The National Library’s Child Poverty Strategy explains how we will play our part in supporting participation in culture, learning and the arts for children, young people and families in poverty during the period 2012-2015.
Statement of basic principles

The National Library of Wales provides its services free to all Welsh citizens and it does not discriminate on the basis of ability or inability to pay: it welcomes children and young people to use its services, either by visiting the Library in Aberystwyth or accessing its resources and services on-line at home, in schools or through free internet access in public libraries across Wales. The Library has a duty not only to ‘keep its doors open’, but also to promote awareness and use of its collections and services, by all possible means at its disposal - and this Strategy allows us a further opportunity just to do that among our children and young people.

“I wish to thank the Association of Friends for sponsoring this important Strategy. The Friends’ generosity will allow us to welcome hundreds of children and young people to the Library over the next few years, which I hope will not only inspire them but also broaden their horizons”

Sir Deian Hopkin, President, National Library of Wales
Foreword

Eradicating child poverty and improving the life chances of our most disadvantaged children and young people are at the top of the Welsh Government’s agenda for Wales, and as a result of the Child Poverty Act 2010 and the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010, a duty has been placed on The National Library of Wales, as a Welsh Government Sponsored Body, to adopt and develop a strategy to improve opportunities for children and young people and thereby assist the Government to realize the historic and ambitious commitment made in 1997 to eradicate child poverty by 2020.

The existence and work of the Library is dependent on certain principles and values, which are shared by those who govern it, work within it and use it. They support the values and principles of the Welsh Government whilst giving direction to the work of the Library. The Library is pleased to be able to contribute to the aim of the Welsh Government to eradicate child poverty. The Library intends to work in partnership with other organizations and agencies to strengthen its efforts and learn from the experiences of others working in this area.

The Library’s Education Service was established in 2005 and its two dedicated members of staff have enabled it to work closely with children and their families in the successful delivery of various projects. The history and heritage project led by the Library’s National Screen and Sound Archive in partnership with the BBC and delivered with the co-operation of Valleys Kids at their Horeb Centre at Penygraig in the Rhondda is one notable example of how the Library has worked in partnership with others in its attempts to improve the lives of children and young people. Locally, we have worked with the Plas Lluest centre in Aberystwyth where young people and adults with learning difficulties have been given numerous opportunities to explore their talents and to exhibit their work at the Library.

Our Education Service arranges two outreach events annually spread over two weeks, working with a number of schools. For example, work in the Gwendraeth Valley in 2009, Wrexham in 2010 and Newtown in 2011 brought the Library – through ‘outreach’ activities - into contact with many schools and up to 500 children in each area. These sessions have focused on using treasures from the Library’s collections with local connections.
The Service has also led the Library’s involvement in the ‘Read a Million Words’ project and working with the Basic Skills Agency and Ceredigion County Council through Theatr Felin Fach, as well as an Artist in Residence Programme in Nantgaredig, Harlech, Machynlleth, Llanidloes and Newtown.

The Library has also worked in low income areas through Culturenet Cymru. Since its formation nine years ago Culturenet Cymru has delivered popular heritage digitisation projects such as Gathering the Jewels and ‘Glaniad’ in partnership with museums, archives and libraries across Wales. In recent years, activities have extended beyond heritage organisations to include working with schools and community groups on projects such as the intergenerational project ‘From Warfare to Welfare’ and various digital inclusive initiatives through Community Archives Wales and Communities 2.0. The Library has worked in a number of areas across Wales including Brynaman, Cwmystwyth, Cwmaman, Bonymaen, Port Talbot, Ystalyfera, Nantlle, Tregaron, Troedyrhiw, Maerdy and Machen in the delivery of this initiative. Heritage has been found to be an effective way of engaging with digitally excluded individuals and of introducing them to new technologies which can, in turn, bring both social and economic benefits to them.

The Library cannot eradicate the direct effects of economic poverty, but in the area in which it is active, it is fully committed to reducing the effects of educational and cultural poverty by offering a variety of opportunities for our children and young people.

Andrew Green
Librarian
“Thank you for a wonderful visit to the Library. I thought you pitched it perfectly for the children and they certainly enjoyed every minute of your talk and tour. It was an experience they’ll remember for many years.”

Mrs Emanuel, Head, Blaengarw Primary School
Context

Every child has a right to knowledge, education and culture and these should not belong to or be the privilege of the few.

Although child poverty often occurs as a result of low household income, income level alone is not the only measure of poverty.

In research presented to the UK Parliament in 2010 it was demonstrated that the most influential factor on the learning outcomes of children between the ages 5 to 10 years old is limited learning opportunities and access to information within the home environment. It was noted that not helping children to enjoy and explore information can be extremely harmful to their development and can cause a kind of poverty that is likely to affect them throughout their lives.

The Library believes that it is through supporting and contributing to the agenda for social inclusion and reducing inequality that it can best assist the Government to tackle child poverty, especially by ensuring that its resources and services are available to more people in Wales. By attracting new audiences we will interpret the wealth of our collections and information in ways that will assist individuals through learning, playing, motivation and raising their sights to see beyond their current difficulties.

The Government’s publication *Libraris Inspire: The strategic development framework for Welsh libraries 2012-16* (November 2011) shows how important the role of libraries is in a period of economic downturn: people need access to high quality impartial information, resources and assistance to enable them to take informed decisions. The framework goes on to say that libraries play a key role in developing people’s skills and knowledge at all levels and at all ages, helping young
children to take their first steps to literacy, supporting students in their studies and contributing substantially to the task of delivering digital inclusion and information literacy.

A key theme to emerge from the recent consultation on the Welsh Government’s Child Poverty Strategy was the importance of libraries to low income families and disadvantaged communities. Being free at the point of delivery, libraries support families living in poverty by offering access to a wealth of resources and range of information, and tackling child inequalities.

The Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 placed a duty on the Welsh Government to publish a Child Poverty Strategy for Wales. In recognition of the key role played by other partners in the shared fight against child poverty the Measure made action to eradicate child poverty a statutory requirement across local authorities, Local Health Boards, and a range of public bodies in Wales including the National Library of Wales.

The National Library of Wales was established by Royal Charter in 1907. It has independent charity status and is also a Welsh Government Sponsored Body. In the context of the Measure, the Library’s focus will relate to:

- providing low-income parents/carers with the skills needed to secure employment
- helping children and young people to participate effectively in education and training
- reducing inequalities in educational attainment between children and young people
- reducing inequalities in participation in cultural, sporting and leisure activities between children and young people between parents/carers.

They deserve the best sets out how the Library will during the next few years continue to collect and provide access to information for people in Wales and in particular will look for new opportunities to bring its resources and its services to the attention of children and their families. The Library will also continue to have family-friendly policies that support parents who wish to work and bring up children at the same time.

The Library believes that:

- The information gathered and provided by the Library should be available free of charge to everyone. This right to have easy access is part of the democratic rights of the citizens of Wales in pursuit of information, knowledge and enlightenment, and contributes to promoting ‘social inclusion’.
- Its collections and services exist to meet the needs of everyone who can benefit from them - including children and young people.
- It has a duty not only to ‘keep its doors open’, but also to promote awareness and use of its collections and services through all the means at its disposal.
Building on achievement and good practice

In the Library’s current strategy, *The Agile Library*, we have committed ourselves to the following developments. Each of them will help us achieve the aims of *They deserve the best*.

**Collaboration**

Although the next few years will be difficult as a result of the cuts in public spending, we are determined that the Library will not stand still or refuse to respond to current challenges, such as child poverty, but rather will continue to develop, serving the people of Wales and moving in new directions. Being flexible is the main theme of *The Agile Library*, the Library’s main strategy.

Close collaboration with local and national organizations will continue and we will take advantage of opportunities to facilitate access to our services among people who are not currently receiving them.

The Library has developed and built a long and strong tradition of collaboration with a wide range of other organizations locally and nationally. It is anticipated that it is essential that we continue to work closely with other significant bodies in order to achieve our objectives in the future.

**Flexibility of Information and Content**

It is anticipated that there will be a fundamental change in the way information is provided in future in response to user demand. In the past, it was necessary to visit the Library in Aberystwyth in person to take advantage of what was offered by the institution; in the future, remote access, mainly digital, will become even more important. The Library is also part of a wider linked network of library, information and archive organizations in the United Kingdom and worldwide. It collaborates with them to make the best use of the resources which are available to everyone. We must respond flexibly to these expectations. There will be an even greater emphasis on collecting and republishing material in digital form, which means that an increasing number of children and young people will have access to important information from their homes or their schools. It should also be emphasised in the context of this Strategy that we attempt to interpret our collections, targeting two audiences in particular (children and young people) and providing services specifically for them: this work will increase during the life of this Strategy.
**Flexibility in our Relationship with our Users**

It is our users, whether they are readers, visitors and children and young people in the building or remotely, which define the value of the Library. We do our best to place users and prospective users at the centre of our thinking and our activities and especially children and young people and those who provide access to information for them.

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**Focusing our work**

Focusing on the following strategic aims will help the Library make a contribution to the Welsh Government’s commitment to eradicate child poverty by 2020. We will do our best help children, young people and their families living with low income take advantage of the services and opportunities provided by their National Library.

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**Strategic Aim 1**

They deserve the best... broaden the horizons of children and young people by bringing them to the National Library

The Library has recently worked in partnership with Ceredigion County Council’s Department of Education and Community Services Ceredigion to ensure that local schools have the opportunity to visit the exhibition *Following the Flame*.

During this past school year Aberystwyth’s primary schools have all worked on the theme of 'The Olympic Games' as part of their primary / secondary transition. Their thematic work began with a visit to the Library and participated in a two-hour workshop on the theme and exhibition. The emphasis of the workshops, as is that of the exhibition itself, is the contribution of the Welsh people to the Olympic Games.

Over 800 children from about 35 schools will have visited the Library during the period of the exhibition: the workshops will be held in English and Welsh and led by Phil Cope, curator of the exhibition and by the Library’s Education Service.

We want to see more children and young people – from Community First and Flying Start areas - to visit the Library. The Library will pay the cost of transporting the children and young people to Aberystwyth and back home again, with lunch provided and we promise them a rewarding educational and cultural experience. The purpose of this Aim is to increase awareness of the services and resources offered by the Library to all the people of Wales,
including our electronic services and resources which are accessible remotely from all areas of Wales. Their visit is intended to stimulate their interest and awareness of how the Library can be relevant and accessible to them in their everyday lives when they get back home.

This Aim is sponsored by the Association of Friends of the Library. The promotion of Library services and improving access to the collections are among the main aims of the Association and the Friends see this Child Poverty Strategy as an excellent opportunity to share the wealth of the Library’s resources with children and young people by bringing them to the Library in Aberystwyth. Inspire, broaden horizons and increase the desire to learn more, are some of the objectives of this Aim.

"we had so much fun when learning about the Library and learning history.
We had a fantastic day. Thanks for everything. We would like to come again."

Kayla and Rhian, Ysgol y Dderi

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actions 2012-15</th>
<th>Expected Outcomes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work with schools to arrange visits to the National Library</td>
<td>Up to 15 schools will receive funding from the Library to enable them to arrange a day visit to the Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrange day visits and provide children and young people with worthwhile experiences</td>
<td>Children to benefit from the visits – and maybe inspire them to return some day and use the Library’s online resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide information packs for the children and young people to take home with them</td>
<td>Children and teachers benefit from the information packs and are able to use the materials in their teaching following the visits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review this Aim in April 2013</td>
<td>We hope to be able to continue with this Aim and improve the service provided during the remainder of the Strategy: we will learn from the experiences of 2012-13 and also from the feedback we receive from children and adults.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Strategic Aim 2

They deserve the best ... through schools, local libraries and other partners

Case Study: Outreach

During the duration of this Strategy the Library will target even harder our more economically deprived communities.

The Library's Education Service has experience of working with children and young people in different areas of Wales. Workshops have been held to share the Library’s collections with young people, teachers and parents in Merthyr Tydfil. The sessions were arranged in partnership with the Local Authority’s Education Department and with the co-operation of the ESIS advisory service and the Council’s Schools Improvement Group. The scheme was a part of the local authority’s strategy to improve literacy among young people 9-13 years of age.

The location for the first part of this work was the Bishop Hedley Catholic Secondary School near the Gurnos estate and workshops were set up in the school for their year 7 pupils and for older pupils from 7 primary schools within the school’s catchment area. The second location was the Dowlais Infant School where workshops were arranged for the school’s pupils and for pupils from the Gwernllwys Junior School.

The Education Service has also worked with children and young people on similar schemes in Wrexham, Llandudno, Carmarthen, Whitland, Ynys Môn, Gwendraeth Valley and Newtown.

Between September and November 2012 the Education Service will work with partners from within and outside Swansea’s Community First areas, introducing the children and young people to new experiences and aspirations.

The highlight of these activities will be the opportunity for the children and their teachers and parents to take part in the activities of the President’s Evening that will be held in Swansea in November, and share with the invited audience what they have accomplished whilst working with the Library.

*Thank you for a wonderful visit to the Library. I thought you pitched it perfectly for the children and they certainly enjoyed every minute of your talk and tour. It was an experience they’ll remember for many years.*

Mrs Emanuel, Head, Blaengarw Primary School
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<tr>
<td>Work with schools, libraries and partner organisations to ensure that the Education Service has access to schools and can work with children, young people and adults</td>
<td>Children (and their parents) who have never before had the opportunity will be given the chance to participate in the Library’s services. Receive personal feedback from children, young people and adults.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>We hope to be able to continue with this Aim and improve the service provided during the remainder of the Strategy: we will learn from the experiences of 2012-13 and also from the feedback we receive from children and adults.</td>
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</table>
Strategic Aim 3

They deserve the best ... through visual arts

Case Study: Resident Artist Project

Since 2006 the Education Service has worked with artists in residence to provide access to the Library’s collections to children and young people through developing their creative skills. Last year, Luned Rhys Parry was appointed as an artist in residence (the third in a series) to work on the Geoff Charles Photograph Collection in schools in Newtown and Wrexham.

Our hope during the next few years is to be able to offer a similar scheme that will allow us to work with craftspeople to develop creative skills among young people and adults based on the Library’s collections. The craftspeople will use a variety of creative media as part of the scheme and they will be particularly interested in developing craft skills, rather than creating artwork for display only.

We will work with adult learners and young people within their communities on themes supported by items from the Library’s collections. These learners will visit the Library to see original items from the collection that are relevant to their theme. Each project may lead to an installation or display in each location which will be duplicated or represented in the Library itself. Educational resources for each theme will be produced and distributed free of charge to every community.

In the context of this Strategy we will ensure that children and young people and their families in Community First areas will also benefit from this project.

‘A review of arts projects in a number of cities around Northern Britain shows that they can be effective in combating social exclusion by building long term pride in communities and in people who live in them.’

‘Researching links between poverty and literacy’, The Joseph Rowntree Foundation,
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<tr>
<th><strong>Action 2012-2015</strong></th>
<th><strong>Expected outcomes</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Education Service will arrange the project in a Communities First area.</td>
<td>Young people to benefit from the project through working with craft people.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Provide a new experience for young people; feedback from young people.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work with partner organisations to ensure that the artists/craftspeople in residence host a number of workshops and deliver worthwhile projects.</td>
<td>Arrange workshops based on the Library’s collections; allow the young people an opportunity to visit the Library and create exhibitions; arranged workshops for young people, visits to the Library, exhibitions completed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review this Aim in April 2013</td>
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Strategic Aim 4

They deserve the best ... by contributing to the digital inclusion agenda

Case Study: People’s Collection Wales

The Library is working with the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales and Amgueddfa Cymru/National Museum Wales to provide content for the People’s Collection Wales website. As part of this work, a range of graphic materials have been contributed from the Library’s collections including the photographs of John Thomas, P.B. Aber and Tirlun Cymru - Welsh Landscape, the Library’s collection of topographical prints.

The Library’s significant input into this important project will continue.

We will also continue to contribute significantly to the Welsh Government’s wider digital inclusion agenda. The Librarian is a member of the Digital Inclusion Management Board established by the Government to give expert advice on digital inclusion, and of its Digital Wales Advisory Board, where he recently gave evidence on the subject of ‘digital by default’. The Library is therefore in an excellent position to ensure that the Library and public libraries play their part in supporting the Government’s commitment to this agenda.

The Library will also play a lead role in the JISC funded WHELF (Wales Higher Education Libraries Forum) project to digitise and make World War 1 primary source material, make it accessible online, and create educational resources (linked to the curriculum) prior to the start of commemoration activity during 2014-2018.

Note: The Library was recently specifically named as one of the ‘trusted sources’ of material for creating new learning resources in the recent review of digital classroom learning Find it, Make it, Use it, Share it report (2012)
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Action 2012-2015</th>
<th>Expected outcomes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Move quickly towards digital engagement</td>
<td>More Library and PCW material available</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More children and young people using our resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving access to resources</td>
<td>Ensure that our search provisions and access processes are easy to use and user-friendly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continue to contribute to the Government’s digital inclusion agenda</td>
<td>More digital material available to children and young people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continue to work with People’s Collection Wales partners</td>
<td>Successful progress of programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review this Aim in April 2013</td>
<td>We hope to be able to continue with this Aim and improve the service provided during the remainder of the Strategy: we will learn from the experiences of 2012-13 and also from the feedback we receive from children and adults.</td>
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Strategic Aim 5

They deserve the best ... through volunteering, and learning new skills

Case Study: Open College Network

The Library’s Education Service has been working with Coleg Ceredigion in providing a scheme for young people with severe learning needs. It helped them to gain an Open College Network qualification.

The Library has recently attracted Big Lottery Funding, allowing us to appoint a volunteering co-ordinator. The launch of our volunteering scheme - Help Us To Deliver - is scheduled to take place during June 2012.

The volunteering scheme has the potential to make a big difference to the lives of many people and simultaneously help us to do our job better and provide better service to our citizens. 'Help Us To Deliver' will provide opportunities for individuals - and particularly young people - looking for useful and rewarding volunteering/work experience opportunities.

Allowing school pupils to participate in volunteering/work experience may also fulfil some of the requirements of the Welsh Baccalaureate. We will work closely with schools, Careers Wales and other agencies to promote the Library as a volunteering/work experience centre for our young people.

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Promote the Library among schools and colleges as a location for work experience/volunteering as a part of the Welsh Baccalaureate qualification.</td>
<td>The number of young people given the opportunity to do work experience/volunteering. We hope to be able to continue with this Aim beyond 2011-12 and improve the service provided during the remainder of the Strategy: we hope to learn from the experiences of 2012-13 and the feedback we collected from young people and adults</td>
</tr>
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Conclusion & looking forward

Our children ... they deserve the best ...

Access to knowledge, culture, learning, education and the arts should not be the privilege of the few, but the right of all the children and young people of Wales. The National Library of Wales will reach out to them through this Strategy so that we may enrich their lives and that of their communities, by providing free access to information and making available the recorded memory of Wales.

In addition to the five Strategic Aims of this Strategy, the Library will implement other exciting and interesting developments during the next few years, and contribute further to our commitment to eradicate the effects of child poverty. We also look forward to building on the experiences of 2012-13 and feedback from participants, and learning from best practices from other sources.

Institutional flexibility, flexibility of information and content and flexibility in our relationship with our users are the consistent themes throughout our current Corporate Strategy The Agile Library, and our determination not to stand still even during a period of saving and contraction as a result in cuts in public spending will all contribute to providing a free and important service to children, young people and the citizens of Wales.