hold a series of workshop sessions to develop Outcome Delivery Plans using a Theory of Change methodology, to ensure a clear agreement of how the ultimate aims will be achieved and how progress and success will be monitored and evaluated. The PSB intends to monitor a range of high-level indicators to check progress, and provides a number of examples which include:

- ♦ the percentage of children in poverty.
- ♦ the percentage of children who are "school ready."
- ♦ the number of young people not in education, employment, or training.
- ♦ the number of households in fuel poverty and many more.

Reflections

- This plan was easy to find when searching online for the 'Neath Port Talbot Council Well-being Plan.'
- The plan makes reference to the wellbeing needs of children and young people with Objective 1 specifically focused on supporting children to have the best start in life.
- As well as actions to tackle child poverty, the plan also addresses financial support for adults struggling with the cost of living, which includes parents and carers which will implicitly support children living in poverty.
- Obspite the plan not including agreed set of indicators to measure progress, commitments for a detailed and extensive method for evaluating success is very strong, strengthening the validity of the objectives by providing proficient ways of understanding the effectiveness of the steps taken.

Newport – See Gwent PSB





Pembrokeshire – Produced by Pembrokeshire Public Service Board^{xii}

Overview

Pembrokeshire's Child Poverty rate is amongst the top five highest in Wales, making reducing poverty and inequalities a key priority. A project focussing on this which originated from a Local Authority group was taken on by the PSB, and a group including representatives from all PSB partner organisations and wider partners such as Citizens Advice, was established.

This group devised 3 main outputs to deliver on reducing poverty and inequality. These are:

- A short-term programme of schemes and initiatives to respond to the cost-of-living crisis, utilising WG and local funds.
- A medium to long term poverty strategy to effect more lasting change, informed by local and national data and understanding of best practice, and by the lived experience of people in poverty in the County.
- Recommendations to the PSB partners on actions they can take to contribute to the strategy.
- These actions are intended to support growth, jobs, and prosperity, enable safe and connected communities and reduce inequalities and improve wellbeing by working with communities.
- Other actions that will be taken which are relevant to children in poverty are:
- Working with communities as equal partners to help address wider challenges facing society (this could include effects of poverty on children and young people).

Monitoring

The Council's Partnerships Panel is responsible for reviewing and scrutinising decisions or actions by the PSB. The plan outlines an intention to identify measures by which success will be monitored with a performance management framework in place to evaluate progress. The specific action to produce a poverty strategy includes sub actions, outputs, timescales and intended outcomes.





Reflections

- When searching online for the Well-being Plan, it was not possible to find a copy in an accessible or designed format.
- Aiming to enforce strategies to reduce poverty in the short, medium, and long term is a huge strength of this plan, but the longer-term strategies are not fully outlined which weakens the benefits (although, taking time to decide these actions will likely result in a more effective strategy).
- ◊ The section on reducing poverty and inequalities does not explicitly mention children and young people.
- The plan commits to the development of a Poverty Strategy.
- The measures by which success will be monitored has not yet been developed and the PSB is yet to develop a performance management framework to evaluate progress. This weakens the plans validity as it cannot yet be seen if the delivery of these plans is effective in achieving its aim.

Powys – Produced by the Powys Public Service Board^{xiii}

Overview

Powys PSB aim to focus on young people to improve the system surrounding healthy weight, looking to support the best start in life for all young people, irrespective of their background.

The first objective that 'people in Powys live happy, healthy, and safe lives' includes commitments to:

- ♦ healthy life expectancy
- ◊ tackle health inequalities
- ◊ improve living standards
- ◊ Improve educational attainment
- ♦ Incomes and income inequality
- They will engage with stakeholders who contribute to the local obesity system, work collaboratively to action system-wide change, and identify and test local solutions to tackling overweight and obesity at a system level. Unhealthy weight





can impact a person life-chances in educational attainment, employability and various other ways

A commitment to improve access and affordability of fresh, seasonal, and nutrientdense food to support people to eat healthily is also highlighted in the plan.

Monitoring

The section outlining monitoring arrangements makes reference to leadership and oversight through workstream officers, working groups and annual reporting. A hyperlink to the national indicators and milestones for Wales is provided.

Reflections

- ♦ The plan was easy to find when searching for 'Powys County Council Wellbeing Plan.'
- Overall, it appears that the steps taken to achieve the objectives in relation to supporting children and young people relate solely to their health. There is no mention of addressing child poverty in the main body of the Plan, only through an appendix outlining the response to the Wellbeing Assessment.
- There is no reference in the Plan of work underway in Powys through the Child Poverty Taskforce to develop a poverty plan for the county.

Rhondda Cynon Taf – See Cwm Taf Morgannwg PSB

Swansea – Produced by the Swansea Public Services Board^{xiv}

Overview

One of the objectives outlined in the Swansea PSB Well-being plan is focusing on Early Years and ensuring that children in Swansea have the best start in life to be the best they can be. This is proven to make children much more likely to live healthier, be better learners and be less likely to experience deprivation as adults.

A whole system approach to this objective will include commitments to:

◊ Promoting important messages and information to all.





- Enhancing universal Early Years services through the availability of early intervention provision for expectant parents/carers and young children to ensure strong foundations are in place for their future development.
- Awareness of trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences and how to support and build resilience.
- Adding value to universal and early intervention services through the engagement and involvement of wider services and organisations to promote, signpost, co-plan and deliver community-based support and activities.
- Reference is made to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCR, the Children and Young People's National Participation Standards, with engagement with a Children's Rights Steering Group and a Poverty Partnership Forum, alongside the creation of a Poverty Truth Commission.
- Overty is referenced as part of the preventative agenda and commitments with the objectives to 'Live Well, Age Well' and 'Strong Communities.'

The Plan sets out future commitments to develop arrangements to ensure progress is measured and monitored and to agree who will take lead responsibility and be involved in delivering each step. Detailed annual plans are also to be developed to show progress. Further, there is a commitment to develop performance management arrangements which measure and monitor the PSB's progress.

Reflections

- The plan was easy to find when searching for the 'Swansea Council Well-being Plan.' An easy read version of the plan has also been published.
- A commitment to ensure that children in Swansea have the best start in life is prominent in the Plan and a welcome development. However, there is less commentary on the impact of poverty on children and young people in the plan or reference to tackling poverty under Objective 1-Early Years.
- The plan identifies in detail what is needed to ensure their objectives and ambitions set out through the objectives are met but didn't provide any detail in relation to any indicators or performance measures, other than to inform that monitoring and measurement arrangements will be developed.





Reducing deprivation and poverty is not one of the core objectives in the plan, and looking at steps to prevent poverty directly is not so prominent.

Torfaen – See Gwent PSB

Vale of Glamorgan – Produced by the Vale of Glamorgan Public Services Board^{xv}

Overview

The Vale of Glamorgan Council has stressed a priority to support work to tackle food poverty, including food poverty projects:

- Llantwit Food Project began October 2020, funding from the national lottery meant improvements could be made to providing good food accessible for all in Llantwit major, looking to potentially expand this. Website: <u>https://foodvale.org/llantwit/</u>.
- Move More Eat Well Plan (developed by Cardiff and the Vale) aligns with Welsh Government "Healthy Weight: Healthy Wales" strategy – contributing to work to tackle food poverty and health inequalities. Website: <u>https://movemoreeatwell.co.uk</u>.
- ◊ The council and PSB also aim to work together to ensure young people are supported through early years, childhood, and teenage years.
- The Well-being Assessment has highlighted areas in the Vale with high levels of deprivation, and there will be a particular focus to work with people in these communities.

Objectives which could provide support for children in poverty are:

- Developing a better understanding and response to diverse needs of communities and families in deprived areas, ensuring services and facilities are accessible (design, transport, affordability, and technology).
- Increasing levels of engagement and involvement at all ages, particularly those disengaged/ seldom heard.
- Engaging with and involving children and young people to better understand their concerns and aspirations, ensuring services reflect their views and needs.





- Improving health and well-being, tackling health inequities by ensuring greater engagement and a more targeted preventative approach to reach those most in need.
- ◊ Providing information and support for dealing with cost-of-living impacts.
- Supporting work to tackle food poverty, raising awareness of the close links to environmental wellbeing and health.

3 Objectives are stated in the plan to provide a framework for the PSB and others to address issues raised. These are:

- ♦ A more resilient and greener Vale.
- ♦ A more active and healthier Vale.
- ♦ A more equitable and connected Vale.

There is a priority workstream to work with people who live in communities with the highest levels of deprivation.

Monitoring

Progress will be monitored and reported by the PSB which will publish Annual reports on what has been achieved each year and the focus for the coming 12 months. They will receive regular progress reports on key activities detailed in the Wellbeing Plan to ensure issues are being addressed and objectives delivered, including from contributory projects and partnerships.

Reflections

- This plan was easy to find when searching online for 'Vale of Glamorgan Council Wellbeing Plan.'
- The plan highlights concern for children and young people living in poverty, and a commitment to providing support for them, but does not explicitly say what actions they will take other than committing to engaging with and understanding their needs. More distinct actions plans should be explored to effectively support young people, particularly those in low-income families.
- The previous wellbeing plan had clearer commitments and objectives to 'reduce poverty and tackle inequalities linked to deprivation' and 'to give children the best start in life.'





- The actions linked to addressing poverty primarily focus on tackling food poverty in the county.
- There is a lack of performance indicators in the Plan although there is a commitment to identify measures to support progress reporting and draw upon annual report of contributory projects referenced.

<u>Wrexham</u> – see Flintshire <u>Ynys Mon</u> – See Gwynedd

Commentary

Since the enactment of the Measure in 2010, the landscape at a local and regional level is decidedly more complex. Informed in part by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, the enactment of the Socio-economic Duty under the Equality Act 2010 and emergence of Public Services Boards, these notable developments have signalled new and different approaches being adopted by local authorities to meet their statutory obligations.

The Well-being Plans produced by local and regional Public Service Boards are now intended to be the vehicle by which local authorities demonstrate the actions being taken to eradicate child poverty and to discharge the duties initially prescribed through the Measure. However, this snapshot report has shown that examining these reports in isolation does not provide a comprehensive account of all the actions and steps being taken by local authorities to prevent and tackle child poverty. Many of the Well-being Plans remain high level in content and signpost to other relevant documents produced or yet to be developed, and list future intentions following publication of the Plans, especially in relation to establishing working groups, identifying named responsible individuals, developing delivery plans and agreeing performance measures and monitoring arrangements.

Several local authorities have published or are taking steps to publish distinct plans to address levels of child poverty in their area, and these are to be welcomed. Establishing multi-agency partnerships and engaging with children and families to inform local priority actions which are then outlined within an accessible child poverty focused strategy or





similar framework is an approach to be commended. The value of this approach is that local authorities can stipulate more clearly to children, young people, and families in their areas that child poverty is unacceptable, and to outline the steps being taking in response to this key priority. It also allows for local approaches to compliment the national approach by the Welsh Government through their refreshed Child Poverty Strategy.

Section 2: Welsh Public Bodies

Natural Resources Wales

Natural Resources Wales are statutory members of each PSB and therefore there is a need to view the Well-being plans referenced in the previous section to identify actions being taken forward.

Other relevant links where actions to tackle poverty and improve well-being are provided:

- ♦ <u>Corporate Plan to 2030</u>
- ♦ <u>Well-being Statement</u>
- ◊ <u>Area Statements</u>

Notable actions include opportunities for apprenticeships, volunteering, student work experience and other placements opportunities, which can help young people to gain valuable experience and support them out of poverty. NRW also work with schools to encourage more children to enjoy and care for their environment.

The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW)²

HEFCW is a Welsh Government Sponsored Body which funds universities and colleges in Wales. One of HEFCW's five core strategic themes is to secure inclusion, progression, and

² From August 2024, a new body will be set up called Medr to fund and regulate FE and HE institutions.





success in higher education for learners of all ages and backgrounds. On the website, there is a dedicated section on 'widening access and inclusion' under the 'Our Responsibilities' tab, which includes priorities for ensuring children in poverty have access to higher education, clearly signposted for people to see.

- Widening access strategic priorities that can benefit children in poverty:
- securing all-age recruitment from the bottom two clusters of the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation areas.
- ensuring under-represented groups in Higher Education are supported and enabled to succeed.
- improving progression pathways to Higher Education.
- Promoting fair admissions.
- Improving fair access to the professions, high level skills and the priority sectors.
- Supporting Welsh Government priorities relating to tackling poverty, raising educational aspirations and attainment, social mobility, and equality of opportunity.
- An annual equality report is published each year providing an overview of HEFCW's progress towards meeting their statuary responsibilities in relation to the Equalities Act 2010.

Amgueddfa Cymru (The National Museum of Wales)

Amgueddfa Cymru receives funding from Welsh Government to ensure that their facilities are free to access for all, which is a significant contribution towards enabling families and children in poverty to have access and opportunities to learn and research at their 7 sites across Wales.

They are committed to developing child poverty objectives with input from youth forums and partners, and embed these objectives in their corporate plan:

- ♦ <u>Strategy for Public Programmes 2022-27</u>
- Amgueddfa Cymru is also committed to ensuring poverty and social disadvantages are not barriers to participation. They have produced a 2030 strategy to guide how they will engage and support communities to remove systematic exclusion and ensure all Welsh communities have a better and culturally richer life.





♦ Amgueddfa Cymru Strategy 2030

Key commitments include:

- Making sure that everyone is represented.
- They are working with people and communities to decide what to collect for the future, ensuring more diverse stories are represented in Wales' national collections.
- Displays and exhibitions celebrating and representing the history and arts of communities who experience inequalities.
- ♦ Improvements to recruitment methods, removing barriers and recognising the value of lived experiences, valuing, and appreciating staff diversity.
- ◊ Inspiring creativity and learning for life
- Building on the schools learning programme to engage with all schools, supporting the well-being of children and young people in poverty and inspiring learning.
- Encourage mutual learning and growth, and embrace diversity, equality, and inclusion.
- Expand volunteering, placement, and apprenticeship programmes, creating more opportunities for young people to gain creative work experiences.
- Continue to blend museum and virtual learning experiences, so that transport is no longer a barrier.
- Discover and explore the museum digitally.
- Recognising difficulties faced by those experiencing digital poverty, they will work with other organisations to be as accessible as possible.
- The achievement of these commitments will be monitored by developing systems and processes which will show transparency whether Museum Wales and their partners are achieving real change.

The Arts Council of Wales

The Council was established in 1994 and receives funding from the Welsh Government and distributes funding from the National Lottery as well as the Welsh Government. In relation to the focus of our report, the Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report 2021-2022 is the most up to date report publicly available at the time of writing.





Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report 2021-2022

The plan highlights key actions progressed during 2021-2022, which included a joint action plan with Museum Wales calling for significant actions to develop and improve arts experiences for many people, including those experiencing social deprivation and poverty, which was published in 2022.

♦ Widening Engagement Action Plan 2022-25

The website highlights that the voices of those facing socio-economic deprivation must continue to be heard and actions must be taken to remove the barriers they face in creating and accessing the arts.

The creative learning funding section on the website outlines the arts grants which are relevant to young people, including:

- Creative Learning in the Early Years grants, providing interactive training sessions to build confidence in exploring creativity, engagement, reflection, and collaboration with children aged 3-5 in early years settings.
- Have a Go fund for learners aged 3-16 giving an opportunity for learners to experience activities and workshops delivering expressive arts. This fund offers grants up to £1,500, and applications can be made by state-maintained schools, pupil referral units and cultural organisations.
- Go and See grant, which can be used to fund visits to high-quality arts events in galleries, theatres arts centres and other venues.
- Lead Creative Schools Scheme offers £10,000 grants over two academic years to schools to nurture creative approaches to teaching and learning.
- Cynefin: culturally and ethnically diverse Wales schools could receive 16 days support from a Creative Professional, and a £2,000 grant to fund additional creative practitioners, resources, and trips to support the project.

The National Library of Wales

Entry to each library is free to all, giving everyone the opportunity to enjoy events and exhibitions without financial barriers.

The 'Visiting with children' section of the website has information on what is available for children and families at the library, including:





- A play area for children aged 3-7, full of play activities to stimulate senses and curiosity, also free of charge and with no need to book in advance.
- Events for children and families during the school holidays, with a link to latest events information.
- ◊ Free activities for children in some of the Exhibition spaces, with a link to current activities offered.
- Workshops are also provided free of charge for schools and colleges, giving children in poverty the ability to take part in school trip opportunities without financial barriers.
- The Reading Room is open to those 16 and over, with free access to resources and collections for young people and a quiet space for reading or studying with free Wi-Fi.
- ♦ <u>Visiting with Children</u>

Their Strategic Equality Plan 2024-2028 builds on the previous Equality Plan 2020-2024 to protect and promote equality and diversity for the benefit of our staff and users. It outlines the key areas which they will be focusing on over the next four years in order to improve their services, which include providing better access for socio-economically disadvantaged groups and reduce barrier for children and families:

Strategic Equality Plan 2024-2028

Sports Wales

Enabling Sport in Wales to Thrive is the strategy which was coproduced and developed for everyone in Wales:

♦ Sport Wales Strategy

Sports Wales is committed to achieving the following objectives in the future:

 Giving every young person a great start, ensuring they have the skills, confidence, and motivation to enjoy and progress through sport and lead an active, healthy life.





- Ensuring everyone has the opportunity to be active and enjoy great experiences through sport, with inclusivity for all.
- The needs and motivations of the individual lead the delivery, for all abilities.
- How they are changing their approach:
- Striving to be more flexible to respond quicker to the changing needs and motivations of people and communities.
- ♦ Investing resources differently, seeking out and encouraging effective collaborations which have the potential to create far-reaching and deeper impact.
- One important step that Sports Wales has taken towards supporting children in poverty is through the Free-Swimming Initiative. This is targeted at children aged 16 and under (and older people over 60), especially those from areas of deprivation, to help them gain access to swimming pools and give them a chance to learn to swim. Each local authority and their delivery partners are now required to provide a minimum standard of one free splash session to young people each weekend in every Local Authority run pool. During summer holidays, each pool will be expected to deliver two free sessions during the week in addition to this.
- Citbag is an online learning hub for supporting children in poverty, offering free sport and activity resources for schools and teachers, ensuring investment is put into the physical education that children receive at school, including schools in deprived areas.
- ◊ <u>Citbag</u>
- The School Sport Survey gives children across Wales the opportunity to have a say on sport and wellbeing and informs decisions about future investment resources.
- School Support Survey 2022
- The' Be Active Wales Fund' offers grants from £300 to £50,000 to sports clubs and community organisations to support projects that promote equality and improve access to physical activity. All not-for-profit sports clubs or organisations can apply, meaning lower socioeconomic communities can get support to ensure children in less affluent areas have access to sports facilities and equipment.

Alternatively, 'A Place for Sport' is a partnership with Crowdfunder which supports community clubs and activities to raise money for facility improvements, and Sports Wales will pledge funds up to 50% towards the given project. This gives further opportunity for children and young people from all backgrounds to have access to good quality sports facilities in their communities.





Fire and Rescue Authority

The Fire and Rescue Authority are statutory members of each PSB and therefore there is a need to view the Well-being plans referenced in the previous section to identify actions being taken forward. There are 3 authorities in Wales:

- ♦ <u>Mid and West Wales</u>
- ♦ <u>North Wales</u>
- ♦ <u>South Wales</u>

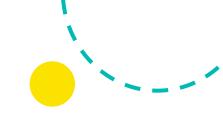
The South Wales F&RA publishes a Strategic Equality Plan subject to an annual review which sets out the steps achieved to meet their objectives, one of which is:

 Ensuring under-represented groups/marginalised communities are involved at the onset of design and delivery of services (<u>Annual Review</u>)

The Mid and West Wales work with children and young people is separated into four distinct areas which are - Fire cadets, Phoenix, Education and Fire Setters. There is a dedicated section on their website with more information on each area (<u>Website Page</u>).

North Wales F&RA have published their Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2024-2029 which sets out actions to tackle poverty across all protected characteristic groups (<u>Strategy</u>).





References

- ⁱ Welsh Government (2010) Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010
- ⁱⁱ Welsh Government (2015) Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- ⁱⁱⁱ Cardiff Public Service Board (2023) Cardiff Well-being Plan 2023-28
- ^{iv} Carmarthenshire Public Services Board (2023) The Carmarthenshire We Want 2023-28
- ^v Ceredigion Public Service Board (2023) <u>Ceredigion Local Well-Being Plan 2023 2028</u>
- vi Conwy & Denbighshire Public Service Board (2023) Local Well-being Plan 2023-2028

^{vii} Cwm Taf Morgannwg Public Services Board (2023) <u>Our Well-Being Plan: A More Equal Cwm Taf Morgannwg 2023</u> - 2028

- viii Flintshire & Wrexham Public Service Board (2023) Our Well-Being Plan 2023 2028
- ^{ix} Gwent Public Services Board (2023) Well-being Plan for Gwent
- ^x Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Service Board (2023) Anglesey and Gwynedd Well-being Plan 2023-28
- ^{xi} Neath Port Talbot Public Services Board (2023) Well-Being Plan 2023-28
- ^{xii} Pembrokeshire Public Service Board (2023) Well-being plan for Pembrokeshire
- xiii Powys Public Service Board (2023) <u>The Powys Well-being Plan: A Fair, Sustainable and Healthy Powys</u>
- ^{xiv} Swansea Public Services Board (2023) <u>Working Together to Improve Well-being in Swansea: Local Well-being</u> <u>Plan 2023 - 2028</u>
- ^{xv} Vale of Glamorgan Public Services Board (2023) Well Being Plan 2023-2028