



Report on child poverty project regional meetings held August 2008

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Executive summary

This report provides an overview of the main points raised by participants at the three regional meetings held by the Welsh Local Government Association and Save the Children. The report is designed to provide a brief summary of the contributions of participants and is not a comprehensive narrative on local approaches to child poverty.

These meetings defined child poverty in the national policy context then participants discussed child poverty. A pre-prepared discussion guide, which split the discussions into three parts, guided these discussions.

The first discussion covered child poverty and why it is important, the second joined-up working and current practice and the third good practice proper. These discussions were participant led and were intended to diverge from the guidance.

In the first discussion, participants discussed childcare; employment, education and training; carers; transport and service poverty; safety; housing; culture and attitudes of both those in poverty and society; the central role of income maximisation; service delivery; the balance between local and national priorities; and sustainability of provision.

In the second discussion, participants discussed how to create more joined-up working; the role of leadership; financing such working; reducing duplication; communication between departments; joined-up working within service areas; and engagement with children and young people.

In the third discussion, participants returned to and gave practice examples of working in the areas of childcare; employment, education and training; housing; culture, role models and stigma; income maximisation; and transport and service poverty. Participants also gave further practice examples in the areas of basic skills training; health; commitment; and creating a single point of access for services. Furthermore, participants discussed the difficulties of measuring success.

Introduction to regional meetings

The Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) and Save the Children (SC) held three regional meetings in Pontypool, Rhyl and Llandrindod Wells on the 22nd, 26th and 27th August respectively. These provided an informal forum for debate and discussion and brought together partners from a range of areas of service delivery to discuss approach to mainstreaming the child poverty agenda.

The WLGA and SC will use the information gathered from these meetings to develop the 'learning from practice' sections of Child Poverty Solutions Wales, the web-based improvement tool developed by the WLGA and SC, and to enable the project team to ensure that said tool remains responsive and supportive to meeting local needs.

Defining child poverty in the national context

To ensure that all participants used a common definition and to promote discussions, each meeting began with a brief presentation detailing the definition of child poverty we use. In addition, the presentation explained Child Poverty Solutions Wales and its 'learning from practice' section, giving participants the context of the meeting.

Following a European Union (EU) definition, the "poor shall be taken to mean persons, families and groups of persons whose resources (material, cultural and social) are so limited as to exclude them from the minimum acceptable way of life in the Member State in which they live."¹

The Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) defines child poverty in three dimensions: income, service and participation poverty. Income poverty reflects the most common measure of poverty - that of children living in households with an income less than 60 per cent of the median average. Service poverty refers to households having trouble accessing and benefitting from quality services, such as housing, healthcare, education and leisure facilities. Participation poverty means children are unable to engage in social activities. This has a negative impact on education and training and affects transitions to independence.²

Furthermore, the presentation gave an overview of the situation in Wales. In 2006/07, an estimated 29 per cent of children in Wales lived in income poverty (defined as the family earning less than 60 per cent of median income).³ In 2004/05, 13.4 per cent lived in severe income poverty (defined as the family earning less than 50 per cent of median income and the child being deprived of two or more necessities).⁴ Effective videos from the *Newsround* website give human examples of these statistics.⁵

Child poverty has moral and socioeconomic justifications for response. Beyond the moral claim that no child deserves to be poor, child poverty affects socioeconomic prosperity. Poorer children have worse life chances than their more affluent peers and

¹ European Community. (1985). *On Specific Community Action to Combat Poverty* (Council Decision of 19 December 1984). 85/8/EEC. Official Journal of the EEC, 2/24.

² Welsh Assembly Government. (2005). *A fair future for our children*, pp. 14-48. [Available at <http://new.wales.gov.uk/dsjlg/publications/childrenyoung/fairfuture/strategie?lang=en>, accessed 12-09-08].

³ Howarth, S. (2008). *In Figures: Child Poverty*, p. 2. [Available at <http://www.assemblywales.org/08-045.pdf>, accessed 12-09-08].

⁴ Magadi, M. and Middleton, S. (2007). *Severe Child Poverty in the UK*, p. 14. [Available at <http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/en/docs/sevchildpovuk.pdf>, accessed 12-09-08].

⁵ CBBC Newsround. (2006). *Specials: the wrong trainers*. [Available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/cbbcnews/hi/specials/2006/the_wrong_trainers/default.stm, accessed 12-09-08].

are more likely to become poor adults, creating a cycle of deprivation. Moreover, public services will not work efficiently if they are carrying the high costs of poor health and higher crime.

The WAG and United Kingdom government have committed themselves to both eradicating child poverty by 2020 and halving it (against the 1997 rate) by 2010. The statutory framework centres around *One Wales*, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Children Act 2004 and the present WAG consultation on a proposed voluntary agreement on child poverty.⁶

The role of local government

From the perspective of local authorities and their partners, a number of strategic plans can contribute to reducing child poverty. Child poverty implementation plans; children and young people's plans (CYP plans); health, social care and well being plans (HSCWB plans); local development plans; and community strategies all contribute.

As child poverty is a wide ranging, crosscutting agenda, many service areas have a role to play in its reduction. Thus, all of the seven core aims are relevant to the child poverty agenda. To this end, a brief overview of some of the service areas that relate to child poverty under each core aim (plus transport and service poverty) was produced to give an introduction to how all the core aims should relate to the reduction of to child poverty (see Appendix 1).

Discussions

Organisers split each meeting into three discussions, with each discussion focusing on a different theme relating to child poverty. Representatives, whose notes we have used as the basis of this report, facilitated these discussions. Organisers intended each discussion to be a starting point and encouraged participants to diverge from the stated points and lead the discussions. Facilitators allowed participants to take the lead and discuss issues they felt were important and relevant.

Discussion one was an introduction to the child poverty agenda and intended to allow participants to give an overview of their local contexts and their role with regards the child poverty agenda. Participants explored the child poverty agenda, discussing both actual and ideal priorities and ideas.

Discussion two developed upon the first discussion to discuss how participants were addressing child poverty within their organisations. Thus, discussion of joined up working was encouraged and an idea of shared priorities identified. The means of how participants address child poverty as a corporate body was the prime focus of this discussion.

The third discussion mainly centred on practice, discussing what participants are doing that has an impact on child poverty. This meant discussing what partners have done and how these schemes developed.

⁶ Crowley, A. and Winckler, V. (2008). *Children in severe poverty in Wales: an agenda for action*, pp. 9-24. [Available at <http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/housingandcommunity/research/newideasfund/complete/children/?lang=en>, accessed 12-09-08]; Welsh Assembly Government. (2008). *Taking Action on Child Poverty Consultation Paper*, pp. 7-9. [Available at <http://new.wales.gov.uk/consultations/currentconsultation/childreynongpeople/takingaction/?lang=en>, accessed 12-09-08].

We have included further details of each discussion in appendices 2-4. These discussion guides were the basis for facilitators and participants at the three regional meetings. However, the actual discussions diverged from these guides. Facilitators intended discussions to diverge in this way, as we have mentioned above.

In reporting from each discussion, we have removed references to individuals and areas to allow us to draw the general lessons from the regional meetings and aid with the synthesis of general priorities.

Discussion one: why is child poverty important and to whom?

Childcare and play

Most participants stressed the need for the provision of additional, good quality childcare as a primary concern, especially for lone parents. They emphasised the role of childcare, flexible working and benefit uptake in reducing child poverty. Childcare can enable parents to return to work, increasing family income and potentially contributing to improved material circumstances.

Childcare is about more than allowing parents into work, some noted, as quality childcare helps children prepare for school. Thus, authorities should ensure that childcare provided via Flying Start and other programmes is of the highest standard.

In addition, participants mentioned access and transport to childcare, out-of-school-hours provision, and summer play provision as an element of helping lone parents back into work; to facilitate this, the use of community focused schools found support. Participants lauded the role of Genesis in helping people overcome barriers such as childcare and return to work; therefore, and report that the continuation of the Genesis scheme was a common priority. Participants further highlighted the need for extra childcare for children with special needs and support for their parents.

Furthermore, some mentioned the problem of childcare mistrust and the barrier this erects with parents. Occasionally, parents do not trust childcare facilities with their children and they are less inclined to use them. Authorities and partners can adopt a variety of strategies to reduce this mistrust, but the barrier remains a significant issue in a minority of cases.

A few participants noted the burden of regulation in training childcare workers and child minders. They called for simplified regulations to help people pass the Care Standards Inspectorate rules. This would mean more people could train as childcare workers and child minders, improving both the supply of childcare places and the employment rate of local people.

Participants mentioned play as vital to child development; it enriches the experiences of children and helps children discover important learning skills at an early age.

Employment, education and training

When developing the skills of parents, participants noted the problems of language and mistrust. Firstly, they noted the language barrier for parents for whom English is a second language. Secondly, they highlighted mistrust towards numeracy and literacy programmes an issue, many felt the programmes were not targeted effectively and were not engaging those in most need.

Participants stressed the role of schools in developing employment skills, financial literacy, parenting skills and emotional resilience. Some suggested that schools are examination or target orientated and are not teaching children the necessary life skills. Ideas of community focused schooling and paired learning found support, as did ideas of engaging parents with education and their child's learning plan.

Participants supported school uniform grants as a means to reduce the extra costs of schooling faced by lower income families.

Implementing the basic skills strategy was a common theme amongst participants; they believed basic skills to be an important factor in helping people back to work.

Vulnerable groups

Participants noted the need to focus on particularly vulnerable groups of young people, such as looked after children, in efforts to tackle child poverty. They also highlighted the need for help for young carers, who lack recourse to finance and are therefore at risk of local authorities and their partners not serving their needs.

Health

Participants noted the need to recognise the central role of health inequalities in the long-term impacts of child poverty, especially the impact of nutrition and the effects of health inequalities on housing and education.

Transport and participation

To tackle participation poverty, participants supported mobile outreach services. Many participants mentioned that in some areas authorities have commissioned mobile units to provide services to isolated areas. Additionally, some local authorities ensure that transport providers consider access and sustainability issues when bidding for contracts with the local authority.

Participants identified that Communities First schemes have the capacity for developing novel community based projects (e.g., access to affordable toys, credit union pay points, food cooperatives, etc.) but may still have problems engaging and ensuring the participation of young people and the local community.

Safety

Some participants highlighted the link between road safety and deprivation. Children living in areas classified as deprived are more likely to be involved in road accidents, which is an area of concern.

Housing

Participants identified affordable housing as a major issue, and that the lack of affordable housing within their locality often forces families to pay higher rental charges and not have any protection against unscrupulous landlords.

Culture and attitudes

Participants frequently emphasised the importance of attitudes – both individual attitudes to work and societal attitudes towards the workless. They perceived the attitudes of those in poverty as vital. They saw a poverty of aspiration, experience or role models as a barrier to improving the life chances of disadvantaged children and young people and that as a result society is leaving those without aspiration behind as the gap between the best and worst widens.

Participants lauded the use of role models. They believe that successful young people could inspire others to achieve their dreams and passion, helping prevent the intergenerational cycle of poverty. However, finding such mentors is difficult and there is not enough focus on engaging young people to fulfil such roles as part of local approaches to enhancing participation.

Some claimed that for anti-poverty schemes to succeed, people needed to want help and wanted to engage in local schemes and opportunities (i.e., adult learning, Sure Start, etc.) A few went even further than expressing a need to provide experiences. They argued for compulsory experiences to overcome a lack of aspiration and ensure engagement.

However, most noted that enhancing opportunities for children in terms of experiences i.e., school trips would be expensive and would probably require a national commitment from the government. They noted Duke of Edinburgh, Scouts and Guides as possible 'experience' schemes, but availability is limited and popularity low as many feel they are out of touch with young children today.

Linked to aspiration was the need for confidence and self-esteem. Many noted that individuals needed to have the courage to aspire and the right skills set to be able to aspire to achieve their potential and they saw participation as an important vehicle for delivering on this agenda, but remains embryonic at a local level.

Underpinning all this, some participants noted the role of communities and the negative impact of atomisation and erosion of support networks.

Money matters

Many identified worklessness and benefit uptake as a crucial area of work. Getting parents into work is a priority, especially tackling worklessness amongst high-risk groups such as lone parents.

Going beyond merely entering employment, some participants noted that lower skilled job seekers are only qualified for low paid jobs. This creates a risk of in-work poverty and lessens the incentives to leave benefit dependency.

Some see the perceived marginal costs of moving into work, especially in terms of access to credit, free school meals and benefits, as a barrier to work. Furthermore, the costs of childcare add to the costs of entering employment. In addition, for the first month of work, individuals will be without benefits and without a wage until their first payday. These costs create disincentives to enter work.

Seasonal work may enhance the prevalence of worklessness. In certain areas, jobs are available during the holiday season but then disappear along with the tourists. Thus, young people can only maintain employment during peak summer months.

For older young people, participants noted the need for education, employment and training after the end of compulsory formal education. Many saw employment as the first step to escaping poverty and highlighted the need to instil a work ethic in young people via the school system and through a more effective approach to work experience or community services.

On the other side of the issue of work, the phenomenon of in-work poverty was an area of concern. However, it was not as widely addressed and many maintained that work represents the best means to help people escape poverty.

Participants viewed benefits, debt information and advice as an important area to develop, and some are developing outreach work in this area.

Participants identified fuel poverty as an important issue in terms of income maximisation. Reductions in fuel bills leave families with more income, thus improving their material circumstances and thus reducing their deprivation. Authorities also need to provide more effective provision of outreach information and more support for people to access benefits and schemes that will reduce fuel costs for families.

The local and the national

Participants highlighted the challenges involve in aligning local and national (i.e., WAG or even UK government level) priorities and achieving a balance between the two.

There was also identified a problem with the number of separate policies that emanate from the Assembly Government, all of which can impact on levels of poverty, but remain separate, with separate targets and funding streams which undermines the development of a corporate and sustainable approach at a local level.

The national government primarily governs welfare rights, and occasionally they do not recognise Welsh names and thus impose a barrier to benefit uptake.

Keeping it going

Sustainability of provision emerged as an important concern amongst most participants. The need for consistent service access was the basis for helping people out of poverty, and many expressed concern at the short-term nature of many anti-poverty schemes. Schemes would end just as people were receiving good support, leaving those dependent on such schemes without recourse. Thus, schemes are not strategic and have no longevity. They are short term, wasteful exercises that do not join up and often fail those they intend to serve. Services cannot build to support sustainable change.

Linked to finance were the concerns of some participants that EU convergence funding was underutilised and finance for Genesis and Communities First was scant. In addition, some expressed concern that many assume Communities First areas are well financed by the WAG and local authorities and therefore do not need access to potential new finance streams; in reality, they may not always be as well financed as is assumed. In addition, authorities can extend infrastructure and development finance to impact on child poverty.

Discussion two: what is done currently?

Joining up

Joined up working was identified by a few as helping generate the critical mass necessary for efficient service delivery - a lack of critical mass can hamper projects. In contrast, smaller authorities suggested that they find joint working easier and some participants suggested the complexities of joint working might be a problem. Participants suggested that joint working needs careful facilitation and authorities must provide incentives for information sharing and delivering joint priorities.

One of the weaknesses of the first round of development of the four statutory plans has been the lack of strategic joint planning mechanisms that ensure each of the plans, in relation to poverty issues reflect similar priorities and maximise available

resources. Partners do not always make the links between CYP plans and HSCWB plans; for example, these areas can link up in areas of housing and transport. In addition, Communities First strategies must also link into this.

In certain areas, authorities have made the links. Some health, social care and well being strategies are dedicated to reducing poverty and social exclusion by raising poor and basic skills and reducing child poverty.

Some participants noted the need to emphasise links between neglect and poverty. Social services are limited in some respects because they do not administer benefits. Therefore, authorities and partners can develop both the links among departments and guidelines on what is acceptable. In this way, services are less likely to miss at risk children.

Within the CYP plans, authorities and partners recognise that they should link all priorities to the child poverty agenda. Some areas have made links between their CYP plan and their HSCWB plans. For example, one authority has a well being group that links with the children and young people's partnership core aim seven group and with regeneration. This joins up different aspects of the child poverty agenda. Another area is seeking to integrate its free school meals initiative into wider efforts to regenerate parts of the local area.

In some areas, multi-agency child poverty sub-groups identify links among service areas and highlight the opportunities for engagement; matrices of organisations aid this. Such groups make links among service areas and can thus improve delivery; for example, they can improve delivery of benefit maximisation and housing support.

Road safety services in some areas have links with Community First areas, reflecting the noted correlation between deprivation and accident incidence.

One authority has made clear links and reviewed how they can realign partnerships to address the child poverty agenda as a whole. For this to succeed, participants identified that partners need to make a commitment and the right people need to provide continued engagement at senior level, which was identified in some authorities as a barrier to progress.

Another authority has implemented joint ownership of child poverty priorities and joint accountability for their outcomes.

Leading teamwork

In terms of joint working, participants stressed the need for leadership in order to engage with the child poverty agenda and create links among service areas. Indeed, some noted that the creation of successful working parties working across many areas was owing to committed leadership. Leadership allows for joint working, especially as monetary constraints may impede such working. Leadership can enable people to see the 'big picture' and think beyond their own service area.

A number of participants believe leadership needs to come from the upper levels (of the authority, as the lower levels cannot act without such leadership due to hierarchy. which can stifle progress that is led by the community .Leaders need to encourage innovation and remain in touch with frontline staff, which requires a commitment of their time.

Participants identified the role of good leadership as central to developing a corporate approach. Some saw ideas of succession, development, competitive salaries and better

staffing as crucial. The role of good leadership many saw as personal, as the structures are not in place to ensure joint working. Similarly, some suggested a single department should have the identified lead on child poverty to ensure clarity and consistency of leadership, whether this be via the corporate centre or charged to a specific department.

Some noted that although the WAG stresses the need for joint working, this might be limited at lower levels. On the other hand, others suggested that although partners work well together and are willing to do so, cooperation at the strategic level and leadership from the WAG was limited. Partners need a strategic 'steer' and links with the lower levels, they claimed.

Financing

Various participants mentioned that lack of money could impede joint working. Tight budgets and short-term funding streams limit partnership working and mean partners cannot support their intentions with finance. Structures are unstable and many plans lack the financial backing to be effective. Service areas compete for finite finance, enhancing 'territoriality' as service areas become protective.

However, a few participants noted that pooling of budgets enhanced cooperation, as this sharing of resources necessitated shared working. The need for money can thus become strength instead of weakness.

Duplication

Duplication of services and divergent assessment criteria and different 'languages' was a common problem participants identified. Many promoted the use of 'one stop shops' to help create a single point of access and to streamline services. Similarly, the training of staff to refer clients to other services was an area of interest.

In one area, a pilot scheme has engaged multiple services to focus on one child and its family to improve the cooperation among partner services and prevent duplication. Though expensive, such an intensive scheme has proven successful.

Another authority has reduced duplication by examining roles within the authority and ways to streamline responsibility. This assessment highlighted areas of need as well as areas of duplication. This mapping of services allowed for better organisation and effective use of resources. A different area has designed its anti-poverty plan for children to complement its other plans and prevent duplication.

Talking to each other

Participants described communication links within partnerships as good. They described a range of partnership working occurring on poverty and the variety of links to other agendas (e.g., social exclusion) and praised the role of the CYP plan as a catalyst to enhance partnership working.

Some authorities use the clustering of school groups and meetings to develop activities. Cluster development group meetings can examine the situation in the community and provide resources for outreach services working with young people and voluntary youth services.

Participants identified the vital role of information sharing to identify vulnerable children who need special focus. In addition, they highlighted the role of partnerships in identifying barriers to work.

Beyond inter-service cooperation

Going beyond inter-service cooperation, several participants mentioned the need for joined-up working within service areas. Communication within an area may be imperfect, hampering efficient delivery.

Conversely, some participants suggested joined-up working should occur at the inter-authority level. That is to say, local authorities and their partners should where appropriate seek to collaborate at a regional level, in line with the 'Making the Connections' agenda.

Participation - Getting engaged

Many participants said that they engage well with young people. They involve young people at many levels of decision-making and are developing ways to engage with service users. This, they suggested, is a way to overcome the bias towards a limited number of more affluent children that exists in consultations that rely on networks in which disadvantaged young people struggle; participants noted that they needed to undertake work to engage with such children who are hard to reach. Respect for the views of young people participants saw as vital, though these need qualifying by a condition that young people's expectations are not overinflated.

Examples of involving children and young people included involving children in creating areas of play and developing play strategies, children sitting on the interview panel of the local health board, and approaches to enhancing participation in line with the new national participation standards.

Discussion three: what is being done well?

Childcare and play

Provision of childcare through Genesis schemes can enable parents to begin to develop their confidence and basic skills, perhaps even going on to further education. Childcare can develop a child's social skills while parents learn these basic skills, which in turn improves family life. Participants described getting parents into work as a means of developing aspiration, encouragement and engagement.

Participants highlighted shortages in childcare for older children and holiday care. Youth clubs may close in the summer and holiday care is prohibitively expensive. Open-access summer play schemes are limited, as they only operate for a few hours a day. Participants mentioned that before- and after-school clubs were not available to all because transport problems prevent access. For example, those living in the Welsh valleys struggle to access inter-valley transport and thus cannot access the services available to those in better-connected areas. In order to meet the needs of holiday care, one participant suggested summer camps modelled on American camps, where children attend summer camps for extended periods over the summer vacation.

Authorities and partners are developing their provision of elemental play, exposing children to risk. For example, one play strategy centres on risk and elemental play.

Employment, education and training

One aspect of work with those not in education, employment or training (NEET) is the link between children leaving employment and working with Jobcentre Plus. This

may help Jobcentre Plus to reach children before a cycle of dependency traps them. Jobs fairs and the New Deal also offer opportunities for early interventions.

Some local employer partnerships interview lone parents with basic skills problems and give the remit for their vacancies.

One area protects a certain percentage of jobs created by regeneration and provides them to local people. The authority aims this at the poorer or lower skilled individuals in an area, who it additionally provides with basic skills training to build relevant skills, confidence and self esteem. Another scheme works with employers to tailor basic skills training for the jobs available.

Several Jobcentres Plus offers work trials. Under these schemes, individuals do not lose their benefits while trialling a job for between three weeks and a month. This offers a route into employment and helps lessen the marginal costs (actual and perceived) of entering employment and allows people to experience the benefits of employment, which are not all monetary.

Action teams within Jobcentre Plus work with Communities First, regeneration departments and credit unions to help jobseekers.

One Jobcentre Plus scheme works with offenders in an open prison, allowing them out to work recycling. This helps such young people gain experience and thus enter work after they have served their sentence. The scheme involves the police to teach those with driving offenses to drive, helping their rehabilitation.

Basic skills

In some areas, basic numeracy and literacy are barriers to basic skills work because they are required to access basic skills assessments. In one area, individuals fill out a Genesis form with a member of staff to mitigate any concerns about ability to fill in the forms. They may then accompany them to adult literacy and numeracy schemes. Another way of improving access to basic skills programmes is to run them in libraries.

One scheme looked at developing basic skills centres on family learning-While children are in childcare, parents can go and develop their basic skills. This helps improve uptake and access to services.

Health

To stimulate the consumption of healthier foods, one Community First area has begun cooking lessons with such low cost but healthy foods. Many areas offer discounted food bags of seasonal fruit and vegetables in Communities First areas.

To overcome the gap in the provision of free school meals during holidays, authorities can provide free healthy meals at holiday play schemes, especially in Communities First areas. This can improve health, participation and engagement.

Some participants mentioned another aspect of health – efforts to mitigate the effects of deprivation. Smoking and underuse of breast-feeding are some the most significant factors that had been found in many needs assessments to demonstrate the gap between the health of the richest and poorest and are thus the focal point of such schemes.

Other areas focus on sexual health and its links to education, as sex education is the basis for sexual health. Schools cannot achieve such education without joint working

between health and education departments within local authorities. Participants were acutely aware of the impact of teenage pregnancy and concerned about continued high incidences in many local communities. They further suggested improving accessibility to family planning and resources, especially as young people's clinics become less common.

Housing

In one local authority, a small scheme provides supported lodgings. The authority pays volunteer families to host a homeless young person. However, the scheme is restricted as take-up was low and the authority must restrict who can lodge (e.g., they rule out those with behavioural problems).

Culture, role models and stigma

Participants made reference to stigma and the need to better promote the achievements of disadvantaged children and the capacity of the workless or those NEET. They mentioned a need to broaden understanding.

To overcome the stigma of accessing some services, some participants described efforts to make access subtle. For example, they may link clothes swaps with recycling and green clothes sales or they authorities could develop better ways of providing free school meals such as cashless catering.

In a few areas, entrepreneurial young people are establishing social enterprises and providing a model for other young people. However, participants expressed concern that there was no finance to help with this. In another area, the local authority has established a 'bank' to offer grants for young people who want to develop and deliver services in their local area.

Similarly, one road safety scheme took young offenders into schools to teach young people the possible consequences of criminal driving behaviour.

Money still matters

Credit unions find widespread support within partnerships as a means to provide affordable credit, information and help prevent a cycle of debt trapping poorer people. However, many noted that accessibility to accounts is sometimes poor.

Some participants expressed concerns that work to develop financial literacy came too late in secondary school and believed it should be primary schools that teach children budgeting skills.

Partnerships are maximising income in a variety of ways. Information and advice on benefit eligibility improves uptake. Financial literacy helps reduce the recourse to bad credit and preponderance of debt. Communities First can offer budgeting courses, but they can face problems in employing a suitable tutor and providing a course at the appropriate level for those attending. School saving schemes are run alongside local credit unions and financial literacy included as an element of physical and social education.

Transport and service poverty

Road safety staff can offer free driving courses, offering a step to learning to drive and helping overcome service poverty. These courses offer an introduction to driving, giving young people a basis to begin learning to drive. Such schemes also give young people a safe environment in which to experience driving for the first time.

Participants from rural areas expressed concern that the child poverty agenda is not addressing rural poverty issues. For example, some participants highlighted the problem of transport in rural areas. In such areas, isolated individuals require transport to get to work that can be prohibitively expensive or require an infeasible commute. Thus, they cannot access jobs. Similarly, the lack of grants for college transport means isolated young people without the necessary finance cannot access further education.

Commitment

One authority is developing a poverty pledge modelled on [a London pledge](#). This allows services to sign up to particular aspirations and awards those who achieve those aspirations. This is measurable and entails a commitment from services, who can sign up to aspirations most relevant to them.

Single point of access

A participant described an integrated model of Flying Start. A broad network of health visitors has links with social services. Health visitors would talk to parents and can refer them to educational services or social services (e.g., for benefit issues). Alongside this, visitors can suggest income and service checks. This integrated service picked up about 175 families in 6 months, enabling the access of £250,000 extra benefits. Schools have made a further impact, but long-term financing was once again an issue.

One Community First area has linked its play areas to its Community First office by siting the office adjacent to a large play area. This improves access, making the office available.

In one area, road safety staff undertake a day course to identify problems and are aware of a process to report concerns. Thus, their frontline contact work can highlight problems. Training frontline staff to offer advice was a common theme from many participants across a variety of service areas.

Measuring success

Participants raised concerns about the measurement of success. Some felt that the criteria for success changed frequently and thus they cannot measure success. Moreover, one of the definitions of low income is relative (60 per cent of current median income), and can thus change depending on the prosperity of the nation. The flexible nature of poverty measures frustrated some participants.

Appendix 1

Policy areas relevant to each core aim

Early years

Parenting skills
Genesis
Basic skills
Sure Start/Cymorth
Developing quality childcare provision
Stimulating and supporting childcare providers in poor areas
Outreach – tackling childcare mistrust

Education

NEETs
School uniform grants provision
Parental involvement
Basic skills
Attainment
Financial literacy
Inclusive education
Free school meals: uptake and cashless catering
Community focused schools/out-of-school-hours provision

Health, freedom from abuse

Social worker practice (integrated worklessness/benefit advice)
Parental skills
Community Health
Teenage pregnancies and low birth weight babies
Affordability of healthy food
Reducing health inequalities

Play, leisure and culture

Diversions work (sport and culture)
Provision of quality play opportunities
Access to a good environment
Access to play, leisure and culture
Afterschool clubs and out-of-school-hours provision

Participation

National Youth Assembly/Funky Dragon
Involvement in decision making
Social exclusion
Building skills and confidence
Ability to make informed decisions
Voice of the user in service delivery

Safe home and community

Accident prevention
Road safety (in poorer areas)
Improving housing quality
Work to eradicate overcrowding
Homeless families
Financial literacy and tenants
Community based intervention
Housing benefit administration

Income maximisation

Worklessness and benefit uptake
Benefits administration (streamlining, ease of use)
Credit unions
Fuel poverty
Welfare advice

Transport and service poverty

Access to services
Rural access
Integration of planning and transport
Subsidised transport schemes
Mobile services
Fuel poverty

Appendix 2

Discussion 1: Child poverty - why it is important and to whom?

Structure

1. What are local priorities?
2. How have the four plans been used to include aspects of the poverty agenda?
3. The relevance of the core aims (see Appendix 1).

Outcomes

1. Participants will explore the child poverty agenda.
2. They will recognise local priorities and various strategic plans as relevant to child poverty.
3. Moreover, participants will identify links between the seven core aims, various policies and child poverty.

Facilitators will:

1. Encourage participants to identify local priorities and their links to child poverty; query why different areas have different foci and encourage comparisons between different areas; ask what individuals feel the priorities should be.
2. Encourage the recognition of how various strategic plans (Children and Young People's Plans; Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Plans; Community Strategies; Child Poverty Implementation Plan); query how these plans both could and have been linked to the child poverty agenda.
3. Aid participants to explore how various policies link to child poverty through the seven core aims.

Participants should:

1. Discuss their local priorities in tackling child poverty (e.g., employment opportunities, benefit uptake) and why different areas focus on different aspects.
2. Explore both the actual and ideal priorities for local areas.
3. Discuss the role of strategic plans in the child poverty agenda; again, participants can explore both the actual and ideal.
4. Discuss links between various policies, the seven core aims and child poverty, i.e., identify how various areas link into the child poverty agenda.

Appendix 3

Discussion 2: What is done currently?

Structure

1. How is child poverty addressed as a body, is it joined up?
2. What departments/service areas should be involved in the child poverty agenda?
3. How can you develop a joined up approach – what are the opportunities for this?
 - 3.1. Through the Core Aims?
 - 3.2. Joining-up, linking policies – joint working and cross-cutting agendas.
 - 3.3. How does this approach inform and lead the development of practice?
 - 3.4. Where does the leadership come from?
 - 3.5. Do you involve children and young people in the decision making process?
 - 3.6. How?
 - 3.7. Which aspects do you focus on? Why?
 - 3.8. What are the opportunities for joint working?

Outcomes

1. Participants will explore the links between different service areas.
2. They will identify how services and departments can be involved in the agenda and how joint working can be developed; perhaps learning of different areas with application in the child poverty agenda.
3. Discussions will also centre on how joint working is developed and how this develops policy.
4. This will help identify how a corporate approach to child poverty can be developed.

Facilitators will:

1. Help participants explore both how they do and how they could address child poverty in a joined up manner.
2. In asking which departments should be involved, refer to education, social services, health, sustainable development, regeneration, transport, as examples of areas. Encourage further examples from participants, highlighting different ways of approaching the child poverty agenda.
3. Link joint working back to the strategic plans referenced in discussion 1.
4. Help explore the steps between departments committing to the child poverty agenda and departments developing policies to realise this commitment.
5. Encourage discussion of both successes and difficulties, looking at how participants have overcome difficulties and realised successes.
6. Develop discussions around how difficulties can be overcome and how joint working can be developed, as well as the difficulties themselves and the working in practice.

7. Help participants reflect on both the real and ideal – what they do and what they might do.

Participants should:

1. Explore how they do and how they can address child poverty in a joined up manner.
2. Be creative in their identification of areas that could be involved in the child poverty agenda and explore a variety of areas.
3. Explain and discuss their own experiences of joint working, both successes and failing.
4. Explore how the core aims are used (or not used) as an organising framework for joint working.
5. Discuss links between policies and service areas – how these are realised or could be realised.
6. Explain their reasons for working in a particular way, involving particular departments, or focusing on particular areas.
7. Where barriers to joint working are identified, discuss ways of overcoming such barriers.

Appendix 4

Discussion 3: What is being done well?

Structure

1. Scrutiny/ papers to cabinet/ elected member with lead responsibility.
2. Through specific policy areas (see Appendix).
 - 2.1. Early years (0-7 years).
 - 2.2. Education and learning opportunities.
 - 2.3. Health and freedom from abuse and exploitation.
 - 2.4. Play, leisure, sport and culture.
 - 2.5. Participation in decision-making.
 - 2.6. A safe home and community.
 - 2.7. Not disadvantaged by poverty.
 - 2.8. Transport and service poverty.
3. How did they come about?
 - 3.1. What inspired them?
 - 3.2. What informed them?
 - 3.3. Did you involve children and young people in the process? How?
 - 3.4. Implementation – successes and barriers to success.

Outcomes

1. Participants will explore notable practice.
2. They will discuss what is being done across Wales that impacts upon child poverty.
3. Moreover, the policy process will be explored and inspiration for policies.

Facilitators will:

1. Ensure participants are aware that notable practice does not mean best practice – others can learn from barriers to success as much as from success.
2. Draw the links between various policy areas and child poverty, so participants are aware of how they link into the child poverty agenda.
3. Encourage discussion of practice in all core aim areas, making the discussion as wide ranging as possible to include a variety of practice.
4. Guide discussions through the core aims, using them as a springboard to further discussion.
5. Help discussions to inspire other participants as to examples they had not thought relevant.
6. Establish what participants are doing in the core aim fields.
7. Ask how participants developed these policies and programmes, to gain an insight into the process as well as the product.

8. Once again, help participants reflect on both the real and ideal – what they do and what they might do.

Participants should:

1. Discuss notable practice, using the core aims and policy fields as a guide.
2. Highlight that which they feel is innovative or particularly successful as notable practice in key areas.
3. Mention anything they feel others can learn from in the field of child poverty.
4. Explain their practice and how it developed.
5. Discuss how children and young people both are and could be involved in the process of developing policy.
6. Explore both successes and barriers to success, helping others learn from their experiences.
7. Be unafraid of discussing a wide range of ideas, initiatives, policies and programmes.