

END CHILD POVERTY NETWORK CYMRU
RHWYDWAITH DILEU TLODI PLANT CYMRU

Senedd Elections – Child Poverty: A Manifesto towards Eradication 2021



Children in Wales
Plant yng Nghymru

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

Steering Group members include:

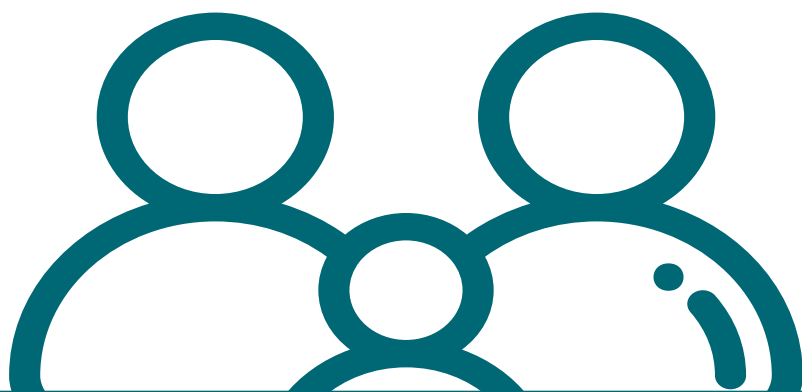
Action for Children
Barnardo's Cymru
Children in Wales
Child Poverty Action Group
Citizens Advice
National Energy Action Wales
NSPCC Cymru
Oxfam Cymru
Public Health Wales
Save the Children Wales
Shelter Cymru
The Buttle Trust
The Children's Society
The Prince's Trust Cymru
University of Wales Trinity Saint David

Observers:

The Welsh Local Government Association
The Wales Trades Union Congress
The Office of the Children's Commissioner for Wales

The End Child Poverty Network Cymru is co-ordinated by Children in Wales
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February 2021



The End Child Poverty Network Cymru remain deeply concerned that levels of child poverty in Wales remain stubbornly high and predicted to sharply increase in the near future, with many more children and their families struggling to meet basic everyday costs and needs. Many children will have found their situations considerably worsened as a direct result of the economic impact of COVID 19, with the emergency serving to exacerbate pre-existing inequalities.

Pre Covid-19 figures show that over [28%](#) of children were living in relative income poverty, and in some constituencies this figure rises to a [1/3](#) of all children. Close to half of all children in some electoral wards are said to be living in poverty. Independent reports estimate that there could be at least [50,000](#) more Welsh children in poverty by 2021. With unprecedented demand for emergency food parcels, growing levels of unemployment and fears around increased debt, financial hardship is very likely to have further increased by the time of the Senedd Elections in May.

All children have a right to an adequate standard of living under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), and all children should have a say in decisions which will affect them. We believe that Wales could and should do more within the power the next Welsh government will have at their disposal.

We believe that preventing and tackling child poverty should be key priorities for the next Welsh Government and for all political parties in the next Senedd term.

We are calling for the following actions:

1. Building on the statutory child poverty duties prescribed through the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010, the next Welsh Government should publish a revised **Child Poverty Strategy with Delivery Plan**, with clear measureable and ambitious milestones, supported by transparent monitoring arrangements.
2. Many children are going hungry during the school day. The next Welsh Government should increase the eligibility threshold for **Free School Meals** to ensure that all children whose parents are in receipt of Universal Credit are entitled during the school term and throughout the school holidays, and take steps towards universal entitlement for all.
3. The **Childcare system** is not fulfilling its full potential, with barriers prevailing in relation to sufficiency, accessibility, quality and cost. The next Welsh Government should ensure that all children have access to high quality childcare, as part of a coherent and integrated system, with the eligibility criteria for the Childcare Offer and Flying Start childcare widened to ensure that all children in poverty can access free childcare.
4. Establish a **Welsh Benefit System**, as a single point of access for assistance, to help address some of the shortcomings with the approach taken in Wales to financially support low-income families.
5. Ensure that existing statutory duties placed upon relevant **public bodies** to tackle child poverty through the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act are being sufficiently delivered, and that robust monitoring arrangements are in place to assess the quality and implementation of local Well-Being Plans.
6. All Welsh Government **budgetary decisions** should be fully child poverty proofed, with child rights impact assessments undertaken and published, setting out the impact of decisions on children in low income households.
7. Adequately resource and scale up existing **national programmes** and services, such as Flying Start, which have been effectively evaluated and which deliver positive outcomes for our poorest children.
8. Strengthen the interface between the **equality and child poverty** policy agendas by ensuring that programmes are placing a sufficient focus on the needs of children with protected characteristics, and aligned to the Socio Economic Duty under Part 1 of the Equality Act.
9. A commitment to ensuring that all primary and secondary aged children have access to a **personal computer** of their own to access and complete school work, and that all households, have safe digital broadband connections.
10. Ensure that replacement funding for exiting European programmes are at sufficient levels, and effectively targeted to provide lasting benefits for children in low income households.

The next Welsh Government's actions should be underpinned by compliance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

Children in Wales

Children in Wales is the national umbrella body for organisations and individuals who work with children, young people and their families in Wales. We are a membership body, and our members are drawn from the voluntary, statutory and professional sectors. We work with and for our members to promote their interests and meet their needs. Together we:

- Contribute to making implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child a reality in Wales
- Fight for sustainable quality services and fair shares for all children and young people
- Ensure special attention and treatment for children in need and those who are marginalised
- Ensure children and young people have a voice

End Child Poverty Network Cymru

The End Child Poverty Network Cymru Steering Group, which has been operational since 2001, has been working to reduce the levels of child poverty and mitigate the impact on children, young people and their families. Our work in this area includes:

- Proactively engaging with Welsh Government Ministers, officials and Members of the Senedd in the development and delivery of legislation and policies relating to child poverty
- Organising National and regional child poverty events
- Carrying out an annual survey on child poverty in Wales

The End Child Poverty Network Cymru is **free** to join and you will receive regular e-bulletins and access to free events. For more information, or to join, please contact: Karen McFarlane at karen.mcfarlane@childreninwales.org.uk

