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Child Poverty Strategy Monitoring Framework



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Glossary

Acronym/Key word	Definition
Children	People up to the age of 18 as per the Welsh Government Child Poverty Strategy (Welsh Government, 2024a).
Dependant	Someone who depends on a caregiver. This could be a spouse, partner, child, grandchild or parent (UK Government, 2024b).
Domain	Broad themes used to group child poverty indicators linked to the objectives of the Child Poverty Strategy.
Lived Experience	Personal knowledge gained from direct experience that would not ordinarily be apparent through observation or via representations constructed by a third party who has not 'lived' it through the eyes of those who were in the situation (O'Leary and Tsui, 2022).
Measure	A way to measure and monitor a given outcome.
Material Deprivation	The extent to which people are able to afford basic things like food and heating (Welsh Government, 2020). People in material deprivation lack the ability to access key goods or services (House of Commons Library, 2024).
National Indicator	The national indicators are designed to represent the outcomes for Wales, and its people that will help demonstrate progress towards the seven well-being goals (Welsh Government, 2022a).
Objective	The change which the intervention aims to bring about.

Acronym/Key word	Definition
Protected Characteristic	<p>According to the 2010 Equality Act (UK Government, 2010a), it is against the law to discriminate against anyone (at work, in education, as a consumer, when using public services, when buying or renting property, as a member or guest of a private club or association) because of the following protected characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • age • gender reassignment • being married or in a civil partnership • being pregnant or on maternity leave • disability • race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin • religion or belief • sex • sexual orientation.
Real Living Wage	<p>The Real Living Wage is a voluntary wage rate in the UK. It is independently calculated to reflect the real cost-of-living and stands at £12 per hour (as of April 2024). The Real Living Wage is different to the UK's statutory minimum wage rate regime (the National Living Wage and Minimum Wage). The statutory minimum varies depending upon the worker's age and whether or not the worker is an apprentice (Living Wage Foundation, 2024; UK Government, 2024a).</p>
Relative Income Poverty	<p>An individual is living in a relative low-income household (or relative low income) if the household income is below 60% of UK median household income in that year. This measure is an indication of inequality between low- and middle-income households. The median is the point at which half of households have a lower income, and half have a higher income. Household income may be measured before housing costs or after housing costs are deducted (House of Commons Library, 2024).</p>

Acronym/Key word	Definition
The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD)	This is the Welsh Government's official measure of relative deprivation for small areas in Wales. It identifies areas with the highest concentrations of several different types of deprivation. WIMD ranks all small areas in Wales from 1 (most deprived) to 1,909 (least deprived) (Welsh Government, 2022b).
Young People	People up to the age of 25, as per the Welsh Government Child Poverty Strategy (Welsh Government, 2024a).

Chapter 1

Background

1.1 The Child Poverty Strategy for Wales 2024 (Welsh Government, 2024a) (the strategy) sets the direction for Welsh Government actions to tackle child poverty over the next decade or more and to meet our ambitions for children and young people in Wales, no matter what their circumstances or background. It also provides a framework to maximise the levers we have at our disposal to make our contribution to eradicating child poverty.

1.2 The strategy sets out how the Welsh Government will tackle child poverty in Wales through initiatives to reduce costs, maximise incomes, develop pathways out of poverty and support wellbeing, so that every child can enjoy their rights and has every opportunity to reach their potential.

1.3 The strategy seeks to ensure stronger integration across our national policies, programmes and action plans and to support collaboration at the regional and local levels. This will deliver our ambition to achieve greater equity of experience and outcome for all children and young people.

1.4 The strategy is published under the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 (UK Government, 2010b). The measure places a duty on Welsh ministers to set child poverty objectives and to report every three years on progress towards achieving those objectives. The latest progress report (Welsh Government, 2022c) was published in 2022 and reported progress against the 2015 Child Poverty Strategy. The next progress report, in relation to the current Child Poverty Strategy for Wales, will be published in 2025.

1.5 On publication of the strategy, Jane Hutt MS Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip, made a commitment to develop a robust monitoring framework to transparently demonstrate our progress on addressing child poverty. This framework would be subject to independent academic advice and review. The development of the monitoring framework (the framework) would also take into account the views of the External Reference Group on the Child Poverty Strategy¹.

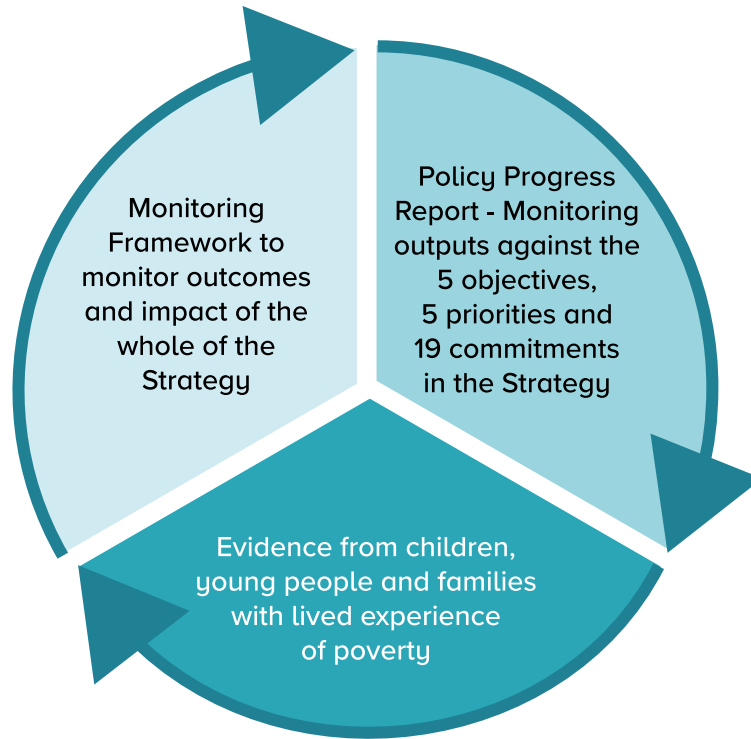
1.6 Every three years the following three elements will be published in delivering the strategy's objectives, as required by the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 (Figure 1):

1.7 The **monitoring framework** reporting on regular and robust population level data on a range of child poverty indicators and measures to provide insight on impact and direction of travel on the outcomes for children and young people.

1.8 The **policy progress report** providing a detailed update on the impact of specific policies, actions and associated outputs, in delivering progress against the five objectives, five priorities and 19 commitments of the strategy.

1.9 Evidence from people with **lived experience** of poverty providing important information about how policies and actions are making a difference for children, young people and families at a household level.

Figure 1: The three elements for demonstrating progress on the Child Poverty Strategy for Wales 2024.



Chapter 2

Introduction to the Monitoring Framework

2.1 The monitoring framework will use population level data to provide an assessment of the impact of efforts across government in relation to addressing child poverty and securing improved outcomes for children and young people in poverty. The National Well-being Indicators (Welsh Government, 2022a) (required under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015) and their associated measures provide a robust means to do this and assess our progress over the long term.

2.2 As outlined in Chapter 1, it is planned that the framework will be published alongside the progress report on the strategy every three years. The framework will not replace the regular national poverty statistics (Welsh Government, 2024b) which are published annually and to which we will also be held to account.

2.3 The framework is intended to demonstrate the difference that the powers and levers the Welsh Government have are making to the lives of children and families in Wales. These differences are often masked in headline poverty statistics which are heavily influenced by the levers at a UK Government level, and do not fully reflect the complexity of how poverty is experienced. The framework is intended to go beyond 'headline' poverty statistics to more fully reflect the complex and multi-faceted nature of child poverty in Wales.

2.4 The framework is not intended to report on the detailed outputs of each of the cross-government policy actions, plans or programmes within the strategy. As discussed in 1.8, this level of policy detail and focus on activities and outputs will be in the progress report, which will provide a wide-ranging narrative on the determinants of poverty, and policy and programme implementation aimed at mitigating the worst impacts of poverty.

2.5 This framework sets out the domains, National Well-being Indicators, and associated measures (including data drawn from the School Health Research Network) against which we will report statistical evidence on our progress towards the goals of the Child Poverty Strategy.

2.6 The framework is hybrid, multidimensional and wide-ranging, focusing primarily, though not exclusively, on social outcomes relating to child poverty, deprivation and wellbeing. It is outcomes-based, using national indicators and external data sources that align with the objectives set out in the strategy.

2.7 The framework has been reviewed by an independent academic expert, Professor Rod Hick at Cardiff University. His report² has provided insights, critique and guidance to deliver a framework that will monitor the impact of the strategy on children and young people living in poverty in Wales. In addition, the Child Poverty Strategy External Reference Group has provided important feedback during the development of the framework.

2.8 The strategy has five objectives and it is against the first four we have set the framework domains in table 2. Objective five is largely to do with the way in which we work with our stakeholders in the delivery of the strategy. As such there are no directly related framework domains for this objective within the framework. The successful delivery of objective five will be reflected in the delivery against each of the other four domains.

2.9 The framework therefore has four domains, each considered important in its own right, reflecting different areas of life that impact the life of a child living in, or at risk of living in, poverty:

- Standard of living (mapping to objective one)
- Education, skills and employment (mapping to objective two)
- Wellbeing (mapping to objectives three and four)
- Inclusive communities (mapping to objective four).

2.10 Within each domain there are indicators and measures, although the number of indicators and measures per domain are different, largely due to data availability (see table 1).

2.11 A mapping exercise undertaken in order to identify the relevant national indicators and measures was guided by the following set of inclusion criteria. The indicator and its associated measures should (where possible):

- Be relevant to the Child Poverty Strategy.
- Represent an outcome measure for children and young people.
- Be populated by routinely available robust data.
- Have a clear and well understood interpretation.
- Add value and not be duplicative.

2.12 The primary aim of the framework is to capture evidence on child outcomes as a result of poverty, where children and young people (from birth to up to 25-years-old) are the preferred unit of analysis. However, as children are economically dependent on adults, it was considered relevant to include households or adults as the unit of analysis in some cases. This gives the framework a hybrid character though child outcomes are the predominant focus.

2.13 Overall, 11 National Well-being Indicators were identified and mapped across as being relevant to the domains and the strategy, with 22 measures across the four domains and 15 of them having a child or young people focus as the unit of analysis. In terms of children and young people, the national indicators largely cover families with children and 16 to 24-year-olds, with less data available for children under the age of 16. The outcomes evidence for this younger group is therefore supported with data taken from outside the national indicators (School Health Research Network, 2024).

Table 1: Number of national indicators and measures across the four domains

Domain	Number of national indicators	Number of measures ³	Measures using children and young people as the unit of analysis
Standard of living	2	7	7
Education, skills and employment	4	4	2
Wellbeing ⁴	3	7	5
Inclusive communities	2	4	1
Total	11	22	15

Chapter 3

How did we manage data limitations?

3.1 We recognise that there are gaps within the framework that are not as well served in terms of data availability. This is not to say these areas are not considered to be important but reflect the lack of robust and consistent data. As data developments come into existence, they will be considered for inclusion in future iterations of the framework. For example, we will include more educational and developmental measures as data becomes available and meets the criteria for inclusion. We are also aware of the importance of disaggregation by protected characteristics and intersectionality from an equalities perspective and where robust and reliable data is available we have sought to disaggregate against the relevant indicators. However, there is not always data available to do this work and limitations in existing data has prevented this from being carried out consistently across the framework. Future developments and improvements in the equalities data infrastructure will be reflected where relevant in future updates.

3.2 At the time of populating the framework with data, all relevant data will be considered for inclusion and the reasons for any changes in published data will be made clear. We will always use the latest data available, however as is standard in data publication there will be a time lag related to the collection, analysis and publication of data. Where there are data gaps, we will continue to explore feasible ways to secure quality data to fill these gaps.

3.3 To further support the data gaps, additional questions are planned about children living in material deprivation in future waves of the National Survey for Wales.

Chapter 4

The domains, indicators and measures

Table 2: The domains, indicators and measures of the framework

Domain/national indicators	Measures
Standard of living domain	
<p>To enjoy an adequate standard of living; related to objective 1 of the Child Poverty Strategy: <i>to reduce costs and maximise the incomes of families.</i></p> <p>National indicator 18: Percentage of people living in households in income poverty relative to the UK median, measured for children, working age and those of pension age.</p> <p>National indicator 19: Percentage of people living in households in material deprivation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of children in Wales living in relative income poverty (after housing costs). • Percentage of children in Wales living in relative income poverty (after housing costs), by number of children in the household. • Children in Wales living in relative income poverty (after housing costs), by family type. • Children in Wales living in relative income poverty (after housing costs), by economic status of household. • Percentage of children in Wales living in relative income poverty (after housing costs), by disability in the family. • Percentage of children in material deprivation. • Percentage of secondary school children who eat breakfast every weekday by family affluence.⁵

Domain/national indicators	Measures
Education, skills and employment domain	
<p>Engagement, attainment and skills and opportunity to participate in the labour market; related to objective 2 of the Child Poverty Strategy: <i>to create pathways out of poverty so that children and young people and their families have opportunities to realise their potential.</i></p> <p>National indicator 7: Average capped 9 points score of pupils, including the gap between those who are eligible or are not eligible for free school meals.</p> <p>National indicator 16: Percentage of people in employment, who are on permanent contracts (or on temporary contracts, and not seeking permanent employment) and who earn at least the real Living Wage.</p> <p>National indicator 17: Pay difference for gender, disability and ethnicity.</p> <p>National indicator 22: Percentage of people in education, employment or training, measured for different age groups.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of GCSE entries awarded by grade range in all subjects A*-C for Year 11 pupils comparing pupils eligible for Free School Meals and those not eligible. • Percentage of people in employment in Wales who earn at least the real Living Wage. • Pay difference in Wales (median hourly earnings for full-time employees excluding overtime) and totals by category (gender, disability and ethnicity). • Percentage of people aged 16 to 24 in education, employment or training.

Domain/national indicators	Measures
Wellbeing domain	
<p>To be able to enjoy activities for health and wellbeing, to be able to enjoy good mental wellbeing. Related to objectives 3 and 4 of the Child Poverty Strategy: <i>to support child and family wellbeing and make sure that work across the Welsh Government delivers for children living in poverty, including those with protected characteristics, so that they can enjoy their rights and have better outcomes; and to ensure children, young people and their families are treated with dignity and respect by the people and services who interact with and support them and to challenge the stigma of poverty.</i></p> <p>National indicator 1: Percentage of live single births with a birth weight of under 2,500g.</p> <p>National indicator 29: Mean mental wellbeing score for people.</p> <p>National indicator 38: Percentage of people participating in sporting activities three or more times a week.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of live single births with low birthweights⁶ by Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) quintile.⁷ • Mean mental wellbeing score for adults aged 16 or over by material deprivation. • Mean emotional difficulties score for primary school pupils on the Me and My Feelings Questionnaire by family affluence.⁵ • Percentage of secondary school pupils who rated their life satisfaction as 6 or above by family affluence.⁵ • Percentage of parents by material deprivation reporting that their child takes part in regular organised activity once a week outside school, such as sport or a youth group. • Percentage of primary school children who reported exercising (so much that they get out of breath and sweat) at least four times a week by family affluence.⁵ • Percentage of secondary school children who are physically active for at least 60 minutes per day by family affluence.⁵

Domain/national indicators	Measures
Inclusive communities domain	
<p>To be satisfied with the community where you live, to access services, feel included, respected, and treated with dignity. Related to objective 4 of the Child Poverty Strategy: <i>to ensure children, young people and their families are treated with dignity and respect by the people and services who interact with and support them and to challenge the stigma of poverty.</i></p> <p>National indicator 24: Percentage of people satisfied with their ability to get to/access the facilities and services they need.</p> <p>National indicator 27: Percentage of people agreeing that they belong to the area; that people from different backgrounds get on well together; and that people treat each other with respect.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of people by material deprivation satisfied with their ability to get to/access the facilities and services they need. • Percentage of people by material deprivation satisfied with outdoor and indoor places for children to play in their local area. • Percentage of people by material deprivation agreeing that they belong to the area; that people from different backgrounds get on well together; and that people treat each other with respect. • Percentage of primary school children who agree that teachers accept them as they are, overall and by family affluence.⁵

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Endnotes

- 1 The External Reference Group (ERG) was established in 2023 to inform the development of the Child Poverty Strategy for Wales. Membership consists of the **End Child Poverty Network Steering Group** members and a representative of the office of the Children’s Commissioner for Wales in an observer capacity.
- 2 **Child Poverty Strategy monitoring framework and independent expert review**
Fframwaith monitro y Strategaeth Tlodi Plant ac adolygiad arbenigol annibynnol.
- 3 Six measures sit outside the national indicators and are based on data from the School Health Research Network.
- 4 A housing measure was considered as desirable for this domain but at the time of publication a suitable and robust child focused outcome measure was not able to be identified. Should a suitable indicator be developed it will be prioritised for inclusion in future iterations of the framework.
- 5 A non-national indicator measure using data from the School Health Research Network.
- 6 A birthweight of under 2,500g.
- 7 For context the headline indicator will also be stated.