



# FOOD POVERTY IN SOUTH WALES: A CALL TO ACTION

A REPORT BY THE SOUTH WALES  
FOOD POVERTY ALLIANCE

FEBRUARY 2019

**FOOD** *Power*



# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Although the UK is the seventh richest country in the world, many people struggle to afford food. The surge in the number of people seeking emergency food support in Wales betrays the desperate, daily struggle facing many people, up and down the country, in just having access to the basics: like putting a meal on the table. The safety net of our social protection system is failing to protect some of the most vulnerable people in our communities and half of all Welsh households experiencing poverty have at least one adult in paid employment.

This report brings together a range of evidence on the scale and impact of food poverty across South Wales and some of the initiatives trying to address the issue

The headline figures present a bleak picture behind which are people just like you and me trying their best to get by.

- In 2017-18 98,350 three-day emergency food supplies were provided to people in Wales in crisis by food banks in The Trussell Trust. Of these, 35,403 went to children.<sup>1</sup>
- According to the Food Standards Agency a fifth of people in Wales are worried about running out of food and 26% of 16-34 year olds surveyed in Wales ran out of food in the past year.<sup>2</sup>
- The Food Foundation<sup>3</sup> has shown that 160,000 children in Wales are living in households for whom a healthy diet is increasingly unaffordable.
- Reception-age children in Wales are significantly more likely than the Welsh average to be obese, if they live in areas of higher deprivation. The gap between obesity prevalence in the most and least deprived quintiles has increased from 4.7% in 2015/16 to 6.2% in 2016/17.<sup>4</sup>

Given there is no shortage of food in Wales, we need a shift of focus from the provision of food aid to boosting incomes so that everyone can access it. Primarily it is the role of the government to ensure that people have enough cash to be able to eat – and that food aid should not replace the dignity and choice afforded to those who can afford to buy food.

Without a shift in focus we risk food banks becoming an institutionalised fixture of Welsh society. This is not what we want. The South Wales Food Poverty Alliance wants to see the hunger experienced by a growing number of men, women and children in Wales better understood by our politicians, given the gravity it deserves and with clear actions put in place to end hunger in Welsh communities.

## OUR CALLS TO ACTION FOR WELSH GOVERNMENT ARE:

- A commitment to adopting the FIES based measurement (or equivalent) of food insecurity in Wales or to ensuring that any Office of National Statistics (ONS) or UK Government measure includes a large enough sample to allow for meaningful Wales disaggregated data.
- Any adopted measure of food insecurity should be included in the updated national wellbeing indicators to track our nation's progress towards the well-being goals.
- Use of all available policy levers, including the Economic Contract, to ensure that employers across Wales pay the real Living Wage, set by the Living Wage Foundation and act to reduce the gender pay gap.
- Use of the Discretionary Assistance Fund to support people struggling to feed themselves or their families during the 5 week wait for their initial Universal Credit payment.
- A holistic evaluation, including a full cost benefit analysis, of how best to ensure children living in poverty are adequately fed and nourished.
- Support the wider roll out of existing healthy eating initiatives developed and supported by the all-Wales Nutrition Skills for Life™ programme.
- A commitment to continue funding the School Holiday Enrichment Programme to at least 2022 to enable full research into its medium and long term impacts.
- To ensure that holiday provisions in Wales are mapped and co-ordinated and that all publicly funded programmes should be assessed based on Social Return on Investment and adhere to Quality Assurance, including safeguarding, that ensures appropriate and nutritious food provision and healthy lifestyle messages.
- To establish a Fair Food Transformation Fund in Wales.

## 2. BACKGROUND

In 2015 Welsh Government supported the creation of the All Wales Food Poverty Alliance in line with its Tackling Poverty Action Plan and Food and Drink Action Plan, although a budget was never allocated to the running of it. More recently, a change in Welsh Government policy focus around the poverty agenda meant that to continue the work of the Alliance a fresh approach was required.

The South Wales Food Poverty Alliance (SWFPA) and North Wales Food Poverty Alliance were set up in January 2018 with financial support from the Big Lottery funded Food Power programme overseen by Sustain and Church Action on Poverty and supported in Wales by Food Sense Wales.<sup>5</sup>

The SWFPA follows the principle that “food poverty in Wales is unacceptable”. Food poverty means the inability to afford, or have access to foods which make up a socially and culturally acceptable healthy diet. People have a right to be adequately nourished to maintain health and dignity.

Food poverty is a complex issue and therefore tackling it requires systemic and concerted efforts from a range of public, private and third sectors. The SWFPA aims to integrate efforts from various organisations, communities and public agencies across South Wales which we hope will lead to more coordinated and effective interventions. To date the SWFPA has concentrated on

undertaking a mapping exercise to bring together indicators of food insecurity across each of the local authority areas in the South Wales region. These indicators were selected through consultation with SWFPA members. Data was collated via desk based research using either publicly available national statistics or data sets provided by Alliance partners. A full list of data sets and their sources is available on request. As part of the research, we contacted Local Authorities across the region to inform them of the Alliance, invite them to participate and to share data mapping for their area. In some instances, local government representatives responded with amended data for their area. However, to allow for comparison across local authorities in the region we have retained data collated from national statistical sources.

This report outlines the findings from the mapping, examples of positive initiatives to tackle food insecurity and highlights recommendations for action drawn from the expertise and knowledge of Alliance Members. It also identifies areas in South Wales that could develop local food poverty alliances to co-ordinate action.

FOOD BANKS ARE INCREASING – THEY SHOULD NOT BECOME THE ‘NORM’.<sup>6</sup>

RESPONDENT TO CHILDREN IN WALES’ 2018 CHILD AND FAMILY SURVEY

## 3. INTRODUCTION

### 3.1 Scale of the challenge

Dignified access to nutritious and healthy food is a fundamental part of life – a human right.<sup>7</sup> Yet, increasingly, for many people in Wales and the UK, providing food for themselves and their families is challenging due to inadequate incomes and the rising cost of living. In 2017-18 Trussell Trust food banks in Wales provided 98,350 three-day emergency parcels to people in Wales, of these 35,403 went to children.<sup>8</sup> This provides an underestimate of the number of people going hungry in Wales due to a lack of data from other emergency food aid providers and food bank users being only a small group of the wider food insecure population. The stigma of accessing emergency food aid helps to explain why this is usually a “strategy of last resort” for people, with many employing other coping mechanisms or preferring to go hungry instead.<sup>9</sup>

FOOD POVERTY CAN IMPACT ON EVERY ASPECT OF A FAMILY'S LIFE, INCLUDING FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS, EDUCATION, CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING.<sup>10</sup>

RESPONDENT TO CHILDREN IN WALES' 2018 CHILD AND FAMILY SURVEY

A recent Food Standards Agency report found that a fifth of people in Wales are worried about running out of food and that 26% of 16-34 year olds surveyed in Wales ran out of food in the past year.<sup>11</sup> The Food Foundation<sup>12</sup> has shown that 160,000 children in Wales are living in households for whom a healthy diet is increasingly unaffordable. Comparing the estimated cost following the UK Government's 'Eatwell Guide' with household income shows that the bottom 20% of families in Wales would need to spend 36% of that income on food to meet PHE's Eatwell Guide. Due to a complex mix of factors, people on low incomes have the lowest intakes of fruit and vegetables and are far more likely to suffer from diet-related diseases such as cancer, diabetes, obesity and coronary heart disease.<sup>13</sup> A report by Age Cymru in 2015 found that 36% of retired households had cut back on the amount or quality of food that they buy.<sup>14</sup>

The Childhood Measurement Programme (2016/17)<sup>15</sup> showed that reception-age children in Wales are significantly more likely than the Welsh average to be obese, if they live in areas of higher deprivation. The gap between obesity prevalence in the most and least deprived quintiles has increased from 4.7% in 2015/16 to 6.2% in 2016/17. Obesity prevalence in reception-age children is highest in Merthyr Tydfil, and is significantly higher than the Welsh average in Blaenau Gwent and Rhondda Cynon Taf.

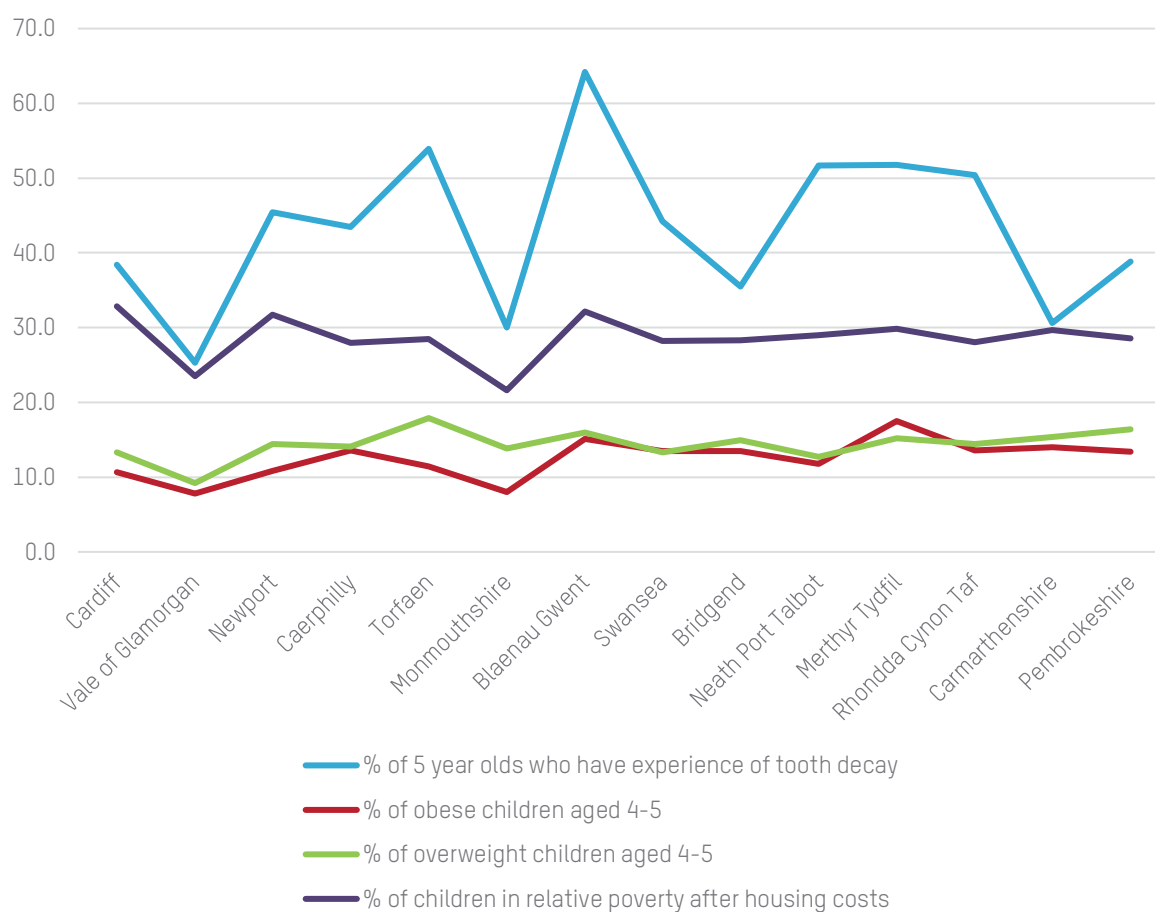
A 2017 report by the Child Poverty Action Group and the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health sought the views of paediatricians across the UK on how poverty effects the physical and mental health of the children they see.<sup>16</sup> More than 3 in 5 respondents said that food insecurity contributes 'very much' to the ill health of children they work with and a further quarter that it contributes 'somewhat'.

[I SEE PATIENTS WITH] POOR NUTRITIONAL STATE FROM POVERTY OR LOW INCOME, WITH GROWTH BELOW [WHAT IS] EXPECTED.

PAEDIATRICIAN, 2017

Our mapping work highlights the potential impacts on food insecurity on child health (Figure 1) with a close relationship between the numbers of children living in relative poverty and childhood tooth decay and obesity for example. The high level of tooth decay among children living in Blaenau Gwent is particularly concerning.

Figure 1: Relationship between relative poverty and child health for children living in the South Wales region





## 3.2 Measuring food insecurity

Welsh Government needs to better understand who is experiencing hunger in Wales and why, to be able to better develop effective interventions to ensure that food banks do not become an institutionalised fixture of Welsh society. Food Cardiff and the Welsh Food Poverty Alliances, together with members of the UK Food Poverty Alliance, have been advocating for a national measure of food insecurity since 2016.



As part of its obligations under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), agreed in 2016, the UK will need to collect data to adequately report its progress towards meeting the goals, including Goal 2- Zero Hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable development. The Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES)<sup>17</sup> was endorsed by the UN Statistical Commission in 2016 as an indicator for Target 2.1 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.<sup>18</sup> The SDG monitoring framework was officially adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2017. FIES-based indicators will serve to track global, regional and national changes in food insecurity, providing information for international and national-level policy making.

The Scottish Government are already implementing three FIES questions (with a view to implementing all eight in coming years). These questions were incorporated into the Scottish Health Survey. In 2016, three questions were approved for inclusion in the National Survey for Wales for 2016/17, with just 2 included in 2017/18. Despite the 2017/18 results suggesting an increase in

acute food insecurity there appear to be no Welsh Government plans to build on these questions in line with the internationally approved measures of food insecurity. It is important that Welsh Government use the opportunity, through the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, to include an effective measure of food insecurity in the revised set of national wellbeing indicators.<sup>19</sup>

In his report on the UK<sup>20</sup> the UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights recommended that the UK should introduce a single measure of poverty and measure food security. He was concerned that the UK Government is not measuring food poverty and that a UK Minister dismissed the significance of food bank use as being only occasional with food banks existing in many other western countries. His recommendations reinforce the Concluding Observations from the Committee of the Rights of the Child who called for the state party to 'systematically collect data on food security and nutrition for children' and 'monitor and assess effectiveness of policies and programmes on food security and nutrition of children'.<sup>21</sup>

### CALLS TO ACTION:

- Welsh Government commits to adopting the FIES based measurement (or equivalent) of food insecurity in Wales or to ensuring that any Office of National Statistics (ONS) or UK Government measure includes a large enough sample to allow for meaningful Wales disaggregated data.
- Welsh Government should include any adopted measure of food insecurity in the updated national wellbeing indicators to track our nation's progress towards the wellbeing goals.

## 3.3 Factors affecting the cost of living & the price of food

### 3.3.1 Poverty Premium

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) highlighted factors affecting the cost of living for low income families in 2018<sup>22</sup> including paying more for:

- Public transport. With low income households that regularly use buses paying an average additional £116.15 per year for their fares in 2018. This has a knock-on effect on the ability to buy low cost food and to get and keep a job.
- Food and energy (Figure 2). The cost of food and energy is rising faster than inflation with typical houses in the bottom fifth of incomes paying £61.86 more in 2018 compared to 2017 for the same energy use. Similarly, a family in the bottom fifth of incomes needed to find an additional £67.81 for the same weekly food shop in 2018 as they purchased in 2017.
- People on low incomes pay higher prices for many essential goods and services than people who are better off. The extra costs

of being poor cost the average low income household £490 a year, but for more than one in ten of these households it costs at least £780.<sup>23</sup>

Fair by Design have identified actions that could be taken by government, businesses and others to reduce the poverty premium, for example leading on a 'vulnerable citizen's strategy', committing to 'poverty premium proofing' products and services and automatically placing social housing tenants on the cheapest energy tariff.<sup>24</sup>

Over the last year increases in the **price of food and fuel** cost the UK's **poorest households** an extra...

# £130



Figure 2: Impact of price rises on food and fuel on people living in low income households



### 3.3.2 Climate change and Brexit

The Centre for Economics and Business Research (Cebr) highlighted the impact that the 2018 extreme weather will have on the price of food for UK consumers with wholesale prices for vegetables rising significantly. Cebr estimates that the extreme weather will ultimately drive up the costs to UK consumers by £45 million per week. This is equivalent to a rise of £7.15 per month per household.<sup>25</sup> In addition, a recent House of Lords European Union Committee report on Brexit: Food Prices and Availability, concluded that post Brexit food prices are likely to rise by 3.8% even if a deal is reached, with even higher price rises at the checkout due to import tariffs if no deal is reached.<sup>26</sup> These factors will only exacerbate the dire situation many Welsh families find themselves in, having to choose between paying the rent, heating their homes or feeding their children.

In 2011, the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) estimated that globally 1.3 billion tonnes of our food are wasted or lost every year, accounting for a third of the food produced for human consumption.<sup>27</sup> With increasing incidences of extreme weather events due to climate change, depleting natural resources and uncertainties in the global supply of food, increasing the efficiency of our food system and preventing food waste is key.<sup>28</sup>

In the UK the largest retailers, food producers and manufacturers, and hospitality and food service companies have committed to milestones laid out in a new industry Food Waste Reduction Roadmap, developed in conjunction with IGD (Institute of Grocery Distribution) and WRAP to tackle food waste.<sup>29</sup> Measuring and reporting on food waste will help identify surplus and opportunities for redistribution in their own operations and their supply chain.

In Wales, tackling food waste is a priority for Welsh Government and it is estimated that approximately 500,000 tonnes of food are wasted by the food industry each year.<sup>30</sup> Welsh businesses of all sizes should be encouraged to commit to 'Target, Measure and Act' on food waste. Food and Drink Wales suggest that larger businesses could further demonstrate their corporate social responsibility by signing-up to Courtauld 2025<sup>31</sup> (a commitment to tackle food waste) and support for FareShare Cymru<sup>32</sup> and other redistribution charities. This will help ensure that food fit for human consumption is redistributed to charities instead of being directed to waste treatment facilities and should form part of Welsh Government's Economic Contract.

### 3.4 Policy context

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 is at the heart of Welsh Government policy requiring all public bodies to ensure that actions taken now will benefit future generations. It should follow that, to achieve “prosperity for all” investing now in the health of Wales’ children is crucial. A report by the Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee, *Rethinking Food in Wales* in 2018 concluded that there is a need for a strategic vision for the Welsh food sector which makes connections between different policy areas, such as health, wellbeing and sustainability, alongside economic growth.<sup>33</sup> In terms of procurement, for example, the Committee believed it to be vital that the wider benefits of the estimated £74.4 million per year Welsh public sector food and drink spend be realised through investment in the health and wellbeing of Welsh people, particularly via food and drink in schools and hospitals.

Prosperity for All, the Welsh Government’s national strategy has a commitment to ensuring that Wales has a population which is ‘healthy and active’ through multi-sector collaboration and engaging the public.<sup>34</sup> A Healthier Wales – the Welsh Government Plan for Health and Social Care commits to proactively supporting people throughout the whole of their lives, and through the whole of Wales, making an extra effort to reach those most in need to help reduce the health and wellbeing inequalities that exist. Good nutrition and healthy weight is essential to mitigate against the risk of child and adult obesity and other chronic conditions including type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, some cancers, osteoarthritis and depression. Good health enhances quality of life, increases capacity for learning, strengthens families and communities and improves workforce productivity.<sup>35</sup>

Food and Fitness in the School Curriculum<sup>36</sup> and more recently, the Donaldson Report<sup>37</sup> and the new school curriculum in Wales<sup>38</sup> recognises that children and young people require healthy eating and cooking knowledge and skills to be healthy, confident individuals and to manage everyday life as independently as they can.<sup>39</sup>

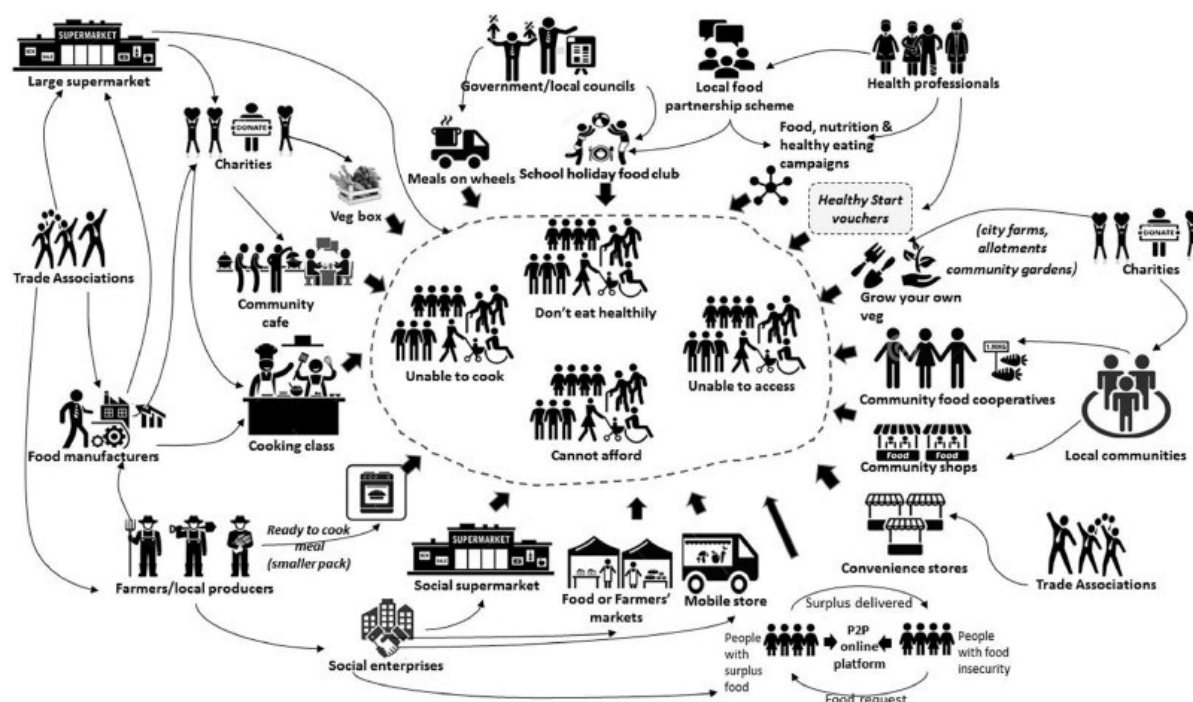
We are in extraordinary times with three major Welsh Government food related consultations on the table or about to be; Brexit and our Land, Healthy Weight, Healthy Wales and the next phase of the Food and Drink Action Plan. All these must consider how to tackle inequalities resulting from poverty in a way that is proportionate to the scale of the challenge. In addition, the recently established National Assembly for Wales, Cross Party Group on Poverty provides an opportunity to push for more action on food insecurity which is a symptom of extreme poverty in Wales. This report demonstrates that Wales has many of the tools required to address the challenge, but they need to be deployed effectively and efficiently.

## 4. DRIVERS OF FOOD POVERTY

To better understand food poverty, we need to better understand the often complex social, environmental and economic barriers people face in accessing food as indicated in Figure 3. These are categorised below but we recognise that there is overlap between these categories and that some people experience multiple barriers:

1. A lack of **finances** to pay for food (this can be a temporary financial crisis or long term)
2. A lack of **nutrition knowledge and cooking skills** which impacts on the ability to eat healthily
3. A lack of **access to affordable and healthy food** (e.g. people who live in rural area or in food deserts)
4. A lack of **cooking facilities or the ability to use them** (e.g. older people or people with disabilities or people who live in a shelter where there are no cooking facilities or people living in fuel poverty)

Figure 3: Mapping existing food provisions that tackle food poverty<sup>40</sup>



## 4.1 Financial

### 4.1.1 Low or inadequate wages

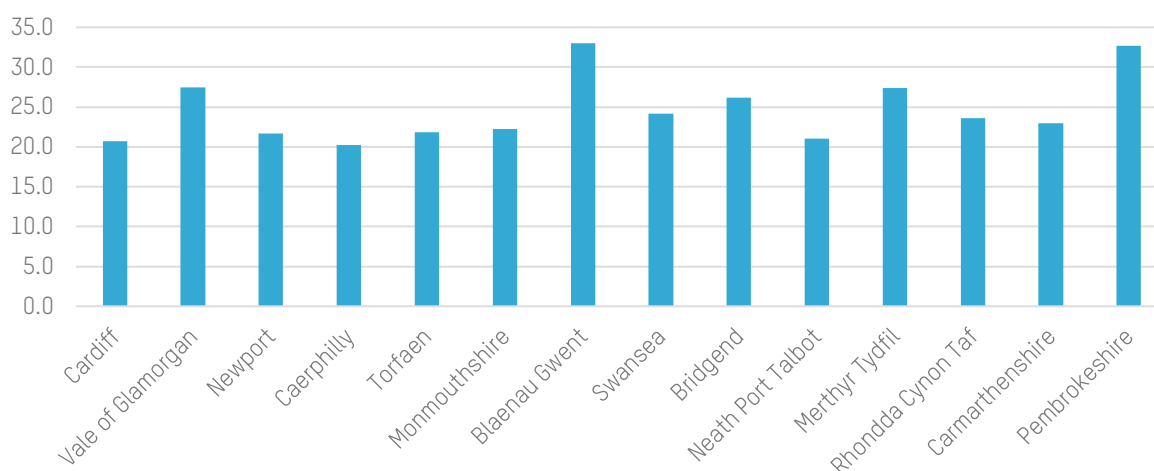
Latest Welsh Government figures show 24% of Wales's population, or 750,000 people each year, were living in relative poverty after paying housing costs between 2014-17.<sup>41</sup> Over half the people living in poverty in Wales today are in work. Links are increasingly being drawn between low pay and poor quality employment that means for many, work is no longer a guaranteed route out of poverty. Following his visit to the UK in November 2018, the UN Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights highlighted his concern that employment wasn't even a guarantee against people needing to use food banks with one in six people referred to Trussell Trust food banks being in work.<sup>42</sup>

More than a fifth of workers in Wales are earning less than the real Living Wage as set by the Living Wage Foundation.<sup>43,44</sup> For some areas in South Wales, for example Blaenau Gwent and Pembrokeshire, this figure rises to a quarter or even a third jobs being paid less than the real Living Wage (Figure 4).

I'M ASHAMED ABOUT IT! I'M ASHAMED COMING IN HERE! I THINK THAT, OTHER PEOPLE ARE A LOT WORSE OFF THAN ME. AND I SHOULDN'T REALLY BE COMING HERE. BUT ON THE OTHER HAND, I'M HUNGRY. YOU KNOW, THERE ARE PEOPLE WITH CHILDREN, ELDERLY PEOPLE, AND, I DO FEEL EMBARRASSED, AND ASHAMED. IT'S, ERM, I DON'T KNOW. I HONESTLY DON'T KNOW.

NIA – NURSE

Figure 4: Percentage of jobs that are paid less than the Living Wage Foundation Living Wage in 2018

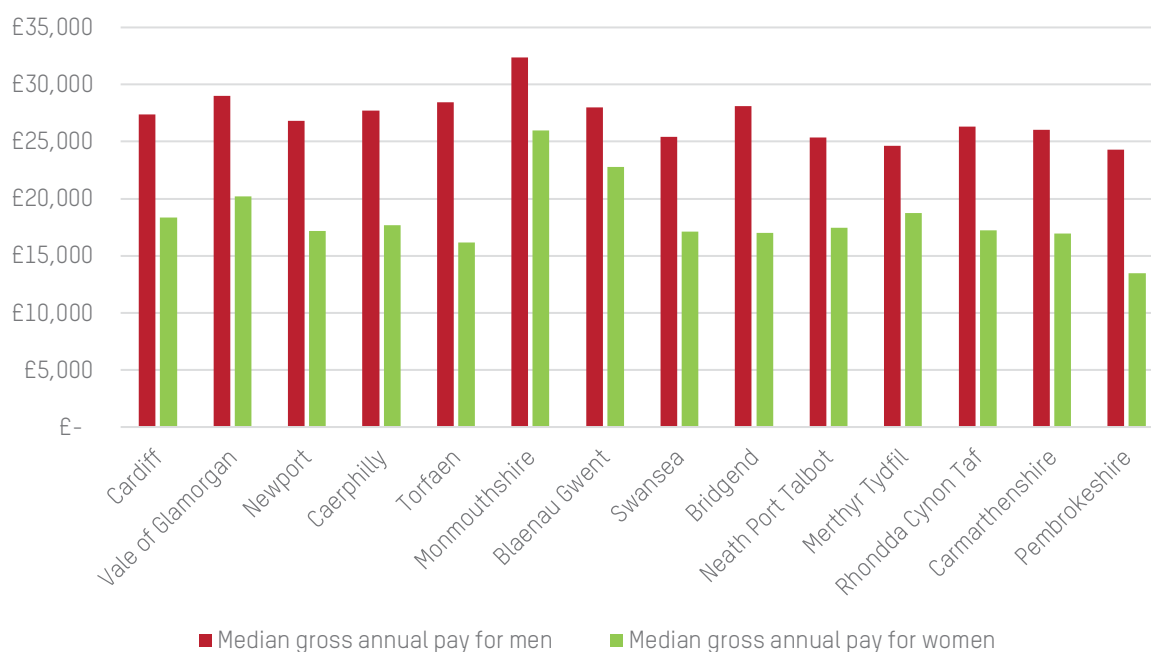


Women are less likely than men to be in good quality employment<sup>45</sup> being consistently over-represented in low paid, part time, insecure and temporary work. They face the double burden of poverty and discrimination, and continue to be paid less than men, even at the top, often struggling to find roles that allow them to earn a living while also coping with the lion's share of domestic work and childcare. The true extent of women's poverty could be hidden, as poverty is measured at a household level on the assumption that resources and income are shared equally. Figure 5 shows the median gross annual pay for men and women across the South Wales region in 2017.

Research on decent work for women in the food and drink sector found that the workforce remains heavily gender segregated with more to be done to tackle a culture of discrimination based on gender.<sup>46</sup> Career pathways within the food and drink sector were overall not clearly defined with more

needing to be done by stakeholders to develop and communicate opportunities for career progression. The Food and Drink industry has been recognised as a core part of the foundational economy for support by Welsh Government under Prosperity for All. Welsh Government see providing 'fair work' and better skilled (and remunerated jobs) as key to the Food and Drink sector's contribution to tackling poverty and inequality. We look forward to the outcome of the Fair Work Commission and the Rapid Review on Gender to help progress these ambitions. It is essential that Welsh Government uses all policy levers, including the Economic Contract, to achieve fair work for men and women across all sectors. As a globally responsible nation, we must also do everything we can to ensure that the human and labour rights of the people producing our food, whether here in Wales or overseas, are respected and to end the widespread human suffering among women and men in global food supply chains.<sup>47</sup>

Figure 5: Median gross annual pay for men and women across the South Wales region 2017



## CALL TO ACTION:

Welsh Government should use all available policy levers, including the Economic Contract, to ensure that employers across Wales pay the real Living Wage, set by the Living Wage Foundation and act to reduce the gender pay gap.

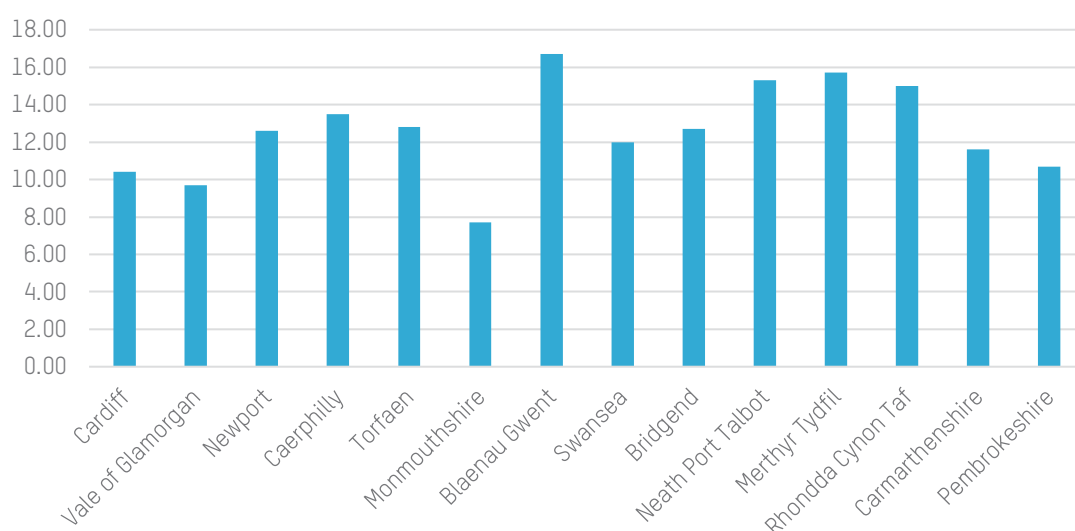
## 4.1.2 Social security

### 4.1.2.1 Universal Credit

The Trussell Trust has been monitoring the impact of the roll out of Universal Credit on the use of their food banks. In 2018, Trussell Trust food banks saw on average a 52% increase in demand 12 months after rollout, compared to 13% in areas with Universal Credit for 3 months or less.<sup>48</sup> This increase could not be attributed to randomness and existed even after accounting for seasonal and other variations. End Hunger UK<sup>49</sup> has also raised concern about the impact Universal Credit roll out is having on some of the poorest people in our communities.<sup>50</sup> In areas where Universal Credit has been rolled out, food banks and other food aid providers report a surge in the numbers of people pushed into greater debt, destitution and hunger because of excessive waiting times, delays in receiving payments, debt and loan repayments and benefit sanctions.

These frontline organisations also identified practical ways in which the delivery of Universal Credit can be improved, including reducing mandatory waiting time for payments, improving the support offered to people through the process of applying for Universal Credit and making it easier for people to apply for Universal Credit by providing training for computer literacy, increasing accessibility and offering alternative methods of applying (e.g. by phone). Figure 6 shows the number of people claiming out of work benefits in 2016 across South Wales as a percentage of the population aged 16-24 years with highest numbers of claimants in Blaenau Gwent, Neath Port Talbot, Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Figure 6: The number of people claiming out of work benefits in 2016 as a % of the population aged 16-24





The Trussell Trust identified that almost half of their clients reported their incomes were unsteady from week-to-week, and 78% had skipped meals and gone without eating in the past 12 months. Lone parents and children make up the largest population of people using food banks. A report published in April 2017, *Early Warnings: Universal Credit and Foodbanks*<sup>51</sup>, found that food banks in areas that had rolled out Universal Credit were particularly stretched due to increased demand. In some cases, volunteers said that they did not feel they could always give the support that they wanted to. Benefit claimants moving onto Universal Credit are now able to request a 100% advance payment with budgeting support from DWP but this means that they are borrowing against their first payment, and often merely shifts financial hardship caused by the 5 week wait into the next month.

Data showing Trussell Trust 3-day emergency food provision across South Wales for the last two years is given in Figure 7. Many Trussell Trust food banks are working with a range of local agencies to tackle food poverty for example, the Vale Food bank receives fresh food from local allotments and has advisors from Citizens Advice, Shelter Cymru & Pobl in its centres to ensure people access the support they need to address their crisis. Figure 8 shows the numbers of Trussell Trust food centres and food banks and the numbers of independent food banks across the region. There are higher numbers of independent food banks in Newport, Torfaen, Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire for which we do not have any data on the quantity of food aid provided.

‘THE VOLUNTEERS AT THE  
FOODBANK ALSO TRY TO SORT YOU  
OUT WITH OTHER STUFF. EVEN IF  
THEY CAN’T HELP YOU DIRECTLY,  
THEY POINT YOU IN THE RIGHT  
DIRECTION AND TRY TO HELP YOU  
THAT LITTLE BIT MORE.... IT MADE ME  
FEEL REALLY GOOD WHEN I COULD  
GET FOOD AND SPEAK TO PEOPLE  
AT THE FOODBANK. THEY’RE REALLY  
NICE PEOPLE, YOU DON’T GET MANY  
PLACES LIKE THIS.’

**JOSH’S EXPERIENCE OF USING  
A FOOD BANK IN TORFAEN**

Figure 7: 3 day emergency food provision by Trussell Trust food banks in Wales

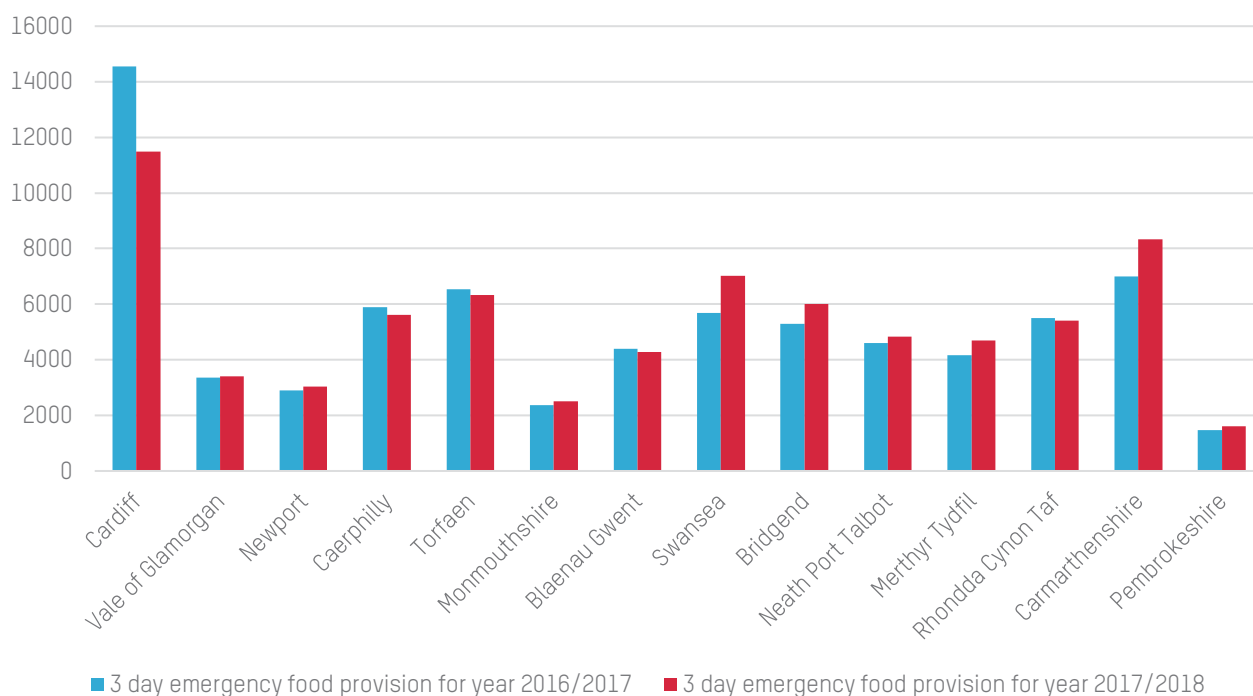
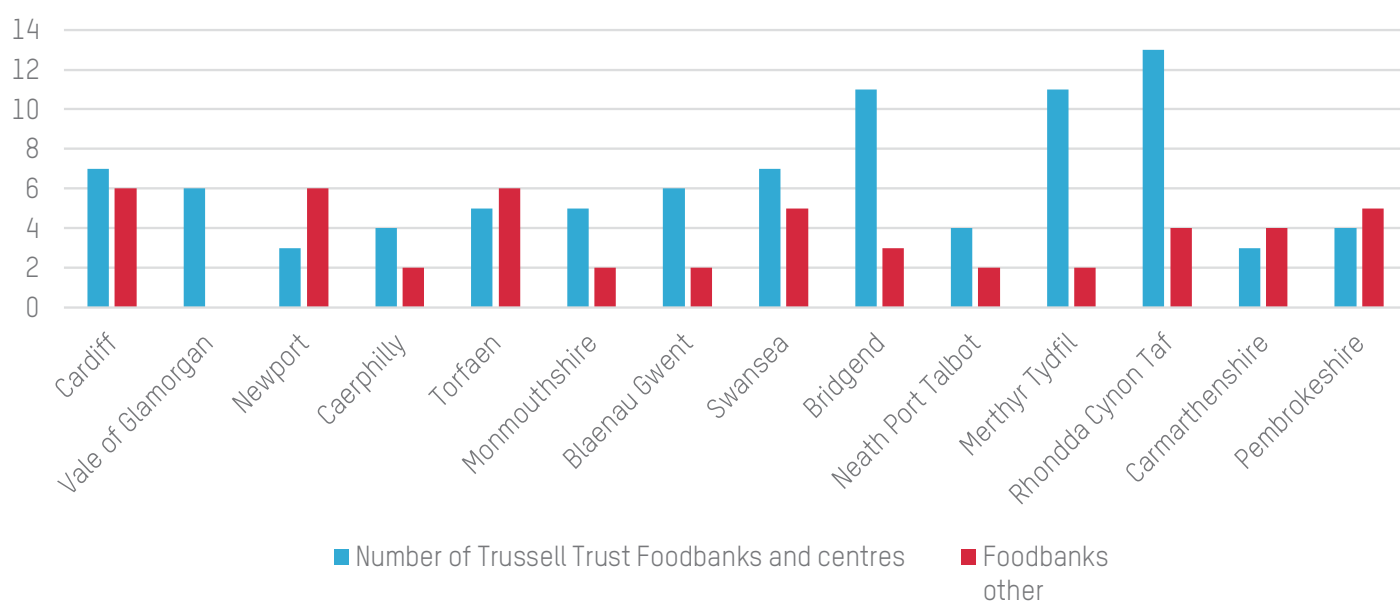


Figure 8: Number of Trussell Trust food banks &amp; independent food banks across the South Wales region

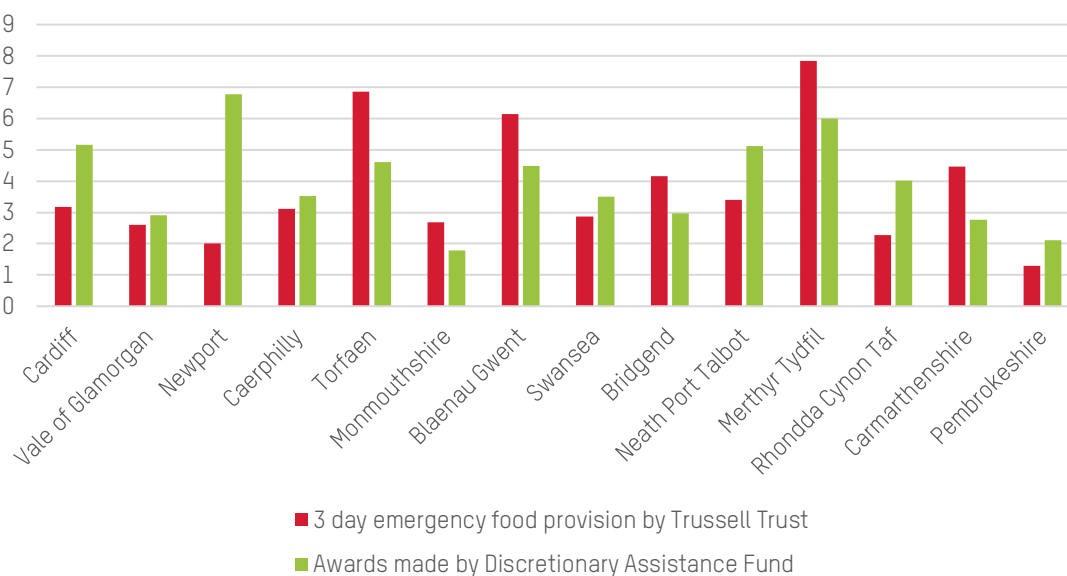


#### 4.1.2.2 Discretionary Assistance Fund (DAF)

The Discretionary Assistance Fund (DAF) is an all Wales emergency fund, administered on behalf of the Welsh Government by Northgate Public Services UK Ltd. The DAF provides applicants with two types of emergency grants that do not have to be paid back. The Emergency Assistance Payment (EAP) is a grant to help with essential costs after an emergency such as a flood or fire in your home. The payment will help cover the costs of food, gas and electricity, clothing and emergency travel. The EAP cannot be used by people experiencing issues related to welfare benefits.

The Individual Assistance Payment (IAP) is a grant to support independent living rather than having to remain in an institution such as a care home or hospital. The IAP can pay for items such as a fridge, cooker or washing machine, beds, bedding and seating. A comparison of Trussell Trust 3-day emergency food bank provision with DAF awards in 2018 is given in Figure 9 as a percentage of the total population in each area of South Wales. DAF payments are highest in Newport, Merthyr, Cardiff and Neath Port Talbot.

Figure 9: Comparing Trussell Trust 3 day emergency food provision with DAF payments as a % of the total population in 2017-18



In international programme work, Oxfam are increasingly promoting and delivering cash grants as a more effective form of crisis intervention than food aid. This is a dignified way of helping people in need get back on their feet and it also supports local economies. Giving cash gives people greater choice, along with dignity, empowerment, flexibility and improved support to economic recovery. When markets are functioning, cash-based responses can help stimulate markets and improve people's chances of recovering their livelihoods.<sup>52</sup> In the same way, we would argue that a cash based approach should also be taken when people are unable to afford to eat in Wales.

Internationally food aid is provided during times of acute emergency but over time, this approach transitions to a focus on tackling the underlying causes of the crisis. The same approach is required here in Wales, and given there is no shortage of food, this necessitates a shift in focus from the provision of food aid to boosting incomes so that everyone can access it. Primarily it is the role of the state to ensure that people have enough cash to be able to eat – and that food aid should not replace the dignity and choice afforded to those who can afford to buy food.

## CALL TO ACTION:

Welsh Government should use the Discretionary Assistance Fund to support people struggling to feed themselves or their families during the 5 week wait for their initial Universal Credit payment.

### 4.1.2.3 Free School Meals (FSM) and free school breakfasts

Research in Wales has shown that queues and enough time to eat and socialise are the most important factors influencing take-up of secondary school lunches for all pupils irrespective of whether they are eligible for FSM.<sup>53</sup> Welsh Government statistics on the numbers of pupils eligible for FSM compared to those that actually eat school meals shows that on census day 2017/18, 24% of children eligible for a free school meal did not eat one.<sup>54</sup> This means that on school census day 2017/18, less than half the children, who live in poverty and who are in full time education in Wales, actually received a free school meal. The most recently reported take-up data for secondary school lunches in Wales indicates that 69% of pupils who are eligible for FSM take them up and 50% of the remainder take up paid school lunches.<sup>55</sup> In addition, only 36% of children eligible for FSM receive at least one free school breakfast a week.<sup>56</sup>

The eligibility and uptake of FSM and free school breakfasts across the South Wales region in 2018 are given in Figure 10. As highlighted, the numbers of children eligible for FSM accessing free school breakfast provision is less than 20% in each of the local authority areas.

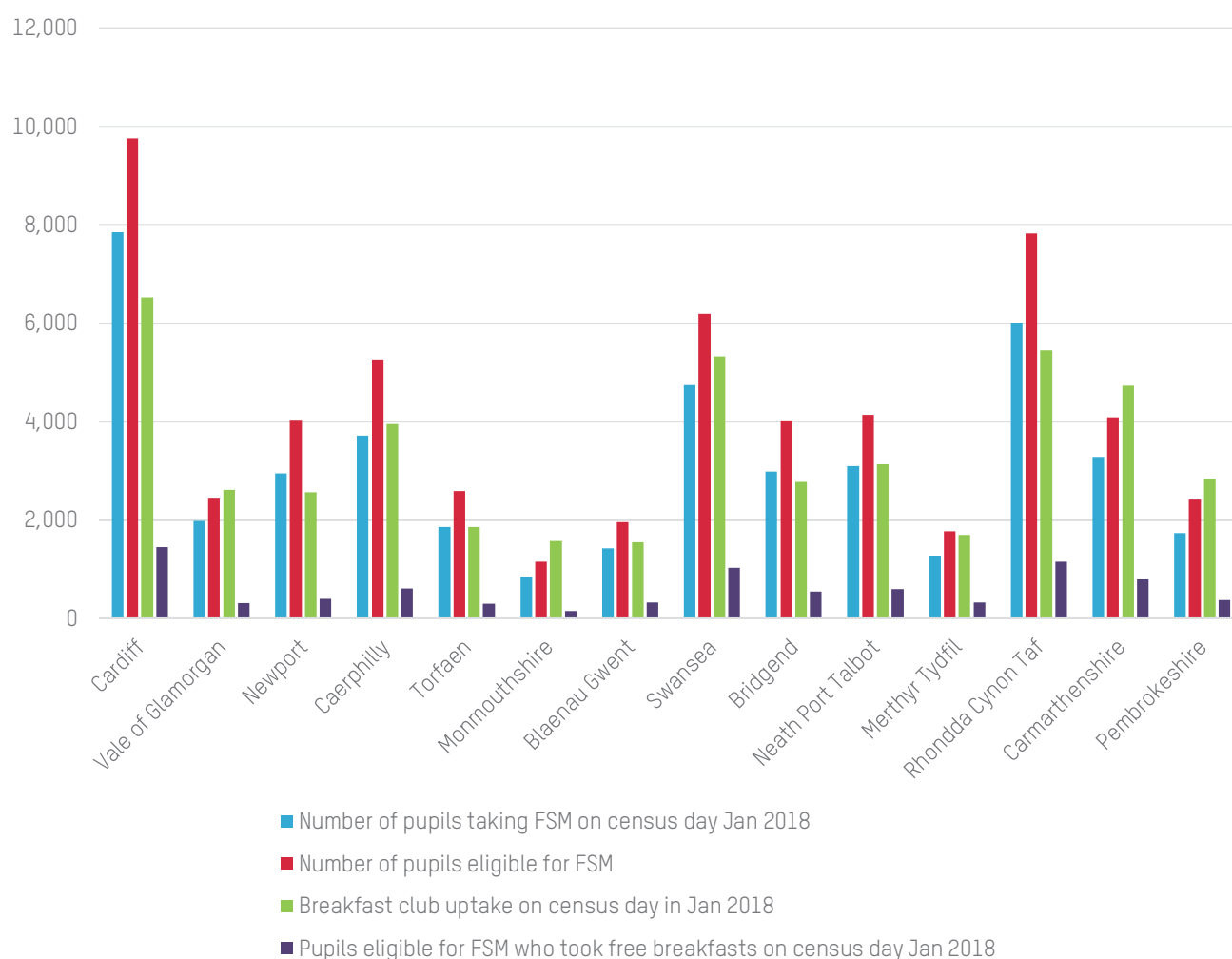
Breakfast consumption for pupils aged 11 to 16 years is associated with deprivation and age and school provision is less common in maintained secondary schools.<sup>57</sup> Where pupils must wait until morning break or lunch break to eat their first meal of the day hunger is likely to be a factor in their concentration, behaviour and attainment. The greatest impact is likely to be felt by pupils who are eligible for FSM and not able to take up their entitlement until lunch break. The recent *Children's Future Food Inquiry* found that some pupils across the UK, aged 11 to 16 years, arrive at school 'having had nothing to eat and no money in their pockets to buy a snack at morning break'; and 'spend the entire morning unable to concentrate in class, counting down the hours to their free school lunch'.<sup>58</sup>

FOOD POVERTY IMPACTS ON EDUCATION, IF A CHILD IS HUNGRY THEY CANNOT CONCENTRATE ON THEIR EDUCATION.<sup>59</sup>

RESPONDENT TO CHILDREN IN WALES' 2018 CHILD AND FAMILY SURVEY

Clearly, if Welsh Government's policy aim is to ensure children living in poverty are adequately fed and nourished then we need to consider how best to achieve this incorporating all aspects of current provision including the school holiday provision (see Section 4.2.2), school break times and free school breakfasts to create a more integrated, holistic and sustainable approach to school food. The Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) are looking to publish a report into the healthy eating implications of school break times for 11-19 year olds in Wales. This report is expected to provide an overview of the current landscape of healthy eating and break times in secondary schools before presenting the findings of a break time census of maintained middle and secondary schools in Wales, discussing the implications for healthy eating, and making recommendations to governing bodies and Welsh Government. Research from England suggests that increasing the take-up of school lunches by all pupils is the best way to improve FSM up-take and that schools should consider the social, cultural and environmental aspects of dining to achieve this.<sup>60</sup>

Figure 10: Eligibility &amp; uptake of FSM and free school breakfasts across the South Wales region 2018



The Children's Society estimate that around 55,000 children who live in poverty in Wales are currently not eligible for FSM, almost entirely in working families. The SWFPA appreciate the difficulties Welsh Government face in managing the impact of Universal Credit on FSM eligibility with no additional funding from UK Government but we were disappointed with the recent announcement that only children living in households with an annualised net earnings of less than £7400 will be entitled to FSM. We do not consider that an adequate cost benefit analysis of this policy position has been undertaken.

Moving towards progressive universalism in the provision of FSM would maximise delivery of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 goals and offer a key mechanism for meeting our obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).<sup>61</sup> Financing a policy that maximises the numbers of children in Wales eligible for FSM should be viewed as preventative spending. The broader benefits of widening access to FSM are well known with economies of scale reducing the price per meal, improvements in children's health generating savings for the NHS, educational benefits



supporting a more prosperous economy as well as the potential to boost the rural economy and to deliver wider environmental outcomes such as improvements in land management and reductions in energy use and waste generation. If implemented properly, widening the eligibility and provision of FSM could help ensure these children can access at least one healthy meal per day as well as promoting local and sustainable food production, ensuring budget is spent in a way that supports rather than damages the environment and local economy. Targeted public sector procurement focussing on FSM provides an opportunity to support the Welsh rural economy by offering a predictable and guaranteed market for Welsh farmers and other local producers.

WORKING PARENTS ARE UNABLE TO AFFORD SCHOOLS MEALS, ESPECIALLY IF THEY HAVE MORE THAN ONE CHILD AT SCHOOL.<sup>62</sup>

RESPONDENT TO CHILDREN IN WALES' 2018 CHILD AND FAMILY SURVEY

## CALL TO ACTION:

Welsh Government undertake a holistic evaluation, including a full cost benefit analysis, of how best to ensure children living in poverty are adequately fed and nourished. This evaluation should include but not be limited to:

- FSM & free school breakfasts
- Holiday provisions including those in special schools
- School break times & lunchtimes, particularly in secondary schools.
- Adherence, monitoring and appropriateness of the Healthy Eating in Schools (Wales) Measure 2009 and The Healthy Eating in Schools (Nutritional Standards and Requirements (Wales) Regulations 2013
- Healthy Start

#### 4.1.2.4 Healthy Start

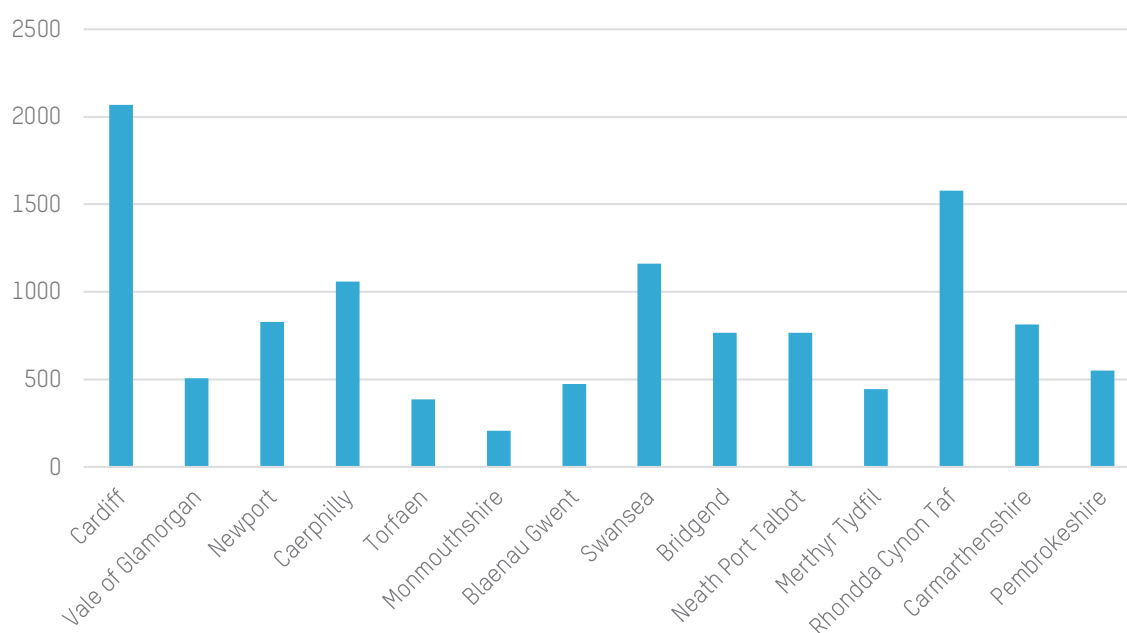
Healthy Start<sup>63</sup> replaced the previous welfare food scheme in 2006, to offer vouchers for cow's milk, fruit and vegetables or infant formula to pregnant under 18s and to low income pregnant women and families with children under 4 years of age. Women and families eligible for Healthy Start also receive coupons for free Healthy Start vitamin supplements. Healthy Start beneficiaries receive the following food vouchers:

- Pregnant women get one Healthy Start food voucher a week, worth £3.10
- Babies under the age of 1 year get two vouchers a week, worth a total of £6.20
- Children aged over 1 year and under 4 years get one voucher, worth a total of £3.10

Figure 11 shows the uptake of Healthy Start Vouchers across the South Wales region in 2018. According to a Food Cardiff report the take up of Healthy Start Vouchers across the

region varies from 62% in Monmouthshire to 74% in Cardiff. For Cardiff alone, Food Cardiff estimated this to equate to an underspend on the scheme of over £300K, money which could be supporting those on a low income and supporting the local economy.<sup>64</sup> Research by Food Cardiff found that many retailers accepted HSV for products not included in the scheme, no retailers were visibly advertising the scheme and that knowledge and understanding of the scheme was low among front line staff. A considerable amount of local action and research across the UK has taken place to establish the barriers and solutions to the take up of Healthy Start vouchers. These were documented in a recent webinar held by Food Power and Sustainable Food Cities.<sup>65</sup> An outcome of the SWFPA has been to work more closely with organisations in Merthyr Tydfil and Blaenau Gwent to develop more local Alliances which now have an opportunity to apply for support from Food Power to improve the take up of HSV in their areas.

Figure 11: Uptake of Healthy Start Vouchers across the South Wales region in 2018



## 4.2 Nutrition knowledge and cooking skills

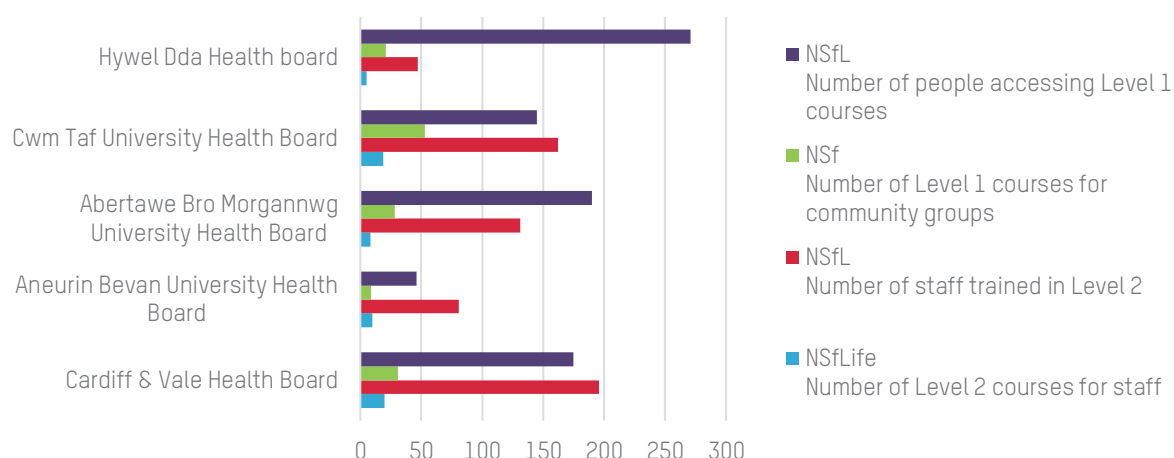
Although nutrition knowledge and cooking skills are not a solution to food poverty, programs to help people cook nutritious food on a budget can be helpful for people on low incomes.

### 4.2.1 Nutrition Skills for Life™

The Nutrition Skills for Life™ (NSfL) training programme, co-ordinated by dietitians in NHS Wales aims to build community capacity to support healthy eating. This is achieved through accredited nutrition skills training for community workers/volunteers, peer leaders, school based staff and others to be able to pass on evidence based nutrition messages to communities that they work with. It supports the development of community food and nutrition initiatives and trained community workers can deliver accredited nutrition courses, practical food skills courses (Get Cooking and Come and Cook/ Dewch i Goginio) and the structured weight management programme Foodwise for Life. The programme aims to reach communities that stand to benefit the most to address diet related inequalities.

The NSfL model has been successfully embedded into Flying Start programmes in some areas in Wales including nutrition and practical food skills courses for parents, delivered by trained Flying Start nursery nurses and community support workers.<sup>66,67</sup> The current provision of NSfL at Level 1 and 2 across the South Wales region is shown in Figure 12. Including the NSfL capacity building model in all local Flying Start programmes would enable communities to benefit equally across all parts of Wales. Evaluation of the scheme showed that 92% of individuals completing the Level 1 course felt more confident about preparing healthy food and 94% of individuals reported making changes to what their family eats because of attending the Level 1 course.

Figure 12: Nutrition Skills for Life™ training provision at Level 1 & 2 across the South Wales region 2017-18



The NSfL programme supports childcare settings, particularly Flying Start settings, to meet the Best Practice Guidelines for Food and Nutrition<sup>68</sup> through nutrition training and dietetic support with menu planning, provision of healthy snacks and drinks and promoting healthy eating to parents and carers.

The importance of opportunities for cooking skills development, particularly for school aged children has been raised at recent stakeholder events. There is strong support for promoting cooking skills in communities, the need for facilities, resources and funding to help every child learn to cook healthy meals and support for the wider roll out of the all-Wales NSfL programme.<sup>69</sup> Flying Start<sup>70</sup>, the First 1000 days<sup>71</sup> programmes and the School Holiday Enrichment Programme (SHEP) (see 4.2.2.1) provide ideal opportunities to share healthy lifestyle messages with parents, children and families to engender change.

I FOUND HOW QUICK AND EASY HEALTHY COOKING IS SURPRISINGLY, AND NOW I KNOW HOW TO COOK NEW MENUS I WOULD NEVER HAVE TRIED BEFORE!

PARENT, RIVERSIDE GET COOKING

## CALL TO ACTION:

Welsh Government support the wider roll out of existing healthy eating initiatives developed and supported by the all-Wales Nutrition Skills for Life™ programme.

## 4.2.2 School Holiday Provision

### 4.2.2.1 Bwyd a Hwyl/Food and Fun School Holiday Enrichment Programme (SHEP)

The School Holiday Enrichment Programme (SHEP) is a school-based scheme that provides healthy meals, food and nutrition education, physical activity and enrichment sessions to children in areas of social deprivation during the school holidays. During the school holidays, when Free Breakfast in Primary Schools and FSM are not available, some families struggle to afford or access food that provides a healthy diet. Some children also experience social isolation and a lack of intellectual stimulation, normally provided by school or family enrichment activities, and this may contribute to widening the attainment gap. SHEP co-ordinators complete NSfL accredited training, as outlined in 4.2.1, and provide standardised, evidence based nutrition information.

AM VERY THANKFUL FOR THIS HOLIDAY CLUB HAS HELPED ME FINANCIALLY WITH THE COST OF FOOD AND HAS KEPT THE CHILDREN ACTIVE AND NOT STUCK IN THE HOUSE ALL HOLIDAYS. WOULD RECOMMEND AND THE KIDS REALLY ENJOYED IT.

**PARENT COMMENT FROM  
2018 SHEP EVALUATION**

AT MY HOUSE I NORMALLY JUST HAVE RUBBISH TO EAT, AND NEVER REAL FOOD.

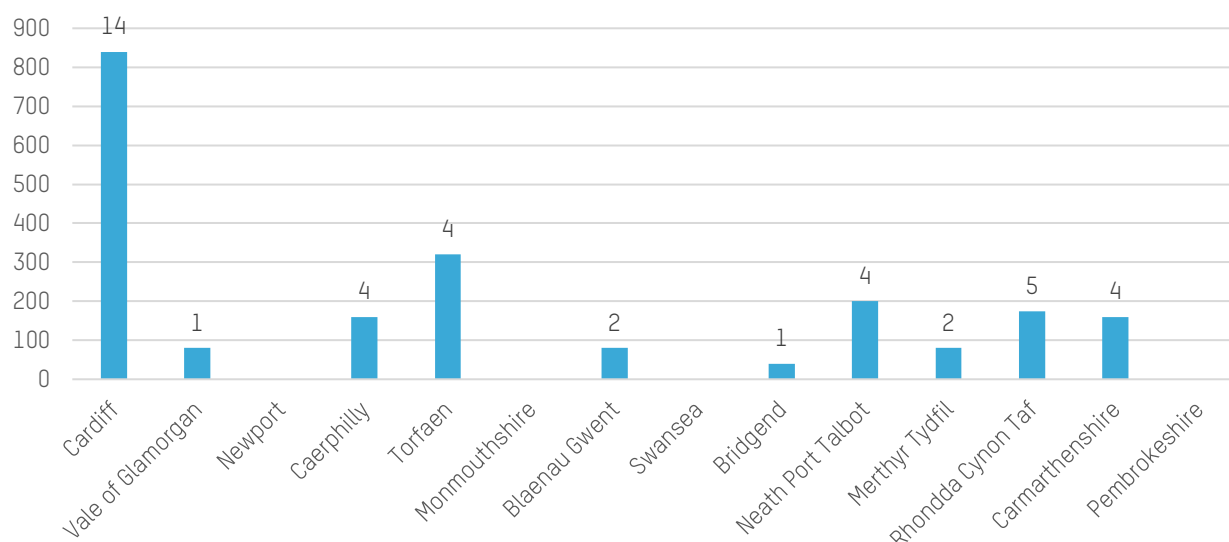
**CHILD ATTENDING 2016 SHEP SCHEME**

The Welsh Government's Department for Education and Skills part funded the programme with £500,000 per year from 2017 to 2019. The programme continues to grow each year: in 2018, 16 local authorities across Wales provided SHEP (known locally as Bwyd a Hwyl/Food and Fun) in 53 schemes for a minimum of 12 days of the school summer holidays. There were up to 2,300 SHEP places available including provision for special educational needs in 3 local authorities. Provision of SHEP across South Wales is shown in Figure 13. There is currently no provision in Newport, Monmouthshire, Swansea or Pembrokeshire. A continued commitment to fund SHEP will enable local authorities to commit to provision and increase the number of schemes in a planned roll out, to a potential 11,000 children and their families by 2022. The feedback from children on SHEP has been extremely positive, particularly in relation to playing sports and being active, socialising/making friends, eating a healthy breakfast/lunch and learning/trying something new. Children reported exercising more and eating healthier on days they attended the scheme and the majority reported positive intentions when the scheme had finished. Parents reported many benefits to their children, including improved behaviour and reduced anxiety about returning to school in September, less anxiety about the costs of feeding the family over the

holidays and being able to continue working, where they would normally have to stay at home to care for their child(ren). Schools and SHEP staff reported improved parental and pupil engagement, collaborative work between school and SHEP partners, and the raising of pupil aspirations from role models providing enrichment activities.

An additional £400,000 revenue has been allocated by Welsh Government in 2019 – 2020 to extend the programme which is coordinated by the Welsh Local Government Association. The Welsh Government Child Poverty Strategy progress report<sup>72</sup> highlights the success of SHEP and the WLGA undertook an evaluation of the scheme.<sup>73</sup>

Figure 13: Number of SHEP places available & number of schemes across the South Wales region 2018



## CALL TO ACTION:

Welsh Government to commit to continue funding SHEP to at least 2022. This will enable full research into the medium and long term impacts of SHEP:

- Primary outcomes of improved psychosocial health, reduced depressive symptoms and reducing the education attainment gap of children in areas of social deprivation
- Secondary outcomes of improved levels of physical activity and improved dietary behaviour of children attending Food and Fun
- Improvements in parents' mental health and wellbeing



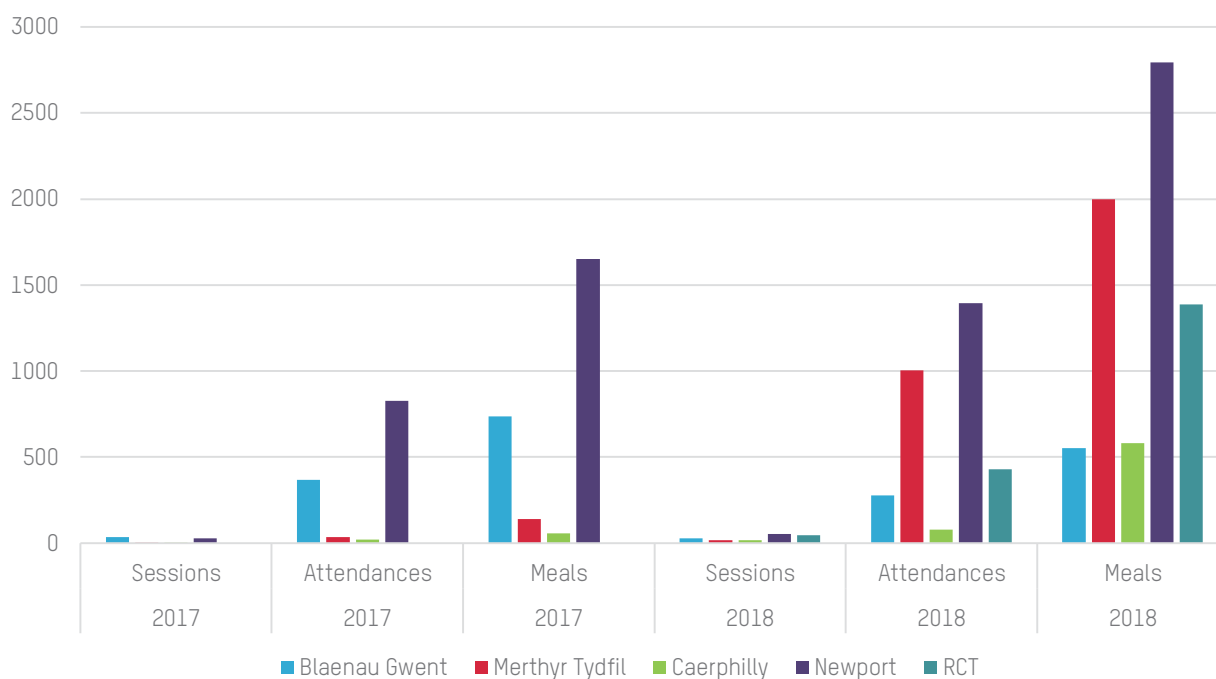
### 4.2.2.2 Fit and Fed

There are other organisations working on provision of activities and meals during the school holidays, for example Fit and Fed which is delivered via Street Games. Fit and Fed works with the local community at community venues to deliver food poverty interventions alongside sports activities. In 2017 and 2018 the Fit and Fed scheme was delivered at several sites in Merthyr Tydfil, Blaenau Gwent, Newport, RCT and Caerphilly, provision across these areas is shown in Figure 14.<sup>74</sup> One of the expected outcomes of the South Wales Food Poverty Alliance is improved co-ordination between programmes such as SHEP and Fit and Fed, in Merthyr Tydfil for example, to avoid duplication and therefore maximise geographical and weekly provision.

I LIKE COMING HERE, IT FEELS SAFE. MY MUM IS IN WORK ALL DAY, SO I AM USUALLY WANDERING THE STREETS WITH NO FOOD ALL DAY. I ALSO LIKE PLAYING WITH THE NEW FRIENDS I'VE MADE HERE

PARTICIPANT, FIT & FED

Figure 14: Street Games Fit & Fed provision across South Wales in 2017-18



## CALL TO ACTION:

Welsh Government to ensure that holiday provisions in Wales are mapped and co-ordinated and that all publicly funded programmes should be assessed based on Social Return on Investment and adhere to Quality Assurance, including safeguarding, that ensures appropriate and nutritious food provision and healthy lifestyle messages.

## 4.3 Access to affordable healthy food

### 4.3.1 Food Deserts

A report commissioned by Kelloggs in 2018, highlighted that people living in areas of low income are also likely to be inadequately served by retail outlets offering food that is both affordable and sufficiently close to where they live.<sup>75</sup> These areas are known as food deserts and can result in people having to use an already stretched budget to pay for transport to access food, having to carry food long distances, having to choose food that is easier to carry such as ready meals or low quality take away food or simply going without. The report found the following clusters of 'deprived food deserts'<sup>76</sup> in South Wales:

- St Mellons, Old St Mellons (Cardiff)
- Rumney, Trowbridge (Cardiff)
- Bishpool, Liswerry, Ringland (Newport)
- Rhigos, Hirwaun, Penywaun, Cefn Rhigos, Penderyn, Llwydcoed (Rhondda Cynon Taf)
- Parts of Rumney (Cardiff)
- Brynmawr, Pontygof, Clydach Terrace (Blaenau Gwent)

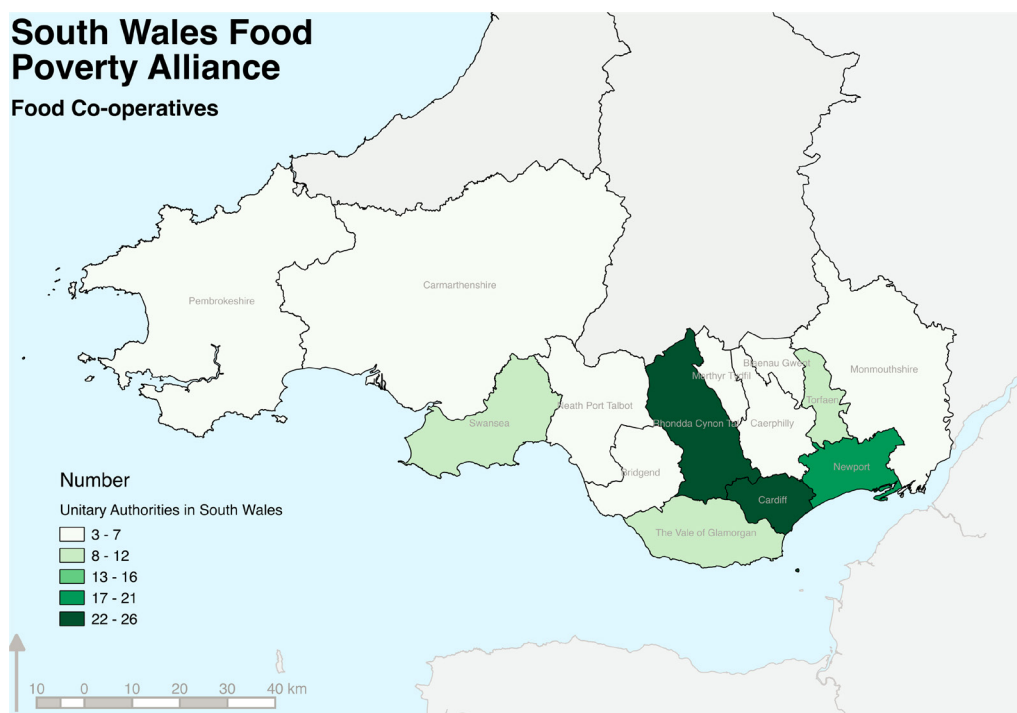
### 4.3.2 Community Food Co-operatives

One solution to food deserts are community food co-operatives. A food co-operative is a simple system through which people can access affordable, quality, fresh fruit and vegetables on a weekly basis at a local community venue. The food co-ops are run by local volunteers and work by directly linking the local community to local suppliers. A bag of fruit or vegetables bought from a food co-op typically costs around £3. Up until September 2016, the Community Food Co-operative Programme in Wales was supported by the Rural Development Unit and funded by Welsh Government. The Programme left a legacy of

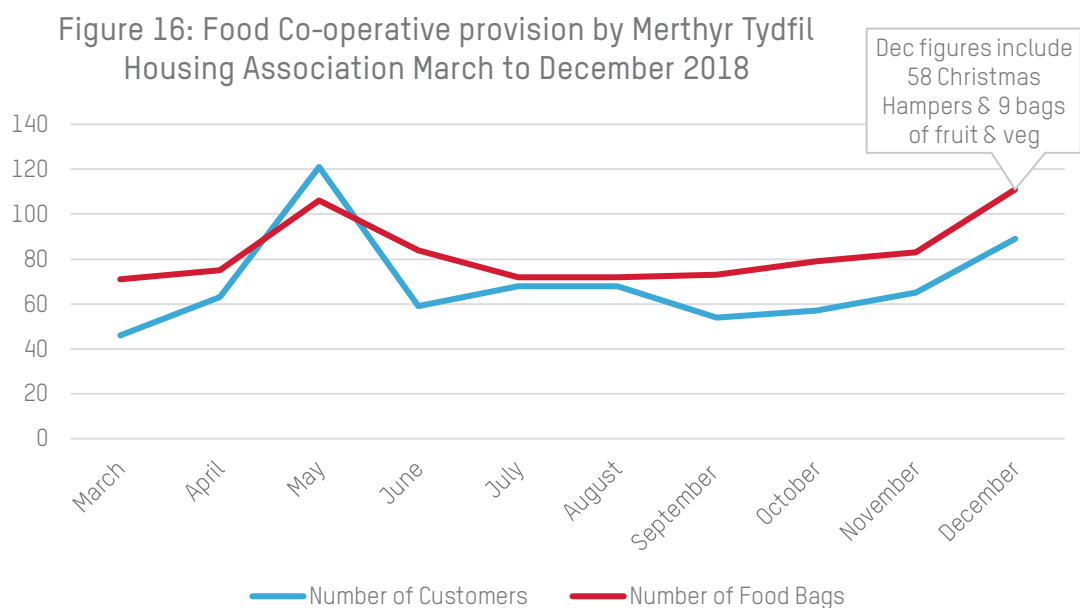
300 co-operatives across Wales, generating income for Welsh businesses, providing customers across Wales with accessible, healthy, fresh and affordable food and helping volunteers to gain vital skills and confidence.

As part of our mapping, we took data on community food co-operative provision across South Wales from the Rural Development Unit website (Figure 15).<sup>77</sup> However, since Welsh Government financial support for food co-operatives ended in 2016 this site has not been updated and is therefore not reflective of current food co-operative provision within local communities. South Wales Food Poverty Alliance members anticipate the actual numbers of community food co-operatives in their area are significantly lower. For example, although the website indicates 26 food co-operatives operating in Cardiff, research into provision by Food Cardiff in June 2018 found that only 8 food co-operatives out of this list were still running across the city. Similarly, the website indicates 4 community food co-operatives in Merthyr Tydfil when there is currently only one in operation delivered by Merthyr Tydfil Housing Association.

FIGURE 15: FOOD CO-OPERATIVES ACROSS SOUTH WALES  
(DR BRIAN WEBB, CARDIFF UNIVERSITY)



To give an idea of the reach of community food co-operatives, March to December 2018 food co-operative provision by Merthyr Tydfil Housing Association is given in Figure 16.

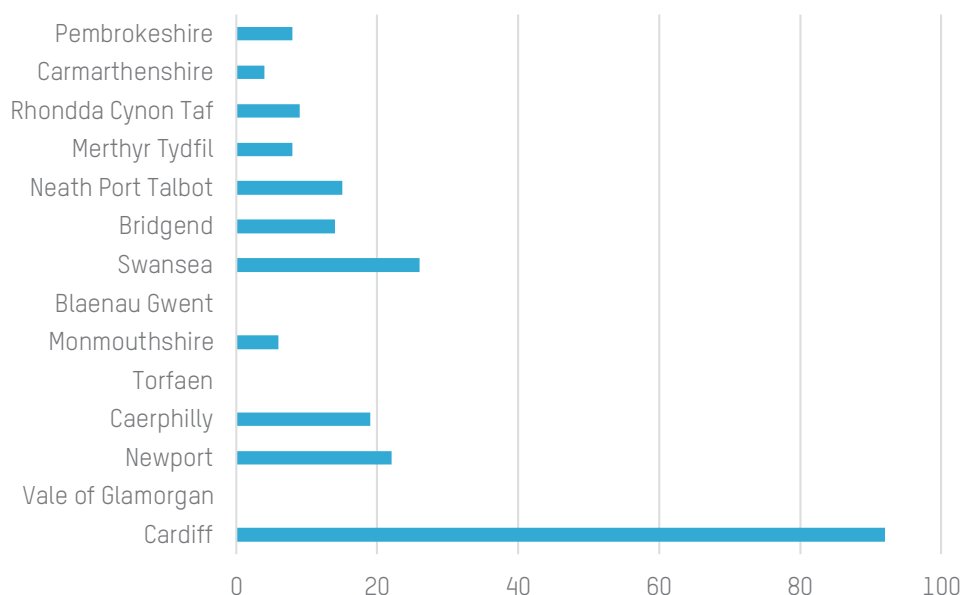


## 4.4 A lack of cooking facilities or the ability to use them

People may experience food poverty because they either do not have access to adequate cooking facilities or they are unable to use these facilities. For example, research by Food Cardiff in 2016 showed that 6 out of 7 housing associations surveyed did not provide cookers, only 1 out of 7 provided a free service to connect cookers to the gas or electric and all 7 housing associations did not provide any cooking equipment for their tenants.<sup>78</sup> In addition, older people or people with disabilities may struggle with cooking independently.

A lack of access to cooking and food storage facilities for people living in temporary accommodation such as B&Bs, hostels or night shelters and those sleeping rough means reliance on voluntary sector food provision from shelters, churches and day centres. Figure 17 shows the number of rough sleepers across the South Wales region that might be reliant on such provision. Many of these voluntary sector providers rely on good quality surplus food from charities such as FareShare Cymru.

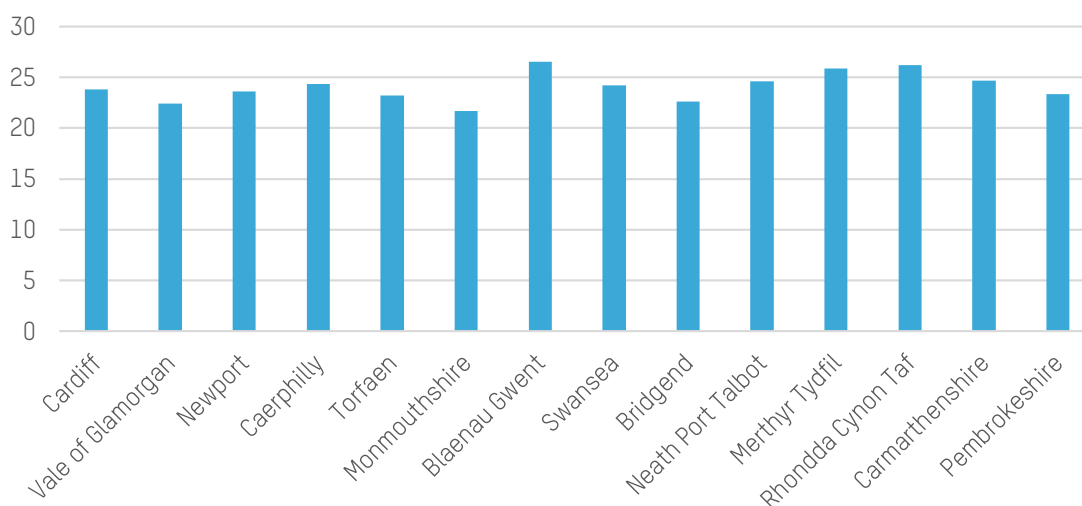
Figure 17: Estimated number of rough sleepers 2018



Even if you have adequate cooking facilities at home then you may be unable to use these because you have insufficient money to pay for gas or electricity. The percentage of households living in fuel poverty across South Wales is shown in Figure 18. A fifth of all households across the region are living in fuel poverty with people struggling to pay for the energy needed to cook food.

Fuel poverty rises to just over a quarter of all households in Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taf and Blaenau Gwent. Some Trussell Trust food banks now offer 3-day emergency food parcels with contents that do not need to be cooked or offer 'fuel bank' vouchers which provide up to 2-week support with energy bills.

Figure 18: Percentage of households living in fuel poverty 2015



FareShare Cymru works with over 200 charities and community organisations across South Wales and in 2016-17 redistributed enough food to contribute to over 1.5 million meals to organisations that help feed people in need. It is estimated that this food saved the third sector circa £500,000 which many of the organisations divert back into their vital frontline services or enables them to continue to provide their food services.

FareShare Cymru enables the community organisations they supply to provide regular, well-balanced, nutritious meals improving the nutrition and health of people using the services. Research by NatCen<sup>79</sup> for FareShare UK highlights some of the positive impacts on the health and wellbeing of people accessing nutritious surplus food through FareShare's network of community food partners:

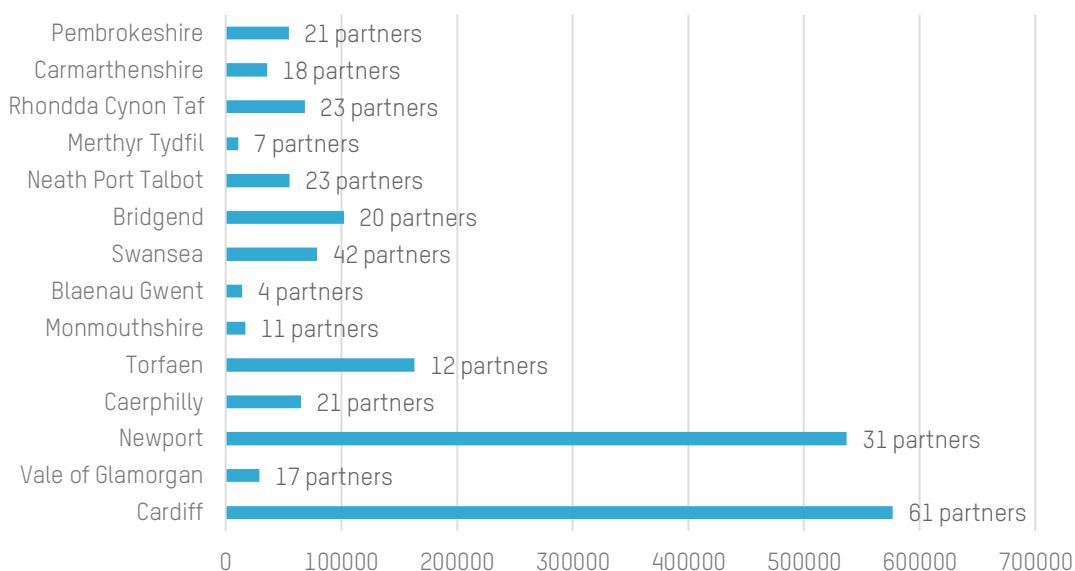
- 59% of people using the service say they eat more fruit and vegetables
- 87% say that eating a meal at the service has a positive impact on how they feel
- 92% say that being able to have a meal at the service helps them 'face the day ahead'

In addition, FareShare Cymru's work enables some organisations to run services such as luncheon clubs which reduce the impacts of loneliness and isolation.

The numbers of meals provided by FareShare Cymru's community partners across South Wales is shown in Figure 19. Currently, the community partner network is most well established in Cardiff, Swansea and Newport however, there are plans to expand and extend the service subject to funding.

The Scottish Government's £1.5 million a year Fair Food Transformation Fund<sup>80</sup> is currently supporting community-based organisations across Scotland to address some of issues relating to accessing healthy food alongside the facilities and knowledge to cook it. The Fund supports projects such as community kitchens, alternative retail options and cooking skills.

Figure 19: Number of meals provided by Fareshare Cymru community partners 2017-18



WHEN THEY HAVE NO MONEY FOR GAS OR ELECTRIC AND ARE SAT IN A COLD, DARK ROOM, IT IS A BLESSING FOR THEM TO AT LEAST HAVE SOMETHING TO EAT.

**COMMUNITY FOOD PARTNER,  
FARESHARE CYMRU**

FOR MOST OF US THIS IS OUR MAIN MEAL FOR THE DAY, WITHOUT IT WE'D ALL BE LOST. I CAN'T COOK. WHEN I'M AT HOME I LIVE ON SANDWICHES AND SAUSAGE ROLLS, ANYTHING EASY.

**ATTENDEE AT LUNCH CLUB SUPPLIED BY  
FARESHARE CYMRU**

## CALL TO ACTION:

Welsh Government establishes a Fair Food Transformation Fund in Wales to:

- enable the shift from delivering food charity to a system of food justice where everyone has access to affordable, nutritious food
- support a food movement that promotes the social value of food, supporting people at risk of food poverty in dignified settings where they can also volunteer, learn new skills and access wider community based activities and support.



# CONCLUSIONS

The evidence mapping presented in this report highlights that for a significant number of people living in our communities it is a struggle to put regular, healthy meals on the table for themselves and their families. The mapping presents only the visible part of the picture of people accessing food aid provision and other support services. Without an effective measure of food insecurity, we cannot know the true scale of the problem. This needs to be urgently addressed.

We have serious concerns that without strong leadership, a strategic vision, a designated budget and clear accountability, tackling food insecurity will fall between the cracks resulting in piecemeal actions rather than the holistic, resourced and determined efforts needed to ensure no one in Wales goes to bed hungry.

In line with the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, there are a number of benefits of action to tackle poverty being a cross cutting theme – requiring action from all Ministers and their departments. Indeed, our report has shown that the food poverty agenda has implications for diverse policy areas such as health, education, employment and skills, economy and transport and environment. Tackling food insecurity is key to delivering Wales' seven wellbeing goals.

Welsh Government may not have all the powers needed to achieve this but our report has shown that a suite of Welsh policy tools exist which, if used effectively, could make a significant difference to people experiencing food insecurity across Wales. The SWFPA remains committed to working collectively on this agenda to effect positive change and we hope that this report will stimulate critical thinking, constructive discussion and practical action.

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