Welsh Affairs Select Committee inquiry on

Working towards ending child poverty in Wales

Submission from Feeding Britain (May 2026)

About Feeding Britain

Feeding Britain is an award-winning charity with a vision of a UK where no one goes hungry. We support a national network of 140 regional and local anti-hunger partnerships comprising more than 700 frontline organisations – ranging from community centres and schools, to local authorities and social enterprises.

By piloting innovative and effective new projects, and showing how severe or chronic food insecurity can be prevented, we are designing a road map for eliminating hunger from the communities we serve. By sharing this knowledge with others, and using it to work for systemic changes at a national level, we will ensure hunger becomes a thing of the past.

Consultation response

How effectively do the UK and Welsh governments work together towards ending child poverty in Wales?

Feeding Britian has consulted with our partners in Wales including the Merthyr Tydfil Food Prosperity Network, which delivers a range of projects to tackle hunger in the area. In their experience, the Welsh Government is often trying to fix the impact of decisions it didn't make. While the Welsh Government is doing what it can with the tools it has, the biggest drivers of poverty – income, benefits, cost of living – sit with the UK Government. On the ground this results in a constant cycle of trying to soften the blow rather than stop it at source.

How well do devolved and reserved agencies co-ordinate their work towards ending child poverty in Wales?

The intention on the part of the Welsh and UK Governments to tackle child poverty is there, but families need more than aligned intentions. They need things to actually line up in real life. When one part of the system is pushing people into hardship and another part is trying to support them out of it, it feels like a case of constantly firefighting.

The Twyn Community Hub in Merthyr Tydfil is supporting working parents who are still relying on food support, and children coming into the hub because there is food, because it's warm, because it feels safe. What starts as "we need a meal" is never just that – it's debt, stress, poor mental health, isolation, transport issues and others. From their perspective, services don't always join up the way families need them to. People don't live their lives in alignment with government departments and portfolios, but support is often set up that way. For this reason, community spaces like theirs end up being the place where everything comes together for them. This highlights the type of co-ordinated support that should be provided by the Welsh and UK Governments.

There are additional challenges for some communities in Wales that should be factored into the approach to child poverty. For example, our partners work with families at the Glynmil traveller site in Merthyr Tydfil. These families must navigate barriers to transport, stigma, and access to services, making it even harder for them to get the support they need.

Are children's voices in Wales heard loudly enough by policymakers in the UK Government?

Twyn Community Hub has said they hear from children all the time in what they say, but also what they don't say. They feel left out, that they don't have the same opportunities, and worry about things children shouldn't have to worry about. This need to shape policy and decision-making more, not just be a part of consultation.

How could better data be harnessed to design and deliver measures that more effectively address child poverty in Wales?

In 2024 the Welsh Government established the Streamlining Welsh Benefits (SWB) Steering Group, tasked with coordinating efforts between the Welsh Government and local authorities to create a more coherent benefits system in Wales. The Bevan Foundation, one of the group's members, has noted that their latest progress report states "despite complexity in administration, legislation and data sharing, it is possible to simplify the user experience in cases where an application is required or where data is already available to local authorities".[1]

With regard to the collection and sharing of data, while the numbers matter, they don't always tell the full story of what is happening on the ground. More local, real-time understanding of what's actually happening in communities is needed. We need to connect the dots between school attendance, food need, housing stress, mental health, and what we're seeing in community settings.

As well as obtaining better data, better use of data is just as important. It should help us step in earlier, not just respond when things hit crisis. We can often see when a family is starting to struggle long before they reach breaking point, but systems don't always act until it's too late.

We strongly welcome the introduction of the Welsh Benefits System which could act as an example of best practice for other nations to follow, in both simplifying and streamlining poorer families' access to a wide range of support. We encourage the Welsh Government to complete the rollout of the System as quickly as possible and to report on changes in the take-up of those benefits and services covered by the System.

[1] https://www.bevanfoundation.org/views/welsh-benefits-priority/