

Socio-economic Duty



**What is the socio-economic duty
and what does it do?**

Socio-economic duty

- Came into force March 31st 2021
- When taking strategic decisions public bodies have to have **due regard** to the need to reduce inequalities of outcome resulting from socio-economic disadvantage

Key terms

- **Due regard** - giving weight to a particular issue in proportion to its relevance- active consideration of issues
- **Inequalities of outcome** - any measurable differences in outcome between those who have experienced socio-economic disadvantage and the rest of the population
- **Socio-economic disadvantage**-Living in less favourable social and economic circumstances than others in the same society
- **Decisions of a strategic nature** – plans, setting objectives , changes to services, major procurement – not everyday decisions
- **Reporting** - there will be no statutory reporting but organisations should be able to demonstrate how they have discharged their statutory duty and have a clear audit trail of evidence

Inequalities of outcomes-

- Examples of unequal outcomes - greater chance of being a victim of crime, lower health life expectancy, deaths from COVID -19, lower paid work, poorer skills and attainment
- Data for Wales shows pupils eligible for free school meals and children in care have poorer educational outcomes in schools on average with the gap widening as pupils get older.
- Adults living in the most deprived areas of Wales have lower life expectancies than those living in the least deprived areas.

Examples of poverty

Poverty is a very broad term and means different things to different people – generally it can be defined as:

“a lack of something or when the quality of something is extremely low”

Below are the areas of poverty that the Council considers a priority through the Council Plan

- Income Poverty - People on low income who are unable to meet day to day living costs
- Child Poverty – Children who do not have access to adequate food, clothing, shelter and education to lead a healthy and active life
- Food Poverty – People who are not able to access food that meets their daily nutritional needs and requirements
- Fuel Poverty - Households that have higher than average fuel costs and meeting those costs will cause them to experience poverty
- Digital Poverty - Inability to interact fully in a digital world

Demonstrating due regard - Audit trail

- Evidence of listening to people who experience socio-economic disadvantage
- Evidence of data - insight, future trends
- Information through consultation
- Impact assessments

Meeting the duty- what we are doing

- Strategic decisions are identified in formal committee reports
- Integrated Impact Assessments (IIA) include potential impacts on poverty and these are included within committee reports for decision makers to consider – should show data and evidence of engagement
- Impacts on the Well-being goals, including the goal “A more Equal Wales”, and the future ways of working are also reported within committee reports
- Poverty is included as a priority within the Council Plan
- Updating the Commissioning Form

Better outcomes

- The overall aim of the duty is to deliver better outcomes for those who experience socio-economic disadvantage.
- Ensuring that those taking strategic decisions:
 - take account of evidence and potential impact through consultation and engagement
 - understand the views and needs of those impacted by the decision, particularly those who suffer socio-economic disadvantage
- Evidenced based decision making

Case study- review of provision of a mental health hospital

- Before the socio-economic duty the Health Board thinks about:
 - The type of accommodation required
 - How to make accommodation suitable for a range of treatment
 - Accommodation needed by staff
 - Access – physical access to buildings, car parking and transport routes

Applying the duty...

- Evidence that:
 - people living in poverty or living in deprived neighbourhoods have higher risk of addiction and mental illness
 - Many patients struggling financially and socially
 - New site might increase transport costs for employees

After the duty...

- include a small office to be offered for free to a local third sector organisation to provide a full benefit-check for patients. By reducing financial stress, this might help mental health outcomes.
- committed to paying the living wage to employees.
- negotiated with a local bus company to give their workers a 10% discount on travel-cards for the first 18 months after the move
- examining the data held on workers' shifts to check that employees are being offered enough work to suit their individual requirements and reduce in-work poverty
- road-show in local secondary schools in deprived areas to encourage pupils, especially boys, to think about a future career in mental health nursing or related occupations

Any questions

