

Children in Wales APPG – Parliamentary Briefing Event

Chair: Gill German MP

Date: 10 June 2025

Location: Residence Room 1, Palace of Westminster

1. Welcome and Introductions

Gill German MP, Chair of the Children in Wales APPG, opened the meeting by welcoming attendees and speakers. She noted her previous role involvement with Children in Wales prior to working in local council and becoming the MP for Clwyd North.

MPs and Peers in attendance:

- Baroness Anita Gale of Blaenrhondda (Labour)
- Baroness Carmen Smith of Llanfaes (Plaid Cymru)
- Lord Leslie Griffiths of Burry Port (Labour)
- Gill German MP (Clwyd North, Labour), APPG Chair
- Andrew Ranger MP (Wrexham, Labour), APPG Officer
- Steve Witherden MP (Montgomeryshire & Glyndwr, Labour) & Chair of the APPG for Education
- Llinos Medi MP (Ynys Mon, Plaid Cymru)
- Staff from the offices of Alex Barros-Curtis MP (Cardiff West, Labour) and Claire Hughes MP (Bangor Aberconwy, Labour)

Guest Speakers:

- Hugh Russell – CEO, Children in Wales
- Sean O'Neill – Policy Director, Children in Wales
- Luke Young – Head of Policy, Citizens Advice Wales
- Amy Bainton – Senior Policy & Public Affairs Lead, Barnardo's Cymru
- Melanie Simmonds – Head of Save the Children Wales

2. Presentations

Children in Wales – Hugh Russell & Sean O'Neill

- Children in Wales is the national umbrella organisation for children's rights and wellbeing in Wales.
- Advocates for the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and a Wales where all children's rights are fulfilled.
- Core work includes:
 - Policy and campaign work, especially via networks such as the End Child Poverty Network Cymru
 - Professional learning and training for the children's workforce

- Participation projects through Young Wales
- Cross-sector representation (public, private, and third sectors)
- Focus on child poverty, noting Wales has the highest child poverty rate of the UK nations – 31% of children live in relative poverty after housing costs.
- Called for legally binding poverty reduction targets and reform of the social security system, which is currently reserved to the UK Government.
- Emphasised collaboration across governments and agencies.

Ref - [Children in Wales | Putting children at the heart of our work](#)

Child & Family Poverty Report (2025) - [Children in Wales | Child Poverty](#)

Local Poverty Statistics (2025) – Loughborough University & End Child Poverty (2025) [Local Child Poverty Statistics - End Child Poverty](#)

Intergenerational Foundation: A Growing Divide (2025) - [A-growing-divide-two-decades-of-intergenerational-unfairness-interactive.pdf](#)

Contact– Hugh.Russell@childreninwales.org.uk & Sean.oneill@childreninwales.org.uk

Citizens Advice Wales – Luke Young

- Almost half of those receiving debt advice in Wales are in a negative budget, many of them families with children.
- Significant proportion of support goes to single-parent households and families with young children.
- Advocated for:
 - Ending the two-child limit and benefit cap
 - Uprating Local Housing Allowance
 - Rethinking disability benefit reforms
- Emphasised that 75% of families in poverty are in working households.
- Urged a broader view of poverty that includes life opportunities, not just income thresholds.

Ref: [Wales - Citizens Advice](#)

Pathways to Poverty (2025) [Pathways to Poverty: How planned cuts to disability benefits will impact the people we support](#)

Unravelling Household Costs (2025) [Unravelling household costs: summary of Citizens Advice engagement work for the Child Poverty Strategy - Citizens Advice](#)

Barnardo's Cymru – Amy Bainton

- Works with over 11,000 children and families across Wales through 50+ services.
- Increasing need for emergency support for basic items (bedding, utensils, energy).
- Research with the Bevan Foundation showed:
 - 43% of parents fear worse futures for their children

- Over 50% of children lack confidence in achieving their goals
- Called for a Welsh Child Payment Scheme (similar to Scotland's model) to directly support families.

Ref - [Barnardo's Cymru/Wales | Barnardo's](#)

Ending Poverty in Early Years (2024) - [Ending poverty in early years - Bevan Foundation](#)

Contact - amy.bainton@barnardos.org.uk

Save the Children Wales – Melanie Simmonds

- Focused on empowering children, families, and communities to end child poverty.
- Shared findings from a co-designed participatory project with children ("Power of Voice").
- Children voiced their hopes, as well as the impact poverty has had on their aspirations and mental health.
- Outlined four key calls to action:
 1. Ensure access to support
 2. Expand opportunities for young people
 3. Promote positive relationships and reduce stigma
 4. Create space for young voices in policymaking

Ref - [Wales | Save the Children UK](#)

[Power of Voice \(2025\)](#)

3. Q&A and Member Contributions

Gill German MP

- Highlighted the complexity and opportunity of devolution in tackling child poverty.
- Emphasised the importance of changing child poverty figures, not just mitigating their impact.

Llinos Medi MP

- Stressed the need for accessible services and strong transport links, especially in rural areas.
- Highlighted the link between service access and child poverty.

Andrew Ranger MP

- Urged a focus on root causes, including infrastructure and intergenerational cycles of poverty.

Baroness Carmen Smith

- Called for intergenerational fairness in social security.
- Emphasised that children and young people are currently being left behind.

Luke Young (Citizens Advice)

- Pointed out the overlap between pensioner poverty and child poverty.
- Emphasised need for leadership and ambition in addressing child poverty at the UK level.

Hugh Russell (Children in Wales)

- Reinforced the message that investing in social security is key to meaningful prevention.

4. Actions and Next Steps

- Members to consider ways to support a cross-government strategy on child poverty
- Continued engagement with Welsh Government's child poverty strategy process
- Ongoing support and coordination with sector organisations and networks
- Date of next meeting to be confirmed

Secretariat

[Children in Wales](#) acts as the group's secretariat
[Children in Wales | All Party Parliamentary Group on Children in Wales](#)