



Wales Centre for Public Policy
Canolfan Polisi Cyhoeddus Cymru

What can PSBs do about poverty?

Workshop recap and resource pack



Workshop Summary

- These slides were originally developed in order to inform the Public Service Board (PSB) wellbeing plan process, and were presented to an audience of PSB members and coordinators in the summer of 2022.
- The slides present evidence from several WCPP research projects, drawing heavily on our recent [review on poverty and social exclusion](#).
- The evidence synthesised from these projects largely relates to policy at a Welsh level; these slides aim to present the evidence with a PSB lens, looking at what they can usefully do to tackle poverty.

Clickable links to resources and references are included throughout



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Contents: Workshop aims and objectives

(Click links to jump to section)

Situating PSBs

PSBs, well-being, poverty and plans

A good strategy makes a big difference

Understand the importance and key dimensions of an effective approach to addressing poverty

More than a list of interventions

Become familiar with short- and medium-term area-based interventions that map and connect across priorities for addressing poverty

Long-term pathways and opportunities

Become familiar with opportunities for long-term economic action possible within the PSB remit and local influence

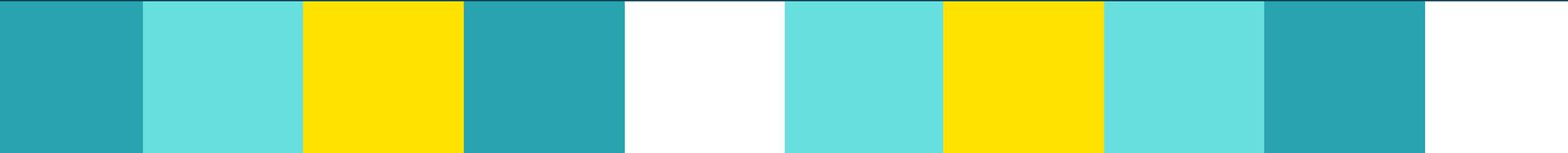
Discussion

An overview of what workshop participants thought this information could mean for PSBs

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Introduction

Situating PSBs



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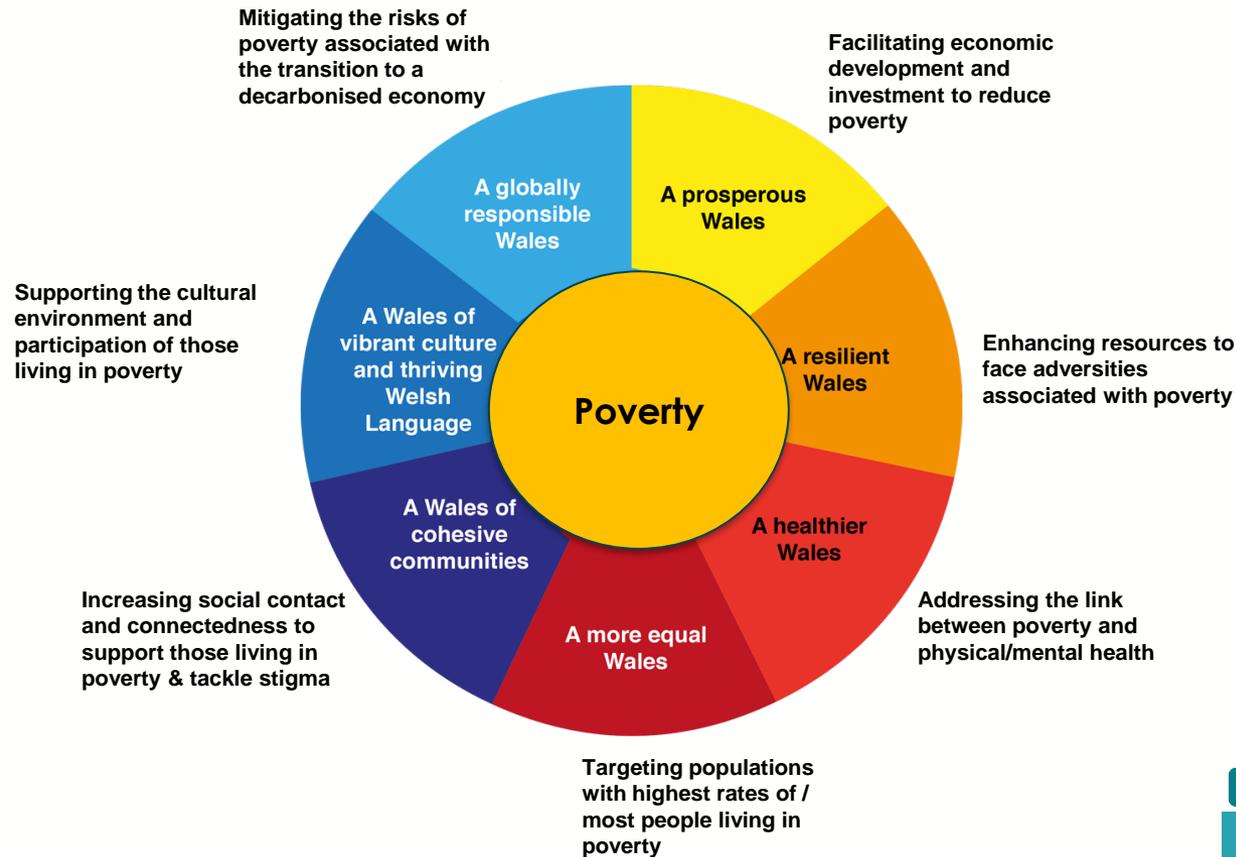
By poverty, we mean a long-term state of not having sufficient resources to afford food, reasonable living conditions or amenities or to participate in activities (such as access to attractive neighbourhoods and open spaces) which are taken for granted by others in their society”

Welsh Government
(2015)

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Poverty and well-being

- Poverty is interconnected with, and can impact on, multiple areas of well-being.



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What can PSBs do?

What can PSBs do to identify and support those living in poverty and at risk of poverty, to mitigate the impacts of poverty, as well as efforts to prevent those at risk from poverty?

Two priorities for this workshop:

- (1) **Evidence on area-based interventions** to support people at risk of poverty
- (2) **Evidence on long term economic activities** to support an area and its population to improve its long-term economic prospects.

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What have PSBs already been doing?

Poverty Focus 2017 Plans	Detail	WCPP Evidence
Approach	Local intelligence, raising awareness, coordination, ensuring delivery	What makes an effective anti-poverty strategy?
Skills & regeneration	Inequality and skills gaps, skills for working adults, regeneration	Lifelong learning Skills for a just transition
Finance & debt	Financial skills, coordination with debt advice centres	Household debt
Childcare & early years	Cost and coordination between programmes	Early childhood education & care
Supporting active travel	Improving and integrating transport services	Transport disadvantage
Digital	Providing broadband and digital infrastructure	Digital exclusion
Reducing fuel & food poverty	Working with foodbanks and social housing providers	Fuel poverty Food insecurity
Crime & safety	Crime, ASB, community safety	Neighbourhood environment

What are PSBs planning to do?

Poverty Focus 2022 Assessments	Detail	WCPP Evidence
Approach	Urban v rural poverty Multi-agency working	What makes an effective anti-poverty strategy? Effectiveness of multi-agency working
Cost of living	Food and fuel poverty, in-work poverty and debt	Fuel poverty Food insecurity Household debt In-work progression
Transport access	Barrier to access to work and education	Transport disadvantage
Skills and youth	Young people access work experience / careers	FE and skills Youth services
Housing	Lack of affordability	Affordable housing
Children / childcare	Cost and accessibility of childcare; child poverty	Early childhood education and care

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Section 1

A good strategy makes a big difference



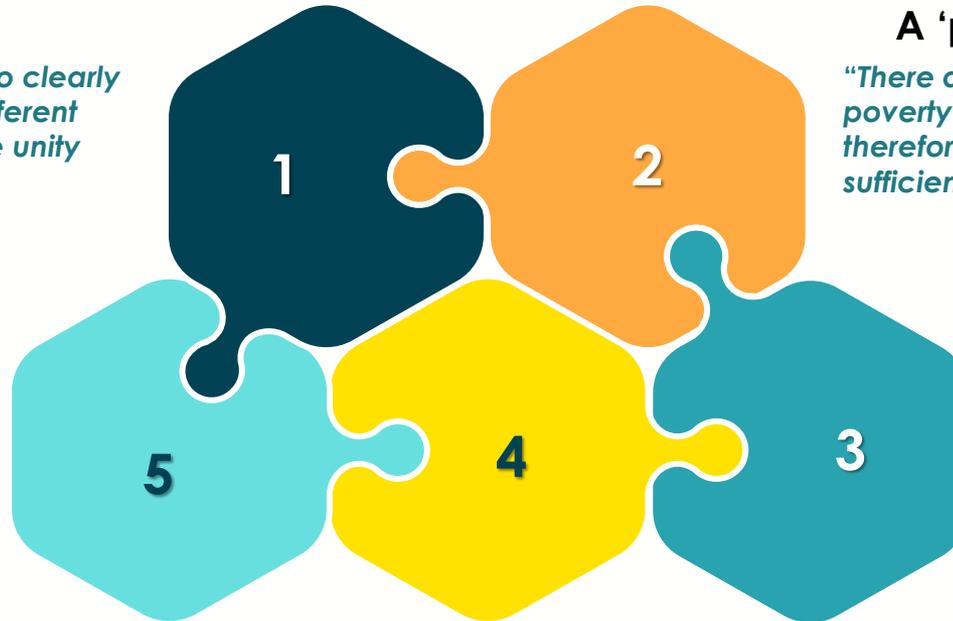
Five important considerations

Prioritisation

"...actions must be linked to clearly defined objectives, and different objectives must have some unity between them."

Participation

The importance of any strategy being 'person-centred' and ensuring the meaningful inclusion of those with lived experience, and those who provide services to them.



A 'policy mix'

"There are multiple drivers of poverty and social exclusion and therefore no single policy is sufficient to reduce them."

Delivery agents

"Our review of effective anti-poverty strategies emphasises the need for effective coordination of actors at multiple levels: from Ministerial through to 'front line' service delivery."

Monitoring

Addressing issues like poverty takes time. A combination of output and outcome measures are needed to monitor progress.



Resources: [What makes an anti-poverty strategy effective?](#)
[Overview of the international evidence](#)

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Case Study: Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy (2015-2035)

A prioritized, policy mix: housing stability, service access, transit (public transport) equity, food access, quality jobs and livable incomes.

Rolling four-year action plans within the strategy.

Tackling structural drivers of poverty - inclusive economic growth.

Engaging city staff and residents on poverty reduction efforts.

Guidance on understanding poverty and responsibility for it.

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Resources: [What makes an anti-poverty strategy effective?](#)



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Related questions for the PSB planning process

- 1** What is the focus/priority of the WB Plan (on poverty)? How will it add to and build on existing PSB (and others') poverty efforts?
- 2** Given the priority/s identified, what will be the relevant combination of interventions (or policy mix) in the Plan?
- 3** Which local actors will need to be mobilised by the PSB? Do they have capacity? Is delivery aligned with their incentives? What resources and support might they need?
- 4** How will the efficacy of different interventions in the Plan be determined? Is there the necessary capacity and clarity of responsibility?
- 5** How will the Plan incorporate the ongoing and meaningful participation of the people that it is seeking to support?

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Section 2

More than a list of interventions



Four areas of focus...



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Resources: [Poverty and social exclusion: A way forward](#)

...reflecting lived experience

“you have got to choose which one, Do I pay the gas and electric? Do I make myself more in debt so that we can eat?”

“a journey that took half an hour in the car was more like two hours on the bus and the earliest option arrived in to the city nearly half an hour later than many employers expect you to be in work”

“You’ve not had it every day, every year, and then get to your mid-thirties and you are no better off than when you were watching your parents do the same thing.”

“It’s a vicious circle because no matter what you’re always going to worry about one thing or another. My son is worried to death – ‘how am I gonna’ manage mum?’”

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[Lived experience of poverty and social exclusion](#)

Resources: [Review of lived experience evidence](#)

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Aligning PSB priorities and focus areas

Reducing costs and maximising income	'Pathways' out of poverty	Enabling environments
2017 plan priorities		
Finance and debt		
	Skills and regeneration	
Reducing food and fuel poverty		
	Digital	
		Childcare and early years
		Supporting active travel
		Crime and safety
2022 assessment priorities		
Cost of living		
Housing		
	Skills and youth	
		Transport access
Children and childcare		Children and childcare
Mental health and mental load		

Reducing costs and maximising income



Take up of cash transfers



Fuel poverty



Household debt



Food insecurity



Affordable housing

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Take up of cash transfers

Intervention	Strength of evidence	Effectiveness
Within PSB remit		
Local, integrated approaches	Generally weak evaluation	Likely effective
Provision of information	Strong	Mixed
Assistance with the claiming process	Strong * note: including evidence of outcomes resulting from <i>lack</i> of assistance	Effective
Partnership building	Good evidence of their role, less on direct outcomes	Effective
Outside PSB remit		
Passporting and automation	Strong	Effective

Fuel poverty

Intervention	Strength of evidence	Effectiveness
Within PSB remit		
Behaviour	Good	Effective
Home energy efficiency improvements	Good	Effective (important that they do not result in higher energy prices)
Outside PSB remit		
Energy prices	Weak (little international evidence of the effectiveness of different approaches)	Effective (although the evidence base is weak, reducing energy prices for low-income households will reduce fuel poverty)
Financial assistance with energy costs	Weak	Promising (clearly an important policy lever but little evaluation evidence of impact on fuel poverty)

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Household debt

Intervention	Strength of evidence	Effectiveness
Within PSB remit		
Financial literacy	Strong	Effective - Financial literacy on financial behaviours Mixed - Financial education on literacy and behaviours
Outside PSB remit		
Asset-based welfare policies	Strong	Mixed
Debt advice services	Good	Effective
Debt relief services	Weak (Robust evaluations are scarce)	Effective
Access to credit opportunities	Weak evaluations of alternative financial products	Limited effectiveness (Able to reach a marginal portion of the population)

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Food insecurity

Intervention	Strength of evidence	Effectiveness
Within PSB remit		
Food banks and community-based interventions (e.g. 'community cupboards' and 'pantries')	Mixed (scarce in relation to food banks, more robust but still limited in relation to community-based interventions)	Limited effectiveness
Outside PSB remit		
Policies related to food deserts and food swamps	Mixed (strong in relation to impact on health outcomes, limited in relation to food insecurity)	Limited effectiveness
Social protection policies (cash assistance, food subsidies)	Strong	Effective
Free or reduced-price school meals	Strong	Effective

Affordable housing

Intervention	Strength of evidence	Effectiveness
Outside PSB remit		
Policies supporting a 'dualistic model' (e.g. boosting homeownership; restricting access to social housing)	Good	Limited effectiveness (related to a reduced safety net function of a shrinking social sector)
Policies supporting a 'social market model' (e.g. regulating and subsidising the private rental sector; widening access to social housing)	Good	Effective (albeit challenging to implement in contexts characterised by high levels of poverty and inequality)

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‘One-stop’ multi-agency services in the community...

**‘...that provide diversified support are useful in the face of the range of interconnected needs and vulnerabilities people can experience. Evidence shows that these are most effective when they are non-stigmatizing and leverage trusted relationships in the community that help with expanding their reach’
(Bucelli and McKnight, 2022a).**



Resources: [Overview of the international evidence](#)

Enabling environments



Digital exclusion



Neighbourhood environment



Youth services



Transport



Affordable housing

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Digital exclusion

Intervention	Strength of evidence	Effectiveness
	Within PSB remit	
Digital literacy	Good, although weak elements. (for example, identifying what works in terms of course design)	Likely effective (particularly when courses are linked to specific need)
Access to devices and connectivity	Good	Likely effective (some evidence that broadband subsidies increase adoption in low-income households but other barriers also need to be addressed)

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Neighbourhood environment

Intervention	Strength of evidence	Effectiveness
Within PSB remit		
Bottom-up, community-led approaches	Generally weak evaluation	Effective
Outside PSB remit		
Top-down, place-based approaches (e.g. planning and implementation related to housing development, business assistance, social service provision, workforce development)	Mixed (varying quality, seldom focused on effects on poverty)	Mixed (positive outcomes on a range of dimensions but also negative effects)

Youth services

Intervention	Strength of evidence	Effectiveness
Within PSB remit		
Youth participation	Strong (quasi-experimental)	Effective
Outside PSB remit		
Open access youth services	Mixed (reviews of evidence) The results of inappropriate quantitative impact assessments are vulnerable to misinterpretation and can lead to damaging reforms.	Effective

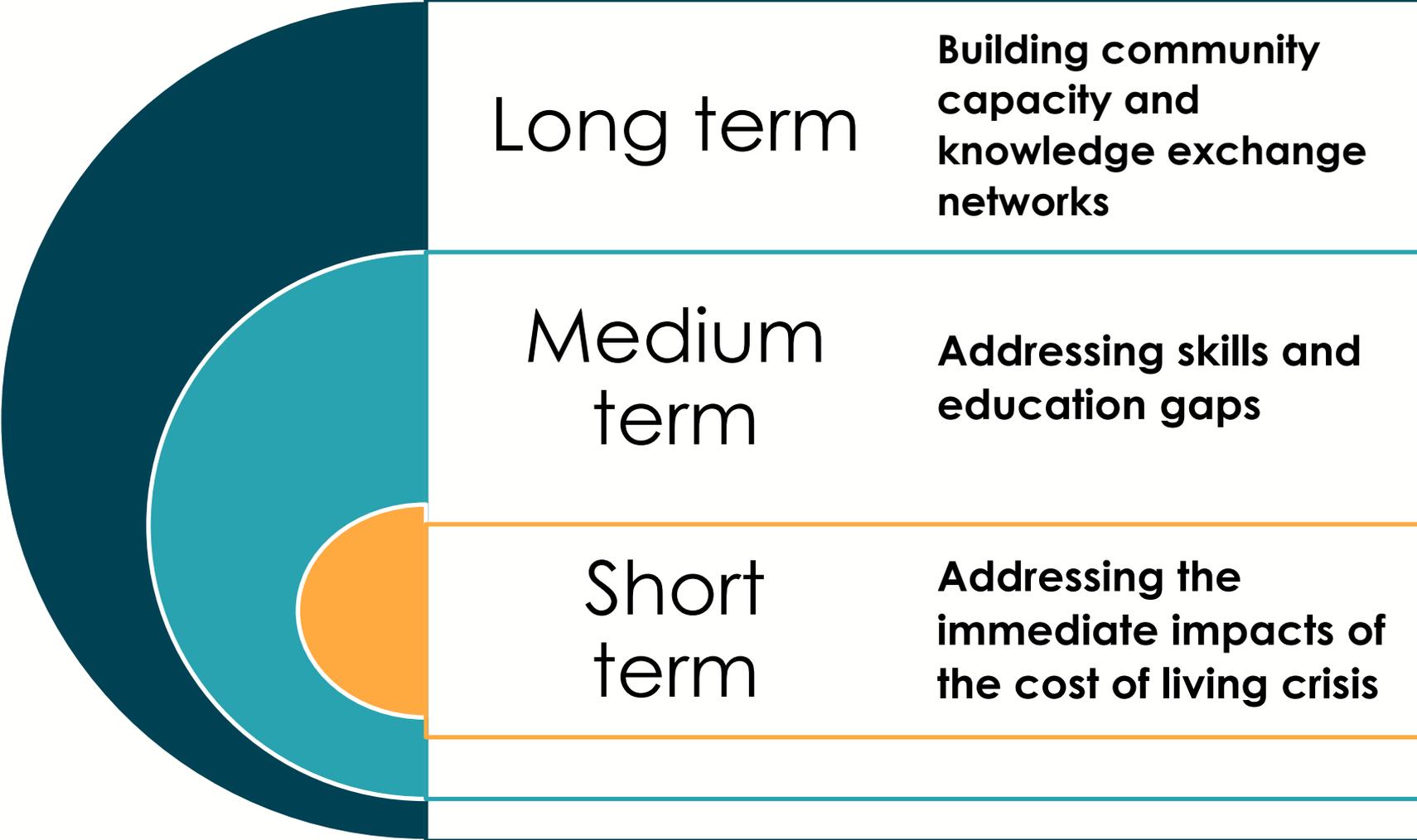
Transport

Intervention	Strength of evidence	Effectiveness
Within PSB remit		
Community transport	Good	Effective
Shared transport	Weak	Likely to be effective
Outside PSB remit		
Demand-responsive transport	Good	Effective

Section 3

Long-term pathways and opportunities





Long term	Building community capacity and knowledge exchange networks
Medium term	Addressing skills and education gaps
Short term	Addressing the immediate impacts of the cost of living crisis

Long term

Building community capacity and knowledge exchange networks

Medium term

Addressing skills and education gaps

Short term

Addressing the immediate impacts of the cost of living crisis

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Pathways out of poverty



FE and skills



In-work progression



ECEC



Transport

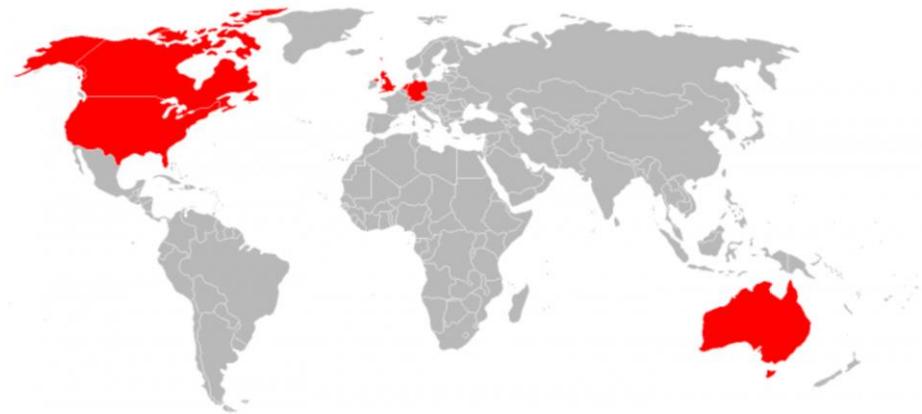
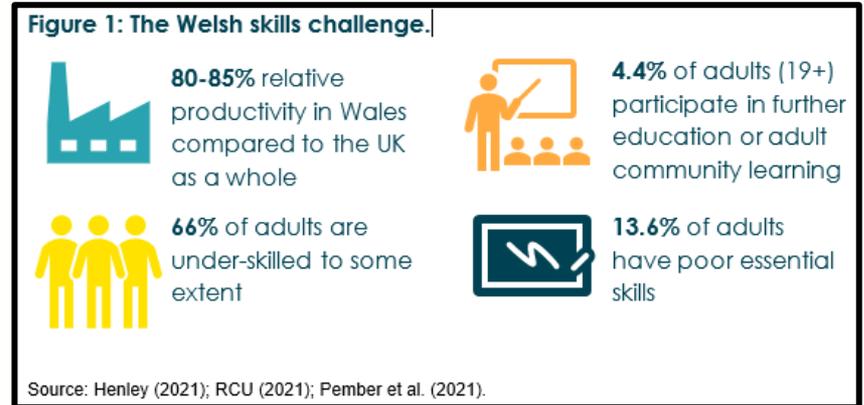
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FE and skills

Intervention	Strength of evidence	Effectiveness
Within PSB remit		
Policies boosting participation in adult learning	Good	Mixed (because of unequal participation)
Outside PSB remit		
Policies related to system design (e.g. school/work-based models; Dual System)	Strong	Effective (more mixed for long-term employment advantages)

Skills for a Just Transition: lessons learned

- Policy responses should target:
 - Skills development
 - Investment in innovation
 - Worker and community support
- Where policy responses have been successful, several effective delivery approaches were observed:
 - Strategic planning
 - Localised and individual delivery
 - Cross-sector collaboration



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Resources: [Developing skills for a just transition](#)

Opportunities in the Welsh context



Industry

- Identify future skills needs & assess current skills in the current workforce
- Develop targeted, relevant training/upskilling opportunities
- Lead the advancement of research & innovation to increase demand for high-skilled labour



Education

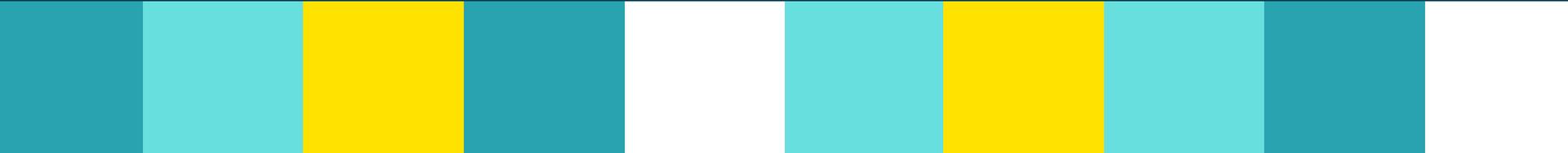
- Promote lifelong learning
- Increase access to/demand for skills training that meets the need of industry and the workforce



Gov't &
Local/Regional
Bodies

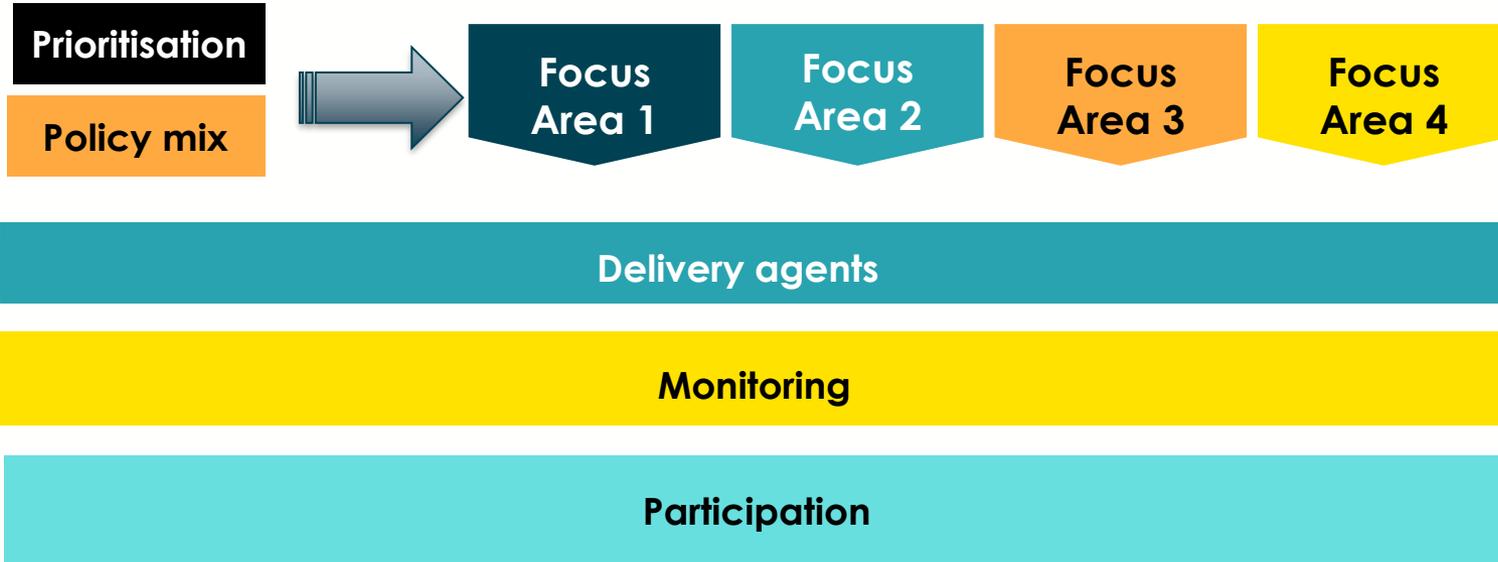
- Utilise data to identify high-risk areas
- Provide targeted interventions to support workers and strengthen communities and regions most impacted by the transitions

Closing Remarks and Next Steps

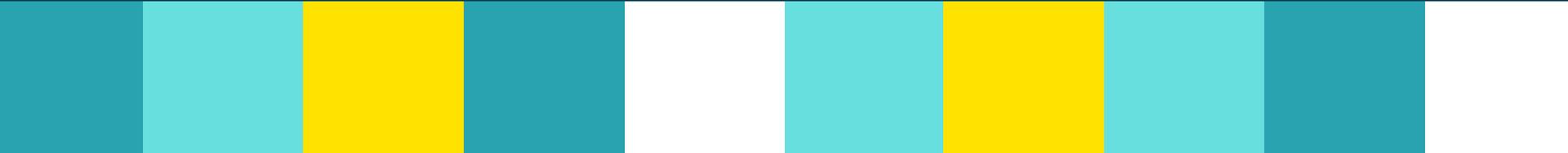


A useful framework?

- Prioritisation and policy mix inform focus areas
- Other considerations are cross-cutting throughout



Discussion



Discussion Questions

What does this information mean for PSBs?

We asked participants to think about:

- What is useful about what you've heard for PSB planning on poverty? How might it apply to your local plan/PSB/possible objectives and actions?
- What do you think the PSB role could be in coordinating action/interventions around this/these areas of focus?
- What challenges, gaps or additional evidence needs can you identify?
- What thoughts do you have around delivery, monitoring or participation in relation to these areas of focus / possible interventions?

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What is useful about what you've heard for PSB planning on poverty? How might it apply to your local plan/PSB/possible objectives and actions?

- How workshop organised and grouping into focus areas useful
- Evidence that participatory approaches are valuable
- Inter-relations important as enables PSBs to take a 'one stop' approach
- Practical interventions helpful
- Mixed opinions on setting out what is and is not in PSB remit
- Currently working with PSB on jobs, skills, local economy and investment and linking up with Shared Prosperity Fund proposal
- Have set up a partnership between PSB and university on community outreach to increase access to learning and skills

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What do you think the PSB role could be in coordinating action/interventions around this/these areas of focus?

- PSBs need a clear scope and to avoid duplication e.g., Socio-Economic Duty relevant to all public bodies,
- “PSBs can provide support to people to break down barriers and to walk through doors”
- PSBs can map, promote and support access to existing services, support dissemination of key messages on tackling poverty, help to bring lived experience of poverty to the fore.
- PSBs can bring coordination capacity, link with other plans and strategies, help to integrate activities and provide leadership in their local area
- More PSB face-to-face engagement – mixed views

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What challenges, gaps or additional evidence needs can you identify?

- Case studies directly relevant / applicable to PSBs
- More on foodbanks and their effectiveness
- Evidence on affordable housing & local level interventions
- In-depth local information on inequality and protected characteristics
- Information on access to FE for those caring for children
- Role of PSB members as procurers and employers and potential impact on poverty
- More on inter-relations between topics (e.g., poverty and climate change or green spaces) so can deliver a 'one stop' approach

What thoughts do you have around delivery, monitoring or participation in relation to these areas of focus / possible interventions?

- PSBs can engage more with private sector and need to consider influence/balance of some partners versus main members e.g., Third Sector
- More diversity of voices around the table/ participation in PSBs including those affected by poverty
- Increase in participation of those with lived experience is important
- Focus on youth participation welcome
- Example provided of a 'community fridge' that brings together addressing poverty, community action, environment and reducing waste and health benefits.

You can find out more about our work on our website:

- [Review of poverty and social exclusion in Wales](#)
- [Poverty and social exclusion: A way forward](#)
- [Lived experience of poverty and social exclusion in Wales](#)
- [International review of effective anti-poverty policies and programmes](#)
- [What makes an anti-poverty strategy effective?](#)

If you'd like to talk to us some more, please get in touch:

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