

Why poverty must be a priority for the next Welsh Government

Poverty was a significant problem in Wales long before the outbreak of Covid-19. 700,000 people - nearly a quarter of the population - were already trapped in poverty before the pandemic struck. The virus and the economic impact of the measures put in place to control its spread have exposed and deepened existing inequalities in our society.

It is not right that anyone lives in poverty. That is why the Wales Anti-Poverty Coalition is calling on all political parties to make solving poverty a priority for the next Welsh Government. Members of the coalition have developed detailed policy proposals that, if implemented, could achieve these objectives. The coalition members are agreed that three key approaches should underpin the next Welsh Government's plan for solving poverty:

- People with lived experience of poverty should be included in decision making, including the design, review and evaluation of services.
- Cash-first should be the default approach when designing schemes to support people facing poverty and destitution. Alongside this, the Welsh Government should invest in good quality public services to support people. Charitable support provided by organisations such as food banks cannot become part of the fabric of our communities.
- The spirit of the socio-economic duty should be embodied in the design and delivery of all public services, in order to tackle stigmatising attitudes towards people affected by poverty.

The coalition recognises that not all powers to solve poverty have been devolved to Wales. However, there are significant tools at the disposal of the next Welsh Government that could make a real difference to people's lives. The Wales Anti-Poverty Coalition is therefore calling on whichever party or parties that form the next Welsh Government to ensure that by end of the next Senedd term:

- No one in Wales should need to use a foodbank.
- All children should have access to a healthy, nutritious diet.
- All children have access to high quality and affordable childcare and education.
- No-one misses out on benefits or services they are entitled to.
- Everyone in need has access to emergency cash support in a time of crisis.
- Everyone has access to a warm, affordable, secure, good quality home.
- People without recourse to public funds are treated fairly.
- Everyone is paid at least the voluntary living wage.
- Everyone has access to the internet and digital technology.
- Public transport is open and accessible for all.

More information can be found on the websites of coalition members, and members can be contacted individually for more detailed discussions.

We will never achieve wellbeing for all while poverty is allowed to exist. We know what pulls people into poverty, what can trap them there, and what's needed to help people escape. Now is the time to take action to end poverty for good.

Signatories

BASW Cymru

Bevan Foundation

Child Poverty Action Group

Children in Wales

Cymorth Cymru

Faith in Families

Food Sense Wales

Home Start Cymru

Jim Barnaville, Co-ordinator, Caritas Archdiocese of Cardiff

NEA Cymru

Oxfam Cymru

Purple Shoots

Save the Children

Tai Pawb

The Children's Society

Trefnu Cymunedol Cymru/ Together Creating Communities

Trussell Trust

Save the Children