Oxfam Cymru.
Tackling poverty on our doorstep.
Poverty in Wales isn’t about drought, war or starvation – as it can be in developing countries – but it’s every bit as real. Almost one in four people in Wales live in poverty which means their income is less than 60% of the average. That is about 700,000 of our fellow citizens, enough to fill the Millennium Stadium ten times over. At least a third of all children in Wales live in poverty, two thirds of them in households with at least one working adult.

Poverty can mean having no money in your pocket, your children going to school or to bed hungry. Or not being able to afford a winter coat – or to heat your home. But it can also mean living for years without work or hope, cut off from opportunities and change. People in poor communities have worse health and shorter life expectancy. Changes to the benefits system and mounting food and fuel costs are adding to the problem. On top of all this, there’s no shortage of blame, stigma and lies flying about on the subject of poverty.

That’s why Oxfam Cymru works in Wales to overcome poverty, and to tell the truth about it, now and in the long term.

www.oxfam.org.uk/cymru
WHAT WE DO?

- We develop projects with local partners to help people living in poverty to improve their lives and show how things can change.
- We raise public awareness of poverty in Wales to create pressure for change.
- We work with policy makers and politicians to tackle the root causes of poverty.

Our projects support individuals and communities to cope with crises. We work with people to build on their strengths and capabilities. Our projects encourage people to use all the resources at their disposal to make their livelihoods more secure.

Oxfam works through local community organisations to help the long term unemployed, isolated older people, young people with no qualifications, refugees and asylum seekers, lone parents and families, depending on local need.
We also campaign for a fairer tax system: ensuring the rich pay the taxes they should; and for people who want to work to be properly supported with training and advice.

We’ve also called for investment in energy efficiency for poor households in Wales which would combat fuel poverty and help tackle climate change.
Oxfam’s projects in Wales

Access to Work and Enterprise
Building Livelihoods and Strengthening Communities
Sanctuary in Wales

Access to Work and Enterprise

Oxfam
This project is located in communities across Wales and offers people one-to-one support to take stock of their lives and get the help they need to make positive change for themselves.

In **GLYNCOCH** near Pontypridd we work with parents of children at two local schools. Our partner is Glyncoch Community Regeneration Ltd  
[www.glyncoch.org.uk](http://www.glyncoch.org.uk)

People who are homeless or in insecure housing are offered support by our project with The Wallich in **EBBW VALE** which also addresses drug and alcohol dependency issues.  
[www.thewallich.com](http://www.thewallich.com)

In **PEBLIG** near Caernarfon, our partners are Sylfaen Cymunedol Cyf  
[www.sylfaencymunedol.org](http://www.sylfaencymunedol.org)

In **CARDIFF** we work with South Riverside Community Development Centre to help black and minority ethnic (BME) women and men boost their employability and quality of life.  
[www.srcdc.org.uk](http://www.srcdc.org.uk)

In **SWANSEA** is the location for another project with BME people, including refugee and asylum seeking men, to improve their skills and employability. We work with the African Community Centre  
[www.africancommunitycentre.org.uk](http://www.africancommunitycentre.org.uk)

In **RHYL**, our project is aimed at older people in the town, many of whom live in bedsits and find work hard to come by. Our partner here is the Bedford St Community Company and Denbighshire Voluntary Services Council  
[www.dvsc.co.uk](http://www.dvsc.co.uk)

In **BANWEN** in the Upper Dulais Valley we work with Dove (View) Workshop to boost the opportunities and life chances of long term unemployed people.  
[www.doveworkshop.org.uk](http://www.doveworkshop.org.uk)

In **WREXHAM** we work with the Caia Park Partnership  
[www.caiapark.org.uk](http://www.caiapark.org.uk) to support housing estate residents with mental health problems and learning difficulties to improve their lives.
Families with children in school are supported by our partnership with Duffryn Community Link [www.duffryncomlink.org.uk](http://www.duffryncomlink.org.uk) in Newport.

In addition, there is a project to support young people including refugees and asylum seekers in Cardiff in partnership with the Prince’s Trust [www.princes-trust.org.uk](http://www.princes-trust.org.uk) and Oasis [www.oasiscardiff.org](http://www.oasiscardiff.org).

**Sanctuary in Wales**

Based in Cardiff, Swansea, Newport and Wrexham, the Sanctuary in Wales Project offers refugee and asylum-seeking women support to access training and voluntary work placements and encourages their integration into local communities.

**Our partners are:**
- Oasis Cardiff [www.oasiscardiff.org](http://www.oasiscardiff.org)
- African Community Centre [www.africancommunitycentre.org.uk](http://www.africancommunitycentre.org.uk)
- Displaced People in Action [www.dpia.org.uk/Sanctuary_in_Wales.html](http://www.dpia.org.uk/Sanctuary_in_Wales.html)
- The Sanctuary, Bethel Church [www.bethelnewport.co.uk/sanctuary](http://www.bethelnewport.co.uk/sanctuary)
- and Business in the Community [www.bitc.org.uk/wales](http://www.bitc.org.uk/wales)

**Access to Work and Enterprise**

Single parents with children over five years old are now expected to look for work. Our project helps parents in Cardiff to get ‘work ready’ and overcome barriers such as lack of child care, low basic skills and - most importantly - low self confidence.
Latoya, 28, fled from a desperate background of family violence and official corruption in her native Barbados. She has two young children, one of whom has learning difficulties. Her claim for asylum has been refused but she has been given leave to remain for the time being. When she arrived in Cardiff, she was isolated and fearful of the future. Then she started going to the Oasis drop-in centre, Oxfam’s local partner, where she led a singing class and learned how to teach English.

Now she has completed a work placement with Radio Cardiff where she produced her own music show and is working voluntarily to stage a young people’s music festival in the city.

She says: “My future is still uncertain but Oxfam’s project has given me confidence in myself and hope for a career in music.”

Oxfam’s project has given me confidence in myself and hope for a career.
Paul warns of a ‘tsunami’ of hardship

Paul, 36, works for Glyncoch Community Regeneration Limited, Oxfam’s partner in Rhondda Cynon Taf. For over 2 years, he ran the local job club, now he is Learning Lead Officer for Communities First in the Pontypridd area. He has a close-up view of what is happening to poorer Welsh communities in the wake of the recession and austerity.

Paul gave evidence to the Wales Select Committee inquiry into the Work Programme and was critical of the way the programme ignores people who most need help getting jobs in favour of those who can get work relatively easily.

“The hardship we are seeing now is just the drizzle before the tsunami,” he says, “With the squeeze on benefits, cuts in public services and the continuing lack of jobs, it’s more important than ever that Oxfam both works and campaigns in Wales.”

“It’s more important than ever that Oxfam both works and campaigns in Wales.”
Cassy Dawes, 24, has signed up to be one of Oxfam’s peer mentors for its Building Livelihoods and Strengthening Communities project on the Peblig estate near Caernarfon in North Wales.

She’ll be working closely with Oxfam’s partner organisation, Sylfaen Cymunedol Cyf to support young local people who are not in education, work or training.

Cassy knows from personal experience the sorts of challenges that can throw young people off course. Her parents went through a bitter divorce, she was bullied in school and left early. By age 20, she was a single mum to Lilly, now aged four.

Cassy’s future now looks brighter. She is doing an Open University degree in psychology and aims to be a social worker.

“I somehow got where I am without any help. I know how hard it can be. I want to help young people see what they are capable of and support them in getting more out of life,” she says.
Saima, 36, is a single mum of two sons, a proud ‘graduate’ of Oxfam’s Access to Work programme. When she left her husband in 2008, she was almost completely isolated, with no family nearby and little English. “I was typical of many young Pakistani mums here – trapped in the triangle between home, the corner shop and the school gates,” she recalls. When her youngest son turned five, Jobcentre Plus referred her to the Access to Work programme.

“Access to Work opened up new horizons for me. I completed NVQ Level 2 in retail studies and did courses in first aid and food hygiene. I volunteer at the Oxfam Boutique and the Oxfam Cymru office and made loads of friends.

I am so much more employable now. I am applying for jobs in retail with my new CV. My long-term goal is to go into business, designing and making clothes.”

“Access to Work has opened up new horizons for me.”
The trouble is that jobs these days are mostly temporary or zero hours contracts – where you’re not guaranteed enough pay to live on.

Lee, 36, is a single dad who has attended job clubs and training at Glyncoch Community Regeneration Limited (GCRL), Oxfam’s partner in Rhondda Cynon Taf. He became unemployed eight years ago. He’s keen to work and has had several jobs including his latest one as a mail sorter.

*The trouble is that jobs these days are mostly temporary or zero hours contracts – where you’re not guaranteed enough pay to live on. But I’m still hopeful. Without the support I’ve had from Glyncoch Communities First Partnership, I would never have got as far as I have.*

No-one can say Lee isn’t a ‘striver’ - he has taken all the support on offer and seized the opportunities that came his way. But people like Lee will still be struggling until there are real jobs with fair wages and conditions. That’s why Oxfam not only helps people in communities but also campaigns for social change.
To find out more about Oxfam’s work in Wales, visit www.oxfam.org.uk/cymru
follow us on Twitter or Facebook, or contact us:

By phone: **0300 200 1269**  By email: **oxfamcymru@oxfam.org.uk**

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