

## Reaching Families in Wales: Mapping Families with Disabled Children Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation Child Index Research

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# Reaching Families in Wales: Mapping Families with Disabled Children

## Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation Child Index Research

### Summary

This preliminary research aimed to investigate the relationship between families with disabled children in Wales and child poverty by comparing data on families helped by the Family Fund by postcode with the areas of relative deprivation in the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation Child Index (WIMD) 2011.

Existing studies, which highlight the strong links between families with disabled children and poverty, would indicate that there would be a relatively direct correlation between the two sets of data.

The research found a more complex picture than expected with the highest density of families with disabled children receiving grants from Family Fund living in the most deprived WIMD areas but with large numbers living across Wales in the least deprived WIMD areas.

These initial findings pose a number of key questions for Welsh Government policy, indicating the need for more detailed research into families with disabled children and child poverty. Any future research should focus on how best to reach families with disabled children facing financial challenges and the complex relationship between the experience of childhood disability and the seven WIMD domains; income, health, education, community safety, housing, physical environment and geographical access to services.

Contact a Family Wales supports families of disabled children whatever their condition or disability; we provide support, advice and information, parent workshops and family events.

Family Fund is the UK's largest provider of grants to low-income families raising disabled and seriously ill children and young people.

Our organisations have a long history of collaborative working in Wales providing direct support and services to families as well as campaigning to improve the lives of disabled children and young people in Wales.

## Background and introduction

There has been considerable research undertaken into the financial challenges facing families with disabled children in the UK, investigating the link between child poverty and disabled children. <sup>(1)</sup> Contact a Family's Counting the Costs 2010 report <sup>(2)</sup> highlighted the severe impact having a disabled child can have on family income and expenditure, 25% of children in need in Wales have a disability<sup>(3)</sup> and most recently the Children's Society (2011) found that four in every ten disabled children in the UK were living in poverty <sup>(4)</sup>.

These and other findings have been recognised by government policy across the UK. In Wales the issues facing families with disabled children have been specifically included in the Welsh Government's child poverty strategy <sup>(5)</sup>, Families First programme <sup>(6)</sup> as well as the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 <sup>(7)</sup>.

There is however little specific data available from Wales which focuses on the relationship between families with disabled children and child poverty. Emerson has described how quantitative sociology can be used to 'better understand the impact that exposure to environmental adversity may have on the well-being and life experiences of disabled people (including children)' <sup>(8)</sup>. The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation Child Index (WIMD) published in 2011 provided the official measure of relative deprivation relating to children in Wales, 'the Index was developed as a tool to identify and understand child deprivation in Wales, so that funding, policy, and programmes can be effectively focussed on disadvantaged children' <sup>(9)</sup>. The WIMD Index therefore offers a valuable opportunity to investigate the relationship between families with disabled children in Wales and relative deprivation.

This report presents the findings of some preliminary research undertaken by Contact a Family Wales and the Family Fund.

## Methodology

We know that families of disabled children are socially disadvantaged two fold by also being families affected by poverty. The Institute for Public Policy Research (2007) found that there is 'two-way relationship between poverty and disability among Britain's children'; child poverty causes disability and disability causes child poverty, with 29% of households with one or more disabled children living in poverty, compared to 21% of households with no disabled children <sup>(10)</sup>. Counting the Costs 2010 found that in Wales, 24% of families reported going without heating, 56% had fallen behind with payments and 50% had borrowed money from family and friends <sup>(11)</sup>.

To investigate this relationship more closely Contact a Family Wales and the Family Fund wanted to compare data on families with disabled children in Wales and the WIMD Child Index 2011. It was proposed to map families helped by the Family Fund in Wales against the WIMD Index areas by postcode, with 'families helped' meaning those families who have received a grant from the Family Fund. Previous research would indicate that there ought to be a fairly direct correlation between the two sets of data and we proceeded with the hypothesis that there would be a link between families helped by the Family Fund with disabled children and the areas of relative deprivation but with the understanding that the relationship would be far from straight forward. This research aimed to help us see where these families live to better understand the links between child disability, poverty and areas of multiple deprivation.

The Family Fund provides grants to families who are raising a child or young person who has a disability, additional complex needs or a serious illness. In order to meet the Fund's financial criteria families must be in receipt of a qualifying benefit such as child tax credits, working tax credits or income support. The Family Fund currently helps over 4,500 families in Wales each year distributing £2.6 million in grants for essential items such as washing machines, fridges and clothing but also sensory toys, computers and much needed family breaks. More than 91p in every £1 of funding goes to help families. The data used for this research relates to 'families helped' in the financial years 2009-10 and 2010-11.

The WIMD Index 2011 identifies concentrations of relative deprivation across Wales based on postcode and grouped into lower-layer super output areas (LSOAs) each containing a minimum population of 1000. The LSOAs are ranked from most deprived to least deprived and grouped into five larger categories. It is important to note that 'ranks are a relative system of measurement; we can know which areas are more (or less) deprived than others, but not by how much'<sup>(12)</sup>. The Child Index is constructed from seven different types of deprivation, or domains, these are: income, health, education, community safety, housing, physical environment and geographical access to services.

Poverty is usually considered to be a lack of money, whereas deprivation includes a lack of the opportunities and resources to which we might expect to have access in our society, for example, good health, protection from crime, a clean and safe environment etc. 'Multiple' deprivation therefore refers to the different types of deprivation that might occur. It is important to remember that a lack of deprivation is not the same as affluence. The least-deprived area is not necessarily the most affluent area in Wales. <sup>(13)</sup>.

With the help of the Welsh Government cartography department it was possible to map, by postcode, the data for 'families helped' by the Family Fund in 2009-10 and 2010-11 against the WIMD Child Index areas. In this way we were able to compare how many families with disabled children receiving grants from the Family Fund lived in each WIMD Index categories one to five, with one being the most and five the least deprived.

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Contact a Family's Counting the Costs 2010 study found that in Wales,

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and **50%** had borrowed money from family and friends <sup>(11)</sup>.

## Findings

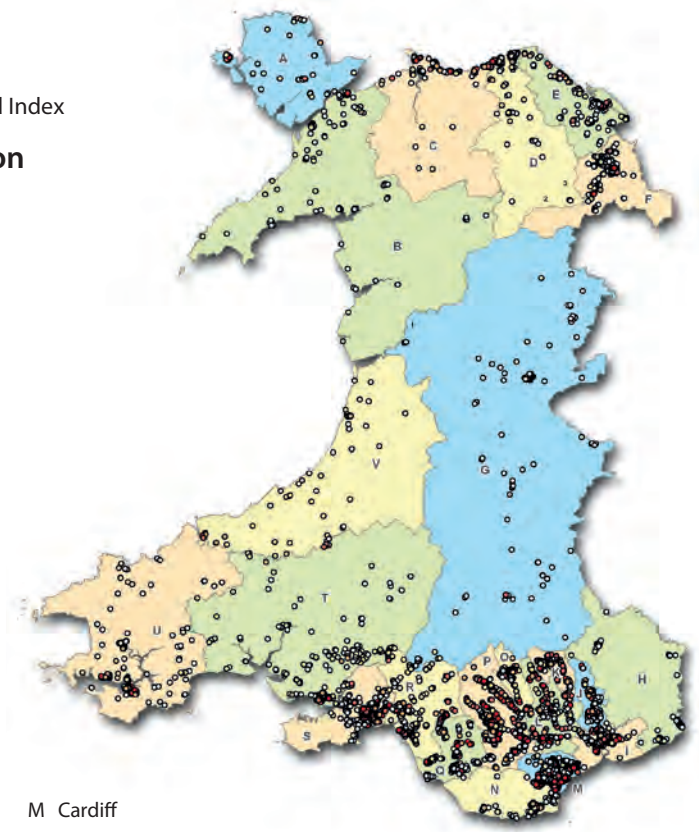
Figure 1.

Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2011: Child Index

### Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation

Count of all disabled children families helped in financial year **2009/2010**

| By Lower Level Super Output Areas |                 |                |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Rank                              | Most Deprived   | Total Number   |
| 1 to 190                          | ● (Dark Red)    | 835            |
| 191 to 380                        | ● (Red)         | 585            |
| 381 to 570                        | ● (Orange)      | 565            |
| 571 to 950                        | ● (Yellow)      | 822            |
| 951 to 1896                       | ● (Light Green) | 1114           |
|                                   | ○ (White)       | Least Deprived |



- A Isle of Anglesey
- B Gwynedd
- C Conwy
- D Denbighshire
- E Flintshire
- F Wrexham
- G Powys
- H Monmouthshire
- I Newport
- J Torfaen
- K Blaenua Gwent
- L Caerphilly
- M Cardiff
- N Vale of Glamorgan
- O Merthyr Tydfil
- P Rhondda Cynon Taf
- Q Bridgend
- R Neath Port Talbot
- S Swansea
- T Carmarthenshire
- U Pembrokeshire
- V Ceredigion

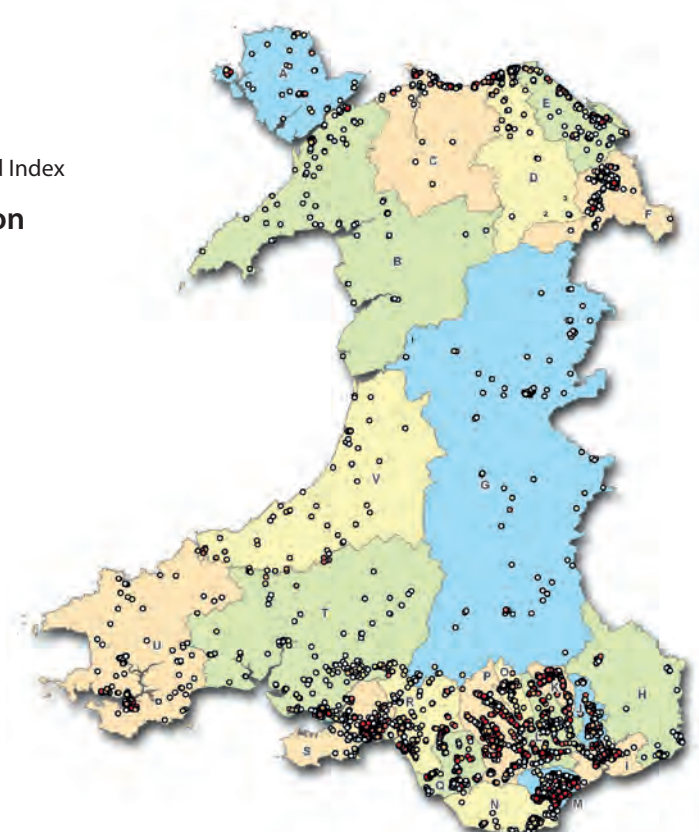
Figure 2.

Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2011: Child Index

### Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation

Count of all disabled children families helped in financial year **2010/2011**

| By Lower Level Super Output Areas |                 |                |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Rank                              | Most Deprived   | Total Number   |
| 1 to 190                          | ● (Dark Red)    | 835            |
| 191 to 380                        | ● (Red)         | 585            |
| 381 to 570                        | ● (Orange)      | 565            |
| 571 to 950                        | ● (Yellow)      | 822            |
| 951 to 1896                       | ● (Light Green) | 1114           |
|                                   | ○ (White)       | Least Deprived |



Findings continued.

Figure 3.

Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2011: Child Index

Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation

Count of all disabled children families helped in financial year **2009/2010**

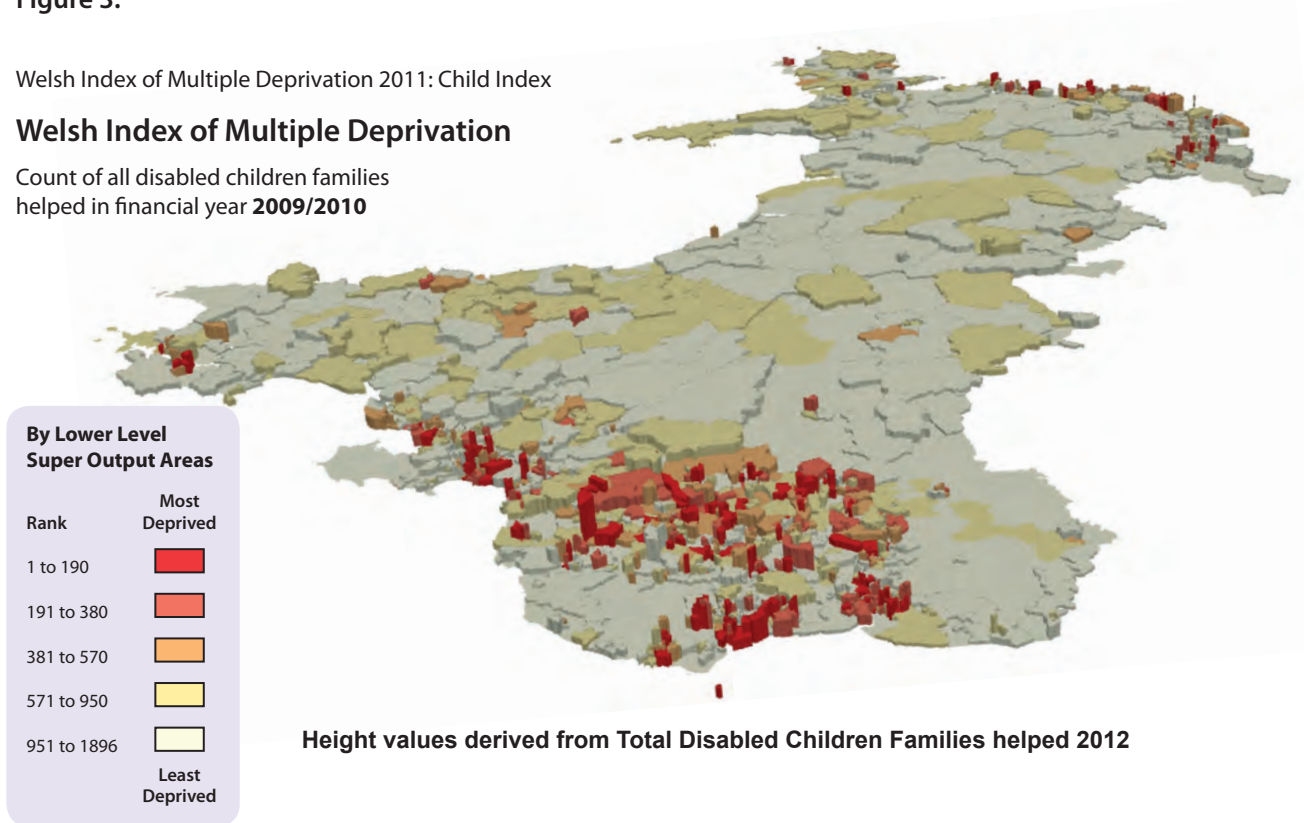
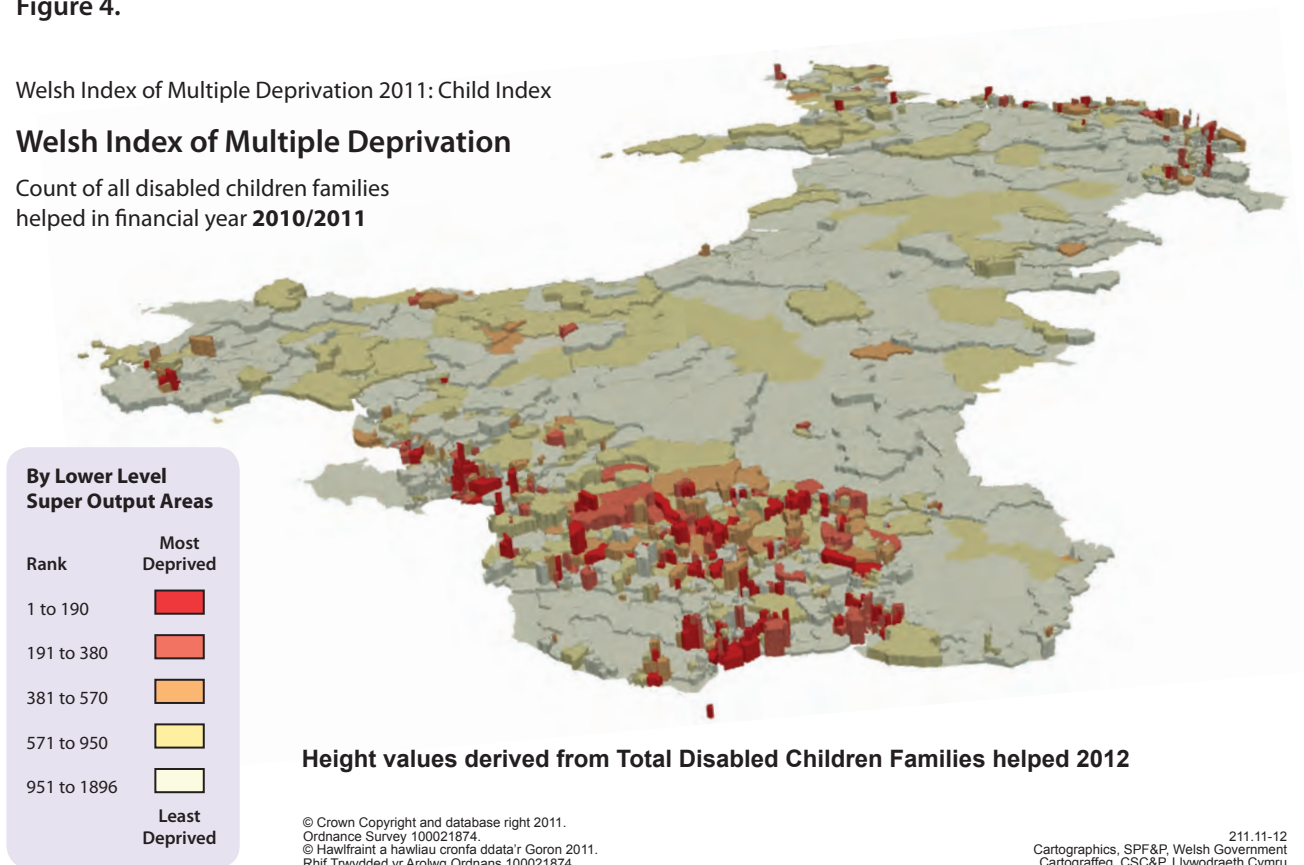


Figure 4.

Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2011: Child Index

Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation

Count of all disabled children families helped in financial year **2010/2011**



Findings continued.

Figure 5.

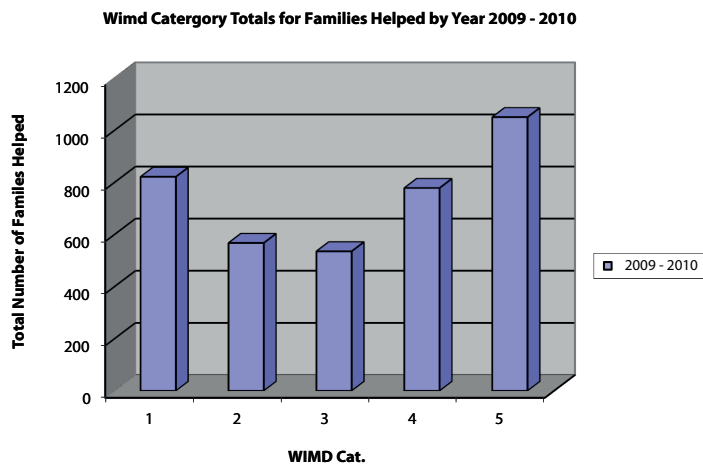
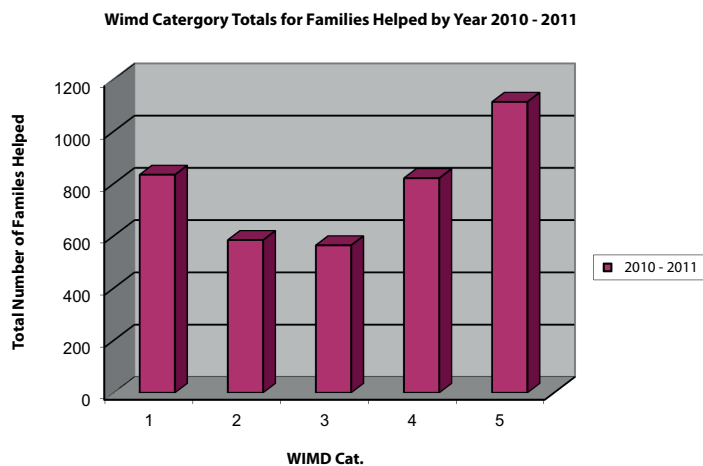


Figure 6.

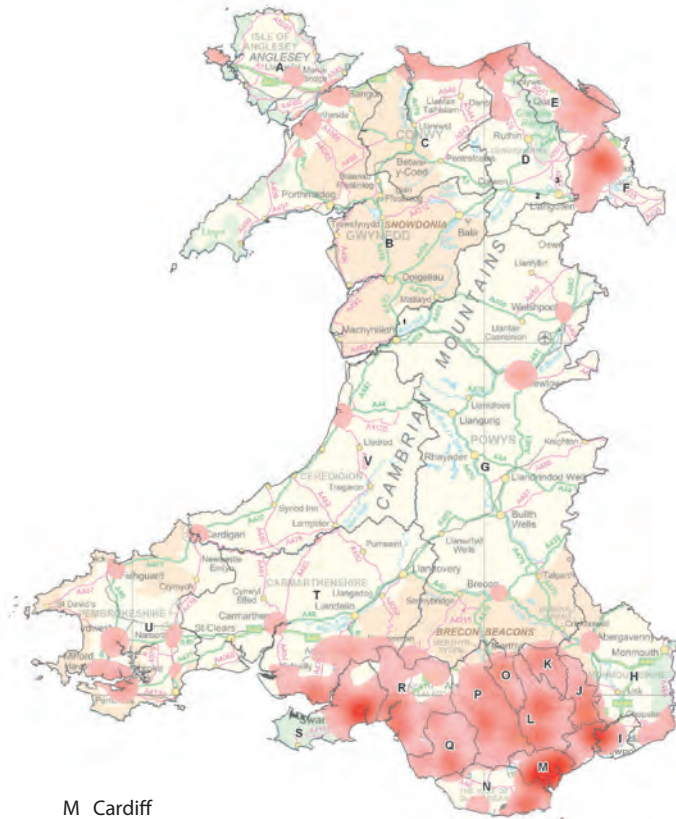


| Child Index |              | Year        |             |
|-------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| Rank        | WIMD         | 2009 - 2010 | 2010 - 2011 |
| 1 to 190    | 1            | 822         | 835         |
| 191 to 380  | 2            | 568         | 585         |
| 381 to 570  | 3            | 536         | 565         |
| 571 to 950  | 4            | 779         | 822         |
| 951 to 1896 | 5            | 1051        | 1114        |
|             | Outside      | 2           | 6           |
|             | <b>Total</b> | <b>3758</b> | <b>3927</b> |

Figure 7.

### Density Analysis

Count of all disabled children families helped in financial year **2009/2010**

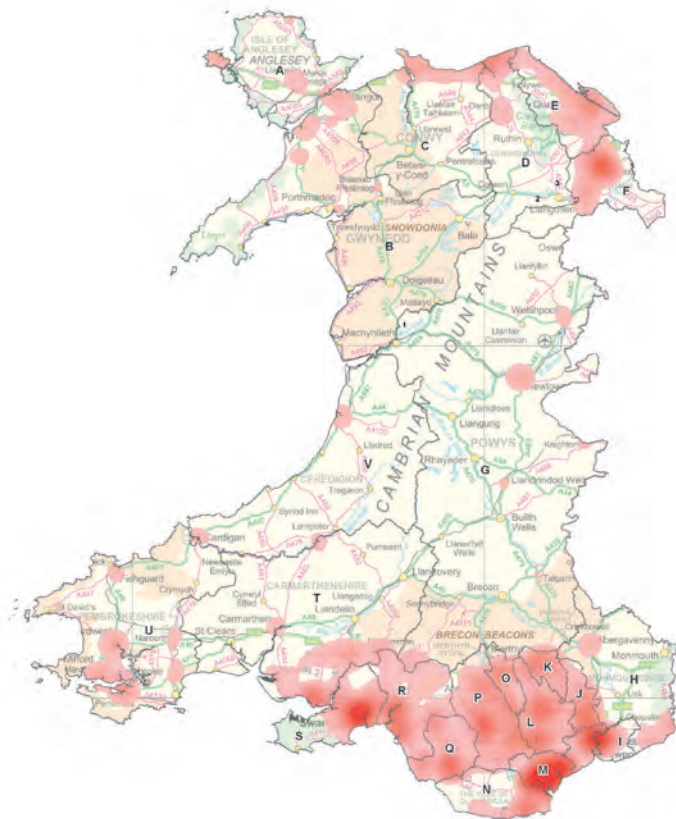
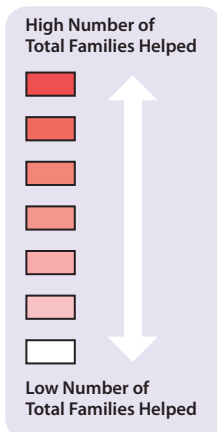


- |                    |                 |                     |
|--------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| A Isle of Anglesey | G Powys         | M Cardiff           |
| B Gwynedd          | H Monmouthshire | N Vale of Glamorgan |
| C Conwy            | I Newport       | O Merthyr Tydfil    |
| D Denbighshire     | J Torfaen       | P Rhondda Cynon Taf |
| E Flintshire       | K Blaenau Gwent | Q Bridgend          |
| F Wrexham          | L Caerphilly    | R Neath Port Talbot |
|                    |                 | S Swansea           |
|                    |                 | T Carmarthenshire   |
|                    |                 | U Pembrokeshire     |
|                    |                 | V Ceredigion        |

Figure 8.

### Density Analysis

Count of all disabled children families helped in financial year **2010/2011**



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## Findings continued.

Analysis of the data reveals that, as anticipated, there is a complex correlation between families with disabled children helped by the Family Fund and the WIMD Index areas of multiple deprivation.

- Family Fund are providing grants to families with disabled children facing financial challenges across the whole of Wales. 'Families helped' are spread throughout all 22 counties and all WIMD categories of multiple deprivation (Figures 1 and 2).
- The correlation between numbers of families with disabled children and WIMD Child Index areas shows a marked higher concentration of Family Fund 'families helped' in the most deprived WIMD categories 1 and 2 (Figures 3 and 4).
- There is however a complex picture of 'families helped' when looking at all WIMD categories across Wales. Despite there being a higher concentration of 'families helped' in the most deprived categories 1-2, there are numerically more 'families helped' living in the least deprived WIMD category 5 (Figures 7 and 8). The correlation between the two sets of data is therefore not as direct as some previous research would suggest.
- There are clear areas in Wales where the highest density of 'families helped' in the most deprived categories 1-2 stand out distinctly. In urban areas such as Swansea North and East in comparison to Swansea West and in rural areas such as Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion with a concentration around Llanybydder, as well as along the North Wales coast (Figures 5 and 6).

This complicated picture is reflected in the WIMD Child Index itself which notes that 'it is important to remember that a lack of deprivation is not the same as affluence. The least-deprived area is not necessarily the most affluent area in Wales' and "the Child Index identifies concentrations of deprivation and not all deprived children are found in the most deprived areas'<sup>(14)</sup>.

Similarly for families with disabled children helped by the Family Fund, although the highest concentrations live in the most deprived WIMD categories in Wales, the large numbers spread widely across the least deprived areas also face financial hardship, poverty and social exclusion.

It is important to note that whilst this research involved just under 4000 families with disabled children this is still a relatively small sample of the total number of families across Wales.

## Conclusion and recommendations

This dispersed geographical profile of families with disabled children facing financial challenges presents a number of dilemmas in regards to tackling poverty and social exclusion in both urban and rural areas across Wales.

It is difficult to reach wider conclusions about the relationship between all families with disabled children and the areas of multiple deprivation in Wales from this preliminary piece of research. Although there is considerable potential for more in depth research and statistical analysis of this issue. In particular on the inter-relationship between the experiences families with disabled children and the seven WIMD domains of deprivation; income, health, education, community safety, housing, physical environment and geographical access to services.

- Family Fund are providing vital financial support to families with disabled children living in the most deprived areas of Wales. The Fund is also reaching those facing considerable financial difficulties living in rural areas.
- Findings indicate that the highest concentrations of families with disabled children are to be found in the most deprived WIMD areas of Wales.
- Families with disabled children living on low incomes are dispersed widely across the whole of Wales presenting considerable challenges to government policy and service provision.
- The Welsh Government's Tackling Poverty agenda must address the specific issues of families with disabled children living in urban and rural areas.
- It is vital for the Families First and Flying Start programmes to continue to focus on addressing the complex needs of families with disabled children across Wales.
- The Welsh Government should commission further research into families with disabled children and the WIMD areas of multiple deprivation, with specific reference to the relationship between the experience of childhood disability and the seven deprivation domains; income, health, education, community safety, housing, physical environment and geographical access to services.

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