

Cyngor Sir CEREDIGION County Council

REPORT TO:	Learning Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee
DATE:	8th December 2022
LOCATION:	Hybrid
TITLE:	<p>Deprivation and Equity Strategy</p>  <p>Equity and Deprivation Strategy (</p>
PURPOSE OF REPORT:	To provide information on new guidance strategy for schools to support young people experiencing deprivation. To encourage schools to consider and plan actions to meet the challenge of securing equity for all children and young people.
REASON SCRUTINY HAVE REQUESTED THE INFORMATION:	Post Covid-19, the gap in attainment and opportunity between disadvantaged and more privileged learners has widened. Outcomes at GCSE suggests the deprivation gap in education in Wales is current around 24 months’ worth of academic progress. The cost-of-living crisis is only serving to widen any pre-existing attainment and opportunity gap found within education.
BACKGROUND:	<p>Supporting disadvantaged learners effectively is paramount to ensuring equity in education. Without effective support, disadvantaged learners are disproportionately affected when compared to their peers.</p> <p>Outcome data at GCSE demonstrates the current gap in achievement. Pre-pandemic data shows that in Wales, the disadvantage gap in results was about 22-23 months of educational progress in 2019, and only very slightly down on 24 months in 2011. Moreover, the persistent disadvantage gap (that is, pupils who were eligible for FSM for 80% of their time in school) was about 29 months of educational progress in 2019, which is also unchanged from the level in 2011. Only 4 per cent of pupils experiencing persistent disadvantage in Wales end up in the top quintile of GCSE scores in 2019.</p> <p>The current Minister for Education, Jeremy Miles, has spoken regularly about his commitment to supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged learners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"Tackling the impact of poverty on attainment is at the heart of our national mission in education."</i>

- *"We know from research and inspection evidence that schools that couple effective learning and teaching with a focus on community engagement are most effective in overcoming the impact of poverty on educational attainment. We will therefore want to see schools operate as community-focused schools, reaching out to parents and carers and engaging with the whole community."*
- *"Tackling the impact of poverty on attainment is essential if we are to achieve high standards and aspirations for all. We know that the life chances of children and young people are hugely influenced by their home and community and that teachers need more support in addressing the issues some children and young people face."*

The new Curriculum for Wales asks that schools and teachers offer a broad and balanced curriculum full of learner experience. Fair and equal access to opportunity should sit at the heart of all decision making. This document encourages schools to consider an equitable approach to education and offers opportunity for wider discussion.

CURRENT SITUATION:

The Ceredigion Local Wellbeing plan 2023-2028 National Data notes that there are currently 3,450 pupils in Ceredigion that are living in poverty. Nearly one third of households in Ceredigion are living in poverty. Between 2018 and 2022, the number of households living in poverty has increased by 9%. Given the current cost of living crisis, it is widely recognised that this figure will further increase. There is a strong correlation between Covid-19, poverty, and the wellbeing mental health of individuals. Since the pandemic, there has been a marked increase in the number of children and young people seeking support with complex emotional and mental health difficulties.

Ceredigion's Corporate Strategy recognises the need to support disadvantaged and vulnerable learners / families. The Corporate Strategy mentions the need to protect people from poverty, promote healthier lifestyles, support wellbeing, and protect the most vulnerable through early support and intervention. Ceredigion's Strategic Equality Plan, 'A Fair and Equal Ceredigion' underpins the key themes presented in the guidance whilst recognising key government documents, such as The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015 and The Equality Act 2010.

Ceredigion's 2021/22 Self-Assessment Report (Annual Review of Performance and Well-being Objectives) also prioritises the need to support learners of all ages and backgrounds to engage with education and training and recognises the need to protect people from poverty.

A key objective for the Schools and Culture Service is to support equity for all learners, especially following Covid-19 and the additional challenges disadvantaged learners face. As a result, an objective for the service was to prepare a Deprivation Strategy for schools to secure an equitable education provision for all learners.

The Deprivation and Equity Strategy sits alongside a body of wider work that looks to better support our more disadvantaged learners. There is a key message at its core – disadvantaged learners need more support, more often, to have the same opportunities as their peers.

There are a number of Education / School based policies that sit alongside this document. These include, but are not limited to:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Equality Policy
- Pupil Discipline Policy
- Ceredigion Principles and Expectations of Maintained Schools for Pupils with Additional Learning Needs 2021/ Special Educational Needs Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Looked After Children Policy

Recognition and understanding of the additional challenges faced by young people in Ceredigion is increasing. The Education and Culture Service is committed to increasing and enhancing the understanding of deprivation to support in targeting provision. Free School Meals (FSM) has historically been used to measure educational disadvantaged. Recently, schools are being encouraged to consider this data alongside Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (2019) data, which is more skilled at recognising deprivation across multiple indicators. Rural poverty

stands-out as a county-wide issues and schools are beginning to consider the use of specific grant funding to overcome more regional barriers to further develop a well-rounded and equitable education for all. Moreover, WIMD data identifies issues such as poor housing, income, and community safety. Low earnings, the lack of affordable childcare, Universal Credit reduction and high housing costs / affordability mean that poverty is one of the biggest challenges faced by the local authority.

From the moment young people arrive at school, every effort must be made in an attempt to irradicate any barrier faced at home. This document supports schools to continue to develop the principles of equity for the benefit of individuals' needs.

WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS:	Has an Integrated Impact Assessment been completed? If, not, please state why	Yes
	Summary:	
	Long term:	
	Integration:	
	Collaboration:	
	Involvement:	
	Prevention:	

RECOMMENDATION (S):

1. To agree to adopt the contents of the Ceredigion strategy for schools on Deprivation and Equity.
2. That an annual report on progress against the Ceredigion Deprivation and Equity Strategy be presented to the Schools, and the Learning Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee/

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION (S):

To ensure that schools have an appropriate and evidence-based strategy to support disadvantaged pupils.

Contact Name:	Gareth Lewis
Designation:	Deprivation and Rural Challenges Coordinator
Date of Report:	December 2022
Acronyms:	FSM – Free School Meals WIMD – Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation