

## Policy Forum for Wales Keynote Seminar: Poverty and welfare reform in Wales

Timing: Morning, Thursday, 13<sup>th</sup> February 2014

Venue: Radisson Blu Hotel Cardiff, Meridian Gate, Bute Terrace, Cardiff CF10 2FL



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Agenda subject to change

- 8.30 - 9.00 Registration and coffee
- 9.00 - 9.05 **Chairman's opening remarks**  
**Mark Isherwood AM**, Shadow Minister for Communities and Housing, Welsh Conservatives
- 9.05 - 9.35 **The impact of welfare reform in Wales**  
**Stephen Crabb MP**, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Wales, Wales Office  
Questions and comments from the floor
- 9.35 - 10.20 **UK-wide welfare reform and its impact on Wales**  
*What are the options for addressing the particular effect in Wales of the introduction of Universal Credit and the uprating of benefits at less than inflation until 2016? How should the Welsh Government's responsibility for poverty, and the UK Government's responsibility for welfare, be coordinated; should welfare reform be devolved to the Welsh Government? What support can be provided to those people moving off incapacity benefits, considering the high relative levels of disabled people and other disadvantaged groups in Wales? How will the shift to Universal Credit affect the financial stability of housing associations; what assistance can be provided to those who go into arrears? How can Government support those families likely to be affected by the benefit changes; how can steps be taken to reduce reliance on pay-day lenders and what role is there for credit unions?*  
**Lee Canning**, Wales Coordinator, TaxPayers' Alliance  
**Fran Targett**, Director, Citizens Advice Cymru  
**Katija Dew**, Financial Inclusion Programme Director, Wales Co-operative Centre  
**Kathryn Edwards**, Corporate Director, Charter Housing  
Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.20 - 11.05 **Early intervention programmes: community, health and education initiatives**  
*How can the multiple early intervention programmes be best coordinated; are Flying Start Programme and Foundation Stages effective models of funding? Has the introduction of the Families First and Integrated Family Support service - aimed at families with complex problems - been successful in providing a holistic approach to multidisciplinary working for families who require extra support? What educational support can be provided for low income families; what has been the impact of continuing the Educational Maintenance Allowance Scheme? What more needs to be done in narrowing inequalities between the most deprived and more affluent areas in Wales; has the Communities First programme been effective in supporting this aim?*  
**Avril Hooper**, Operational Manager, Flying Start, Cardiff Council  
**Mary Powell-Chandler**, Head of Wales, Save the Children  
**Jassa Scott**, Assistant Director, Estyn  
Questions and comments from the floor
- 11.05 - 11.35 Coffee
- 11.35 - 11.50 **The role of Anti-Poverty Champions**  
*Perspective from a local authority Anti-Poverty Champion on improving collaboration across the public sector to tackle poverty in Wales.*  
**Councillor Tom Bond**, Anti-Poverty Champion, Newport City Council  
Questions and comments from the floor
- 11.50 - 12.10 **Tackling poverty through devolution**  
*An overview of current policy initiatives to reduce poverty levels in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.*  
**Dr Jim McCormick**, Scotland Adviser, Joseph Rowntree Foundation  
Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.10 - 12.55 **Routes out of poverty in Wales: skills and employment programmes**  
*How can European Structural Funds be most effectively directed at alleviating poverty and social inclusion? What have been the key challenges for work programme providers operating in Wales; what can be done to raise the percentage of successful placements? Is there a role for direct financial incentives for employers hiring from harder-to-reach groups? How can schools, colleges and local authorities be made more accountable for the progression of younger people; what has been the progress in developing an identification and tracking system that monitors progress of young people at risk of becoming not in education, employment, or training (NEET)? Has the ReAct and Adapt programme for those being made redundant been effective in aligning the skills of people leaving employment with those required by recruiting employers?*  
**John O'Shea**, Principal and Chief Executive, The College Merthyr Tydfil  
**Joshua Miles**, Policy Advisor, Federation of Small Businesses Wales  
**Siân Morgan**, Wales Business Development Director, Remploy  
Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.55 - 13.00 **Chairman's and Policy Forum for Wales closing remarks**  
**Mark Isherwood AM**, Shadow Minister for Communities and Housing, Welsh Conservatives  
**Peter van Gelder**, Director, Policy Forum for Wales