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**Ymateb i Ymgynghoriad / Consultation Response**

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<b>Dyddiad / Date:</b>	11.09.23
<b>Pwnc / Subject:</b>	<b>Draft Child Poverty Strategy for Wales 2023</b>

**Background information about Estyn**

Estyn is the Office of His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales. As a Crown body, we are independent of the Welsh Government.

Our principal aim is to raise the standards and quality education and training in Wales. This is primarily set out in the Learning and Skills Act 2000 and the Education Act 2005. In exercising its functions, we must give regard to the:

- Quality of education and training in Wales;
- Extent to which education and training meets the needs of learners;
- Educational standards achieved by those receiving education and training in Wales;
- Quality of leadership and management of those education and training providers; including whether the financial resources made available to those providing education and training are managed efficiently and used in a way which provides value for money;
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of learners; and,
- Contribution made to the well-being of learners.

Our remit includes (but is not exclusive to) nurseries and non-maintained settings, primary schools, all age schools, secondary schools, independent schools, pupil referrals units, further education, adult community learning, local government education services, work-based learning, and initial teacher training.

We may give advice to the Welsh Parliament on any matter connected to education and training in Wales. To achieve excellence for learners, we have set three strategic objectives:

- Provide accountability to service users on the quality and standards of education and training in Wales;
- Inform the development of national policy by the Welsh Government;
- Build capacity for improvement of the education and training system in Wales.

This response is not confidential.

## Response

### Introduction

Estyn welcomes the Child Poverty Strategy for Wales 2023. It sets out clear objectives and priorities to mitigate the impact of poverty, including the impact on educational attainment. The strategy clearly highlights the challenges that we face in Wales following the pandemic, with 1 in every 4 children living in relative income poverty.

Overall, the document is clear and accessible. The availability of 'an easy to read' and 'young persons' version of the document supports this effectively. A few minor adjustments to the main version could make this even more accessible, for example the use of bullet points when listing statistics in the introduction. Welsh Government might also want to consider how the priorities and objectives are numbered and presented in the main consultation document. This is much clearer in the young person version.

Estyn's role in supporting Welsh Government to reduce the impact of poverty on educational attainment is clear. We will continue to inspect providers and capture what is working well. We believe that sharing best practice will help to strengthen providers' knowledge of what works well and help to shape practice across Wales.

There is clear synergy between the objectives from 'Our national mission: high standards and aspirations for all' and the strategy for example, the references to the development of Community Focused Schools to mitigate the impact of poverty.

## Consultation questions

### Q1. Do you agree that the introduction to the draft strategy is clear and accessible?

Yes

Unsure

No

Do you have any comments on the introduction to the strategy?:

Overall, the introduction reads clearly. The inclusion of relevant statistics from recent evidence helps to highlight the issues well. The paragraphs that include these statistics may be easier for readers to interpret if they were presented in bullet point format, or as infographics.

### Q2a. In considering the requirement under the Children's and Families (Wales) Measure for the Welsh Government to set objectives for the contribution towards the eradication of child poverty, do you agree that Objective 1 should be an objective of the draft strategy?

Yes

Unsure

No

**Q2b. Is the information about what we have heard and what the Welsh Government doing in relation to Objective 1 clear and accessible?**

Yes

Unsure

No

Do you have any comments on content related to Objective 1?:

We agree that Objective 1 is important to include in the strategy. The information and actions for this objective are expressed clearly and accessibly within the document.

**Q3. Do you agree that Priority 1 should be a priority for the draft strategy?**

Yes

Unsure

No

Do you have any comments on what we say we will do to take forward work under Priority 1?:

We recognise reducing the impact of poverty on educational attainment as a key priority. Through our work we highlight strong practice and share relevant case studies.

We agree that accelerating work with school improvement partners is important. As well as undertaking relevant work, it is important that they highlight key messages to share with schools, settings and other providers and evaluate the impact that their work has on practice in schools and learners' progress.

**Q4a. In considering the requirement under the Children's and Families (Wales) Measure for the Welsh Government to set objectives for the contribution towards the eradication of child poverty, do you agree that Objective 2 should be an objective of the draft strategy?**

Yes

Unsure

No

**Q4b. Is the information about what we have heard and what the Welsh Government doing in relation to Objective 2 clear and accessible?**

Yes

Unsure

No

Do you have any comments on content related to Objective 2?:

We agree that objective 2 should be an objective and that the text is clear and accessible.

**Q5. Do you agree that Priority 2 should be a priority for the draft strategy?**

Yes

Unsure

No

Do you have any comments on what we say we will do under Priority 2?:

**Q6a. In considering the requirement under the Children’s and Families (Wales) Measure for the Welsh Government to set objectives for the contribution towards the eradication of child poverty, do you agree that Objective 3 should be an objective of the draft strategy?**

Yes

Unsure

No

**Q6b. Is the information about what we have heard and what the Welsh Government doing in relation to Objective 3 clear and accessible?**

Yes

Unsure

No

Do you have any comments on content related to Objective 3?:

We agree that this objective links well with the Community Focused Schools strategy and others such as Reducing the Cost of the School Day.

**Q7. Do you agree that Priority 3 should be a priority for the draft strategy?**

Yes

Unsure

No

Do you have any comments on what we say we will do under Priority 3?:

It would be helpful to highlight explicitly the Community Focused Schools strategy in priority 3, alongside some of the important initiatives and activity that this strategy encompasses.

**Q8a. In considering the requirement under the Children's and Families (Wales) Measure for the Welsh Government to set objectives for the contribution towards the eradication of child poverty, do you agree that Objective 4 should be an objective of the draft strategy?**

Yes

Unsure

No

**Q8b. Is the information about what we have heard and what the Welsh Government doing in relation to Objective 4 clear and accessible?**

Yes

Unsure

No

Do you have any comments on content related to Objective 4?:

. We suggest that the wording referring to our work should be: 'Estyn inspections consider how effectively maintained schools, pupil referral units and local government services reduce the impact of poverty on educational attainment' .

**Q9. Do you agree that Priority 4 should be a priority for the draft strategy?**

Yes

Unsure

No

Do you have any comments on what we say we will do under Priority 4?:

**Q10a. In considering the requirement under the Children’s and Families (Wales) Measure for the Welsh Government to set objectives for the contribution towards the eradication of child poverty, do you agree that Objective 5 should be an objective of the draft strategy?**

Yes

Unsure

No

**Q10b. Is the information about what we have heard and what the Welsh Government doing in relation to Objective 5 clear and accessible?**

Yes

Unsure

No

Do you have any comments on content related to Objective 5?:

The accessible version is very clear. The main document is less accessible due to the wide range of aspects included.

The hyperlinks are helpful and essential as there are many terms that may be unfamiliar to the reader. For example, the links guide the reader to information regarding the various boards and committees outlined in this section of the paper and allow readers to understand better the ‘Marmot approach’, tackling inequity through action on the social determinants of health.

**Q11. Do you agree that Priority 5 should be a priority for the draft strategy?**

Yes

Unsure

No

Do you have any comments on what we say we will do under Priority 5?:

We agree the link to the Socio-economic duty is helpful here.

It would be worthwhile to explain a few terms in this section, for example by explaining a 'Communities of Practice' approach.

**Q12. Do you agree that the section setting out how we will monitor and report on our progress is clear and accessible?**

Yes

Unsure

No

**Do you have any comments on what we say about how we will monitor and report on our progress?:**

We agree that it is helpful to outline suitable indicators such as the national milestones.

We think that it would be helpful to refer explicitly to the recent 'School improvement guidance framework for evaluation, improvement and accountability' which clearly references the need to tackle the impact of poverty on attainment. This guidance references clearly the need to evaluate the impact of strategies on the progress of groups of pupils eligible for free school meals and those from low-income households using a range of evidence and information.

**Q13. Does the Child Poverty Strategy adequately respond to the intersection between child poverty with protected characteristics (such as ethnicity, gender, disability and sexuality) and the experience of socio-economic disadvantage?**

Yes

Unsure

No

**What effects do you think there would be? How could positive effects be increased, or negative effects be mitigated?:**

We think that an additional paragraph in the introduction would be helpful to outline more explicitly the complexity of intersectionality. We also think that stronger reference also needs to be made to people/pupils with additional learning needs, alongside the reference to those with protected characteristics such as neurodivergent people.

It would also be helpful to gather the views of pupils and young people with additional learning needs as part of this consultation.

**Q14. We would like to know your views on the effects that the Child Poverty Strategy proposal would have on the Welsh language, specifically on opportunities for people to use Welsh and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English.**

**What effects do you think there would be? How could positive effects be increased, or negative effects be mitigated?:**

We do not identify any negative effects of the strategy proposal on the Welsh language, including on opportunities for people to use Welsh and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English.

**Q15. We would like to know your views on the Integrated Impact Assessment.**

**Are there any specific areas where you feel further detail is required, or any specific issues you wish to highlight which may have an impact on a specific group?:**

We note that parents of pupils with additional learning needs who are eligible for free school meals or from low-income households feel discriminated against. It may be helpful to consider and include the views of people/young people with additional learning needs as part of this consultation.

**Q16. We would like to know your views on the Child Rights Impact Assessment.**

**Are there any specific areas where you feel further detail is required, or any specific issues you wish to highlight which may have an impact on children?:**

We note that parents of pupils with additional learning needs who are eligible for free school meals or from low-income households feel discriminated against. It may be helpful to consider and include the views of people/ young people with additional learning needs as part of this consultation.



**Q17. We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to report them:**

The numbering of each objective and then an associated priority may lead to confusion for some readers. The easy read version avoids this by having each objective alongside its priority which is clearer.