

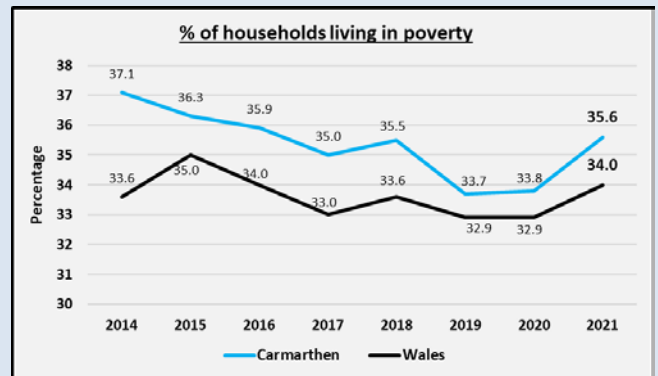


## Well-being Objective 4

**Live Well** - Tackle poverty by doing all we can to prevent it, helping people into work and improving the lives of those living in poverty

### The number of households in Carmarthenshire living in poverty has increased

During 2021, **29,444** households in Carmarthenshire were classed as living in poverty, this is an increase on the previous year of 27,691.  
In work poverty is an increasingly common problem.



Poverty is defined as when a "household income is less than 60% of the GB median income" (in 2021 less than £19,642)

### Why this Well-being Objective is important

- ⦿ Poverty and deprivation have serious detrimental effects, impacting across all aspects of well-being.
- ⦿ It limits the opportunities and prospects for children and young people and damages the quality of life for all. The UN report [Leaving no one behind](#) outlines the imperative of inclusive development.
- ⦿ Poverty is too often an intergenerational experience which poses a significant threat to experiencing positive well-being both now, and in the future.
- ⦿ Carmarthenshire has 5 areas within the most deprived Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA) in Wales (there are 191 in this category - that is within the 10% most deprived). [Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation \(WIMD 2019\) - Stats Wales](#)
- ⦿ Carmarthenshire is now seeing its highest levels of child poverty in recent years (31.3%), which is a similar pattern across Wales. [UK Government Children in low income families \(March 2021\)](#)



### How well are we doing (and how do we know)? 📄 Sources of evidence

#### Success Measures / Explaining the Results

**35.6%** of households are living in poverty



Previously 34% (2020)  
Source: CACI Paycheck

**50.5%** of households threatened with homelessness were successfully prevented from becoming homeless  
Previous year 46.4%



**17.9%** gap in the results of pupils receiving Free School Meals and those who don't (2019/20)  
(19.7% gap in the previous year – 2018/19)

Source: Stats Wales



**12%** of households are living in material deprivation (2021/22)  
Reduced from previous year 11.3% (2019/20)

Source: National Survey for Wales

#### Households Living in Poverty

- ⦿ Well over a third (35.6% or 29,444) of our households are living in poverty which is a concern and has increased in the last year, this is the 8<sup>th</sup> highest % in Wales and above the Welsh average of 34%. 24 wards exhibit rates higher than the Carmarthenshire average, suggesting that the effects of poverty are not felt equally across the county. As food prices, energy bills and general costs continue to rise across the UK it is becoming harder for households to stay above the poverty line. Wages are not rising to meet the extra costs. This means that more working households are experiencing poverty. This has been compounded by the impact of Covid on job losses particularly in the tourism and hospitality sector. The effects of the pandemic were not felt equally by all, evidence suggested that the effects are felt disproportionately by the younger generation and those from low-income households.

### Child Poverty

- ⊙ 30.6% of children in Wales are living in poverty, an increase of 1.6% over the last five years. The figures for Carmarthenshire show a 2% increase over the same time period, with 31.3% of children living in poverty.
- ⊙ This is the 10th highest level of all local authorities in Wales and the joint fifth highest rate of change over the last five years.
- ⊙ At a Wales level, the largest proportion of children living in poverty live in workless households. However, more concerning is the increasing rate at which children living in working households are living in poverty.
- ⊙ At a Wales level 17% of children in poverty live in households where all adults are in work, an increase of 5% from 12% over the last ten years.

### Homelessness Prevention

- ⊙ As a result of reviewing operational practices (listed below), we have adopted a new approach to withdrawn cases, better reflecting the positive outcomes for applicants. We have ensured that staff are reminded of the appropriate sections to end our duties, so we can better capture this successful preventative work we are achieving. Development of a Power Business Intelligence (BI) Dashboard will allow us to better manage and analyse cases within each duty. The impact of applying our new way of working during the year shows an improvement from stand-alone Quarter 1 performance of 43.16% to 52.73% in the last quarter of the year, this giving a cumulative annual result of 50.5%. Steps we have taken include:
  - Reviewing our first point of contact service and developing a Housing Hwb to provide early homelessness prevention advice and assistance.
  - Analysing who presents to us, from where and why, in order to identify what support we need to provide and what training staff may need to be competent and comfortable with responding to challenging people and cases.
  - Reviewing our practices to ensure resources are in the right place to respond to the increased casework.
  - Reviewing how we utilise the existing legislation and allocations policy to help prevent homelessness as quickly as we can, looking to other councils for best practice.
  - Further develop and automate the Power Business Intelligence Dashboard to enable to team leaders to regularly monitor performance.
  - Continue to monitor and ensure staff utilise the appropriate duty for prevention.

### Gap in exam results for pupils receiving Free School Meals and those who do not

- ⊙ The gap between exam results for pupils receiving Free School Meals (FSM) and those who don't (Non-FSM) has reduced by 1.8 percentage points but remains the 7th smallest gap in Wales.  
*The most recent data available for this measure is 2019/20 (2018/2019 Academic Year)*
- ⊙ Free school meal eligibility has increased markedly in Carmarthenshire over the last five years from 16% in academic years 2016/17 to 20% in academic years 2020/21. The largest increase of 3% was seen between 2019/20 and 2020/21. This is 1% above the average for South West and Mid Wales and 1% lower than the Welsh average.

### Living in material deprivation

- ⊙ The 2021/22 National Survey for Wales showed that **12%** of participating households in Carmarthenshire were classed as **living in material deprivation\***, this is above the Welsh average of 11.3% and an increase on the previous result of 11.3%.  
*\*Material deprivation refers to the inability for individuals or households to afford those consumption goods and activities that are typical in a society at a given point in time, irrespective of people's preferences with respect to these items.*
- ⊙ Five of Carmarthenshire's LSOAs are identified as being in the top 10% most deprived in Wales and rank highly in a number of the domains most closely related to poverty, namely; income, employment, health, education and housing. These areas are; Tyisha 2, Glan-y-môr 4, Bigyn 4, Tyisha 3, Llwynhendy 3.
- ⊙ Since 2011 the number of areas in Carmarthenshire included in the 30% most deprived in Wales has increased by 25% which further corroborates the increasing poverty rates evident in the county.
- ⊙ A more detailed analysis of the 2019 WIMD data for Carmarthenshire can be accessed [here](#).

## Progress on the steps we are taking to achieve this Well-being Objective

### Review of our approach to Tackling Poverty

- ⦿ Work on developing the Council's *tackling poverty plan* has progressed with a number of cross-service sessions held to improve alignment and understanding of support services the Council currently provides. This has led to greater cross-service understanding and collaboration and identification of areas for further development in terms of a holistic Council response whilst also working with a range of external partners.
- ⦿ This will be a key priority for the Council moving forward with further development of cross-service working in order to streamline access to support services and targeting of specific interventions and campaigns based on identified need within the county.

### Preventing poverty

- ⦿ We have continued to develop and deliver early intervention support services (0-25) for disadvantaged children, young people and families. Families First (FF) projects have been providing a broad range of support to families/young people in a variety of locations including schools, office/community basis and families' homes as well as continuing to provide support virtually:
  - 6792 individuals supported from the FF programme, of which 4876 (72%) were new individuals.
  - 3569 families supported from the FF programme, of which 2683 (75%) were new families (as a result of working with people on a one-to-one basis)
- ⦿ During the year we have trialled the development of a Hwb Advisor model working through the Council's Customer Service and Contact Centres. We will be looking to further develop and enhance this provision as we aim to work towards providing a holistic support service across all Council services. The Hwb in Ammanford, Carmarthen and Llanelli offer pre-booked appointments and drop-in advice to an average 8,000 residents per month, as well as providing advice and access to training and employment support. For tackling poverty since May 2021 when the staff were appointed, we have helped and advised a total of 528 cases.
- ⦿ The Council's website has been updated to provide a range of information and advice to residents as part of the national [Claim What's Yours](#) campaign. The content aims to make it easier for residents to know what support is available with an option to self-refer for further advice. This will form part of future campaigns to raise awareness of support and advice available.



The Ombudsman published his first ever own initiative investigation into homelessness review processes in Wales [Homelessness Reviewed: An Open door to positive change](#). We were one of three councils in the sample report. The review identified some concerns and examples of good practice.

- ⦿ An action plan response to the Ombudsman's recommendations for improvement has been prepared and will be implemented as part of further development within the service.
- ⦿ The Front of House '*Housing Hwb*' has been implemented and new priorities have been identified around Homeless Prevention as part of the Housing Support Programme Strategy which replaces the Homelessness Strategy.
- ⦿ As an employer we are committed to guaranteeing the equivalent of the 'real living wage' and our lowest paid employees continue to receive the equivalent of the Real Living Wage which is currently £9.90 per hour. We have achieved this via the payment of a supplement – the Real Living Wage Supplement. This means that all employees, regardless of whether they are over the statutory age of 25, are paid at a minimum of the voluntary Real Living wage rate. We also pay supplements for weekend working (8%) and term only working (4%) which increase the pay of mainly lower paid employees. This means that, with the above-mentioned supplements, many of our lower graded posts now attract a total remuneration higher than the Real Living Wage of £9.90 per hour.

## Helping people into work

- ⦿ The number of adults receiving support through Communities 4 Work Programmes during 2021/22 is back to pre-COVID figures with over 1,000 adults receiving either employability or digital inclusion support. All (100%) of the participating adults felt more positive with improved confidence about seeking work or more confident in using a computer and gained IT skills.
- ⦿ 271 accredited qualifications were achieved by residents attending Employment related courses within the Communities 4 Work programmes during 2021/22.

## Improving the lives of those living in poverty

### PRE-TENANCY SUPPORT

- ⦿ For the financial year April 2021/2022, we have **supported 438 new tenants** (helping with **£200k+ supported savings**). This is higher than the previous year due to the Covid restrictions that were in place for 2020/21.
  - Pre-Tenancy Team Staff helped with income maximisation and completing several different benefit applications that financially impacted the tenants.
  - We are trusted partners to apply for grants for white goods, off grid fuel and Emergency Assistance Payments.
  - We issue Foodbank vouchers and make referrals as required for more complex cases.
- ⦿ Pre-Tenancy support has been expanded into the Private Rented Sector (PRS) and we have also supported 103 new tenancies in the PRS, through Housing Support Grant funding. Our PRS Pre-Tenancy Officer now sits in the 3 main Job Centre Offices, taking referrals for anyone making a claim for Universal Credit and have housing costs in the PRS.
- ⦿ We are also in the process of re-starting our Pre-Tenancy training courses now that COVID-19 restrictions are being relaxed. As well as this, we are working in partnership with other teams such as Pre-Tenancy training for foster cares and their placements.

### SUPPORTING FAMILIES TO CLAIM ALL THE FINANCIAL SUPPORT THEY ARE ENTITLED TO

- ⦿ Since November 2021 we have administered the winter fuel support scheme and processed 9,480 cases and paid out £3,409,200.
- ⦿ We have paid out £397,584 of discretionary housing payments and up to mid-March received 10,754 self-isolation support payments applications and paid out over £4 million.
- ⦿ We are processing the cost-of-living payments to approximately 63,000 Carmarthenshire households with the value of around £9.5 million to support residents of Carmarthenshire during these challenging times.
- ⦿ Whilst processing claims and dealing with customer enquires housing benefit staff are often able to identify if people need to be referred for more detailed benefit maximisation advice, personal budgeting or debt advice. They will refer individuals for support or signpost to grants and benefits.
- ⦿ We have established a dedicated Transforming Tyisha Team to lead on specific activity to support community and physical development in Tyisha, which is the most deprived Ward in the County.
  - An ambitious masterplan to transform the area will deliver new mixed-use housing developments, develop more community facilities, and bring vacant business premises back into use; improve the environment and tackle crime and anti-social behaviour; and provide opportunities for education, training, and employment.
  - Four flats have been demolished to clear a site for development; expressions of interest have been submitted by prospective development partners; and a feasibility study is being prepared on a potential community hub.



Audit Wales are currently conducting a National Review on 'Are local authorities doing all they can to help tackle and alleviate poverty?'. The report is due to be published in July 2022. We will take stock of the findings and ensure we embed any relevant recommendation into our tackling poverty plan.

## Is anyone better off?

### Pre-Tenancy Support to JG

- JG was presented to us in March 2021. He had been kicked out by his family due to his antisocial behaviour and his family no longer felt able to cope. JG was subsequently placed into the care of the local authority and at the time of the referral he was neither in Education or Training, therefore being classed as NEET.
- Within three months of presenting as homeless, JG had been referred to Pre-tenancy with the intention of being placed in a training house. The Pre-Tenancy officer accommodated JG's wish not to complete the course as part of a larger group due to his anxiety and it was completed on a one-to-one basis.
- Before allocating JG a place in the training flat, we took the necessary steps to ensure that the current resident met JG prior to moving in. JG then became a resident at the property in August 2021. During his time at the property, JG completed several models of training undertaken with his Youth Support Worker. This training is aimed at providing the necessary skills required to sustain a successful tenancy.
- As a result of early intervention and by providing the right support at the right time, JG has now not only secured employment but is currently successfully maintaining a tenancy out of county. As well as success on a housing level, he also now has a long term and supportive partner.
- The training that was provided by Youth Support Services and support from the Housing Officers has allowed JG to flourish into an amazing young man who is working and living independently

### Hwb advisor help to Mrs H

- Mrs H called into a Hwb as she had received a summons for her council tax, as I was talking to her, I could see that there were other financial difficulties there, I offered my service as a Hwb advisor and she agreed.
- She was a single parent of 3 and a homeowner. Her only income was ESA, Industrial injuries, PIP (lower rate) and child benefit, struggling with day-to-day bills and school dinners. She had applied for Free School meals but had been turned down.
- We helped-
  1. Issued with a council tax reduction form and to apply for back dating
  2. Checked council tax and could see there was no SPD in place, husband had left 2 years previous, Issued SPD form
  3. Advised to apply for UC
  4. Advised to appeal PIP and apply for enhanced rate
  5. Advised to apply for a blue badge due to health condition
  6. Phoned FSM who advised to apply again if UC awarded and

### Outcome

1. Council tax reduction awarded and backdated 3 months
2. SPD awarded and backdated – refunded £1200
3. Awarded UC
4. Awarded the enhanced PIP
5. Awarded a blue badge
6. FSM awarded

Mrs H was delighted with the help and support that she had received from the Hwb and advised that she was now approximately **£800 a month better off** and not struggling.

## Governance Arrangements

To make sure that we are maximising our efforts to tackle poverty we have a cross departmental officer working group and an elected member Advisory Panel.

## What and how we can do better

Our delivery plan to achieve this objective

Ref	Actions and Measures	Date / Target	Owner / Resp. Officer
<b>A</b>	<b>Reviewing our approach to tackling Poverty</b>		
<b>1</b>	We will implement and update the Tackling Poverty Plan to respond to the current challenges faced by residents and communities (15490)	June 2022	Gwyneth Ayers
<b>B</b>	<b>Preventing Poverty</b>		
<b>1</b>	Review of homelessness and temporary accommodation services (15334)	Sept 2022	Jonathan Morgan
<b>2</b>	Improve the % of household successfully prevented/relieved from becoming homeless (baseline 50.5% in 2021/22)	60%	Angela Bowen
<b>3</b>	Develop Carmarthen Hwb to include partnership working with employability projects and other agencies (15597)	30/06/2023	Eifion Davies
<b>4</b>	Develop and promote the Claim <i>What's yours</i> initiative to support the Council's tackling poverty initiative which is responding to the current challenges faced by residents and communities (15598)	31/03/2023	Deina Hockenhull
<b>C</b>	<b>Helping People into work - Also see Well-being Objective 5</b>		
<b>1</b>	% of adults that feel more positive with improved confidence about seeking work after receiving employability support through Workways, Communities 4 Work and Communities 4 Work Plus Programmes (EconD/020) – 2021/22 Target: 100	100%	Amy Wakefield /Shan Williams
<b>2</b>	% of residents that feel more confident in using a computer and gaining IT skills after receiving digital inclusion support through Workways, Communities 4 Work and Communities 4 Work Plus Programmes (EconD/021) – 2021/22 Target: 100	100%	Amy Wakefield /Shan Williams
<b>3</b>	The number of accredited qualifications achieved by residents attending Employment related courses within the Workways, Communities 4 Work and Communities 4 Work Plus Programmes (EconD/022) – 2021/22 Target: 200	200	Amy Wakefield /Shan Williams
<b>D</b>	<b>Improving the lives of those living in poverty</b>		
<b>1</b>	We will work with partners to deliver a range of support services to support the development and growth of the third sector within the County (15518)	March 2023	Helen Morgan
<b>2</b>	We will continue to maximise the draw-down of funding from external sources via the new funding programmes and support/undertake their delivery, e.g. the £2.9m award from UK Government's Community Renewal Fund (15521)	March 2023	Helen Morgan
<b>3</b>	That the Council works with partners to develop a co-ordinated approach to identifying, supporting and developing volunteering across the County (15522)	March 2023	Helen Morgan



View our [detailed progress commitments and targets here](#) for 2021/22 against this objective