

EYST Consultation Response

Draft Child Poverty Strategy for Wales 2023

Jainaba Conteh and Jami Abramson, September 2023



Ethnic Minorities
& Youth Support
Team Wales

Tim Cymorth
Lleiafrifoedd Ethnig
& Ieuencid Cymru



Charity No: 1152486
Company No: 06709767

Consultation on the draft Child Poverty Strategy for Wales 2023

Name: Jainaba Conteh and Jami Abramson

Organisation (if applicable): EYST

Responses to consultations may be made public. To keep your response anonymous (including email addresses) tick the box:

☐

Yes

Q1. Do you agree that the introduction to the draft strategy is clear and accessible?

Yes ☐

Unsure ☐

No ☐

Do you have any comments on the introduction to the strategy?:

The statistics provided helped with better understanding of what is considered living in poverty and how different groups particularly those with protected characteristics have been disproportionately affected. Regarding accessibility, individuals with language barriers and digital barriers may find it difficult to understand. Infographics with simple and concise writing may help convey the message if multilingual print is not available and an easy read version for frontline workers (e.g. youth workers) that allows them to apply some of the information on the draft strategy at work would be beneficial.

Q2a. In considering the requirement under the Children's and Families (Wales) Measure for the Welsh Government to set objectives for the contribution towards the eradication of child poverty, do you agree that Objective 1 should be an objective of the draft strategy?

Yes ☐

Unsure ☐

No ☐

Objective 1 should remain an objective as knowledge of entitlement, needing support with the cost of living and easing the process to claim financial support is of high

importance to EYST clients and colleagues. On the **EYST Wales Cost of Living survey (2023)**, 94% of respondents said that they were very worried/somewhat about the increase in energy bills and the cost of living. Thus, 83% of respondents said that they have had to reduce their spending on energy bills and other living costs. Whereas 50% said that they not received financial help from the UK and Welsh Government with the cost of living, and 39% said they received helped, 35% said that they were not very well informed about the help that may be available to them. This made up the highest portion of respondents that responded to the question about how well informed they were followed by 26% of respondents that said that they were neutral then 22% that said that they were somewhat well informed. Of the 57% of respondents that said that they were aware of the community help available such as food banks and warm spaces, 28% being unsure, 80% were not using the community help. This is a clear indication that although a vast majority of people are being negatively impacted by the rising cost of living, many are not aware of the help available and for those aware, they were not using the services. The respondents expressed that they were receiving information from various unverified sources, the information was deemed confusing, and their accessibility was limited by language barriers, digital barriers, disability and literacy. One of the common themes from this survey was that employed individuals were under the impression that they would not be eligible for support (**EYST Wales, Cost-of-Living Survey, 2023**).

People have raised concerns about needing financial support with food, energy bills, transport, school essentials, housing and period products. EYST conducted **multiple engagement forums** in which participants expressed what would make the biggest difference in the lives of children and families now and in the future. The engagement forum in Wrexham consisted of 32 children and young people from refugee and asylum-seeking background aged between 10 – 18 years. Another engagement forum (referred to as the '**adults in Wrexham**' in this document) was conducted in Wrexham this time consisting of 6 children and young people, and 17 parents/carers for children from refugee and asylum-seeking backgrounds. With 22 of the 23 attendees being of asylum-seeking background, it is important to note that the asylum allowance is approximately £5 per day per person. The Swansea forum was a mixture of 7 young people and 8 parents/carers from diverse ethnic minority communities with different immigration status including UK nationals.

Regarding reducing costs and maximising incomes, **young people in Wrexham** have reported that they would need support with the cost of food supplies, clothing, travel options and leisure activities. The **adults in Wrexham** reported that they need support with food and clothing especially because the parents possess inadequate funds. In addition, the price of Halal meat and fresh produce has risen steeply, and this is an essential item in ethnic minority communities. They have reported that they would benefit from increased public transport support or options for individuals with *no recourse to public funds*. Similarly, they reported that they experience financial barriers to public or private transport options and have trouble as families with younger children travelling longer distances. Along with minimising transport costs, transport infrastructure may need to be considered to accommodate families with young children. The participants from the **Swansea forum** would like support with

discounted bus and train tickets however, they believe that free school transport for children in secondary school will be beneficial as it takes 30-40 minutes for their children to walk to school as they cannot afford public transport. They disclosed that the physical growth and development of the children is heavily impacted due to food poverty, which in turn affect the children's learning at school and at home.

EYST also conducted an **online survey about child poverty** and an overwhelming number of participants reported that cost of food was a main concern. In the strategy, food partnerships are mentioned as key to *“build resilience in local food networks through the co-ordination of on the ground, food-related activity which tackles the root-causes of food poverty”* (Welsh Government, Draft Child Poverty Strategy, 2023). We welcome ‘food partnerships’ but would like to highlight the need to make sure these include Halal and Kosher friendly options for those who require. In doing this, the strategy can ensure it is inclusive in tackling poverty for *all* children in Wales, especially as Halal meat providers, on a large scale, have increased prices greatly – Participants of the **Halal Meat Questionnaire (EYST Wales, 2023)** have expressed that they may have to go without meat in their diet as Halal meat is very expensive and some have to travel to a different town or city to buy Halal meat.

Other areas of concern include cost of clothing (including school uniform), energy bills, fuel, rent, hygiene products and council tax (**EYST Wales, Child Poverty Survey, 2023**).

What was a common theme from the **Cost-of-Living Survey (EYST Wales, 2023)** was that employed participants had the highest level of concern about the rising cost of living but were ineligible for means-tested support such as free school meals, uniform grants, council tax reductions, food banks and Government Cost of Living Payments. Similarly, lone parents that are employed may not be eligible for means-tested financial assistance, although their outgoings might leave them with little as a lone parent.

Q2b. Is the information about what we have heard and what the Welsh Government doing in relation to Objective 1 clear and accessible?

Yes ☐

Unsure ☐

No ☐

The information about Objective 1 is clear and accessible as the concerns raised by people and the practical solutions adopted have been clearly listed with brief explanations and simple language. The information is relevant to Objective 1 and the links provided are helpful for extra reading.

Do you have any comments on content related to Objective 1?:

Having briefly read the Food Partnership initiative, it does not give an example of how food poverty will be dealt with. The clients are worried about food poverty because of the increase in prices due to inflation. How would the Food Partnership tackle the cost of food produce, and would they offer cheaper fresh produce? Would the cultural food items of BAME communities be considered? Regarding fuel poverty, the draft strategy talks about help with energy bills through the Fuel Bank Foundation however, some of our clients have expressed needing help to fuel their cars to drive to work.

Q3. Do you agree that Priority 1 should be a priority for the draft strategy?

Yes ☐

Unsure ☐

No ☐

Do you have any comments on what we say we will do to take forward work under Priority 1?:

The plan of action for priority 1 are all relevant to the participants including increasing the provision of face-to-face information, advice and support. It is recommended from the **Cost-of-Living Survey (EYST Wales, 2023)** that information sharing must be clearer, more accessible, sites should be easily navigable, marketed through all channels available (e.g., Welsh Refugee Council) and produced in multiple languages. Clients have recommended to use community groups that can translate information into their respective languages and recommended receiving information through social media, on the news or on YouTube.

The Welsh Benefits system (Welsh Government, Draft Child Poverty Strategy, 2023) will ease the strain of the cost living crisis however, it important to recognise that working individuals may be doubly impacted as they are not eligible for mean-tested support and may be living below the poverty line. Vouchers for food, fuel and clothing were recommended by the participants (**EYST Wales, Child Poverty Survey, 2023**). Participants have reported that benefits must increase in line with the cost of living as after essential spending, little is left to spend on children's wellbeing and leisure activities.

Ensuring education is cost-neutral would be beneficial as participants have reported that free school meals, school uniform grants and support with public transport to school. Support with breakfast clubs and after school clubs will not only contribute to the children's wellbeing but also allow parents to have more flexibility at work (**EYST Wales, Child Poverty Survey, 2023**).

Q4a. In considering the requirement under the Children's and Families (Wales) Measure for the Welsh Government to set objectives for the contribution

towards the eradication of child poverty, do you agree that **Objective 2** should be an objective of the draft strategy?

Yes ☐

Unsure ☐

No ☐

As objective 2 focuses on helping people out of poverty through education, training and support into fair work (Welsh Government, Draft Child Poverty Strategy, 2023), it should remain in the draft strategy as many of the participants believed it was relevant to them. From the **Cost-of-Living Survey (EYST Wales, 2023)**, a participant reported that it would be more financially beneficial to have reduced hours and be eligible for financial support whilst another participant reported that they must choose between paying the rent, fuelling their car, paying for childcare so they can still go to work. Both experiences highlight that current salaries may not cover essential spending therefore causing people to consider leaving the workforce. People may require being supported into higher paying work to increase their earnings. The promotion of fair work and Plan for Employability and Skills (Welsh Government, Draft Child Poverty Strategy, 2023) may be able to circumvent the barriers the participants face. For individuals whose work permission is restricted due to their immigration status, this leaves them in poverty, lowers their quality of life, impedes their ability to integrate into society. The Home Office should be pressured into speeding up the process or else, the cumulative long-term effect of living in poverty could be dire for these families. In addition, the asylum allowance continues to be inadequate for the families as this has not increased in line with the increase cost-of-living therefore, they fall deeper below the poverty line.

As mentioned in the Draft Child Poverty Strategy (Welsh Government, 2023) about supporting parents and carers to develop the skills to receive a decent wage, **adults in Wrexham** also agreed that they would benefit highly from opportunities that will allow them to develop into higher paying careers. They believe that barriers need to be reduced to increase access to opportunities and particularly training into new professions can improve their wages. The **Swansea forum** agreed that more job opportunities particularly for lone parents would support parents to return to work coupled with support with childcare costs. In addition, employers only seeking qualified individuals poses as a barrier and job training could be an alternative route towards being more employable. Job prospects would improve for individuals that have recently immigrate to the UK if support with education and training was awarded. They agreed that barriers to employment has a generational effect, in which the children therefore will have limited aspirations and child poverty continues when parents do not have liveable paid work.

The **Wrexham adults** also mentioned that support with transport for individuals with no recourse to public funds would increase the range of jobs available to them. This was highlighted in the Draft Child Poverty Strategy (Welsh Government, 2023) that public transport cost was a barrier to employment. The Llwybr Newydd Strategy may be able to cater to the needs of the participants.

Young people in Wrexham agreed that they would benefit from increased employments prospects and options, which would improve their aspirations. These can be however limited by both invisible and visible barriers such as the lack of awareness or understanding of new opportunities, lack of networks that could propel their careers, opportunities not marketed as inclusive and financial barriers to accessing new opportunities. They also agreed that more educational support is needed for young people that have recently arrived in the UK and are joining a curriculum at later stages. Educational support for also individuals with lower educational attainment levels was deemed essential which has also been prescribed on the Draft Child Poverty Strategy (Welsh Government, 2023) as an action to be undertaken through the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework and the Pupil Development Grant. For asylum seeking young people without recourse to public funding, alternative educational post-16 pathways can give them a chance to escape poverty whilst they are waiting for a decision from the Home Office. Impeding their progress and development as they are waiting for a decision can result in deterioration in their mental health such as anxiety and depression. Lastly, they believed that advice and guidance centred on young people regarding their futures, wellbeing and welfare could be a pathway out of poverty. This is in line with creating education-based practical careers, work-related experiences and careers advice (Welsh Government, Draft Child Poverty Strategy, 2023).

On the issue of the Additional Learning Needs process being taken in a person-centred way, participants (**EYST Wales, Child Poverty Survey, 2023**) have disclosed that they need access to specialist support staff and resources for children with ALN as there are very limited number of specialists available and this results in rationed visits. The process is hectic for the child and the prolonged wait leads to late diagnosis and by then, it is too late to help the child. Delays in getting on the waiting list and getting assessments are causing strains on the family on top of caring for the child that requires extra help.

Q4b. Is the information about what we have heard and what the Welsh Government doing in relation to Objective 2 clear and accessible?

Yes ☐

Unsure ☐

No ☐

Do you have any comments on content related to Objective 2?:

More awareness needs to be raised about the Personal Learning Account programme and better-quality courses must be available that increases the chances of securing higher paid work. The PLA programmes in Swansea are more hobby driven than career focussed. There should be an independent review on whether these courses result in the expected outcome. It will be difficult to market is as a form

of gender budgeting (Welsh Government, Draft Child Poverty Strategy, 2023) and may discourage people from minority backgrounds to apply as it conveys the message that it does not include 'ethnic minority budgeting'. Business Wales may need to reveal the level of support that they are willing to offer a young person. A lot of policies have been listed on this section but whether this is actionable is another matter.

Q5. Do you agree that Priority 2 should be a priority for the draft strategy?

Yes ☐

Unsure ☐

No ☐

Do you have any comments on what we say we will do under Priority 2?:

As many participants would like higher wages to remain employed, delivering against the recommendations of the Fair Work Commission is relevant.

Increasing employability and skills is also a priority for the participants coupled with the the right guidance and inclusive services for both adults and young people. On the **Child Poverty Survey (EYST Wales, 2023)**, it was reported that career workshops for young people and the promotion of apprenticeship and internships may create a pathway out of poverty.

Removing barriers such as childcare and transport costs will help people stay employed. This will be particularly helpful for lone parents on a single income. Participants have reported that emotional support for lone parents with also help them remain employed.

What was also reported from the **Child Poverty Survey (EYST Wales, 2023)** that would create equity for disadvantaged groups is a trust fund for children in poverty, which they can access as adults and invest towards their futures. This will help level the playing fields.

Student finance assistance for asylum seekers is not available therefore, how can these young people progress when they are not able to attend university, especially as they are liable for 'international' student fees. People are often waiting a decision for years and Welsh Government has a responsibility under its Nation of Sanctuary Plan to ensure these young people can access education, lowering their vulnerability to poverty in the future.

Q6a. In considering the requirement under the Children's and Families (Wales) Measure for the Welsh Government to set objectives for the contribution towards the eradication of child poverty, do you agree that Objective 3 should be an objective of the draft strategy?

Yes ☐

Unsure ☐

No ☐

Regarding community-based support, improving housing conditions, improving mental health support and providing low-cost child and family support, Objective 3 should remain in the draft strategy.

The **Cost-of-Living Survey (EYST Wales, 2023)** showcased that although community-based support was available such as Food Banks and Warm Spaces, some participants were not able to access the services due to physical and mental health issues. The community services may not be inclusive particularly for large families as one participant reported that it is impractical for her large family to use the warm spaces. In addition, employed participants responded that they could not access the food banks and warm spaces during working hours. This will particularly affect individuals in low-paying jobs with no recourse to public funds as concluded in the **Cost-of-Living Survey (EYST Wales, 2023)**. The **adults from Wrexham** agreed that increased community cohesion will make a difference in their lives including reduced discrimination and racism, which will foster appreciation for all cultures and encourage everyone to flourish. The **forum from Swansea** agreed that family wellbeing could be supported by raising awareness, educating families, being able to have a person they can talk to from the community organisations. Their experiences of services can be improved knowing that organisations are collaborating in the interest of the families and young people.

Regarding housing conditions, particularly temporary housing, the **adults in Wrexham** believed that the housing conditions could be improved for homes provided by the Home Office. Distress is caused by the abrupt nature of losing housing due to immigration status changing temporarily and this is a process that could be improved upon. From the **Child Poverty Survey (EYST Wales, 2023)**, it was reported that immigrants on worker visas and refugees are being invited into the UK without addressing the housing crisis thus leaving these vulnerable groups at risk of homelessness, overcrowding in house shares and having to pay exorbitant rent costs as unprepared new residents. The standards of living decline as a result leaving children in poverty and deteriorating the mental health of families. Therefore, the affordability of housing is a massive concern.

On the topic of experiencing racism in services such as GP surgeries and schools, this was corroborated by the **young people in Wrexham** who said that professionals need to be more culturally competent when responding to the needs of ethnic minority people and take racism and discrimination more seriously. The **forum in Swansea** agreed that more anti-bullying initiatives need to take place in school as safety is of high importance to all parents and support for ethnic minority communities such as counselling need to be prioritised by schools. Many of the participants that took part in the **Child Poverty Survey (EYST Wales, 2023)** want access to services without racism however, some believe that actions to tackle racism comes across as superficial with no societal impact and more work may need

to be done in the way that anti-racism projects are assessed, evaluated and delivered.

Many parents would like low-cost child and family activities such as sporting activities, leisure activities and social opportunities in schools and elsewhere. The **adults in Wrexham** agreed that it would be beneficial to their wellbeing if the entire family group could be supported to participate in physical activities in which financial barriers to participation exists. They also agreed that they would like new culturally enhancing experiences and trips that will help them foster a closer connection to Wales. From the **Child Poverty Survey (EYST Wales, 2023)** local authorities could be supported to create free leisure areas which are open to the public such as basketball courts. The need for more recreational activities in the community was highly regarded and activities outside of school hours (**EYST Wales, Child Poverty Survey, 2023**). Even with the availability of some of the activities, exemptions or discounted rates for children could help many low-income families to engage in sports, arts and children's aspirations. There is an extra barrier when it comes to accessing low-cost family activities, which is that transport cost becomes another burden for families (**EYST Wales, Child Poverty Survey, 2023**).

Q6b. Is the information about what we have heard and what the Welsh Government doing in relation to Objective 3 clear and accessible?

Yes ☐

Unsure ☐

No ☐

Do you have any comments on content related to Objective 3?:

This section was well structured, and each subsection was relevant to Objective 3.

Q7. Do you agree that Priority 3 should be a priority for the draft strategy?

Yes ☐

Unsure ☐

No ☐

Do you have any comments on what we say we will do under Priority 3?:

Funding community- focused initiatives, dealing with housing matters and providing mental health support are all relevant to EYST clients. The 'one-stop shop'-style multi-agency services will ease accessing the right services and the right information and may allow better collaboration between organisations. To make community-based services more inclusive, they need to consider service users with mental and physical health issues. The solution could be delivery services of food, befriender services and access to online groups (**EYST Wales, Cost-of-Living Survey, 2023**). Food pantries should open outside of working hours for employed individuals, stock

items that represent the cultural needs of the community and marketing for community events and activities should be produced in common community languages to be more inclusive of ethnic minority communities (**EYST Wales, Cost-of-Living Survey, 2023**).

Low-cost family activities to support health and wellbeing is also a priority for EYST clients. As recommended on the **Cost-of-Living Survey (EYST Wales, 2023)**, for households with a total income below £40,000, subsidised learning opportunities in the arts, sporting activities and after school clubs should be made available.

The last point on using a community action approach may already be considered in the first point about 'thinking community' (Welsh Government, Draft Child Poverty Strategy, 2023). The difference between these two points is unclear. It may be a more impactful to give Mental Health its stand-alone sub-priority. Mental health support that is culturally appropriate and available in common languages, and mental health support as part of support package offered to resettled Refugees (**EYST Wales, Cost-of-Living Survey, 2023**) would be of great importance to EYST clients especially as the Welsh Government has a responsibility under its Nation of Sanctuary Plan. Mental health was raised by participants of the **Child Poverty Survey (EYST Wales, 2023)**.

Q8a. In considering the requirement under the Children's and Families (Wales) Measure for the Welsh Government to set objectives for the contribution towards the eradication of child poverty, do you agree that Objective 4 should be an objective of the draft strategy?

Yes ☐

Unsure ☐

No ☐

Objective 4 is focussed on providing an inclusive experience for service users by services and institutions. This is a cause for concern for EYST clients especially with children not only being isolated due to their ethnic background but also social signifiers of poverty. It was reported that parents that struggle to provide new shoes and uniform due to the children's growth spurt may have to do without essential items like hygiene products. This can lead to poor hygiene in children hindering their ability to socialise with their peers and increase the likelihood of being bullied. Poor hygiene can also result from broken down heating system and house items (**EYST Wales, Child Poverty Survey, 2023**). It is recommended for schools that for children who are significantly impacted by their family finances to be supported with their mental health (**EYST Wales, Cost-of-Living Survey, 2023**). Promoting a positive cultural environment in schools will be beneficial as stated on the Draft Child Poverty Strategy (Welsh Government, 2023) and as one participant stated "*Hearing about this crisis from our primary-school child is sad. Children understand and are*

helpless regarding the situation and this certainly can impact their emotional health long term.” (EYST Wales, Cost-of-Living Survey, 2023). An initiative towards poverty proofing in schools is for schools to focus on projects that help increase resilience to food costs and energy bills. Schools can also provide projects that reflect the diversity of their students such as cultural food growing and meal prepping. Schools can make themselves aware of the support that is available outside the school premises that can help the ethnic minority students (**EYST Wales, Cost-of-Living Survey, 2023**). These recommendations may help schools understand poverty which is in line with the Price of Pupil Poverty Project.

The **young people in Wrexham** agreed that reducing the financial divide between people will result in them being treated with respect and dignity. Thus, being characterised as a person from a low-income background can result in receiving poor treatment from services or institutions. They also agreed that for those facing language and financial barriers, information needs to be provided in multiple languages or provide interpreters that convey the information using simple and easy to understand language. This will make them feel that their needs are being catered. The **Swansea forum** revealed that they will feel that they are treated with respect and dignity if the services respect their privacy; this includes not being made to feel like begging for charity, confidentiality is protected and the platform to voice their concerns without retribution or rejection is provided. With the rising cost of living plummeting families deeper into poverty, participants believe that it is putting marginalised people further into a survival mode, which also means that it is even more difficult for them to voice their concerns and risks them becoming further marginalised and ignored (**EYST Wales, Cost-of-Living Survey, 2023**). The cumulative effect of poverty and being an ethnic minority may result in concerns being ignored, part of a service that is respectful is one that is willing to listen to the concerns of their service users.

Often, the participants (**Swansea forum**) can become overwhelmed physically and emotionally, yet they are pressured to attend programs. The **Swansea forum** revealed that it be more dignifying if services gave them the freedom to pause then resume attending programs. It may be perceived that the service user has no autonomy as the programs are forced unto them and their needs are not being identified by the services. On the other hand, the social stigma of accessing services and being perceived as struggling by community members may be another reason why service users may not want to use services (**EYST Wales, Cost-of-Living Survey, 2023**). As the **Swansea forum** and participants of the **Cost-of-Living Survey (EYST Wales, 2023)** have identified ‘privacy’ as key to being treated with respect and dignity, services can be operated in a more discrete manner to make it comfortable for people to reach out for help. Lastly, the **Swansea forum** believe that staff should be well-trained in cultural awareness, understand that communities are not a monolith and treat people individually, and recognise that people have different needs. Being treated with respect was a common theme on the **Child Poverty Survey (EYST Wales, 2023)**.

The section on the Trauma Informed Wales Framework is relevant to EYST clients as even the **young people in Wrexham** said that services need to spend more time conversing with clients to build connection, trust and understanding and that will circumvent miscommunication. This was corroborated by the **adults in Wrexham** that agreed that services need to spend more time listening and communicating with people to gain trust and build connection. Services can provide interpreters to ensure better communication whilst new residents in Wales are learning English or Welsh. Lack of resources such as availability of interpreters can leave the burden of interpretation on the children who although have better understanding of the English Language, may not understand the gravity of the situation or use the appropriate language when translating. From the **Child Poverty Survey (EYST Wales, 2023)**, a person reported, *“A way to make things more equal for me would be for people to take more time to consider what situation I am in, this is that if they consider where I’ve come from, if my parents can speak fluent English and if I’m an only child will all affect the way I have been brought up, it would foster a more inclusive environment everywhere since everyone can understand why some people can act a certain way.”* It is also helpful to train people working for support groups to recognise the decline in someone’s mental health and know the relevant steps to help the individual as recommended on the **Cost-of-Living Survey (EYST Wales, 2023)**.

Q8b. Is the information about what we have heard and what the Welsh Government doing in relation to Objective 4 clear and accessible?

Yes ☐

Unsure ☐

No ☐

Do you have any comments on content related to Objective 4?:

The subsections ‘Delivering services with kindness and compassion’ and ‘Creating inclusive education environments’ are relevant to EYST clients however the title of the subsection ‘Paying due regard to the UNCRC’ could be altered to ‘Paying due regard to the concerns of young people’ as this seems to hold more importance to the clients and falls in line with the importance of lived experiences influencing policy.

Q9. Do you agree that Priority 4 should be a priority for the draft strategy?

Yes ☐

Unsure ☐

No ☐

Do you have any comments on what we say we will do under Priority 4?:

All the points on Priority 4 are relevant to EYST clients. Regarding point 4 on protected characteristics, it must be taken into consideration that when it comes to

school sanctioning students, ethnic minority students are disproportionately sanctioned in addition to coming from a low-income background.

Q10a. In considering the requirement under the Children's and Families (Wales) Measure for the Welsh Government to set objectives for the contribution towards the eradication of child poverty, do you agree that Objective 5 should be an objective of the draft strategy?

Yes ☐

Unsure ☐

No ☐

As EYST is part of the third sector, we reach into the hearts of communities, spend years building relationships, which can sometimes be generational relationships. Because of the trust that we have built in the community and with particular families, they are more willing to discuss issues with us. They are also more willing to engage in activities like consultations and focus groups. This gives the Welsh Government insight into the communities and the ability to identify the core issues. This coordination between the Welsh Government, public bodies and other third sector organisations help with the planning and implementation of programmes that can alleviate child poverty. As a participant said, "*EYST helped me tremendously so, more organisations like this would be good*" (**EYST Wales, Child Poverty Survey, 2023**) and this was also echoed by other participants. As an organisation EYST fosters sharing learning and good practice by distributing newsletters, emails to our stakeholders and spreading information by delivering awareness sessions and trainings. When sessions are delivered, not only is information shared, learning from other attendees or organisations takes place. Attending joint-organisational meetings on different topics is another opportunity to learn from other organisations such as the one on education in which children's organisations attended and best practice was shared.

As for tackling inequity through actions on the social determinants of health, **Cost-of-Living Survey (EYST Wales, 2023)** has identified that the "*potential long-term outcomes from ongoing poor diet and living conditions could be poor educational outcomes for children, increased levels of disease and chronic illness, increased dental issues, and a mental health epidemic, putting NHS services under incredible long-term strain, reducing life expectancy, and negatively impacting future career prospects, and market productivity*". This was also echoed by the **adults in Wrexham** that stated that they need GP and hospital services to be quicker and easier to access. This was also a concern for many of the participants of the **Child Poverty Survey (EYST Wales, 2023)**. It is recommended on the **Cost-of-Living Survey (EYST Wales, 2023)** that GP surgeries must undertake consultations regarding the lack of translation support for ethnic minority communities and be

trained to become 'Safe Surgeries' if they receive Welsh Government funding. For clients experiencing language and/or digital barrier, accessible traditional walk-in appointments should be offered as recommended on the **Cost-of-Living Survey (EYST Wales, 2023)**. The privatisation of dental clinics has made it inaccessible for many low-income families (**EYST Wales, Child Poverty Survey, 2023; EYST Wales, Cost-of-Living Survey, 2023**)

Funding for EYST is derived from various sources for different projects such as the UK Government, Welsh Government, Local Authorities or private funders. For the Refugee Resettlement schemes, there is a tender process and after the application, the waiting period may be prolonged and as staff continue to support clients in the interim, staff experience pressure during this uncertain period as their contracts being renewed is yet to be determined. Other grants are applied for when the funding is advertised. Again, the waiting period is prolonged thus significantly affecting the strategy of EYST and plans cannot commence until EYST is certain that the bid has been secured. This negatively impacts employee morale, employee job security and clients especially if bids are unsuccessful. Plans for projects can be delayed if the funding process takes too long therefore, the management of the project has to be reevaluated. An alternative approach could be for funders to initiate discussion with the third sector organisation to minimise a certain level of uncertainty as their decision is very impactful on the services that clients use. Funding influences how an organisation is managed and can negatively affect the efficiency and effectiveness of an organisation's service. A quicker and less bureaucratic funding process can make a difference. A longer duration of funding may also help (Welsh Government, Draft Child Poverty Strategy, 2023).

Q10b. Is the information about what we have heard and what the Welsh Government doing in relation to Objective 5 clear and accessible?

Yes ☐

Unsure ☐

No ☐

Do you have any comments on content related to Objective 5?:

None

Q11. Do you agree that Priority 5 should be a priority for the draft strategy?

Yes ☐

Unsure ☐

No ☐

Do you have any comments on what we say we will do under Priority 5?:

All the points listed are relevant to ensuring that effective cross-government working. It will be beneficial for training to be delivered to the third sector on how best to manage their projects and how they can contribute to the implementation gap.

Q12. Do you agree that the section setting out how we will monitor and report on our progress is clear and accessible?

Yes ☐

Unsure ☐

No ☐

Do you have any comments on what we say about how we will monitor and report on our progress?:

It is clear and accessible however; it will improve understanding if an example was given such as the progress of a particular milestone against the national milestone. For example, how data was collected about people in poverty, how impact was measured when a strategy or policy was introduced, what baseline was used etc.

Q13. Does the Child Poverty Strategy adequately respond to the intersection between child poverty with protected characteristics (such as ethnicity, gender, disability and sexuality) and the experience of socio-economic disadvantage?

Yes ☐

Unsure ☐

No ☐

What effects do you think there would be? How could positive effects be increased, or negative effects be mitigated?:

What is positive is that the protected characteristics are listed throughout the draft strategy such as people with disability and asylum seekers in Objective 1 and individuals with learning needs in Objective 2 etc. The one-stop shop approach in Priority 3 will be an excellent initiative that can help people that fall under multiple protected characteristics get their needs met. What could be an issue is that when individuals are minorities within a minority, therefore facing more barriers, their voices are may not be heard. For example, older ethnic minority who are more isolated and face more cultural backgrounds than the younger generation do not feel that community-based spaces are inclusive for them (**EYST Wales, Cost-of-Living Survey, 2023**). The younger generation may find it inclusive to access certain services and due to their digital literacy, they can be overrepresented in surveys therefore skewing the data. Whereas services can improve to deal with issues for

one protected characteristic, the issues that people with multiple protected characteristics can look very different and these voices need to be heard as well. In other words, the people facing more barriers and struggling the most may not be heard.

Q14. We would like to know your views on the effects that the Child Poverty Strategy proposal would have on the Welsh language, specifically on opportunities for people to use Welsh and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English.

What effects do you think there would be? How could positive effects be increased, or negative effects be mitigated?:

It is recommended on the **Cost-of-Living Survey (EYST Wales, 2023)** to market services and offer Mental Health support in the common community languages and this should include Welsh so that it is held in the same regard as English. Although many EYST clients will be learning English as a second language and this can already be a difficulty, it may be making it even harder to learn Welsh alongside. It is promising that the **adults in Wrexham** mentioned their journeys to learn English as well as Welsh. This may help them integrate in Wales even more so.

Q15. We would like to know your views on the Integrated Impact Assessment.

Are there any specific areas where you feel further detail is required, or any specific issues you wish to highlight which may have an impact on a specific group?:

The Integrated Impact Assessment is clear and accessible. Under Negative impacts, the factors that may impede the delivery of the programmes could be mentioned especially if they've been previously highlighted such as what has not worked in the past. In the introduction for the draft strategy, it states that, "*Despite this investment poverty remains a significant issue that limits the opportunities of too many children, young people, families and communities*" (Welsh Government, Draft Child Poverty Strategy, 2023). What have we learned from the 2015 strategy and decided to let go. How do we know that they way impact is monitored and evaluated is the right metric, and the right variables are being measured?

Q16. We would like to know your views on the Child Rights Impact Assessment.

The Child Rights Impact was clear and accessible. Listing and explaining the relevant articles of the UNCRC will be helpful. It is summarised well Objective 2 written as "*young people, parents and carers told us about the support they need to*

make work pay” (Welsh Government, Draft Child Poverty Strategy: Integrated Impact Assessment, 2023). does not capture the meaning of the objective. This could be altered to *“young people, parents and carers told they value good education and good employment to improve their lives”*. Given the language used in this section, the word ‘employment’ is of the same level of language. Objective 4 written as *“children and young people told us they want to feel fully included in the places where they go for education”* (Welsh Government, Draft Child Poverty Strategy: Integrated Impact Assessment, 2023) needs to be altered to *“children and young people told us they want to feel fully included in the places where they go for education **and other places**”*. Having the 5 priorities included will also be helpful.

Are there any specific areas where you feel further detail is required, or any specific issues you wish to highlight which may have an impact on children?:

There is a chance that young people that are from a refugee or asylum-seeking background might misunderstand some of the the UNCRC articles (Welsh Government, Draft Child Poverty Strategy: Integrated Impact Assessment, 2023). The young person may have a false impression that their immigration status would result in a positive outcome if it is the state’s responsibility to award these rights. If the decision made about their immigration status is negative, they may be devastated and may feel misled.

Q17. We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to report them:

Communication of ministerial decisions that negatively impact young people and their families – As was evident in the recent decision around ending free school meals for the summer holidays (see here: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-politics-66301413>) we want to highlight the negative impact of such sudden decisions upon families. As we consider Child Poverty Strategy in Wales, we think it is important to note the importance of communicating changes that could negatively impact young people and families at the earliest instance, so they can then prepare accordingly. Additionally, such impactful decisions should be clearly evaluated to ensure they do not result in further poverty, countering the good intentions of this draft Child Poverty strategy.

Recording child poverty in Wales – The plan notes the use of ‘independent research advice on suitable national poverty indicators’ to monitor developments in poverty progress. We would like to ask how this will take place and who will be consulted in this process?

“In addition to these broader national milestones, we will seek independent research advice on suitable national poverty indicators, data availability and a framework to monitor and demonstrate transparent accountability in reporting on our tackling poverty progress and on involving people with lived experience in telling us whether

we are achieving. We will consult separately on these proposals” (Welsh Government, Child Poverty)

Due to changes in monitoring tools both at Welsh Government and Local Authority levels, we already face challenges in accessing accurate data around race inequalities in Wales. With this work, I would urge the Welsh Government to seek expert advice from groups with knowledge of different protected characteristics, to inform categories used when recording race and ethnicity for example. For example, if Gypsy, Roma and Travellers are recorded as ‘white’ in monitoring, we cannot gain an accurate picture of inequalities pertaining to race and ethnicity. We urge Welsh Government to plan, consult, and take time to design monitoring apparatus, ensuring that those who are recording information have training to correctly fill documents. In doing this, we can gain a more accurate picture of how poverty cuts across different indicators and how it is related to race and ethnicity. For EYST, and others working to effect positive changes for race equality in Wales, this information is vital to the health, wellbeing and prosperity of ethnic minority individuals in Wales.

References

- Report from The All Wales Minority Ethnic Engagement Programme’s Cost of Living Survey; <https://eyst.org.uk/assets/eyst-wales-cost-of-living-survey-report.pdf> **(EYST Wales, Cost-of-Living Survey, 2023)**
- Have your say about Child Poverty in Wales (1-62)-online response **(EYST Child Poverty Survey, 2023)**
- Child Poverty and Protected Characteristics - Response Swansea FLP on 29th March 23 **(Swansea forum)**
- Child Poverty Engagement- Response from EYST Wales Wrexham Workshop 27th March 23 **(Adults in Wrexham)**
- Child Poverty Engagement- Response from EYST Wales Wrexham Workshop 28th March 23 **(Young people in Wrexham)**
- Halal Meat Questionnaire (1-43) **(EYST Wales, Halal Meat Questionnaire, 2023)**