



Wales Centre for Public Policy
Canolfan Polisi Cyhoeddus Cymru

June 2026

An introduction to WCPP for Senedd members

Who are we and what we do

Connecting evidence with decision making to improve policy
and public services in Wales

The Wales Centre for Public Policy is a leading, independent knowledge brokering organisation that connects policy makers with evidence to improve public services in Wales. Based in Cardiff University, we bridge the gap between research and decision making by making rigorous evidence and expertise accessible, relevant and actionable for policy makers, practitioners and public service leaders across Wales.

Our vision

A Wales where public policy and practice are consistently shaped by the best available evidence and insight, leading to more effective, equitable and responsive public services.

Our mission

IDENTIFY

We collaborate with decision makers at national, regional and local levels to help them to identify their most pressing policy challenges and shape meaningful opportunities for evidence-informed solutions.

CONVENE

We analyse and synthesise high-quality research in a timely manner and convene leading international experts to improve policy decisions and implementation.

ADVANCE

We advance knowledge in the field of evidence-informed policy by sharing learning, evaluating impact, and contributing to a growing knowledge base of what works in practice.

We have conducted more than 220 projects for Welsh policy makers, established relationships with a global network of leading researchers and policy experts, and developed an award-winning approach to mobilising evidence.

Research and impact

All our work for Welsh policy makers is underpinned by sector-leading academic research on what works to bridge the gap between research and policy making.

As a result, we are frequently consulted by governments around the world, keen to replicate the model we have created.



Identify



Convene



Advance

Our work

We have 12 years' experience at the heart of Welsh policy making, supporting decision makers with independent evidence and expertise and informing policy and implementation across a broad range of areas including economy, skills and education; governance and evidence use; environment; social justice and equality; and families, children and young people.

We are also a leading partner in the RCT Health Determinants Research Collaboration ([HDRC](#)) with Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council. The RCT HDRC is helping the Council to create a vibrant research culture within the local authority. This drives evidence-informed decision making to break the cycle of poverty, improve the life chances of the most disadvantaged, and address the wider determinants of health.

Recent highlights

Cost of living and child poverty

In February 2026, our webinar [Turning the tide on child poverty](#) brought together an expert panel to explore how the next Welsh Government can best prevent and reduce child poverty, as well as supporting families experiencing financial hardship.

As part of our [Poverty and Social Exclusion Review](#), we brought together 'what works' evidence across 12 policy areas, including the take-up of cash transfers, transport, housing and energy poverty. Building on this, we have developed a programme of work to enable local authorities to take an evidence-informed approach to preventing and addressing poverty stigma, including delivering a [place-based project in Swansea](#) with lived experience experts.



Homelessness and housing

We are working with the Centre for Homelessness Impact to support local authorities in Wales to take a more evidence-informed and preventative approach to reducing homelessness and the need for temporary accommodation. As part of this work, we are delivering an 'Evidence Sprint' in North Wales for Ynys Môn and Flintshire councils.

In South Wales, for Rhondda Cynon Taf Council, we are mobilising evidence on the impacts of homelessness and what works to prevent it for single-person households, as part of a larger HDRC project to map and strengthen preventative spend in this area.

Tackling health inequalities

As part of our involvement in RCT HDRC, we have been supporting their work to tackle health inequalities. Recent work has included defining and measuring [preventative spend](#), and its impacts. This work, which has drawn on and contributed to a UK-wide project led by CIPFA and supported by the Health Foundation, has garnered interest across the UK.

Education inequalities

On behalf of Medr, the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research, we worked to identify the drivers of equality of opportunity in the tertiary sector in Wales.

Our report, [Understanding inequity in tertiary education in Wales](#) found that access to tertiary education in Wales is not equal among learners, with socioeconomic class and deprivation key factors, that participation is relatively low in Wales in comparison to the rest of the UK, and there is a need to test and evaluate best practice elsewhere and the success of existing widening participation initiatives.

Building prosperity through a just transition



Our recent webinar, [Building prosperous local economies through a just transition](#), drew out how Wales can leverage the potential of decarbonisation to secure a more prosperous future, particularly in areas that currently lack access to economic opportunity. Making the most of the opportunity afforded by new technologies and new energy infrastructure can support better living standards across Wales.

This builds on our previous work looking at place-based approaches to decarbonisation, including [Domestic Retrofit: Driving Green Growth and Social Equity](#) – a report for Cardiff Council; and [A local authority-led transition to net zero](#), a report for the Welsh Local Government Association.

We provided the previous Welsh Government with evidence on governing [voluntary carbon markets](#) and how these

lessons might be applied in Wales, and on topics including the [net zero skills](#) industry requires. We have also submitted evidence to Senedd committees including on moving [towards a green economy](#).

Additionally, we supported the [Wales Net Zero 2035 Challenge Group](#) which looked at ways to accelerate decarbonisation, established under the Co-operation Agreement between Plaid Cymru and Welsh Labour. The [evidence we provided](#) supported the work of the Group across its five challenge areas: food, energy, transport, housing, and education and skills.

‘It was essential that our reports on the pathways to net zero were rooted in the best available evidence, and WCPP’s independent work to support the group was therefore a vital contribution.’

Jane Davidson, Chair, Wales Net Zero 2035 Challenge Group

Community wellbeing

Our focus on community wellbeing builds on a body of work to inform approaches to enhancing community connection, including research into the role of community action to tackle loneliness during the pandemic and an [evidence review into the nature and causes of loneliness inequalities](#).

We have recently been working as a core member of the Resourceful Communities Partnership and have published [reports setting out evidence and expertise to enable effective collaboration](#) between the public and community sectors in Wales, as a key mechanism to strengthening community wellbeing. As part of this work, we are partnering with the Coproduction Lab Wales to develop a digital resource to support organisations involved in multi-sector partnerships take evidence-informed actions to sustain and strengthen their collaborations.

Our recent webinar, Strengthening community cohesion drew on our [report to support the independent Expert Group on Social Cohesion](#) established by the previous Welsh Government in response to a recommendation from the Senedd's Equality and Social Justice Committee's enquiry into Social Cohesion in Wales.

'[WCPP] analysis was fundamental to helping the Group understand what the evidence tells us works and identify recommended actions.'

Jane Hutt, former Welsh Government Cabinet Secretary

Governance and public service reform

Following [our report on effective implementation](#), we have developed expertise in supporting effective and efficient governance in Wales including through identifying opportunities for change.

We supported the previous Welsh Government in identifying the potential pathways and mechanisms for devolving probation services to Wales, identifying three potential pathways and international evidence on [Building a Welsh probation service](#). We were subsequently asked to look in more detail at the challenges and opportunities involved in a Memorandum of Understanding approach: our report, [A Welsh way for probation](#), supported an agreement to implement an MoU in Wales.

We also supported a [Welsh Government spending review](#) highlighting the potential for longer-term budgetary planning and frameworks to better meet future needs.

Wales Centre for Public Policy

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Independent Working Group on Sustainable Local Government for the Future

Evidence supports the view that the current model for local government is unsustainable and that a new vision is important for local government to continue to serve its citizens well into the future.

Working with the WLGA, we convened the Independent working group on sustainable local government for the future whose membership includes elected members and chief executives from Welsh local authorities and independent experts.

The group has published its views in [A firm foundation for change](#), setting out a series of actions the Welsh Government and Welsh local government should take to support sustainable, democratic and responsive local government in Wales. Its final output will be published in summer 2026.

'If we are to continue delivering for our communities, it's crucial that we face these challenges head-on and work towards long-term, sustainable solutions. This group offers us the opportunity to take control of our future and ensure a strong and resilient public services sector in Wales.'

Councillor Andrew Morgan OBE, former leader of the WLGA

How we can help you

As Wales' place-based What Works Centre, our role is to help decision makers to understand what the evidence says, and to apply this insight in the Welsh context. We are independent, non-partisan, and focused on supporting evidence-informed decision making in Wales.

All WCPP outputs are published on our [website](#). If you think we can support your work, please contact info@wcpp.org.uk