

**Part One-The Impact of poverty in young children in Wales****Part Two- Methodical Considerations****Part Three-Ethical considerations****Part Four-Conclusion****Part One – The Impact of Poverty in Young Children in Wales**

Poverty is one of the most known social issue affecting families and children across Wales. Despite Wales's developed economy and strong social policy framework , Wales has such a high rate of children living in poverty compared to other parts of the united kingdom. Recent figures have shown that around 30% of children in wales live in relative income poverty after housing costs, these figures add to make a statistic of nearly one in three children grow up in a signific ally lower income household than the average household in other parts of the country.

In early years especially child poverty is not only based on income , but is based on the long term inability to afford the essentials such as food, warm clothing a stable home and opportunities for learning and play . Maslow's hierarchy of needs(1943) shows the importance of these factors for a child's development. According to the Welsh government policy documents, poverty affects children's access to basic needs and also their ability to take part in everyday life , such as educational trips or recreational activities that fortunately some children may take for granted.

Wales's first minister in May 2025 issued her concern over the two child limit and is concerned over the rates of poverty in Wales , calling the limit damaging to the majority of families in Wales . The Welsh minister has taken her worry to the parliament where they are holding discussions on whether to end the two child benefit limit .However following a major government announcement towards the end of 2025 , the two child cap is set to be abolished in April 2026.

The child poverty progress report(2025) shows that young children , specifically children under the age of five are more affected by poverty . This has a negative affect as this age is where they make most of their developmental progress and being affected by poverty has such a negative affect on the child . This is why figures are showing the rise of abortion numbers rising since the cost of living with working families struggling to cope and more so families that have more than one children . The national minimum wage just does not amount to everything that needs to be provided especially with young children.

The health affect of poverty can be immediate and become a long term affect. Babies that are born into low income families will be more likely to be of a smaller birth weight which can lead to developmental delays and provide challenges for the child will they develop . These challenges could also have a long lasting effect on a

child's physical and cognitive development. Poor nutrition affects a child's development, however with the cost of living it can be difficult for families to provide the correct nutrition a child needs. Public Health Wales(2024) suggest that tackling the early years poverty is key to improving a child's health and wellbeing and will prevent lifelong and lasting effects on their childhood.

Corums data(2025) shows that parents in Wales pay the most in childcare in the whole of the United Kingdom. If a parent in Wales was to send their child under the age of two into a nursery setting they would on average be paying £2600 more than anywhere else in the country. In some areas of Wales, catchment areas are provided and if a family falls into that catchment area, they are offered the flying start scheme just after a child's second birthday. These are offered as 2.5 hours sessions over five days and can be either mornings or afternoons. This can be an advantage and disadvantage for some families as it's funded but then trying to work around the hours proves difficult especially if taken into consideration single parents. The eligibility of flying start is shared with multi organisations such as health visitors and midwives. The Welsh government also introduced the 30 free hours childcare(2019) for working families who have children aged between 3 and 4, this was a greatly funded source from the government to help families on low incomes as the cost of nurseries are rising alongside the cost of living.

The financial year ending in 2024 shows that the average price of private housing was around £704 a month, which represents a staggering 25.9% of the median price of private renting. This affordability level was considered to be below the typical 30% of household to be concerned. Families claiming universal credit alongside housing costs will have most if not all rent costs covered, but that is dependant on what rates they receive by the Local Housing Allowance(LHA). The Senedd(2024) addressed the need for more social housing as they felt they were not able to keep up with demand, since this announcement they are working alongside the Welsh government to build numerous social housing in areas of Wales, this will lower the numbers of families being housed in temporary accommodation as they are waiting for social housing.

Poverty also affects a child's education, research from the child strategy monitoring framework(2025) shows that children from low income families are less likely to achieve the grades needed to pass their GCSES, this can then cause a negative effect on children as they may not be able to pursue their career or end up in careers they dislike.

One of the major steps Wales took to tackle poverty was to introduce the Free School Meals policy and it became universal so was not just offered to families who earned under a certain amount. This policy will give children a better nutritional opportunity and offer support for families as some children may only be fortunate enough to have their only meal in a school setting. Wales made this policy universal for all families in 2024 and has seen a positive impact since it was implemented.

## **Part Two- Methodical Considerations**

Poverty among young children in Wales is becoming a serious social issue that affects health , long term life chances and education . To understand the scale the severity and scale of the issue of poverty , and being able to create effective solutions to decrease the numbers of children in Wales living in poverty , we need to be able to use a method which will provide accurate, reliable and comparable results. Using the quantative research method is the best approach for studying poverty in Wales in young children, this will allow for a large-scale data collection, a clearer measurement on poverty, identification of patterns or trends, and also allow for stronger evidence to inform the relevant organisations so they can take the relevant steps to allow for change . One of the main advantages of using quantative research method is its ability to collect data from large populations , so for this research the decision was taken to pick a primary school from each county of Wales. This decision was made to give a more detailed research into what areas of Wales are in the higher level of poverty. As poverty in Wales is a widespread issue that affects thousands of children across Wales , studying only small number of families would not give an accurate reading . Quantitative methods, such as surveys and analysis of government statistics, allow researchers to gather information from many households across different regions. This makes the findings more representative and ensures that conclusions reflect the experiences of young children across Wales rather than a limited group.

The use of quantative method is also effective because poverty can be clearly measured using numerical indicators. Child poverty in Wales is often defined using numerous measures such as household income, eligibility for free school meals, the employment status of parents , and also housing conditions. These indicators can be counted , compared and analysed statically. This makes it easier to identify how many children are living in poverty , which areas have the highest levels of poverty , and also which age groups are most affected by poverty. Clear measurement is especially important when studying young children, as it helps identify risks early in life. Data will be collected using structured questionnaires with close ended questions. The structure of the questionnaire will be based on questions that link to poverty . Using close ended questions will allow for the responses to be easily

counted and analysed. For this questionnaire the process of online forms has been considered and the chosen schools have given consent to send the link to parents or guardians. The use of quantitative research can help towards longitudinal studies , this will allow the researches to keep the same families and children overtime , allowing researchers to measure how much poverty affects families and reaching out for extra support from multi organisations and even further afield as the Welsh Government. Data collected from the research can be essential in showing how and why families are affected , they will then allow for changes if possible , depending on funding availability from relevant resources. Once all data is collected it will be analysed using statistical methods , such as percentages , averages and comparison between groups. Using this method would enable the comparison of educational access between children in different income brackets or analyse the relationship between poverty and school attendance . Graphs and tables could be used to present all findings clearly . A key strength of this method is that it allows researchers to study poverty on a large scale, making findings more representative and reliable.

Quantitative data is objective and allows patterns and trends to be identified. It also provides strong evidence that can be used to inform policy decisions and support funding for early intervention programmes. Although the quantitative research method seems the most effective way to gather information of poverty in young children in Wales , it does hold some limitations. Researchers need to take in the consideration of the reliance of self reported data, the accuracy of this data depends on the honesty and self awareness of the participants . Some parents and guardians may have biases in self reporting, especially when it comes to their own personal experiences of poverty . This could then potentially lead to impacts on findings. To lower the risks of this happening we need to ensure all parents and guardians feel comfortable about expressing and sharing their experiences.

In conclusion, a quantitative survey method is a suitable and ethical approach for a research learning assignment on children in poverty. It allows researchers to collect measurable, reliable data, identify patterns, and draw conclusions that can support effective policies and interventions aimed at improving outcomes for children living in poverty. and also which age groups are most affected by poverty. Clear measurement is especially important when studying young children, as it helps identify risks early in life. Data will be collected using structured questionnaires with close ended questions. The structure of the questionnaire will be based on questions that link to poverty . Using close ended questions will allow for the responses to be easily counted and analysed. For this questionnaire the process of online forms has been considered and the chosen schools have given consent to send the link to parents or guardians.

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### **Part Three – Ethical Considerations**

Conducting research with children who live in poverty is essential for the understanding scale of the hardship , informing policy responses and ensuring any changes that need to be made to lessen the problem of poverty . However , ethical considerations must be taken into consideration for the quantative research involving the participants . Children although not participating in the research need to be considered as they are vulnerable and need to be ensured they are considered and agree to their family participating in the research. Ethical research does not simply follow rules , it protects the participants rights ,wellbeing, privacy and dignity throughout the whole research process.

One of the most fundamental ethical principles in all human research is human consent. The Belmont report(1979)which is foundational document in research

ethics, outlines the three core principles that must guide research which is respect for persons, justice and beneficence. The factors of respect for persons includes securing informed consent from the participants who are both legally and mentally capable of providing it , and ensuring that the research will not bring them to any danger or harm .

The principles of beneficence is ensuring all results are maximised for potential benefits and ensuring that they minimise any discomfort or sensitivity of any participants. This is as poverty is a sensitive and emotional subject . Using suitable close ended questions in the quantitative research will ensure participants that the emotional and mental aspects of poverty has been taken into consideration. Asking questions that relate to finances, family hardships or education can potentially cause stress if not handled sensitively.

In this section the key ethical outlines principles that are relevant to the study will be discussed . This will include informed consent , data protection under the GDPR(Local Government Association 2018) and also the UK Data Protection Act(GOV UK,2018), confidentiality , the wellbeing of all participants and researchers, the researches responsibilities , and also the ethical review process. Individuals have the reinforcements of The Department for Digital , Culture , Media and Sport (2017) allowing them the right to access their personal data and to object to the processing of such data, which is critical in ensuring participants retain control over their information.

Ethical consideration has been considered for many years even centuries. John Stuart Mills(1861) ethical theory strongly influences the ethical considerations in relation to obtaining research. Mill argued that that actions are morally right if they are promoting great happiness for the greatest number , implying that using research for larger numbers of people , the researcher needs to ensure that participants are happy and comfortable in participating . Also for researches this will allow the encouragement of weighting the potential benefits of the study and ensuring participants are not in any position to feel uncomfortable or in any harm. Ethical practices such as risk–benefit analysis, safeguarding participants from unnecessary harm, and stopping research if harm outweighs benefits reflect Mill's ideas. Mill also emphasizes the support the participants receive whilst participating in any research and that participants understand they are not obliged to participate and can also withdraw at any time. From Mills ethical framework guide, researches can be guided on how to create designs for research that will maximise research results, whilst minimizing harm . This guideline provides highly influential support for researches in modern ethics.

Tham, Gomez and Garasic(2022) emphasize that informed consent ensures participants are fully aware of the study's nature , purpose , risks and also benefits before any participant agrees to take part . This empowers individuals to be able to make voluntary informed decisions about participating in a study. Within this study

parents or participants must be provided with clear , accessible information about what the survey aims to achieve . They must also be given information on the questions they will be asked and also on how their responses will be used . Participants must also be advised on their rights to withdraw or refuse at any point or time without any negative consequences .

It is also important that the information the participants have provided does not include complex language , instead creating questionnaires that use straightforward and simple communication. Consent must always be given freely whilst being informed , direct and specific which is in guidelines with the General Data Protection Regulation(GDPR). By researchers using this regulation it ensures that the participants have been given the genuine choice and control over their personal data, including any survey responses that may contain any personal or sensitive information. Consent ,must be treated as not merely a procedural step but as an ongoing ethical commitment that respects the autonomy of every participant .

Ethical considerations also need to be taken into consideration with participants that have additional needs or need additional support. These requirements are essential to ensure inclusion, dignity and also protection from harm . Researches must obtain informed consent in accessible formats, allowing extra time and using clear, adapted communication so that the participants can fully understand the research that has been conducted . Confidentiality , safeguarding , minimizing stress and creating adjustments for participants that require additional support for their needs are key factors in promoting equitable participation.

The GDPR(2018) and the Data Protection Act(2018) both work together to support ethical research practice by ensuring that personal data is collected , used and stored in a fair, lawful and transparent manner. The GDPR(2018) sets out the core principles such as data minimisation, purpose limitation , confidentiality and accuracy , which all align closely with the ethical responsibilities that respect the privacy and autonomy of all participants. The Data Protection Act(2018) works along side of the GDPR(2018) by providing the specific UK legal framework and safeguards , pacifically for vulnerable groups and sensitive data. The both acts , require researchers to obtain informed consent or identify a clear, lawful basis for processing data , protecting participants from the misuse of their personal information , upholding their rights, and also reinforcing their ethical considerations of trust, respect and accountability in participating in research.

In close ended research , confidentiality remains a key ethical consideration because participants are often limited in the selection to predefined responses, which can still contain personal and sensitive information. Researches must ensure that all responses are anonymous or securely stored so that individuals cannot be identified. even when data is presented in numerical or statistical form. Access to the data should be restricted, and findings should be reported in a way that prevents tracing responses back to specific participants. Maintaining confidentiality in closed-ended

research helps build trust, protects participants' privacy, and ensures the research meets ethical and legal standards.

However, it is also crucial to be transparent about the limits of confidentiality. If a participant reveals information that shows that there are safeguarding concerns or concerns over the safety or wellbeing of the child, it may be a legal or ethical duty to report these concerns to the relevant authorities. Participants will be made aware of the limitations of confidentiality before they give consent to participate. This will ensure they understand that absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed when there is a concern on safeguarding.

Safeguarding is also a crucial factor in ethical consideration when conducting research. It ensures the safety, protection and wellbeing of participants throughout the research process. Researchers have the responsibility of ensuring the minimisation of risks and also identifying any risks, particularly with research that involves children. This includes the clear use of procedures for responding to the disclosures of harm, distress or abuse particularly mental when researching a topic such as poverty in young children and families. Effective safeguarding measures promote a safe research environment, uphold participants' rights, and reflect ethical principles of care, responsibility, and accountability.

Inclusivity and accessibility are also critical ethical concerns. Ensuring that the study captures a diverse range of perspectives, the questionnaire will be designed to accommodate parents from a varied social, educational, and cultural background. Offering different modes of participation, such as online, paper based, or telephone options to reduce any barriers and to accommodate different accessibilities. It is essential to provide translations or assistance for those with limited literacy or language skills further promotes fair participation. It is also important to minimise the burden on participants, especially those who may already be managing significant caregiving demands. Respecting participants' time and circumstances by offering flexible completion options and keeping the questionnaire length resonant supports ethical engagement and also improves the likelihood of high quality and meaningful results of data.

#### **Part Four- Conclusion**

In conclusion, conducting research on poverty within young children in Wales requires a strong combination of ethical considerations, methodical consideration and contextual understanding. Researchers must have the skills to develop and design child centred and inclusive methods. They must also communicate sensitively with participants involved, and also work effectively and professionally with any other organisations that may need to be involved in the research. A clear understanding of safeguarding, confidentiality, and data protection is essential, alongside the ability to analyse both qualitative and quantitative data to reflect the complex realities of child poverty. Ultimately, well-developed research skills enable findings that are accurate, ethical, and meaningful, supporting informed policy and

practice to improve outcomes for young children in Wales. Using quantitative research for poverty in young children in Wales is the most effective method to collect data. Following the guidelines of the GDPR(2018) and the Data Protection Act(2018) all data will be collected and stored enormously and only shared with organisations if concerns of safeguarding is shown. All researches will be aware of both acts and ensured that both are followed. Accurate data collection and analysis allow researchers to present a clear and trustworthy picture of child poverty, which is vital for informing policy, shaping effective interventions, and improving outcomes for young children.

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