

**Equality, Justice  
and Prosperity:**  
Our strategy for the  
next three years



# The Bevan Foundation generates solutions to Wales' most challenging problems.

We're a proudly independent think tank and charity. We are not connected with any political party, which means we can speak out and find genuinely new solutions to the challenges facing Wales.

We depend on the generosity of hundreds of people in Wales and the rest of the UK to make a difference. You can get involved for as little as £3.25 a month at <https://www.bevanfoundation.org/support-us/> or keep in touch with our free e-newsletter at <https://www.bevanfoundation.org/sign-up/>

We are a registered charity no. 1104191 and company limited by guarantee registered in Wales no. 4175018.

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

The Bevan Foundation's vision is of equality, justice and prosperity for everyone in Wales. Our mission is to develop lasting solutions to help achieve this vision, working with others to make them a reality.

Our independence from government and political parties ensures we act without fear or favour. Our expertise and ways of working ensure that what we do is practical and will achieve results. And when we need to hold organisations to account, we do so.

Since we were established in 2001, the Bevan Foundation has made a major contribution to public debate and public policy despite extremely modest resources. Over the last fifteen years we have maintained a relentless focus on reducing inequalities in all aspects of people's lives, achieving considerable success in raising the profile of problems and advocating practical solutions. The National Assembly for Wales, Welsh Government, local authorities and charities are all acting on many of our proposals, and people's lives are better as a result.

Our strategy for the next three years - 2018/19 to 2020/21 – aims to address the most challenging of Wales' social and economic problems, including those that have bedevilled our nation for many years as well as new challenges that are emerging. In doing so, we aim to build on our considerable achievements, consolidating 'what works' and developing new approaches.

## **The challenges facing Wales are unprecedented.**

People are in the midst of the weakest growth in living standards in at least 60 years, with low-income families faring the worst. Constraints on public spending have seen real-terms cuts to many public services and to social security benefits, again hitting low-income households hardest. People's sense of wellbeing in Wales is lower than in any other part of the UK. The result is that, every day, lives are being wasted by poverty, inequality and injustice.

## **Established ways of meeting these challenges will not work.**

There have been many efforts to solve poverty and reduce inequality, with some resulting in real and tangible improvements. But in other areas there has been little if any progress despite good intentions, whether in earnings, educational achievement or the incidence of certain diseases.

Our view is that doing more of the same is not an option. Constraints on public spending are set to stay for some time to come, and there is deep uncertainty about economic prospects of Wales and the UK. Too often, public policy in Wales lacks ambition and good intentions fail to make a sufficient impact. Unless there is a change of approach, thousands more lives will be blighted in the years ahead and everyone in Wales will pay the price.

Our strategy for the next three years is to develop practical solutions to the new and long-standing challenges that face Wales. In doing this we will always put the most marginalised and powerless people first. We will then persuade government, businesses, communities and people themselves to take action. This is a big and bold ambition – but that is what Wales needs!

We hope that you will work with us towards shared goals.

## 2. OUR STRATEGY

We want a Wales where everyone is able to enjoy a ‘good life’, whatever their personal characteristics, such as gender, race or disability, and no matter whether they are from a rich or poor background. This aim is much more than achieving general improvements in prosperity or well-being - it involves actively reducing the inequalities and injustices that currently exist in almost all aspects of life. Our approach therefore complements but also challenges Wales’ well-being goals.<sup>1</sup>

Our understanding of what constitutes a ‘good life’ draws on many different points of view, from the ideas of leading human rights thinkers to crowd-sourced ideas such as ‘The Wales we Want’.<sup>2</sup> Out of this diversity we have identified the fundamental requirements of a decent society and a ‘good life’ as being:

- **Prosperity:** that everyone should enjoy a decent standard of living with the things or activities that most people take for granted, and that nobody should go without adequate shelter, food and warmth.
- **Equality:** everyone should be able to achieve their potential irrespective of their characteristics and background, through good health and effective skills in cohesive communities.
- **Justice and Voice:** everyone should have a say in decisions that affect them, be able to participate in a thriving civil society and have access to justice when things go wrong.

We see the root causes of poverty, inequality and injustice lying in our economic, social and institutional systems. Individuals’ decisions and behaviours do of course make a difference, but lasting change for the largest number of people comes from effective legislation, policy and practice.

### 2.1. Prosperity for all

#### The problem

One in four people in Wales is struggling to make ends meet because their income is too low to meet their basic needs. More than half of people of working age who are on a poverty-level income live in a household where there is someone in work. Households are under real pressure, with nearly 11,000 families becoming homeless last year and 43,000 households receiving food parcels from the Trussell Trust in just six months. High costs e.g. of housing and fuel make households’ struggles even harder, with rents being unaffordable for around half of all social housing tenants.

Poverty blights people’s lives. Growing up in poverty affects a baby’s weight at birth and a child’s achievement at school. For adults, poverty affects their risk of being made redundant, the likelihood

<sup>1</sup> As set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act, these are: a prosperous Wales; a resilient Wales; a healthier Wales; a more equal Wales; a Wales of cohesive communities; a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language; a globally responsible Wales.

<sup>2</sup> The Wales We Want (2014). Available at <http://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/people/future-generations-act/?lang=en>

of suffering from cancer or cardiovascular disease and risk of experiencing domestic violence. For older people, poverty affects life expectancy. If that is not enough, poverty also costs the Welsh public purse some £3.6 billion a year.

Poverty is no longer the political priority that it was in Wales or the UK. There are few signs that the headline rate of poverty is coming down, and some signs that poverty is getting worse:

- child poverty is forecast to increase to nearly 40% by 2021
- in-work poverty is continuing to grow
- pensioner poverty has started to rise after years of falling.

### **Our aim**

We want to bring an end to the scourge of poverty in Wales. To do this, more people need to want to solve poverty, understand it and take action.

Our ambition is that by 2030 there is a groundswell of support for effective action that will mean that:

- no more than 10% of the population lives on a low income, and
- nobody is ever destitute.

### **What we will do**

Over the next three years we will focus on addressing the root causes of poverty, namely:

- how work now, and in the future, can help to prevent and protect against poverty;
- how everyone can have a decent, affordable and secure home and enough to eat;
- how a safety-net of benefits can help people avoid and leave poverty.

We will work closely with people with experience of poverty as well as experts and practitioners to understand poverty in these three areas and to develop practical solutions.

Our work on poverty will be primarily undertaken in partnership with the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. Working with them and other partners, and focusing on the UK as well as Welsh Government, we will take forward practical solutions that will achieve a marked reduction in the levels of poverty and inequality in Wales.

## **2.2. Equality for everyone**

### **The problem**

Many thousands of people in Wales are unable to make the most of their talents because of who they are, their income or where they live. People from low-income backgrounds have a greater burden of illness and shorter life expectancy than others, with a man from a deprived area enjoying 18 fewer years of life in good health. Inequality in attainment begins at an early age and by age 16 children receiving Free School Meals are half as likely to get five good GCSEs as other children.

Inequalities associated with gender, race and disability are proving highly resistant despite decades of legislation against discrimination.

Where people live also makes a difference, shaping the opportunities available and how social relationships between different groups of people. Sometimes, tensions between groups spill into violence or abuse, with one in five people from an ethnic or religious minority reporting having experienced harassment or abuse recently.

There are few signs that things are getting better and some signs that they're getting worse. The gap in healthy life expectancy between the most and least deprived areas is widening and the gap in attainment between children who receive free school meals and others is now stuck after narrowing for some years. And community cohesion is fragmenting in some areas, with evidence of low-levels of belonging and harassment and abuse on the rise.

### **Our aim**

We want to find new ways to enable everyone to have a 'good life', no matter who they are or where they live.

Our ambition is to develop ways to enable everyone in Wales to make the most of their talents so that by 2030:

- Young people including those who are disabled, from minority ethnic groups and in low-income families, have the same life chances as those from better-off homes.
- The burden of ill-health and shorter life expectancy in Wales' most deprived areas is reduced.
- People enjoy good community relationships and excellent opportunities in all parts of Wales.

### **What we will do**

Over the next three years we will develop practical solutions to increase equality between different groups of people focusing on:

- Better life chances for young people from all backgrounds
- Better health for people in the most deprived areas
- Stronger and more cohesive communities.

We are pleased to have secured support from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation to work on improving integration and the rights of migrants to Wales, and we will seek continuation funding to take forward our work on better life chances for young people.

We will also seek support from other funders to enable us to deliver this programme.

## **2.3. Justice and voice**

### **The Problem**

Democracy and civil society in Wales are in crisis. Even though public bodies take decisions that affect people's lives every single day, too few people have a say in what those bodies do. These

institutions are often unrepresentative of the wider population and do not always listen to people's views. Looking at local government:

- In the May 2017 local elections just 4 out of 10 people voted
- In local elections, in 1 in 13 seats there was only one candidate
- In the general population 90% do not get involved in council business

Changes such as City Deals, the out-sourcing of services and possible changes to local government mean decisions are becoming even more remote from ordinary people. It is not clear how these bodies take decisions nor how a citizen can get their views heard.

Participation in civil society is relatively low, and organisations face unprecedented pressure on budgets as demand for services rise, and concerns about accountability and public trust and confidence need to be addressed.

And when things go wrong, people need access to justice to ensure matters are put right, whether through effective complaints procedures, recourse to the Obmudsman or access to tribunals.

### **Our aim**

We want everyone to have a strong voice in the decisions that affect them. Wales' political and public institutions should be representative of and accountable to our diverse population, with high levels of engagement in democracy, social movements and civil society, and access to justice when required.

### **What we will do**

Over the next three years we will develop radical proposals to strengthen people's voice, participation and justice so that ordinary people can influence the decisions that affect them. This will include:

- A vibrant local democracy in which people have their say and institutions listen
- Rights and redress when things go wrong
- A thriving civil society

We will seek external funding to deliver this programme, although where essential we will use our reserves to ensure that the voices of ordinary people are not ignored in major debates.

## **2.4. Next steps**

In each year, we will develop detailed plans around these broad themes. This will enable us to reflect contemporary issues and concerns. It will also reflect our capacity to deliver on the issues which depends on the resources available to us.



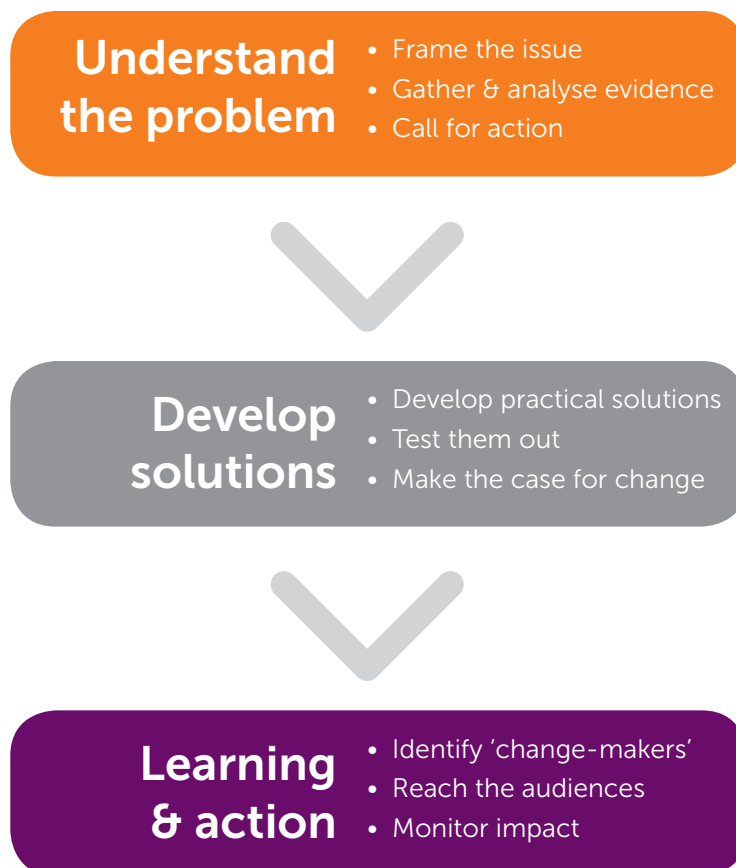
### 3. OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

Our primary charitable purpose is to ‘educate the public’, which we do by increasing collective knowledge, formally and informally, about social and economic issues in Wales and their solutions.

We have developed a clearly thought-through ‘theory of change’ or logic model, to show how our charitable purpose achieves real and lasting change in people’s lives. Within this 3-step approach, we have also set out how we approach each stage, being especially careful to ensure that:

- we maintain our independence of thought and action in how we define social and economic issues
- we involve the people affected by an issue in developing solutions
- we use a number of different ways of encouraging people and organisations to take action.

#### The Bevan Foundation Theory of Change



### 3.1. Understand the problem

Understanding the ‘problem’ is key to the Bevan Foundation’s approach, because this frames solutions and action. Some of the ‘problems’ which we seek to understand may be new, in that they are not an issue that is recognised by decision-makers or in public debate, or many be presented in new ways. This is one of the many reasons why working with ordinary people is crucially important. In building our understanding we aim to:

- **Identify and frame problems based on people’s experiences**  
The views of people affected by an issue will be at the centre of our understanding. Government and other statistics have a role to play, but the experiences of ordinary people will be paramount.
- **Gather and analyse evidence**  
We will use robust methods to ensure that the evidence we gather reflects the diversity of Wales’ population. We will ensure that our analysis uses appropriate methods, and that our findings are reported in a fair and balanced way.
- **Increase knowledge**  
We will increase collective knowledge and understanding of an issue or problem, sharing our findings widely and openly in briefings, articles and reports. We will do our best to ensure that our output is accessible to all, subject to resources.

### 3.2. Develop innovative solutions

We are committed to developing practical solutions to the issues we have identified. Some of the solutions may involve changes in the terms of public debate and political priorities, others may involve new or improved legislation, public policies or funding, and some may involve changes in behaviour, whether by businesses, professionals or individuals.

We will develop appropriate solutions through:

- **Social innovation**  
We will use a range of methods to generate solutions to problems, including learning from good practice elsewhere, listening to the views of ordinary people, professionals and stakeholders as appropriate, and our own experience and imagination.
- **Trialling and Testing**  
We will test the practicality of our proposals, usually by discussion with a wide range of interested parties or occasionally more formal consultations.
- **Case making**  
For promising proposals we will develop a robust case for change, demonstrating that our ideas are deliverable and effective.

### 3.3. Learning and action

Our fundamental charitable purpose is education and so we achieve change through promoting learning about an issue. Our focus is on increasing collective knowledge of a problem and how our proposed solutions can make a difference. We then monitor progress and assess the impact of our work. We do this by:

- **Identifying ‘change makers’**  
Change-makers are the people and organisations who are responsible for implementing the solutions we have recommended. The Welsh Government will continue to be a major focus because of its legislative, policy and fiscal powers, but we will also focus on other organisations, businesses, professionals and individuals as agents of change too.
- **Reaching the audience using the right approaches and methods**  
We will reach our target audience through conferences and seminars, training, meetings and briefings and through publishing reports, articles and resources in a range of media.
- **Monitor progress and impact**  
We will monitor progress using a mix of statistics and people’s experiences to tell us and the powers that be how well they are doing.

## 4. RESOURCES

This programme is ambitious, and delivering it will mark a step change in the Bevan Foundation’s resources, requiring its income to more than double to at least £300,000 a year. Even with this level of resource we will remain considerably smaller than other similar organisations in Wales. We face the challenge of filling the existing deficit in our budget as well as achieving a step-change to this level.

We will work with a wide range of funders, from charitable trusts and foundations, individual and organisational supporters, sponsors and clients to achieve these aims. We will also work with a number of partners to help us to deliver our ambitions, including those active in the community and delivering frontline services as well as those engaged in the development of policy and practice.

We would be delighted if you or your organisation would like to help to make Wales fair, prosperous and sustainable. You can do this through a donation or subscription, sponsoring a seminar, lecture or discussion, or by contributing towards the cost of a one-off or ongoing project.

**Please contact us if you would like to get involved via [info@bevanfoundation.org](mailto:info@bevanfoundation.org)**



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