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Cymru
Public Health
Wales

Child poverty A Welsh perspective

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Tackling Poverty – A Call to Action Conference, 15 May 2024

Statement of interest

- Public Health Wales employee
- Part time secondment to Welsh Government; not representing those views
- Member of Faculty Poverty SIG
- Coopted member of BMA Wales Committee for Public Health Medicine (for expertise in Wider Determinants of Health)

What's different about Wales?

Child poverty in Wales

Public health role – examples from Wales

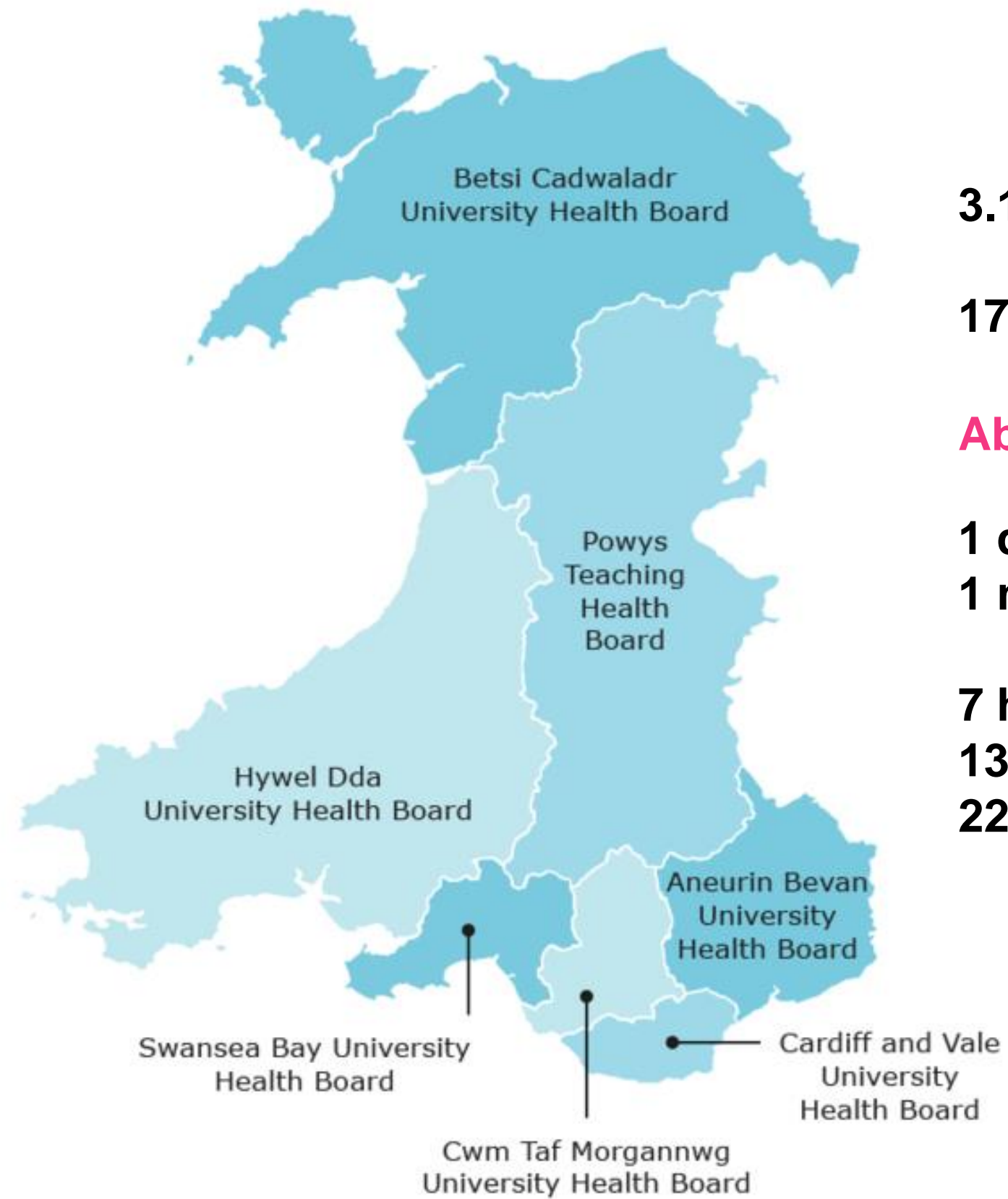
What next?

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What next?



3.1m people

17.5% age 0-15 years (549,000)

About 30% of children live in poverty

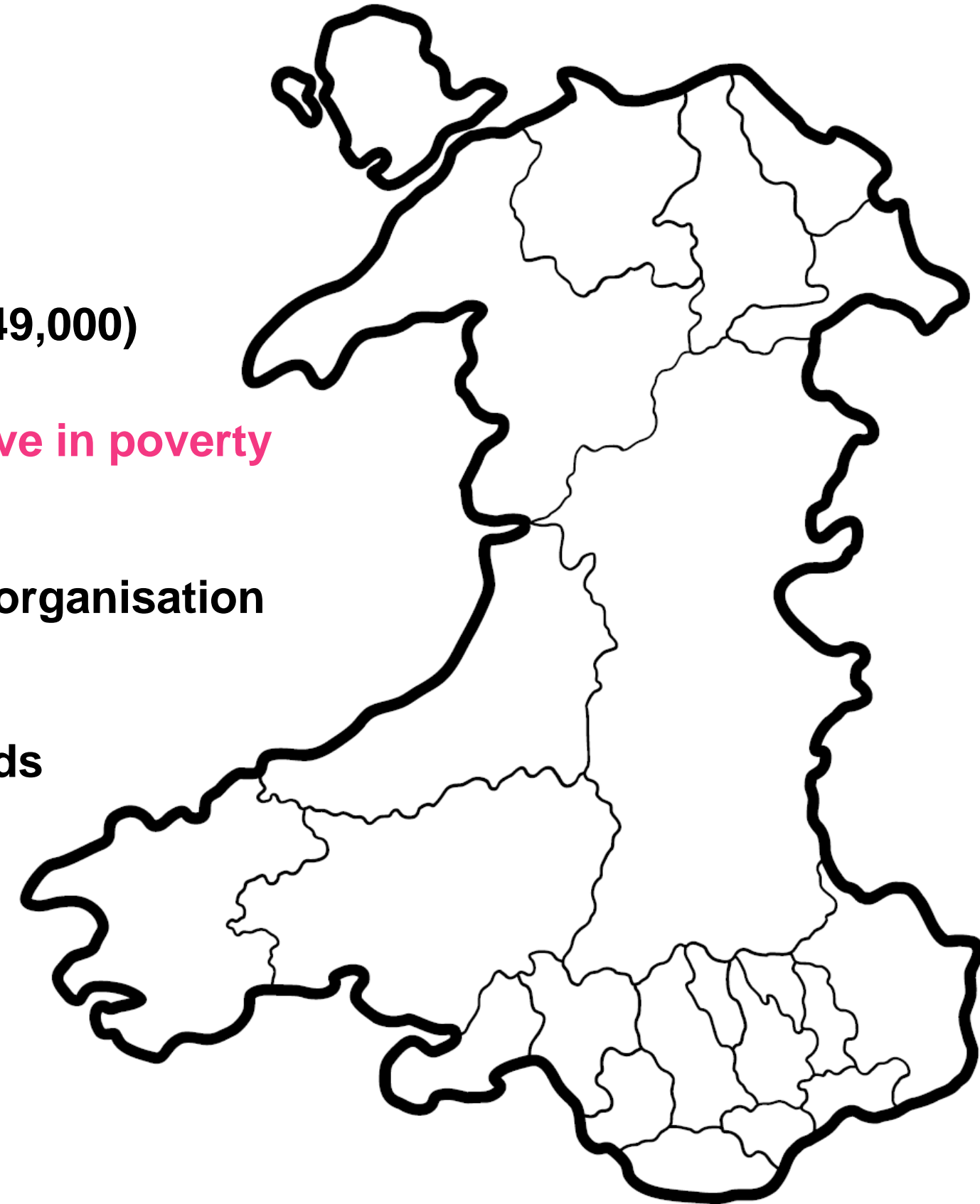
1 devolved parliament

1 national public health organisation

7 health boards

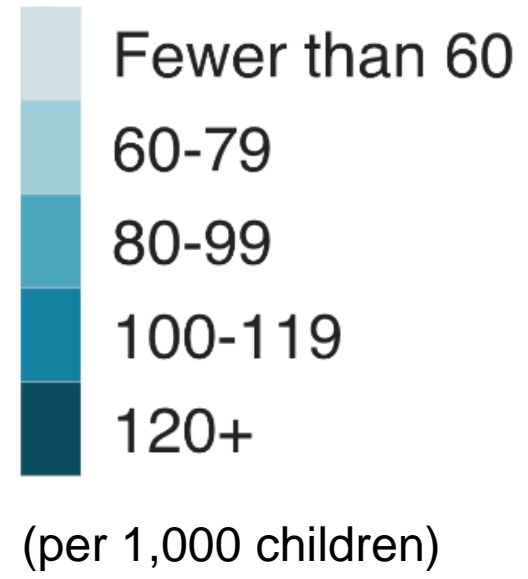
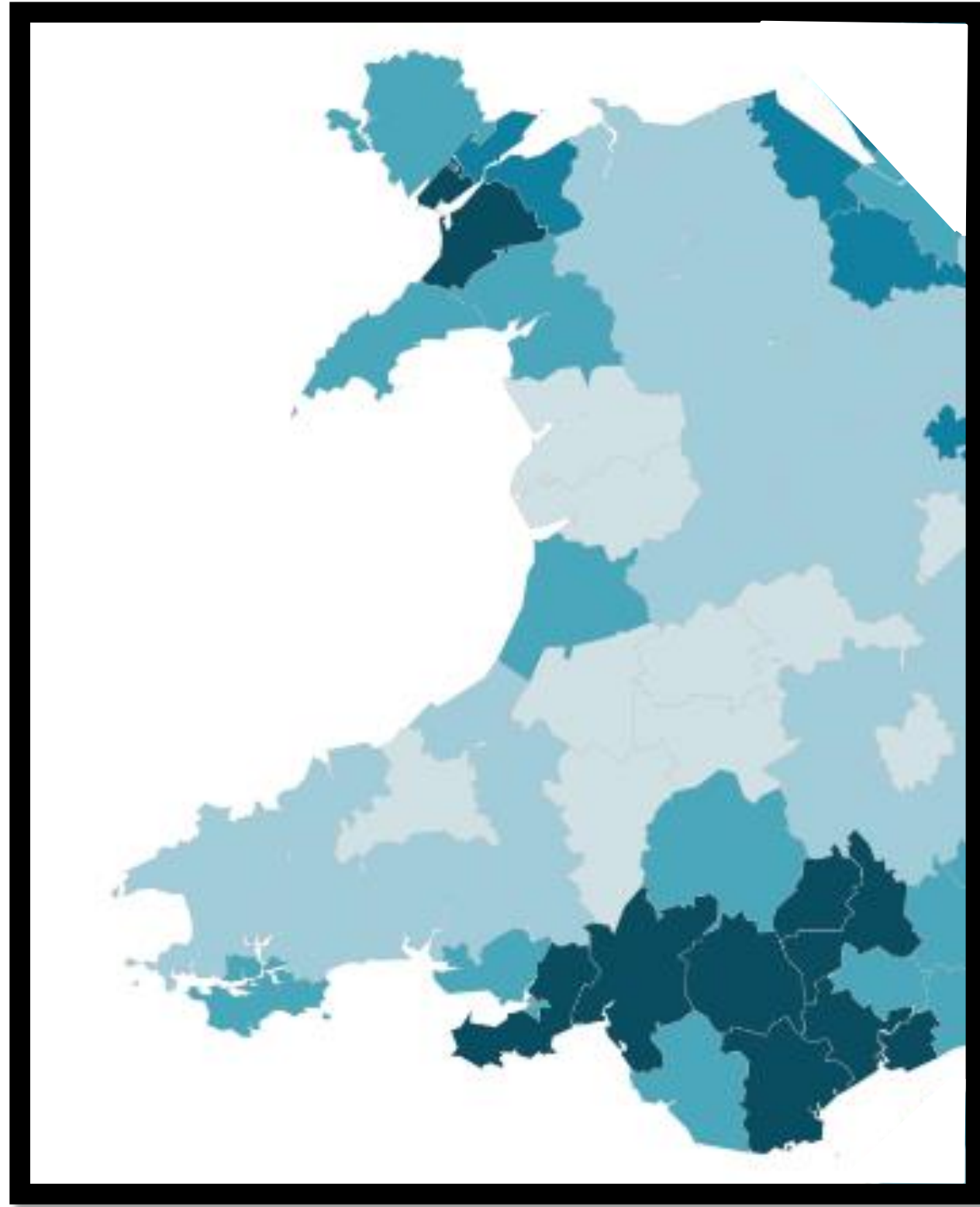
13 Public Services Boards

22 local authorities



Child mortality (age 1-5)

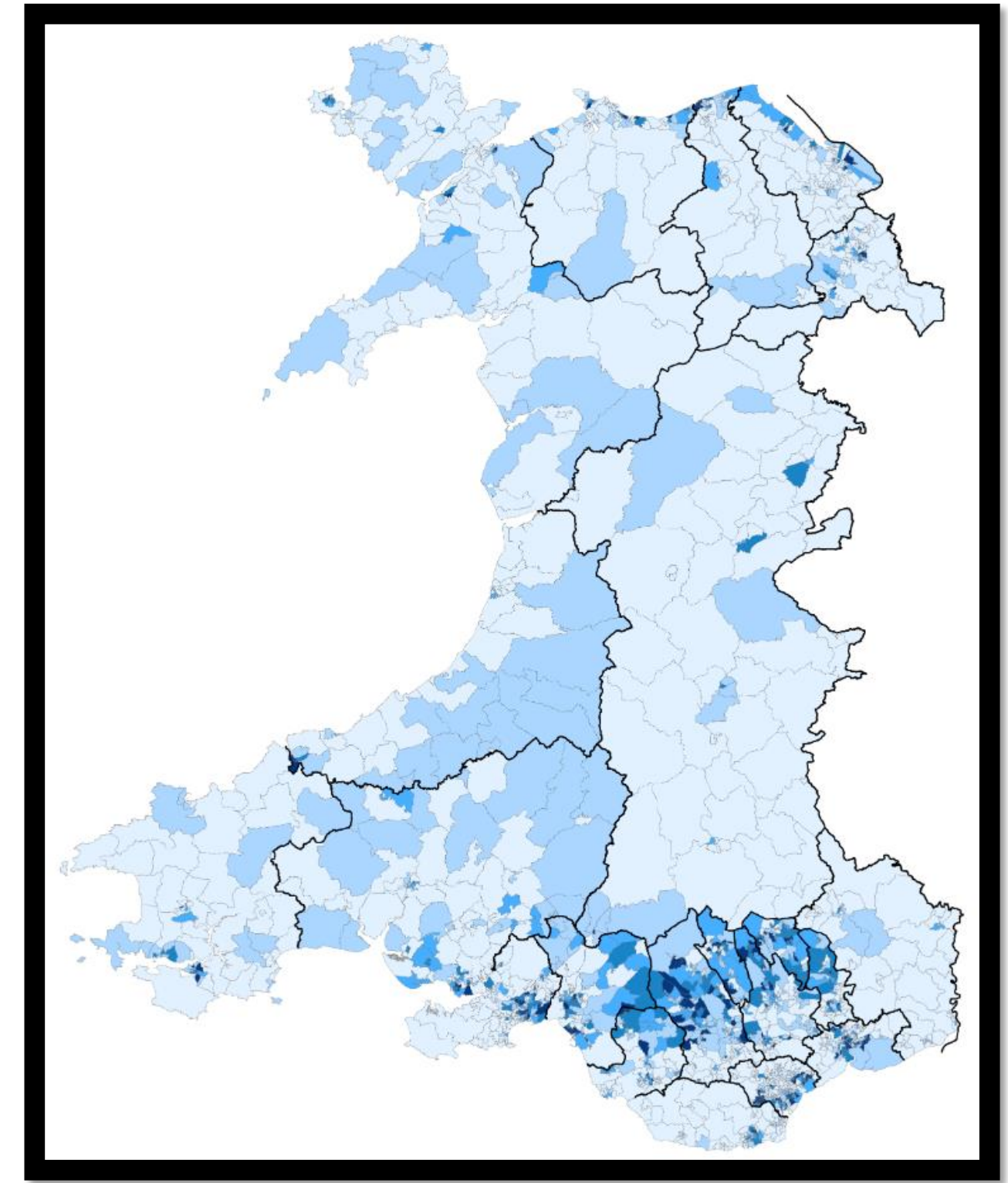
1851



Source: University of Cambridge www.PopulationsPast via bbc.co.uk/news/health-57730353

Welsh index of multiple deprivation

2019



Source: Welsh Government

Powers of Welsh Parliament (Senedd)

Devolved

Health and care
Housing
Education, including early years
Economic development
Local transport

Reserved

Social security
Macroeconomic and fiscal matters
National Minimum Wage
Employment law
Justice and policing

Limited powers Tax; borrowing



LLESIANT CENEDLAETHAU'R DYFODOL WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

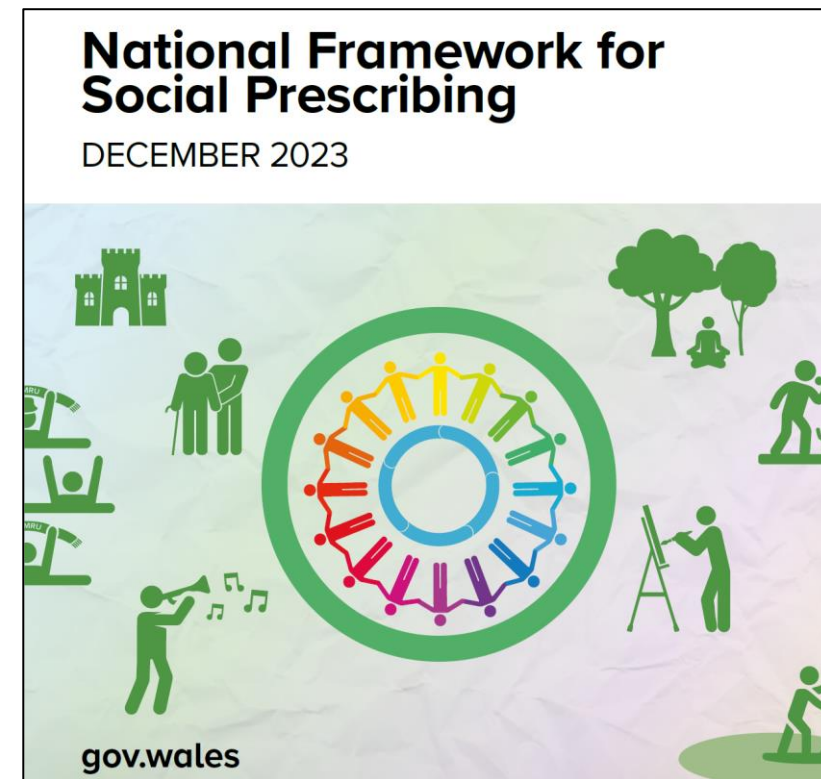


#AMoreEqualWales

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

'Putting tackling inequality at the heart of decision making'

Children and Families Measure, 2010 duties

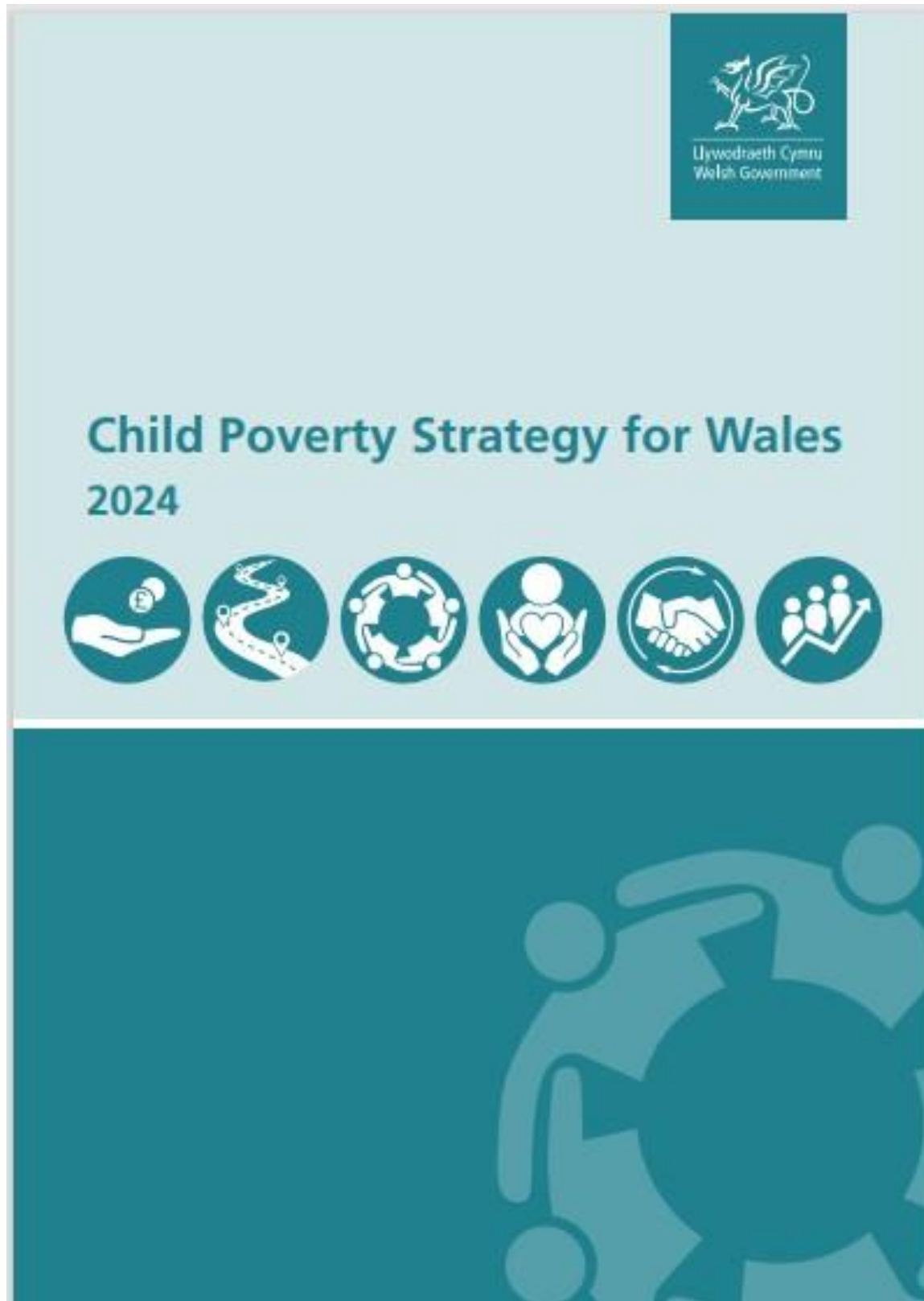


Draft health impact assessment regulations
Public Health (Wales) Act 2017

Social Partnership and Procurement
(Wales) Act 2023

Basic income pilot for care leavers





Objective 1: to reduce costs and maximise the incomes of families.



Objective 2: to create pathways out of poverty so that children and young people and their families have opportunities to realise their potential.



Objective 3: to support child and family wellbeing and make sure that work across the Welsh Government delivers for children living in poverty, including those with protected characteristics, so that they can enjoy their rights and have better outcomes.



Objective 4: to ensure children, young people and their families are treated with dignity and respect by the people and services who interact with and support them and to challenge the stigma of poverty.



Objective 5: to ensure that effective cross-government working at the national level enables strong collaboration at the regional and local level.

Cost and income

Pathways out of poverty

Support child and family wellbeing, cross government delivery

Dignity and respect

Cross government action enables strong regional & local collaboration

[Child poverty strategy for Wales: strategy and progress | GOV.WALES](https://gov.wales/child-poverty-strategy)

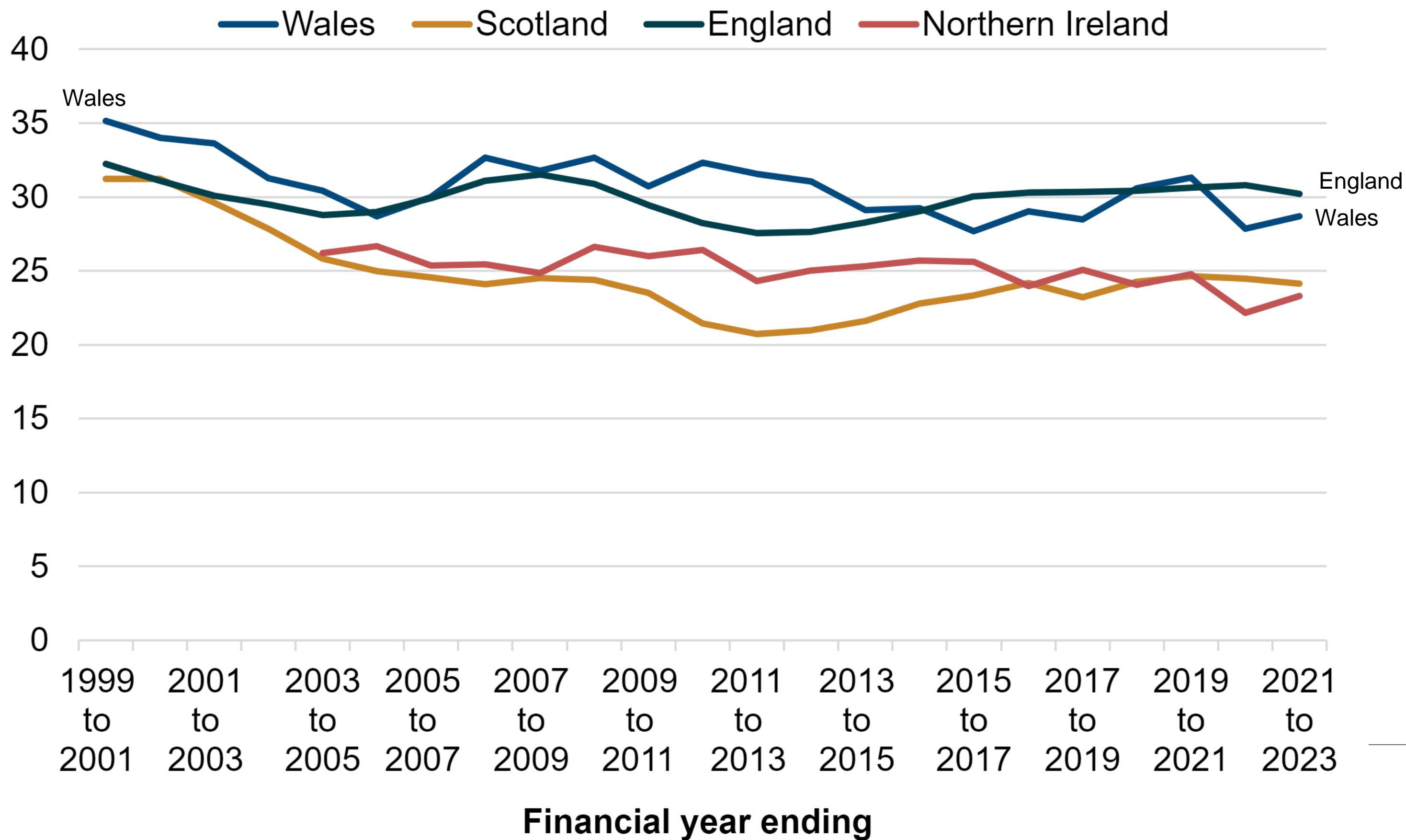
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Percentage of children living in relative income poverty (after housing costs)



Over half of households with children have **gone without heating** over the previous three months



One in five (21%) households with children have **reduced the size of their child's meal** or **skipped a meal** of their child

Nearly half (45%) of 7-11 year olds in Wales, and a quarter (26%) aged 12-18, are worried about **having enough food to eat**



Children living in cold homes are seven times more likely to have four or more **negative mental health** symptoms



Children in the lowest household income quintile are seven times more likely to experience 1+ **ACE** than the most affluent children

seven times

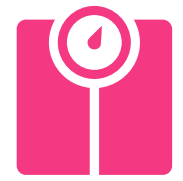
*“We feel cold, hungry
and unhappy”*

Child under 10

*“My mum cries all the
time because she has no
money. I feel really bad
and don’t know what to
do. I can’t tell her I’m
hungry because she will
cry more”*

Child aged 10-13

Living in the most disadvantaged areas in Wales means you are...



nearly **2 x** as likely to be **obese** at age 4-5



nearly **5 x** as likely to be repeatedly **absent from school**



nearly **5 x** as likely to have **no qualifications** as an adult



nearly **5 x** as likely to live in **overcrowded housing**



and **2 x** as likely to have a **chronic condition**

...compared to those in the least

What's different about Wales?

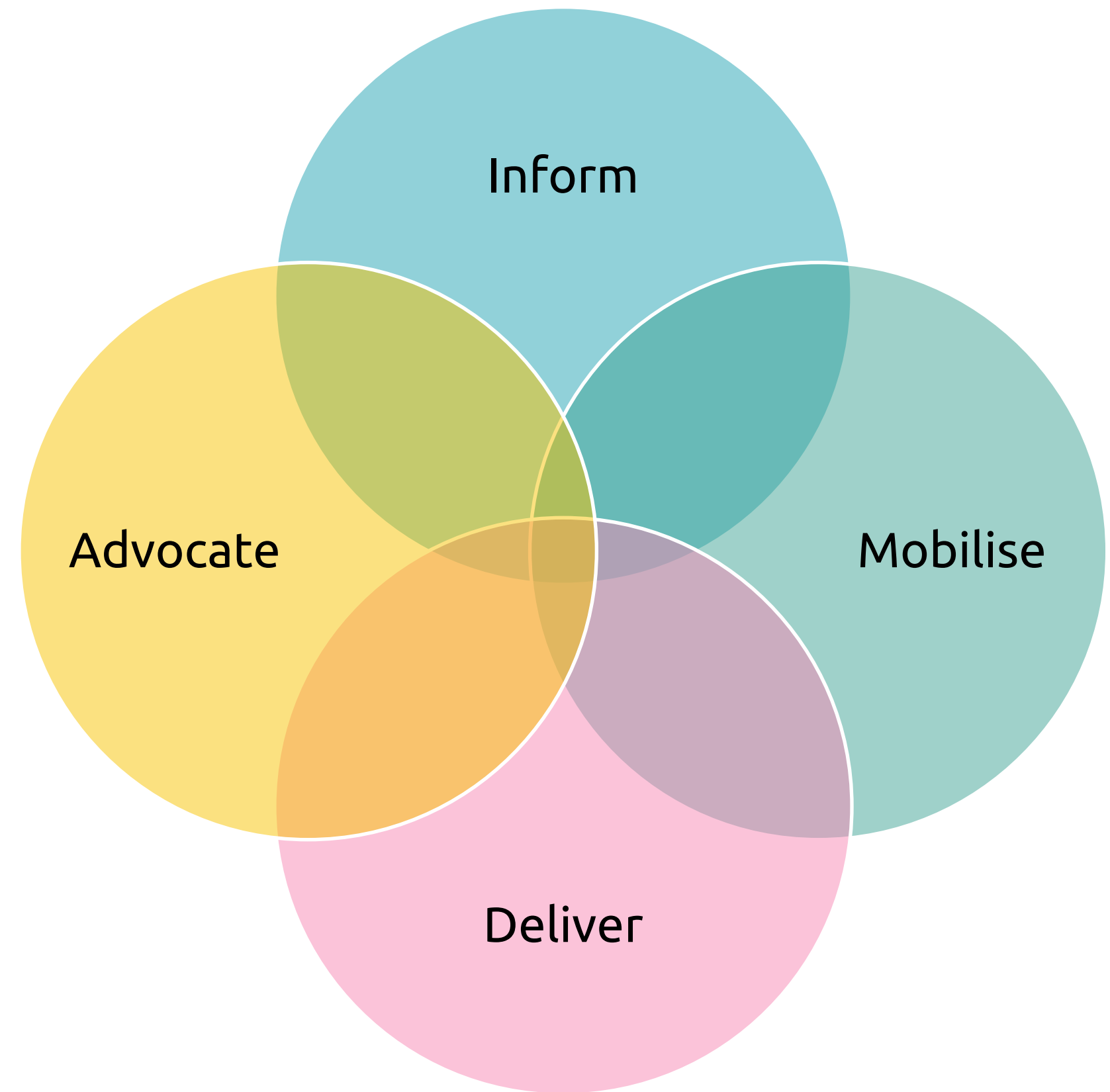
Child poverty in Wales

Public health role – examples from Wales

What next?

Role of public health

The science and art of preventing disease, prolonging life and promoting health through the **organised efforts of society**



Cost and income

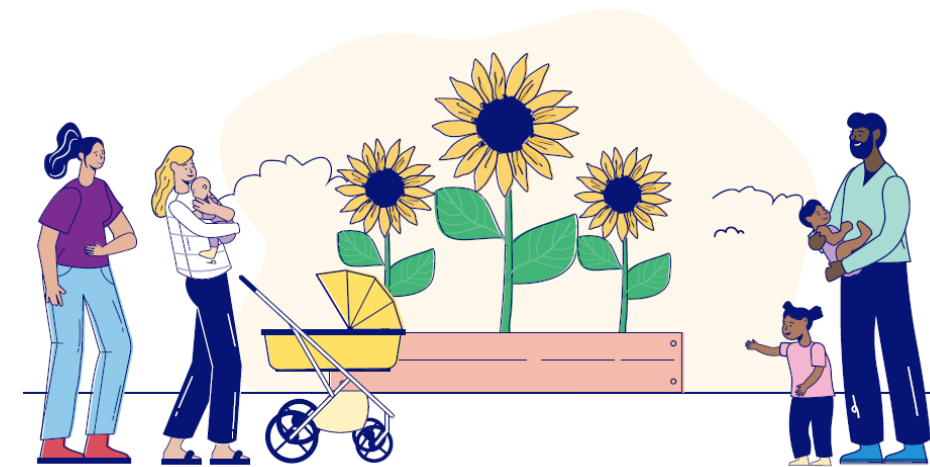


Pathways out of poverty



Fair work

Support child and family wellbeing, cross government delivery



Dignity and respect

Cross government action enables strong regional & local collaboration



Adeiladu Cymru Iachach
 Building a Healthier Wales



Llunio Lleoedd
 ar gyfer Llesiant yng Nghymru
Shaping Places
 for Well-being in Wales

Cost and income

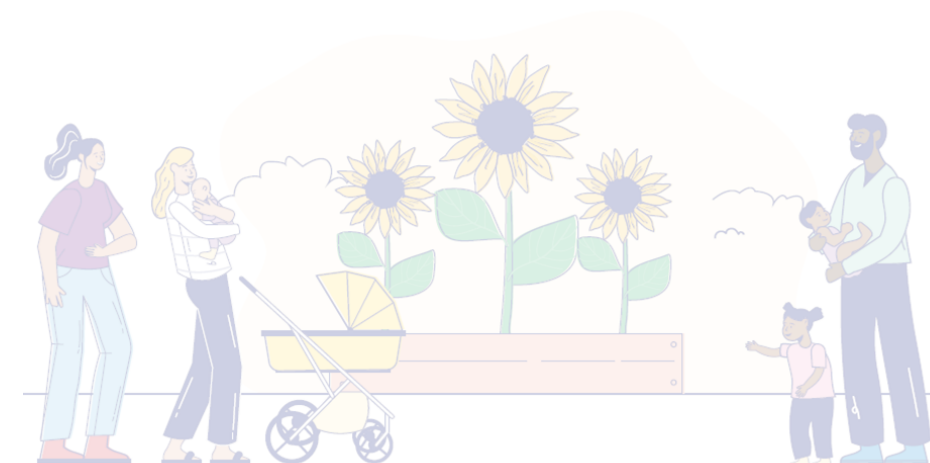


Pathways out of poverty



Fair work

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What's different about Wales?

Child poverty in Wales

Public health role – examples from Wales

- Informing child poverty strategy
- Advice on policy implementation
- Best start in life
- Convening

What next?

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Child poverty in Wales

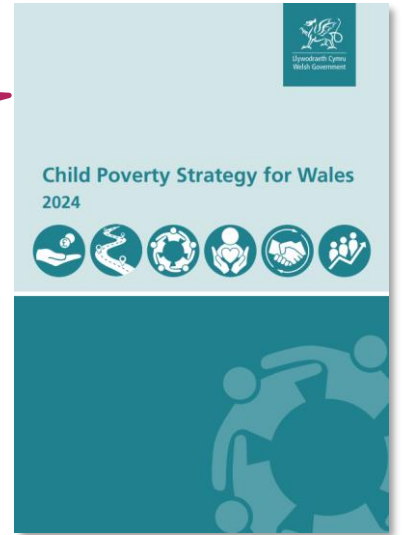
Public health role – examples from Wales

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What next?

Child poverty strategy

"The first 1,000 days of life, from conception to age 2 significantly influence the outcomes for children..."



Welsh Government engagement



Engaging – public health, third sector, Royal college

Jan 2023

Consultation on strategy

Jan 2024

Start report

Finalise and socialise report



Publish report

21 (13%) responses from health service

Link child poverty and health inequalities

'this is the most health noise I can ever remember hearing about a non-health issue'

Children and the cost of living crisis in Wales

What's different about Wales?

Child poverty in Wales

Public health role – examples from Wales

- Informing child poverty strategy
- Advice on policy implementation
- Best start in life
- Convening

What next?

Universal free primary school meals & childcare expansion

- Value children in the now - opportunities for play
- Supply chain
- Fair working conditions
- Evaluation essential

Proportionate universalism should guide planning



Provision



Most deprived

Least deprived

Universal provision, more intensive for those with greatest needs

Quality essential



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Building a Healthier Wales

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Child poverty in Wales

Public health role – examples from Wales

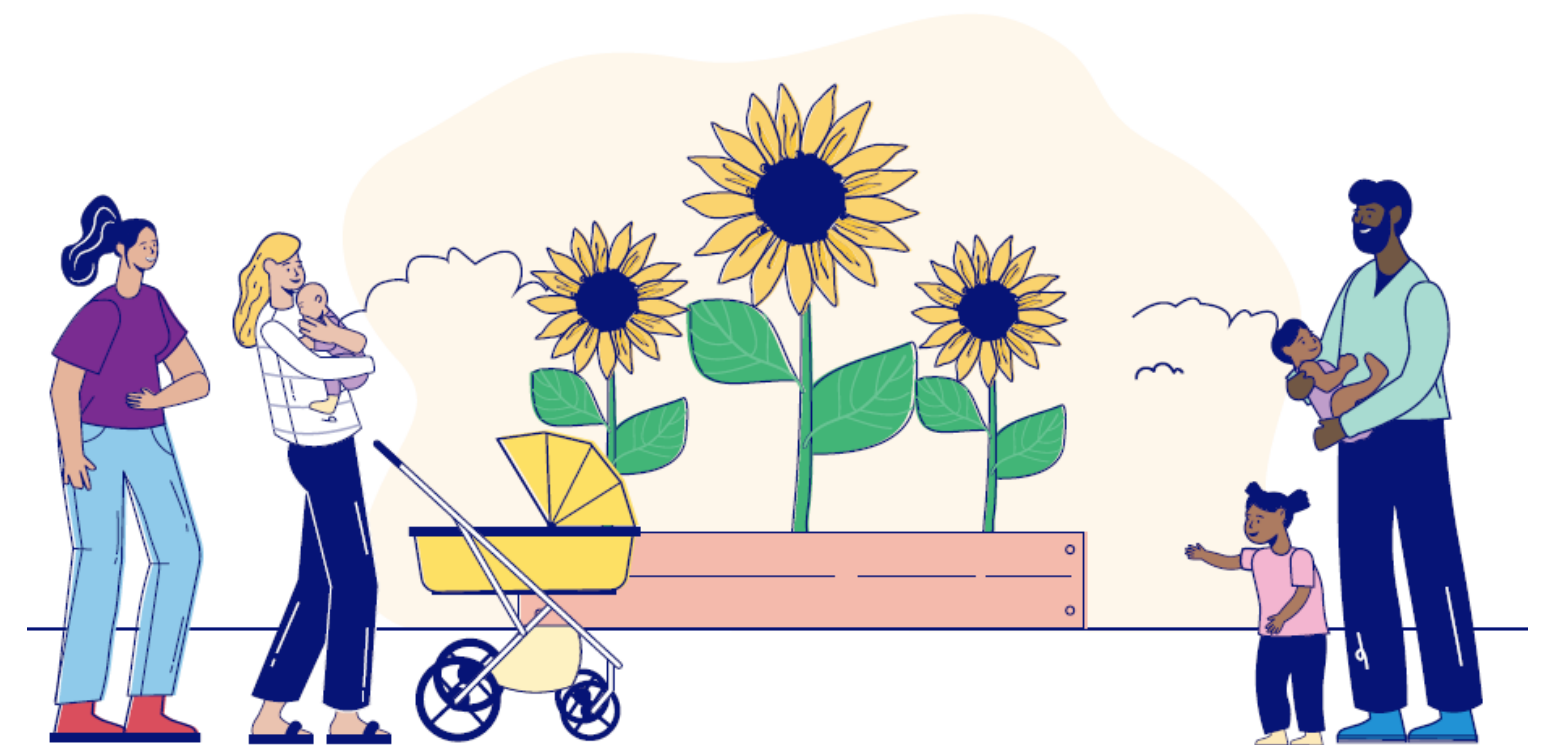
- Informing child poverty strategy
- Advice on policy implementation
- **Best start in life**
- Convening

What next?

Best start in life: First 1,000 days

A public health approach to supporting parenting

- Parenting matters for children's wellbeing now and into future
- Parents want to do the best for their children
- Help create the conditions for families in Wales to flourish
- Good mental health and social support act as buffers
- Action to improve outcomes in the first 1000 days and reduce child poverty should be a strategic priority across the system in Wales.



What's different about Wales?

Child poverty in Wales

Public health role – examples from Wales

- Informing child poverty strategy
- Advice on policy implementation
- Best start in life
- **System convening**

Final thoughts



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Building a Healthier Wales

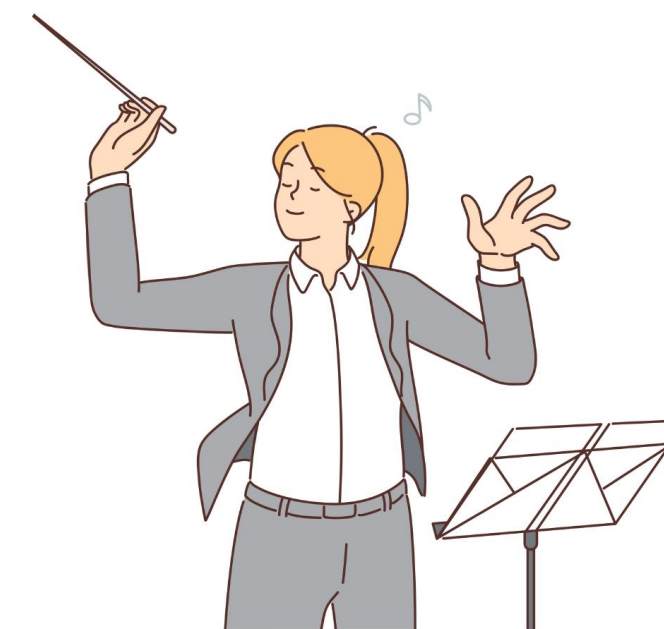
Income maximisation

Free school meals/child care

Cost of living summit

Cost of living case studies

Child poverty focus



<https://publichealthnetwork.cymru/topic/building-a-healthier-wales/>

What's different about Wales?

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What next?

That's why the fight to lift children out of poverty will be at the heart of this Welsh Government's mission.



No childhood should begin blighted by poverty.

...

*To do this, we will **renew our focus on supporting the first 1,000 days** of a child's life. Those very earliest days lay the foundation for a child's life, and for their family as a whole.*

...

*That will require **a long-term and co-ordinated response** across Government, across public services and, indeed, across Wales.”*

Vaughan Gething, First Minister of Wales

Statement on priorities in Welsh Parliament, 16 April 2024

Time to think differently

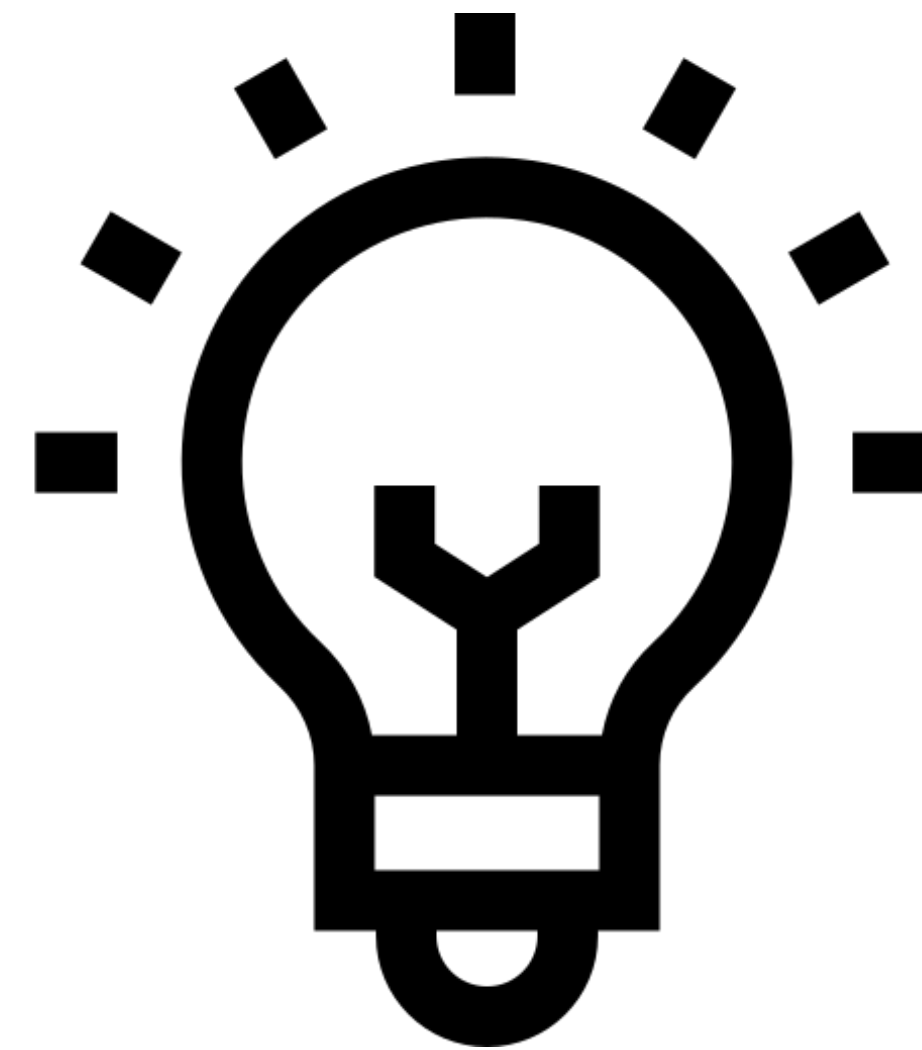
Our role – leaders within systems

Our challenges

- What is and isn't in control
- Levels of systems

Our tools

- Inform – advocate - mobilise





Llunio Lleoedd
ar gyfer Llesiant yng Nghymru
Shaping Places
for Well-being in Wales



Public Services Boards

Well-being plans – focus on poverty

Apply systems approaches

Learning

Supported by



This project is part of the Health Foundation's Shaping Places programme. The Health Foundation is an independent charitable organisation working to build a healthier UK.

Long term



Person

Place

System drivers

Infrastructure

Rights of the child

Article 2

All children have these rights no matter what.

Article 6

You have the right to life and to grow up to be healthy.

Article 12

Your right to say what you think should happen and be listened to.

Article 27

Your right to a good standard of living.

Article 29

Your right to become the best that you can be.

