

South Wales
Fire and Rescue Service



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
De Cymru

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service

Child Poverty Strategy



RAISING AWARENESS - REDUCING RISK

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1. Introduction

The Children and Families [Wales] Measure 2010 provides the statutory framework for tackling child poverty in Wales. The Child Poverty Strategy developed from the measure identifies three primary strategic objectives:

1. To reduce the number of families living in workless households.
2. To improve the skill level of parents and young people living in low-income families so that they can secure well-paid employment.
3. To reduce the inequalities that exist in the health, education and economic outcomes for children living in poverty, by improving outcomes of the poorest.


It is in the field of the third strategic objective that the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service (South Wales Fire and Rescue Service) is best placed to achieve positive outcomes. In line with the over-riding objective of this organisation to protect and support the communities we serve, South Wales Fire and Rescue Service recognises the importance of targeted interventions to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty and improve outcomes for young people in both health and education.

The Welsh Government recognises that public authorities play a crucial role in reducing child poverty and specifically names the fire and rescue service as one of these contributing public bodies in section 6 of The Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010. The Measure places a duty on the named Welsh Authorities to produce a child poverty strategy and to demonstrate how they intend to improve the life chances of children and young people experiencing poverty and deprivation. The Measure details 13 broad aims which reflect back onto the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The Measure specifies that the named public authorities have a commitment to delivering against one or more of the 13 broad aims. Those set out below are those which South Wales Fire and Rescue Service can engage with most effectively:

- Broad Aim 6: To support parenting of children
- Broad Aim 9: To ensure that all children grow up in safe and cohesive communities
- Broad Aim 13: To help young people participate effectively and responsibly in the life of their communities

As well as the 13 broad aims mentioned above, Welsh Government has set out seven Core Aims which summarise the relevant Articles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. This is the context in which Welsh Government has developed its Child Poverty Strategy and so these Core Aims, or at least extracts from them appropriate to the Fire and Rescue Service, form the basis on which our strategy is founded. In order to achieve the outcomes we desire, South Wales Fire and Rescue Service will be seeking to engage with a number of Children and Young People's Partnerships (CYPP) operating within the Local Authorities of South Wales.

The sentiments within this document are informed by existing organisational strategies setting out the commitment of South Wales Fire and Rescue Service to the diversity agenda and the reduction of inequalities occasioned by the experience of poverty and deprivation.



This is in line with our organisational vision of making our communities the safest places to live, work and visit; and echoes our core value of Service to the Community.

Whilst the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service is happy to endorse all the broad aims set out in the Guidance and Regulations for Welsh Authorities issued by Welsh Government, there is one important reservation that we must acknowledge.

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service is compelled to state the belief that any Child Poverty Reduction Strategy should contain a commitment to reducing the number of accidental dwelling fires and deaths and injuries caused by fires. In view of the fact that the vast majority of the fires we have to deal with take place in areas of social and economic deprivation, as an organisation South Wales Fire and Rescue Service feels it is entirely appropriate to put keeping children and young people in homes that are safe from fire as a priority in this Strategy document. Statistics from Save the Children show that children from low income households are 15 times more likely to die in a fire at home and are 37 times more likely to die in a fire at home if parents are long term unemployed or have never worked. Our own statistics show an almost exact correlation between the number and frequency of fires and the socio-economic circumstances of the area effected: the areas suffering the most fires are the areas of greatest social and economic deprivation.

This strategy seeks to demonstrate how the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service intends to contribute to improving outcomes for children and young people who experience poverty and deprivation. This strategy will involve consultations with our statutory partner organisations in the CYPP to look at the development of new services within Families First and Community First (CF) areas, as well as looking at our existing programmes to identify more creative methods of delivery. It will set out our intentions and actions across all relevant areas of our current engagement and indicate those broad aims which particularly coincide with the focus of our concerns in relation to the UNCRC. There are other broad aims that South Wales Fire and Rescue Service can support tangentially, such as helping young persons participate effectively in education and training, thereby improving outcomes in health and education and breaking the cycle of poverty.

It should also be recognised that low income families are not only located in CF areas, and not all families in CF areas necessarily have a low income. Research shows that only 40% of families with low income are found in CF areas. In the light of this research, South Wales Fire and Rescue Service will be exploring additional approaches to targeting low income households: eg. through Social Services or Families First consortia.



2. Outcomes/Actions/Measures

This chapter sets out our response to the UNCRC Core Aims.

In partnership with other pro-social agencies involved in those CYPP's which we actively support, South Wales Fire and Rescue Service will be seeking to adapt some of our existing programmes to meet the needs of some of our more vulnerable families across South Wales. It is also the case that we shall be exploring further initiatives that can be put in place to support the imperative of tackling child poverty. Taking as a starting point the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, South Wales Fire and Rescue Service will set out the Outcomes, Actions and Measures we can enact in support of the Core Aims, and put in place a narrative for the outcomes that will form the basis of the Review in 2014

2.1 CORE AIM 1: Every child should have a flying start in life.

This aim seeks to ensure that every child is born healthy into a secure and supportive family. It coincides with the commitment of South Wales Fire and Rescue Service to support the parenting of children and to ensure that all children grow up in homes that are safe from fire.

Planned Outcomes:

We will endeavour to improve fire safety conditions within homes of families at particular risk by conducting home fire safety checks (HFSC) and the provision of fire detection and prevention devices. Also, we will engage with parents of young children, as identified by partner agencies, to improve their safety awareness, specifically through our Firesetter Intervention Scheme.

Actions

We will:

Identify homes at particular risk through the use of socio-geographic intelligence software (Mosaic) and direct home check activity towards these; in partnership with midwives and health visitors to direct HFSC to the homes of neonates in CF areas.

We will:


Arrange presentations to target groups of young parents to address directly with them issues pertaining to fire safety in the home, using partner agencies such as Sure Start and Flying Start who operate in Community 1st areas.

Measures:

We will aim to fit smoke alarms in 1000 homes for low income families identified by our targeting methodology in consultation with Communities First and Families First within the two years of the Strategy prior to review.

We will give a presentation to every Sure Start Young Mother's group within the two years of the Strategy prior to review.

Within South Wales, pre-school children will suffer 5% fewer fire related injuries during 2012 - 2014 than during the two years preceding the implementation of the strategy.



2.2 CORE AIM 2: Every child and young person should have access to a comprehensive range of education, training and learning opportunities, including acquisition of essential personal and social skills.

This aim is in harmony with the efforts of South Wales Fire and Rescue Service to help young people participate effectively and responsibly in the life of their communities.

Planned Outcomes:

To provide a range of age and ability appropriate learning opportunities for children and young people in areas of social and economic deprivation which are not rich in opportunities.

This will provide a source of community enrichment and foster good relations between the local Fire Station and the community which it serves. This will be evidenced by a reduction in the frequency and severity of attacks on Fire Crews.

Actions

We will:

At KS1 we will deliver a spiral curriculum to Year 2; at KS2 Year 5; and re-enforcement at Year 6. For Year 4 we will offer Forest School for two schools each year which will be selected according to the prevalence of wildfires in their area, (which statistics show are more likely to occur in the most deprived areas of South Wales.) These courses will be delivered directly by Fire Service personnel and harmonises precisely with the aim of the National Parks to promote responsible use of the countryside.

We will:

At KS3 and KS4 we will provide learning materials for secondary school teachers to explore the themes of Personal and Social Health Education that reflect the priorities of the Fire and Rescue Service, eg. Peer pressure and bullying and their effect on fire setting and hoax calls.

We will:

Provide opportunities for 200 young people each year to engage with the Young Firefighter scheme, promoting soft and social skills, leading to the award of a BTEC Certificate. This will encourage access to Further and Higher Education, thereby altering poor economic outcomes for the better.

We also offer targeted programmes to Tier 1 and Tier 2 young people who are referred through the youth justice system, many of whom have a background of economic deprivation.

We will:

Provide 270 places a year for young people on the Phoenix Programme, aimed at promoting pro-social behaviour and improving self esteem

We will:

Provide 2000 places a year for young people engaging with Crime and Consequences, a modular training package promoting consequential thinking skills and social responsibility around the issues of fire crime.



We will:

Provide young people not in Education, Employment or Training with 300 hours of tuition every year on issues related to Fire Safety and Road Safety.

Measures:

A reduction in Fire Crime committed by young people evidenced by a 5% drop in deliberate fire setting; hoax calls; and a 10% reduction in attacks on fire crews in Community First areas..

2.3 CORE AIM 3: Every child and young person enjoys the best possible health, including freedom from abuse and exploitation.

This aim is reflected in the work of the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service to actively promote home fire safety and protect vulnerable children.

Planned Outcomes:

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service will actively promote protocols and procedures to protect children perceived to be at risk of abuse or exploitation and keep them safe within their homes.

Actions

We will:

Put in place clear protocols and procedures to enable all personnel employed by the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service to report any concerns about the well-being of children they encounter in the course of their work.

We will:

Ensure that there is an effective Safeguarding Team deployed within the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service who will undertake to ensure that any such concerns are reported to the appropriate authorities.

We will:

Target the homes of young families suffering from economic deprivation to carry out Home Fire Safety Checks and install appropriate detection and protection to reduce the risk to children of injury or death through fire, including the provision of anti-inflammable materials to reduce the risk from smoking-related fires.

Measure:

All instances of concern expressed to the Safeguarding Team of South Wales Fire and Rescue Service about the welfare of individual children will be referred to the appropriate authorities.

All families suffering economic deprivation will be given the opportunity of a visit by South Wales Fire and Rescue Service who will offer Home Fire Safety Checks and provide appropriate fire safety advice and materials.



2.4 Core Aim 4: Children and young people should have access to and opportunities to participate in high quality and safe play, sport, leisure and cultural activities.

This aim is resonant with the efforts of the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service to provide opportunities for young people to participate effectively and responsibly in the life of their communities.

Planned Outcomes:

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service will have in place a menu of activities offering a variety of opportunities to children and young people to take part in high quality leisure and cultural activities.

Actions

We will:

Offer a range of diversionary activities each Spring to engage with young people aged 11 – 18 from areas of economic deprivation (Bernie).

We will:

Provide opportunities for young people to engage with the Young Firefighter Scheme leading to the award of a BTEC Certificate.

Measure:

With the support of our partners in the designated Local Authorities, South Wales Fire and Rescue Service will put 800 young people through the Bernie programme in the two years prior to review in 2014.

BTEC Awards will be secured by 150 young people by 2014.

2.5 Core Aim 5: All children and young people will be listened to, treated with respect and be able to have their race and cultural identity recognised.

Planned Outcomes:

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service will have in place an expanded range of opportunities for children and young people to contribute positively to their communities within a context of respect for principles of equality and diversity.

Actions

We will:

Run Fire Watch at schools identified by MOSAIC.

Run Young Firefighter programmes at stations serving some of the most deprived communities, embracing young people from all ethnic backgrounds

Run Phoenix for 200 vulnerable young people a year.


Run Literacy Mentoring scheme at fire stations in our most economically deprived CF areas, in partnership with the Library Service and CF/ Social Services.

Measure:

40 schools will be running the Fire Watch scheme by the time of the review in 2014.

150 Young Firefighters will have secured the BTEC Award.

400 young people will have passed through the Phoenix programme.



Literacy mentoring schemes will be in place in Maesteg, Merthyr Tydfil, Caerphilly and Tonypanydy.

2.6 Core Aim 6: All children and young people should be able to be safe in their own home and community in which they live.

Planned Outcomes:

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service will have in place proactive protocols which target adults with problems of substance abuse and enhance fire safety awareness and fire precautions in the home.

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service will have developed a comprehensive programme aimed at enhancing road safety and reducing road traffic collisions that will be delivered at every secondary school in South Wales, including those in areas of social deprivation.

Protocols and procedures are established for referring issues relating to hate crime and domestic abuse to the appropriate authorities.

Actions:

Advocates specifically tasked with visiting homes of adults involved in substance abuse will provide maximum support in terms of fire safety for those with children.

Domino programmes promoting road safety will be introduced into all secondary schools as part of the PSHE curriculum.

Measure:

Drug and Alcohol Abuse Advocate will have carried out HFSC in 600 homes of people involved in substance abuse.

Road Safety Programme will have been delivered to all secondary schools across the ten local authorities.

2.7 Core Aim 7: Poverty should not stop children and young people living a full life, achieving and succeeding.

Planned Outcomes:

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service will have programmes in place encouraging adults in workless households to engage in learning with their children and adopt appropriate measures to ensure fire safety in the home, as well as providing opportunities for children and young people from backgrounds of social deprivation to enjoy learning experiences and gain qualifications.

Actions:

All of the activities provided by South Wales Fire and Rescue Service are open to all children and young people, promoting improved self-confidence, self-esteem and self reliance; encouraging educational achievement and ensuring that all families are occupying homes which are adequately protected against fire.

**Measure:**

In the two years prior to review, South Wales Fire and Rescue Service will:

- Have fitted smoke alarms and given fire safety advice to 20,000 homes in areas of economic and social deprivation
- Have provided learning opportunities promoting Home Fire Safety to children in all primary schools in South Wales
- Have provided access to learning programmes and diversionary activities to children and young people in South Wales across all Key Stages of the Curriculum Cymraeg
- Have given presentations promoting road safety to all secondary schools in South Wales
- Have delivered presentations promoting home fire safety to young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET); to people dealing with issues of substance abuse; to carers of children and to young people leaving care across South Wales.



3. Timeframe

	Action	By when
1	First draft complete	October 2011
2	Draft presented to SMT	8th November 2011
3	Presented to Fire Authority	December 19th 2011
4	Consultation period	January to March 2012
5	Implementation	1st April 2012 to 31st March 2014
6	Review	April 2014

4. Governance

This strategy document sets out the ways in which South Wales Fire and Rescue Service demonstrates its commitment to tackling child poverty.

To ensure that it fulfils this commitment and achieves better outcomes for children and young people, certain controlling factors have to be established.

These will include:

Governance – the establishment of South Wales Fire Authority as lead body in the delivery of the strategy.

Stakeholder buy in – the harmonisation of this strategy with those of key players such as CYPPs.

Evaluation – the development and monitoring of outcome based, key performance measures that provided a transparent window to success.

Participation – the direct and specific involvement of children and young people in the what and how of our engagement with them.

Reportage – the creation of a reporting mechanism that satisfies the needs of each heading group in this chapter.

Specifically:

- To the Fire Authority via the Acting Chief Fire Officer
- To the stakeholders via our engagement with CYPPs
- To children and young people through young people focus groups already existing in CYPPs and through ad hoc groups attending a range of fire service organised activities
- To South Wales Fire and Rescue Service staff via the communications group
- To the Child Poverty Unit of Welsh Government



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