

SP 37

Blaenoriaethau ar gyfer y Pwyllgor Cydraddoldeb,  
Llywodraeth Leol a Chymunedau  
Priorities for the Equality,  
Local Government and Communities Committee  
Ymateb gan: Barnardo's Cymru  
Response from: Barnardo's Cymru

## **1. Information and working context of Barnardo's Cymru**

Barnardo's Cymru has been working with children, young people and families in Wales for over 100 years and is one of the largest children's charities working in the country. We currently run over 80 diverse services across Wales, working in partnership with 18 of the 22 local authorities. Every year we work with in the region of 8,000 children, young people and families directly and a further almost 20,000 through less direct work; including open groups and outreach work. Barnardo's Cymru services in Wales include: care leavers and youth homelessness projects, young carers schemes, specialist fostering and adoption schemes, family centres and family support, parenting support, family support for children affected by parental imprisonment, domestic abuse and parental substance misuse, short breaks and inclusive services for disabled children and young people, assessment and treatment for young people who exhibit sexually harmful or concerning behaviour and specialist services for children and young people at risk of, or abused through, child sexual exploitation and young people's substance misuse services.

Every Barnardo's Cymru service is different but we always strive to secure better outcomes for more children. We use the knowledge gained from our direct work with children to campaign for better childcare policy and to champion the rights of every child. We believe that with the right help, committed support and a little belief, even the most vulnerable children can turn their lives around.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>This response may be made public.</b></li><li>▪ <b>This response is on behalf of Barnardo's Cymru.</b></li></ul> |
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**1.**

Barnardo's registered Charity Nos. 216250 and SCO37605  
Rhifau Cofrestru'r elusen Barnardo's 216250 a SCO37605

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. We are a major third sector provider of support services to vulnerable children, young people and their families across Wales. Our services have noted a steady increase in the level of financial hardship reported by the young people and families we support. Traditionally our work with families affected by child poverty and young people on low incomes would have focussed on mitigating the impact of poverty so that children and young people could realise their rights and reach their potential in the same way as their peers.
- 1.2 Supporting children, young people and their families so that they can realise their rights and enjoy good wellbeing outcomes remains a primary aim of the work we undertake. However the severity of material deprivation being experienced by many families and young people means that assistance is needed to meet basic needs before families are able to fully engage in interventions and support.
- 1.3 This does not just mean assisting young people and families with managing debt, income maximisation and budget management. Families are presenting in food poverty, without basic items such as children's clothing, bedding or in a position where they cannot replace broken white goods such as cookers or fridges.

## **2. EU funding of tackling poverty programmes**

- 2.1 Many of the families we support live in communities that have benefited from EU funding. Austerity measures mean that commissioners are consistently looking to providers such as ourselves to provide 'more for less' in response to public funding cuts. At the same time welfare reform and persistent poverty mean that the pressure on services is increasing in terms of those in need.
- 2.2. While Barnardo's Cymru is not a direct beneficiary of ESF funding the loss of EU funding is likely to impact negatively on the level of community support and opportunity available to many of the children, young people and families we work with. This will put further pressure on our services in terms of a loss of community services to which we can signpost families for additional support as part of a team around the family approach and community facilities for children and young people.
- 2.3. We would urge the Committee to consider the impact of the loss of EU funding on third sector organisations and the families they support even if they are not direct beneficiaries of European funding.

### **3. In-work poverty**

- 3.1. We welcome the fact that the Committee have recognised the need to consider the impact of in-work poverty on young people and families in Wales. The Welsh Government approach to tackling poverty has seen a growing emphasis on employability and work as the route out of poverty, despite the high levels of in-work poverty in Wales.
- 3.2. In the absence of a robust plan for accessible and affordable public transport and childcare it will be important to consider the 'cost of working' and the impact of this on the ability of young people and parents of secure and maintain employment.

### **4. Poverty and welfare reform**

- 4.1. The levels of material deprivation experienced by the young people and families we support (as described above) are routinely the result of benefit sanctions, change of circumstances resulting in a new claim and arrears for housing and council tax costs.
- 4.2. The initial attention given to the impact of welfare reform in Wales through a Ministerial Group for example appears to have lost impetus despite the continued and increasing impact of welfare reform on levels of poverty for children, young people and families. This situation and the lack of a clear plan for mitigating the impact of welfare reform needs urgent consideration.