

Under embargo until 00.01am on 18/06/2015



Trussell Trust responds to the Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee Inquiry into Poverty In Wales

A new report, launched from Blaenau Gwent foodbank, calls on the Welsh government to set up a 'Welsh Poverty Reduction Alliance' bringing together ministers, officials, third sector organisations, businesses and academics to enable better policy development, implementation and scrutiny of poverty in Wales'.

Wales has the second highest proportion of the population living in poverty in the UK, behind only London. In 2014-15 Trussell Trust foodbanks gave 3 days emergency food to 85,875 people in Wales.

The report recommendations include:

- That the Welsh Government adopt a clear definition of poverty, based on whether a person's resources are sufficient to meet minimum human needs
- That detailed analyses and targets are adopted to tackle food poverty, fuel poverty and homelessness
- That government led research is commissioned seeking to establish which groups of people in Wales are disproportionately likely to be living in poverty, to bridge the current lack of data
- the Welsh Government uses its influence on the low skilled end of the labour market to drive up the quality of low skilled jobs, through procurement and grant funding conditions
- devolution of the Work Programme, so that helping people into work is based on local knowledge and focused on people furthest from the labour market

Tony Graham, Wales Foodbank Network manager said:

"We are pleased the Assembly committee have chosen to launch their report from one of our foodbanks, a potent expression of the social injustices we see in society currently and part of the front line fight against poverty in Wales."

"Blaenau Gwent foodbank, where this report was launched, was feeding 50 people per month in 2008. It now feeds 300 per month. This experience is not unique to the town and reflects the scale of the challenge foodbanks face up and down Wales."

"We welcome the calls for targets and a detailed analysis of food poverty, fuel poverty and homelessness. A joined up approach to the complex situations facing those in poverty would go far in tackling the problems we see in our food banks."

Adrian Curtis, The Trussell Trust's Network Director said:

"Although there are areas for improvement in the report for the Welsh Government's anti-poverty strategy, ministers are taking the issue seriously and listening and learning from the experiences of our foodbank clients. We would encourage a deepening of the work with charities, businesses and individuals through a Welsh Poverty Reduction Alliance proposed in the report."

“We welcome the ongoing dialogue with the Welsh government on tackling poverty in Wales and are saddened that this level of focus on poverty and cooperation with civil society has not been achieved yet with ministers in England. More can and must be done at all levels of UK government to recognise and come up with solutions to the issues of low pay, benefit delays and changes which are the biggest drivers of food bank referrals.”

ENDS

Notes to Editor:

How Trussell Trust foodbanks work:

- Trussell Trust foodbanks provide three days’ nutritionally balanced food and support to people in crisis in the UK. We also signpost people to other agencies and services able to help resolve the underlying cause of the crisis. As part of the charity’s More Than Food approach, many foodbanks also host additional services like debt/financial advice, holiday lunch and breakfast clubs. Read more on new pilot debt advice service.
- Everyone who comes to a Trussell Trust foodbank is referred by a professional such as a social worker, health visitor or schools liaison officer. Over 30,000 professionals referred people to Trussell Trust foodbanks in 2014-15, and 50 percent are statutory agencies.
- Over 90 percent of food given out by Trussell Trust foodbanks is donated by the public. The Trussell Trust is a Christian charity that runs the biggest network of foodbanks in the UK. For more on The Trussell Trust visit www.trusselltrust.org

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