



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

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Young Wales

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Welsh Assembly Government

Consultation Document

Child Poverty Strategy for Wales: Delivery Plan

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CHAPTER 1

1.1 Introduction

This document sets out the Welsh Assembly Government's Delivery Plan that accompanies its first statutory Child Poverty Strategy for Wales. The aim of the document is to confirm the policy action we intend to take forward to deliver the **13 Broad Aims** of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure, and achieve the Child Poverty Strategy's three **strategic objectives**. In so doing, the Delivery Plan sets out what our contribution to tackling child poverty will be – during the life of this first strategy (2010–2013).

1.2 Why is this Delivery Plan needed?

The Delivery Plan sets out **how** (through specific policy action) the Welsh Assembly Government will deliver its vision for 2020 – to ensure that no child or young person is disadvantaged by poverty.

1.3 How is this Delivery Plan structured?

The Welsh Assembly Government has set out seven core aims which summarise the relevant Articles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). These provide a context for all policy related to children and young people in Wales. In line with this, this Delivery Plan is structured around these seven core aims.

Given the importance of those factors – largely economic – that are the most direct cause of child poverty, the core aim of ensuring that no child or young person is disadvantaged by poverty comes first (Chapter 2). Chapter 3 to Chapter 8 cover the remaining six core aims. These seven chapters outline the policy action that will be taken to achieve the Strategy's Broad Aims and strategic objectives.

Recognising that certain groups in Wales have a higher risk of living in poverty, Chapter 9 outlines policy action designed to help particular vulnerable groups. Chapter 10 sets out our approach to partnership working, while Chapter 11 acknowledges the importance of tackling child poverty in rural Wales and in areas of high deprivation (and sets out specific actions in these areas). Chapter 12 and Chapter 13 describe our plans to monitor outcomes for children and young people living in poverty and evaluate the Child Poverty Strategy for Wales.

CHAPTER 2

No children or young person is disadvantaged by (income) poverty

2.1 Introduction

In terms of lifting families out of poverty, the evidence shows that employment (particularly full time employment) is highly protective against poverty. We also know that many of those who will be parents in 2020 are currently in the 16 to 24 age range. It is therefore crucial that Government – at the UK **and** Wales level – does all that it can to support future parents entering adulthood.

However, employment does not always provide the route out of relative poverty. It is also important to take action to tackle “in work” poverty. By the end of the period 2004-07, slightly more children in poverty were in working families than in workless ones. Many of the households in this group are in part time work.

In light of the above, we are fully committed to supporting individuals into employment **and** addressing “job quality” (defined in terms of pay, working conditions and hours, participation and progression, training opportunities and flexible working). We are also clear that more must be done, across the UK and Assembly Government, to promote parental employment in a way that is consistent with family life. This is reflected in the Broad Aims set out below (see Box 2.1).

2.2 What we are looking to achieve

Box 2.1: Broad Aims of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure and the 2010 Child Poverty Strategy

To increase income for households including one or more children with a view to ensuring that, so far as reasonably practicable, there are no households in the relevant income group.

Ensuring that, so far as reasonably practicable, children living in households in the relevant income group are not materially deprived.

To promote and facilitate paid employment for parents of children.

To provide parents of children with the skills necessary for paid employment.

To help young persons take advantage of opportunities for employment.

2.3 Welsh Assembly Government policy action to make further progress and achieve the Broad Aims

We are committed to making further progress between 2010 and 2013 to achieve the 13 Broad Aims of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure. In addition to the programmes already in place, or to boost their impact, we will take action in a number of different areas. These are outlined below.

Working with the UK Government

In March 2010, the UK Government published its Strategic Direction Paper for child poverty reduction over the next ten years. There is a complex mix of devolved and non-devolved government responsibilities for social policy that can influence the level of child poverty in different parts of the UK and the paper reflects this.

To support our Child Poverty Delivery Plan, we will:

- Seek to influence the UK Government and monitor their proposals on employment and financial support for families.
- Act on behalf of low income families in Wales to raise issues where they may be disadvantaged by UK Government proposals. We will do this at both Ministerial and official level.

Employment

Increasing the relative prosperity of Wales, reducing inequality within Wales, and improving the opportunities available to people in Wales, will require long-term and targeted support from government to help both current and future working-age generations.

To support our Child Poverty Delivery Plan, we will:

- Ensure that the right employment policies and structures are in place for the future, through our **Economic Renewal Programme** for Wales, which was launched in late 2009.
- Take forward our **Strategic Regeneration** commitment to establish an integrated and cross-cutting approach to initiatives aimed at economic development and regeneration, particularly in areas of high deprivation.
- Continue to target support to **Communities First** areas, where people face multiple barriers to accessing work and training, offering support and soft entry activities.
- Continue to **programme bend** to meet the needs of those furthest from the labour market.

- Work in conjunction with DWP to introduce a package of measures to respond to increased unemployment amongst young people, via the **Young Person's Guarantee**. All young people aged 18-24 who have been unemployed for approaching 6 months or over will receive a guaranteed offer of a job, training or a work experience placement.
- Draw together the services provided by JCP and Careers Wales to create **Integrated Employment and Skills Actions** and pilot activities to test a joint “skills health check” process.

Employer Partnerships

Employer partnerships are also important to delivering the Broad Aims set out in Box 2.1.

To support our Child Poverty Delivery Plan, we will:

- Work with DWP to explore the possibility of simplifying the employer offer – with the emphasis on developing an account management approach to improve access to Job Vacancies. Linked with this is the work being undertaken in Wales to support the **Job Centre Plus Local Employment Partnership** initiative through the provision of bespoke pre-employment training which provides employers with “job ready” candidates.
- Continue to work with DWP/JCP to promote **Local Employment Partnerships (LEPs) in the Public Sector** in Wales.
- Through the Local Employer Partnerships, we will work with the larger employers in Wales, particularly those in the public sector, to ensure that low paid workers are provided with the skills and opportunities necessary to **progress in the workplace**.
- Ensure that casual recruitment to the Welsh Assembly Government will be directed (predominantly) towards LEP candidates to provide employment opportunities.
- Continue to work in partnership with Jobcentre Plus, Merthyr Tydfil and Blaenau Gwent local authorities under the DWP **School Gates Employment Support Initiative**. This initiative seeks to develop a package of support for Non-working mothers or partners in coupled families who are at risk of poverty and adversely affected by the recession. The initiative aims support more “potential second earners” in low-income couple families by increasing engagement, and eventually employment, amongst non-working partners. It provides support, help and advice to prepare parents for (and signpost them towards) employment and training support provision in their area.

Investing in Apprenticeships

Skills that Work for Wales sets out our strategy for building on the success of the **All Age Apprenticeship Programme** and expanding opportunities, particularly for young people. Our All Age Apprenticeship Programme offers opportunities for

up-skilling adults in the workplace and providing valuable transferrable qualifications recognised by industry sectors.

To support our Child Poverty Delivery Plan, we will:

- Create more opportunities for young people to access apprenticeships.
- Work with **Careers Wales** to provide easier access to apprenticeship opportunities through a vacancy matching service.
- Align apprenticeships with the **Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification (WBQ)**.
- Develop more opportunities for **higher level apprenticeships**.
- Encourage more small and medium sized enterprises to participate in apprenticeship programmes.
- Raise the status of apprenticeships and ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to govern the development of apprenticeship frameworks and the issue of certificates. The **Apprenticeship Learning and Skills Act 2009** provides a statutory basis for apprenticeships. Regulations will be introduced which will mean that all apprentices will be employed and have an apprenticeship agreement with their employer.
- Pilot **Shared Apprenticeship** models in construction and engineering, in order to engage smaller companies.
- Better coordinate and promote apprenticeships in Wales, through a new dedicated **Apprenticeship Unit**.
- Provide a flexible route for young people – through the **Pathways to Apprenticeships (PTA)** – to acquire the underpinning knowledge and skills for the successful completion of a full apprenticeship framework.
- Provide targeted support to create high quality apprenticeship places with employers for young people aged 16-24 through the **Young Recruits Programme (YRP)**.
- Consider forthcoming advice from the Low Pay Commission (in its 2010 Report) on the introduction of a new national minimum wage for apprentices.

Investing in Skills and Workforce Development

This is a key area in terms of reducing child poverty and in tackling the increasing rates of **'in work' poverty** in Wales.

To support our Child Poverty Delivery Plan, we will:

- Deliver an integrated business support package, focusing resources on priority sectors and strategically-important businesses.
- Expand the **Workforce Development Programme**, especially for leadership and management development, to encourage company investment in skills development for the whole workforce.

- Encourage and support employers to work with the **Investor in People Standard** which requires a “whole workforce” approach to training and development.
- Support employers to accredit in-house training to provide individuals with transferable skills.
- Work with Wales TUC to support training for low-skilled employees through **Wales Union Learning Fund**.
- Provide more support for the training of low-paid workers, by ensuring that adults studying a level 1 or 2 course (and in receipt of JSA, ESA, Council Tax Benefit, Housing Benefit, or Working Tax Credit) will be entitled to free learning through our **Investing in Skills Consultation**.
- Use public procurement as a tool to enable the creation of job and training opportunities.
- Take forward the **Can Do Toolkit**. This is a Welsh Assembly Government project to support local authorities achieve the Welsh Housing Quality Standard, which intends to include targeted recruitment and training (TR&T) as a core requirement in contracts.
- Promote job flexibility through the **“time to train” legislation**, which introduced a legal right for employees in Wales to request time off for training. From April 2010, employees in businesses with more than 250 people will have this right. This will be extended to all businesses from 2011.
- Work with **Chwarae Teg** to provide support for employers to consider benefits associated with flexible working arrangements and family friendly policies.
- Increase the take-up and implementation of the **Basic Skills Employer Pledge** with employers to address basic skills needs in the workplace.
- Develop a new **Quality and Effectiveness Framework** for post 16 learning (further education, work based learning and community learning). This will complement the **School Effectiveness Framework**.
- Strengthen arrangements so that Further Education Colleges are encouraged to do more, to ensure participation amongst low income families.

Adult Learning

Increasing parental skills is particularly important to the child poverty agenda in Wales.

To support our Child Poverty Delivery Plan, we will:

- Drive forward our **Adult Community Learning (ACL)** policy. This aims to strengthen and develop the capacity of adult community learning to support learners, to build learning communities, and to enable adults to achieve their full potential as learners.
- Take action to develop the capacity and effectiveness of ACL to meet the needs of learners as part of the broader **Transformation Agenda**.

Higher Education

There are a range of developments currently taking place in the field of Higher Education in Wales which are directly relevant to reducing child poverty and delivering the Broad Aims set out in Box 2.1.

To support our Child Poverty Delivery Plan, we will:

- Phase out the tuition fee grant from academic year 2010-11 and re-model the student finance system – in response to recommendations in the Phase One of the Higher Education review.
- Re-invest a total of £44 million in the student finance system to enhance the **Assembly Learning Grant**. As a result, we will raise the level of a full Assembly learning grant from £2,906 in 2009-10 to £5,000 in 2010-11. This will have a particular impact on students from families with the lowest incomes. Further assistance is available for “vulnerable” students such as Childcare Allowance, and Disabled Students’ Allowance. In addition, continuing students taking out new maintenance loans (from academic year 2010/11) may be eligible for a partial cancellation of the loan.
- Launch the **National Bursary and Scholarship Framework** by Spring 2010 and implement the new bursary scheme in academic year 2011/12. This commitment has been made in *For Our Future – The 21st Century Higher Education Strategy and Plan for Wales*. The new bursary will complement the actions already taken to remodel the student finance system. It aims to address the issue of equity of outcomes for students and uphold the principle of supporting those with most to gain but with greatest need for support.
- Remit the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) to develop a **renewed widening access strategy** in 2010 – as part of the implementation of *For Our Future*. This will include a stronger focus on helping those that access higher education to successfully complete their learning objectives.
- Provide £2 million a year to HEFCW to support their **Reaching Wider Initiative** via four regional Reaching Wider Partnerships. The partnerships focus on four target groups: People from Communities First areas; people from a minority ethnic group; people with a disability; and those accessing Welsh medium provision.
- Work with HEFCW to widen access and close the gap between regions of Wales with markedly different skills attainment rates. More than £60 million (from 2009 and 2014) will be invested in the Heads of the Valley Initiative (UHOVI). UHOVI will provide access to all levels of learning, from basic skills to postgraduate, with a primary focus on level 4+ qualifications.
- Work with HEFCW and the Reaching Wider Partnerships to encourage progression from FE and work based learning to HE. We will look to the HE sector to develop greater diversity and flexibility in programme design, duration and delivery to match need and demand.

- Place a stronger focus on shorter accredited programmes. These are better tailored to fit around people's lifestyles and responsibilities; are more in line with the needs of employers and businesses; and include significantly greater opportunities to study part-time and in the workplace.
- Explore and pilot new flexible programmes which enable progression to Foundation Degree level and beyond.

Childcare

We know that there are some significant challenges if we are going to provide the right type of childcare, in the right place, and of a quality that will support the development of children in the early years. A priority for this Child Poverty Strategy's Delivery Plan must be to promote accessible, affordable and high quality childcare – which offers a dual benefit for employment and early years development.

To support our Child Poverty Delivery Plan, we will:

- Develop a strategic and coherent approach to childcare policy in Wales to provide integrated solutions to improve the supply and diversity of childcare provision. This will include developing the childcare infrastructure by increasing and improving the range of provision.
- Close the gap between demand and supply for childcare in Wales.
- Work with local authorities and the Sector Skills Council to develop and enhance the childcare workforce in Wales.

Access to money and debt advice

In addition to using whatever policy levers are available to us to promote employment and tackle 'in-work' poverty, we must do what we can to maximise household income through increasing take up of benefits and tax credits. Improving the financial capability of low income families (through access to financial and debt advice) forms a key component of the Welsh Assembly Government's **Financial Inclusion Strategy** – and is crucial to delivering the Broad Aims set out in Table 2.1.

To support our Child Poverty Delivery Plan, we will:

- Work in partnership with the Consumer Credit Counselling Service (CCCS) to support a **Housing Debt Helpline** for Wales. This offers support to both home owners and those in rented property who are experiencing housing difficulties.
- Work with the Legal Services Commission and local authorities to establish comprehensive, high quality **advice services** across all of Wales.
- Provide £747,000 for **Citizens Advice Cymru** in 2009-10 to establish their **single number advice line**. This funding will establish a much needed integrated telephone service via a Virtual Call Centre which will give clients greater access to telephone advice in English and in Welsh.

- Continue to work with the Financial Services Authority (FSA) to provide the **“Parents Guide to Money”** to all expectant parents in Wales (to help prepare them for the financial implications of a new baby).
- Continue to support the **Welsh Unit for Financial Education** – funded by ourselves and the FSA – to provide schools and teachers with expert support to help them in deliver financial literacy in the curriculum.
- Work with the FSA to deliver the **Moneymadeclear** guidance service across Wales by the end of 2010 – to help people make confident and informed decisions and make the most of their money.

Benefit issues and take up

Continued promotion of the take-up of UK Government and Welsh Assembly Government benefits amongst low income families is essential.

To support our Child Poverty Delivery Plan, we will:

- Work with UK Government Departments to take forward the Take Up Taskforce Report **“Take Up the Challenge”**. A cross-government delivery group is working to secure a more customer centred and co-ordinated approach to the delivery of benefits and tax credits, and to produce materials to support local services.
- Continue to promote the availability of the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit and where possible to extend the reach of the scheme to parents with older children.
- Deliver, through Citizens Advice Cymru, a **£500,000 benefit uptake campaign** focussed on families with disabled children building on the existing **Better Advice Better Health** initiative.
- Further support (for 2009–2011) – through an investment of £1million per year to increase Council Tax Benefit and Housing Benefit uptake. We will widen the focus of these schemes to low income families with children.
- Support the DWP in their roll out of the **In and Out of Work Pilot** to the whole country by March 2010. Whereas in the past, information has been required by a number of organisations when someone moves into or out of work, we will move to a system where Jobcentre Plus collects all the information needed by Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs and local authorities. This system will enable tax credit and HB/CTB claims to be opened, amended and closed more quickly. DWP will consider how to apply the lessons from this project more widely to support people into work.

Affordable credit and savings

“One Wales” makes three specific commitments on credit union development which have specific implications for the delivery of the Welsh Assembly Government’s **Financial Inclusion Strategy**. These commitments are:

- To establish **credit unions** as a form of social enterprise throughout Wales – which was achieved in October 2008.
- To provide every secondary school pupil in Wales with access to a credit union by 2011: 16 Credit Unions supported to date (this financial year) and the **CU@theCU** schools resource launched in November 2009.
- To encourage more credit unions to offer **Child Trust Fund** accounts. Eighteen Welsh Credit Unions have now been funded by the Assembly Government to become CTF account providers.

To support our Child Poverty Delivery Plan, we will:

- Provide a Welsh Premium to the Child Trust Fund of all eligible children living in Wales (from Autumn 2009). These eligible children will receive an additional £50, with those from low income families receiving £100.
- Reduce financial exclusion amongst tenants of housing organisations by providing funding to Community Development Cymru to employ a **Financial Inclusion Officer** through its Social Housing Management grant programme.
- Take forward the **Mortgage Rescue Action Plan** to address the specific issues around struggling home owners. This programme of action will seek to improve access to debt advice for people threatened with repossession proceedings. It is being backed by the Assembly Government's **Mortgage Rescue Scheme** which enables people to remain in their home on a rental basis through purchase by a housing association.
- Explore how **Community Development Finance Institutions** might help social enterprises to develop and grow and also how they might contribute towards the wider financial inclusion agenda. We welcome the initiative taken by Community Housing Cymru to establish a CDFI *Moneyline Cymru* in some of Wales' most disadvantaged areas.
- Continue to support the **All-Wales Illegal Money Lending Unit (IMLU)** and their work to investigate and prosecute illegal money lenders across Wales.
- Work with the UK Government and providers to ensure that the delivery of the **Saving Gateway** reflects the needs of the eligible population in Wales – and that Welsh Credit Unions are supported to become Saving Gateway providers.

Fuel Poverty

Addressing fuel poverty amongst low income families with children is essential. These families are a priority group within the Welsh Assembly Government's **Fuel Poverty Strategy**.

To support the Child Poverty Delivery Plan we will:

- Seek to make major changes to our Home Energy Efficiency Scheme to improve targeting of households suffering the effects of fuel poverty, including low income families with children.
- Work to establish a clear central point of contact for referrals and advice to ensure that the full range of assistance is available to fuel poor households. This central hub will play an important role in identifying and linking up with community-based advice providers. The hub will provide these providers with a clear place to refer people in fuel poverty for assistance.
- Continue to work with energy suppliers and Ofgem to ensure consumers have access to information and advice on the range of tariffs available and which tariff will best meet their needs.

2.4 Measuring our progress

We will measure our progress using relevant indicators included in the Children and Young People's Wellbeing Monitor for Wales, as well as existing Child Poverty Targets.

RELEVANT CHILD POVERTY TARGETS¹

- **Percentage of children living in relative low income households.**
- **Percentage of children living in workless households.**
- **Percentage of lone parents in employment.**
- **To increase credit union market penetration from 1.82% to 6% by 2020, taking the number of adult members from approximately 43,000 to 142,000.**
- **To provide Child Trust Fund Cymru payments to 50% of eligible children per annum.**
- **Percentage of working age adults with level 1 or above functional basic skills in literacy and numeracy.**
- **Percentage of adults of working age with a qualification equivalent to an NVQ level 2 or above, level 3 or above, level 4 or above.**

¹ We are currently developing a subset of our child poverty indicators. Where data are available, we will provide an analysis (of these indicators) for children and families living in low income households. We will also look to report on a proportion of working families on a low income.

CHAPTER 3

Every child should have a flying start in life

3.1 Introduction

Supporting the parenting of children and boosting parental skills are critical to tackling child poverty in Wales – not least because of the important role of the home environment and its potential to impact on the developmental, educational and health outcomes of children and young people. Parental skills must encompass more than simply basic skills, and must also include action that supports parents' ability to cope and their wider wellbeing.

Action to support the parenting of children and boosting parental skills is central to the new Child Poverty Delivery Plan – and reflects the Broad Aim set out in Box 3.1 below.

3.2 The Broad Aim – What we are looking to achieve

Box 3.1: Broad Aim of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure and the 2010 Child Poverty Strategy

To support parenting of children.

3.3 Welsh Assembly Government policy action to make further progress and achieve the Broad Aims

We are committed to making further progress between 2010 and 2013 to achieve the 13 Broad Aims of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure. In addition to the programmes already in place, or to boost their impact, we will take action in a number of different areas. These are outlined below.

Integrated Family Support

The family support element of the work to reduce child poverty is crucial.

To support our Child Poverty Delivery Plan, we will:

- Develop a more coherent approach to family support policy that will place the family at the centre. This will involve developing a holistic model that will integrate the interventions with families, and look to provide help to those families that need it the most.
- Look to develop clear pathways for parents, so that they are able to access the help and support that they need to become self sufficient, as families. This will include help around parenting skills, basic skills, and information on the options available to them as parents and as a family – with the view to improving both short term and longer term outcomes for parents, children and young people living in poverty. We will also need to ensure that there is a continuum of support for families between interventions – and pathways out of poverty.

- Place a greater emphasis (through our 10 year strategy for Social Services **Fulfilled Lives, Supportive Communities**) on more focussed and integrated approaches to deal with the entrenched exclusion some families face.
- Establish a central resource to support **Integrated Family Support Team Pioneer Areas** (and their staff) in the design and functions of IFST over the pioneer period.
- Embed Family Support Programmes in the work of the **School Effectiveness Framework** – as part of the “Working with Others” strand of SEF work that is currently being developed. Case studies and best practice will be developed and made available to schools.
- Continue to invest in **Flying Start**. Approximately 16,000 children and their families across Wales are currently being reached by **Flying Start** and this number is set to rise in 2010/11 following an increase in funding.
- Continue to develop and expand the network of **Integrated Children Centres** in Wales and create better links between the ICCs and other community facilities, networks and partnerships.

Boosting levels of parental skills

The Children and Families (Wales) Measure will give local authorities new powers to provide or secure provision of parenting support services, in respect of which we may issue guidance. Also, for the first time, local authorities will be required to set specific objectives in relation to parenting support. This reinforces that local authority activity in relation to parenting should be undertaken in the context of their overall child poverty duties and objectives.

To support our Child Poverty Delivery Plan, we will:

- Develop our strategic approach to parenting ensuring that the links are made between the different work streams that impact on issues of parenting and wider family support. Support for parents is far more than parenting support and should form part of a wider family support approach.
- Issue a **Digital Inclusion Strategy** for consultation, which will include a commitment to support priority groups. These groups include the recently unemployed and the economically inactive (who lack skills with technologies) **and** those living in social housing.
- Take forward a programme of work with Community Housing Cymru, housing associations, local authorities and Communities First areas to reduce digital exclusion amongst tenants.

Community focussed schools: Parenting support and adult education

Community Focussed Schools (CFSs) are potentially a key mechanism for supporting parents from disadvantaged backgrounds in Wales. A Community Focussed School is one that provides a range of services and activities – often beyond the school day – to help meet the needs of its pupils, their families and the wider community (National Assembly for Wales Circular 34/2003).

All local authorities have made progress in enhancing the opportunities available within their communities. However, the Assembly Government recognises that some local authorities are more advanced than others in developing the community focused schools agenda and more needs to be done.

To support our Child Poverty Delivery Plan, we will:

- Focus support on those areas where there is a less developed community focused approach and promote this agenda as a key component of the **Schools Effectiveness Framework**.
- Develop case studies and best practice and make these available to schools, showing the benefits of Community Focussed Schools to improved outcomes in learning and wellbeing.
- Help schools to build on existing provision and consider what additional services or activities that they and their partners might develop, particularly in the field of childcare.
- Take forward the findings of the on-going independent evaluation of RAISE – which has highlighted the importance of schools developing a community focus (in order to support the education of young people living in more challenging circumstances). In the light of this evidence, local authorities and their regional consortia have agreed that the development of a community focus in schools should be one of the key themes for RAISE activity in 2009-2010.
- Place increasing emphasis on integrating public services in community-focused schools, through the **Twenty-first Century Schools Capital Investment Programme**.

3.4 Measuring our progress

We will measure our progress using relevant indicators included in the Children and Young People's Wellbeing Monitor for Wales, as well as existing Child Poverty Targets.

RELEVANT CHILD POVERTY TARGETS²

- **Number of childcare places in Wales.**
- **We need to establish comparative data on the development outcomes of children from low income families, as they enter full time education. Proposals on how best to achieve this will be issued during the consultation period.**

² We are currently developing a subset of our child poverty indicators. Where data are available, we will provide an analysis (of these indicators) for children and families living in low income households.

CHAPTER 4

Every child and young person has access to a comprehensive range of education, training and learning opportunities

4.1 Introduction

As described in the Child Poverty Strategy, improving basic skills, educational outcomes and access to appropriate learning and training opportunities are all important policy actions to prevent children and young people entering into poverty. Action to reduce educational inequalities (by levelling up) is particularly important – and must be central to the new Child Poverty Strategy. Alongside this, action to reduce the number of children and young people who are not in employment, education or training is also vital – not least because young people who enter unemployment at an early stage of their adult life are at risk of entering poverty for a sustained period of time. This is reflected in the Broad Aims set out below (see Box 4.1).

4.2 The Broad Aims – What we are looking to achieve

Box 4.1: Broad Aims of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure and the 2010 Child Poverty Strategy

To reduce inequalities in educational attainment between children.

To help young persons participate effectively in education and training.

4.3 Welsh Assembly Government action to make further progress and achieve the Broad Aims

We are committed to making further progress between 2010 and 2013 to achieve the 13 Broad Aims of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure. In addition to the programmes already in place, or to boost their impact, we will take action in a number of different areas. These are outlined below.

Reducing Inequality in Outcomes and Narrowing Gaps in Educational Achievement and Experience

Improving both basic and work-related skills is an important element in our drive to tackle child poverty and to improve outcomes for vulnerable children and their families. The core aim of the **Basic Skills Strategy** is to reduce the gap in achievement of literacy and numeracy. There is a close relationship between poor basic skills, child poverty and socio-economic disadvantage. Initiatives funded through the Basic Skills Strategy are targeted at areas of greatest need.

To support our Child Poverty Delivery Plan, we will:

- Continue to support the **Foundation Phase** in Wales. This has a key role to play in reducing inequality in outcomes and narrowing gaps in educational achievement and experience. The Foundation Phase is planned as a progressive curriculum that spans four years (3 to 7 years). It is designed to meet the diverse needs of all children, including those who are at an earlier stage of development and those who are more able.
- Continue to support **Language and Play and Family Literacy and Numeracy Programmes**. These are targeted at areas and families in Wales where need is greatest, with the aim of improving the basic skills of both parents and children from an early age.
- Take forward the **Basic Skills Quality Standard** in schools. This identifies children falling behind in their learning and requires schools to implement plans to reduce the gap in attainment. All schools in Wales have (or are working towards) this standard.
- Continue to support **catch-up programmes** in schools which identify children falling behind in their learning and provide additional one to one or small group support. Programmes are targeted at those schools where need is greatest and is directly related to reducing the inequalities arising from child poverty.
- Continue to support the **Boys' Literacy Initiative** which targets boys in Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 (who are falling behind in their literacy skills) and aims to reduce the gender-gap in achievement.
- Consider the results of recent pilots of **Short Intensive Basic Skills Courses**. These are targeted at older children (14-19) in danger of becoming disaffected or disengaged from learning.
- Work with leading academics, local government and schools to develop a new model for school improvement in Wales, as part of the implementation phase of the **School Effectiveness Framework (SEF)**.
- Develop differentiated strategies within the SEF to respond to the needs of children living in poverty – in the realisation that there is no “one size fits all” solution **and** in response to the danger that the most disadvantaged learners could be left behind.
- Explore further how the progress of specific groups of pupils can be enhanced, and how the impact of socio-economic circumstances can be mitigated by schools and local authorities through new joint working arrangements.
- Mainstream the lessons learnt from the **RAISE Programme** into the SEF and create the differentiated strategies necessary to ensure that poverty issues in education can be effectively addressed.
- Put in place initial delivery models for the SEF by September 2010. Regional delivery of the School Effectives Framework will be undertaken by the four Association of Directors of Education Wales (ADEW) consortia based upon the key principles of the SEF and its differentiated strategies.

- Take forward the revised **National Curriculum Orders** to develop a learner-centred, skills-focused, flexible curriculum that is relevant to the 21st century and inclusive of all learners. The revisions, and associated support provided to local authorities and schools, should enable teachers to ensure that the needs of all learners are being met. In this way, learning can be tailored to best fit children's prior skills, knowledge and understanding **and** ensure progression. The focus on skills development also ensures that all learners achieve on a day-to-day basis, and that self-esteem and confidence improve.
- Extend the **Development Programme for Thinking and Assessment for Learning** across Wales. Findings from a recent evaluation of the pilot programme indicate that all learners demonstrate improvements in their speaking and listening skills, quality of outcomes (achievement and attainment), self-esteem, motivation and behaviour. This was especially evident in learners with lower prior attainment.
- Support schools to teach all programmes of study and frameworks in ways appropriate to learners' developing maturities and abilities. In order to extend their learning, learners should experience a variety of learning and teaching styles.
- Support schools in their use of material in ways suitable for the learners' age, experience, understanding and prior achievement. For learners working significantly below the expected levels at any key stage, schools should use the needs of the learner as a starting point and adapt the programmes of study accordingly.
- Continue to support **Youth Support Services**.
- Ensure that young people have access to balanced and progressive Youth Service Methodology in response to the National Youth Service Strategy 2007. Informal and non formal learning should focus on facilitating active participation, the development of wider skills, and enhanced emotional competence.

Developing the Education and Skill Levels of Future Parents

The **Leitch Report (2006)** recognises that a lack of skills means that many people are unable to sustain continued employment and are unable to progress their careers. The report called for a much closer integration of employment and skills interventions – which the Welsh Assembly Government is committed to taking forward.

To support our Child Poverty Delivery Plan, we will:

- Implement the **Skills that Work for Wales** strategy which sets out a distinctive Welsh agenda to raising skill levels and working with the DWP to equip young people for work. As part of this work we will improve the quality and relevance of education and training.
- Implement our *Learning Pathways 14-19 Programme* – driven forward by the **Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009**. This will secure access to a wider choice of options for young people in Wales, including vocational course options.
- Ensure learners have access to a **Learner Support Service** which will provide information, advice and guidance to help young people make informed choices and overcome any barriers to their learning.
- Through the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure ensure that maintained schools and further education institutions collaborate in the formation of a local curriculum – which (by 2012) will ensure that learners at Key Stage 4 will be able to elect their course of study from a minimum of 30 subject choices (including five vocational subjects).
- Through the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure, ensure that maintained schools and further education institutions provide, secure or participate in the delivery of services that encourage, enable or assist young people to participate effectively in education or training.
- Support schools and further education institutions to provide, secure or participate in the provision of **learning coaching, personal support services and careers information**. The intention is to ensure that learners can access the support they need to develop solutions to any barriers to their learning, to remaining in learning, and to achieving their full potential. Crucially, there will be a differential in the services provided, with the level of support being linked to the level of need required by the individual learner. This has important implications for young people living in poverty who may need more intensive support than their peers.

Boosting education, training and skills for young people who are at risk of being NEET

There is strong evidence to suggest that children living in poverty are more likely not to be in employment, education or training (NEET). In particular, young people who are not in employment, education or training are more likely to live in a household where no-one is working (ONS April 2009). Reducing the number of children and young people who are not in employment, education or training is central to addressing child poverty in Wales.

To support our Child Poverty Delivery Plan, we will:

- Improve the quality and raise the status of apprenticeships in Wales.
- Work with our partners in Careers Wales, employers and education and training providers to develop innovative approaches to ensure that we can help match potential apprentices with employers.
- Ensure that training is available which helps individuals get a foothold on a successful career path (with training designed by employers to meet their current and future skill needs).
- Introduce a range of measures to support the continuation of apprenticeship training, in order to respond to the current economic environment.
- Increase the availability of targeted support to create additional opportunities for young people to access high quality apprenticeship places.
- Continue to work with Careers Wales to develop an **Apprenticeship Vacancy Matching Service**.
- Pilot shared apprenticeship models in construction and engineering.
- Establish provision in schools to enable young people to acquire the skills and experience they need to enter apprenticeship training. New **Work Based Learning Pathways** have been piloted in schools which have given young people experience and qualifications to enable them to progress to apprenticeship training. As part of this, we will seek to achieve close alignment between apprenticeships and the Welsh Baccalaureate.
- Take forward the **Young Recruits Programme** to support employers offering high quality apprenticeship programmes (to recruit and train additional young apprentices).
- Continue to support the **Apprenticeship Unit** to better co-ordinate and promote apprenticeships in Wales. In place since June 2009, the Unit will provide the coordination point for initiatives designed to stimulate greater employer involvement. It will work with local partners, Sector Skills Councils and Careers Wales to tackle barriers to participation and support employer engagement.
- Continue to support initiatives designed to support young parents, helping them to return to education, employment or training.
- Continue to support the **Integrated Family Support Service** which is specifically designed to support vulnerable families.

Guidance, Training and Support for Schools to Tackle Child Poverty

Schools have an important role to play in helping to tackle child poverty in Wales.

To support our Child Poverty Delivery Plan, we will:

- Undertake work to ensure that lessons learnt from the RAISE Programme are mainstreamed in policy and practice.
- Introduce a *Common Core of Skills, Knowledge and Understanding* for the workforce through the **Workforce Development Strategy** – to underpin children and young people’s personal development and the improvement of their overall wellbeing.
- Integrate the *Common Core of Skills, Knowledge and Understanding* through professional training, induction, and continuing professional development.
- Use findings from recently commissioned Welsh Assembly Government research on the wider costs of schooling (including the cost of school uniform) to formulate policy to address these costs.

Using Community Focussed Schools to tackle Child Poverty

As noted in Chapter 3 of this Delivery Plan, Community Focussed Schools have a particularly important role to play in helping to tackle child in Wales.

To support our Child Poverty Delivery Plan, we will:

- Continue to ensure that **Community Focussed Schools** can provide a range of services and activities – often beyond the school day – to help meet the needs of its pupils, their families and the wider community.
- Look to focus support for those areas where there is a less developed community focused approach, and promote this agenda as a key component of the **School Effectiveness Framework**.
- Continue to support the development of out of schools care in Community Focussed Schools and the development of activities for children and young people as part of that childcare package. Community Focussed Schools can provide important wrap around childcare.
- Continue to promote the role of Community Focussed Schools in Communities First areas and in rural areas. Recent Guidance issued by the Assembly Government prioritises the need for Communities First Partnerships to engage with Community Focussed Schools (Welsh Assembly Government 2009). This will help to ensure that children and families from low income backgrounds are able to benefit from local provision. It will also help in terms of supporting children and their families to be fully engaged in education.

4.4 Measuring our progress

We will measure our progress using relevant indicators included in the Children and Young People’s Wellbeing Monitor for Wales, as well as existing Child Poverty Targets.

RELEVANT CHILD POVERTY TARGETS³

- **Pupils achieving Key Stage 1 (Core Subject Indicator).**
- **Pupils achieving Key Stage 2 (Core Subject Indicator).**
- **Pupils achieving Key Stage 3 (Core Subject Indicator).**
- **Pupils achieving Key Stage 4 (Core Subject Indicator).**
- **Pupils leaving fulltime education with no approved qualification.**
- **Pupils aged 15 achieving the Level 2 threshold (5 or more GCSE A*-C).**
- **16-18 year olds not in education, employment or training.**

³ We are currently developing a subset of our child poverty indicators. Where data are available, we will provide an analysis (of these indicators) for children and families living in low income households.

CHAPTER 5

Children and young people in Wales should enjoy the best possible physical, mental, social and emotional health and be free from abuse, victimisation and exploitation

5.1 Introduction

Improving the health outcomes of children and parents living in low income families is essential to tackling child poverty. Action to reduce health inequities in Wales is particularly important, and is central to the new Child Poverty Strategy and Delivery Plan. This is reflected in the broad aim set out below (see Box 5.1).

5.2 The Broad Aim – What we are looking to achieve

Box 5.1: Broad Aim of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure and the 2010 Child Poverty Strategy

To reduce inequalities in health between children and between parents of children (so far as necessary to ensure the wellbeing of their children).

5.3 Welsh Assembly Government action to make further progress and achieve the Broad Aims

We are committed to making further progress between 2010 and 2013 to achieve the 13 Broad Aims of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure. In addition to the programmes already in place, or to boost their impact, we will take action in a number of different areas. These are outlined below.

Reducing health inequities for children and parents in Wales

The health and wellbeing of the children and young people in Wales is one of our main priorities. Ensuring that quality health services are developed, alongside programmes for the entire population *as well as for those facing disadvantage*, is recognised in the wide range of Welsh Assembly Government programmes and in the core services provided by the NHS, local authorities, schools and other partners.

A strategic framework for public health in Wales already exists. In November 2009, we published *Our Healthy Future* – the central goal of which is improved quality and length of life, and fairer health outcomes for people in Wales.⁴ Reducing inequities in health is fundamental to this goal and forms part of the “thematic structure” which underpins the overall strategic framework. Prevention and early intervention also forms a key component of the overall thematic structure of *Our Healthy Future*, recognising that health through the life course starts with the principle that children

⁴ *Our Healthy Future*: <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/health/ocmo/healthy/?lang=en>.

and young people must have a good start in life that supports their long-term health and wellbeing.

The thematic structure of *Our Healthy Future* is set out in Figure 5.1 below. Each of the interconnected themes impacts positively on the health of children and young people. In particular, there is strong alignment between the themes and priorities set out in *Our Healthy Future* and the Broad Aims and strategic objectives of the new Child Poverty Strategy.

Figure 5.1: Thematic structure of Our Healthy Future



Source: Our Healthy Future (Welsh Assembly Government 2009)

Our Healthy Future contains ten priority areas for action and a series of next steps for developing and expanding linkages between stakeholders and partners and across policy portfolios. The top ten priorities for public health in Wales are:

- Reducing smoking prevalence.
- Increasing participation rates in physical activity.
- Reducing unhealthy eating.
- Stopping the growth in harm from alcohol and drugs.
- Reducing teenage pregnancy rates.
- Reducing accident and injury rates.
- Improving mental wellbeing.
- Improving health at work.

- Increasing vaccination and immunisation rates to target levels.
- Reducing health inequities.

Focussing policy effort on these top ten priorities will contribute to improving health outcomes across a range of different indicators.

The long term vision set out in Our Healthy Future is aligned with Professor Michael Marmot's recent review of health inequalities in England "**Fair Society, Healthy Lives**".

To support our Child Poverty Delivery Plan, we will:

- Develop a reducing **health inequities strategy for Wales** in 2010, as part of the Strategic Framework for Public Health in Wales. This will help to drive forward effort to improve health outcomes for children and families living in poverty. The prioritisation of health inequities will mean greater emphasis on "narrowing gaps" in relation to the health outcomes of children and families living in poverty.
- Review the **National Service Framework (NSF) for Children, Young People and Maternity Services** by mid 2010, to ensure that the framework remains relevant and fit for purpose. Launched in 2005, the NSF contributes to the achievement of the seven core aims for children and young people by supporting improvements in quality and reducing variations in service delivery by the setting of national standards. These standards have been set not just for health – but for education, housing, leisure, transport and other local services (which strongly influence the wellbeing of children and also focus on the need to provide enhanced support for marginalised or vulnerable groups).
- Take forward the 21 cross cutting standards and 203 measureable and key actions in the NSF – a number of which are linked specifically to reducing child poverty. A Self Assessment Audit Tool (SAAT) has been developed to enable local agencies and the Welsh Assembly Government to monitor progress in implementing NSF actions.
- Continue to invest in the survival and future health of children through **Antenatal Care** and **Maternity Services**. These have a specific focus within the NSF. Maternity services are delivered in partnership with women and their families and aim to ensure safe and positive outcomes for women and babies at all times. Maternity care can also make an important contribution to reducing health inequities. The Welsh Assembly Government recognises that to improve the health of children in Wales, investment in a child's health must begin before the child is born.
- Continue to promote a holistic approach to support mothers and families, through the **Mental Health Strategy** and NSF. The Mental Health Strategy aims to prevent depression developing whenever possible, by encouraging women to draw on support networks – both informally and through the statutory sector.

- Continue to deliver a system to ensure that every woman is assessed to check that they do not have mental health problems, or problems with substance misuse, during their pregnancy. Should any problems be identified, these women will be referred (appropriately) to a range of interventions and support in their community, usually from primary care (including health visiting or voluntary sector agencies) or if needed, from mental health services.
- Take forward the commitment made in *One Wales* to place a new priority on providing for mental health – including child and adolescent mental health services (**CAMHS**). The mental health and wellbeing of children and young people, is a priority for the Welsh Assembly Government and it is recognised that CAMHS need to be improved. Children and young people with mental illness are amongst the most vulnerable and socially excluded groups in our society. Services need to be about helping to enable and empower young people to take a full and as active part in the community as possible.
- Support steps to strengthen the range of CAMH Services in Wales, including access to specialist CAMHS.
- Continue to support the provision of counseling in schools.
- Continue to implement our 10 year substance misuse strategy **Working Together to Reduce Harm** which recognises that substance misuse can be a both a symptom and a cause of a range of inter-related problems (including poverty). Supporting families affected by substance misuse is central to supporting the delivery of our Child Poverty Strategy.
- Publish and implement our new integrated violence against women strategy **The Right to Be Safe**.

Future action to maintain focus on the child poverty targets

Focussing policy effort on the top ten priorities identified in Our Healthy Future (and the development of a “reducing health inequities strategy” for Wales) will form a key part of our effort to achieve the 2020 child poverty targets.⁵

To support our Child Poverty Delivery Plan, we will:

- Roll out the **Designed to Smile** dental health initiative across the whole of Wales, and take forward developments that will see younger and older children included in the programme.
- Take forward action to reduce conception rates in girls under 16, as part of the **Sexual Health and Wellbeing for Wales 2009-2014 Working Paper**.
- Continue to support the **Mind Exercise Nutrition Do it! (MEND)** programme in Wales through the delivery of approximately 20 programmes per term up until March 2011.
- Work to increase the uptake of the **Welsh Network of Healthy School Schemes (WNHSS) National Quality Award**, and expand the concept to pre-school settings.

⁵ *Eradicating Child Poverty in Wales: Measuring Success* (October 2006).

- Continue to work with the UK Government on the development of the new **Road Safety Strategy** – which will include new targets for 2020.
- Address road safety in areas where casualty and fatality rates are higher than the national average of where there is an issue for particularly vulnerable groups.
- Deliver the **Walking and Cycling Action Plan** targets for child travel to school, adult non-recreational journeys, and recreation in Wales – as part our National Transport Plan. (Section 11.2 contains additional information on the National Transport Plan and action to improve road safety in Wales.)

Improving levels of nutrition amongst children and young people

We are committed to taking forward action across a range of different policy areas – with the view to improving nutrition amongst children and young people from low income families.

To support our Child Poverty Delivery Plan, we will:

- Promote a **whole school approach** to a range of issues, including offsite policies, dining environment, food on offer and payment arrangements.
- Take forward the provisions within the **Healthy Eating in Schools (Wales) Measure 2009** which specifically relate to the promotion of free school meals and the protection of the identity of pupils in receipt of these meals. This will help to tackle the potential stigma attached to accessing FSMs at the pupil level. The potential stigma that arises from accessing FSMs at the parent level is more difficult to quantify and to address, although the availability of an online application process should help (see below).
- Take forward ongoing work to support **Appetite for Life** which includes the provision of a specific grant scheme, an action research project, a dedicated Appetite for Life Coordinator, Nutritional Analysis Software and the implementation of new legislation in this area.
- Continue to work with local authorities and other key stakeholders to raise awareness of the availability of Free School Meals to maximise uptake.
- Continue to explore opportunities to build efficiencies into the Free School Meals system to reduce the administrative burden placed on parents and on the local authority.
- Explore the possibility of introducing an on-line system for parents to apply for Free School Meals.
- Maintain our programme of Free School Breakfasts.
- Review the 5 Year Action Plan – Food and Fitness: Promoting Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Children and Young People in Wales.
- Continue to ensure that every Key Stage 1 pupil has **school milk** supplied at no cost to their parents or guardian, and that milk is subsidised for Key Stage 2 pupils.

Supporting parents to understand the importance of a healthy diet and exercise

Our Healthy Future will provide a framework for improving and protecting the health of people in Wales. An essential part of future action under this framework will be to ensure that everyone has a healthy diet and regular exercise. At the same time, there will be a focus on narrowing the gap between those communities with poor health and those with good health.

To support our Child Poverty Delivery Plan, we will:

- Promote **Change4Life** in Wales – which was launched in early 2010. *Change4Life* is a social marketing programme, originally developed by the Department of Health to increase levels of physical activity and promote healthy eating, in order to tackle obesity. *Change4Life* will be positioned as a sub-brand of *Health Challenge Wales* for addressing physical activity and healthy eating.
- Through *Change4Life* provide the Welsh context to inspire and motivate and connect people in Wales, with the local resources that can help them change their behaviour. The main target for the programme will be families with children under the age of 10.
- Develop a new tobacco strategy in 2010, to reduce smoking amongst parents, children and young people in Wales.

Wider benefits of work in improving the health and wellbeing of families

We have outlined our approach to improving the health of the working-age population (and reducing the number of people falling out of work through ill-health) in our response to Dame Carol Black's review "Working for a Healthier Tomorrow" (March 2008).⁶ This response sets out an integrated approach to improve the health and wellbeing of people in work – consisting of three dimensions: prevention, management and treatment.

In particular, we recognise the importance of providing appropriate skills, training and employment opportunities for those people wanting to enter and/or return to work.

⁶ The Welsh Assembly Government's response to Dame Carol Black's Review can be found here: <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/health/improvement/work/working/?lang=en>.

To support our Child Poverty Delivery Plan, we will:

- Implement our **Skills That Work for Wales** strategy – which has a comprehensive set of measures designed to raise employment levels. These measures have important implications for reducing the number of workless households (and the number of children living in poverty) in Wales.
- Take forward **Healthy Working Wales** – which was launched by the Welsh Assembly Government in 2008. *Healthy Working Wales* provides advice and information to health professional, employers and individuals around health and work issues to improve the health of the working age population. The programme is underpinned by the evidence that being in work is good for physical and mental health and well being, and that families without a working member are more likely to suffer persistent low income and poverty. The programme aims to raise awareness of the health benefits of work and to prevent the flow of people out of work and into economic inactivity due to health issues.
- Continue to support the **online training, support and resource centre** which aims to change perceptions on fitness for work among GPs. A common health complaints desk aid has been piloted as part of *Healthy Working Wales*, which is designed to help in the management of patients who present with musculoskeletal or mental health problems, providing key information for use during consultations. An additional feature of this desk aid is to provide information around work and health to help practitioners promote a clear and consistent message and facilitate shared decision making about return to work and rehabilitation.
- Support a European Social Fund initiative to develop and roll out a **Pan Wales Peer Mentoring Project** – designed to provide new and additional strength to substance misuse services in Wales. The project will focus exclusively on helping substance misuse dependent individuals achieve **economic independence** via access to sustainable employment. The project forms part of the Welsh Assembly Government's Substance Misuse Strategy **Working Together to Reduce Harm**. This sets out a ten year programme of activity to reduce the negative impact of illicit drugs, alcohol and other stimulants. Central to the Substance Misuse Strategy is helping people overcome their problems via treatment, counselling, casework help and support.

5.4 Measuring our progress

We will measure our progress using relevant indicators included in the Children and Young People's Wellbeing Monitor for Wales, as well as existing Child Poverty Targets.

RELEVANT CHILD POVERTY TARGETS⁷

- **Low birth weight.**
- **Infant mortality rate.**
- **Dental caries amongst children aged 5 and 12 years.**
- **Teenage conceptions for under 16s.**
- **Pedestrian injuries for children aged 5 to 14 years.**
- **Road casualties for children aged 0 to 15 years.**

⁷ We are currently developing a subset of our child poverty indicators. Where data are available, we will provide an analysis (of these indicators) for children and families living in low income households.

CHAPTER 6

All children have access to play, leisure, cultural and sporting activities

6.1 Introduction

Action to reduce inequalities in participation in cultural, sporting and leisure activities between children living in poverty and their peers is an important part of the child poverty agenda in Wales. This is reflected in the broad aim set out below (see Box 6.1).

6.2 The Broad Aim – What we are looking to achieve

Box 6.1: Broad Aim of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure and the 2010 Child Poverty Strategy

To reduce inequalities in participation in cultural, sporting and leisure activities between children and between parents of children (so far as necessary to ensure the well-being of their children).

6.3 Welsh Assembly Government action to make further progress and achieve the Broad Aims

We are committed to making further progress between 2010 and 2013 to achieve the 13 Broad Aims of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure. In addition to the programmes already in place, or to boost their impact, we will take action in a number of different areas. These are outlined below.

Free or subsidised access to low income families to cultural, sporting and leisure activities

Providing free or subsidised access to cultural, sporting and leisure activities for low income families is vital – not least because of their potential impact on the overall health and wellbeing of children and young people living in poverty.

To support our Child Poverty Delivery Plan, we will:

- Make it clear that all organisations in the cultural sector – including local authorities and those active in the arts, sport, and historic environment – should be proactive in extending access to and participation by all age groups and sections of society.
- Continue to support free entry to **Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum of Wales** – and their seven national museums (a One Wales commitment). This includes free entry to temporary exhibitions, and free access to the learning and events programme.

- Continue to support the Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum of Wales **Start (Art)** project with 7 schools in Communities First areas in Cardiff having secured funding from the Prince's Foundation for Children and the Arts. The project not only aims to engage school children, but also their families. The Foundation encourages participants to apply for further funding to continue working with the schools for a further 1-2 years. Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum of Wales is also currently engaged in **Roman Remains Film Project** working with three Community First schools in the Newport area, in partnership with Cinetig.
- Continue to support the **Arts Council for Wales** and their sponsorship of initiatives which contribute towards the alleviation of the effects of child poverty. This includes revenue funding for **Valleys Kids**; support for summer schools; and the **Young Promoters' Scheme**. The Arts Council for Wales are currently consulting on its strategy for children and young people "**Changing Lives**". This states that "all children and young people should have the right to freely participate in cultural life and the arts". The Arts Council for Wales also aims to involve children and young people in developing policies, projects and plans through the introduction of a **Children and Young People's Advisory Panel**.
- Work with the Arts Council of Wales to support and monitor the impact of its **Reach the Heights** project. This initiative aims to reduce the number of young people in Wales aged 11 – 19 years who are not in education, employment or training (NEET), or at risk of being so. By the end of the calendar year it is hoped that the project will have awarded 41 participation projects and 3 training projects, and involved over 6,500 young people in participatory arts activity and training.
- Continue to support the **National Library for Wales** and their provision of free access to all exhibitions and free membership of the library for children and young people aged 16 and over. Free educational visits and activities with schools are also encouraged by the National Library for Wales, with each class receiving individual attention.
- Continue to support the National Library for Wales and their provision of free, on-line educational resources – including packs related to curriculum areas (such as World War 2) and access to the digital catalogue.
- Work with **Cadw** to review their admissions and pricing policies. This will include consideration of discounted admission for families on certain benefits. **Cadw** are involved with a number of different projects designed to improve access to activities amongst low income families. This includes free admission to Cadw sites in **Torfaen and Conwy**, for families working with family services; working with **Action For Children** to encourage foster families to visit Cadw sites (providing free admission to such families by issue of special family membership cards) and organising **New Family Events** where there is no additional charge (over the standard admission charge) to engage in the event.⁸

⁸ The latter is based on findings from Cadw research which suggest that (in addition to admission charges) low income families are more likely to consider visiting heritage sites where living history and family activities are on offer.

- Collaborate with the **Big Lottery Fund** in their development of a new programme to address child poverty. All four of the distributors of National Lottery "good causes" money in Wales are devoting a significant proportion of their programmes towards increasing opportunities for children and young people in Wales.
- Place greater emphasis on creating opportunities for families to undertake physical activity together – particularly amongst low income families – through the implementation of the **Five Year Physical Activity Action Plan Creating an Active Wales**.
- Continue to fund **Free Swimming** in Wales for children and young people aged 16 and under during all school holidays. The provision of Free Swimming for children and young people aims to increase participation in physical activity (and improve their overall health and wellbeing) by improving access to local authority leisure services.
- Ensure that services and support for families living in poverty are delivered bi-lingually.

A range of additional initiatives designed to engage with children and young people (and their families) from low income backgrounds are also being taken forward by the Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum for Wales. These are summarised in Box 6.2 below.

Box 6.2: Amgueddfa Cymru-National Museum for Wales: Future Initiatives to increase access and participation amongst children and families living in poverty

They will:

- Deliver sustainability-themed workshops to secondary school pupils within Communities First areas of Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- Distribute and target schools in Communities First areas to loan and display a portable (schools only) version of the "Climate change: what's occurring?" **Sustainability Exhibition**.
- Advertising **family events** in media in an accessible fun style (e.g. Feb half term Red Dragon & Big Pit radio ads).
- Distributing **What's On Events Leaflets** to disadvantaged communities in the Swansea area.
- Distributing **book marks** advertising family friendly activities to school children.
- Target sign-up of "**Spring Bulbs for Schools**" distance learning package within Communities First areas, through collaboration with Communities First officers.

Opportunities for play amongst low income families

The Children and Families (Wales) Measure will place a legal duty on local authorities to assess the opportunities for children and young people to play in their area and, wherever practicable, to ensure that opportunities are provided.

To support our Child Poverty Delivery Plan, we will:

- Work with local authorities and other partners to develop the definitions of play and the range of play opportunities that can be provided for children and young people. We want to see a diverse and appropriate mix of play provision, and the development of open spaces for play, that allow children and young people to play in safe and stimulating environments.
- Continue to advance access and the development of play and leisure services for disabled children and young people. An additional £1 million was made available through the **Cymorth: Children and Youth Support Fund** in 2007-08 to support this work in Wales.

Children and Families (Wales) Measure: New Duties

The Children and Families (Wales) Measure will place a legal duty on named “Welsh Authorities” to prepare and publish a strategy for contributing to the eradication of child poverty in Wales. Section 6 of the Measure places such a duty on the **National Library of Wales; Amgueddfa Cymru-National Museum of Wales; Arts Council of Wales** and the **Sports Council for Wales**. This reflects Ministers' understanding that in order to make faster progress on child poverty, there is a need to galvanise and draw on the expertise and experience of a wide range of public bodies in Wales.

To support our Child Poverty Delivery Plan, we will:

- Issue guidance to local authorities and public bodies in Wales on the implementation and monitor new duties that arise from the Children and Families (Wales) Measure.
- Provide further funding and support so that the **Child Poverty Solutions Wales Online Tool Kit** can be further developed to support all those public bodies affected by the new statutory duties being placed upon them through the Children and Families (Wales) Measure. This will involve promoting the tool to new audiences; sharing the learning from the local authority pilot projects; and offering more support to organisations to tackle child poverty in their areas.

6.4 Measuring our progress

We will measure our progress using relevant indicators included in the Children and Young People's Wellbeing Monitor for Wales, as well as existing Child Poverty Targets.⁹

⁹ We are currently developing a subset of our child poverty indicators. Where data are available, we will provide an analysis (of these indicators) for children and families living in low income households.

CHAPTER 7

All children and young people are listened to, treated with respect and have their race and cultural identity recognised

7.1 Introduction

Action to help young people participate effectively and responsibly in the lives of their communities is an important component of the new Child Poverty Strategy and its Delivery Plan, and this is reflected in the broad aim set out below (see Box 7.1). It is particularly important that those children and young people “hardest to reach”, who often include those living in poverty, are supported and encouraged to participate so that their views and experiences can be taken into account by decision makers and other community and school leaders.

7.2 The Broad Aim – What we are looking to achieve

Box 7.1: Broad Aim of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure and the 2010 Child Poverty Strategy

To help young persons participate effectively and responsibly in the life of their communities.

7.3 Welsh Assembly Government action to make further progress and achieve the Broad Aims

We are committed to making further progress between 2010 and 2013 to realise the 13 Broad Aims of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure. In addition to the programmes already in place, or to boost their impact, we will take action in a number of different areas. These are outlined below.

Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Building on the Assembly Government’s strong record to date in supporting children and young people’s rights under Article 12 of the UNCRC is central to helping children and young people from low income families participate in the lives of their communities.

To support our Child Poverty Delivery Plan we will:

- Develop and publish a new National Strategy for Children and Young People’s Participation – with the view to linking local participation strategies and identifying the roles and responsibilities of key partners and sectors in driving forward this agenda.

A New National Survey of Children and Young People in Wales

The 2008 Children and Young People's Wellbeing Monitor for Wales identified the need for more information on specific groups of children and young people in Wales, which includes those living in poverty. The Monitor also highlighted a lack of information in Wales on children and young people's engagement in decision making, and their participation in the lives of their communities.

With the view to addressing this gap, our new National Survey of households in Wales will include a self-completion questionnaire for children and young people. The new National Survey will be representative of all households in Wales – and will include households with children and young people who are living in poverty.

To support our Child Poverty Delivery Plan, we will:

- Analyse and act upon the results of the children and young people's questionnaire from our new National Survey of households in Wales, with a view to ensuring that children and young people's views and experiences of poverty are better reflected in policy development.

More action to raise aspirations of children and young people living in poverty

Action to raise the aspirations of children and young people living in poverty is essential and forms an important part of the Child Poverty Strategy and Delivery Plan.

To support our Child Poverty Delivery Plan, we will:

- Work with key partners to raise the aspirations of children and young people living in poverty in Wales, as part of the School Effectiveness Framework.
- Take a whole family approach to raising aspirations amongst children and young people – for example, through Communities First Partnerships. This reflects the evidence that the expectation and experience of low aspirations is transmitted across the generations.
- Support children from the most disadvantaged communities to participate and have a say in the decisions that affect them – using Communities First Partnerships.

7.4 Measuring our progress

We will measure our progress using relevant indicators included in the Children and Young People's Wellbeing Monitor for Wales, as well as existing Child Poverty Targets.¹⁰

¹⁰ We are currently developing a subset of our child poverty indicators. Where data are available, we will provide an analysis (of these indicators) for children and families living in low income households.

CHAPTER 8

All children and young people have access to a safe home and community which supports physical and emotional wellbeing

8.1 Introduction

Action to ensure that children and young people grow up in decent housing and in safe and cohesive communities will make an important contribution to the child poverty agenda in Wales. This is reflected in the Broad Aims set out below (see Box 8.1).

8.2 The Broad Aim – What we are looking to achieve

Box 8.1: Broad Aims of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure and the 2010 Child Poverty Strategy

To ensure that all children grow up in decent housing.

To ensure that all children grow up in safe and cohesive communities.

8.3 Welsh Assembly Government action to make further progress and achieve the Broad Aims

We are committed to making further progress between 2010 and 2013 to realise the 13 Broad Aims of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure. In addition to the programmes already in place, or to boost their impact, we will take action in a number of different areas. These are outlined below.

Reducing numbers of families in temporary accommodation and those in overcrowded accommodation

Homelessness, whether short-term or long-term, has significant impacts on both adults and children. In July 2009, we launched our new Ten Year Homelessness Plan which sets out our long term policy direction. The vulnerability of children and young people is recognised in the Plan, which contains a vision for minimising homelessness through prevention. Over recent years, this prevention approach has made substantial progress in reducing the numbers of children in Bed and Breakfast and other temporary accommodation, and reduced overall levels of homelessness.

The new **Housing Strategic Framework for Wales** highlights the impact of poor housing on children and sets out measures that will both directly and indirectly benefit poor families. Over and above providing homes, initiatives such as the **Housing Related Support Programme** also play a vital role in preventing problems (such as homelessness) in the first place or, through early intervention, preventing

initial problems from getting much worse. They also make a significant contribution tackling the inequalities that exist between people in different parts of Wales.

It is also important to note that building new homes contributes to the economy and provides jobs and training opportunities. Refurbishing homes is particularly good for supporting local businesses, providing jobs, skills and training. This in turn addresses adult and youth employment. Improvements to housing and the surrounding area can also help to tackle deprivation, anti-social behaviour, and improve local services and facilities. Improving the security of properties also helps to reduce crime and the stress caused by the fear of crime.

To support our Child Poverty Delivery Plan, we will:

- Have continued action to achieve the current target of a minimum of 6,500 additional affordable homes by 2011.
- Develop a **Welsh Housing Investment Trust** to pull in more private sector investment to build more affordable homes.
- Review the laws and rules that apply to homelessness to identify what more needs to be done in Wales to tackle it.
- Promote the prevention of homelessness amongst children and young people through the implementation of the Ten Year Homelessness Plan.
- Give guidance to local authorities on how they can prevent youth homelessness through joint working between Housing and Children's services and other statutory and Third sector organisations.
- Support the development of links between youth homelessness services and the provision of training, skills and employment opportunities to help break cycles of homelessness.
- Develop more ways of helping people to rent, to own, or part-own properties where they are unable to do so through the housing market.
- Improve existing homes and ensure that new investment helps to create better homes and communities and supports job creation and training.
- Review the Welsh Housing Quality Standard to see whether more can be done to support action on fuel poverty, health and climate change, and more information will be obtained to measure progress against it.
- Build on the success of action to provide financial and debt advice to those in most need particularly those who are homeless or at risk from moneylenders and make sure people know about this and other services that can help.
- Complete a major review of the **Supporting People Programme** so that the help available is delivered as efficiently as possible.

Improvements in Housing Benefit administration and take up

Improving housing benefit administration and take up is essential to delivering the Broad Aim "ensuring that all children and young people grow up in decent housing".

To support our Child Poverty Delivery Plan, we will:

- Support the DWP in its roll-out of the *In and Out of Work* project – which is looking to extend its current remit. The original scope for *In and Out of Work* was Job Seeker’s Allowance customers and Income Support customers, with an immediate Work Focused Interview. It is likely that DWP will pilot this in one site in Wales from January 2010.

Community cohesion

Wales needs strong, resilient and harmonious communities that can respond effectively to the increasing pace and scale of economic, social and cultural change in the 21st Century. **Getting On Together – A Community Cohesion Strategy for Wales** is part of the Welsh Assembly Government’s One Wales commitments to achieve a fair and just society, in which all citizens are empowered to determine their own lives and to shape the communities in which they live. Its aims and objectives should be delivered through Local Community Cohesion Partnerships, including engagement with Children and Young People’s Partnerships and schools.

To support our Child Poverty Delivery Plan, we will:

- Continue to support partnership working – in order to tackle hate crime.
- Place the promotion of equal opportunities at the centre of our work.
- Take action to support marginalised groups and encourage their full participation in community life.
- Fund Communities First Partnerships to develop priorities for local activity.
- Develop higher levels of volunteering amongst all age groups.
- Tackle the causes of anti-social behaviour through specific strategies for substance misuse, domestic abuse and youth offending.

8.4 Measuring our progress

We will measure our progress using relevant indicators included in the Children and Young People’s Wellbeing Monitor for Wales, as well as existing Child Poverty Targets.

RELEVANT CHILD POVERTY TARGETS¹¹

- Number of families with dependent children who are living in B&B accommodation.
- Number of families with dependent children who are living in temporary accommodation.
- Number of families with dependent children who are living in overcrowded conditions (measured by the bedroom standard).

¹¹ We are currently developing a subset of our child poverty indicators. Where data are available, we will provide an analysis (of these indicators) for children and families living in low income households.

CHAPTER 9

Vulnerable families and children

It is widely recognised that children living in certain families in the UK (and Wales) are more at risk of poverty than others. We are committed to ensuring that these vulnerable families and children receive the support that they need and are “not left behind”. In particular, we need to ensure that in 2020, it is not the most vulnerable and/or most difficult to help that make up those families living in poverty.

9.1 Children and families more at risk of poverty

As Table 12.1 highlights, certain characteristics (of families with children) are associated with higher than average risks of experiencing relative poverty. As noted earlier in this Strategy, **worklessness** is a strong risk factor associated with living in poverty: Unless all adults in the family are working (and at least half of them full time), the risks of living in poverty remain high. **Lone parent families** are particularly at risk.

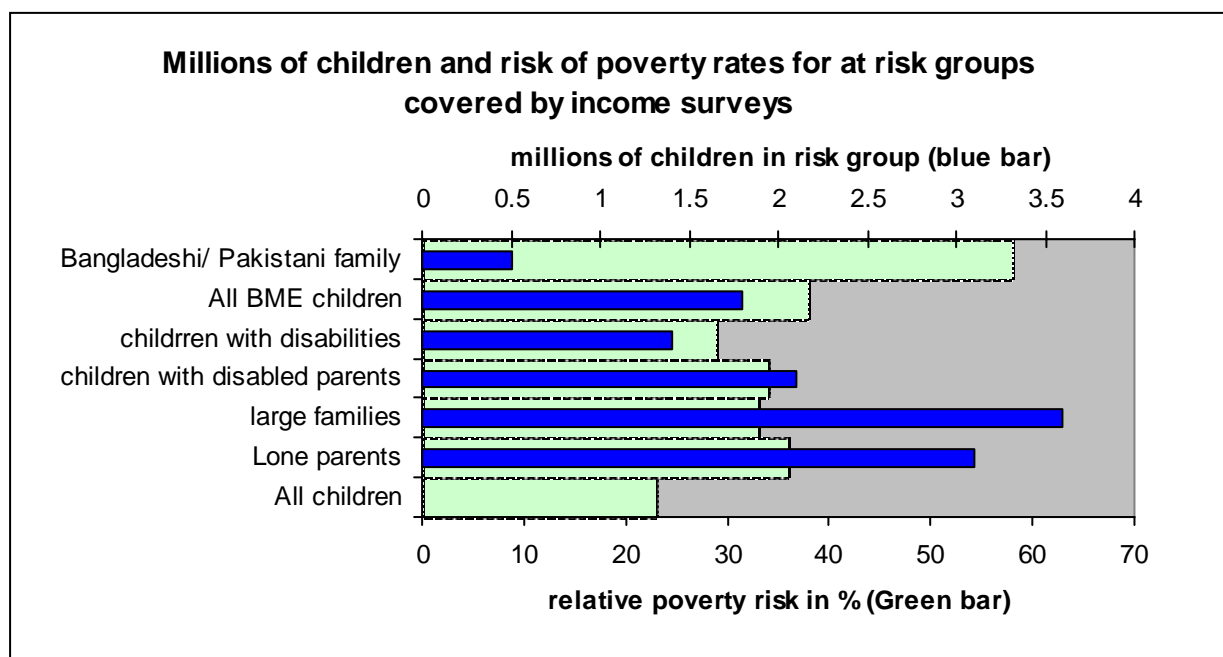
Children from certain **minority ethnic groups** are more likely to be living in poverty – even when other poverty risk factors are taken into account (such as family structure and the number of earners). Children from Bangladeshi and Pakistani families are particularly at risk.

When disability is present, families are also more at risk of experiencing relative poverty. At a UK level, 55% of families with **disabled children** live in or at the margins of poverty (H.M. Treasury 2004), while 31% of households with children with one or more **disabled adults** were in poverty (MacKay and Atkinson 2007). Young people caring for family members may also be at risk of poverty, given that **carers** often face “the challenge of combining paid work and informal care” (DWP 2009). In particular, recent research has recognised that caring responsibilities “are likely to affect the type of work that can be done, the hours of work and the likelihood of gaining or remaining in employment” (DWP, 2009).

There is also evidence to suggest that **larger families with four or more children** are also more at risk of living in poverty, as are families with severe **parental substance misuse**; **children leaving care**; **asylum seeker children**; and **Gypsy and Traveller** children.

For some of the groups highlighted in Figure 9.1, the risk of poverty can be temporary. Crucial to tackling poverty for all at risk groups, however, is ensuring that families have sufficient support at “transition points”.

Figure 9.1: Children and families at risk of poverty in the UK



Source: HBAI

9.2 Disabled Children

Our policy agenda for disabled children and young people was launched in December 2008. **“We are on the way!”** sets out policies designed to improve service delivery for disabled children and young people (from across different Ministerial Portfolios) in a single document. The policy agenda was developed by the **Rights into Action for Disabled Children and Young People Task Group**. An agreed priority is to work towards eliminating discrimination against children and young people with disabilities and improve their access to services and support.

To support our Child Poverty Delivery Plan, we will:

- Support the **Rights into Action for Disabled Children and Young People Task Group** to develop a plan to ensure its work links with key activities and national policies in other areas. For example, the *National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services* which has specific standards relating to disabled children and young people (and is designed to act as a key drive for change).
- Support **short breaks** for disabled children, young people and their families in Wales through a grant of £1.5 million.
- Help to ensure that play, leisure, recreational services (and opportunities to participate in decisions that may affect them) are available to young people with disabilities *on the same terms as they are to other children and young people*.

- Support the **Family Fund Trust (FFT)** – which provides grants and information in relation to the care of the child including holidays, transport, household equipment and driving lessons to families of severely disabled children up to the age of 18. During the 2007-08 financial year, the Family Fund Trust distributed £2.65m (provided by the Welsh Assembly Government) in grants to almost 3,000 families in Wales.
- Support the provision of **Key Transition Workers** for disabled young people. Since 2007, £500,000 per year has been made available (for three years) to provide additional Key Transition Workers in Wales for young people with a disability. Work is now under way, with support from the Care Co-ordination Network UK, in five pilot areas: Gwynedd, Anglesey, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire and Monmouthshire (and other Local Authorities are being encouraged to take part). A bid to secure match funding as part of the **Reach the Heights** European Social Fund grant scheme was successful in February 2009. This means that the total funding available for transition key working has more than doubled to over £3m.
- Raise awareness of the benefits to which parents and carers of children with disabilities are entitled through the £500,000 awarded to Citizens Advice Cymru to deliver the campaign to increase benefit up-take – as part of the **Better Advice Better Health** initiative. The initiative operates in all 22 local authority areas in Wales, and provides local and co-ordinated general and welfare advice by Citizens Advice Bureaux (in co-operation with primary health teams). We will undertake a full external evaluation of the two year benefit up-take campaign, and use the findings to inform the future delivery of the initiative.

9.3 Looked After Children

Many parents of children entering care have specific difficulties. This includes mental illness, misuse of drugs or alcohol, parental learning difficulties and high levels of domestic violence. Children from one parent families are also over-represented in the care system, as are children from workless households and children who have a mother aged less than 20.

To support our Child Poverty Delivery Plan, we will:

- Use powers in the Children and Young Person's Act to reform the statutory framework for the care system, to ensure that children and young people receive high quality care and support – and drive forward improvements in the delivery of services focused on the needs of the child. This will include improving placement stability; educational attainment and experience; the quality and transparency of care planning; and ensuring that young people are not forced out of care before they are ready, by giving them a greater say in decisions that affect their future.
- Place a requirement on all schools to have a designated member of staff responsible for looked after children, to help ensure that their needs are treated as a priority by all schools.

- Develop a framework for foster care to encompass the training support and remuneration they receive.
- Over the next decade, deliver our 10 Year Strategy for Social Services **Fulfilled Lives, Supportive Communities** (Welsh Assembly Government, 2007).
- Place a greater emphasis on more focussed and integrated approaches to deal with the entrenched exclusion some families face, through *Fulfilled Lives, Supportive Communities*.
- Increase the skills of the care-system workforce (to allow us to work more intensely and earlier with families with greatest need).
- Establish the new **Integrated Family Support Service/Teams**.
- Take forward improvement measures for those in care and leaving care, in the implementation of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008. These changes will build on the good foundations set out in **Towards A Stable Life and a Brighter Future** – the Welsh Assembly Government's policy to strengthen the placement and wellbeing of looked after (and other vulnerable) children.
- Continue to support the **Child Trust Fund Reimbursement Grant Scheme** and encourage local authorities (as good corporate parents) to contribute to the Child Trust Fund accounts of the children they are responsible for looking after.

9.4 Care leavers

It is well documented that young people leaving care have a lower level of educational attainment than their peers and is a characteristic that places them at risk of living in poverty. With the view to supporting the needs of this specific group of young people, we will work with a range of partners – to deliver a range of initiatives that will provide looked after children with quality opportunities for work placements and raise their aspirations for the future.

To support our Child Poverty Delivery Plan, we will:

- Introduce a **national bursary**, requiring local authorities to provide a minimum sum of money for all young people in care who go on to university.
- Provide personal advisory support for those who haven't achieved the qualifications they need by the age of 21, and to those young adults who request support up to the age of 25.
- Place £200 per year in the Child Trust Fund account of every eligible child who spends a year in care. The £200 represents a £100 contribution from the Welsh Assembly Government and £100 from the UK Government for all looked after children in the UK – as part of a scheme administered by the Assembly Government.
- Legislate to ensure that young people are not moved from regulated to unregulated placements unless such a proposal has been properly scrutinized and the young person's views have been taken into account.

- Support the **Best Chance Initiative** for care leavers aged 17 to 21. The initiative involves a mentor from a supporting company meeting regularly with their assigned young person (over a three to six month period) to provide ongoing support. Mentors help to keep the young person motivated and assist in helping them to structure their next steps (be it for work or education, CV presentation and interviews) and to talk through any concerns about leaving care.

9.5 Parental Substance Misuse

Our 10 year substance misuse strategy *Working Together to Reduce Harm*, acknowledges that families affected by substance misuse often have a range of complex problems and needs. We believe that meeting the needs of these families requires a whole family approach, with different services working together.

To support our Child Poverty Delivery Plan, we will:

- Prioritise action to reduce the risk of harm to children and adults, as a consequence of a parent's (or partner's) substance misuse.
- Identify families who are at risk and provide evidence based interventions at the earliest opportunity – to reduce the impact of substance misuse and the likelihood of problems becoming more entrenched.

9.6 Refugee and asylum seeker children

The **Refugee Inclusion Strategy** sets out our vision of refugee inclusion in Wales. The overall aim of the inclusion strategy is “to support and enable refugees to rebuild their lives in Wales and make a full contribution to society”. The Refugee Inclusion Strategy recognises that the circumstances of many refugee and asylum seeking children and young people are “exceptionally complex” and that they are more likely to be regarded as “children in need”.

Refugee/asylum seeking children and young people have diverse health needs – and we recognise that key remedial measures are needed to protect and promote the health of some asylum seeking and refugee children and young people.

To support our Child Poverty Delivery Plan, we will:

- Monitor the **National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services** which includes specific references to asylum seeking and refugee children, where they are recognised as children in special circumstances. The Children & Young People's Partnerships are responsible for prioritising key actions within the NSF locally.
- Take forward developments to improve **Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)** throughout Wales.

9.7 Gypsy and Traveller children

We have recently consulted on the draft **Gypsy and Traveller Strategy** for Wales. Central to this Strategy is improving the housing, health and educational outcomes of these families and their children. A range of specific objectives have been developed to improve their accommodation and access to services in Wales. The *Gypsy and Traveller Strategy* also includes direction setting in relation to education for Gypsy and Traveller children and young people; access to health care and continuity of care; planning; unauthorised encampments; participation; and civic engagement for Gypsy Travellers in Wales.

To support our Child Poverty Delivery Plan, we will:

- Deliver a regular and positive (and culturally relevant) educational experience *to the whole family* – through our *Gypsy and Traveller Strategy*. This has been recognised as particularly important, in terms of giving the community the skills and abilities to ensure for themselves the same rights as everyone else in Welsh society.
- Ensure that the health needs of Gypsy and Travellers are addressed through national and local policy, by making health care more accessible for the Gypsy and Traveller community and improving access to continued care.
- Continue with our programme of facilitating the refurbishment of existing local authority sites through grant funding of £1 million. The **Gypsy and Traveller Refurbishment Grant** aims to bring existing sites up to a decent standard by improving the quality of life and standard of living for Gypsy and Travellers on local authority sites.
- Continue to work with local authorities to provide new sites and offer grant funding support of up to £1.5 million and guidance to facilitate this. The Welsh Assembly Government also recognises the role for Planning Authorities in this process and will therefore continue to review the Planning Application process and deliver training to local authorities.
- Support the Save the Children **Travelling Ahead Project** which aims to build on the success of the Travelling Ahead DVD. This DVD (featuring Gypsy and Traveller children and young people from across Wales) has been issued to every school in Wales and will be used as a teaching and training aid for young people in the settled community, (as well as practitioners, and local and national government officials) to highlight the cultural diversity of Gypsy and Traveller children.
- Through the Travelling Ahead Project, continue to build links to children and young people from the Gypsy and Traveller community around Wales, through an Engagement and Participation Officer.

CHAPTER 10

Working in partnership and local delivery

Further and faster progress on our shared child poverty reduction goals depends on delivery through strong partnerships at all levels. This chapter covers:

- Delivery through Local Partnership.
- Joined up action across the Welsh Assembly Government.
- Working in Partnership with Community and Third Sector Partners.
- Working in Partnership with the UK Government.

Tackling child poverty is highly complex and involves a range of inter-related policy solutions. No single policy approach or single organisation will be able to deliver the solutions to what are often deep seated, intergenerational social issues.

Our Vision is that from 2010 there will be a clear line of sight in place, setting out the action that we will take to tackle child poverty, which can then guide the action that should be taken at local government and community level. This is our best chance of success to ensure that more of our disadvantaged children and young people are provided with the opportunities to which they are entitled.

10.1 Delivery through Local Partnership

Chapters 2 to 9 of this Child Poverty Delivery Plan set out the policy action that we are committed to taking forward, in order to achieve the 13 Broad Aims set out in the Children and Families (Wales) Measure. The challenge is to implement this policy action in ways that meet the varying needs of individual families. This is reinforced by the evidence that we need to help children within the context of their wider family relationships, and that we need to help families as a whole to escape from poverty.

There are five statutory plans that Local Authorities and partners are required to produce: the Community Strategy; the Health, Social Care and Well-Being Strategy; the Children and Young People's Plan; the Local Development Plan; and the Community Safety Plan. As local bodies develop these, they will need to consider how to link with the child poverty agenda in Wales. Local Service Boards are now providing local strategic leadership which integrates the statutory plans and the work of the individual partnerships and enables issues like child poverty to be dealt with holistically.

The potential range of issues facing families in poverty can vary enormously. Getting the right partnership working is therefore a complex, but fundamental challenge. Integrating support from agencies as diverse as the NHS, schools, youth justice, the DWP and the third sector, as well as local authority services, is not easy.

Families with children in poverty sometimes have to engage with a range of different agencies. At times, these can appear to have competing objectives. Families can

often find it hard to negotiate through quite complex bureaucracy. Rightly or wrongly, some of the service providers are regarded with suspicion, and some bring stigma.

Although many children in poverty will face similar obstacles in fulfilling their potential, the reasons that they and their families are living in poverty (and the obstacles they face) may vary considerably. As a result, the programme of support which each family will need (to help them escape poverty) needs to be tailored to their individual circumstances on a case by case basis. In particular, it will need to help them to map their way through the full range of issues which they face. Our vision is to put in place coherent support for families that will help take them on a journey out of poverty.

The priority, therefore, is to develop local partnership working that offers the right support for individual families, across a range of issues that might be relevant (including unemployment, education, health, housing, parenting, benefits, debt, skills, violence against women and children, and substance misuse). At the same time, it needs to remain simple to access from the perspective of the family.

We cannot be sure that families in poverty know where to go for the range of support that they may need. They may only get a partial picture of what is available, depending on which professionals or voluntary organisations they may come into contact with. We want to ensure that wherever possible, families are able to access simple and effective information, help and support. We need to break down the complexity of the current support and interventions so that families are able to see the help that is available to them.

Our family-focussed solution needs to be able to reach out to families, and win their trust, as well as aim to maximise retention and engagement over the necessary period of time. We also need to reach out to families without acute problems, where early and preventative support can make a big difference to their future prospects.

In summary, what we need is local delivery that is:

- **Family-focused**, offering families help to improve their chances of escaping poverty, including getting help getting into work and the right information on benefit issues, as well as help to improve the outcomes for children, with the emphasis on working with families and increasing their ability and confidence to meet challenges.
- **Bespoke**, tailoring help to individual family circumstances, where necessary bending programmes to fit individual family circumstances that are perhaps outside of the norm.
- **Integrated**, with help from different organisations effectively coordinated and ensuring that there is a seamless progression for families between different interventions and programmes.
- **Pro-active**, seeking out families who can benefit from early preventative help and engaging them in longer term change.

- **Intensive**, with a vigorous approach, and relentless focus, adapting the package of interventions as a family’s circumstances change, and maintaining that effort with families to ensure successful outcomes.
- **Local**, reflecting the circumstances of local communities, such as the differences of delivering in rural compared to urban areas, and with effective links into communities.

A great deal of good partnership work is already being done in Wales by a wide range of agencies, under the leadership of the Children and Young People’s Partnerships. Some “**Team around the Child**” approaches show great promise to bring professionals and practitioners from multiple agencies together to deal with families on a holistic basis. But even the best approaches are not yet delivering for families in a fully integrated way – for example, by including the income and work issues needed to tackle poverty in the round.

In light of the above, we will use the consultation period for the draft Child Poverty Strategy to discuss how local delivery models can be shaped to provide a “**Team around the Family**” approach – for families living in poverty. We will do this via a series of workshops.

A Stronger Focus on Outcomes

All local delivery models need to be more focussed on improving the outcomes of children and young people and their families living in poverty.

Our proposed priorities to achieve this are:

- (a) To develop a set of measures for Children and Young People’s Plans that will link evidence of progress at the national and local level. This will include measures in relation to the 13 Broad Aims from the Children and Families (Wales) Measure and (where data are available) the strategic indicators set out in Section 3.4 of the Child Poverty Strategy in their CYP Plans.
- (b) To support this by improving the evidence base where appropriate. Annex 1 to this Strategy has highlighted that children from families living in poverty tend to fall behind (in developmental terms) from an early age. It is particularly important, therefore, to have comparative data on the developmental outcomes of children living in poverty – at the local authority level. Proposals on how best to achieve this will be issued shortly.
- (c) To ensure performance management frameworks for education, health and social services are coherently aligned to support effective local delivery. We intend to run workshops with local delivery partners during the consultation period on our Child Poverty Strategy to seek views on how current performance management frameworks could be improved.

- (d) To make much greater use of joint inspection by Estyn, CSSIW and HIW and others. This will help to put the spotlight on the effectiveness of joined-up delivery and local multi-agency delivery – in relation to key issues. This includes mental health services for children and the quality of childcare in the early years. The Welsh Assembly Government will be developing proposals (in conjunction with Estyn, CSSIW, HIW and others) to take this forward.
- (e) To highlight and disseminate good practice, identified not only through inspection but also from research and experience outside Wales. Views are invited on how best this can be achieved.
- (f) To focus with local delivery partners on what needs to be done to raise the skills of front line delivery staff.

Allied to this approach, we remain keen to encourage local shared budget arrangements. Given the current forecasts for pressures on public service spending, we need to explore creative ways to deliver more from the Welsh pound. The type of integrated joining up of delivery we are seeking provides opportunities to identify more efficient ways of working. As noted above, we will seek views on this approach (through a series of workshops) as part of the consultation process of the Child Poverty Strategy.

Children and Young People's Partnerships

Local authorities are well placed to provide the local leadership necessary to tackle child poverty and facilitate the creative local solutions needed to combat locally identified problems. Much of this work is facilitated and strengthened by the partnership arrangements that are already in place. The Children and Young People's Partnerships set up under the Children Act 2004 are the key vehicle for planning and delivery of services.

Children and Young People's Partnerships are central to ensuring a stronger focus on outcomes. Views from the Partnerships gathered as part of the consultation process will feed into the guidance for their next round of business planning for 2011-2014. Given timing, it is our intention to issue a form of interim guidance to Children and Young People's Partnerships in Spring 2010, with a further update issued in the light of the outcome of this consultation exercise.

To support our Child Poverty Delivery Plan we will:

- Conduct a programme of engagement with all relevant stakeholders on developing models for coherent support for families living in poverty, and on the alignment of performance management frameworks for education, health and social services.
- Issue proposals for establishing comparative data on the developmental outcomes of children living in poverty as they enter full time education – at the local authority level.
- Develop proposals to make much greater use of joint inspection by Estyn, CSSIW, HIW and others.

- As part of the guidance being prepared by the Assembly Government to inform the next round of CYP Plans, we will ensure that there is an increased emphasis on child poverty action. This guidance will support local authorities and their partners in complying with new legislative duties on child poverty under the Children and Families (Wales) Measure. An interim update will be issued in Spring 2010.
- The Childcare Act 2006 expands and clarifies the vital role Local Authorities play as strategic leaders in the provision of childcare locally. Section 22 gives Local Authorities a new duty to secure as far as is reasonably practicable provision of childcare that is sufficient to meet the requirements of parents in their area in order to enable them to work or undertake education or training leading to work. Section 26 of the Childcare Act gives Local Authorities a related duty to undertake childcare sufficiency assessments, which is a necessary step to securing sufficient provision, enabling Local Authorities to identify gaps and establish plans to meet the needs of parents. We are working to design a Childcare Sufficiency Assessment toolkit for use in Wales to address issues raised around data collection, consultation processes and action planning. The toolkit will provide a step by step guide for Local Authorities to produce the next Audit in April 2011.

Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010

Our vision is to ensure that tackling child poverty is at the top of everyone's agenda and that all partners are clear about the role they can play in improving the life chances of children and young people living in poverty. This is the rationale that underpinned the development of the **Children and Families (Wales) Measure** and also the **Joint Agreement on Child Poverty**.

The Children and Families (Wales) Measure was given Privy Council approval on 10 February 2010. The Measure provides the framework within which specified public bodies will be expected to demonstrate their commitment to tackling child poverty in Wales through the publication of child poverty strategies. Certain public bodies, notably Welsh Ministers and Local Authorities, will be required to choose objectives relating to the Broad Aims identified as being the most crucial in tackling child poverty. It is the intention to strengthen local partnership arrangements not duplicate effort and it is fully expected that local authorities and their key partners on the Children and Young People's Partnerships will fulfil the Measure duty on child poverty through those existing mechanisms.

For the remaining public bodies affected by the Measure duty on child poverty, they will be expected to choose objectives relating to one or more of the Broad Aims set out in the legislation. These public bodies include:

- Local Health Boards.
- Fire and Rescue Authorities.
- National Park Authorities.
- Countryside Council for Wales.

- Higher Education Funding Council for Wales.
- Public Health Wales National Service Trust.
- National Museum of Wales.
- Arts Council of Wales.
- National Library of Wales.
- Sports Council for Wales.

The new duties in the Children and Families (Wales) Measure recognise that all of the public agencies covered now have a responsibility to take action to tackle or ameliorate the effects of poverty on our children and young people. Many already have a strong record of achievement in this area, but by complying with the new legislation they will be able to demonstrate their commitment to the child poverty agenda and highlight the way in which they are contributing to our shared national mission to reduce child poverty in Wales.

We recognise that some public bodies will need help and guidance in order to fulfil the new duties being placed upon them and it is our intention to produce guidance to support compliance with the new duties.

Joint Agreement on Child Poverty

In March 2009, the Minister for Social Justice and Local Government launched the signing of the Joint Agreement on Child Poverty. The agreement was launched as a pre-cursor to the development of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure and allowed all public agencies in Wales to publicly demonstrate that they are prepared to work with the Assembly Government to tackle child poverty in Wales. This pledge is an important element of our vision of a national mission to end child poverty.

A number of organisations have signed the Joint Agreement or have expressed an interest in doing so.

To support our Child Poverty Delivery Plan we will:

- Promote the **Child Poverty Agreement** to harness widescale commitment to tackling child poverty across organisations in Wales including those not affected by the new duties under the Children and Families (Wales) Measure.
- Produce new guidance to inform the child poverty strategies to be published by other “Welsh Authorities” under the Children and Families (Wales) Measure.
- Provide financial and sponsorship support for the Save the Children-led **Child Poverty Solutions Wales** project. This will ensure that all the public agencies affected by the new child poverty duties under the Children and Families (Wales) Measure received the help and support necessary to understand the role they can play in tackling child poverty.

10.2 Joining up action across the Welsh Assembly Government

We recognise that as well as ensuring that our action on child poverty is joined up with our external partners, there is also a need to ensure that action across the Assembly Government itself is comprehensive and joined up.

The cross cutting nature of child poverty-related policy means that the action necessary to combat its causes and effects cut across a number of Ministerial portfolios and Assembly Government departments. This is a challenge that must be overcome if we are to fulfil our objective of presenting and delivering a joined up programme of action to reduce child poverty in Wales through the new child poverty strategy.

The importance we attach to joined up policy development and delivery is demonstrated through the **Cabinet Committee on Children and Young People**, chaired by the Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning & Skills, which ensures that cross-cutting responsibilities for children and young people, including responsibilities relating child poverty, are coordinated effectively across Government. A support group of senior officials from the relevant policy departments with a Ministerial Chair has been established to support the work of the Cabinet Committee.

To drive forward the delivery of key child poverty policies and programmes, there is also a Ministerial chaired **Child Poverty Delivery Group** comprising senior officials from across Assembly Government Departments. Its purpose is to:

- Examine and monitor the delivery of those policies and programmes likely to have the greatest impact on reducing child poverty in Wales.
- Monitor cross-Assembly Government action in taking forward specific 'One Wales' commitments aimed at tackling child poverty in Wales.
- Monitor the Assembly Government's progress in meeting its cross-cutting targets set out in "*Eradicating Child Poverty in Wales: Measuring Success*" (October 2006).
- Facilitate cross-Departmental action on child poverty and promote a cohesive strategy to reduce levels of child poverty in Wales.

Senior Assembly Government officials responsible for Departmental child poverty targets contained in "*Eradicating Child Poverty in Wales: Measuring Success*" are represented on the Delivery Group. The Delivery Group will be responsible for driving progress on the agreed policy commitments identified in the Child Poverty Strategy and Delivery Plan.

The **Child Poverty Unit**, situated within the Social Justice & Local Government Department, is responsible for co-ordinating the Assembly Government's policy response in relation to tackling child poverty, and supports the Minister for Children in his cross Departmental lead on child poverty. This includes the development of the Child Poverty Strategy and the new statutory requirement to keep the Strategy under review. The Unit is also responsible for mainstreaming child poverty issues across

Assembly Government policy and strategy. A multi-disciplined **Child Poverty Analytical Team** has also been established and has a key role in monitoring our child poverty targets and ensuring a strong evidence base for the Assembly Government's ongoing child poverty work.

Our **Child Poverty Expert Group**, established as a One Wales commitment in April 2008, provides expert knowledge and advice on the priorities and challenges that need to be addressed to tackle child poverty in Wales. Since 2008, the group has provided evidence based policy recommendations for consideration by Welsh Assembly Government Ministers and has played an instrumental part in shaping this Strategy and Delivery Plan. As part of its remit, the group will consider and comment on the progress of the Assembly Government in the attainment of its child poverty targets, including those set out in *"Eradicating Child Poverty in Wales – Measuring Success"*.

To support our Child Poverty Delivery Plan we will:

- Refocus the internal **Child Poverty Delivery Group** in order to measure and drive progress on the policy commitments included in the Child Poverty Delivery Plan.
- Ensure that we build upon the arrangements we have put in place in 2008 so that progress on our child poverty targets (and progress against the objectives in the Child Poverty Strategy) are visible and easily accessible.
- Continue to support the **Child Poverty Expert Group** and take into account its advice and recommendations on our policy action to tackle child poverty.

10.3 Working in Partnership with Community and Third Sector Partners

We recognise the importance of working in close partnership with our colleagues in the voluntary and community sector, particularly when striving to reduce the causes and effects of child poverty. The larger national childcare and family support organisations make a vital contribution. As key delivery partners on the ground, the voluntary sector has a critical role to play in reaching the most vulnerable families and ensuring that they receive the services and support to which they are entitled. This close co-operation with the voluntary sector will continue to be a fundamental element of our child poverty strategy. There are a plethora of individual projects operating across Wales led by the voluntary sector which are having a major positive effect on the lives of children and young people struggling to deal with the effects of living in poverty. We are committed to ensuring that this valuable work continues and forms an important element of our national drive to combat child poverty.

It is clear from an analysis of outcomes for children and young people across a range of areas (such as health and education) that children and young people living in the poorest parts of Wales experience disproportionate disadvantage. The impact of multiple deprivation on children and families living in Communities First areas means that a wide range of services need to be focussed to help lift these

communities out of deprivation. This evidence points to the need for our child poverty strategy to include both a universal element and a targeted approach.

We know that our Communities First Programme is already making a positive impact on the experiences of children and young people in our most disadvantaged communities. From the start, virtually every local partnership has made it their priority to support children and young people and the benefits can already be seen in numerous projects and activities. But there is more that can be done to ensure that this work is embedded throughout the programme so that its legacy is an improved future for children and young people in Wales. We are also increasing our emphasis on the need for other national programmes, agencies and services to prioritise needs of Communities First areas (referred to as Programme Bending). We have now established the Communities First “Outcomes Fund” to support this process.

We have also recognised that Communities First Partnerships need the right tools and information to help them understand the role they can play, or are already playing, in our shared agenda to reduce child poverty in Wales. In October 2009, we published new guidance – **Working with Children, Young People and Families** – which we hope will be a valuable resource to which Communities First Partnerships can turn for help and advice on what is a complex issue. The guidance was developed jointly with a range of individuals, partnerships, agencies and young people.

When Partnership arrangements are established locally it is essential that these are clear to Communities First Partnerships, Children and Young People’s Partnerships and all their partners, in how deprivation in these areas will be tackled.

Arrangements should cover:

- Having a named representative for Communities First Partnerships on the Children and Young People’s Partnership.
- Clear line of communication (both ways).
- Clear reporting and data sharing protocols.
- Shared understanding between Communities First Partnership and the Children and Young People’s Partnership of roles and responsibilities.

We have a strong record of working in partnership with the voluntary sector, underpinned by our statutory Voluntary Sector Scheme to which we remain fully committed. At the strategic level, and specifically on child poverty, the Minister for Social Justice and Local Government has established six monthly meetings with members of the End Child Poverty Network so that issues of concern can be shared and the sector kept up to date on government thinking and policy.

To support our Child Poverty Delivery Plan we will:

- Ensure that the guidance to Communities First Partnerships on tackling child poverty, “Working with Children, Young People and Families”, published in October 2009 is promoted and kept under review.
- Continue to develop further policies and guidance supporting Communities First areas and in, particular, the child poverty agenda in these areas.
- Support Communities First Partnerships so that they can take advantage of the necessary training and support on child poverty.
- Continue to meet regularly at a Ministerial level with the third sector (End Child Poverty Network in Wales) so that issues of concern can be discussed at a strategic level.

10.4 Working in Partnership with the UK Government

We have already put in place a mechanism through which we can work closely with the UK Government and our partners in the other devolved administrations on child poverty action. The Four Nations Child Poverty Forum meets on a quarterly basis and has proved an effective vehicle for sharing information and good practice. During 2009, the Forum has concentrated on preparations for the introduction of the Child Poverty Bill and the new duties to develop child poverty strategies. It is envisaged that in 2010 the focus will remain on strategy development including the need to ensure action across the UK is complementary. It will also be important to share information about the evidence base underpinning strategies.

To support our Child Poverty Delivery Plan we will:

- Use the **Four Nations Forum on Child Poverty** to work as a strong partnership with the UK Government and the other devolved administrations.
- Contribute to the development of **the UK Government child poverty strategy** and seek to influence policy in non-devolved areas to benefit children living in poverty in Wales.
- Monitor the impact of non-devolved policy on low income families in Wales and influence the UK Government, as appropriate, through formal and non-formal mechanisms.
- Nominate a member to represent Wales so that we have a strong voice on the proposed **UK Child Poverty Commission** that is intended to provide expert advice on the shape of the UK child poverty strategy.
- Share information that can be used to inform the UK Government’s report to Parliament on the progress being made in Wales on tackling child poverty.
- Share best practice and learning from the four UK nations on child poverty to support and inform the delivery of frontline interventions.

Chapter 11

The role of place

This is a child poverty strategy for the whole of Wales. It is focussed on reducing child poverty and improving outcomes for low income families, regardless of where they live. Indeed, evidence suggests that the strongest influences on children's outcomes are found in their parental and family circumstances rather than where they live. However, some areas experience multiple disadvantage.

On that basis, the new strategy will include a mix of policy commitments that are focused on improving the outcomes of children and families living in poverty across Wales, whilst recognising and responding to the challenge that exists when there are concentrations in particular areas and a high demand for services.

11.1 Rural areas

Defining rurality is a complex issue: We may have rural land, rural people, rural businesses and so on, and a definition that fits one of these types may not be appropriate for another.

Rural Wales has significant numbers of people living in poverty and deprivation. In contrast to many urban and valley communities, however, people living in poverty in rural Wales are dispersed over a much wider area. This (combined with the attractive and sometimes misleading concept of the “countryside idyll”) means that poverty and deprivation are often hidden.

The issues facing disadvantaged people in rural areas are generally the same as those living elsewhere in Wales – which include low income, unemployment, lack of childcare, lack of play and recreation areas and poor housing. However, access to services can be a particular problem for rural areas. Rising fuel costs will only serve to increase pressure on rural households, which are heavily reliant on fuel to travel and heat their homes. There is often a cost differential for providing services to rural areas, and this (coupled with the distances individuals may need to travel to make use of these services) presents a challenge to Government, the Third Sector and citizens at all levels. A deprived individual in a rural area may be doubly disadvantaged because of accessibility issues compared to an urban counterpart.

The One Wales agreement commits to meeting the needs of rural Wales, and tackling poverty and deprivation is central to the broader aims of improving quality of life and extending opportunity to every community in Wales. A specific pledge has been made in One Wales to help Local Authorities identify and address the particular issues affecting “deep rural” areas in Wales. The Wales Rural Observatory was commissioned to undertake extensive research to explore how residents experienced life in “deep rural” parts of Wales, with a focus on the strategies and mechanisms adopted with regard to service provision. The final report was published in December 2009, and will inform policy development across all areas. The Department of Rural Affairs is working closely with WAG departments, local authorities and other stakeholders to discuss the range of issues highlighted by the

report and consider how solutions could be achieved. This includes the Department for the Economy and Transport (see below).

To support our Child Poverty Strategy, we will:

- Rural proof all new Assembly Government policies, strategies and action plans to ensure rural circumstances and needs are considered in the design and delivery of policy.
- Continue to support young people as a priority target group, under Axes 3 and 4 of the Rural Development Plan 2007-2013.

11.2 Transport

The **Wales Transport Strategy** sets out our vision for sustainable transport. It identifies access to key sites and services as one of five strategic priorities. The **National Transport Plan** sets out how the Strategy will be delivered over the next five years and focuses on integrating our transport system and improving access. It contains commitments which are accompanied by a series of actions that will help to deliver a more sustainable, integrated and accessible transport system.

The National Transport Plan aims to make transport more sustainable. This means that all of the commitments are designed to work together to improve the social, environmental and economic impacts of transport. The Plan makes a number of commitments that are directly relevant to the Child Poverty Strategy and its Delivery Plan.

To support our Child Poverty Delivery Plan we will:

- Improve access to key sites and services. This commitment recognises that access is a critical issue facing people living in rural communities, and references the report by the Wales Rural Observatory on Deep Rural Localities (which acknowledges the need to enable residents to travel or gain access to essential services).
- Increase healthy and sustainable travel choices, including walking and cycling.
- Improve local bus services.
- Monitor progress on these commitments through a series of indicators linked to the Wales Transport Strategy.
- Continue to work with the UK Government on the development of the new **Road Safety Strategy** – which will include new targets for 2020.
- Actively promote our guidance on setting local speed limits in Wales, particularly outside facilities such as schools.
- Promote and support more use of 20mph zones in residential areas, in line with our guidance.
- Introduce new legislation to improve the safety of home to school transport.
- Maintain our **Safe Routes in Communities Programme**, to develop safer walking and cycling opportunities across Wales.

11.3 Concentrations of child poverty in Wales

The concentration of deprivation in certain areas in Wales can necessitate a focus on place and certain communities. Factors affecting deprived communities include a high demand for services, high crime rates, poor housing and low aspirations – which can compound a family’s experience of deprivation and make it more difficult for them to take steps out of poverty.

The need to provide whole community approaches to tackling the wider effects of poverty in areas of multiple disadvantage (and to develop and support communities in tackling child poverty) is crucial – particularly in terms of raising community aspirations. Furthermore, communities need to be supported to develop their own solutions to local issues in partnership with key service providers. In Wales, this is being taken forward through our **Communities First Programme**.

The needs of families and children living in Communities First areas and suffering multiple deprivation are complex. In tackling these complex issues, policies are likely to have the greatest impact when they deliver tailored support to the most disadvantaged people with minimal complexity; reflect local needs and priorities; are shaped through active engagement with stakeholders including service users; and are supported by the local community.

The Communities First Programme exists to provide local people with opportunities to play an active role in shaping the future of their community (Welsh Assembly Government 2009). Reducing child poverty is a dedicated theme within the Communities First Vision Framework – in order to increase the priority given to local action by Communities First Partnerships.

In planning actions to tackle child poverty (both at a community and local authority level) the needs and circumstances of local communities should be taken into account (for instance – when considering access to transport or childcare). Communities First Partnerships and Children and Young People’s Partnerships should work together to ensure activity is joined up and has the capacity to meet local levels of demand.

To support our Child Poverty Delivery Plan, we will:

- Continue to promote the infrastructure of Communities First Partnerships as a means of engaging with the hardest to reach individuals in the most deprived communities.
- Continue to support Communities First Partnerships in their key role of tackling child poverty in our most disadvantaged communities.
- Continue to develop a range of practical tools and policies to focus effort on these communities.

- Work with key service deliverers (and Departments within the Assembly Government) to support targeting at Communities First areas, and engagement with Communities First Partnerships. This process is referred to as *Programme Bending*.
- Use our increased focus on outcomes to ensure that children from Communities First areas are not disadvantaged at school because of where they live.
- Continue to support Communities First Partnerships in rural areas.

CHAPTER 12

Monitoring outcomes for children and young people living in poverty

The Welsh Assembly Government is committed to making a difference to the lives and life chances of children and young people living in poverty. An essential part of this commitment is making sure that appropriate monitoring arrangements are in place – that will allow us to track change over time in the experiences and outcomes of children and young people living in poverty. Specifically, monitoring outcomes will allow us (and our partners at the local level) to regularly assess whether progress has been made on a range of indicators around child poverty and wellbeing.

12.1 Evidencing outcomes at a national level

We established two key mechanisms in 2008 to provide us with robust arrangements for evidencing progress and monitoring outcomes **at a national level** for children and young people living in poverty in Wales. The first is the **Children and Young People's Wellbeing Monitor for Wales** (published for the first time on 20 November 2008). The second is the Statistical Bulletin **Eradicating Child Poverty in Wales: Child Poverty Milestones and Targets Update** (published for the first time in November 2008 and recently updated in November 2009).

The Children and Young People's Wellbeing Monitor for Wales

The Children and Young People's Wellbeing Monitor for Wales provides a high level perspective on different aspects of the wellbeing of children and young people and child poverty in Wales. The Monitor reports at an *all Wales level* and focuses on the seven core aims that underpin Welsh Assembly Government policy in relation to children and young people. The Monitor fulfils both a One Wales commitment and the UNCRC recommendation that state parties collect data "on persons under the age of 18 years for all areas covered by the Convention, including the most vulnerable groups".

The Monitor also reports on our child poverty 2010 milestones and 2020 targets set out in "*Eradicating Child Poverty in Wales – Measuring Success*" (October 2006) – but places them within the wider context of what else we know about children and young people's wellbeing in Wales.

The Monitor pulls together data from a variety of sources – including national surveys such as the Millennium Cohort Study; the Welsh Health Survey; and the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) study. It includes national statistics (published by the Welsh Assembly Government and ONS) on a range of different topics – including health, education, housing and workforce characteristics in Wales. It also includes key findings from relevant research that has a Wales focus.

The next Monitor is due to be published at the end of 2010. Thereafter, a Children and Young People's Wellbeing Monitor for Wales will be published every three years, to fit into the planning and reporting cycles for the Children and Young

People's Partnerships and their Plans. For the first time, the 2010 Monitor will include results from the new National Survey in Wales and its Children and Young People's Questionnaire. It will also respond to key "evidence gaps" identified by the 2008 Monitor – by including key findings from qualitative research with children and young people in Wales.

Statistical Bulletin Eradicating Child Poverty in Wales: Child Poverty Milestones and Targets Update

In 2008, we put in place arrangements to monitor progress against the child poverty milestones and targets set out in "*Eradicating Child Poverty by 2020: Measuring Success*" (October 2006).

We now publish an annual Statistical Bulletin to provide an assessment of progress made to date. In addition, there is a dedicated presence on the Statistics Wales website, so that data on these milestones and targets can be updated as and when it becomes available.

The child poverty milestones and targets cover four main policy areas:

- Income and Work.
- Education.
- Health.
- Housing.

In the main, the 31 milestones and targets were derived from existing targets and Departmental Strategic Plans – such as *The Learning Country 2* and the *Road Safety Strategy for Wales*.

As part of the monitoring arrangements put in place for the new (2010) Child Poverty Strategy – indicators such as educational attainment by socio-economic group will now complement the milestones and targets published in 2006. This is a key development – and one which allows us to assess progress against the essential Broad Aims which underpin the Child Poverty Strategy. This includes the extent to which the gap in certain outcomes – such as educational attainment amongst children living in poverty (and their better off peers) – is being narrowed, as well as retaining a focus on overall improvements.

UK Child Poverty Targets

As noted in Chapter 10 *Working in Partnership and Local Delivery*, the Child Poverty Act places a duty on the UK Secretary of State to meet four child poverty targets. These targets focus on relative poverty; material deprivation; absolute low income; and persistent poverty. The Child Poverty Act also places a duty on the UK Secretary of State to publish and lay an annual report before the UK parliament on these four child poverty targets, which will allow us to monitor and assess progress made to date at the UK level.

12.2 Evidencing outcomes at a local level

We are currently developing an **Outcome Measures Framework (OMF)** for local authorities and Children and Young People's Partnerships in Wales. The Framework will include a set of outcomes which link directly to the 13 Broad Aims of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure.

12.3 Outcomes agreements with local authorities

Also with the view to driving performance and delivering outcomes at the local levels, we will conclude outcome agreements with each local authority during 2010-11. These agreements will be structured around broad *One Wales* themes, with local authorities choosing outcomes within each theme to reflect particularly pressing local needs, and agreeing those with the Assembly Government.

We will include outcomes relating to reducing child poverty in the framework from which local authorities will select and develop their priorities.

12.4 Evidencing outcomes at the individual level

Demonstrating Success is a Welsh Assembly Government project that aims to develop a new approach to measuring the progress and outcomes of children in Wales. It is based on recognition that young people achieve far more through their involvement with programmes and policies than is currently measured by more traditional approaches (which tend to focus more on assessment and attainment measures).

The Demonstrating Success Model is developing a set of indicators, tools and guidelines for measuring young people's achievements, development and progress – in range of different settings. The indicators and tools will form a framework for capturing changes in the social and emotional disposition and skills (SEDS) of the individual.

A series of pilots has been established in Wales to test the content, presentation and practical application of methods for capturing the development of SEDS in young people between September 2009 and March 2010. As part of the pilots, a Demonstrating Success Draft Handbook is being tested. This contains information on the background to the Demonstrating Success Model; an introduction to the concept of Social and Emotional Disposition and Skills (SEDS); and a framework (as well as tools and guidance) for observing SEDS in young people.

CHAPTER 13

Evaluation of the 2010 Child Poverty Strategy for Wales

This chapter outlines Welsh Assembly Government plans to develop a robust evaluation approach for the 2010 Child Poverty Strategy. In so doing, it sets out an **evaluation framework** for the new Child Poverty Strategy for the period 2010 to 2013. This framework provides us with a foundation for measuring the impacts of the new Child Poverty Strategy – within the overall aim of reducing the number of children and young people living in poverty in Wales, and improving their experiences and life chances.

The evaluation framework for the new Child Poverty Strategy for Wales builds on research and analysis taken forward by the Welsh Assembly Government's Social Research Division. This work was carried out in 2009, and involved a review of existing evaluations of key Welsh Assembly Government programmes that contribute to the child poverty agenda in Wales. In parallel with this work, an external contractor (Professor Edward Melhuish from Birkbeck College) was commissioned to develop an overarching framework for the evaluation of child poverty initiatives in Wales. Key findings from these two inter-related strands of work are highlighted below.

13.1 A review of Welsh Assembly Government evaluations of programmes that contribute to the child poverty agenda in Wales

One Wales included a commitment to conduct a “robust evaluative review of the outcomes of existing anti-poverty programmes in Wales”. In order to inform the development of the new Child Poverty Strategy for Wales, it was agreed that the review would focus initially on anti-poverty programmes for children and young people in Wales.

The review involved gathering information on existing evaluations of anti-poverty programmes for children and young people in Wales, and highlighting key (and/or emerging) findings. A synthesis report was produced by the Social Research Division of the Welsh Assembly Government which highlights the extent to which there is evidence that anti-poverty programmes in Wales are having an impact on outcomes for children and young people.

The main conclusion of the synthesis work is that there is currently limited information about the impact of Welsh Assembly Government programmes on child poverty. This is because:

- It is too soon to assess the impacts of many child poverty programmes and initiatives in Wales.
- Not all evaluations of child poverty initiatives are focusing on outcomes for children and young people. Several evaluations are focused on programme implementation, and have yet to report on outcomes.
- A number of programmes have not been evaluated.

There are, however, a small number of evaluations which **are** looking at the impact of programmes on reducing child poverty and improving outcomes. These include the evaluations of programmes such as Flying Start, Genesis Wales and Want2Work – which will help us develop future approaches for the evaluation of other child poverty initiatives (see below).

13.2 Developing an overarching framework for the evaluation of child poverty initiatives in Wales

Developing an overarching evaluation framework for child poverty programmes and initiatives in Wales has a number of long-term benefits. In particular, the evaluation framework for the new Child Poverty Strategy will:

- Help us to assess how well our policies are producing outcomes which reduce child poverty within Wales.
- Help to improve our understanding of how our policies are working together to tackle child poverty.
- Help us to make informed judgments about changes needed to improve the way we tackle poverty.
- Provide a model for cross-cutting evaluation which can be applied to other Assembly Government priorities.
- Help to increase knowledge around social inequality and the role of public services.

In addition to the above, the evaluation of programmes is an important part of the “good administration” of public services – not least because it can provide evidence to inform decision-making and practice. Crucially, it can also contribute to making services outcome-oriented and provide evidence for accountability and the efficacy of services.

13.3 Taking this work forward

Over the next few months, we will be considering the recommendations made by Professor Melhuish – on the development of an evaluation framework for the new Child Poverty Strategy. There are four key recommendations which we could potentially take forward in the short term. These are:

- The evaluation evidence needed for programmes and initiatives relevant to the Child Poverty Strategy should be reviewed. This should be done as soon as possible in order to strengthen the development of an appropriate evidence base as soon as possible. A key issue is whether the existing or planned evaluation work is sufficient, or whether further studies are needed and what the nature of those might be. For instance, there might be a study to investigate how key Assembly Government programmes are contributing to child poverty indicators individually **and** holistically.

- Work should be undertaken to further develop an integrated suite of “logical frameworks” for the new child poverty strategy – centered around clear, evidence-based assumptions about the links between individual programmes, groups of programmes, and outcomes for children and young people.
- The international evidence should be considered for lessons that may contribute to the development of child poverty policy in Wales. This evidence should be used as part of the evaluation of individual programmes to assess the extent to which evidence of “*what works*” internationally in the design and implementation of effective programmes is being followed in Wales.
- Consideration should be given to how individual programmes and initiatives are being delivered and (then) improved continually, in order to ensure programmes to work more effectively.

A series of other recommendations were also made by Professor Melhuish, and these will be considered by the Child Poverty Analytical Team in 2010. In particular, consideration will be given to establishing a series of research reports on existing evaluations and statistical work linked to the Child Poverty Strategy. This set of reports could be brought together in a summary synthesis report, which could pull together high level indicators of child poverty and wellbeing (as well as progress in relation to the impacts of key individual programmes). Together this would constitute a cross-cutting evaluation of the new Child Poverty Strategy as a whole.

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ANNEX 1

Rationale and evidence for the Child Poverty Strategy's Broad Aims and key policy priorities

This Annex sets out the evidence around why it is important for the Welsh Assembly Government (and its partners) to focus on the Broad Aims set out in the Children and Families (Wales) Measure. It also provides a rationale for the specific policy areas identified for Welsh Assembly Government action. The **Broad Aims** and **priority policy actions** have been summarised in Table 3.1 of the Child Poverty Strategy. For the purpose of this Annex, we have mapped across each of the 13 Broad Aims to the Assembly Government's seven core aims for children and young people.

1.1 No child or young person is disadvantaged by poverty

The Broad Aims of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure relevant to this core aim are:

- **To increase the income of households containing children so that, as far as reasonably practicable, none are poor.**
- **To ensure that, so far as reasonably practicable, children living in poor households are not materially deprived.**
- **To promote and facilitate paid employment for low-income parents.**
- **To provide low-income parents with the skills needed for paid employment.**
- **To help young people take advantage of employment opportunities.**

As set out in the 2008 Children and Young People's Wellbeing Monitor for Wales, children and young people who grow up in poverty are more likely than others to live in poorer housing and more deprived neighbourhoods; to suffer poor health; to have behavioural problems; and to underachieve at school. As they get older, children living in poverty are more likely to become parents at a young age, to have low skills, to be low-paid or unemployed, and to die younger.

There is a growing body of evidence from many countries that links poverty in childhood to serious material, cultural and social disadvantage – both immediate and long-term. These inequalities in the quality of childhood and in later life outcomes are stark. Furthermore, they are distinct from those arising within the conventional equality domains of gender, disability, ethnicity, sexuality, age and religion.

There are many reasons why some children do not have a happy, healthy and fulfilling childhood and later fail to realise their full potential as adults. But it is widely accepted, and substantiated by the evidence, that living in poverty is the most important reason – and this is why both the UK and Assembly Government place so much emphasis on eradicating child poverty. The Assembly Government believes that work, at adequate pay rates and for sufficient hours each week, is the main

route out of poverty for most people and their families. In addition, this is seen as their main protection against falling into poverty – whilst acknowledging that for some parents (particularly when their children are very young), doing paid work may not be in the child's best interests or may not be a realistic option.

Whether working or not working, the Assembly Government's Child Poverty Strategy will concentrate on helping all poor families to claim the state benefits and services to which they are entitled. The Strategy will also focus on plans currently in place to boost financial capability and access to mainstream financial services and affordable finance; to make it easier to get high-quality debt advice; and to provide targeted help to the fuel poor.

In addition, we will make it easier for parents who are not in work to get the skills, high-quality childcare and flexible working they need to enable them to work, and to find out about job vacancies in the first place. In addition, parents in work, yet still in poverty – a group which accounts for around one half of all poor children in Wales – will be helped to earn more and to sustain their place in the labour market through greater access to job-related training and skills development. These commitments are set out as a series of specific priorities for action – summarised in Table 3.1 of the Child Poverty Strategy.

1.2 Providing a flying start in life

The Broad Aim of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure relevant to this core aim is:

To support parenting of children.

Parenting that is warm and supportive facilitates the development of strong and secure relationships. Conversely, parenting which is harsh and neglectful increases the risk of poor outcomes for children. The evidence linking good parenting with positive cognitive outcomes is substantial. There is also evidence that poor parenting is a determinant of behavioural problems in children.

Crucially, when measures of parental confidence and competence are taken into account, differences in child outcomes between richer and poorer families are no longer statistically significant. In essence, parents on low incomes who are confident and able are as effective (in terms of the outcomes of their children) as those parents on a high income. However, parents living in poverty are more likely than more affluent parents to be facing a range of issues (other than material deprivation) which may affect the home environment.

There is strong evidence to support the Family Stress Model, which suggests that economic stress affects childhood adjustment indirectly through family processes. The stress experienced by parents in poverty is partly responsible for differential child outcomes. However, this process should not be seen as deterministic, as there is good evidence to show that most parents living in poverty are resilient.

Parental involvement has a significant effect on child development outcomes even after all other factors (such as maternal education and poverty) have been taken into account. For example, the home learning environment is a strong predictor of attainment at age 10. The frequency of mother-child interactions, the quality of the home learning environment, and greater use of outside activities are significantly related to measures of child motor development.

The evidence on effective initiatives and support mechanisms that aim to improve child outcomes by improving parenting practice can be split into three groups.

Supporting parents: These initiatives aim to promote parental skills around supervision, boundary setting and communication. They are able to demonstrate positive outcomes for parent-child relationships and long term benefits for health, social and psychological functioning into adult life. Features of programmes that have worked include high attention to implementation issues to promote attendance and lasting engagement; interactive methods of teaching; and initiatives that are practically-focussed.

Changing emotional and behavioural outcomes for children: Evidence shows that programmes that use cognitive behavioural methods are effective in reducing children's emotional and behavioural problems, and increasing parental confidence and enjoyment in their children. The features of programmes that have worked for early intervention for conduct problems typically involve behavioural training on an individual or group basis, and age-appropriate methods taking account of children's developmental stage.

Enhancing children's educational outcomes: These are designed to influence children's self confidence as learners through parental involvement and, thereby, their levels of attainment and aspiration. Such interventions typically promote educational competence and home-school links, but the specified outcomes can vary depending on the age of the child. Programmes that have worked typically involve intensive two-generational programmes involving multiple components, and training parents in specific techniques and skills to help their children read.

1.3 Access to education, training and learning opportunities

The Broad Aims of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure relevant to this core aim are:

To reduce inequalities in educational attainment between children.

To help young people participate effectively in education and training.

Pupils who attain qualifications at school are more likely to go on to Further Education (FE), Higher Education (HE) and training. Adults with higher educational attainment are more likely to be in work, earn more, and have a higher socio-economic status (SES). They are also less likely to live in poverty than those with lower educational attainment. Recent estimates suggest that half of the inequality in lifetime earnings is due to factors determined by the age of 18. In

summary, children and young people who do well at school are more likely to go on to live longer, healthier and happier lives than those who do not.

There is strong evidence of a relationship between pupils from more deprived backgrounds and low attainment at all levels in school. This relationship is particularly marked for White British pupils, and is established when children are young. Early attainment is a strong predictor of future attainment. Children not gaining qualifications at school are more likely to be dependent on benefits as adults. Low levels of employment and social exclusion are linked to crime and anti-social behaviour.

A key indicator of participating effectively in education is attending school. There is evidence to suggest that pupils who are absent or excluded from school disproportionately come from disadvantaged backgrounds. Not attending school is strongly linked with low attainment. Young people who have been excluded from school due to poor behaviour and truancy tend to have a lower SES, less stable careers, and greater unemployment, compared to others from a similar background who have not been excluded.

Effective initiatives and support mechanisms that aim to reduce inequalities in educational attainment include pre-school and early year interventions. Support for the development of a good home learning environment, as well as parent up-skilling and focused support for literacy or numeracy is particularly important. Evidence suggests that early years interventions are the most cost-effective and offer the best return on the investment. However, any early years investment must also be followed up with later investment.

In school, personalised approaches to teaching and learning are important, along with programmes to raise aspirations; services and support targeted directly at individual children's needs; and initiatives that bring the home and school closer (through out-of-hours clubs, parent classes and outreach work).

An emphasis on school transition points and helping parents to support children through the various phases of education (e.g. from primary to secondary education) is also needed, along with after-school programmes and mentoring programmes for school-age children and adolescents; and programmes to improve the health of women of childbearing age. Family-based multi-agency support that encompasses health, education and social services are also likely to be effective.

Effective initiatives that aim to help children and young people to participate in education and training opportunities include the provision of incentives to stay in education beyond the age of 16; programmes to raise levels of college attendance by young people from low-income families; and the extension of targeted interventions aimed at reducing the direct and indirect costs of learning for selected groups of adult learners (19+).

It is important to note that very little is known about how financial factors affect learners in the post 16 environment. This is partly because financial factors are difficult to untangle from other factors (such as SES or prior attainment) and partly due to the way in which policy interventions have been rolled out.

Furthermore, there is unlikely to be a “one size fits all” approach to raising levels of low educational attainment. Whilst poverty is linked to low attainment, it is not clear how this pathway operates. For example, a child may be exposed to multiple risks to their development and not just poverty. There is also the concept of risk and resilience: Just because a child is born into a low-income home does not necessarily mean that they will not go on to become a high achiever. They may show the resilience to overcome their early disadvantage.

1.4 Every child and young person should enjoy the best possible physical, mental, social and emotional health and is free from abuse, victimisation and exploitation

The Broad Aim of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure relevant to this core aim is:

To reduce inequalities in health between children and between their parents, so far as necessary to ensure children’s wellbeing.

Inequalities in health across different socio-economic groups have persisted despite increased policy attention. A range of risk factors, including poverty in childhood, have been associated with negative health and wellbeing outcomes in both the short term and over the lifespan.

For example, smoking rates are higher among lower socio-economic groups, increasing exposure for children in these groups. Reducing the number of mothers who smoke during pregnancy will have positive impacts on the levels of low birth weight babies, and also impact on asthma and wheezing among young children. There are also socio-economic differences in breast feeding rates, such that children born into poverty are less likely to be breast fed and thus receive the health benefits arising from that. Injuries remain the leading cause of death in children and young people, and those from the most deprived communities in Wales are more likely to suffer an accident. There are also differentials in the rates of teenage pregnancy, smoking and alcohol consumption in children and young people from different socio-economic groups.

In addition to the lifestyle factors mentioned above, social determinants of health have a significant impact on inequalities in health. The health care system is one of the social determinants of health, both influencing and being influenced by the other social determinants. A greater focus on equity, disease prevention and health promotion can have a positive impact. Similarly, good employment and working conditions have powerful positive effects on health, providing not only financial security, but also social status, personal development, social relations and self-esteem (as well as protection from physical and psychosocial hazards). For those that are not in employment or who experience specific shocks, such as illness, disability or loss of income, social protection programmes need to be set at a level that is sufficient for healthy living. Housing conditions and area deprivation are also linked to adverse child health outcomes.

As will be clear from the other core aims, health is (and should be seen as being) a relevant consideration in all policies. Every aspect of government and the economy can impact on health and health equity, and a holistic and cross-cutting approach is critical. Attention should be paid to inequities in health rather than inequalities, as the focus for policy needs to be on those inequalities that are avoidable. Health services are universal and as such, it is difficult to deny access to health improvement programmes to higher socio-economic groups. However, steps can be taken for programme bending, so that there is increased emphasis on targeting policies and programmes at, for example, Communities First areas.

The Broad Aims outlined under each of the core aims in the Child Poverty Strategy demonstrate the cross cutting approach taken to child poverty and all have the potential to impact on inequity in health.

1.5 All children have access to play, leisure, cultural and sporting activities

The Broad Aim of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure relevant to this core aim is:

To reduce inequalities in participation in cultural, sporting and leisure activities between children and between parents of children (so far as necessary to ensure the well-being of their children).

Children from low income families often miss out on leisure, cultural and sporting activities, such as after-school clubs, school trips and inviting friends for tea. Attendance at arts events and participation in music is also lower. This is partly (but not entirely) due to cost.

Access to activities in an education setting is also affected by lack of money. Recent research has highlighted the “costs of education” and the potential stigma attached to not having enough money to pay for school uniform, school trips, reading and learning materials, and extracurricular activities. Evidence suggests that there is potential for children and young people from poorer backgrounds to become disengaged from education – particularly if they are unable to participate fully in school life, and the potential stigma that this may bring.

Play is also important: Early enhanced play experiences may have a lasting effect on a child’s development. Whilst young people in disadvantaged areas do not play significantly less than their counterparts, they tend to have fewer safe places to play and live near more dangerous road environments. The availability of outdoor space is seen as particularly important by young people. Problems with social contact may be reinforced where children live in areas with few accessible spaces, safe areas to play and unaffordable leisure facilities.

Physical activity (of which sport is a key part) has a number of benefits, including tackling and reducing obesity. Participation in sport and physical activity can promote physical literacy; develop social skills; and can aid creative intelligence, physical development and fitness. Furthermore, a lack of activity in childhood can contribute

to inactivity as an adult. There is evidence that children in disadvantaged areas are less likely to participate in sport or exercise than their counterparts in non-disadvantaged areas. Evidence also indicates that gender plays a significant part, with boys more likely than girls to participate in sport and cultural activities.

In terms of interventions to promote physical activity, there is strong evidence that school-based interventions (with involvement of the family or community), and multi-component interventions, can increase physical activity in adolescents. However, limited evidence has been found for an effect from interventions targeting children from low-socio-economic populations.

In broader terms, the following interventions have been demonstrated to be effective in one or more studies relating to improving children and young people's physical activity: Education and provision of equipment for monitoring TV or video-game use; engaging parents in supporting and encouraging their children's physical activity and providing opportunities for family participation; multi-component, multi-site interventions using a combination of education in the classroom; improvements in school Physical Education; extended schooling and out of hours activities; and home-based activities.

In the light of the evidence reviewed above, adopting policies that aim to reduce the cost of sport, arts and cultural activities, but also attempt to promote their use and to change cultural attitudes towards particular activities amongst children and parents with low incomes may well be effective. In particular, improving participation is likely to benefit children and young people from low income families – by stimulating development and learning, improving a wide range of skills, and contributing to improved health outcomes.

1.6 All children are listened to, treated with respect and have their race and cultural identity recognised

The Broad Aim of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure relevant to this core aim is:

To help young persons participate effectively and responsibly in the life of their community.

Academics working in the area of children's rights have identified key outcomes of children and young people's participation as being community change and improved quality of life. At the heart of the rationale for engaging children and young people in their community is that it can lead to having race, gender and cultural identity recognised. This can subsequently lead to better outcomes such as raised aspirations and educational and economic benefits.

For instance, young people from low-income families participate in fewer out-of-school activities than those from more affluent homes. Participation in such activities can provide alternative opportunities than school, for young people to develop positive and focused educational relationships with adults and peers. Improving participation in out-of-school activities for children and young people from

low-income families may also lead to improved engagement in school and educational outcomes. There is also some evidence that community participation may lead to re-engagement, particularly for young people in danger of being not in employment, education or training (NEET).

It is well established that young people's aspirations, and those of their parents, influence their educational attainment and later life outcomes. The 11 to 14 age range is crucial and is when young people move from idealistic to more to realistic ambitions. Young people are more likely to achieve positive outcomes when they develop ambitious achievable aspirations – combined with the self-esteem, self-efficacy, information and inspiration they need to persevere towards their goals. Aspirations vary by gender, ethnicity, social class and area. Whilst parents are the most important influence on children, young people and their parents are also influenced by the people and places where they live. Communities matter.

However, young people in certain types of neighbourhood are less likely to develop ambitious achievable aspirations. Such neighbourhoods tend to have high levels of deprivation. However, deprived communities are not all the same. Young people in some very deprived communities have high aspirations. Nonetheless, certain community characteristics are associated with low aspirations. These characteristics include close knit social networks, a sense of isolation from broader opportunities, and a history of economic decline. High levels of bonding, social capital and low levels of bridging social capital can restrict young people's horizons and access to opportunities. These communities often have lower levels of educational attainment than might be expected, given their level of deprivation. This suggests that engagement alone – or indeed some types of engagement – is not sufficient to counter poverty. Rather, evidence suggests that a locally-tailored behavioural change approach could be effective in shifting attitudes, changing behaviours and improving outcomes. The idea here is that in order to be most effective, participation needs to be coupled with mobilising the community around the goal of doing the best for their young people – through constructive local partnership working.

It is widely recognised that to increase children's participation there are likely to be a number of dilemmas, tensions and barriers. These include the current legislative and structural models for reaching out to a broad array of children (to inform different levels of community and government decisions); and the need to identify how structures of community and civil governance may need to be changed (along with the way organisations support children and parents as partners to accommodate children on their own terms).

In more practical terms, a number of factors need to be addressed in policies and practice relating to children and young people's participation. These include the importance of working on children's participation in settings where children are already engaged; creating environments in which children are invited to participate and feel comfortable participating; the importance of adult attitudes and the role of adults as mentors; and ensuring the basic characteristics of good participation are specified and observed.

It is also recognised that to be most effective, the culture of participation in a particular community or nation may need to be aligned with children's own cultures,

identities and tastes. This reminds us that to recognise children's own gender, race and culture is not only a desirable outcome but also a critical component of the process of encouraging participation within a particular context.

1.7 All children and young people have access to a safe home and community which supports physical and emotional wellbeing

The Broad Aims of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure relevant to this core aim are:

To ensure that all children grow up in decent housing.

To ensure that all children grow up in safe and cohesive communities.

It is well established that living in poor quality housing can be detrimental to children and young people's health and wellbeing, with effects lasting well into the future. Huge improvements have been made in recent years to the quality of the housing stock and most Welsh households are now well-housed, but some children, particularly those in poverty, suffer serious harm from the dwellings they live in and from those they live with and around. The clearest harms are caused by exposure to toxins such as lead, radon, carbon monoxide and cigarette smoke. Lead poisoning, usually because of lead water pipes, can affect children's neurological development and lead to lowered IQ, and can even occur in the womb. Carbon monoxide poisoning is fast-acting and often fatal, while inhaling cigarette smoke can lead to serious illness and death many years later.

Dust mites and moulds create another class of hazard, inducing allergenic reactions such as asthma. Children living in damp and mouldy houses are more likely than others to suffer respiratory problems, diarrhoea and headaches, vomiting and sore throats. There is also evidence, of varying strength, associating living in overcrowded conditions to a range of problems for children, including respiratory and stomach conditions, TB infection in deprived areas, mental health and social and emotional development. Many of these problems are compounded for children living in temporary accommodation or who are homeless, and are clearly related to parents' poverty.

Alongside these direct health effects, which make some housing unsafe for children to live in, homes act as a conduit to experiences and opportunities in the wider community, which every child needs to develop well – physically, emotionally and socially. Inaccessibility to outdoor play has been found to contribute to pre-school children's distress and behavioural problems, and the physical risks that children face outdoors vary greatly between generally deprived areas and more affluent areas. Children living in deprived areas have been estimated to be three times more likely to be hit by a car than children in other areas, and there are also important differences in air quality and noise levels. Overall, children in the worst quality, including least safe, housing and the most deprived areas are the least likely to enjoy many of the facilities and opportunities they really need within or outside the home.

The problems described above call for many kinds of policies – to improve the physical characteristics of newbuild and existing dwellings and of neighbourhoods, ‘designing out’ or remedying some of the problems; to raise the incomes of poor parents, including through helping them into work and ensuring that all eligible state benefits are claimed; to prevent homelessness and respond effectively if children become homeless; to encourage improvements in parental behaviour, so that, for example, children are not subject to passive smoking. The Assembly Government is active across each of these dimensions, and major improvements to the quality and safety of Welsh housing have been made in recent years and are continuing to be made, with sustained commitment shown to improve the most deprived localities, often composed mainly of social housing.