



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Building Resilient Communities

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Taking forward the
Tackling Poverty Action Plan
Annual Report 2014

Building Resilient Communities: Taking forward the Tackling Poverty Action Plan

Audience	This document is aimed at members of the public and stakeholders with an interest in the tackling poverty agenda. The wide ranging policy areas covered by the Annual Report mean that representatives from across the public, private and third sectors will have an interest in the document.
Overview	The document sets out progress made to date by the Welsh Government against commitments made in Building Resilient Communities: Taking forward the Tackling Poverty Action Plan published in July 2013. As well as progress to date, the report outlines next steps for the year ahead.
Action Required	None – for information only.
Further information	Enquiries about this document should be directed to: Tackling Poverty Team Local Government and Communities Division Welsh Government Rhydycar Business Park Merthyr Tydfil CF48 1UZ Email: TacklingPoverty-MinisterialBusiness@wales.gsi.gov.uk
Additional copies	This document can be accessed from the Welsh Government's website at: www.wales.gov.uk/topics/people-and-communities/tacklingpoverty/publications/taking-forward-tack-pov-plan/?lang=en
Related documents	Building Resilient Communities: Taking forward the Tackling Poverty Action Plan – www.wales.gov.uk/topics/people-and-communities/tacklingpoverty/publications/taking-forward-tack-pov-plan/?lang=en

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Ministerial Foreword

When we published Building Resilient Communities (the refreshed Tackling Poverty Action Plan) last year we committed to report on progress annually. We set targets in the key areas where we want to make a difference. Here we have set out progress to date because we want to be transparent and accountable for our actions.

The targets set were deliberately challenging to push ourselves and our partners to achieve as much as we can, and focus on shared priorities. As is set out in this report, we are making very positive progress in some areas and recognise that we need to do more in others.

The UK Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission recently welcomed the collaborative approach being taken to tackle poverty in Wales. They also welcomed the inclusion of specific milestones and targets in our Action Plan and would like to see this emulated elsewhere in the UK.

We are only one year into the revised Tackling Poverty Action Plan (referred to hereafter as 'the Action Plan'). In some of our communities poverty has become entrenched and we recognise that it will take time to fully address this. Measuring the success of individual policies and programmes is not quick or easy. We recognise that overnight improvements are not always possible.

The whole of the Welsh Government – all Ministers and departments – are taking forward policies to tackle poverty and improve outcomes for people in low income households. We know that no single department can deliver the tackling poverty agenda alone. Nor will any improvements be achieved without our partners across the public, private and third sectors. That is why we continue to work with others – bringing people together to deliver more with less, listening to their views and relying on their expertise.

The Action Plan details our key objectives, but we will continue to react to emerging aspects of poverty in Wales. That is why we have included specific sections on in-work and rural poverty in this report, acknowledging their prevalence and the actions we are taking to address them.

Addressing child poverty remains central to our approach. The Action Plan incorporates and broadens the delivery of commitments made in our Child Poverty Strategy. As a Government, we remain committed to the target of eradicating child poverty by 2020, though we acknowledge the scale of this challenge. We will continue to review our Child Poverty Strategy and an evaluation of the impact of the Strategy, will be published later this month.

We recognise there is much more we need to do to tackle poverty, particularly against a backdrop of the welfare reforms being introduced by the UK Government. These changes are expected to hit poor households in Wales the hardest. However, as a Government we are committed to doing all that we can and achieving the targets we have set.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeff Cuthbert'.

Jeff Cuthbert

Minister for Communities
& Tackling Poverty



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Vaughan Gething'.

Vaughan Gething

Deputy Minister for
Tackling Poverty

Preventing Poverty

- Improving attainment for Flying Start children
- Breaking the link between educational attainment and poverty

Key Actions and Achievements

- Expansion of Flying Start
- Workforce and new business development within the childcare sector
- Launch and first year implementation of the Early Years and Childcare Plan
- Better join up of Flying Start, Families First and Communities First
- Launch of Rewriting the Future, to raise ambition and attainment in schools
- Pupil Deprivation Grant – more than doubled for 2014/15.
- Launch of Schools Challenge Cymru - £20 million for 40 secondary schools
- Progress made, and on track to meet the educational attainment target for 7 year olds

Helping people into work

- Reducing the number of young people not earning or learning
- Creating 5,000 opportunities for non-working households

Key Actions and Achievements

- Youth Engagement and Progression Framework published
- 22 local authorities produced action plans to deliver the Framework
- Gap between Wales and the UK re the proportion of young people aged 19 – 24 who are NEET is narrower than it has been since 2008
- Jobs Growth Wales created 13,223 job opportunities
- Lift Programme launched and operational in 6 of 8 areas
- Over 200 people already supported into Lift training and employment opportunities

Mitigating the impact of poverty

- Equality of health provision
- Quality affordable housing

Key Actions and Achievements

- Good progress being made towards the 2020 dental health target for 5 year olds
- Closer working between the NHS and Communities First
- Inverse Care Law pilots underway
- Pilots to increase uptake of smoking cessation services by pregnant women completed
- Excellent progress towards affordable homes target – so target increased by a third
- 60% of social housing stock achieved WHQS
- All social landlords required to include social clauses in procurement contracts
- Additional £1.3 million for Discretionary Housing Payments
- £100m awarded for Vibrant and Viable Places, including £7 m VVP Tackling Poverty Fund

Introduction

The proportion of households in Wales living in relative poverty remains stubbornly high. Around a quarter of adults and a third of children are living in households below 60 per cent of the contemporary UK median income, after housing costs. We do not believe that this is acceptable or inevitable, which is why we are committed to tackling poverty.

The Action Plan sets the direction for the entire Welsh Government to reduce poverty and improve outcomes for people from low income households. We have identified six key priorities where we believe we can have most impact. These are: early years; educational attainment; reducing the number of young people not in employment, education or training (NEET); reducing the number of workless households; ensuring equal access to high quality healthcare; and housing and regeneration.

In this report we have set out progress towards the relevant targets¹ in the Action Plan for each of these areas, as well as details of the work being done to achieve the targets and what we will do in the coming year. In Annex A we have also set out progress towards the other targets in the Action Plan not directly related to the six priorities and the milestones we said we would reach in 2013/14.

Governance, accountability and embedding tackling poverty

The following formal and informal groups and networks have been established to support the delivery of the Action Plan and the tackling poverty agenda more broadly:

- **Tackling Poverty Implementation Board** – the board is chaired by the Deputy Minister for Tackling Poverty. Its members are senior Welsh Government officials who have responsibility for the actions and milestones in the Action Plan.
- **Welsh Government Tackling Poverty Champions** – tasked with helping to embed tackling poverty across their respective departments and portfolios. A key part of their role is to help identify further opportunities for policy development and alignment.
- **Local Authority Anti Poverty Champions** (both elected members and officials) – responsible for promoting and implementing policies to tackle poverty in their authorities. The Deputy Minister for Tackling Poverty has asked them to specifically focus on young people who are NEET and low birth weight babies.
- **Tackling Poverty External Advisory Group** – providing expert advice and opinion on the Welsh Government's approach to the tackling poverty agenda.

We also engage in dialogue with external organisations working directly with children and families through the End Child Poverty Network Cymru, coordinated by Children in Wales and including representation from across the voluntary and statutory sectors. They work to ensure that policies are in place at all levels of Government which contribute to eradicating child poverty in Wales.

¹ Further information on each target is provided, compared to the original wording in the Action Plan, where appropriate. This includes clarification on the target base year and the source of the data. Please note that any changes to the wording do not alter the nature of any targets, making them either easier or harder. The intention is just to be clear about what we are saying we will do and when we will do it by.

Collaboration and integration – achieving more

The economic climate and budgetary constraint in recent years means that resources are limited. It is vital the Welsh Government and our partners use staff, funding and expertise as effectively as possible. That is why we must work together across departments, programmes and organisational boundaries.

We recognise that many partners and some of our own programmes have similar objectives and work with similar groups of people. The Deputy Minister for Tackling Poverty held four Regional Tackling Poverty events across Wales in February and March 2014. The purpose of the events was to develop a stronger and more consistent approach to working together towards shared objectives. The audience for the events included Local Authority Anti-Poverty Champions, representatives from Local Health Boards, Communities First, Flying Start and Families First. There will be further events in the autumn.

The Deputy Minister for Tackling Poverty has established a task and finish group to ensure that a shared outcomes framework for Communities First, Families First and Flying Start is developed by September 2014. This builds on a consistent call for a framework from each group of regional tackling poverty partners.

In addition, stronger links have been developed with key programmes across the Welsh Government and beyond to support improved delivery and outcomes in Communities First Clusters.

Welfare Reform

Many of the levers to tackle poverty do not sit with the Welsh Government and we must acknowledge the key role of the UK Government. We were disappointed that the UK draft Child Poverty Strategy did not recognise the impact of the tax and benefit changes introduced by the UK Government upon child poverty. Welfare reforms are having a significant impact on the lives of people across Wales and on devolved services. We share the view of the UK Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission that the Strategy is a missed opportunity that falls short of what is needed.

The Welfare Reform Ministerial Task and Finish Group commissioned a three-stage programme of research to assess the impact of the reforms in Wales which was completed and published in February 2014. Our assessment of the impact of welfare reform, which focuses on working-age people, estimates that annual benefit and tax credit entitlements in Wales will be reduced by around £900 million in 2015/16. Even after taking account of the impact of changes to pensions and personal taxes, the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) estimate that this loss will be still be over £700 million.

The latest research that we have commissioned has been undertaken by the IFS. It highlights the extent to which UK Government choices on personal tax and benefit changes have the biggest adverse impact upon disabled households, poor households, non-working households and those of working-age with children around the poverty line. Other IFS research shows the effect of Universal Credit being outweighed by the impact of other tax and benefit reforms. This makes tackling poverty much harder. That should not be the mission or impact of any government.

Whilst the Welsh Government has made clear that it cannot pick up the financial shortfall resulting from the UK Government's welfare changes, the research has and will continue to help inform our response to the reforms. We remain committed to doing what we can in the context of a reducing budget to help those hardest hit to manage the changes. That is why, for example, we have made:

- Funding available under the Discretionary Assistance Fund to support people who are most in need. In 2013/14, £7.2m was provided to support people in an emergency (Emergency Assistance Payments) or to help them live independently in the community (Individual Assistance Payments).
- Further funding of over £1 million available in 2013/14 to support free and independent front-line advice services as the impact of Welfare changes hit communities. This funding supported services that offered help with welfare benefits, debt and money management, housing and discrimination. A further £1 million has been announced to support front-line advice services in 2014/15.

The introduction of the UK Government's Universal Credit means that we need to change eligibility arrangements for our passported benefits, such as free school meals. Recognising the importance placed on these benefits, we have ensured that short term arrangements were in place ahead of the introduction of Universal Credit; we will keep these arrangements under review.

Remploy

Welsh Ministers have opposed the UK Government's decision to close all Remploy factories following the publication of the Sayce review. We lobbied the UK Government to devolve responsibility in Wales, this was refused. In response, the Welsh Government established the Employer Support Grant (ESG) scheme to offer financial support for employers looking to provide work to eligible disabled Remploy workers. The policy is supported with more than £2 million of funding per annum.

The latest figures show over 250 former Remploy workers have now found new jobs with support from the grant. A number of new enterprises, founded by disabled former Remploy staff, were also supported by the Welsh Government.

Growth, sustainable jobs and skills

We recognise that jobs and growth are fundamental to tackling poverty, and all evidence shows that work is the best route out of poverty. The Welsh economy and labour market has grown strongly over the past year, closing the gap in employment with the UK.

Our support for business is helping to promote the economic recovery in Wales. Since publication of the Wales Infrastructure Investment Plan two years ago, we are expecting to deliver additional investment of £2.7bn to support investment priorities and maximise the benefits to the Welsh economy and public services. This includes capital allocations of over £1.1bn and a further £1.6bn through our programme of innovative finance. We remain committed to gaining the best value possible to tackle poverty in each area of procurement spending.

Our Policy Statement on Skills sets out a vision for employment and skills policy in Wales over the next 10 years and the responsible action needed by all stakeholders to develop a resilient, responsive and sustainable post-19 skills system. It also recognises the tough choices ahead if Wales is to deliver the skills needed to raise productivity levels and reduce barriers into employment.

Links with the equalities agenda

We recognise the close links between poverty and certain groups with protected characteristics. When considering approaches to address poverty it is important to acknowledge and focus on groups with protected characteristics at greater risk, such as disabled people, women and some minority ethnic groups.

We made a commitment in the Action Plan to dovetail with the Strategic Equality Plan. There are similar objectives in each Plan, so officials in the Fairer Futures and Tackling Poverty Divisions are working together closely to share knowledge, avoid duplication and collectively work with other departments where appropriate.

Equal opportunities is a Cross Cutting Theme in all key European funding programmes, and provides an opportunity to target those furthest from the labour market with specific action.

Early Years

Experiences in early life (and pre-birth) are profoundly influential on a person's future. Early development of language and cognitive skills are vital, as is access to high quality childcare which allows parents to work. We want every child, regardless of their circumstances, to fulfil their potential.

Target in the Action Plan:

- By 2016, increase the proportion of 3-year-olds receiving Flying Start services that have achieved or exceeded their developmental milestones² by 5 percentage points. (55 per cent of children in the Flying Start programme reached or exceeded their developmental milestone at age 3 in 2012/13).

Where are we now?

- Summary statistics for the Flying Start programme were published for the first time during summer 2013; therefore only one year of data is currently available. The base year for this target is 2012-13 when 55 per cent of 3 year olds receiving Flying Start services achieved or exceeded their developmental milestones.
- The next update will be published in mid July 2014 and will include data for 2013-14. This will provide an early indication of progress towards this target.

Key Programmes/Policies:

Early Years and Childcare Plan

The Plan was launched in July 2013. It sets out the direction of travel for the next 10 years with actions and timescales for delivery. The Plan brings coherence across different policies and programmes impacting on and influencing the early years. The key themes are children's health and well-being; supporting families and parents; high-quality early education and childcare; effective primary education; and raising standards.

Flying Start

We have committed to double the number of children and their families benefiting from Flying Start, which is clearly reflected in our budget where we have allocated an additional £55 million in revenue and £19m of capital funding over the next three years to support expansion. The expanded programme is being targeted using income benefit data, which is a proxy indicator for poverty.

In 2012 -2013, 23,579 children benefited from Flying Start Health Visitor services. Overall 90 per cent full or reduced offers of childcare in a Flying Start childcare setting were taken up in 2012-13. We have therefore exceeded the interim milestone to increase take-up to 85 per cent by 2013.

2 The Flying Start Health Visitor assesses each child in receipt of Flying Start services using an appropriate Welsh Government approved developmental assessment tool. This tool assesses a child's development across key areas relating to movement, manipulation, visual, hearing, speech and language, and social interaction, comparing the child's progress with a norm derived from a standard reference group of children of a similar age.

A series of reports from the National Evaluation of Flying Start were published at the end of 2013. It shows that the programme has resulted in awareness of, referral to and take-up of parenting programmes being higher amongst parents. It also shows that parents had positive perceptions of the extent to which Flying Start had provided support and advice that helped them improve as parents and helped their child learn and develop. The report on qualitative research with high-need parents concluded that “experiencing the Flying Start programme has been life-changing for some high need families”.

Families First

Families First was set up in 2010 to play a key role in addressing child poverty in Wales. It works with local authorities to provide co-ordinated support and a range of projects to help families experiencing multiple difficulties. Families First projects are excellent examples of how early intervention can help vulnerable families address problems as soon as they arise.

The programme has helped over 3,000 families in Wales with a range of needs to receive support during a nine month period in 2013/2014. Almost 1,800 of those families signed up to specific Families First action plan, and the remainder were referred to a range of projects as a result of the support they had through the Welsh Government’s Families First programme.

The programme is subject to a three year evaluation designed to gauge the delivery and impact of the programme. Evaluation of our work is vital if we are to ensure we are meeting our targets and using resources efficiently. The Evaluation of Families First: Year Two Report shows how Families First is making a positive contribution to our work to tackle child poverty. The year two evaluation report indicated that the process for commissioning strategic projects better reflects the needs of families than projects prior to Families First. There is also evidence that the programme has facilitated improved multi-agency working to support families.

Workforce and new business development within the childcare sector

Increasing the number of child care businesses by providing advice, support and funding where there are gaps in provision is a priority for the Welsh Government. We will provide advice to businesses on the benefits and practicalities of adopting family friendly policies.

Case study:

Returning to education and improving job prospects

Helen is a young, single parent and lives with her mum and her three year old daughter. She is a full-time mum but has aspirations to start a career with children after previously working as a shop assistant. Before getting pregnant she was studying a Level 2 childcare course at college and since the birth has felt that she was stuck in the house with her daughter.

Helen had a difficult birth, didn't have time to bond with her daughter and has struggled with post-natal depression. After becoming a mum she lost all her confidence, was scared about parenting and didn't have any close friends in the area.

Flying Start has been able to do a lot to help Helen who has been keen to take up their support. She has taken up two parenting programmes and training in First Aid and Food Hygiene, where she has made a number of close friends. She has also taken up two self-confidence courses and is currently studying sign language. In a few months' time she is resuming her studies and taking a Level 3 childcare qualification so she can work with primary school children. In addition, the boost to Helen's confidence has encouraged her to volunteer at the Flying Start Toy Library.

Breaking the link between Poverty and Educational Attainment

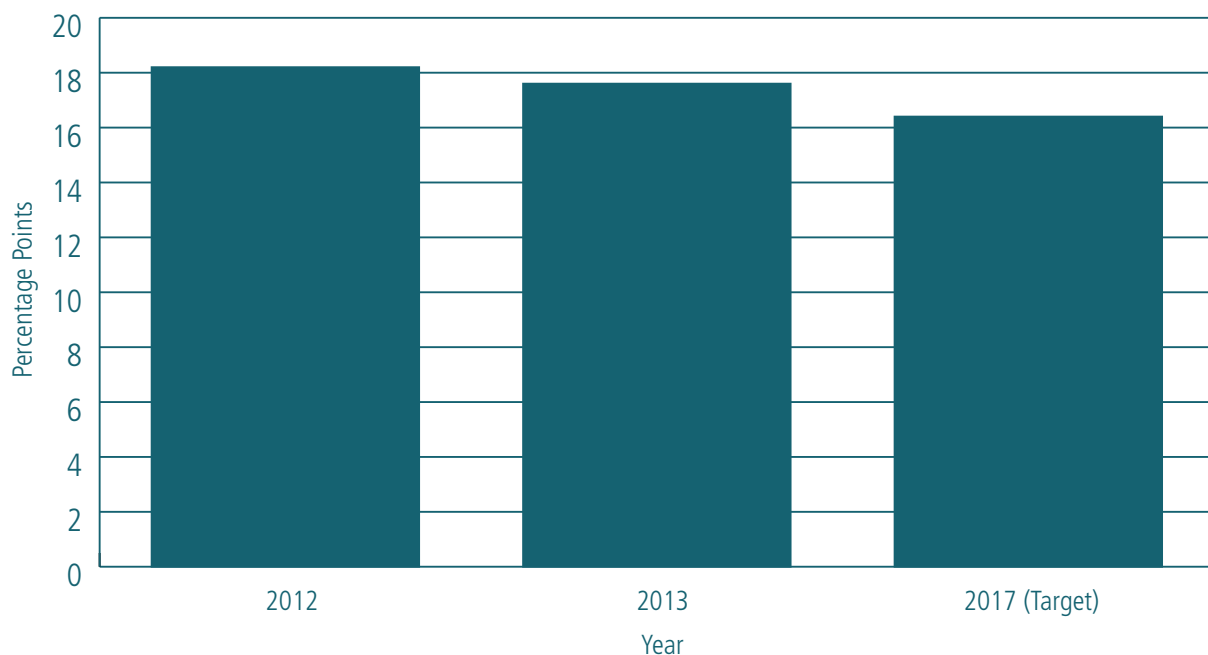
Children who receive free school meals (a proxy measure for children in poverty) tend to do significantly less well at school than other children, and the difference in attainment becomes more pronounced as they travel through their school career. While we want all children to do better at school, we want to increase the pace of improvement for those pupils eligible for free school meals to narrow the gap between children in poverty and their counterparts.

Targets in the Action Plan:

- To narrow the gap in attainment levels between learners aged 7 eligible for free school meals and those that are not eligible for free school meals, who achieve the expected levels at the end of the Foundation Phase, as measured by the Foundation Phase Indicator, by 10 per cent by 2017.
- To improve the overall attainment levels of students eligible for free school meals, measured as the proportion of learners eligible for free school meals at age 15 who achieve Level 2 inclusive at Key Stage 4 (GCSE grade C or above in English or Welsh and Mathematics or equivalent), to 37 per cent by 2017.

Where are we now?

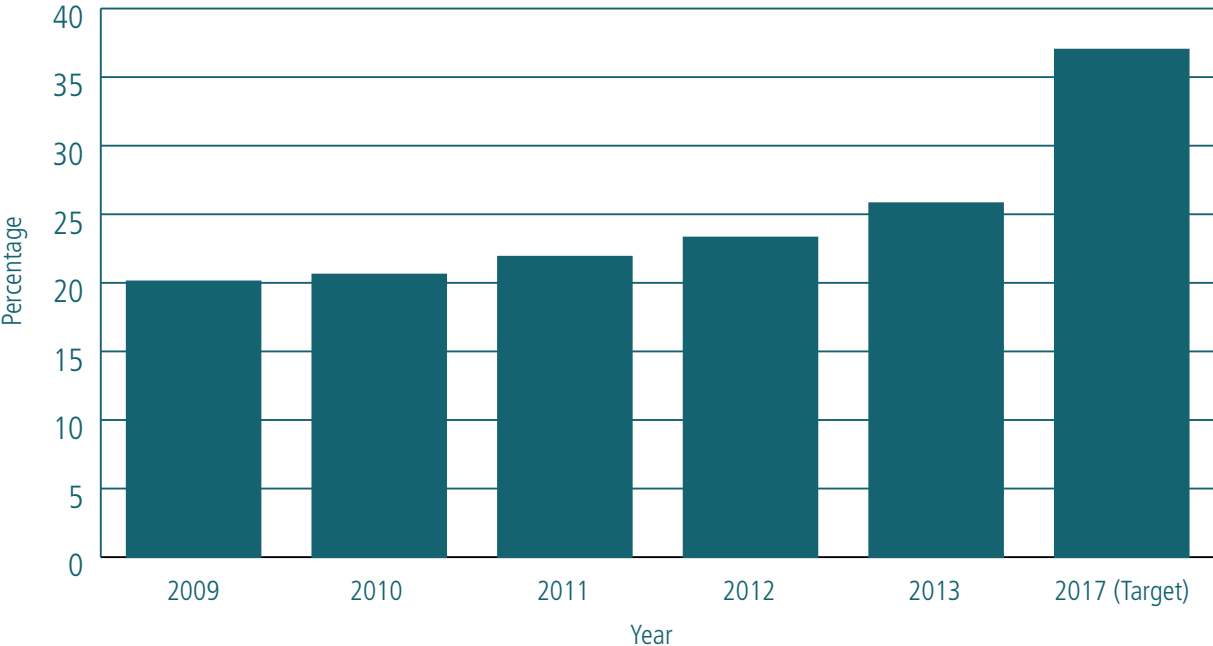
Gap in proportion of 7 year olds achieving the expected level at the end of the Foundation phase (between those entitled to FSM and those not entitled to FSM, percentage points).



Source: End of Foundation Phase Outcomes and School Census

The baseline year for this target is 2012 (18.3 percentage points). The difference in attainment between those eligible for free school meals and non-eligible pupils in 2012 was 18.3 percentage points and in 2013 the difference was 17.6 percentage points. The target is for the gap to reduce by 10 per cent (i.e. to 16.5 by 2017). We are confident that we are currently on track to achieve this.

Percentage of learners eligible for free school meals at age 15 who achieve Level 2 inclusive at Key Stage 4.



Source: Welsh Examinations Database and School Census

In 2013, 25.8 per cent of students eligible for free school meals at age 15 achieved Level 2 inclusive at Key Stage 4. Over the past 5 years there has been a steady increase in this percentage; an increase of 5.7 percentage points between 2009 and 2013. This proportion will need to increase at a faster rate over the next 4 years in order to reach the target of 37 per cent by 2017.

Current Position in Key Programmes/Policies:

Rewriting the Future: raising ambition and attainment in Welsh schools

The programme was launched in June 2014 and sets out what schools, working with their parents, can do to break down the barriers faced by children from low income households by acting as the central locus for interventions and support.

Rewriting the Future is aimed at raising the academic attainment of pupils from low income households, ensuring progression into further and higher education and ultimately into well paid employment.

The objectives of this programme are to:

- Overcome the impact of poverty in the early years so that learners are ‘school ready’ and have well developed early language skills.

- Engage families effectively in children's learning and school life.
- Make all schools community schools.
- Better equip the school workforce to understand and overcome the challenges faced by learners from low income households.
- Ensure that learners from low income households access the highest quality teaching and learning.
- Provide high-quality digital learning experiences for learners to ensure they are equipped with skills to excel in the third millennium.
- Engender high aspirations and raise expectations for learners from low income households, and ensure they meet those expectations.

Pupil Deprivation Grant (PDG)

The PDG is intended to improve attainment for learners who are eligible for free school meals and looked after children. It aims to overcome the additional barriers that learners from disadvantaged backgrounds face which prevent them from attaining as well as their peers, whatever their ability.

The Minister for Education and Skills has announced that for 2014/2015, the per-pupil allocation of the PDG will rise from £450 to £918. This rise was agreed for one year only. Schools are expected to make the best use of this funding to implement sustainable solutions that will quickly bring about changes for those eligible.

The Communities First match funding for the Pupil Deprivation Grant is aimed at encouraging schools and communities in areas of poverty to work more closely together to raise the educational attainment of pupils from low income households. 37 projects have been funded.

Schools Challenge Cymru

Schools Challenge Cymru is the Welsh Government's flagship school improvement programme. It is rooted in the belief that all children can achieve and recognises that this can only become a reality if schools get the right support at the right time. The programme will inject around £20 million funding, alongside proven expertise, to deliver a package of support that is individually tailored to meet each school's needs.

Forty secondary schools, around a fifth of secondary schools in Wales, have been identified as Pathways to Success Schools and will play a central role in taking forward this programme.

The forty schools participating in the challenge were announced by the Minister for Education and Skills in May 2014. The programme will formally roll out in schools from September 2014. The schools will be monitored on a regular basis to ensure that the support delivers real improvements.

The role of the family

One of the most accurate predictors of a child's achievement is not only the family's socio-economic status, but also the home learning environment created by the parents. Working in partnership with parents, therefore, is vital in order to achieve the results we want. International evidence suggests that countries where parents get involved are the most successful. Our recently launched "Education begins at home" campaign aims to encourage parents to get involved in their child's education by showing them how little things can make a big difference. Schools will also be supported to engage parents more effectively through the publication of new guidance currently being drafted.

Case Study:

The Department for Education and Skills awarded a research contract to the regional consortia to establish a Policy Observatory; their remit included sourcing effective home-grown interventions. Oakdale Comprehensive School in Caerphilly County Borough Council is an 11-to-16 co-educational English medium school where approximately 19 per cent of pupils are entitled to receive free school meals.

Staff meet regularly in curriculum teams to ensure consistency in the development of policy and procedures, and to provide opportunities to showcase best practice, this includes engaging parents and encouraging learning at home. "One of the common things we hear is we didn't do it like this in our day." (Teacher)

In order to overcome such barriers to learning the school held a 'Parental Core Development Evening'. By focusing on pupils that needed an extra push to get the 'C Grade', 30 parents were targeted and 21 turned up. Pupils and parents attended together and spent 1 hour with the Maths and English Departments. Participants were provided with basic equipment such as pens, pencils, tracing paper, compasses, angle measurers, rulers, and past paper resources. During the evening participants were given clear guidance and information as to what they can expect to happen for their children from January to June in order to get parents engaged in helping their children.

Following on, additional pupil homework was set each week which parents were expected to check, and after teacher marking, was handed back to parents for their information and to help track their children's progress. Parental drop in sessions are also run throughout the year for those who would like more guidance and support.

The evening encouraged parents to think about their children having informed life opportunities and to have conversations with them about aspirational futures. Parents reported positive feedback and said they understood the need to be honest with their children and tell them why it is important to have real life skills. "We tell all our pupils never give up, every child is expected to achieve their potential." (Deputy Head)

This case study will be shared across the education community in Wales, as it clearly evidences the importance of two of the themes of our Deprivation Strategy, "Family and Community Engagement" and "High Expectations and Aspirations" and shows what measures a school can take to support disadvantaged pupils.

Young People who are not in employment, education or training (NEET)

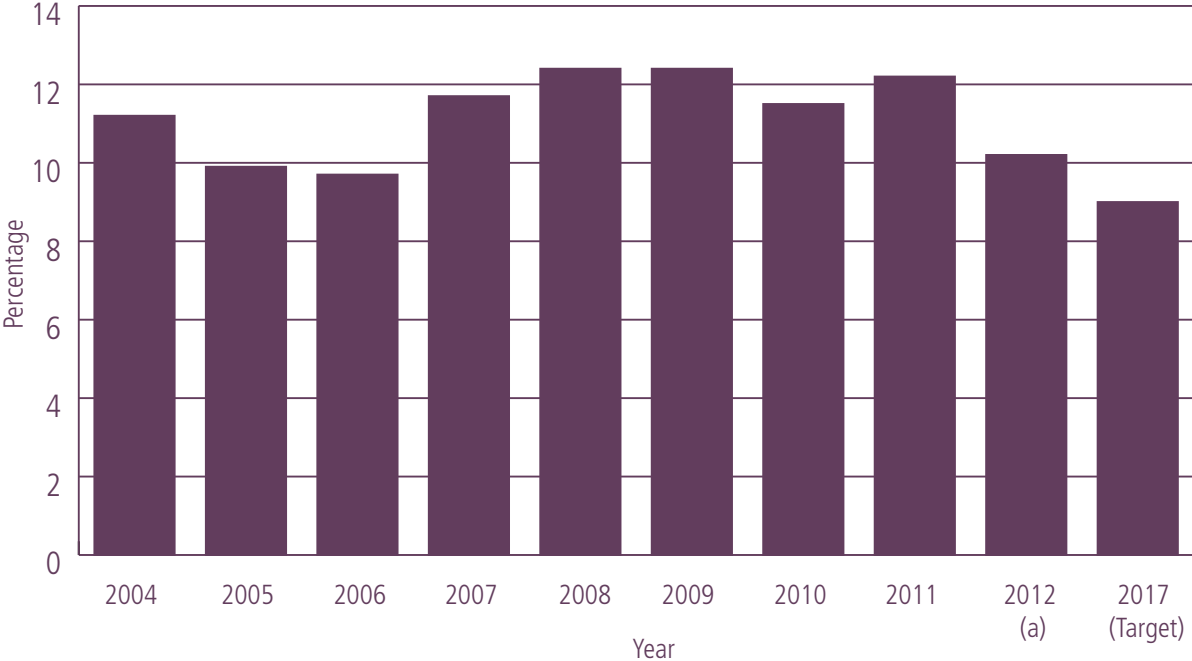
Economic and personal circumstances present some groups of young people with huge challenges to progressing through education and training into sustained employment. We want to tackle these barriers. Young people are more likely to do well and fulfil their potential if they engage in education, training or employment. Reducing the number of those not engaged will have a long term impact on the lives of not just today’s young people, but generations to come.

Targets in the Action Plan:

- To reduce the number of young people who are not in employment, education or training aged 16-18 to 9 per cent by 2017.
- To reduce the proportion of young people who are not in employment, education or training aged 19-24 in Wales relative to the UK as a whole by 2017.

Where are we now?

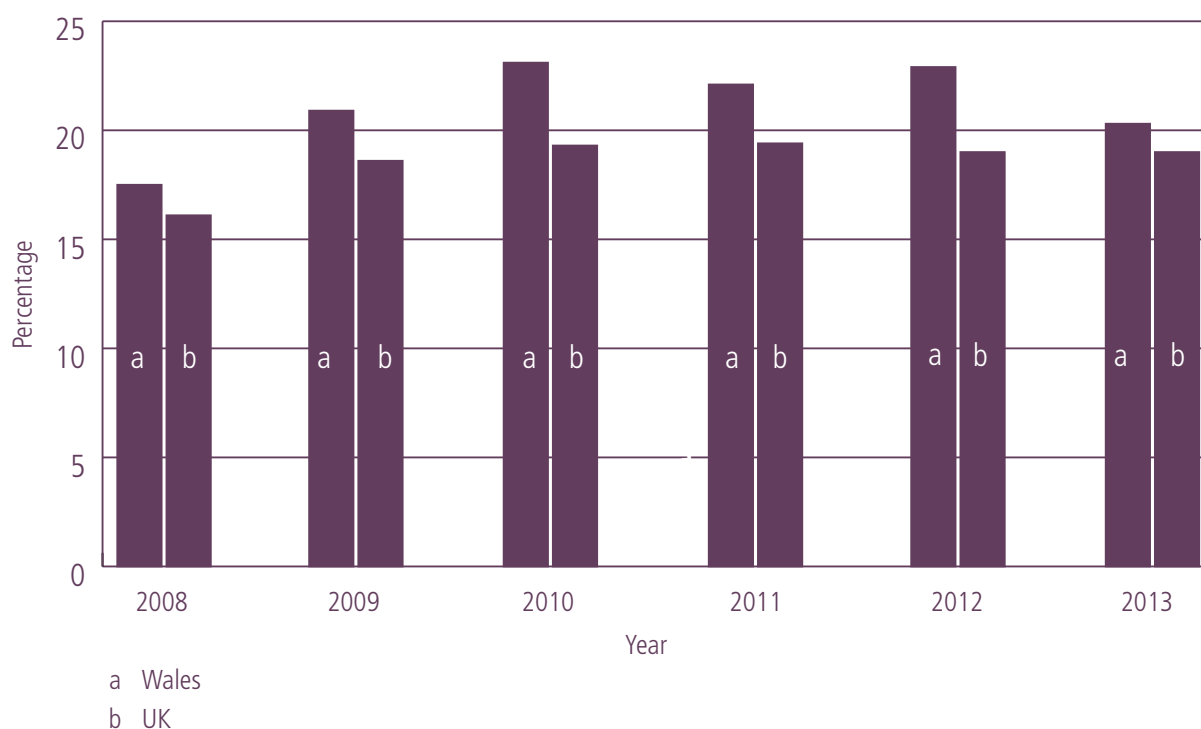
Young people aged 16-18 years who are NEET.



Source: Welsh Government Participation in education and labour market
 (a) Data for this year are provisional.

The proportion of 16 to 18 year olds not in education, employment or training at end 2012 (provisional) was 10 per cent; this was a 2 percentage point decrease on the previous year and 1 percentage point from the target. Long term fluctuations from year to year have been previously evident – we must work to sustain the improvement achieved between 2011 and 2012.

The proportion of young people who are NEET aged 19-24 years in Wales relative to the UK.



Source: Annual Population Survey

2012 is the baseline for this target. The gap between Wales and the UK is narrower today than it has been since 2008, which is welcome. We will seek to maintain and ultimately improve on this by 2017.

Current Position in Key Programmes/Policies:

Youth Engagement and Progression Framework

The Framework and an implementation plan for delivery were published in October 2013. The Framework requires an integrated approach from all organisations involved in delivering activity for young people, focussing on the needs of the individual. It has six key elements:

- Identifying young people most at risk of disengagement.
- Better brokerage and coordination of support.
- Stronger tracking and transitions of young people through the system.
- Ensuring provision meets the needs of young people.
- Strengthening employability skills and opportunities for employment.
- Greater accountability for better outcomes for young people.

Local Authorities are charged with providing the support young people need to aid their progression through education and training into employment. This will be delivered through a systems based approach to early identification of need, co-ordinated brokerage of support and tracking of progress.

At the heart of the Framework are two new actions. The first is the offer of a lead worker within a relevant organisation who can provide continuity of support and contact for the most at risk. The second is the development of a proactive offer of a Youth Guarantee, which is the offer, acceptance and commencement of a suitable place in education or training for a young person making the first time transition from compulsory education at age 16.

Each local authority has a Welsh Government lead contact who will continue to work closely with them to support their implementation of the framework, ensuring that they meet the milestones. All 22 local authorities in Wales have submitted an action plan confirming their commitment to implement the milestones within the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework.

Jobs Growth Wales

The Jobs Growth Wales scheme started in April 2012 and aims to create 16,000 job opportunities over 4 years for unemployed 16-24 year olds throughout Wales. The programme caters for young people that are job ready but have had difficulty securing employment.

The programme provides a job opportunity for a six month period, paid at or above the national minimum wage for a minimum of 25 hours per week and a maximum of 40 hours.

As at 10 May 2014, 13,223 job opportunities have been created, with 9,978 young people filling these opportunities. The target of creating and filling 8,000 jobs by end of the second year of delivery has been achieved.

The Welsh Government is supporting an additional 750 job opportunities through Jobs Growth Wales targeting unemployed young people from Communities First Clusters over the next two years. As of May 2014, 231 job opportunities have been created. Of those, 128 job opportunities have been filled by young people living in Communities First clusters.

Case study:

Wrexham made reducing the number of young people who are NEET a corporate council priority in 2009, in light of increases in this figure in previous years. They set clear targets for improvement and brought together a range of key partner organisations who were working to reduce the number of young people who were NEET in Wrexham. These key partners included the local authority, Careers Wales, training providers and organisations working with young people who are NEET.

Through quarterly meetings of this group, specific priorities were identified and regular monitoring of current work took place. In 2011 the group identified the need for a new service to work with the most vulnerable young people who are NEET. Funding was allocated from Families First and the group developed the contract specification for the new service. The impact of the work has been clear to see with a reduction in the number of 16-year-olds who are NEET as measured by Careers Wales from a high of 9.6 per cent in 2008 to 3.2 per cent in 2012. The work of the original group continues to be sustained.

Opportunities for people from non-working households – the Lift Programme

Work is still the best means out of poverty. We want to support people to find sustainable employment and recognise that this is hardest for those from non working households. Evidence tells us that those in long-term unemployment require more personalised support to return to work. There is a much greater possibility of return to work if sufficient time, encouragement and support are offered.

Target in the Action Plan:

- To offer 5,000 training and employment opportunities to people in workless households by the end of the 2017 calendar year.

The Lift Programme was established and formally launched on 24 March 2014 to deliver this commitment.

Where are we now?

The Programme is already operational in eight Lift Programme areas. Funding has now been approved for a ninth Lift area in Flintshire, with programme staff expected to be in post in that area in the near future.

The Delivery Model

The programme offers personalised, intensive support which considers the full range of life circumstances to help the long-term unemployed and those furthest from the labour market back into work. Lift brokers based in the eight Communities First areas initially identify and engage long-term workless households and then inform them about the pool of possibilities open to them and encourage/support them to take them up.

Brokers will:

- Map current provision available to workless households and identify gaps in services for unemployed people including work-related opportunities.
- Assess a participant's aspirations for employment, training or education and identify potential barriers.
- Undertake 'Job-matching'.
- Maintain contact with participants after they begin training or employment to ensure issues are resolved and the training or employment is sustained.

Progress

The Programme is already working intensively with people from workless households, with over 261 people already supported into training and employment opportunities. This number should increase rapidly over the coming months as the Lift area teams develop their work within the Programme. The Lift Brokers will identify opportunities through local contacts in addition to the national engagement work.

All Welsh Government departments and a range of public, private and third sector organisations will contribute towards the achievement of the target. For example, the Department for Health & Social Services has confirmed that the NHS will aim to provide 1,000 training, work experience or employment opportunities by the end of 2017. The Chief Medical Officer has written to Local Health Board Chief Executives asking them to clarify the details of the support they can offer.

Opportunities are also being finalised in Housing & Regeneration. A significant number of training and employment opportunities are potentially available through Registered Social Landlords and with contractors on Welsh Government funded programmes such as Vibrant & Viable Places.

The Welsh Government's Finance and Corporate Services Department are also developing a pilot programme which will provide work experience placements across the Welsh Government to those on the Lift Programme. The Pilot will then be evaluated with a view to commencing a phased roll out across Departments over the duration of the Lift Programme.

Alongside this, the Lift Programme staff and the wider Communities First teams will identify possible training and employment opportunities through their contacts with local employers and partner organisations.

Case Study:

South Wales Fire & Rescue Service (SWFRS) ran a project providing six weeks' work experience for people from workless households in the Tredegar and Ebbw Vale Lift Programme areas.

The local Communities First (CF) Cluster teams identified people who would potentially benefit from the project and ran a selection exercise to finalise the fourteen participants who were aged 17 to 29. The project was delivered from Tredegar Fire Station and involved drills in firefighting skills led by SWFRS staff and other elements supported by the CF teams, including:

- Healthy diet and eating – participants self catered and worked with a dietician and cooked to prepare the meals for the team.
- A gym exercise programme every day. Baseline assessments of height, weight, BMI, body fat percentage, blood pressure, and aerobic capacity were made at the start and end of the project.
- Job application skills and CV building, including interview preparation, interview skills, job searching and one to one advice of job and career aspirations and planning.

- One to One discussions from positive role models, including advice and guidance about positive lifestyle choices; and
- Financial budgeting and planning on limited funds, leading to an OCN qualification.
- All 13 participants completed a BTEC Level 2 Fire and Rescue Services in the Community.

Thirteen of the original participants completed the project which culminated in a graduation event where they received Records of Achievement from the Chief Fire Officer and Deputy Minister for Tackling Poverty.

Since the programme ended, the Lift and CF teams have worked with the participants to secure paid work and volunteer placements. Some are further developing their literacy and numeracy skills; others are pursuing a Prince's Trust programme and Army Reserves opportunities, while others are interested in becoming Young Firefighter instructors. All are looking at how they can use their new found skills and more positive outlook to employment as well as life in general. They continue to report that their confidence levels are still high and have more focus and direction in their lives. Many continue to maintain their fitness levels by regular use of the gym and swimming pool. Station 27 has proved to be a life changing experience for many of the participants.

Health inequality and the Inverse Care Law

People in poverty are less likely to have access to high quality healthcare, despite the fact that they are likely to have greater need for health care. This is sometimes referred to as the 'inverse care law'. We want to reduce inequality in access to healthcare as part of the overall action to reduce inequality in health and well being.

Targets in the Action Plan refer to reducing inequalities in healthy life expectancy, reducing low birth weight babies and dental health of children. The situation for each is that the latest evidence indicates an improvement in the situation of the most deprived fifth of the population but no significant reduction in the gap between that group to those less deprived.

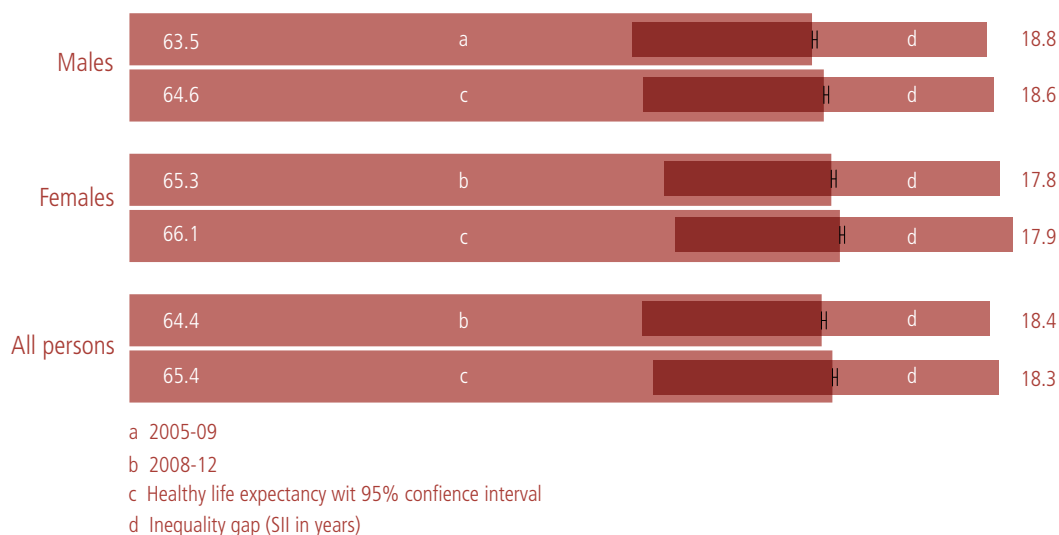
Where are we now?

Healthy Life Expectancy:

- Healthy life expectancy at birth (HLE) represents the number of years a person can expect to live in good health. If the population is grouped into fifths in terms of increasing levels of deprivation, there are significant gaps in healthy life expectancy between each fifth, with the less deprived areas doing much better. We aim to close these gaps by an average of 2.5 per cent – by 2020.³

Healthy life expectancy at birth, with inequality gap, Wales, 2005-09 and 2008-12

Produced by Public Health Wales Observatory, using ADDE and MYE (ONS), WIMD and WHS (WG)



The chart⁴ shows that for males and females HLE has increased by 1.1 years and 0.8 years respectively. The inequality gap as measured by the Slope Index of Inequality has remained largely unchanged. However, this is in the context where some forecast deterioration as a result of the global financial crisis.

³ The way the target is expressed has been amended to make it clearer, without changing the essence.

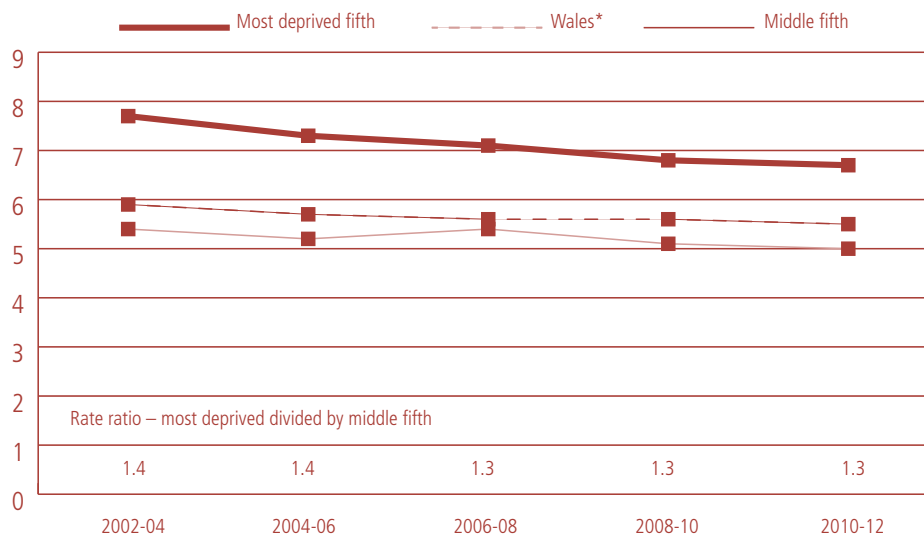
⁴ The chart indicates the change in the inequality gap between the periods 2005-09 and 2008-12. It measures the inequality gap in Healthy Life Expectancy (HLE) using the Slope Index of Inequality (SII). The SII is a measure of the difference in HLE (in years) between the most deprived and the least deprived whilst taking into account the distribution across all deprivation fifths.

Low Birth Weight:

- To reduce the proportion of babies born under 2500g in the most deprived fifth of the population by 19 per cent – by 2020.

Babies born with low birthweight (<2500g), 3-year rolling percentages with 95% confidence intervals, singleton live births, Wales, deprivation fifths

Produced by Public Health Wales Observatory, using NCCHD (NWIS) and WIMD 2005, 2008, 2011 (WG)



*does not include those births where the Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) of residence is unknown

This shows progress towards achieving the target. The proportion of babies born with a low birth weight in the most deprived fifth of areas has fallen steadily from 7.7 per cent in 2002-04 to 6.7 per cent in 2010-12, a 13% improvement. The ratios between the most deprived fifth and the middle fifth and between the most and least deprived fifths have not significantly changed.

Dental health

- To improve the dental health of 5 and 12 year olds in the most deprived fifth of the population to that found in the middle fifth-by 2020.

5 year olds *

Most deprived fifth

	2007/08 (baseline data)	2011/12	By 2020 (2007/08 values for the middle deprived fifth)
Mean number of decayed, missing or filled deciduous/milk teeth	2.65	2.16	1.77
% of 5 year olds with at least one decayed, missing or filled deciduous/milk tooth	57.6%	51.5%	44.1%

*Positive consent is required from parents for 5 year olds to partake in dental surveys. This consent from parents may differ across areas of deprivation.

Oral health surveys measure caries levels and 'DMFT – teeth 'decayed, missing or filled'. For the most deprived fifth of 5 year old children in Wales, the average DMFT was 2.65 in 2007/08, with the target for 2020 1.77. In 2011/12 the average DMFT for the most deprived fifth was 2.16, representing good progress towards the 2020 target.

12 year olds

Most deprived fifth

	2004/05 (baseline data)	2008/09	By 2020 (2004/05 values for the middle deprived fifth)
Mean number of decayed, missing or filled adult teeth	1.35	1.31	1.12
% of 12 year olds with at least one decayed, missing or filled adult tooth	53.8%	52.4%	45.5%

Early data from the latest study suggests an improvement in the absolute level of the dmft of this age group also.

Current Position in Key Programmes/Policies:

Fairer Health Outcomes for All (FHOFA)

This is the Welsh Government's strategic action plan for reducing health inequalities through to 2020. An indicator framework is being developed to monitor progress in achieving FHOFA's vision of 'improved health and wellbeing for all, with the pace of improvement increasing in proportion to the level of disadvantage'. Actions include:

- Seeking Wales and UK legislation on tobacco, alcohol, other health issues, with overall smoking rates in Wales now down to 21 per cent.
- Progressing the new maternity strategy – holding bi-annual maternity performance board meetings with Health Boards, where they are required to report on levels of maternal obesity and rates of smoking, alcohol consumption and substance misuse in pregnant women. Local initiatives are being set up in all Health Boards to offer support to pregnant women in eating well and keeping active, managing weight gain and in being alcohol aware.
- Agreement of the new Healthy Child Wales programme which will deliver a consistent, coordinated Wales wide approach to support child health and wellbeing in the early years, promote early identification of developmental problems and opportunities for effective intervention, with implementation to start in 2014/15.
- Closer working between the NHS and Communities First, especially in support of the Communities First ambition to create healthier communities.
- Improved immunisation uptake with targeted efforts in Flying Start areas supported by additional funding.

- Extending Healthy Working Wales – this aims to improve health at work to reduce the impact of ill health at work; and to contribute to retaining people in work with a health issue. The programme is now working with over 1,800 organisations, representing 28 per cent of the working population of Wales.

Physical Activity

While a large number of actions from, Creating an Active Wales, our strategic document for physical activity published in 2010, have been completed, physical activity levels have remained relatively constant. A Physical Activity Executive Group (PAEG) was established in 2013 to set a new direction to increase levels of physical activity. PAEG is focusing on large scale change where different approaches depend on the needs of the community. The Minister for Health and Social Services and the Minister for Culture and Sport have agreed with the PAEG that efforts to raise levels of physical activity should concentrate on the most sedentary, and should target Communities First areas.

Inverse Care Law Pilots

Led by Aneurin Bevan and Cwm Taf Health Boards, these pilots aim to improve the impact of health care in some areas where deprivation is most significant. The first phase aims to reduce premature mortality from cardiovascular disease, which will also help both take forward their local Heart Disease Delivery Plan, looking at improving cardiovascular risk assessment and access using community pharmacies to smoking cessation services.

Low Birth Weight

Four Health Boards have piloted work on increasing the uptake of smoking cessation services by pregnant women. Maternity support workers have been trained to deliver smoking cessation support and these services have been delivered more flexibly than in usual care settings. This work is being led by Public Health Wales with the expectation that best practice will be shared and rolled out, subject to budgets being identified.

Initial results from the pilot projects are encouraging and suggest that a more flexible approach has been more effective in getting pregnant women to engage with smoking cessation services. This supports the view that engagement is greater when support is embedded in the maternity pathway rather than through referral to other services.

However, until the full evaluation has been completed, we cannot be certain that this new approach has led to an increase in the number of pregnant women that have successfully quit smoking.

Communities First areas will take this forward to support pregnant women in developing healthy lifestyles.

Public Health Wales are reviewing the evidence on the causes of low birth weight. This will be used to refine and develop activity aimed at reducing the number of low birth weight babies.

Case Study:

The Models for Access to Maternal Smoking Cessation Support (MAMSS) project has been developed to implement current National Institute of Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) guidance on smoking cessation for pregnant women, and compare the effectiveness of new models for providing specialist smoking cessation services to pregnant women with existing services delivered by Stop Smoking Wales.

The MAMSS projects are being implemented over a 9-12 month period in selected sites across four health boards: Aneurin Bevan; Abertawe Bro Morgannwg; Betsi Cadwaladr and Cwm Taf. The projects use an integrated approach between maternity services, local public health teams and Stop Smoking Wales.

Core recommendations from NICE were implemented across project and usual care sites within the participating health boards. In usual care sites, support for pregnant women was delivered by the existing Stop Smoking Wales service. In project sites, support was provided by a specialist stop smoking advisor (Maternity Support Worker, Midwife or dedicated Stop Smoking Wales advisor) and was delivered more flexibly than in usual care sites.

Core elements implemented in all project and usual care areas were:

- Strict adherence to NICE opt out smoking cessation pathway for pregnant women, including CO monitoring.
- Smoking cessation services being more closely aligned to maternity services (being provided as part of the package of maternity care).
- Referral from midwife to smoking cessation support within 48 hours.

In addition, project areas within each health board developed and implemented a new service delivery model specifically for their areas. These were based on a woman centred approach with flexibility in service provision.

Evidence thus far tells us:

- It is possible to increase compliance with NICE guidelines in midwifery services, although this did not occur to the same extent in the comparison sites.
- The approaches were more effective than previous practice in getting pregnant smokers to engage with services.
- Evidence supports the view that success in engagement is greater when embedded in the maternity pathway rather than through referral to other services.

These projects are still on-going. We will continue to monitor progress and outcomes relating to the number of women quitting smoking.

Housing and Regeneration

Housing and the environment in which you live are hugely important to the lived experience of poverty. We want to improve the quality of housing in poorer communities and make places more pleasant for people to live.

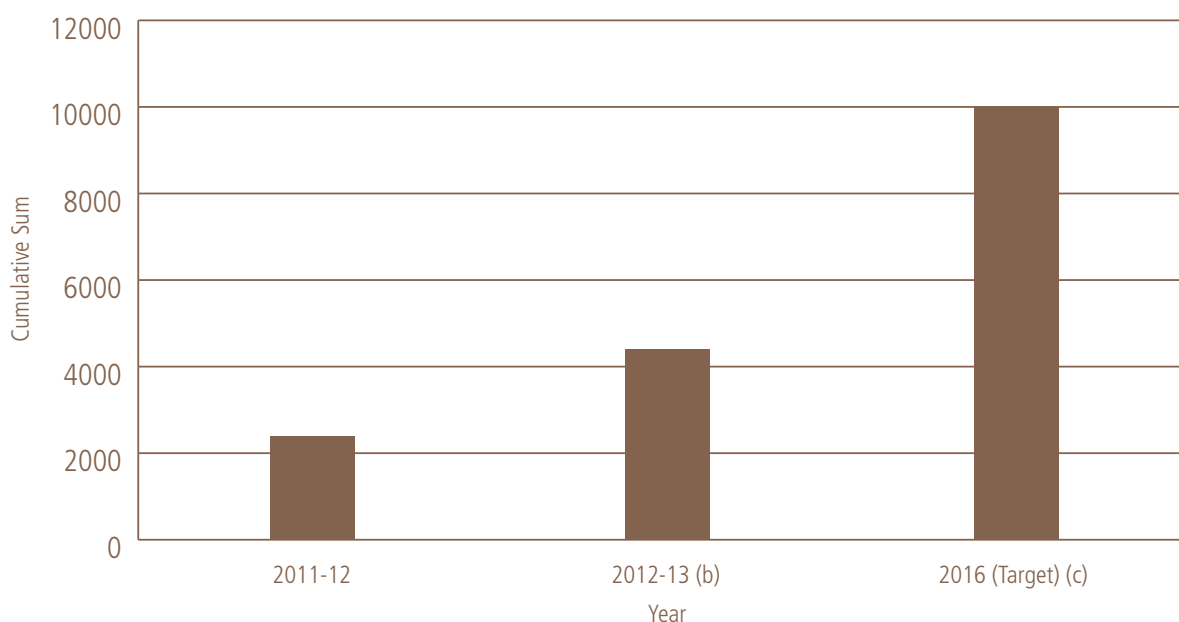
Targets in the Action Plan:

- To achieve 7,500 additional affordable homes (social and intermediate) – by 2016. (In March, a new target of 10,000 additional affordable homes was announced by end of this Assembly).
- To increase the number of empty houses brought back into use by 5,000 – by 2016.

Where are we now?

Affordable homes:

Number of additional affordable homes (a)



Source: Affordable Housing Provision data collection, Welsh Government

(a) This is a cumulative sum of the number of additional affordable homes since the baseline year.

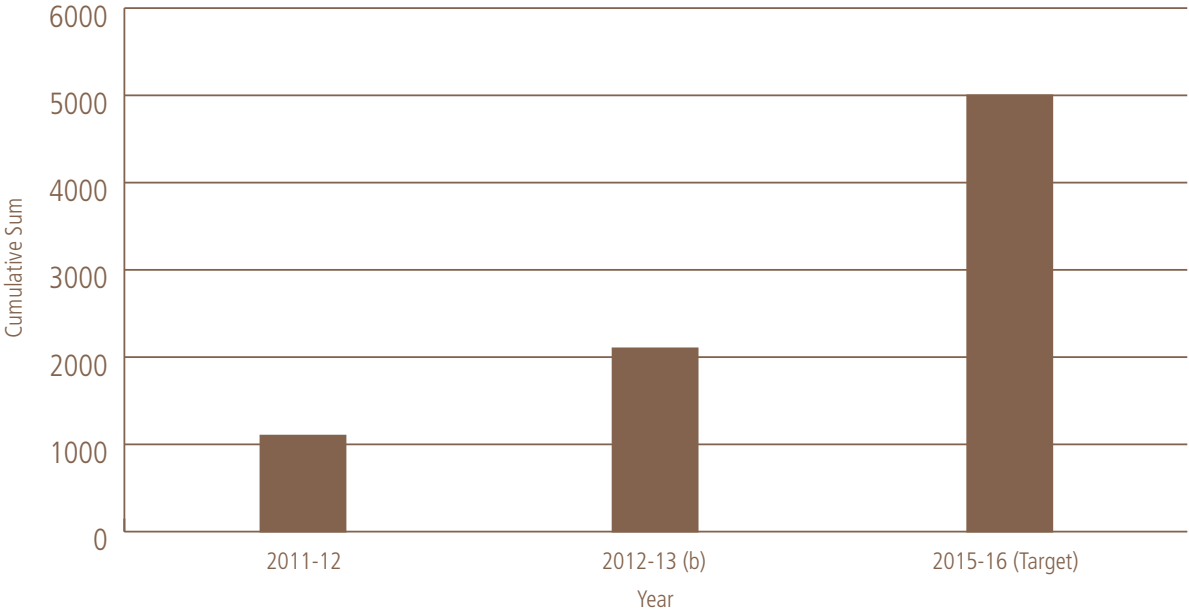
(b) The total for 2012-13 is the sum of the number of additional affordable homes delivered in 2011-12 plus the number delivered in 2012-13.

(c) In March, a new target of 10,000 additional affordable homes was announced.

The starting point for this target is April 2011. During the two year period between 1 April 2011 and 31 March 2013, a total of 4,474 additional affordable housing units were delivered across Wales which represents 45 per cent of the increased target of 10,000 additional affordable homes.

Empty homes:

Number of empty properties brought back to use (a)



Source: National Strategic Indicator PSR/004 Welsh Government

- (a) The target to increase the number of empty homes brought back into use by 5,000 by 2016 is a cumulative sum over the years from 2011-12.
- (b) The total for 2012-13 is the sum of the number of empty houses brought back in to use in 2011-12 plus the number brought back into use in 2012-13.
Data is missing for Monmouthshire in 2012-13.

We are on course to meet the target of bringing 5,000 empty properties back to use by the next Assembly elections. Since 1 April 2011, direct action by local authorities has resulted in bringing 2,178 empty private sector dwellings back into use.

Current Position in Key Programmes/Policies:

Improving housing related services for vulnerable people

The Supporting People programme is continuing the roll out of £136 million investment in services supporting the most vulnerable groups in our communities. 70,000 people supported under the programme in the last financial year. A monitoring and evaluation framework covers outcomes for service users, financial impact on wider public policy and value for money studies.

The 10 year Homelessness Plan is continuing to deliver essential support for people who are homeless or who are at risk of becoming homeless. Subject to it being passed by the Assembly, the Housing Bill will result in a greater emphasis on preventing homelessness.

Long term investment in the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS)

WHQS is about making sure that by 2020 tenants have better quality homes which will also help to improve their health and well being. All social homes will have secure windows and doors, smoke alarms, modern kitchens and bathrooms and economical heating systems.

Social landlords are expected to invest around £2.5billion improving their housing over the next five years, with £540m (£108m per annum) of this provided by Welsh Government through Major Repairs Allowance. Work on achieving WHQS generates significant employment and training opportunities: the HM Treasury multiplier for housing repairs reports 35 jobs created per £1million invested.

The investment of WHQS in communities has helped to reduce worklessness in communities; increase workforce and sector skills, such as those in the construction sector; and create opportunities for business in the whole supply chain.

By 31st March 2013, 60 per cent of the social housing stock in Wales had achieved compliance with the WHQS (including acceptable fails) – 133,786 homes out of a total number of 221,770.

Community Benefits

From 1 September 2013 social landlords must include social clauses in all procurement contracts where benefits could be realised, and complete the Value Wales Measurement Tool for these contracts. Adoption of the Tool as a standard form of measurement for projects incorporating community benefits will ensure all projects are measured and monitored effectively and allow better reporting of outcomes.

The Community Housing Cymru's 2012 report on 'Measuring the Economic Impact of the Welsh Housing Association Sector' states that between 2008 and 2012 their members spent over £1.8 billion of investment on regeneration activities, and for every one full time person employed by a housing association nearly two other jobs were supported elsewhere in the economy.

Investment to mitigate welfare reform

In 2013/14 £20m was made available through the Social Housing Grant programme to support the building of 1 and 2 bedroom homes for those affected by the bedroom tax. Twenty local authorities have benefitted from the programme supporting 32 schemes and delivering 375 units in total. Building on this investment, £5m is being made available in 2014/15 and £15m in 2015/16.

At the end of 2013/14, an additional £1.3 million was made available to local authorities for Discretionary Housing Payments. The funding has been used to help people to cope with increased demands on the Fund. However the need caused by the bedroom tax is a real barrier to our ambitions to tackle poverty.

Vibrant and Viable Places (VVP)

Local authorities will share more than £100m for regeneration schemes from 2014 to 2017. The fund will be invested in town centres, coastal communities and Communities First areas. Successful authorities are commencing their programmes this year and projects aim to provide homes, working opportunities, stimulate private sector investment and improve town centres for example.

The £7 million VVP Tackling Poverty Fund will be used on a range of projects that will tackle poverty in the following settlement areas: Tredegar; Rhymney; Grangetown; Llanelli; Rhyl; Caernarfon; and Barry. Engagement with wider Welsh Government community based initiatives such as Communities First, LIFT, Families First and Flying Start will be an essential part of this.

Vibrant and Viable Places funding will also embed the Community Benefits approach and the use of the Value Wales Measurement Tool.

Energy Efficiency

The Welsh Government remains committed to doing all we can to eradicate fuel poverty. In 2013-14, the Nest scheme improved over 4,900 homes, bringing the total number of low income homes improved by Nest since 2011 to over 13,400. The energy improvements installed in these homes are estimated to deliver energy bill savings averaging over £470 per household per year, making a real difference to low income households.

In addition to providing home energy improvements, Nest helped householders access a range of advice and support to reduce their fuel bills and increase their income, including referral to their energy supplier for a Warm Homes Discount (WHD) and referral for a Benefit Entitlement Check (BEC). In 2013-14, Nest helped 79 householders to secure a WHD rebate of £135, a total value of over £10,600, and helped over 350 householders to secure new or additional benefits that increased their income by an average of over £2,470 per year.

Our area based energy efficiency programme, Arbed 2 ERDF, is providing improvements to households in some of the poorest communities across Wales. The programme is projected to help over 4,800 homes across Wales in the 3 years of its operation, and in 2013-14 it completed energy efficiency improvements to over 2,500 homes.

Case study:

Melin Homes is a Housing Association based in Pontypool, Torfaen, which provides over 3,700 homes in south east Wales.

Recognising that many people need additional support to improve their lifestyles and move out of poverty, they established Melin Works in 2011. It provides employment support to residents and people who live in their communities through ten funded and non-funded projects. Each project is run by an experienced employment team who have the skills and knowledge to provide support to individuals on their journey towards employment.

Projects which have, to date, supported 1339 people by increasing their work skills and employability. 'Drive to Thrive' was established after recognising that not being able to drive can be a barrier to employment, and for many people driving lessons are unaffordable. The project has supported 75 people who were unemployed and looking for work by giving them accredited qualifications in health and safety, first aid and manual handling and a set of driving lessons including theory and driving tests.

Through the 'Y Prentis' £2.5million shared apprenticeship scheme, developed and operated in partnership with Monmouthshire County Council's Community Interest Company (CMC2), 60 young people have gained valuable onsite experience in the construction industry with 16 companies. The scheme bridges the gap between education and the world of work, providing individuals who at the start of the scheme may not be job willing or ready, with a tailor made package of support and mentoring.

Due to the welfare reforms, Melin has identified that residents are experiencing increased financial pressure. This has made it more important than ever for them to get into employment. Melin Homes now funds a free service to its residents to find work and maximise their income, provided they are unemployed and actively looking for work.

In-work poverty in Wales

Work provides the most sustainable route out of poverty. However, we know that in-work poverty is a growing issue in Wales. Estimates published by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation in September 2013 suggest that of those working age adults and children living in poverty in Wales, more are in working families than in non-working families.

The evidence we have around levels of poverty in Wales tells us that in-work poverty tends to be more prominent amongst households that are part-working⁵. There is growing recognition that even where adults are supported into employment, they may go from being in “out of work poverty” to being in “in-work poverty”.

Non-devolved areas – particularly the tax and benefit systems – are crucial. The current economic climate and investment and growth in Wales will also have an important impact on what the Welsh Government can achieve. Nevertheless, it is critical that we use all available levers in Wales to tackle in-work poverty.

In work poverty is likely to be influenced by a number of different factors. This includes the level of earned income in a household, which in turn is affected by factors such as hourly wage rates, the number of hours worked, whether both adults are working. Unearned income is also important – which includes tax credits/social security benefits.

Devolved policy levers

Among the levers available to the Welsh Government to address in-work poverty is the availability of childcare, raising educational attainment and reducing the number of people who are NEET, which have already been discussed in this report. Additional levers include:

- Full-time employment opportunities: Getting people working part time to work more hours, in order to increase their income.
- Supporting second earners into work: To increase the number of people working, thereby increasing household income.
- Increasing skills: To help people progress in the labour market, ensure in-work progression and increase their earnings.
- Mitigating the impacts of in-work poverty: Supporting families through initiatives such as Free Breakfasts, Council Tax Reduction and subsidised travel.

Next steps

We will:

- Use European Social Funding for 2014-20 to support workforce progression including through increasing the proportion of the employed workforce with intermediate level skills or above and helping people to access sustainable employment.

⁵ Part-working households are defined as those where at least one adult in is in work, but not all; or at least one adult works part-time.

- Undertake an assessment focusing on the characteristics and dynamics of in-work poverty, as well as the actions the Welsh Government will take to address this.
- Progress with the actions identified in the Policy Statement on Skills, which sets out a vision for employment and skills policy in Wales and the responsible action needed by all stakeholders to develop a resilient, responsive and sustainable post-19 skills system.
- Continue to encourage employers in the private, public and Third Sectors to consider becoming Living Wage employers.
- Continue to support people into employment through support for businesses and programmes such as Jobs Growth Wales.
- Consider options to improve childcare provision – we will be doing further work over the summer and announce further developments as soon as possible.

Rural poverty

Over a wide range of measures, rural Wales tends to be better off than the rest of Wales. These include average incomes, rates of benefit claimants, educational standards, health standards and crime rates. However, it must also be recognised that while rural areas are generally better than the Wales average on these measures, this does not mean that there are no problems or that the scale of problems is acceptable.

The evidence shows that there are people living in poverty in rural areas who need the same sort of assistance as people living in poverty elsewhere. The main difference is that they tend to be more geographically dispersed than those in urban areas.

We need to consider ways in which poverty – and the experience of poverty – might be different in rural areas. Some issues are recognised as particular challenges, including fuel poverty, transport concerns and accessibility of services (such as childcare, financial and advice services).

We will:

- Ensure all funding allocations issued through the Rural Development Plan 2014-20 will consider poverty and social exclusion by including this as a Cross Cutting Theme across the whole programme.
- Encourage the use specific strands of the programme (such as LEADER) to target rural poverty.
- Commission a review of the evidence around interventions that are proven to succeed in rural communities.
- Work closely with the Independent Advice Providers Forum to identify how to achieve flexibility in service responses, as highlighted by the Advice Services Review. Use of telephone and video link services are particularly beneficial for those in rural areas.

The Way Forward

There is still more we need to do to reduce poverty for people living in low income households. We acknowledge that we must continue to review our activities and take further steps to ensure that we are doing all we can.

We will:

- Continue to focus on the priorities and targets in the Action Plan. We need to sustain our efforts over a prolonged period of time if we are to make a difference.
- Ensure that our policies and programmes are evaluated in terms of their impact on people from low income households, so we understand if they are effective. It can be challenging to assess the impact of individual programmes on people's lives, but this makes it all the more important that we build in targeted outcomes and robust evaluation.
- Ensure that we focus efforts on the areas where we can make the most difference and there is evidence that we can have the most impact. Our key focus needs to be on preventing poverty.
- Ensure good practice is shared and replicated. For example work with other parts of Welsh Government to transfer learning from the community benefits work of the housing sector.

Next steps in the six priority areas

Early Years:

- Publish the second Flying Start Statistical Bulletin in mid July 2014. This will cover data on key indicators for the Flying Start programme for the period 2014-15 including data on the proportion of 3-year-olds receiving Flying Start services that have achieved or exceeded their developmental milestones.
- Publish the first annual Early Years and Childcare progress report in July 2014. As well as reporting on progress made during 2013-14 it will also outline key priorities for the year ahead.
- Develop an Early Years Outcomes Framework. A series of workshops have been held with key partners in the sector in order to gain their feedback on the draft Framework. A public consultation will run from September.
- Take action following the recommendations of the evaluation of the Child Poverty Strategy, due to be published in July 2014.

Breaking the link between poverty and educational attainment

- Following the launch of Rewriting the Future an implementation plan and outcomes framework will be developed. These will lay out governance arrangements for delivering commitments in Rewriting the Future and provide clear, measurable outcomes.
- We have recruited a small team of experts in supporting schools to engage meaningfully with families and communities to produce guidance and a strategy for

practitioners which will be available in the autumn. This will be supported by a concerted awareness-raising and communications campaign to engage parents and carers in their children's education.

- From September a feature of the Common Inspection Framework will be how well pupils from low income households are supported and how effectively resources, including targeted grants, are used for this purpose. We have collaborated with Estyn to develop new guidance for inspectors on these aspects.
- Liaise with Estyn to promote the Inspectorate's INSET materials on tackling the impact of deprivation on educational attainment and will publish by the end of the summer, best practice case studies which the Wales Centre for Equity in Education and the four regional consortia have produced on behalf of the Welsh Government. Further resources will be commissioned where there is an identified need and published on Learning Wales.

Young people who are NEET

- Analyse the local authority action plans produced in relation to the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework using contextual, post 16 destination and quarterly Careers Wales progression data to identify potential delivery risks and to monitor progress. The analysis will also identify any further guidance local authorities might require supporting implementation.
- Run and learn from Regional Working Groups which include local authorities and representation from Careers Wales, FE, Work Based Learning, NTFW, Regional Education Consortia schools and the Third Sector. The workshops are themed around the different areas of the Framework in order to share experiences, highlight good practice and to help Welsh Government develop any further guidance required.
- Use European Social Funding for 2014-20 to target youth employment and attainment.

Opportunities for non-working households

- Finalise the contribution of relevant Welsh Government departments to the Lift Programme.
- Continue to engage with representatives from across the public, private and third sectors to identify opportunities through the Lift Programme.
- Work with Brokers to identify examples of best practice in the Lift Programme and share information with other clusters.

Health inequality and the Inverse Care Law

- Local Health Boards will apply lessons emerging from the inverse care law pilots and from the low birth weight schemes and emerging advice from Public Health Wales.
- There has also been strong interest in taking forward a new Public Health Bill for Wales. Our recently published Public Health White Paper outlines a series of practical proposals for utilising legislation to help control or reduce some of the causes of avoidable ill health, and sets out possible action in relation to themes identified in FHOFA including tobacco, alcohol and the use of pharmacies.

- Review the formula used to distribute resources to health boards by Welsh Government to ensure allocation reflects need. Each health board is currently working on implementing their integrated three year plans and developing local plans. As part of this they will be looking at opportunities to tackle the inverse care law.

Housing and regeneration

- Use our new pact with Registered Social Landlord sector to deliver on our promise of 10,000 affordable homes in this Assembly term.
- Roll out Vibrant and Viable Places programmes, putting in place a monitoring and evaluation framework that will capture their impact in tackling poverty.
- Ensure housing associations report their achievements in tackling poverty consistently.
- Improve management practices in the private rented sector through provisions contained in the Housing (Wales) Bill, which is currently undergoing scrutiny by the National Assembly.

Milestones in the Action Plan – 2013/14

Milestone	Commentary
<p>Inverse Care Law – Approaches are being piloted in the Cwm Taf and Aneurin Bevan University Health Board areas. The initiatives are aimed at addressing the issue of deprived communities having the greatest need of services which might not always be accessible or available.</p> <p>Associated targets are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – have in place a needs assessment for each local area, based on the populations served by small networks of GP practices, to assist the two health boards in ensuring that service development is prioritised in these areas – by July 2013 – put in place action plans to address more effectively wider determinants of health such as obesity, smoking and alcohol misuse in the intervention areas – by December 2013 – demonstrate improved identification and management of cardiovascular disease in the intervention areas – by April 2014 <p>Establish a consistent all-Wales approach to assess the health, development and wellbeing of all children in Wales, in the early years, so that problems are identified early and the necessary support given – by December 2013.</p>	<p>Population health profiles have been published by the Public Health Wales Observatory for all GP Cluster networks across Wales; in addition analysis developed in the 2 Health Board areas has been published.</p> <p>Pilot work has been undertaken in both areas, with a costed plan in place in Aneurin Bevan UHB and work in hand in Cwm Taf UHB to develop a formal risk management programme.</p> <p>Data from the 2013/14 Quality Outcome Framework, which will be published in September 2014, will be used to measure and report improved outcomes for citizens.</p> <p>A programme has been agreed, implementation and rollout will be completed in January 2015.</p>

Milestone	Commentary
Put in place a new certification process to support better reporting of the scheme for apprenticeships in social care – by September 2013.	<p>The Standards for Apprenticeships are set by Welsh Government and the process of certification is undertaken by the Care Council using the national database Apprenticeship Certification Wales.</p> <p>The Care Council now has data on all learning providers who deliver Apprenticeships in Wales. If any issues in checking compliance are identified they can be referred to the provider and the Awarding Organisation.</p>
Review the way in which NHS activities and resources can better support the economy in Wales – by December 2013.	A new Health and Wealth delivery plan is in place. The key elements to the plan are; a network of Health Board/Trust Innovation leads; an NHS Intellectual Property commercialisation review; a scoping exercise of structural/non structural EU funding; and a focused industry engagement.
Redesign action and targets to encourage more people to be physically active – by March 2014.	The Ministerial led Physical Activity Executive Group is developing actions to decrease levels of physical inactivity focused on Communities First areas.
In the light of the Arts in Education Review, develop action and targets to help children from low-income families benefit from the arts and culture more generally, including the historic environment – by March 2014	Baroness Kay Andrews has set out her recommendations in her report “Culture and Poverty” in March 2014.
Arbed and Nest – Our energy efficiency programmes install energy efficiency improvement in households across Wales, whilst creating and safeguarding job and supporting local businesses.	A target of improving at least 6,000 homes under Nest and Arbed in 2013/14 and 2014/15 has been set. In 2013/14 the Welsh Government’s energy efficiency programme, that includes Nest and Arbed, supported over 9,100 homes with energy efficiency improvements.

Milestone	Commentary
<p>Negotiate and agree with the European Commission future Structural Fund programmes 2014-2020 which will embed tackling poverty actions and invest at least 20 per cent ESF support to tackle poverty and social inclusion through sustainable employment – by 2014.</p>	<p>The 2014-2020 ESF programmes were formally submitted to the European Commission on the 17 of April 2014 for negotiation. The proposed programmes included investments proposals of at least 20 per cent of ESF to tackle poverty and social inclusion through sustainable employment in both the East Wales and West Wales and the Valleys programme areas. The proposed programmes also include actions to prevent and mitigate the impacts of poverty including through actions to address Youth Unemployment and educational attainment and supporting progression in employment through investments to up skill the workforce. Formal Negotiations will continue during 2014.</p>
<p>Complete a detailed workforce study relating to the childcare sector in Wales – by 2014; make recommendations by 2014 for recruitment to the childcare sector and for improving the skills and qualifications of childcare workers and increase the qualifications levels, and number of childcare workers in Wales by 2016.</p>	<p>A 10 Year Plan for the early years, childcare and play workforce in Wales is being developed and will consult in September 2014 on the right approach for this workforce in terms of qualification levels, graduate leadership, continuous professional development and career pathways. The Care Council for Wales have carried out a workforce survey which will help to inform the development of the 10 Year Plan.</p>
<p>Increase the take up of Flying Start provisions to 95% – by 2015. Interim milestones – to increase the take up of Flying Start provision to 85% in 2013 and to 90% in 2014.</p>	<p>Of the 5209 offers of childcare during 2012-13, 4666 were taken up (90%). 4 Local Authorities in 2012-2013 achieved a take up of 100%.</p> <p>Account Managers have investigated further the small minority of Local Authorities (3 in total) in which take up was lower than 80% and put in place improvement plans where necessary.</p> <p>Data for 2013-14 will be published in Mid July 2014.</p>

Milestone	Commentary
<p>Implement Integrated Family Support Services on a regional consortia basis, to operate pan-Wales – by end of 2013/14.</p> <p>Work with local authorities to further assess the nature of the demand for childcare services across the whole of Wales – by 2014.</p>	<p>The roll out of Integrated Family Support Services (IFSS) on an all Wales basis was completed in March 2014.</p> <p>Childcare Sufficiency Audits (CSA) are undertaken by the 22 local authorities in Wales every three years, with a 'refresh' carried out in the years in between the full assessments. Local authorities conducted a full CSA for 2013/14 which will provide an updated picture of childcare provision in each area, including information on gaps in provision.</p> <p>The CSA procedure is currently being reviewed, improvements are being identified through discussion with Local Authorities, and we will be formally consulting on any new process for assessing childcare sufficiency.</p>
<p>Finalise future funding for Advice Services based on the recent Review, after involvement and engagement with key partners – by March 2014.</p>	<p>In April 2014, informed by further close working with key partners and stakeholders, the Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty announced funding of £1 million in 2014/15 to support front-line advice services on issues relating to welfare rights; debt and money management; housing and discrimination. Indicative allocations of funding at the same level have been made for financial years 2015/16 and 2016/17. This grant is in addition to the £2.4 million being provided between 2013 and 2015 for outreach debt and welfare benefits advice in 36 Communities First cluster areas and the £2.2 million per annum contract with Citizens Advice Cymru (to 2015) to deliver the Better Advice; Better Lives scheme.</p>
<p>Achieve a rate of 500 monthly unique individual visits to the MoneyMadeClearWales website – by December 2013.</p>	<p>There were a total of 42,454 hits made to the MoneyMadeClearWales website during April 14 to December 14, which far exceeds the targets set for this year.</p>

Additional targets in the Action Plan

Target	Progress
<p>Communities First – Prosperous Target: 45,000 interventions with people, 26,250 better off (58 per cent).</p>	<p>Actual as of 31 March 2014: 53,895 interventions with people, 13,947 better off (26 per cent).</p> <p>Interventions under this theme include getting people back into work through skills programmes, training initiatives, jobs clubs and projects to improve the economy and entrepreneurship in the area.</p> <p>In the first 12 months of the Programme, numbers indicate that 26 % of interventions have resulted in a significant improvement in circumstances, such as entering employment.</p>
<p>Communities First – Learning Target: 30,000 interventions with people, 18,750 better off (63 per cent).</p>	<p>Actual as of 31 March 2014: 39,858 interventions with people, 13,345 better off (33 per cent).</p> <p>Projects under the learning outcome include initiatives to help people learn new skills, learn basics skill, become digitally included as well as initiatives particularly focussed on improving educational outcomes for young people and children addressing family literacy and attendance.</p> <p>The figures show that learning projects have exceeded their anticipated intervention level by nearly 10,000 and 33% of those involved better off as a result. This is strong move to meeting the target demonstrating that the half way point has already been exceeded just 12 months into the Programme.</p>

Target	Progress
<p>Communities First – Health Targets:</p> <p>26,250 interventions with people, 16,875 better off (64 per cent).</p>	<p>Actual as of 31 March 2014:</p> <p>45,273 interventions with people, 22,364 better off (49 per cent).</p> <p>Health Interventions include initiatives around healthy eating, healthy and independent lifestyles, growing and cooking healthy food, exercise, smoking cessation, pre and post natal health and alcohol awareness.</p> <p>The figures show that the target number of interventions has been exceeded by 20,000, almost doubling the target number. This inevitable adversely impacts on the percentage figure of those feeling better off, meaning that only 49% of participants (against a target of 64%) were better off. However, when looking at the numbers of people better off, there are over 5,000 more people better off than expected as a result of these initiatives.</p>
<p>Support Credit Unions to provide access to financial products for 7,500 people excluded from mainstream financial institutions – by December 2013.</p>	<p>The jointly funded Welsh Government and WEFO project ended in December 2014 – supported by just under £4 million of funding. This project has supported the Tackling Poverty agenda by helping financially excluded people access financial services through a Credit Union. Approval was given in June to extend the project for six months until March 14. Phase Two of the project has exceeded the targets set. An additional £1.2 million was made available to Credit Unions this year to support their sustainability and reach within communities.</p>

Target	Progress
<p>143,000 Credit Union members across Wales and £75 million in assets – by 2020.</p> <p>As at March 2013, total membership including junior savers was estimated at more than 68,400. Assets of Welsh Credit Unions were estimated to be £32 million.</p>	<p>As at March 2014, total membership including junior savers was estimated at more than 78,000. Assets of Welsh Credit Unions were estimated to be £37 million.</p>
<p>To generate £8 million in additional confirmed benefits for individuals per year through advice services.</p>	<p>In 2013/14 the project generated £16.4 million in confirmed gains for individuals, far exceeding the target of £8 million and provided advice to 20,653 people. The project is continuing until 31st March 2015, and given that this is the final year, discussions are underway regarding an evaluation of the current project.</p>
<p>By 2015: to increase digital inclusion in Wales to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80 per cent of unemployed people; • 60 per cent of economically inactive people; • 70 per cent of residents of social housing; and • 60 per cent of people aged over 50 	<p>Positive overall progress has been made against these targets, which were originally set out in the 2011 Digital Inclusion Delivery Plan. Digital Inclusion levels for the unemployed and those aged over 50 have already exceeded the levels set for 2015. Good progress has also been made amongst the economically inactive and social housing tenants suggesting that the above 2015 targets will be met.</p> <p>Whilst overall progress has been positive, there is still a long way to go to achieve a digitally inclusive society. To reflect this need, a revised Digital Inclusion Delivery Plan was published in June 2014. It includes actions and revised targets to further increase the numbers of people who are digitally included, over the next three years.</p>

Target	Progress
<p>Increase the percentage of care leavers in education, training or employment to 51 per cent by 2017.</p>	<p>The revised targets for 2017* are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 87 per cent of welsh adults; • 96 per cent of unemployed people; • 88 per cent of working age economically inactive people; • 78 per cent of residents of social housing; • 70 per cent of people aged over 50; and • 70 per cent of disabled people (limiting long term illness).
<p>Increase the percentage of care leavers in education, training or employment to 51 per cent by 2017.</p>	<p>In 2012-13 there were 380 young people in this cohort. 52 per cent of the 380 young people were known to be in education, training or employment compared to 47 per cent in the previous year. The target is currently being exceeded.</p>