

SP 34

Blaenoriaethau ar gyfer y Pwyllgor Cydraddoldeb,
Llywodraeth Leol a Chymunedau

Priorities for the Equality,

Local Government and Communities Committee

Ymateb gan: Rhwydwaith Dileu Tlodi Plant Cymru

Response from: The End Child Poverty Network Cymru (ECPN)



The National Child Poverty Coalition for Wales

The End Child Poverty Network Cymru is co-ordinated by



Children in Wales
Plant yng Nghymru

Consultation response - Priorities for the National Assembly for Wales Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee

Introduction

The **End Child Poverty Network Cymru** (ECPN Cymru) is a coalition of concern focused on the eradication of child poverty in Wales, co-ordinated and managed on a day-to-day basis by Children in Wales. Its steering group include representation from across the voluntary and statutory sectors and the Network has an increasing supporting membership from a broad cross-section of agencies.

Operational since 2004, the ECPN Cymru is supporting the Governments vision that no child in Wales should be living in poverty by 2020, and is working to achieve this by

- Increased public and professional understanding of child poverty in Wales
- Public and professional support for measures to tackle child poverty

- Ensure that policies are in place at all levels of Government (local, Wales and Westminster), which contribute to eradicating child poverty in Wales.

Child poverty is a rights violation. Child poverty damages children in the present and limits their opportunities in the future. It is imperative that all levels of Government utilise the maximum extent of its available resources to enhance the quality of life and experience for children today and improve their outcome for the future.

Our Response

ECPN Cymru welcomes the opportunity to help inform the Committee with the development of its forward work programme. This response builds on our contribution, and that of ECPN Cymru member organisations to the NAFW Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee 'Inquiry into Poverty in Wales: Poverty and

PLEASE NOTE: Our response focuses on issues within the realm of 'Child Poverty'. A number of ECPN Steering Group members have submitted responses on behalf of their organisations. We would wish to draw the Committee's attention to these and to the recommendations within.

(List of ECPN Steering Group members – [here](#))

Inequality' during the Fourth Assembly Term (June 2015)

In respect of the issues which the Committee has already identified as potential areas of enquiry, we would support -

EU funding of tackling poverty programmes – Wales is a recipient of a significant level of funding from the European Commission, with 'Tackling Poverty' identified as one of the principle priorities for the 2014-20 programme. There remains a great deal of uncertainty around current tackling poverty programmes beyond EU membership. The Children's Commissioner for Wales has recently expressed her concern over the potential loss of European money and the negative consequences that could be had on current efforts to tackle child poverty in Wales¹. Other ECPN Cymru member organisations have called for the fight against child poverty to take centre stage²

In Work Poverty - The ECPN Cymru '[Child Poverty: A Programme towards Eradication Manifesto](#)' (revised 2014) identified the need to address in-work poverty as a key priority, stating that "Employment should always be seen as a route out of poverty, yet with more than half of all children in poverty living in households with at least one working adult, many families rely on in-work state benefits to top up their low

¹ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-37049442>

² <http://www.childreninwales.org.uk/news/press-releases/eu-referendum-result/>

pay. The Welsh Government should therefore pursue all avenues in the quest to address in-work poverty and develop an agreed national minimum income standard or equivalent for Wales". More recent reports have also identified In-work poverty, insecure employment and low pay as identifiable concerns³ as well as the impact on household income from changes in employment practices and patterns witnessed by frontline services⁴. The ECPN Manifesto also identified the need for progress on a Living Wage for Wales, a call which has been identified by ECPN member organisations.⁵ The current Welsh Government Child Poverty Strategy for Wales has identified in-work poverty as one of its *'five key priorities for supporting families here and now'*. We would welcome an inquiry into this.

Poverty and Welfare Reform

Many organisations providing evidence to the previous NAFW Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee 'Inquiry into Poverty in Wales: Poverty and Inequality' identified the impact of welfare reform on poverty as a significant concern, which has also be reflected in more recent reports⁶. As a number of respondents⁷ will highlight that a number of benefits have been replaced (e.g. Disability Living Allowance), and others are being gradually introduced (Universal Credit). The impact of welfare reform in Wales has to be carefully monitored, both in terms of the impact on household income and the increased demand for support and advice services. Many households with children, and people with a disability or long-term health condition have been particularly affected⁸.

In June 2016, the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child published their [Concluding Observations](#) on the fifth periodic report of the United Kingdom. During the inquiry, the UN Committee raised concerns around the cumulative impact of welfare reform on children, particularly for those most vulnerable and young people with a protected characteristic. The UN Committee made a number of Recommendations in respect of child poverty and welfare reform (pp17-18) which could help inform the basis of an enquiry. The Committee may also wish to consider the devolution of benefits to date and future developments in this area.

For further information on the work of ECPN Cymru, please see www.endchildpovertycymru.org.uk

³ <https://www.jrf.org.uk/blog/work-poverty-keeping-poverty-rates-wales-high>.

⁴ For example, https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/Global/Migrated_Documents/corporate/second-choice-jobs-final--1-.pdf

⁵ <http://www.oxfam.org.uk/cymru/blog/2015/10/living-wage-is-key-to-get-the-people-of-wales-out-of-poverty>

⁶ <http://www.childreninwales.org.uk/resource/child-family-poverty-wales-results-child-family-survey-2015/>

⁷ See the response from ECPN Cymru member Citizens Advice Cymru

⁸ The Institute for Fiscal Studies have issued a number of reports on the distributional effects of tax and welfare reforms in Wales.

