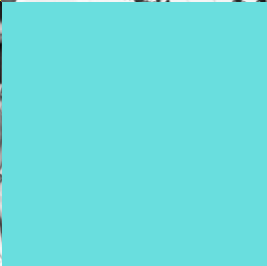
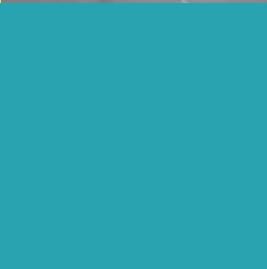






Wales Centre for Public Policy
Canolfan Polisi Cyhoeddus Cymru

2019 IN REVIEW






JANUARY

-  Integrated early years system
-  Preventing youth homelessness in Wales

MARCH

-  Migration in Wales
-  Sustainable Public Procurement
-  How can public services better treat vulnerable debtors

MAY

-  Analysis of factors contributing to the high rates of care in Wales
-  Powers and policy levers – what works in delivering Welsh Government policies
-  Welsh Policy and Politics in Unprecedented Times
-  What Works Summit: Improving outcomes for children and young people
-  What Works Summit: Youth mental health
-  Dr Hannah Durrant presented the Centre's Theory of Change to the Universities Policy Engagement Network

JULY

-  Assessing the impact of trade union activity
-  Launch of our new podcast. PEP Talk Episode 1: Youth Homelessness
-  Supporting Improvements in Health Boards


OCTOBER


-  The Value of Trade Unions
-  Achieving a prosperous economy: insights from other nations and regions
-  What Works Summit: devolved nations and collaboration
-  PEP Talk Episode 3: Gender Equality
-  Tackling inequalities through gender budgeting
-  Emma Taylor-Collins gave evidence about our work on austerity to the Senedd's Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee


DECEMBER


-  Why a 'Just Transition'? Decarbonisation and economic justice
-  Emma Taylor-Collins and Professor James Downe presented our work on austerity to the Welsh Government Treasury Directorate

2019 AT A GLANCE

 Responding to citizens in debt to public services

 Beyond contracting: public service stewardship to maximise public value


 How do we tackle loneliness? Evidence of supporting younger and older people


 The Nordic Exchange on Gender Equality


 Analysing the powers and policy levers of the Welsh Government

FEBRUARY

 Supporting improvements in health boards


 Improving cross-cutting working


 Welsh Government's potential responses to UK Government's immigration reform

 Dr Helen Hodges and Dr Paul Worthington presented our work on responding to citizens in debt to public services to the Money Action Trust Partnership Board

APRIL


 At the tipping point: Welsh Local Government and Austerity


 What Works Summit: Local Economic Performance


 Dr Andrew Connell presented our work on youth homelessness at the Urdd Eisteddfod


JUNE

 Tackling Inequality through Gender Budgeting


 Gender Equality – Learning from Nordic Nations


 Male Suicide: a silent epidemic

 PEP Talk Episode 2: Council tax and vulnerable debtors


 Welsh local government and austerity

SEPTEMBER

 Developing a strategic approach to procurement







 Mobilising meaningful connections between evidence and practice

 The politics of evidence: in conversation with Dr Justin Parkhurst

 The Preston Model: a panacea for Wales?

NOVEMBER

KEY

-  Blog
-  Event
-  Podcast
-  Presentation
-  Report
-  Welsh Government Lunch and Learn

Introduction

2019 was marked by political uncertainty and polarised policy debates. This made it important that policy makers and public services could access reliable independent evidence about what works.

For the last two years, we have worked closely with academic experts, public services, and Welsh Government ministers to bridge the gap which often exists between policy and research. We've published more than 40 reports and convened numerous events which have brought together over 100 researchers from across the UK, Canada, Denmark, Iceland, Norway and Sweden with policy makers and practitioners to discuss the big policy challenges facing Wales.

We have also continued to play an important role as part of the UK-wide **What Works network**, collaborating with other What Work Centres to ensure that policy makers in Wales have access to the evidence that they generate on health improvement, educational attainment, economic growth, social care, early intervention, ageing better, homelessness, wellbeing, and reducing crime.

There has been growing interest in the demand-led approach to mobilising evidence that we have developed, and we were delighted to be selected as one of the two finalists for the prestigious Economic and Social Research Council **Impact on Public Policy Prize**.

We have also drawn on our experience of working with policy makers to contribute new insights to the academic literature on evidence use.

The depth, breadth, and volume of the body of the work that we produced in 2019 was a real group effort, and we want to thank our funders, the experts who we've worked with, our Advisory Group, and the whole team at the Wales Centre for Public Policy for making the last 12 months such a success.

In 2019...



Our reports were downloaded **more than 4000** times.



Traffic to our website increased by **more than 20%** compared to 2018 figures.



The events we organised attracted almost **400 attendees** and **more than 30 speakers**, including speakers from Canada, Norway, and Iceland.



We gained **over 500** new Twitter followers and **425** new newsletter subscribers.

About Us

The Wales Centre for Public Policy helps to improve policy making and public services by supporting ministers and public service leaders to access and apply rigorous independent evidence about what works. It works in partnership with leading researchers and policy experts to synthesise and mobilise existing evidence and identify gaps where there is a need to generate new knowledge.

The Centre is independent of government but works closely with policy makers and practitioners to develop fresh thinking about how to address strategic challenges in health and social care, education, housing, the economy and other devolved responsibilities.

The Centre:

- supports Welsh Government Ministers to identify, access, and use authoritative evidence and independent expertise that can help inform and improve policy;
- works with public services to access, generate, evaluate, and apply evidence about what works in addressing key economic and societal challenges; and
- draws on its work with Ministers and public services, to advance understanding of how evidence can inform and improve policy making and public services and contribute to theories of policy making and implementation.

Through secondments, PhD placements and its Research Apprenticeship programme, the Centre also helps to build capacity among researchers to engage in policy relevant research which has impact.

For further information please visit our website at www.wcpp.org.uk

Health and Social Care

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE LOOKED AFTER

The number of children and young people taken into care in Wales is increasing and there are significant concerns about the state of care provision and commissioning. We are producing independent evidence and analysis to support public services to improve outcomes for this group.

We published a detailed empirical analysis of the factors that are driving **increases in the numbers of children and young people in care across Wales** and we are undertaking three pieces of work on ways of redesigning commissioning.

We have conducted a literature review on the experiences of commissioning from the **perspectives of children and young people and their birth families**.

With experts at the Institute for Public Care, we have conducted an international review of commissioning practices.

We are developing a suite of briefings and infographics on current provision in Wales working with the Children's Commissioning Consortium Cymru.

TACKLING SUICIDE

Mental health has increasingly been recognised as a key public policy issue and the First Minister asked us to provide a short review analysing recent trends and what the current state of the evidence about rates of **male suicide**.

HOW LOCAL GOVERNMENT HAS RESPONDED TO BUDGET CUTS

Constraints on public spending have presented challenges for Welsh councils. Spending on services fell by 12% from 2009/10 to 2016/17, and the local government workforce decreased by around 37,000 staff. In partnership with the Welsh Local Government Association, we conducted a detailed study of how **councils in Wales have responded to budget cuts**. We concluded that there needs to be a debate about the sustainability of Welsh local government and how councils can be supported to be resilient. The analysis was presented at the Wales Fiscal Analysis Conference and to Welsh Government officials at one of our regular 'lunch and learn' sessions, as well as to SOLACE Wales and at a briefing for officials in the Welsh Government Treasury Directorate.

REDUCING LONELINESS

Loneliness has also attracted increasing attention. In 2019, we reviewed what the **evidence says about loneliness in Wales** and in Spring 2020 we are convening a major conference to explore what works in tackling social isolation and loneliness.

SUPPORTING HEALTH BOARDS

Another complex and high-profile policy challenge is how to support health boards where there are concerns about patient care and/or overspending. We reviewed the existing evidence and convened a workshop with senior Welsh Government officials, academic experts, and public service leaders with first-hand experience of turning around underperforming councils and health bodies in England and Wales. Our report on **supporting improvements in health boards** summarises the evidence on ways of tackling the problem.



Economy and Work

GROWTH AND PRODUCTIVITY

We analysed **what Wales can learn from high-growth regions across Europe.**

We convened a What Works Summit on economic growth with presentations from the Royal Society of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce, Institute for Public Policy Research, and the What Works Centre for Local Economic Growth. We also worked with Professor Phil McCann, the Director of the UK's Productivity Insights Network, to provide the Minister and Deputy Minister for Economy and Transport and their Ministerial Advisory Board with the latest evidence on what drives improvements in productivity.

We have been awarded funding from the Economic and Social Research Council for a two-year study to examine how local and regional institutions can promote productivity, inclusive growth and decarbonisation. We are working with researchers from Demos and the Universities of Surrey, Birmingham and Warwick to generate and analyse quantitative and interview data from Wales and selected English regions.

SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP

We conducted a review of the evidence on the **value of trade unions**, both to their members and to employers. Building on this work, we convened a workshop that brought together academic experts, Welsh Government officials, the Office for National Statistics, and the UK and Wales TUC to consider how the impact of trade unions activities and the statutory social partnership, which the Welsh Government is introducing, can be assessed over time.

In 2019 we launched our new podcast series **PEP Talk** which provides a bite-size and engaging overview of our work and includes an episode on the **value of trade unions in Wales.**

MIGRATION

We undertook a study of the **impact the UK Government's Immigration White Paper might have on the Welsh Economy.** It found that almost two-thirds of EU workers currently in Wales would not be eligible for a Tier 2 visa with a £30,000 salary threshold, and it could lead to a significant fall in EU immigration to Wales.

PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

Public procurement accounts for a significant proportion of Welsh public spending and it has been claimed that it offers a way for governments and public services to encourage local economic growth, fair work, and wellbeing.

We have been examining the evidence on whether it is possible to achieve these outcomes by adopting a more strategic approach to procurement. We've published two reports – on **Beyond contracting: public service stewardship to maximise public value** and **Sustainable public procurement** – and three blogs, including one which looks at what Wales can learn from the **Preston Model.**

In November, we convened a seminar to discuss the challenges of **developing a strategic approach to procurement** with more than 50 practitioners and contributions from leading professionals and academic experts, including Liz Lucas of Caerphilly CBC and Steve Robinson of Cardiff Council.

Evidence Use and Policy Making

We know that the relationship between evidence and policy is complex and influenced by a range of factors. Drawing on our own experience of working with policy makers and experts, we are undertaking research to advance understanding of the role which evidence can play in supporting better policymaking. The results inform the ways in which we work in future and contribute new insights to the literature on evidence use.

WHAT WORKS SUMMITS

We are one of the longest established members of the rapidly growing **network of What Works Centres** and have continued to play a leading role in its mission of using evidence to improve the design and delivery of public services across the UK.

In 2019 we contributed to the activities of the What Works Council and Operations Group and organised a series of collaborative activities and events with other What Works Centres.

We convened five **What Works Summits** which brought the evidence on a series of key issues produced by What Works Centres to policy makers in the other devolved nations, and a roundtable with Directors of What Works Centres and senior representatives from Cabinet Office, the ESRC, and devolved administrations to discuss collaboration between Centres and engagement with devolved nations.

GROWING FUTURE RESEARCH LEADERS

One of the benefits of the Centre's work is that it is helping to equip researchers to engage effectively with policy and practice. So we were delighted that Dr Adrian Healy, a Research Fellow in the Centre, was awarded a prestigious UKRI Future Research Leaders Fellowship in 2019.

To help nurture future capacity for policy relevant research, the Centre runs an annual Research Apprenticeship. This gives outstanding early career researchers the opportunity to join us for 12 months to gain first-hand experience of working with public services and the Welsh Government. The scheme has proved very popular, attracting more than 100 applications last year, and our first two research apprentices, Sarah Quarmby and Suzanna Nesom, have both gone on to secure PhD bursaries to pursue research interests that they developed through their work at the Centre. Sarah is researching how policy ideas are generated and gain support. Suzanna is studying the gender pay gap.

CONFERENCES AND SEMINARS

We hosted a major conference on **policy and politics in unprecedented times** in partnership with the Wales Institute for Social and Economic Research and Data (WISERD) at Swansea University, and we have invited several of the leading scholars on evidence use to Cardiff to present their work.

We convened seminars on the Politics of Evidence featuring Dr Justin Parkhurst from the London School of Economics and on 'What do we mean by data' by Professor Louise Locock from the Health Services Research Unit at the University of Aberdeen.

We participated in conferences of the Universities Policy Engagement Network in Bristol and Durham and hosted a meeting of the network in Cardiff which focused on ways to facilitate engagement between researchers and devolved administrations.

We organised a seminar on the **benefits and best practise of knowledge mobilisation** with Cardiff University's Social Science Research Park which featured presentations by our own team and Professor Jonathan Sharples of the Education Endowment Foundation.

KNOWLEDGE BROKERING ORGANISATIONS

In 2019 we completed a review of the literature on knowledge brokering organisations which identified different types of knowledge brokers, their characteristics, and gaps in the existing literature. The resulting paper has been accepted for publication in the leading academic journal *Policy & Politics* in 2020.

Based on in-depth interviews with staff working in knowledge brokering organisations in North America, Africa, and Europe, we have developed case studies comparing the similarities and differences of approach and lessons for our understanding of evidence synthesis and use. The initial findings were presented at the 4th International Conference on Public Policy in Montreal in June.

Environment and Sustainability

The recognition of the climate emergency makes it important that policy makers have evidence to help inform the transitions and behaviour change that will be needed.

In 2019 we conducted a review of ways to achieve a **'just transition'** to a net-zero carbon society and published a blog on **decarbonisation and social justice**. We also began work for Ministers on ways to encourage drivers to adhere to 20 mph speed limits.

In March 2020 we will be convening an expert workshop to consider ways in which Wales can make the transition to a net zero carbon economy and in May we are convening the Wales Economic Symposium which will bring together leading experts, ministers, and senior officials to consider post-growth debates and approaches to decarbonisation.



Social justice and Equality

GENDER EQUALITY

We made major contributions to the **Gender Equality Review** commissioned by Ministers, and led by Chwarae Teg.

In February, we convened a Nordic Exchange with the Deputy Minister, Welsh Government officials and advisers and researchers and policy makers from Denmark, Iceland, Sweden and Finland.

Drawing on this event and working with international experts, we produced a report highlighting what Wales can learn from attempts to **mainstream gender equality** in Scandinavian countries.

In collaboration with Cardiff Business School, we organised an exceptionally well attended **Gender Equality Question Time** which featured contributions from the delegation of Nordic experts.

GENDER BUDGETING

We analysed the evidence **on tackling inequality through gender budgeting** and made recommendations on implementing gender budgeting Wales. Our report informed the introduction by the Welsh Government of gender budgeting as part of the two-year Personal Learning Accounts pilot. Launched in September 2019 this supports employed adults in low paid and low skilled work to switch careers or enter employment at a higher level in priority sectors with known gender effects.

Our PEP Talk podcast series includes an episode on our work on **gender equality**.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

At the start of 2019 we published a report on the evidence of **international approaches to integrated early years provision**.

In partnership with the Campbell Collaboration and Alliance for Useful Evidence we followed this up with a What Works Summit in Belfast to consider **what works in Early Years**. A group of invited practitioners from Northern Ireland and other countries met to hear about recent evidence generated by the Education Endowment Foundation, the Early Intervention Foundation, and National Institute Health and Social Care Excellence (NICE).

A second summit, convened in partnership with What Works Scotland, reviewed the evidence on what works in place-based approaches to public services provision for children with policy makers and practitioners from Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland.

Following our previous work on promoting **emotional resilience and mental health among young people**, we brought together practitioners and researchers in Northern Ireland with experts from What Works Wellbeing, What Works Children's Social Care, and NICE to examine causes, prevention and treatment for young people experiencing mental health difficulties.

TACKLING HOMELESSNESS

Dr Andrew Connell was invited to present the key findings of our work on youth homelessness at the **Urdd Eisteddfod**, and we were invited to be part of Cardiff University's legacy team following the Homeless World Cup's success in raising awareness of the issue. We published a podcast on **youth homelessness** as part of our PEP Talk series. We are exploring ways to build on this work and are convening an event with the Welsh Local Government Association in Spring 2020.

SUPPORTING VULNERABLE DEBTORS

Building on the report we published in 2018 on how public services can support vulnerable debtors, we presented our recommendations to the Money Action Trust Partnership Board in April 2019 and produced a **podcast** to bring the issue to wider attention.



Our Advisory Group

The Centre benefits from the advice and support of an Advisory Group comprising distinguished individuals from academia, government and public services.

Stephen Aldridge is Director for Analysis and Data at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

Professor Annette Boaz is a Professor in Health Care Research at the Centre for Health and Social Care Research at St George's University of London and Kingston University.

Professor Alice Brown is Chair of the Scottish Funding Council and Emeritus Professor of Politics at the University of Edinburgh.

Dr Carol Campbell is Director of the Knowledge Network for Applied Education Research-Rseau d'change des connaissances pour la recherche appliquee en education.

Dr Jane Davidson is a former Welsh Government minister and Pro-Vice Chancellor for External Engagement and Sustainability at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David.

Professor Sir Ian Diamond is the UK's National Statistician and former Principal and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Aberdeen.

Dr Ruth Hall is a non-executive director of Health Education and Improvement Wales and former Chief Medical Officer for Wales.

Professor Gerry Holtham is Hodge Professor of Regional Economy, Cardiff Metropolitan University.

Sir Peter Housden is a former Permanent Secretary of the Scottish Government.

Professor Ruth Hussey was Chief Medical Officer for Wales and chaired the Parliamentary Review of Health and Social Care in Wales.

Professor Paul Johnson is Director of the Institute for Fiscal Studies.

Abdool Kara is the Executive Leader of the Local Services at the National Audit Office and a former local authority chief executive.

Professor Laura McAllister is Professor of Public Policy and the Governance of Wales at Cardiff University's Wales Governance Centre.

Dr June Milligan is a Civil Service Commissioner and lay member of the governing body of the University of Glasgow and former Chair of the Wales Committee on Equality and Human Rights.

Professor Helen Patterson is the Chief Executive at Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council.

Professor Nick Pearce is Director of the Institute for Policy Research at the University of Bath and a former head of the No. 10 Policy Unit and the Institute for Public Policy Research.

Ceridwen Roberts is a former Senior Research Fellow at the University of Oxford's Department of Social Policy and Intervention.

Dame Dr Jane Roberts is a Research Fellow in Public Leadership at the Open University and the former Leader of the London Borough of Camden.

Michael Trickey is Honorary Senior Research Fellow at Cardiff University's Wales Fiscal Analysis team.

Professor Sir Adrian Webb chairs the Ministerial Advisory on the Economy and the Big Lottery Fund, Wales and is a former University Vice-Chancellor and Professor of Social Policy.



Wales Centre for Public Policy

Cardiff University
10/12 Museum Place
Cardiff
CF10 3BG



www.wcpp.org.uk



029 2087 5345



info@wcpp.org.uk



@WCfPP

