

WLGA Briefing

Child Poverty Update

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Purpose

This briefing updates members, officers and partnerships on developments on the child poverty agenda in Wales, providing an overview of the content and implications of the Measure and the WAG child poverty strategy currently being drafted.

Background

The Children and Families (Wales) Measure received Royal Assent on February 10th 2010 which enables provisions within the Measure to be enacted by Ministers in Wales. The WLGA have previously provided briefings to Authorities and Partnerships detailing the content and impact of the Measure on local Government which remain available from www.wlga.gov.uk/childrenpolicy

The Measure- Content and Implication

Part 1 of the Measure focuses entirely on Child Poverty, and uses a legislative framework to place a statutory duty on public bodies. The framework is structured around 13 Broad Aims, identified on the face of the Measure. Public bodies identified in the Measure to support the reduction of child poverty, must do so through policy and service delivery aligned to one or more of the Broad Aims.

The new legal framework created by the Measure, specifies that the Assembly Government and public bodies must produce a child poverty strategy that focuses on one or more of the Broad Aims. The Assembly Government's first child poverty strategy, which will be published for consultation in May, outlines a new policy framework for the reduction of child poverty and details action that the Assembly Government will take to reduce child poverty. The Measure requires that the WAG strategy is to be reported on and updated every three years.

For local authorities and partnerships the Measure requires the development of a 'local child poverty strategy' however this duty can be discharged through reference and actions the production of the Children and Young People's plans, as required by sections 25 and 26 of the Children Act 2004. This means that authorities and those bodies that are members of the CYP Partnership are not required to produce additional stand alone strategies, as the plan should ensure that child poverty is a theme mainstreamed through all of the seven chapters. This in practice should enhance multi agency working and support the developments of shared objectives across key agencies, mainstreaming poverty issues across all areas of service delivery for children and young people and

enhancing the potential of the Children and Young Peoples Plans which are predicated on partnership working.

Some authorities may wish to consider the viability of producing an authority wide child poverty strategy as good practice, and the child poverty solutions tool is a useful resource in taking this forward. A stand alone Council strategy is however not a legal requirement and remains the choice of the authority based on local priorities. Should an authority wish to consider developing a strategy, options authorities and partnerships may wish to consider include:

- Setting out the child poverty strategy as part of the Core Aim 7 chapter of the CYPP plan
- Developing a strategy as part of the Local Service Board's plan which would link to the CYPP plan as appropriate
- Council corporate strategy to sit alongside a partnership plan.

The Assembly Government's Child Poverty Strategy

The Child Poverty Strategy developed by the Assembly Government will be due for consultation in May. The WLGA will be providing a formal consultation response to ensure that the strategy aligns to the current planning frameworks at a local level, and supports the mainstreaming of poverty reduction through the national policy framework. WLGA officials have held ongoing discussions with policy colleagues in WAG, to provide a local government perspective. Guidance will accompany the strategy, which will be sent to all partnerships and public agencies. The WLGA will continue to work closely with WAG officials to support the development of the guidance and will be consulting with our networks during the course of this work.

The strategy will set out the following:

- Strategic vision for 2020
- How WAG will deliver on the 13 Broad Aims identified on the face of the Measure
- Legislative & Policy Context
- Partnership working and Delivery

The structure of the strategy is to have the seven core aims as the framework, within which the Broad Aims and National priorities have been identified to ensure a clear vision within each Core Aim and improved approaches to aligning policy.

Support Mechanisms for Local Government & Partnerships

Child Poverty Solutions Wales

[Child Poverty Solutions Wales](#) was developed in 2007 to support local authorities to mainstream child poverty through corporate policy.

The project ran dedicated pilot work in two authorities Gwynedd and Rhondda Cynon Taf, testing specific policy interventions identified through local needs assessment. In addition the Child Poverty Solutions website was developed which provided resources for members, officers and partnerships in improving policy making. Resources include elected member training support, self assessment tools, impact assessment tools, local information and a model for scrutiny inquiries.

The project commenced in October 2007 running for a period of 2 years, and is supported by a dedicated staff resource at the WLGA and Save the Children, with additional ad hoc support from WAG officials. The work of the project is supported by a National Steering Group, drawn from the wider public and voluntary sectors. It is the role of the NSG to provide expertise, advice, guidance and accountability to the project

Following the success of the first phase, the project has recently received Welsh Assembly Government grant funding for an additional three years. The focus of the next phase will be on:

- Ensuring the project fits within the new policy context.
- Addressing the recommendations from Phase one evaluation reports.
- Updating, maintaining and expanding the web resource for the benefit of local authorities and other public bodies.
- Network with public bodies to promote awareness of the website and how they can use the resources to reduce child poverty in their areas.
- Develop training courses for public bodies to raise their awareness of their existing and new responsibilities to address child poverty.
- Expanding the scope of the project to support the addressing of inequalities in health, education and other service provision.

Save the Children will continue to host the project, with strategic support from the Welsh Local Government Association and the Partnership Support Unit.

Partnership Support Unit

The Partnership Support Unit (PSU) serves to assist Children and Young People's Partnerships to exercise their duties to co-operate in the planning and provision of services and in the production of effective Children and Young People's Plans in order to improve outcomes for children and young people. The PSU is working to support partnerships in a range of activities in relation to planning for the development of their child poverty strategies. Activities include information and awareness raising sessions; self-assessment workshops using the Child Poverty Solutions toolkit; and Results Based Accountability workshops. If you wish to discuss your partnership's support needs please contact geraldine.murphy@wlga.gov.uk

Annexe A

The Measure's Broad Aims are set out in the following tables, mapped against the seven core aims that form the CYPF plans.

CORE AIM 1: EVERY CHILD SHOULD HAVE A FLYING START IN LIFE	
Broad Aim:	To support parenting of children

CORE AIM 2: EVERY CHILD AND YOUNG PERSON HAS ACCESS TO A COMPREHENSIVE RANGE OF EDUCATION TRAINING AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES	
Broad Aim:	To reduce inequalities in educational attainment between children; To help young persons participate effectively in education and training;

CORE AIM 3: ENJOY THE BEST POSSIBLE PHYSICAL MENTAL SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH AND ARE FREE FROM ABUSE VICTIMISATION AND EXPLOITATION	
Broad Aim:	To reduce inequalities in health between children and between parents of children (so far as necessary to ensure the well being of their children);

CORE AIM 4: ALL CHILDREN HAVE ACCESS TO PLAY LEISURE CULTURAL AND SPORTING ACTIVITIES	
Broad Aim:	To reduce inequalities in participation in cultural, sporting and leisure activities between children and between parents of children (so far as necessary to ensure the wellbeing of their children);

CORE AIM 5: ALL CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ARE LISTENED TO TREATED WITH RESPECT AND HAVE THEIR RACE AND CULTURAL IDENTITY RECOGNISED.	
Broad Aim:	To help young persons participate effectively and responsibly in the life of their communities.

CORE AIM 6: ALL CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE ACCESS TO A SAFE HOME AND COMMUNITY WHICH SUPPORTS PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING	
Broad Aim:	<p>To ensure that all children grow up in decent housing;</p> <p>To ensure that all children grow up in safe and cohesive communities;</p>

CORE AIM 7: NO CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON IS DISADVANTAGED BY POVERTY	
Broad Aims:	<p>To increase income for households including one or more children with a view to ensuring that, so far as reasonably practicable, there are no households in the relevant income group;</p> <p>Ensuring that, so far as reasonably practicable, children living in households in the relevant income group are not materially deprived;</p> <p>To promote and facilitate paid employment for parents of children;</p> <p>To provide parents of children with the skills necessary for paid employment;</p> <p>To help young persons take advantage of opportunities for employment;</p>