

## SESSION 2: DECENT WORK IN WALES

Age range: 11-18 years

Time: 1 hour

<p><b>Outline</b></p> <p>Learners will discuss their opinions of statements relating to decent work and the situation in Wales. They will then explore case studies of people trying to make change happen such as <i>Grazia</i> magazine's gender pay gap campaign, an enterprise project in south Wales and Oxfam Cymru's campaign for a Living Wage.</p>	
<p><b>Learning objectives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To learn about some of the actions that different groups are taking to ensure everyone has access to decent work.</li> <li>To consider further their own and other people's ideas about the world of work and how they can influence the world of work</li> <li>To discuss opinions and ideas effectively in groups.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Learning outcomes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learners will consider and develop their own opinions about decent work and the situation in Wales.</li> <li>Learners will develop an understanding of what some individuals, groups and organisations are doing to help people access decent work.</li> <li>Learners will discuss their ideas about which factors of decent work are most important to them and consider who has the power to affect these factors.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key questions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What needs to change to help everyone access decent work?</li> <li>Who has the power to affect what work is like?</li> <li>What are the most important factors of decent work to me?</li> <li>What do I want to see for the future?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>What makes work decent? slideshow (slides 8 to 14)</i></li> <li>Resource sheets:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Who influences whether work is decent?</i></li> <li><i>Making change happen case studies</i></li> <li><i>Factors of decent work – Versions A and B (see Session 1)</i></li> </ul> </li> <li><i>Strongly agree and Strongly disagree signs</i></li> <li><i>UK Government, Welsh Government, Employers and Me signs</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Curriculum links</b></p>	
<p><b>Wales</b></p> <p><b>Careers and World of Work Framework</b> <b>Key Stage 3 and 4</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider their own and other people's ideas about learning, careers and the world of work to inform opinions and decisions</li> <li>Communicate clearly in English or Welsh, as appropriate, about careers and the world of work</li> </ul> <p><b>Post 16</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore their own and other people's assumptions and aspirations and make best use of this in their decision-making</li> <li>Communicate confidently and coherently, in English or Welsh, as appropriate, about careers and the world of work in a wide range of contexts</li> </ul>	

**Activity 1 (15 mins)***Agreement line*

*Note: For more information on using an agreement line (also known as an opinion continuum) see page 16 of Oxfam's Global citizenship in the classroom: A guide for teachers: <http://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/global-citizenship/global-citizenship-guides>*

- Show slide 9 with the following statistic: 23% of people in Wales are in relative poverty. Discuss how learners feel about this statistic?

Discuss what '*relative poverty*' means.

Often we hear about absolute or extreme poverty. This means that people don't have the basics they need to survive, such as food, water and shelter. A person is said to be living in absolute or extreme poverty if they have less than US\$1.90 a day for all their needs.

While this is not the case in the UK (because it is a richer country), there are still people living in relative poverty. People are said to be living in relative poverty when they are poor in comparison to others in their country.

Make the point that, although people living in relative poverty may have the basics to survive through having essential items such as food, water and shelter, the quality of these items and/or their access to them is lower. For example, some people living in relative poverty in the UK may have enough food to survive but may not be able to afford three meals a day or to eat a healthy, nutritious and balanced diet. Hence the use of food banks has increased dramatically in recent years: Oxfam and Church Action on Poverty have calculated that 20,247,042 meals were given to people in food poverty in the UK in 2013/14 by the three main food aid providers. This is a 54 percent increase on 2012/13 (For further information see [policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/below-the-breadline-the-relentless-rise-of-food-poverty-in-britain-317730](http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/below-the-breadline-the-relentless-rise-of-food-poverty-in-britain-317730)).

Relative income poverty is calculated by comparing a household's income, adjusted for family size, with the median income. The median income is the 'middle' income, where half the population have more than the median and half have less. Households with less than 60% of the median income are described as living in relative poverty.

- Create an agreement line. Label one side of the room 'Strongly agree' and the other 'Strongly disagree'. Say that you are going to read out some statements and that learners need to stand along the agreement line to demonstrate how much they agree or disagree with each statement. Explain that everyone's view will fall somewhere along the line and that there are not necessarily any 'right' or 'wrong' answers.
- You may want to introduce a practice statement such as 'Rugby is brilliant' to warm learners up and familiarise them with using an agreement line.
- Agreement line statements (*Note: these statements are also provided in slides 10 to 13*):
  1. *Work is the best way for people to get out of poverty.*
  2. *It is difficult to find decent work in Wales.*
  3. *Everyone should have the right to decent work.*

4. *The minimum wage set by the UK Government is enough to live on.* (See Teachers Guide for information about the minimum wage).
- These are complex issues. Here are a few points to support the discussion of the first three statements:
    - *Paid work can support people to ‘work their way out of poverty’ through providing an income. However 50% of households living in relative poverty have at least one person in employment.*
    - *When in work, parents may struggle to find and afford appropriate childcare for their children.*
    - *The availability of work can be unpredictable if someone is self employed, on a zero-hours contract or relying on agency work.*
    - *Unpaid work such as work experience and volunteering is often a useful way for people to gain experience which can help them develop their confidence and skills in a certain area.*
    - *Some people may be unable to work as a result of a long term illness or a disability which prevents them from accessing certain workplaces.*
  - For discussion of statement 4, see notes in the *Teachers Guide* regarding the Living Wage.
  - Show slide 14 with a set of statistics about the work situation in Wales. Discuss learners’ responses to these statistics. Possible questions include:
    - *Do any of these statistics surprise you? Which statistics and why?*
    - *How do these statistics make you feel?*

**Activity 2 (20 mins)**

*What are others doing to create decent work in Wales?*

- Explain that many individuals, groups, charities and employers are working to ensure that everyone in Wales has access to decent work.
- Organise learners into groups of four or five. Give each group one of the *Making change happen* case studies. Ask learners to read their case study and then discuss the following questions as a group:
  - *What is the problem?*
  - *What are they trying to change?*
  - *Who or what are they trying to influence?*
  - *Who has most influence over this factor?*
  - *Does this case study address any of the factors for decent work that you prioritised in Session 1? Do you think the factors they address are important?*
- *Note that the above questions are provided on slide 15.*
- One person from each group should then join a person from a different group and share their group’s ideas.

**Activity 3 (25 mins)**

*What do you want for the future?*

- Ask learners to reflect on the *Factors of decent work* from Session 1. Discuss the following questions:
  - *Was there anything missing?*
  - *Has anyone changed their mind about what the most important issues are? What do you think now and why do you think this?*
- Write *UK Government*, *Welsh Government*, *Employers* and *Me* on separate cards and arrange them in the four corners of the room. Read out the headings of the *Factors of decent work- version A* and ask learners to stand next to the card with the name of the group or person who they think can influence this factor the most. If learners are split between options, they can stand mid-way between corners (or in the middle of all four). Invite learners in different places to give reasons for their choices.
- Ask learners, in pairs, to draw a stick person in the middle of a sheet of paper and divide the area around the person into three areas. Learners should then write their top three *Factors of decent work* around the person, one per section.
- Ask learners to think about and discuss the following questions in pairs:
  - *What do these factors mean to me?*
  - *Who influences these factors? How do they influence these factors?*
  - *How can you influence these factors?* Learners could refer to *Who influences whether work is decent?* to support their discussions.
- Introduce the *Creating a fair Wales* competition. Ask learners to think about what key message they would like to share with decision makers about decent work and what work should be like.
- Learners should consider this individually and then share their thoughts in pairs or small groups.

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## **Who influences whether work is decent?**

The UK Government, Welsh Government and employers all have influence over people's working conditions.

### **UK Government**

The UK Government has the power to set minimum wages, sick pay rates, amount of annual leave and the right to request flexible working.

Examples of the minimum that any employee is entitled to are:

- National Minimum Wage: £6.70 per hour
- Statutory sick pay: £88.45 per week
- Holiday entitlement: 28 days a year paid annual leave
- Flexible working: every employee has the right to request flexible working after 26 weeks of employment.

### **Welsh Government**

The Welsh Government can use some of the powers they have to encourage employers to do more than the minimum. The Welsh Government has greater control over the Welsh public sector, which includes the National Health Service (NHS). The Welsh Government and National Assembly for Wales are also large employers in their own right. The Welsh Government has already taken steps to do more than the minimum:

- All NHS Wales staff are paid at least the Living Wage
- The Welsh Government is an accredited Living Wage employer
- The National Assembly for Wales has received a number of awards for their workplace policies and practice and in 2015 was a finalist in the Working Families awards for flexible working.

The Welsh Government can also use their buying power [procurement] to encourage private sector companies to do more than the minimum. When the Welsh Government, or any public body, wants to spend money on services or projects - for example when they need to employ a company to build a new road or employ a company to deliver care services – they have to put the contract out to tender so that multiple companies can bid for the contract. The Welsh Government already asks some companies to demonstrate how they will deliver on social and environmental goals as well as value for money. The Scottish Government are considering how a

business treats its employees as part of their procurement policy which will require companies to show that they have a positive attitude to their workforce.

## **Employers**

Employers themselves can also choose to do things differently. For example, some are already accredited Living Wage employers through the Living Wage Foundation, meaning that all of their employees are paid at least £8.25 per hour.

Employers are also more directly in control of employee well-being and how the workplace runs day-to-day. Different employers will take different approaches to how much freedom employees have to set their workload, how many days of annual leave their employees are entitled to, how much opportunity employees have to do professional development training and how flexibly their employees can work.

## **The UK public**

Yes, that includes you. Members of the UK public are able to contact their Members of Parliament (MPs) to talk about issues which matter to them. You can write to your MP and arrange to meet with them to discuss the issues which matter to you. In Wales you can contact your Assembly Member (AM) to raise issues which are important to people in Wales. As employees and potential employees you can speak to your employer about the working conditions. If you are attending an interview, prepare to ask questions about what conditions the employer offers. In your workplace you can speak to your employers about the conditions. You can take small and large actions to help contribute to a positive working atmosphere.

**Making change happen****Case study 1****Oxfam: *Even it up* and make Wales a Living Wage nation**

Oxfam is an international development charity which works in over 90 countries worldwide including Wales. Oxfam is concerned that the gap between the richest and the poorest people in the world is increasing.

In October 2015, the Oxfam *Even it up* bus visited the centre of Cardiff to raise awareness of the poverty and inequality that exist around the

world. The bus used the statistic that the richest 80 people in the world have the same wealth as the poorest half of the world's population- so few people they would fit on a double decker bus. In January 2016 Oxfam released a report to update this statistic. The richest 62 people in the world have the same wealth as the poorest half of the world's population and the richest one per cent own as much as the rest of the world's population.



The *Even it up* bus visits Cardiff Photo: Glenn Smith

Currently 23% of households in Wales live in relative poverty and Oxfam Cymru are calling on the Welsh Government to make Wales a Living Wage nation. The Living Wage is an hourly wage which is worked out based on the cost of living. It is worked out annually by the Living Wage Foundation. The current UK Living Wage is £8.25 per hour.

Through the day, Oxfam asked members of the public to guess what percentage of people working in Wales earn less than the Living Wage. Many people were surprised to find that the answer is 25%. People were also asked the question 'Should everyone in Wales earn the Living Wage?' to which 99% answered yes.

**Find out more about the Living Wage:**

- The Living Wage Foundation: <http://www.livingwage.org.uk/>
- NHS Wales becomes a Living Wage employer, 2014: <http://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/lowest-paid-nhs-staff-wales-receive-7395693>
- Arguments against Living Wage: <http://www.iea.org.uk/blog/living-wage-likely-to-destroy-jobs-and-increase-poverty>

**UK Government: *Access to Work***

People with a disability, health or mental health condition can face barriers in accessing work. The UK Government has an *Access to Work* programme to support workers in the UK to overcome these challenges. *Access to Work* is a grant which can pay for practical support for people with a disability, health or mental health condition, helping people to start working, stay in work, move into self employment or start a business.



Photo: Max Barners, Creative Commons  
<http://bit.ly/1QI3BEi>

Examples of what the *Access to Work* grant can provide include:

- A communicator or sign language interpreter if you are hearing impaired or have communication difficulties
- A support worker, such as a reader for somebody with a visual impairment
- Specialist equipment
- Alterations to working environments to make it more accessible

**Find out more about *Access to Work*:**

- UK Government website: <https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work>
- Disability Rights UK: <http://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/access-work>



**Making change happen****Case study 3****Admiral: happy workers are better workers**

In 2015 Investors in People published a report which found that six in 10 UK workers are not happy in their jobs.

Admiral is a financial services company which specialises in providing car insurance. On their website, Admiral says that *'happy people make happy customers and happy customers make for a successful, thriving company'*.

Admiral offers a range of benefits to their employees to ensure that they are happy:



Photo: David Goehring, Creative Commons  
<http://bit.ly/1JWeZVS>

- All employees are given shares in the company, meaning they own a chunk of the company. This means that employees get a bonus when the company does well.
- Free fruit every day
- Use of free corporate gym membership
- Flexible working
- Season ticket loans
- Child care vouchers
- Dental care
- Staff discount
- In work training to help you develop
- Regular fun events
- Casual dress code

**Find out more about what Admiral offers its staff:**

- <https://admiraljobs.co.uk/what-we-offer/>

**Making change happen****Case study 4****Mind the Pay Gap campaign**

In 2014, new figures were released that showed that the gender pay gap between men and women in their twenties had doubled in the previous three years. As a result *Grazia*, a weekly women's magazine, launched a campaign asking companies with 250 or more employees to publish the details of hourly pay of men and women as a first step to closing the pay gap. *Grazia* believed that greater transparency would help close the pay gap as people would be able to find out what others doing the same or similar roles are paid.

*Grazia* asked readers to sign their online petition, calling on the UK Government to take action and asked people to share their stories using the hashtag #whatimworth.

In March 2015, the Mind the Pay Gap campaign celebrated a change in the law to increase pay transparency so that women and men are able to challenge unfair pay.

**Find out more about the gender pay gap:**

- Mind the Pay Gap campaign: <http://www.graziadaily.co.uk/fashion/shopping/are-you-fed-up-of-the-gender-pay-gap-it-s-time-to-do-something-about-it-20141124213>
- Equal Pay Day 2015- explained by gender equality charity Chwarae Teg (Fair Play): <https://www.cteg.org.uk/equal-pay-day-2015/>

**Making change happen****Case study 5****Carers Rights Day: a Carers Assembly to raise the voices of carers in Wales**

Over 370 000 people in Wales are carers and three in five people will be carers at some point in their lives. The Carers Trust defines a carer as:

*'anyone who cares, unpaid, for a friend or family member who due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction cannot cope without their support. Anyone can become a carer; carers come from all walks of life, all cultures and can be of any age.'*

Carers Wales works to support carers through provision of advice, information and support. On *Carers Rights Day*, Carers Wales held a Carers Assembly at the National Assembly for Wales. Carers travelled from across Wales to debate about what matters to them. This helped carers to make their voices heard so that Assembly Members, who contribute to making policies that affect carers, understand the social care issues which matter to carers and what changes carers want to see.

The care provided by Wales' unpaid carers is worth an estimated £8.1 billion a year and Carers Wales suggests that without carers' support, the health and social care system would collapse.

Carers UK have created *Upfront*, a new online guide to caring, providing financial and practical information to help carers access the support they need.

**Find out more about care work:**

- Upfront guide to caring: <https://www.carersuk.org/upfront/>
- Carers Wales- Carers Assembly for Carers Rights Day  
<http://www.carersuk.org/wales/news/carers-rights-day-carers-assembly-2015>



Photo: Gareth Williams,  
Creative Commons

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/gareth1953/6235576710/>

**Making change happen****Case study 6****Floristry and Enterprise**

Jacqui, a staff member at a community organisation in Pontypridd noticed that some community members lacked confidence and budgeting skills. Using her passion for floristry, Jacqui set up an enterprise and floristry course.



Enterprise workshop  
Photo: Glenn Smith

During the course participants, as well as learning flower arranging and enterprise skills, developed confidence and basic life skills such as budgeting, working as a team and organisation.

20 people from the local community participated in the course and through it obtained a qualification to demonstrate the enterprise skills that they had developed. The participants reported that their confidence had increased from going on the course and many went on to find employment. One participant decided to use her new found flower arranging skills and business knowledge to create and sell flower arrangements via Facebook and at Christmas craft fairs. Others found new volunteering opportunities and were trained as mentors so that they could share their skills and help other people within their community.

Participants commented:

*“Not only have I enjoyed all the things we have covered but I have made new friends that have got me out of a rut. I only wish this could go on for another year. I didn’t realise learning could be such a tonic.”*

*“I have always been interested in flowers but didn’t think I would be able to do it. Coming to the course has boosted my confidence and my belief that I can do it. I know where to go for help with my CV.”*