



Canolfan
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Wales Governance
Centre

**DEPRIVATION AND IMPRISONMENT IN WALES BY LOCAL AUTHORITY
AREA**

**SUPPLEMENTARY EVIDENCE TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY'S
EQUALITY, LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE'S
INQUIRY INTO VOTING RIGHTS FOR PRISONERS**

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WALES GOVERNANCE CENTRE AT CARDIFF UNIVERSITY

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ABOUT US

The Wales Governance Centre is a research centre that forms part of Cardiff University's School of Law and Politics undertaking innovative research into all aspects of the law, politics, government and political economy of Wales, as well the wider UK and European contexts of territorial governance. A key objective of the Centre is to facilitate and encourage informed public debate of key developments in Welsh governance not only through its research, but also through events and postgraduate teaching.

In July 2018, the Wales Governance Centre launched a new project into *Justice and Jurisdiction* in Wales. The research will be an interdisciplinary project bringing together political scientists, constitutional law experts and criminologists in order to investigate: the operation of the justice system in Wales; the relationship between non-devolved and devolved policies; and the impact of a single 'England and Wales' legal system.

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INTRODUCTION

In oral evidence given to the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee in January we referred to ongoing research being carried out by the Wales Governance Centre into imprisonment and deprivation in Wales. Our research continues and is currently at a preliminary stage. This evidence submission has been compiled to provide the Committee with some of our initial findings as part of its inquiry into voting rights for prisoners in Wales.

This evidence will begin by providing an overview of the findings from existing research into social exclusion and imprisonment. Although the relationship between imprisonment and deprivation in Wales has yet to be subject to any kind of serious analysis or research, the section that follows will present an initial analysis of the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation alongside Welsh imprisonment data broken down by local authority.

DEPRIVATION, EXCLUSION AND IMPRISONMENT: A SNAPSHOT OF THE EXISTING EVIDENCE

There exists a wide body of research into the links shared between poverty and imprisonment. These studies, according to Newburn (2016: 329), have helped to establish that a “clear positive relationship” exists between income inequality and levels of imprisonment (e.g. Caddle and Crisp, 1997; Reiman and Leighton, 2010; Wacquant, 2009; Williams et al, 2013).¹ The Social Exclusion Unit’s (2002) *Reducing Reoffending by Ex-Prisoners* remains one of the most important pieces of research in this area, some 17 years since its publication. The Unit’s report identified a strong link between deprivation and imprisonment, it stated “before they ever come into contact with the prison system, most prisoners have a history of social exclusion, including high levels of family, educational and health disadvantage, and poor prospects in the labour market” (Social Exclusion Unit, 2002: 18). Compared with the general population, the Social Exclusion Unit reported that prisoners are:

¹ Many of these studies identify that poverty and exclusion are by no means the only factors that need to be considered.

- Thirteen times as likely to have been in care as a child.
- Thirteen times as likely to be unemployed.
- Ten times as likely to have been a regular truant.
- Two and a half times as likely to have had a family member convicted of a criminal offence.
- Six times as likely to have been a young father.
- Fifteen times as likely to be HIV positive.
- Over twenty times more likely than the general population to have been excluded from school.

The report also found

- 80 per cent of prisoners have the writing skills, 65 per cent the numeracy skills and 50 per cent the reading skills at or below the level of an 11-year-old child.
- 60 to 70 per cent of prisoners were using drugs before imprisonment.
- Over 70 per cent of prisoners suffer from at least two mental disorders.
- 20 per cent of male and 37 per cent of female sentenced prisoners have attempted suicide in the past.
- Around half of prisoners had no GP before they came into custody.

(Social Exclusion Unit, 2002: 6-7)

Imprisonment also contributes to deprivation and social exclusion. Studies have shown that former prisoners can struggle to gain employment (Looney and Turner, 2018; Pager, 2007), housing (Maguire and Nolan, 2007) and educational places (Niven and Stewart, 2005) upon their release and return to the community. Western and Petit (2010)² found that a custodial sentence can lead to a 40 per cent reduction in earnings and reduced job tenure. As well as impacting the communities that prisoners originate from and return to, custodial sentences can also impose a number of financial constraints on prisoners' families. Codd (2007: 256) identified that the costs facing visitors often add to the "extensive" financial difficulties that

² Cited in Newburn (2016)

families already face. This includes the financial strains placed upon families by the potential loss of income as well the costs incurred by supporting a prisoner throughout the course of their sentence (Condry, 2007; Fishman, 1988).

WELSH MULTIPLE INDEX OF DEPRIVATION AND IMPRISONMENT RATES

The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation³ is used by the Welsh Government to measure levels of relative deprivation across Wales. Although it is designed to identify small areas with a high concentration of deprivation, the WIMD 2014 does not provide an overall ranking of deprivation by local authority. Instead, deprivation levels are calculated by the overall number of deprived Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) located in each local authority area. This is broken down into four separate categories: the percentage of LSOAs in the most deprived 10% (ranks 1-191), 20% (ranks 1-382), 30% (ranks 1-573) and 50% (ranks 1-955).

The overall WIMD 2014 is made up of eight separate types of deprivation which are weighted. The areas included are income; employment; health; education; access to services; community safety; housing; and physical environment.

Imprisonment data by local authority have been obtained from the Ministry of Justice and are used here to calculate the imprisonment rates per 100,000 population for the five highest and lowest ranked local authorities in each of the four separate categories included in the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (10%; 20%; 30% and 50%).⁴

³ Deprivation is defined within the WIMD (2014: 1) as “the lack of access to opportunities and resources which we might expect in our society”.

⁴ See ‘Notes’ on page 11 for further details about the data used here and some possible limitations.

Figure 1.1 – % of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in most deprived 10%

Highest

Local Authority	Rank ⁵ (1-22)	Population	Prisoner Population	Rate per 100,000
Blaenau Gwent	1	69,609	61	88
Merthyr Tydfil	2	59,953	309	515
Cardiff	3	362,756	1,392	384
Rhondda Cynon Taf	4	239,127	215	90
Newport	5	151,485	436	288
Total		882,930	2,413	273

Lowest

Local Authority	Rank (1-22)	Population	Prisoner Population	Rate per 100,000
Monmouthshire	22	93,590	21	22
Powys	21	132,515	64	48
Ceredigion	20	73,076	19	26
Flintshire	19	155,155	349	225
Anglesey	18	69,794	63	90
Total		524,130	516	98

The combined imprisonment rate for the five local authorities with the highest percentage of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in the most deprived 10% was **2.8 times greater** than the rate recorded for the five local authorities with the lowest percentage of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in the most deprived 10%.

Figure 1.2 – % of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in most deprived 20%

Highest

Local Authority	Rank (1-22)	Population	Prisoner Population	Rate per 100,000
Blaenau Gwent	1	69,609	61	88
Merthyr Tydfil	2	59,953	309	515
Newport	3	151,485	436	288
Rhondda Cynon Taf	4	239,127	215	90
Neath Port Talbot	5	142,090	177	125
Total		662,264	1,198	181

⁵ 1= Highest %
 22 = Lowest %

Lowest

Local Authority	Rank (1-22)	Population	Prisoner Population	Rate per 100,000
Monmouthshire	22	93,590	21	22
Ceredigion	21	73,076	19	26
Powys	20	132,515	64	48
Gwynedd	19	123,742	157	127
Pembrokeshire	18	124,711	58	47
Total		547,634	319	58

The combined imprisonment rate for the five local authorities with the highest percentage of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in the most deprived 20% was **3.1 times greater** than the rate recorded for the five local authorities with the lowest percentage of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in the most deprived 20%.

Figure 1.3 – % of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in most deprived 30%

Highest

Local Authority	Rank (1-22)	Population	Prisoner Population	Rate per 100,000
Blaenau Gwent	1	69,609	61	88
Merthyr Tydfil	2	59,953	309	515
Rhondda Cynon Taf	3	239,127	215	90
Bridgend	4	144,288	89	62
Neath Port Talbot	5	142,090	177	125
Total		655,067	851	130

Lowest

Local Authority	Rank (1-22)	Population	Prisoner Population	Rate per 100,000
Gwynedd	22	123,742	157	127
Ceredigion	21	73,076	19	26
Monmouthshire	20	93,590	21	22
Powys	19	132,515	64	48
Pembrokeshire	18	124,711	58	47
Total		547,634	319	58

The combined imprisonment rate for the five local authorities with the highest percentage of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in the most deprived 30% was **2.2 times greater** than the rate recorded for the five local authorities with the lowest percentage of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in the most deprived 30%.

Figure 1.4 – % of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in most deprived 50%

Highest

Local Authority	Rank (1-22)	Population	Prisoner Population	Rate per 100,000
Blaenau Gwent	1	69,609	61	88
Merthyr Tydfil	2	59,953	309	515
Rhondda Cynon Taf	3	239,127	215	90
Caerphilly	4	180,795	120	66
Neath Port Talbot	5	142,090	177	125
Total		691,574	882	128

Lowest

Local Authority	Rank (1-22)	Population	Prisoner Population	Rate per 100,000
Powys	22	132,515	64	48
Monmouthshire	21	93,590	21	22
Gwynedd	20	123,742	157	127
Flintshire	19	155,155	349	225
Pembrokeshire	18	124,711	58	47
Total		629,713	649	103

The combined imprisonment rate for the five local authorities with the highest percentage of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in the most deprived 50% was **1.2 times greater** than the rate recorded for the five local authorities with the lowest percentage of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in the most deprived 50%.

Figure 1.5 – Imprisonment Rates per 100,000 by Welsh Local Authority, June 2017

Local Authority	Population	Prisoner Population	Rate per 100,000	Rank (1-22)
Anglesey	69,794	63	90	11
Blaenau Gwent	69,609	61	88	13
Bridgend	144,288	89	62	17
Caerphilly	180,795	120	66	15
Cardiff	362,756	1,392	384	2
Carmarthenshire	186,452	129	69	14
Ceredigion	73,076	19	26	21
Conwy	116,863	122	104	9
Denbighshire	95,159	88	92	10
Flintshire	155,155	349	225	5
Gwynedd	123,742	157	127	6
Merthyr Tydfil	59,953	309	515	1
Monmouthshire	93,590	21	22	22
Neath Port Talbot	142,090	177	125	8
Newport	151,485	436	288	4
Pembrokeshire	124,711	58	47	20
Powys	132,515	64	48	19
Rhondda Cynon Taf	239,127	215	90	12
Swansea	245,480	728	297	3
Torfaen	92,264	60	65	16
Vale of Glamorgan	130,690	77	59	18
Wrexham	135,571	172	127	7
Total	3,125,165	4,906	157	

SUMMARY

- Numerous research studies from across many international jurisdictions have identified a clear relationship between deprivation and imprisonment.
- The data presented in this evidence submission reveal a correspondence between deprivation and imprisonment in Wales.

- When looking at the percentage of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in the most deprived 10% we see that the rate of imprisonment is **2.8 times greater** for the five most deprived local authorities (Blaenau Gwent, Merthyr Tydfil, Cardiff, Rhondda Cynon Taf, and Newport) than the rate recorded for the five least deprived (Monmouthshire, Powys, Ceredigion, Flintshire, Anglesey). (Figure 1.1)
- Although less than a third (28%) of Wales' population live in Blaenau Gwent, Merthyr Tydfil, Cardiff, Rhondda Cynon Taf, and Newport, almost half (49%) of all Welsh prisoners recorded a 'home address' in these areas.
- Merthyr Tydfil recorded the highest imprisonment rate in June 2017.
- The lowest rate of imprisonment was recorded in Monmouthshire.
- With a total population of 59,953, the Ministry of Justice's data show that 1 in 194 people living in Merthyr Tydfil were in prison in June 2017. This compared to 1 in 4,457 people living in Monmouthshire.
- Merthyr Tydfil, Cardiff, Swansea, Newport and Flintshire recorded an imprisonment rate that was higher than the all-Wales average in June 2017 (Figure 1.5).
- The findings presented here, alongside existing academic research, strongly suggest that the current ban on prisoner voting is likely to disproportionately affect individuals who come from the most deprived backgrounds.
- Although the data suggest a clear relationship between deprivation and imprisonment, there are some limitations to this theory. For example, Blaenau Gwent and Rhondda Cynon Taf's imprisonment rates ranked only 13th and 12th highest in Wales despite appearing within the five most deprived areas in all four categories (e.g. 10%; 20%; 30% and 50%). In addition, Flintshire recorded the 5th highest imprisonment rate in Wales despite being one of the five least deprived areas in two out of four categories (10% and 50%). (Figure 1.1 and 1.4)

- The data presented here are subject to their own limitations (see notes) and once again reiterate the need for improved access to Welsh-only imprisonment data. This includes data which isolates those whose 'home address' is not their committal court.

NOTES

All data relating to the 'home address' of prisoners is based on a prisoner's origin address (home address on reception into custody). The Ministry of Justice state that around 97% of prisoners have an origin location; i.e. addresses that are recorded on its central IT system. If no address is given, an offender's committal court address is used as a proxy for the area in which they are resident. Those with no recorded origin are typically foreign nationals or those recently received into custody. Because of this method of recording 'home address' it should be noted that the number of prisoners recorded in a local authority area with a court may be higher. The six local authorities with the highest imprisonment rate (Merthyr Tydfil, Cardiff, Swansea, Newport, Flintshire and Gwynedd) have a Crown Court located within the authority boundary.

Further statistical testing is required to develop the analysis presented here further.

Population statistics available from ONS (mid-2017) at:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/datasets/populationestimatesforukenglandandwalesscotlandandnorthernireland>

Information on deprivation was taken from 'Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) 2014 (Table 2.3) - <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/statistics-and-research/2019-04/welsh-index-of-multiple-deprivation-2014-revised.pdf>

Prison population data by local authority area in Wales were obtained from the Ministry of Justice via the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The data used were from June 2017 to correspond to the most recent ONS mid-year population projections (md-2017).

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