

Petitions Committee

Meeting Venue:
Committee Room 1 – Senedd

Meeting date:
30 June 2015

Meeting time:
09.45

Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales



For further information please contact:

Steve George
Committee Clerk
0300 200 6565
SeneddPetitions@assembly.wales

Kayleigh Driscoll
Deputy Committee Clerk
0300 200 6565
SeneddPetitions@assembly.wales

Agenda

1 Introduction, apologies and substitutions (9:45) (Pages 1 – 22)

2 New petitions

- 2.1 P-04-640 Bring Down the Age of Smears to 18 (Pages 23 – 25)
- 2.2 P-04-643 Save Croeserw Flying Start (Page 26)
- 2.3 P-04-645 Save Glyncoirwg Flying Start (Pages 27 – 31)
- 2.4 P-04-644 The Future of Further Education (Pages 32 – 57)

3 Updates to previous petitions

Public Services

- 3.1 P-04-552 Child Protection (Pages 58 – 59)
- 3.2 P-04-589 Reduce the Number of Councillors and Executive Members in Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council (Page 60)
- 3.3 P-04-602 Personalisation of Graves (Page 61)
- 3.4 P-04-616 Please Prevent Fireworks From Being Sold to the General Public

(Pages 62 – 67)

Health

- 3.5 P-04-494 Robotic assisted laparoscopic prostatectomy must be made available to men in Wales now (Pages 68 – 69)
- 3.6 P-04-588 Charter for Children and Fathers (Pages 70 – 75)

Finance and Government Business

- 3.7 P-04-577 Reinstate Funding to the Real Opportunities Project (Pages 76 – 77)

Communities and Tackling Poverty

- 3.8 P-04-511 Support for children and young people participation standards (Pages 78 – 82)
- 3.9 P-04-573 Call on the Welsh Government to Investigate the Residential Leasehold System in Wales. (Pages 83 – 85)

Education

- 3.10 P-04-538 Involving lecturers to ensure a Further Education Inspection Framework that is fit for purpose (Page 86)

Economy, Science and Transport

- 3.11 P-04-319 Newtown traffic petition (Pages 87 – 88)
- 3.12 P-04-373 School Exclusion Zones for Mobile Hot Food Vans (Pages 89 – 90)
- 3.13 P-04-514 A Welsh clean coal and/or renewable energy power station instead of the proposed Wylfa B nuclear plant at Anglesey (Pages 91 – 99)

Document is Restricted

P-04-640 Bring Down the Age of Smears to 18

Petition wording:

My 18 year old daughter has cervical cancer and we do not want this to happen to any other women just because of the age limit on smear tests. We would like to call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to bring the age down on the tests from 25 to 18.

Additional Information

In March 2014 my daughter Jessica Bradford aged only 18 was diagnosed with cervical cancer. Because of her age she was not allowed a smear test. Jessica had all her cervical cancer injections in school. Jessica attends Velindre cancer hospital in Wales where her treatment was carried out – 5 chemotherapies, 30 radiotherapies and 3 internal radiotherapies. Due to this treatment Jessica can never carry her own children. Myself and Jessica have set up a page on Facebook to raise awareness, called Jess Bradford's cervical cancer awareness. Since doing the page we have met lots of mothers who have lost their daughters from cervical cancer

We are also currently collecting signatures on Change.org petitioning the UK Government on the same issue. Approximately 96,000 signatures have been collected so far..

Petition raised by: Julie Bradford

Date petition first considered by Committee:

Number of signatures: 525 signatures collected on the Assembly website. In excess of 1,000 signatures have been collected on a separate petition website about the same issue

Mark Drakeford AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-640
Ein cyf/Our ref MD/01548/15

William Powell AM

Chair - Petitions Committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

14 June 2015

Dear William,

Thank you for your letter on behalf of the Petitions Committee dated 19 May 2015. I am very sympathetic to Mrs Bradford's cause. Cervical cancer is very distressing for the women affected and their families, particularly when the woman affected is of such a young age.

Cervical cancer is extremely rare in women under 25 with 2.6 cases per 100,000 women and 0-5 deaths in the UK. In England, Northern Ireland and Wales, cervical screening is offered from the age of 25 and finishes at 64 as recommended by the UK National Screening Committee (UK NSC). Scotland currently starts screening at 20 but in 2016, this will be changing to 25 to be congruent with the rest of the UK. Wales raised the eligibility age for screening from 20 to 25 in 2013, following a review of the cervical screening age range, including a public consultation, by the UK NSC.

All population-based, pre-symptomatic screening programmes are developed and delivered using the best available evidence and are subject to regular review. The UK NSC provides independent, expert advice to all UK Ministers on screening. Population screening programmes should only be offered where there is robust, high-quality evidence that screening will do more good than harm at a population level. The eligibility age for cervical screening policy across the UK is based on the latest available evidence and this shows that cervical screening is most effective for women between 25 and 64 years old. The evidence shows that, on balance, the additional risks associated with cervical screening to the health of women under the age of 25 outweigh the potential benefits.

Screening is a way of detecting conditions at an early and treatable stage in healthy people. Cervical screening does not identify cancer but does identify cervical cell abnormalities. Diagnosis and treatment for cervical abnormalities has been shown to cause significant

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd - Cardiff

Pack Page 24

Wedi'i argraffu ar bapur wedi'i ailgylchu (100%)

English Enquiry Line 0300 0603300
Llinell Ymholiadau Cymraeg 0300 0604400
Correspondence: Mark.Drakeford@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Printed on 100% recycled paper

psychological trauma and, considering the majority of young women will clear cervical abnormalities without treatment, it means screening and subsequent treatment for abnormalities could cause more harm than the benefits of screening can provide. Cervical cancer is caused by the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV), which is a sexually transmitted infection. Persistent infection by high-risk HPV types is detectable in more than 99% of cervical cancers. The majority of high-risk HPV infections are transient and cause no clinical problems. Within one year, around 70% of new infections will clear and approximately 90% of new infections will clear within two years.

The number of young women diagnosed with cancer is expected to decrease over the next 10 years due to the HPV vaccination programme which offers the vaccine to girls under 18 years of age. This programme was introduced in 2008 and will help to prevent the majority of cervical cancers. The latest annual uptake across Wales for a complete course is high at 86%.

Best wishes,

Mark

Mark Drakeford AC / AM

Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services

Agenda Item 2.2

P-04-643 Save Croeserw Flying Start

Petition wording:

The undersigned residents object to any planned removal or reduction in services for the Flying Start programme in the Croeserw community. Any changes to this service will have an adverse effect on our children's education

Petition raised by: Donna Taylor

Date petition first considered by Committee:

Number of signatures: 169 Online signatures

P-04-645 Save Glyncorrwg Flying Start

Petition wording:

This petition has been started to save Glyncorrwg Flying Start.

Parents of children who are in Flying start, or have children coming to the age they are able to attend Flying start have received letters stating Flying start will be taken away from our community in July 2015.

Why should our children miss out? Flying Start is a stepping stone for young children, to get them on the learning ladder and ready to start school. It is meant to be provided to those who are in 'deprived areas', which we are, and yet they are taking it away. It's wrong.

Petition raised by: Sophie-Kate Reacord

Date petition first considered by Committee:

Number of signatures: 148 Online signatures



Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-643
Ein cyf/Our ref LG/00678/15

William Powell AM
Chair - Petitions Committee

committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

11

June 2015

Dear Bill

Thank you for your letter of 4 June, regarding Petition P-04-643 "Save Croeserw Flying Start", addressed to Huw Lewis AM, Minister for Education and Skills. I am replying as Flying Start falls within my Ministerial portfolio.

I am aware of the issue and concerns raised in the petition. These were also raised in the Children, Young People and Education Committee by David Rees AM on 2 June and in Plenary by Bethan Jenkins AM on 3 June. I will be writing shortly to these members. I have recently also responded to similar correspondence from Peter Black AM.

Action for Children are currently contracted to deliver the "childcare" element of the Flying Start programme in Croeserw. They have given notice terminating their contract with the Council. This decision means there may be temporary disruption to the childcare element of Flying Start whilst the Council makes alternative arrangements. The Leader of the Council, Councillor Ali Thomas, has assured the residents of Croeserw the Council will do their best to minimise the disruption.

Whilst childcare provision may be affected, all other aspects of Flying Start will continue as normal. This includes the Flying Start health visiting service, parenting classes/groups, baby massage, parent and toddler groups, speech and language services, and midwifery.

Regards
Lesley

Lesley Griffiths AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Cymunedau a Threchu Tlodi
Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Wedi'i argraffu ar bapur wedi'i ailgylchu
recycled paper

Page 28

English Enquiry Line 0300 0603300
Llinell Ymholiadau Cymraeg 0300 0604400
Correspondence.Lesley.Griffiths@wales.gsi.gov.uk
Printed on 100%

Glyncorrwg Flying Start Play group and Croeserw flying start Play group

Overview

Action for Children – Gweithredu dros Blant is no longer able to deliver the Flying Start Play Groups at Glyncorrwg or Croeserw. We are extremely proud to have served the children and families in these communities for over 17 years, however, it is no longer financially viable for the charity to operate these services. We are grateful for the continued support and understanding from the communities of Glyncorrwg and Croeserw.

We have actively explored options for continuing to deliver the service, however, we have been unable to secure a solution. We gave Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council 6 months' notice in January 2015, and the service will close in August 2015 at the end of the school year. We have been in close contact with the council over this issue and appreciate the good relations that have continued as we bring our operations to a close.

This paper aims to communicate clearly the rationale for Action for Children – Gweithredu dros Blant's decision to cease running these services, and the actions we are taking to minimise the impact on children, parents and our staff.

People

Glyncorrwg Flying Start Play group operates five mornings per week and is used by 12 families. Twelve children attend the playgroup. This service has two permanent staff, and one casual member of staff.

Croeserw Flying Start Play group operates five mornings and five afternoons per week and is used by 20 families. Twenty children attend the playgroup. This service has three permanent staff, and one casual member of staff.

Our decision

Action for Children – Gweithredu dros Blant is a not-for-profit organisation. In line with recognised funding principles for the Third Sector, we seek to recover the full cost of delivering services wherever possible. This means that we seek to recover the *direct cost of the service* together with a *share of the centralised support costs* that the service attracts. We recover these costs by applying a contribution value to the contract value for the service.

To ensure that our services meet the local needs of children, young people and their families, Action for Children – Gweithredu dros Blant provides support that adds value to the services that we deliver. As one of the largest voluntary sector providers in the UK, we regionalise and centralise some of this support so that we can achieve efficiency savings and maintain consistently high standards.

Neath Port Talbot council receives funding from the Welsh Government to deliver Flying Start in Croeserw and Glyncorrwg. It is not financially viable for Action for Children – Gweithredu dros Blant to continue to operate these services on behalf of the council. There is an established formula used across Neath Port Talbot used to calculate funding for Flying Start services, however this does not cover the actual cost to Action for Children of providing these services.

actionforchildren.org.uk

This shortfall has been the case for some time. Previously *Action for Children – Gweithredu dros Blant* provided other child care services in Neath Port Talbot, which allowed us to meet some of the shortfall through shared resources. These services closed in 2013/14 and, as a consequence, the Flying Start services are no longer financially viable for *Action for Children – Gweithredu dros Blant* to deliver. .

We have had open and honest conversations with representatives of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council. In October 2014 we met with Neath Port Talbot's Flying Start Team to explore options for continuing the service. Unfortunately, we were not able to secure a solution. We discussed the process for providing notice to Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council. We gave verbal notice in October 2014, and agreed that 90 days written notice would follow at a later date once arrangements for Action for Children's withdrawal had been made. It is our understanding that the funding for a Flying Start provision in Glyncoed and Croeserw is still held with Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council.

Our actions

We have taken action to minimise the impact of these services closing on children and families:

Timing

The decision to close these services at the end of the school year was made in the best interests of the children we serve. By closing the service in August we have been able to ensure that the children attending these groups complete a full year of Flying Start and to meet their target outcomes. It also allows for detailed assessments to be completed which will ease the transition for children into a new setting in September. We felt strongly this would be less disruptive to the children using these services than finishing at the end of the financial year (March), which is midway through the school year.

Communication

Once we had served notice to Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council, we informed the seven staff affected at the earliest possible date. We continue to support our dedicated staff working in challenging circumstances.

The Flying Start central team in Neath Port Talbot informed parents of our decision directly. Our staff continue to offer support and advice to parents during this time, and we have also written to all parents to explain what is happening.

We continue to have conversations with the local authority to make arrangements for closure. We are seeking clarity on their future plans to provide child care settings for these children so that we can assist with the transition and offer reassurance to all the children and their parents. We are also seeking redeployment opportunities for our staff within our other services where possible.

If you have a media enquiry, please contact Alastair Love at Alastair.Love@actionforchildren.org.uk or 07872 675688.

To discuss this briefing, please contact Jane Weeks at Jane.Weeks@actionforchildren.org.uk

actionforchildren.org.uk

P-04-643 Save Croeserw Flying Start – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 18.06.15

Very concerned for our Flying Start Childcare service is closing in July despite NPT council having the funds to run the service.

NPT are not actively looking for new provider for this service and has been suggested they wont until after March 2016.

NPT have not provided any information as to there plans of replacing the service in our community as travel links and timing of children's pick up if they not within the village of Croeserw we feel that the children in this community will be left with out access to this service.

It was felt that if we didn't challenge the council there wouldn't be another service of this type in our area.

We are fighting to keep this very good and popular service to be kept village where its beneficial to the future children of our community.

If NPT are no longer running the service in our community the funding for this should be given back the welsh government.

Agenda Item 2.4

P-04-644 The Future of Further Education

Petition wording:

We note the decision of the Welsh government to cut Further Education funding by £26m for the year 2015/16 and recognise that the 8% cut in the Welsh budget imposed by Westminster, has created financial challenges for Wales. However we fail to understand the decisions of Welsh Government to then allocate money from Westminster in a way that will cause great hardship to a key member of the 'Education Family' in Wales. Colleges have dealt admirably with several years of successive funding cuts and we do not see how they can continue to deliver the remit expected of them by Welsh government. We also note the policy of the Welsh Government to increase reliance on employer contributions to fund employee training, but are not convinced that this will be sufficient to plug the level of Government underfunding. In addition the 50% slash in funding to part time courses will decimate further education provision leaving thousands of adults without access to opportunities to improve their education or to retrain. It will also put hundreds of FE jobs at risk. Further education colleges in Wales have co-operated with Welsh Government over previous funding cuts and a series of mergers, but are now at breaking point. We call upon the Welsh Government not to implement these cuts and to invest properly in lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Additional information

UCU Wales are concerned that:

- * Employers will be unwilling or unable to plug the gap left by the withdrawal of Welsh Government funding.
- * Adults will be restricted to training that is deemed suitable by employers.
- * Adults in low paid, unsatisfactory jobs will be unable to access the education they need to improve their employment opportunities elsewhere.

* Cuts in funding will severely limit choices available to adults. *
Opportunities to improve the life chances of many adults and their families will be removed, which in terms of tackling poverty and improving the economy of Wales, is counterproductive.

* The quality of remaining provision will be reduced as there will be fewer staff, bigger class sizes and less time to teach the courses.

Petition raised by: UCU Wales

Date petition first considered by Committee: 16 June 2015

Number of signatures: 1,861 Online signatures

Julie James AC / AM
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Sgiliau a Thechnoleg
Deputy Minister for Skills and Technology



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-644
Ein cyf/Our ref JJ/00420/15

William Powell AM
Assembly Member for Mid & West Wales
Chair - Petitions Committee

committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

17 June 2015

Dear William

Thank you for your letter of 5 June to Huw Lewis AM regarding the petition you have received from UCU Wales about The Future of Further Education. As this falls within my portfolio I am replying to the concerns that have been raised

I appreciate that members of UCU Wales are very concerned about the cuts to the Further Education (FE) budget. From my own discussions with UCU over recent months, I am well aware of the difficulties the funding rationalisation has had on individuals and institutions in the sector. I can assure you that there is not a single person working in Welsh Government who would choose to make these cuts if they didn't have to, however, this, unfortunately, is the reality of the situation we find ourselves in.

As mentioned by UCU, the cuts imposed on Wales by the government at Westminster mean that the Welsh Government's budget is around 8% lower in real terms than it was in 2010/11. We have been clear with everyone working in every public service in Wales about the financial challenges we face.

The decisions made on budget are guided by the priorities we were elected on in 2011. For example, we said we would protect school spending by 1% above the Welsh block and we have done this by ensuring an additional £100m has been made available for Welsh schools since the election. We said that we would invest in our NHS and that is why we will invest an additional £500m in the Welsh NHS over the next two years. These priorities for funding have necessitated difficult decisions in other areas of the Welsh Government's budget; and I acknowledge the significant difficulties this has caused FE.

The Post-16 FE budget has had to be reduced by £14 million and, as a consequence, part time provision delivered in Further Education has been the hardest hit; with a 50 per cent reduction in funding. We have striven to protect learners as much as possible, and have protected provision for our 16-19 year olds. As we work through these difficult times, it is more important than ever that we focus not just on the resources that are available, but also how we use them to best effect to achieve the best outcomes for young people.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

English Enquiry Line 0300 0603300
Llinell Ymholiadau Cymraeg 0300 0604400
Correspondence: Julie.James@wales.gsi.gov.uk

The Welsh Government has statutory duties, one of which gives primacy to the educational facilities made available for learners aged 16-18. Therefore, the funding cuts have been designed to protect these learners as much as possible. We have also protected our most vulnerable learners, so Adult Basic Education (ABE), English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and discrete provision for learners with moderate or profound learning difficulties has not been subject to the 50 per cent cut.

My officials are working closely with the post -16 sector to evaluate options and to minimise the impact of any reductions on learning. Officials and colleges have worked together, via a Welsh Government convened working group, to look to develop proposals to minimise the impact of these reductions, which is a good example of how the FE sector and Welsh Government can work together to ensure we continue to offer first class learning opportunities to Welsh learners.

We have worked hard to protect provision for those aged 16-18. In fact, we have gone beyond our statutory duty and protected provision for those aged 19. In addition, we have been able to maintain funding for Traineeships, and are continuing to fund Apprenticeships for those aged 16-24 as well as all-age Higher Level Apprenticeships. We fought hard in the recent budget settlement to mitigate some of these cuts and we secured an additional £5m funding for additional apprenticeships in 2015-16 and 2016-17. Looking ahead, the Policy Statement on Skills is designed to prioritise funding for learners aged 16-24 as well as ensuring continued support for all-age Higher Apprenticeships. Part of this is a recognition that we simply cannot continue with a situation where the Government is the sole source of funding for skills training.

The Skills Strategy we have put in place is focused on getting employers to make a greater investment in the training of their workforce through co-investment. I agree that this long-term challenge requires cultural change, but is something which must be tackled if we are to achieve our key goal of a financially sustainable skills system in Wales over the next decade.

Our new *Flexible Skills Programme* will receive £3.9 million to support the skills and employment needs of companies that play a strategic role in the economy. It is estimated that 60 companies will receive funding, and benefit 3,200 individuals.

The development of projects to deliver essential skills support to employed and unemployed adults in Wales is well underway. Officials are now working with partners in the Further Education Sector to continue the development of regional skills projects to incorporate workplace essential skills activity and to explore potential match funding arrangements. Officials are also progressing an extension to the Work Ready programme offering essential skills and employability support to unemployed adults to 31 March 2016. This will enable officials to further develop the Skills for Employment Wales programme listed above, in particular to ensure the new programme takes into account the outcomes of current discussions regarding the future delivery and administration of the UK Government's Work Programme.

In parallel with the arrangements to address lower level skills for employed adults, officials are also working with the FEI sector to incorporate higher level skills activity within the regional skills projects currently being developed. These arrangements will build on existing developments throughout 2014-15 and 2015-16 as part of the Skills Priorities Programme (SPP) aiming to address the growing shortage of highly skilled individuals across Wales. SPP has two main aims: 1) to further extend the development and delivery of industry relevant higher level skills provision; and 2) to support a shift towards more co-invested

skills delivery. Whilst some progress has been made through initial pilot activity in 2014/15, additional investment is needed to further support and incentivise the sector to make this shift. From April 2016, it is intended that this activity will be incorporated within the three FE-led regional skills ESF projects and it is envisaged that DfES will allocate match funding to these projects, with stringent criteria attached, for delivery of higher level skills activity in line with regional employer demand. Officials are also working with these regional skills projects to explore options for common branding. Clearly, we will continue to provide support where we can, but we need to see employers increasing their level of investment.

Against the backdrop of reducing public sector budgets that I have outlined, Welsh Government is working with Regional Skills Partnerships to develop the robust evidence base to prioritise employer skills needs in the three regions linked to key investment priorities/transformational projects.

Regionally focused skills demand and supply assessments, due at the end of September 2015, will:

- Influence where future Department for Education and Skills (DfES) investment should be focused
- Act as a mechanism for regional partners to steer and prioritise their own budgets to support economically focused regionally important priorities.

I have tasked each individual college to look for opportunities for establishing diverse income streams. There are some very good examples in the sector where a college has established a business development team to generate privately funded income through engagement with local businesses to ensure courses meet employer and student need. Being responsive to employers' needs and building on the good practice is more important than ever.

We do value adult education, but we are in the position of having to prioritise where our funds are spent. We have protected our young people from the worst of the cuts we have had to endure from Westminster; and we will continue doing this over the next few years. We also remain committed to FE and look forward to working with colleges in the coming months and years to achieve the best outcomes for learners.

Our aim over the next few years is to help create a sustainable funding framework for Further Education in Wales that can allow the sector to grow and prosper. We are looking carefully at how we can strengthen the relationships between FE Colleges and our schools and universities so we have the seamless, diverse and world class system of Welsh education that can cater for all learners at all levels, as outlined in our Qualified for Life Strategy.

The views of UCU and other stakeholders will be central to realising that vision and so I want to put on record my thanks for the contribution they have made.

Yours sincerely



Julie James AC / AM

Y Dirprwy Weinidog Sgiliau a Thechnoleg
Deputy Minister for Skills and Technology



Unit 33
The Enterprise Centre
Tondu, Bridgend
CF32 9BS

Uned 33
y Ganolfan Anturiaeth
Tondu, Pentybont-ar-ogwr
CF32 9BS

Telephone/Ffon 01656 721951
Fax/Ffacs 01656 723834
Email/Ebost bridgend@ucu.org.uk

William Powell AM
Chair – Petitions Committee

c/o Kayleigh.Driscoll@assembly.wales

23rd June 2015

Dear William,

In light of the correspondence from Julie James AM to yourself, dated 17th June 2015, UCU Wales would like to offer the following response.

The Minister clearly sets out the aims of the Welsh Government with regard to Further Education in Wales, however from our point of view this only serves to highlight the concerns raised by our petition.

We are already aware of the intention to rely on increased employer investment in training and yet, as the Minister's letter clearly states, "this is a long term challenge" and although "some progress has been made" further support is needed to "incentivise the sector".

The colleges are at breaking point now. They do not have the luxury of being able to wait and see what happens over the next decade. This academic year alone, there have been at least 800 voluntary redundancies across the FE sector; this is likely to be the tip of the iceberg. We have recently been made aware that the colleges are now to expect further cuts to the 2015/16 budget, in addition to those that we were aware of at the outset of this petition. The gravity of the situation is outlined in the following note that we have received from one of the college principals:

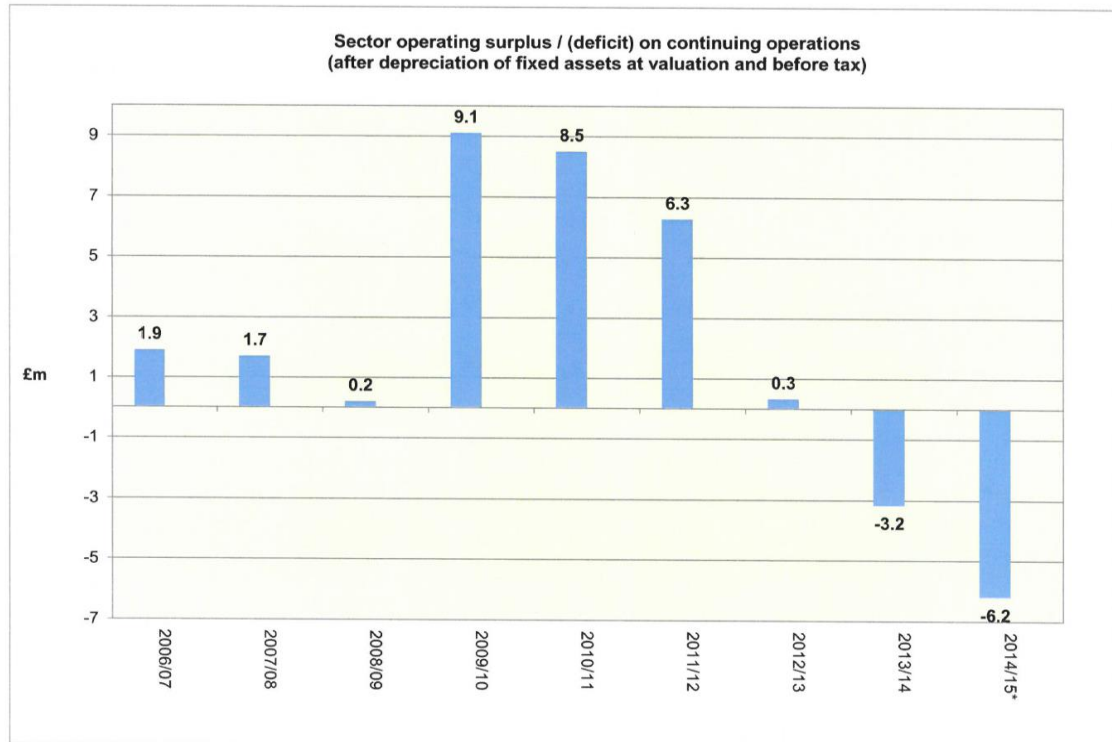
"... this week we have received instruction in terms of our financial planning for 2015/16, which tells us that we should include a range of forecasts that show further cuts for 2015/16 ie the year now beginning in 1^{1/2} months' time- from 0% up to 5%. For information a 5% cut would mean a further reduction of £1.25 million for this College.

At the same time all Principals and Chairs of Governors have been invited to meet the Deputy Minister on the 6th July for a meeting which DfES have called "Raising Resilience in Further Education". This doesn't sound good – and I am working with

Colegau Cymru to ensure that representations are made now that “enough is enough” and that “FE is already taken its fair share of reductions”.

The graph below represents the overall FE sector’s surpluses/deficits in recent years (with the most recent estimate for 2014/15) showing the picture in recent years.

Mid year return



We fail to see how the FE sector can seriously be expected to deliver the remit required of it, at a level that will offer “first class learning opportunities”, under the proposed funding arrangements. Further funding cuts will inevitably lead to compulsory redundancies, further course cuts, reduction in learner choice and an overburdened workforce that cannot deliver the quality of service that the people of Wales deserve.

The Minister repeatedly states that provision is being protected for those learners up to the age of 19 years, but not for those aged 20 or above, unless they are basic skills or employer approved and funded training.

We note that the Minister refers to offering first class learning opportunities to Welsh learners, but not to ‘all’ Welsh learners, which again highlights our concern that opportunities to access life changing learning experiences, will be severely limited (if available at all) for thousands of adults in Wales.

We are aware that the Welsh Government are continuing to fund apprenticeships, however we are concerned that the quality of a number of apprenticeship schemes are not

of a particularly high quality; an issue that is recognized by the Welsh Government, as evidenced in their recent consultation on apprenticeship provision¹. We are unclear as to how the Welsh Government can expect to support the development of high quality apprenticeships, if they do not have adequate funding for qualified and experienced staff or for appropriate resources.

Further we note the investment in the new flexible skills programme, but question why it is that on the one hand the Government are calling for employers to invest more money into training, but on the other hand are providing them with £3.9 to support their skills and employment needs? We would like to know what safeguards there are to ensure that this money will benefit the 3,200 individuals it is aimed at and how?

We would suggest that instead of scattering and diluting available funding, it would be preferable to pool resources and adequately fund FE colleges, to allow them to provide high quality, standardised courses, leading to recognised and portable qualifications that will provide employers with a ready pool of employees.

We hear what is being said with regard to having no choice but to implement the decisions that have been made, but we are not convinced by this plea. Those that have made the choices to disproportionately cut the funding to the FE sector, have the power to review those choices. We would like to see greater consideration of the impact and perhaps, unintended consequences of the decision to so savagely cut, not just the funding, but the route out of poverty and low paid employment for thousands of Welsh citizens, particularly women.

The content of the letter from the Minister, clearly indicates to us that the Welsh Government does not "value adult education", further it does not address any of the concerns that have been highlighted in our petition; if anything, it confirms our fears for the future of lifelong learning.

Please find attached UCU documents, outlining our concerns and highlighting the case for the need for a specific policy for FE in Wales. We are keen to work with the current and any future government in Wales to ensure that we can build and maintain a truly first class education system which is inclusive of everyone.

Yours sincerely



Lisa Edwards
Policy and Communications Officer
UCU Wales

¹ <http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/consultation/150129-apprenticeship-model-consultation-en.pdf>

Wales needs a policy for Further Education

UCU Commentary

The University and College Union (UCU) is the largest post 16 education trade union in the UK. As part of this wider organisation, UCU Wales represents over 7,000 lecturers in Further and Higher Education in Wales.

We campaign for greater public investment in the post 16 education sector, as well fair pay and decent working conditions for our members.

Further and Higher education is vital for individual development, social mobility and a successful economy. Learning benefits people of all ages in terms of employability, wellbeing, personal development and self-confidence.

Colleges and universities are key economic contributors, both as local employers and as providers of training and education for the workforce on which local and Welsh economies depend.

To realise its full potential to society, education and training must be adequately funded and fully accessible. Policy should be based on the premise that Schools, Further Education providers and Universities *collectively* help to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty by providing both opportunities for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and a 'second chance' for older people to help them exit low pay.

Policy for Further Education

UCU Wales call for there to be a commitment to developing a robust policy for further education. Whilst we recognise the commitment and desire to fund other areas of the education sector to improve quality, tackle poverty and meet employer demands, this current the lack of policy for the Further Education sector is creating a black hole in which poverty survives.

Reasons for developing an FE policy in Wales.

To provide second/third chance learning

Traditionally, further education has provided second chance opportunities to adults who for whatever reason, did not achieve their potential at school. There are many bright, but late developers, who without further education, would not be making the positive contribution to Wales that they are now. The ability to gain qualifications for life does not stop at 19 years old. Opportunities to access a wide range of qualifications, at differing levels will become increasingly important as the working population ages, resulting in perhaps several career changes throughout

working life. Supporting older people to maintain and enhance their potential value to society will be of increasing significance to policy development of the future.

- **To help tackle poverty**

Much emphasis has been placed on early years intervention and improving attainment of pupils eligible for free school meals. However evidence of the success of such intervention is patchy and points toward the effects of early intervention programmes being short lived and not sufficient to close the attainment gap for disadvantaged children. Low educational attainment of parents, affects their children's development and progress at school. Further Education supports an approach to family learning that enables all family members to enhance their learning and can support whole families that are vulnerable to poverty.

- **To help reduce reliance on welfare**

Poverty is caused by low paid work as well as unemployment. Enabling more working people to gain access to qualifications, which will assist them out of in-work poverty, should take equal priority. We recognise the desire for employers to provide funding for the 'up-skilling' for their employees and agree that they should take responsibility for financing the acquisition of skills and qualifications that will directly benefit their business. However, this is likely to leave many employees 'trapped', where the qualifications they need to change jobs to gain better pay and therefore reduce the need for 'in-work' benefits, are not funded by the employer and are too costly to fund themselves.

- **Promoting equality, social mobility and community cohesion.**

Poverty reduces opportunities and makes social mobility more difficult. Poverty is also associated with poor health and worklessness that can separate people from mainstream society. Current proposals to reduce the budget for part time courses by 50%, is likely to have disproportionate effect on women. In 2012-13 58% of all unique part time enrolments in FE were women and 59% of part time learners over 19, were women domiciled in deprived areas.

- **To assist in delivering high quality apprenticeships**

We support moves to improve the quality and status of apprenticeship programmes in Wales and welcome the desire to create parity between the value of vocational and academic qualifications. Further education, with its teams of highly skilled and qualified vocational staff, is uniquely placed to provide the off-site training and education required to help realise this ambition.

- **To assist the delivery of HE in FE**

In line with the widening access agenda, we recognise the need for the growth of the provision of accessible, higher level qualifications. Investment in further education will be key to this vision, in order to enable staff in FE colleges access to appropriate CPD and manageable workloads that allow them to deliver the quality of provision expected at higher levels.

- **To ensure appropriate continuous professional development.**

In order for further education to recruit and retain highly motivated and qualified 'dual professionals', to deliver the quality of teaching and learning required. Policy development needs to focus on a framework that sets out the quality and level of CPD required. This should be a practitioner led approach, based on pedagogic principles and professional need, similar to the New Deal being developed for teachers in schools, but for FE it must contain access to appropriate industrial updates and development.

- **To assist the implementation of the Programme for Government**

In addition to the strands of the Programme for Government already touched upon a clear policy for the education sector would assist in the efficiency and co-ordination of a wide range of initiatives. There is an implied reliance on the FE sector to support programmes such as Jobs Growth Wales, Basic Skills development, Welsh Language, changes to the provision for Addition Learning Needs and no doubt, to implement some of the recommendations from the Donaldson review of the Curriculum. It is clear that the sector is seen as having an important part to play in many areas of Welsh life and as such is worthy of robust policy to define and protect its role in the collective provision of lifelong learning for everyone.

The role of further education is far more than a vocational extension of 6th Form provision. It is a lifeline for many adults to improved health and wellbeing as well as enhanced employment opportunities. It can be a tool for addressing economic and political needs, but it also empowers individuals to shape their own destiny.

If we are to develop a vibrant economy in Wales, that will be ready to tackle the unknown challenges ahead, we need investment in a high quality, lifelong education at all levels. We need a system that can prepare and support all citizens through the challenges that each life stage brings, so that we can nurture a creative and flexible workforce.

Developing a policy for the future of the Further Education Sector in Wales

**6th Form supplement or FE
for everyone?**

Wales needs a policy for Further Education

The University and College Union (UCU) is the largest post 16 education trade union in the UK. As part of this wider organisation, UCU Wales represents over 7,000 lecturers in Further and Higher Education in Wales.

We campaign for greater public investment in the post 16 education sector, as well as fair pay and decent working conditions for our members.

Further and Higher education is vital for individual development, social mobility and a successful economy. Learning benefits people of all ages in terms of employability, wellbeing, personal development and self-confidence.

Colleges and universities are key economic contributors, both as local employers and as providers of training and education for the workforce on which local and Welsh economies depend.

To realise its full potential to society, education and training must be adequately funded and fully accessible. Policy should be based on the premise that Schools, Further Education providers and Universities *collectively* help to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty by providing both opportunities for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and a 'second chance' for older people to help them exit low pay.

Policy for Further Education

UCU Wales call for there to be a commitment to developing a robust policy for further education. Whilst we recognise the commitment and desire to fund other areas of the education sector to improve quality, tackle poverty and meet employer demands, this current the lack of policy for the Further Education Sector is creating a black hole in which poverty thrives.

This paper sets out reasons for the need to develop a distinct policy for further education in Wales.

To provide second and subsequent learning chances

Traditionally, further education has provided second chance opportunities to adults who for whatever reason, did not achieve their potential at school. There are many bright, but late developers, who without further education, would not be making the positive contribution to Wales that they are now. The ability to gain qualifications for life does not stop at 19 years old. Opportunities to access a wide range of qualifications, at differing levels will become increasingly important as the working population ages, resulting in perhaps several career changes throughout working life. Supporting older people to maintain and enhance their potential value to society will be of increasing significance to policy development of the future.

- **To help tackle poverty**

Much emphasis has been placed on early years intervention and improving attainment of pupils eligible for free school meals. However evidence of the success of such intervention is patchy and points toward the effects of early intervention programmes being short lived and not sufficient to close the long-term attainment gap for disadvantaged children. Low educational attainment of parents, affects their children's development and progress at school. Further Education supports an approach to family learning that enables all family members to enhance their learning and can support whole families who are vulnerable to poverty.

- **To help reduce reliance on welfare**

Poverty is caused by low paid work as well as unemployment. Enabling more working people to gain access to qualifications, which will assist them out of in-work poverty, should take equal priority. We recognise the desire for employers to provide funding for the 'up-skilling' for their employees and agree that they should take responsibility for financing the acquisition of skills and qualifications that will directly benefit their business. However, this is likely to leave many employees 'trapped', where the qualifications they need to change jobs to gain better pay and therefore reduce the need for 'in-work' benefits, are not funded by the employer and are too costly to fund themselves.

- **Promoting equality, social mobility and community cohesion.**

Poverty reduces opportunities and makes social mobility more difficult. Poverty is also associated with poor health and worklessness, which can separate people from mainstream society. Current proposals to reduce the budget for part time courses by 50%, is likely to have disproportionate effect on women. In 2012-13 58% of all unique part time enrolments in FE were women and 59% of part time learners over 19, were women domiciled in deprived areas.

- **To assist in delivering high quality apprenticeships**

We support moves to improve the quality and status of apprenticeship programmes in Wales and welcome the desire to create parity between the value of vocational and academic qualifications. Further education, with its teams of highly skilled and qualified vocational staff, is uniquely placed to provide the off-site training and education required to help realise this ambition.

- **To assist the delivery of HE in FE**

In line with the widening access agenda, we recognise the need for the growth of the provision of accessible, higher level qualifications. Investment in further education will be key to this vision, in order to enable staff in FE colleges access to appropriate CPD and

manageable workloads, that allow them to deliver the quality of provision expected at higher levels.

- **To ensure appropriate continuous professional development.**

In order for further education to recruit and retain highly motivated and qualified 'dual professionals', to deliver the quality of teaching and learning required. Policy development needs to focus on a framework that sets out the quality and level of CPD required. This should be a practitioner led approach, based on pedagogic principles and professional need, similar to the New Deal being developed for teachers in schools. However, for FE it must contain access to appropriate industrial updates and development.

- **To assist the implementation of the Programme for Government**

In addition to the strands of the Programme for Government already touched upon, a clear policy for the further education sector would assist in the efficiency and co-ordination of a wide range of initiatives. There is an implied reliance on the FE sector to support programmes such as Jobs Growth Wales, Basic Skills development, Welsh Language, changes to the provision for Addition Learning Needs and no doubt, to implement some of the recommendations from the Donaldson review of the Curriculum. It is clear that the sector is seen as having an important part to play in many areas of Welsh life and as such is worthy of robust policy to define and protect its role in the collective provision of lifelong learning for everyone.

The role of further education is far more than a vocational extension of 6th Form provision. It is a lifeline for many adults to improved health and wellbeing, as well as enhanced employment opportunities. It can be a tool for addressing economic and political needs, but it also empowers individuals to shape their own destiny.

If we are to develop a vibrant economy in Wales, that will be ready to tackle the unknown challenges ahead, we need investment in a high quality, lifelong education at all levels. We need a system that can prepare and support all citizens through the challenges that each life stage brings, so that we can nurture creative and cohesive communities and flexible workforce.

Promoting equality, social mobility, community cohesion and tackling poverty.

Further education provides second chance opportunities to adults who, for whatever reason, did not achieve their potential at school. There are many bright, but late developers, who without further education, would not be making the positive contribution to Wales that they are now. The ability to gain qualifications for life does not stop at 19 years old. Opportunities to access a wide range of qualifications, at differing levels will become increasingly important as the working population ages, resulting in perhaps several career changes throughout working life. Supporting older people to maintain and enhance their potential value to society will be of increasing significance to policy development of the future.

The latest statistics available,¹ show that in 2012-13, there were 156,335 unique enrolments, on Further Education programmes. 67% of these were people over the age of 19 years; a clear indication that there is demand for education for adults, outside of compulsory schooling and higher education and yet there is no clear policy in Wales for the direction of this valuable service. Current policy, on the whole, is aimed at the education and training of those aged 19 and under, as illustrated by the publication of the Welsh government's "Qualified for Life" document in October 2014. We would argue that this is at the peril of ignoring the needs of the 105,015 adults over the age of 19 who enrolled in FE in 2012-13. The number of enrolments of those over the age of 19, appears to make a nonsense of the current emphasis for Further Education provision to be focussed on full time programmes of learning for those up to 19 years. We are concerned that we risk of losing a vital pool of untapped Welsh talent if there is no policy to safeguard the provision of Further Education for adults.

Further to this the majority of unique enrolments to part time courses was 69%. 87% of whom were over 19 and 58% of the total number of part time enrolments were female. The current proposals to cut the budget for part time provision in Further education will therefore have a disproportionate effect on women. Contrary to the Government of Wales Act (2006), equality of opportunity for all people will fail to be secured, with current budget arrangements.

Poverty reduces opportunities and makes social mobility more difficult. Poverty is also associated with poor health and worklessness, which can separate people from mainstream society. In 2012- 13 59% of part time learners over 19, were women domiciled in deprived areas. In terms of the Welsh Government 'Tackling Poverty' agenda, this is an indication of the vital contribution that Further Education makes.

There has been much emphasis on the reduction of NEETS, those not in employment, education or training. The Welsh Government's Youth Guarantee, emphasises the needs of those aged 16-19, however the number of NEETs aged

¹ <https://stats.wales.gov.uk/Catalogue/Education-and-Skills/Post-16-Education-and-Training/Further-Education-and-Work-Based-Learning/Learners/Further-Education/UniqueLearnersEnrolledFurtherEducationInstitutions-by-Deprivation-Gender-Age>

19-24 is higher². At the end of 2013, 10.5% of 16-18 year olds were NEET and yet the figure for those aged 19-24 stood at 21.2%. Further Education could play an important role in assisting in the development of opportunities for NEETS, particularly the older age range, but this would require a policy for Further Education which distinguished its role from that of merely supplementary 6th form provision and reinforce the value of the FE sector as a unique provider of lifelong training and education for all.

Much emphasis has been placed on early years intervention and improving attainment of pupils eligible for free school meals. However evidence of the success of such intervention is patchy and points toward the effects of early intervention programmes being short lived and not sufficient to close the long-term attainment gap for disadvantaged children. Low educational attainment of parents, affects their children's development and progress at school. Further Education supports an approach to family learning that enables all family members to enhance their learning and can support whole families that are vulnerable to poverty.

"The benefits of learning to families matter because of the way that poverty can be passed on through the generations. Children and adults learning together, for example, can contribute to children's resilience and communication skills, and can help to reduce children's psychological and behavioural disorders. The acquisition of skills by parents can also help children's performance at school. Children's achievement in early life remains the best indicator of their living successful lives as adults. In this context, lifelong learning has an important contribution to make to reducing poverty in the long run."³

Therefore policies that do not address the need for access to lifelong learning and indeed contribute to their demise, are counterproductive to any attempt to reduce the impact of poverty on the educational attainment of young children.

The structure of our society is changing. More people are living longer. It is predicted that by 2020⁴ almost a third (32%) of the working age population and almost half (48%) the adult population, will be people aged 50. As retirement age continues to rise, working for longer will become an economic necessity. The Welsh Government Skills Implementation Plan focus is on securing a resilient and sustainable skills system for Wales and aims to ensure that employability policies consider the challenges faced by older people. However it is unclear how older people will access the education they need to remain competitive in the workplace, if they are unable to access further education. Welsh Government proposals for addressing the needs of training in the workforce are via the Co-investment framework⁵. However this fails to address the need for learning that is not directly related to an employer led agenda. Further to this evidence was identified in the Equality Impact Assessments for the Programme of Wales, which suggested that older workers were much less

² <http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/young-people-not-education-employment-training/?lang=en>

³ Fullick, L., (2009), *Poverty Reduction and Lifelong Learning*, IFLL Thematic Paper 6, NIACE
<http://www.niace.org.uk/lifelonglearninginquiry/docs/IFLL-Poverty.pdf>

⁴ <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/publications/re-reference-tables.html?edition=tcm%3A77-318453>

⁵ <http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/141120-framework-for-co-investment-in-skills-en.pdf>

likely to be offered participation in employer provided training than younger workers.

The Strategy for Older People Phase 3⁶ and the 'Ageing Well in Wales' programme⁷ highlight the importance of prioritising employment and learning opportunities for older people, to maintain their wellbeing and to empower them to remain engaged in society. Further education can make a major contribution to both learning and social opportunities for older people and help reduce the effects of loneliness and isolation. Therefore we would like to see a Further Education policy that encompasses lifelong learning and addresses the above issues.

Delivering high quality apprenticeships

UCU recently responded to a consultation document from the Welsh Government on the Higher Education Wales Act in which the government is committing to ensure that large sums of public money do not end up in the hands of organisations which are not registered charities. UCU would like to see the next government commit to consider making the same conditions apply to the expenditure on Post 16 education, including spending on apprenticeships.

We would argue that investment in further and adult education would be a more appropriate way of enabling adults to improve their skills, increase their employment opportunities, enhance their wellbeing and improve the communities they live in.

In our response to the Welsh Government's consultation on 'Aligning the apprenticeship model to the needs of the Welsh economy,' we argued that

"Apprenticeships need to be a robust and respected vocational route. They need to offer real opportunities for employment and not be a means of cheap labour"

If apprenticeships are to truly be seen as a high quality vocational pathway, there needs to be greater input from, not just employers but also those delivering the programmes. Lecturers in further education have a wealth of knowledge and experience that could be drawn upon, to help develop a world class apprenticeship model. They are dual professionals, not just having industrial expertise, but also that of teaching; giving them a unique role in the development of a skilled workforce.

There is currently much focus on employer need with regard to the development of the apprenticeship programme, but this should be balanced with community and individual need. A more balanced input into the development of apprenticeship routes would help to empower and inform all stakeholders and help to strengthen the understanding and the value of the provision. The focus should therefore be on the needs of industry rather than employer needs and

⁶ <http://gov.wales/topics/health/publications/socialcare/strategies/older/?lang=en>

⁷ <http://www.ageingwellinwales.com/en/themes/opportunities-for-learning-and-employment>

should include the input of the related trade unions, to help ensure that apprentices receive quality training that will lead to sustainable employment.

Currently employers are expected to provide training for their apprentices, but how often, when and where, are at the discretion of the employer. In order to strengthen progression routes there needs to be some clarification and standardisation of expected levels of training, supported by appropriate regulation, otherwise there can be no parity between the quality of apprenticeships that differing employers provide, which will make it very difficult to determine the appropriate next level of progression.

Whilst it may be appropriate to offer higher level apprenticeships to provide an alternative undergraduate equivalent, we are of the opinion that the apprenticeship route is not generally suited to older adults, most of whom will have had work experience and therefore will not need the 'world of work' element of the apprenticeship scheme. They may also be prevented from taking part due to the 'low pay' offered to apprentices. We would suggest that higher apprenticeships, as a progression route for older adults, should be replaced with appropriately paid employment, offering appropriate continuous professional development, as it is likely that many such adults will already have level 3 qualifications as a minimum. Perhaps what is needed here is clarification of the use of the word 'apprentice'. Apprentice, suggests a person who has limited knowledge and understanding of a particular set of occupational skills, whereas studying a subject at level 4 or above would suggest that the individual already has some mastery of the subject area.

We further argue that despite the promotion of the co-investment model, which relies on the financial contributions of employers, we are not wholly convinced by the argument that funding to the FE sector will 'trickle down' from SME's into the colleges. In order to provide a robust support mechanism, FE colleges need proper funding of their core provision. Current funding cuts are stretching colleges to their financial limits. It cannot be expected that colleges will be able to deliver the remit required of them, to support the apprenticeship agenda, if they do not have the facilities or the staff to support this. Neither can we expect the remaining staff to deliver the level of teaching and learning required to promote the apprenticeship scheme as a high quality alternative route to employment, if they are faced with the ever increasing workloads and class sizes required of the effects of endless 'efficiency gains'. Alongside this, there is likely to be the increasing problem of failing to attract adequately qualified staff with appropriate industrial experience, while working conditions for lecturers continue to be eroded.

Therefore we call for a policy for further education that commits to the inclusion of the FE Sector in the development of a high quality and meaningful apprenticeship programme; one that is developed in partnership with the relevant industries, trade unions, college lecturers and college managers as well as employers, to ensure that the sector receives adequate and accountable public funding, in order to develop a high quality and meaningful vocational route into employment.

Assisting the delivery of HE in FE

The Government in its latest Review of higher education in further education institutions, May 2015⁸ argues that “There should be a more holistic and regional view of post-16 education in Wales, supported by stronger regional planning. Collaboration between higher and further education providers needs to be strengthened so that progression and even simultaneous study in both sectors can become a reality” (p2)

The review makes five recommendations, listed below:

R1 HE in FE part-time delivery to be expanded in critical economic sectors.

R2 HEFCW and ColegauCymru to meet with the Welsh Government to agree on how HE in FE delivery can be developed and expanded to meet the changing needs of the economy.

R3 HEFCW and ColegauCymru to work with Regional Skills Partnerships to ensure joint strategic planning of HE in FE delivery between HEIs and FEIs to support the expansion of delivery.

R4 The Welsh Government to consider how HEFCW’s funding and quality assurance arrangements can support the development of HE in FE provision.

R5 HEFCW to consider strengthening guidance on franchise arrangements between colleges and universities to provide stability and support strategic planning between the HE and FE sectors.

UCU submitted evidence to the Independent review of higher education funding and student finance arrangements (Diamond Review) supporting the delivery of HE in FE but we need to ensure that staff are given sufficient CPD time within their workload to ensure the quality and parity of vocational HE and academic HE.

It is the case that staff in further education are required by law to be members of the Education Workforce Council (EWC) and this body should be the body which ensures that staff have access to good quality CPD to be able to deliver HE in FE to support this agenda.

Thus far the focus has been on school teachers and the ‘new deal.’ We recognise the importance of the new deal and the changes the government wish to see in our school sector, but FE staff have been forced, by law, to be members of the EWC and therefore they should have a reasonable expectation that the EWC will provide at least the same opportunities as is being offered to the school teachers.

The lack of a policy for FE has left FE staff out in the cold, despite our continual reminders to the EWC and civil servants, we have seen little progress on this matter and little engagement with the FE trades unions about CPD suitable for FE staff.

⁸ <http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/publications/reports/a-review-of-he-delivered-in-further-education-institutions/?lang=en>

Further the review itself makes no mention of discussions with trades unions about the impact that the recommendations may have on staff in both further and higher education. Does social partnership not apply to post 16 education sector?

Therefore we call for a policy for further education that commits to the inclusion of the professional opinions of lecturers through their relevant trade unions. One that recognises the values and expertise of those with the knowledge and understanding required, to deliver the quality expected in the post 16 education system, across a wide variety of skills and levels.

Further we call for commitment to ensure the democratic election of the representatives of FE lecturers to the Education Workforce Council and for access to appropriate CPD, to ensure that all members of the Education Workforce Council have equal opportunity to develop professional skills.

Assisting the implementation of the Programme for Government

Since the demise of the Funding Council for Further Education we have seen a distinct lack of government policy providing a direction and mission for the Further Education (FE) sector as a whole, with the exception of the Transformation Agenda, which saw institutions in the sector reduce from 23 institutions in 2000 to 12 FE institutions excluding St David's six form college, YMCA and WEA in 2015.

However, the Welsh Government is heavily reliant on the FE sector to deliver its wider policy agenda, yet despite that fact the FE sector has no clear role and function articulated in a government policy document.

The attached appendix serves to highlight the reliance this government has placed on FE delivering for the different policy initiatives it has introduced during this term of office.

The next government of Wales must articulate in policy the role that FE should play in the future life of Wales. FE is uniquely placed to deliver on the Poverty Agenda, widening access to vocational higher education, providing a second chance education for those who didn't make the most of their chances at school and responding to the ever changing needs of employers in relation to the skills issues they face.

Without a current policy for the FE sector, we are witnessing the destruction of its core function, of providing second chance education. The clear steer given to other education sectors has, perhaps inadvertently, contributed to the neglect of a vital part of further education; its contribution to the community as a whole.

The indirect benefits of FE include increased civil participation and improved racial tolerance. At an individual level, adults often cite learning as increasing their confidence and changing self-perceptions.⁹

FE should not be regarded as simply a vehicle to support routes to HE or employment. It has a far greater role which deserves to be protected by its own distinct policy.

⁹ Fullick, L., (2009), *Poverty Reduction and Lifelong Learning*, IFLL Thematic Paper 6, NIACE <http://www.niace.org.uk/lifelonglearninginquiry/docs/IFLL-Poverty.pdf>

APPENDIX

The role of Further Education in the Programme for Government

Agriculture :- Independent Review of Learning delivered by Further Education Colleges and the Relevance of that delivery in Supporting Farm Businesses in Wales, Jan 2015

Section 1.11 reads

“ The primary objective of the FE sector with agricultural provision in Wales is the delivery of high quality further education. An additional activity is that of developing progression opportunities from FE to HE. This requires a robust partnership with the university sector not only for academic approval but also to support the development of the subject specialism. I cannot overstate the importance of the latter if we are to establish meaningful and enduring coherence to FE/HE links in agriculture in Wales. It is important for the progression to be provided full time, part-time or work-based.

The FE sector colleges are actually exploring ways to exploit their multi disciplinarily approach by broadening their agriculture mission to enhance rural innovation, enterprise, food chain relationships and efficiencies. They need to be actively encouraged to progress in this direction, as they could be major players in future.

However, we need to be aware that the removal of the higher education funding cap in England together with the possible outcomes of the Independent Review of Higher Education Funding and Student Finance arrangements in Wales, may lead to tension within FE/HE relationships in future due to competition for students in a more market-driven recruitment climate.”

Section 3.16 suggests

“The colleges could play a key role in developing and demonstrating emerging innovative applied scientific thinking into holistic sustainable farm systems. The resources available at IBERS and the colleges working together with the Welsh Government and other agencies could provide an excellent platform for taking our industry forward.

Horticulture: Strategic Action Plan for the Welsh Horticulture Industry, April 2010

Section 3.15 states

“In order to improve the supply of suitably trained and qualified labour within the industry, there is a need to assess skills required by businesses and communicate this to training providers.

There is also a requirement to review the current education and training provision available to the industry and raise the profile of horticulture as a career opportunity. It is important to consider whether appropriate delivery mechanisms are in place to provide the skills and knowledge base to make Wales’ horticulture truly sustainable. The industry and the Welsh Assembly Government also need to invest in skills development and the importance of this is reflected in the Welsh Assembly Government’s Skills That Work for Wales Strategy and Action Plan.”

Section 3.25 argues that

“Recruitment and retention of suitably skilled and trained labour is a challenge in all areas of the horticulture industry, partly due to poor awareness of the

variety of career opportunities the sector offers. There is both a challenge and an opportunity to raise the profile of horticulture and to encourage more people to choose horticulture as a career path and to find ways to develop and retain staff.”

Economic Renewal: a new direction, July 2010

Page 4

The government state as a matter of fact that “Most importantly we cannot deliver on this vision by ourselves. It requires us to build on the partnerships forged during the downturn – with the private sector, the third sector, local authorities, Higher and Further Education, the NHS and others.”

Page 27

“It is a central tenet of For Our Future that that the provision of foundation degrees in Wales is fully responsive and opened up to the skills needs of our employers, current employees and the future workforce. Equally we expect Higher and Further Education providers not only to work collaboratively and exploit their combined resources in the provision of foundation degrees, but importantly to work closely in networks with employers – particularly at a regional level.”

Page 28

“Wales’ changing demography means that fewer young people will be entering the workforce, making it ever more important to improve the existing stock of adult skills. Investment in adult learning, particularly training in the workplace, will be vital in maintaining and enhancing our competitiveness.

There are many ways in which current policies and programmes support adult skills. For example, planning guidance to Further Education institutions instructs them to increase basic skills provision and support local Spatial Plan priorities.”

Science for Wales Delivery Plan, March 2012

Section 5.2 commits to

“The Minister for Education and Skills and Deputy Minister for Skills have published their intention to improve labour market intelligence. This will provide the information needed by learners and education providers to better match the skills of young people to the demands of industry. The coordination and dissemination of this information, through more effective careers advice, will provide the information needed by learners to make informed choices on their futures, including the availability of careers in STEM-related disciplines. This information will be allied to the planning of apprenticeship and further education provision to ensure that state funded education is up to the challenge of securing the skills needed by the current and future STEM business community. The Welsh Government will also work with the higher education community to ensure that STEM pathways, from school to higher education, are available and meet the demands of the Welsh economy.”

Building Resilient Communities: Taking forward the Tackling Poverty Action Plan, July 2013

On page 9 it is the government aspiration that

“.....more pupils from Communities First areas will go into Higher Education. HEFCW has a specific aim to raise the number of pupils that achieve this goal. The Communities First programme will continue to work both with HEFCW and local Universities and Further Education colleges to support more young people to access Higher and Further Education and remove the barriers that exist.”

Towards Sustainable Growth: An action plan for the Food and Drink Industry 2014-2020

Section 4.4 highlights

"Graduates and school leavers are not attracted in the same numbers as in other industries. Universities and colleges can find it difficult to fill places on food courses and degrees. In contrast university and college leavers with food related qualifications find it relatively easy to secure interesting and rewarding jobs that offer career paths. There is clearly a disconnect. The 'block' may be fewer students studying the sciences post 16 or, more likely; it may be attributable to perceptions or misperceptions about exactly what working in the food industry entails."

A living language: a language for living – Moving forward, August 2014

On page 14 the government acknowledge

"We also need to build on the work of the bilingual champions in further education and work-based learning to ensure the further development and sustaining of Welsh-medium and bilingual provision post-16 and ensure that the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol continues to develop and thrive."

Capital Investment Fund 2015-16: Welsh language Centres and learning Spaces Feb 2015

"The Welsh Government is opening a capital investment fund of £1 million for 2015-16 that will be specifically targeted to support the development of centres and/or learning spaces which promote the use of Welsh or immersion in Welsh. This fund builds upon the success of the £1.25m fund for 2014-15, which was a key commitment in our policy document A living language: a language for living - Moving forward published in August 2014.

The funding will be awarded to local authorities, further education institutions or universities who can demonstrate an innovative approach and an emphasis on working in partnership with others for the benefit of the wider community."

The Youth Engagement and Progression Framework – Implementation Plan 2014

aims to reduce the number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET). The Welsh Government are determined to reduce the level of NEETs in Wales and the economic and individual costs associated with this. It is clear that this will involve the FE sector.

Page 5

"The national measure of young people who are NEET in Wales shows that the figure for 16 to 18-year-olds who are NEET has remained at levels of between 10 and 13 per cent in the last five years to 2012, reflecting the longer term trend, while the rate for 19 to 24-year-olds increased markedly following the last recession in 2008. International comparisons show Wales is not performing as well as other countries.

We are determined to make further improvement. There are clear benefits to the Welsh economy, wider society and most importantly to young people and their families in increasing youth engagement and progression. Wales needs more young people to successfully progress to further and higher education and into skilled employment. The failure to engage young people increases the costs associated

with health and social services, and contributes to the challenges associated with long-term unemployment.

A study by the University of York in 2010 estimated the additional lifetime costs associated with being NEET at over £160,000 per person in England in 2008. When applied to the current cohort of 16 to 18-year-olds in Wales who are NEET this suggests the cost to Wales as a whole of failing to engage these young people is circa £2 billion. There is an economic as well as a moral imperative to deliver improvement."

The document goes on to outline Welsh Government expectations of improving the quality of existing provision and supporting the provision of the **Youth Guarantee**, which is the offer, acceptance and commencement of a suitable place in education or training for any young person making the first time transition from compulsory education at age 16. It is quite clear that FE colleges will be expected to rise to the challenge.

Page 45

"[The Youth Guarantee requires] post-16 providers to respond to any challenges identified locally. Many FE colleges are already playing an important role locally in addressing the challenge of reducing NEET. We think the FE sector can do even more. We know that the vast majority of college start dates are still in September and October but the introduction of the Youth Guarantee will require more flexibility than this. We will work with ColegauCymru to identify what more the FE sector can do."

Page 47

"Welsh Government to work with ColegauCymru to identify what more the FE sector can do to support the implementation of the Youth Guarantee."

Page 51

"We know that many young people who are not currently participating [in education or training] are highly motivated by work, but do not yet have the skills or practical experience to move into employment. That is why we are making substantive experience of the workplace a key element of our 16 to 19 study programmes. By providing young people with meaningful work experience closer to the point at which they will enter the labour market, we will not only better prepare young people for employment, but also make continuing in learning more attractive to those young people who might otherwise not have participated. We have already made experience of the world of work a central feature of our traineeship programme and will continue to push the FE sector to do the same with its programme delivery."

The tracking of those that might be at risk of becoming NEET and providing opportunities for them to engage, is also part of the Welsh Government **Tackling Poverty Action Plan 2012-2016** as outlined on page 17 of the plan.

The Skills Implementation Plan 2014 sets out how the Welsh Government proposes to develop a sustainable skills system. Part of this plan establishes a Skills Priorities Programme led by Wales' FE sector.

Page 10 of the skills implementation plan

“[the] **Skills Priorities Programme** will focus on the vital role of further education in responding to local employer demand for skills. The programme will deliver vocational skills provision through further education institutions in line with regional and local employer demand for skills between Level 2 and Level 5.

Also key to the Skills Implementation Plan will be the introduction of the Skills Gateway, an online resource for providing skills and employment information and advice. Many of the courses listed on the **Skills Gateway** for adults, are provided by FE colleges; indicating an important role for FE in the provision of post 19 learning.

Agenda Item 3.1

P-04-552 Child Protection

Petition wording:

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to review and strengthen child protection criteria and consider establishing a regulatory body for Wales. This should aim to ensure that those who have charge of children, whether that's in schools, youth clubs, charities where children are the main focus, or people coming into contact or being invited in as patrons, governors, ambassadors, public servants or anybody appointed by children's charities are assessed as to their suitability to work with and around children.

Additional information: As it stands, local and county councillors and people appointed as ambassadors or Chairs of children's charities do not undergo DBS checks. Most of these people get open door access to children because of their position. In the light of the Jimmy Saville affair and the Ian Watkins affair, will the Welsh Assembly now recognise that we can no longer blindly accept people on the basis of their celebrity or social position and allow them access to children.

Petition raised by: Montessori Centre Wales

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 13 May 2014

Number of signatures: 40

Leighton Andrews AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Gwasanaethau Cyhoeddus
Minister for Public Services



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-552
Ein cyf/Our ref LA/00687/15

William Powell AM
Chair - Petitions Committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

seneddpetitions@wales.gsi.gov.uk

17 June 2015


Dear Bete

Thank you for your letter of 5 June regarding the petition (P-04-552) on establishing a regulatory body for Wales to strengthen child protection, enclosing the subsequent correspondence from the petitioner. The Minister for Health and Social Services has asked me to respond, since the correspondence concerns elected representatives, which falls within my portfolio.

The petitioner draws the Committee's attention to the online petition which calls on Carmarthshire County Council to introduce Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks for all locally elected representatives.

As noted by the then Deputy Minister in her reply to you last year, the DBS operates on an England and Wales basis and the positions and duties that qualify for exceptions to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, and therefore liability for checks, are specified in non-devolved legislation. Councillors are not among those specified.

It is not within my remit to require Local Authorities to carry out DBS checks on all elected councillors.

Yours sincerely,


Leighton Andrews AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Gwasanaethau Cyhoeddus
Minister for Public Services

Bae 1 Caerdydd • Cardiff
Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff

English Enquiry Line 0300 0603300
Llinell Ymholiadau Cymraeg 0300 0604400
Correspondence: Leighton.Andrews@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Wedi'i argraffu ar bapur wedi'i ailgylchu (100%)

Page 59

Printed on 100% recycled paper

Agenda Item 3.2

P-04- 589 Reduce the Number of Councillors and Executive Members in Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Petition Wording:

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to instruct the Local Government Boundary Commission to review the number of Councillors and Executive Members for Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council with a view to reducing their numbers.

Additional Information:

Blaenau Gwent has more Councillors per head of population and more Executive Members than neighbouring Councils. Independent Members of the council put in a proposal to the council to reduce the number of executive members to 6 or 7. The Labour ruling council refused this. These savings could reopen the local toilets. Blaenau Gwent has 42 councillors and 10 executive members and the population is 69300, giving a count of 1 councillor for 1611 people. Merthyr Tydfil has 33 councillors and 7 executive members and the population is 58800 giving a count of 1 councillor for 1781 people. Caerphilly has 72 councillors and 10 executive members and the population is 178800 giving a count of 1 councillor for 2384 people.

Each Blaenau Gwent Councillor has the lowest population per councillor rate in Wales. Blaenau Gwent council has made staff redundant in all areas of the council but are not prepared to lower their head count when they are clearly over the amount needed. Can the Welsh Government look into this and force the council to reduce their numbers in order to save money and services in Blaenau Gwent.

Petition raised by: Julian price

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 23 September 2014

Number of signatures: 34

P-04-602 Personalisation of Graves

Petition wording

We the undersigned, call upon Welsh Government to review the central policy with a view to bringing in new legislation/regulations so that there is consistency across local authority areas in Wales on the personalisation of Graves, particularly the graves of babies and children

Petitioner : Elizabeth Haynes & Catherine Board

First considered by the Committee:

Number of Signatures: 120 electronic signatures and 1,486 paper signatures collected. Total: 1,606

Agenda Item 3.4

P-04-616 Please Prevent Fireworks from Being Sold to the General Public

Petition wording

We want to request a change in legislation so that only licensed events with can organise firework displays and use fireworks. We want to ban the sale of any fireworks to the general public. We want to ban the use of fireworks by the general public. As we all know, since the Millennium, fireworks are no longer a 'once a year' event. Every year fireworks are going off more than a week before November the 5th and generally continue in spits and spats until the New Year celebrations start them off in full swing again. Every year, children and adults are injured by fireworks that have been set off by the general public. The use of fireworks in a domestic setting which has no regulatory control or qualified professional in charge of the fireworks can be, and has proven to be, fatal. On top of this, the poor defenceless animals need to be taken into consideration. According to the RSPCA U.K's pet figures of 2013, there are around 22 million household pets in the U.K – averaging about 1 in every 2 houses. Any pet owner can understand the terror caused by fireworks being set off at the end of a neighbours garden where there is no control. Fireworks can be brilliant and something to look forward to. As it stands, many people dread and fear a time that was once a much celebrated time of year. Please help us and our pets feel safe again.

Petitioner : Kathy Peart

First considered by the Committee:

Number of Signatures:: 110

Leighton Andrews AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Gwasanaethau Cyhoeddus
Minister for Public Services



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-616
Ein cyf/Our ref LA -/00314/15

William Powell AM
Chair, Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

SeneddPetitions@assembly.wales

1 June 2015

Dear William,

I wrote to you on 22 April about the petition your Committee has received calling for a ban on the sale of fireworks to the general public. In that letter, I indicated that I needed to consider the legal advice your Committee had received on this matter, which you forwarded to me with your letter of 9 April.

It is difficult for me to reach a view on the Assembly's competence as regards hypothetical legislation to ban the sale and use of fireworks. However, and as I said in my earlier letter, current functions to regulate the sale and use of fireworks in Wales are not exercisable by the Welsh Ministers. Under the Fireworks Act 2003, these rest with the Secretary of State. There is, therefore, no action I can take using existing executive powers.

I do not doubt the sincerity of your petitioners' views about the risks to human and animal health from the deliberate or accidental misuse of fireworks. However, fireworks are relatively insignificant as a cause of fire. Only six primary (more serious) fires were started this way in 2013-14, whereas candles accounted for 65, and cooking appliances for over 1,000. That, along with the absence of existing executive powers, means I cannot give any priority to taking this issue further.

Yours sincerely,

Leighton Andrews AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Gwasanaethau Cyhoeddus
Minister for Public Services

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

English Enquiry Line 0300 0603300
Llinell Ymholiadau Cymraeg 0300 0604400
Correspondence: Leighton.Andrews@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Wedi'i argraffu ar bapur wedi'i ailgylchu 100%
Pack Page 64

Printed on 100% recycled paper

By virtue of paragraph(s) ix of Standing Order 17.42

Document is Restricted

Agenda Item 3.5

P-04-494 Robotic assisted laparoscopic prostatectomy must be made available to men in Wales now

Petition wording:

Robotic assisted laparoscopic prostatectomy is the 21st Century Gold standard. Wales as a nation must be at the forefront in offering this standard. We, the undersigned, are appalled by the fact that men in Wales with prostate cancer cannot be offered robotic surgery in Wales, yet in England ALL men have this choice with at least 40 locations offering this treatment and with men from Wales having to pay thousands of pounds to access this capability in these English NHS facilities (typically between £13-15,000). Clearly, many men in Wales cannot afford this. We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government together with the National Health Service of Wales to resolve this totally unfair predicament and serious lack of essential resource within our NHS in Wales without delay. It is vital that this technology, this 21st Century Gold Standard is offered to men in Wales. It simply cannot be right that such technology is available elsewhere and that men from Wales have to pay to avail themselves of it in an NHS facility in England.

Petition raised by: Professor Kevin Davies MBE

Date petition first considered by Committee: 16 July 2013

Number of signatures: 2090. An associated petition collected 1,000 signatures.

Mark Drakeford AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-494
Ein cyf/Our ref MD/01350/15

William Powell AM
Chair - Petitions Committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

21 May 2015

Dear William,

Thank you for your letter of 23 April regarding Petition P-04-0494 and the availability of robotic-assisted laparoscopic prostatectomy for Welsh patients.

Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board has considered the provision of robotic-assisted procedures for its population. In order to ensure patients from North Wales are treated at a centre which meets national guidelines for the safe number of procedures carried out, patients are referred to Manchester's Christie Hospital.

I am unclear what is being asked in your letter when it enquires what provision is available at Manchester's Christie Hospital. As the committee is aware, patients from North Wales can be referred there for robotic-assisted laparoscopic prostatectomy. I attach a link to the Christie NHS Foundation Trust website which provides further information:

<http://www.christie.nhs.uk/our-services/surgery/robotic-radical-prostatectomy.aspx>

The cost of referring patients to this facility is a matter for the health board and I would urge you to contact it in order to further your enquiries.

Best wishes,
Mark.

Mark Drakeford AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Back Page 69

Wedi'i argraffu ar bapur wedi'i ailgylchu (100%)

English Enquiry Line 0300 0603300
Llinell Ymholiadau Cymraeg 0300 0604400
Correspondence: Mark.Drakeford@wales.gsi.gov.uk
Printed on 100% recycled paper

Agenda Item 3.6

P-04- 588 Charter for Children and Fathers

Petition Wording

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to adopt all six points in the Charter for Action for Children & Fathers in Wales.

1. All Welsh Government funded programmes to record gender of parents / carers they work with.
2. Set S.M.A.R.T. targets to increase participation of fathers and all other Non Resident Parents with Welsh Government services.
3. First Minister to make annual statement on the importance of fathers AND what the Welsh Government has done to help them in the past 12 months.
4. Encourage improved shared care of children to allow more parents (particularly single parents) to take up training or employment programmes.
5. Recognition of Parental Alienation as a form of emotional abuse of children.
6. Establish a work group under the Family Justice Network for Wales to co-ordinate improved collaboration for those organisations who hold the DWP's Help and Support for Separated Families (HSSF) Mark in Wales

Additional Information

1. Welsh Government has confirmed family support services are not currently asked to record the gender of the parents they work with.
2. Our research with parenting initiatives in Wales shows the average engagement level is between 3 and 11% of service users being male.
3. The precedent is from the USA: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/06/14/weekly-address-celebrating-fathers-day-weekend>
4. Several US states require the 'right of first refusal' to non-resident parents and grandparents for them to undertake child care:
<http://ilfamilylaw.com/new-law-right-first-refusal-child-care/> In Illinois

they equate 'the best interests of the child' with 'maximum time with both parents'.

5. The Family Justice Network for Wales rejected our call to recognise Parental Alienation as a form of emotional abuse of children in May 2014⁶. The DWP have confirmed their support for this proposal and Albert Heaney Chair of the FJN has also indicated his support.

Petition raised by: FNF Both Parents Matter Cymru

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 23 September 2014

Number of signatures: 653

Mark Drakeford AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-588
Ein cyf/Our ref MD/01546/15

William Powell AM
Chair - Petitions Committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

14 June 2015

Dear William,

Earlier this year you forwarded correspondence the Petitions Committee received from Mr Paul Apreda, National Manager, Families Need Fathers: Both Parents Matter Cymru. In your covering letter you ask if the Welsh Government would consider collecting data around male engagement and provide further information about why the CAF/CASS Cymru Child and Adolescent Welfare Checklist (CC-CAWAC) cannot be shared more widely.

It may help at this point to inform you I met with Mr Apreda in February. At that meeting, I was accompanied by Gillian Baranski, chief executive of CAF/CASS Cymru. During our meeting we discussed the CC-CAWAC and explained the reasons it would not be appropriate to disclose the toolkits to a wider audience. I have also written to Mr Apreda following that meeting with similar information.

The use of CC-CAWAC relies on ensuring its integrity. In the context of litigation and court where separated parents are in dispute over child arrangements, there is the potential that children could be "coached" and/or highly influenced if copies of the questionnaires and scoring booklet become freely available. This could potentially prejudice the reliability of a Family Court Advisor's assessment and analysis of a child's situation and could skew the child's true wishes and feelings as to a particular proposal being considered by the court.

If CC-CAWAC was shared more widely it would also be likely to prejudice confidence in the CC-CAWAC and undermine its value as an objective and evidence-based assessment tool within CAF/CASS Cymru but also amongst children, service users and the family court.

Whilst there would be benefits to releasing the individual questionnaires and the scoring booklet which supports them, in terms of improved transparency and scrutiny, these are outweighed by the significant detriments which could potentially flow, not least in

undermining the integrity and value of the CC-CAWAC and placing children in an increasingly difficult situation.

You also raise the issue of collecting data around male engagement. Within the department for health and social services, only CAF/CASS Cymru works directly with service users. CAF/CASS Cymru is currently developing a new information recording system, which, when implemented, will record the gender details of the parents with whom they work.

Best wishes,
Mark

Mark Drakeford AC / AM

Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services



[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

William Powell AM

Chair - Petitions Committee

National Assembly for Wales

Cardiff, CF99 1NA

22nd June 2015

Dear Mr.Powell

Petition for Children & Fathers – P04/588

Thank you for sharing with me the Minister's letter of 14th June.

I'm pleased to confirm that I had a very positive meeting with the Minister and the Chief Executive of CAF/CASS Cymru earlier this year in which we discussed a number of issues.

CAWAC ASSESSMENT TOOL – We understand the concerns expressed by Welsh Government about children being 'coached' if information about the assessment methodology is made public. However we note that Cafcass in England are able to share details about all of their assessment tools openly on their website here: <https://www.cafcass.gov.uk/leaflets-resources/policies-and-templates-for-secs/forms,-templates-and-tools.aspx>

It is fair to say that our service users have very little confidence in the outcomes from the use of the CAWAC assessment – partly because it cannot be properly and completely explained or opened to scrutiny. It is also clear that the Welsh Government is not going to change their position on this matter, nor abandon the use of this assessment tool despite it not having been peer reviewed or scrutinised by members of the Assembly.

MALE ENGAGEMENT – I am a little confused by the response from the Minister. We appreciate that Welsh Government itself does not directly engage with service users (except in relation to Cafcass Cymru). We were asking that he consider requiring the Local Authority services he has responsibility for to alter their current practice.

We have previously identified a lack of engagement with fathers across a wide variety of Welsh Government services. In relation to services overseen by the Minister for Health & Social Services we note that Children's Services departments appear to have a culture of 'institutionalised sexism'

towards fathers. I wrote to the Minister on 16th June to highlight this matter and ask him to launch an inquiry into the treatment of fathers and other male carers by Local Authority Children's Services departments.

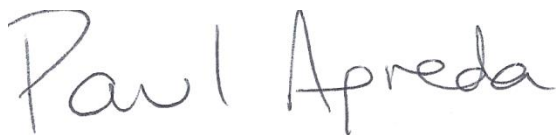
We base our view about 'institutionalised sexism' on a couple of pieces of evidence. Firstly, we have just published our first annual Welsh Dads survey which captured information from fathers across the whole of Wales about their experience of engaging with a variety of public services. The data shows that 60% of fathers who had contact with them had a negative experience of engagement with Children's Services. The data – with many comments from individual fathers can be accessed here https://www.fnf-bpm.org.uk/image/upload/branch/cymru/WELSH_DADS_SURVEY_report_v2.pdf

A very significant piece of evidence is represented by the work of the Fatherhood Institute with Children's Services in Conwy and Newport. Under an EU funded project they undertook a programme of work to map levels of engagement with fathers in child protection cases. The levels were disappointingly low, but in the case of Conwy the department asked to re-assess engagement after a few months during which they asked front line social workers to ask about dads and actively seek to improve engagement levels. The results haven't yet been published officially but a report was included in the industry journal Children & Young People Now (document attached) – which shows the dramatic improvement made by Conwy just by asking social workers to improve their practice.

We believe that requiring LA Children's services departments to record data around the engagement of fathers (using the Fatherhood Institute template) would be a very low cost option that would significantly improve engagement. We also believe that, given the evidence now available in Wales about a lack of engagement, the Welsh Government is currently failing in its duty of 'due regard' under the Rights of Children & Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011 in respect of Article 18 of the UNCRC.

I would be happy to discuss any of the above with the Committee if that would be helpful.

Regards



Paul Apreda

NATIONAL MANAGER

FNF BOTH PARENTS MATTER CYMRU



Agenda Item 3.7

P-04-577 Reinstate Funding to the Real Opportunities Project

Petition Wording

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to reinstate funding to the Real Opportunities project previously funded by the European Social Fund in Wales, or some new similar project that has the same values as Real Opportunities. The project is vital to helping 14-19 year olds with a learning disability or autistic spectrum disorder to gain life skills and independence.

Additional Information:

The Real Opportunities project enables 14-19 year olds with a learning disability or Autism Spectrum Disorder to develop skills vital for their transition into a college education as well as enabling them to transition into the world of work and develop basic life skills vital to their independence. The project has helped over 1700 young adults with learning disabilities or Autism Spectrum Disorder and has helped train over 1000 peer mentors with the intention of increasing the levels of integration between mainstream school pupils and those in a special needs unit. The values of this project are vital to these young people who at the start may have little or no awareness of personal hygiene etc and at the end are self aware of their personal hygiene and have completed Agored Cymru qualifications that they would otherwise be unable to do.

Petition raised by: Aled Davies

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 15 July 2014

Number of signatures: 25 – An associated e-petition collected 226 signatures.

**P-04-577 Reinstate Funding to the Real Opportunities Project –
Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 22.06.15**

Dear Committee,

Thank you for your letter dated March 2015 in which you referred to correspondence received from The Minister for Finance. Whilst all of us in support of the petition appreciate it is not the ministers responsibility to control WEFO funds the intention of the petition was to raise an awareness to the Assembly of the lack of resources actively being made available to Young Adults with Learning Disabilities or an Autistic Spectrum Disorder.

It is with great regret that we have been informed of the decision to not support the requests for European funding to relaunch The Real Opportunities project but instead plough funding into a new initiative that will support a broad spectrum of needs whilst not directly supporting those previously targeted by The Real Opportunities Project.

In your letter I was disappointed to hear that the committee saw the ministers response as satisfactory grounds to move to close the petition without waiting for the WEFO decision on the topic, furthermore I would like to reiterate the fact that the proposal on how to use The Mix as a model of best practice was intended to highlight the ease of running a service in support of young people and in no way a direct request for funding to The Mix. This move by the committee to close the door on the thousands of young adults and their families in dire need of support following the closure of the Real Opportunities Project has not only upset myself but the many other people behind our petition.

Surely you can see the need to be proactive on this situation. By funding initiatives, either with WEFO money or money from The Welsh Government, to support young people now we will see a reduction on the pressure on other services, such as the NHS, needed to support not only these young people but their families.

I shall end my letter by urging you, the committee, to reconsider the options available as a result of this petition, surely it is not too much to ask that a full review be carried out to highlight the shortfall of services to the vulnerable young people served by the Assembly.

Thank you for your time.

Yours Faithfully,
Aled Davies
Petitioner.

Agenda Item 3.8

P-04-511 Support for children and young people participation standards

Petition wording:

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to provide support for the National Children and Young People's Participation Standards for Wales self-assessment process.

Additional Information:

The Participation standards were launched in 2007 after being developed by the Participation Unit. There are seven participation standards which are Information, It's your choice, No Discrimination, Respect, You get something out of it, Feedback and Improving how we work. The participation unit then developed a national standards kite – mark scheme based around the standards. The aim of the kite–mark was that the organisations would complete a self assessment and once it was complete a team of young inspectors would come and inspect the evidence the organisation had to see if they were up to the national standards. If they were seen as achieving they would be awarded the National Participation Standards Kit–mark. However the participation unit now no longer exists which means that's any organisation which does a self assessment now can only achieve a county level kite–mark which means that there is no national recognition and also there is no team co–coordinating the young inspectors.

Petition raised by: Powys Youth Forum

Date petition first considered by Committee: 11 November 2013

Number of signatures: 39

Lesley Griffiths AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Cymunedau a Threchu Tlodi
Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04 511
Ein cyf/Our ref LG/00696/15

William Powell AM
Chair - Petitions Committee

committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

9 June 2015

Dear Bill

Thank you for your letter of 5 June, regarding the petition for the Support for Children and Young People Participation Standards.

As the Welsh Government currently fund Children in Wales to take the National Participation Standards forward, I am happy to let them update you directly.

Regards
Lesley

Lesley Griffiths AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Cymunedau a Threchu Tlodi
Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty

25 Windsor Place Cardiff CF10 3BZ / 25 Plas Windsor Caerdydd CF10
3BZ Tel / Ffôn: 029 2034 2434 Fax / Ffacs: 029 2034 3134
Unit 2 Victoria Dock Balaclafa Road Caernarfon LL55 1TH
Uned 2 Doc Fictoria Ffordd Balaclafa Caernarfon LL55 1TH
Tel / Ffôn: 01286 677570 Fax / Ffacs: 01286 676095
Email / Epost: info@childreninwales.org.uk
www.childreninwales.org.uk / www.plantynghymru.org.uk



Children in Wales
Plant yng Nghymru

12 June 2015

Dear William Powell AM,

re: Petitions Committee consideration the National Children and Young People's Participation Standards for Wales (the Standards)

Thank you for your letter of 5 June 2015 regarding the letter from Jack Gillum who is a member of the Powys Youth Forum on the above matter. It is a pity Powys Youth Forum was unable to be represented in the group considering a refresh of the Standards, but a representative is always welcome at future meetings, the next one is on July 6. There is also a direct communication channel through to the Children in Wales staff because there are specific named link workers from Children in Wales to each of the Youth Forums in Wales and they have made it clear that any issues of concern a Youth Forum has can be raised directly with them at any time, with a view to creating an open dialogue between Children in Wales and the Youth Forums as well as other groups. The link worker to the Powys Youth Forum would be pleased to give Jack an update.

Regarding the Standards, work is ongoing following a mapping exercise which identified the fact that there is a greater variety of practice models across Wales than was originally believed. The consequence of this is that work is currently focussed on delivering a simple refresh of 'the Standards' (as agreed in a previous meeting), together with updated resources. It also includes developing a model of kite-marking that is appropriate for current use across Wales in light of the changes, in part brought about by staffing issues at local level. Young people representatives who have experience of previous models of kite-marking will be involved with participation workers and Children in Wales staff.

Training in relation to the Standards is included in many of the Children in Wales courses to a wide variety of disciplines and sectors. The training the trainer events will be designed and delivered alongside the revised resources when ready. Finally resources regarding sharing good practice on participation are accessible via the new 'Cymru Ifanc' 'Young Wales' website www.cymruifanc.cymru www.youngwales.wales where there is a resources section and forums

and other groups are being encouraged to send in their

Working for children, young people and their families in partnership with the National Children's Bureau and Children in Scotland

Gweithio dros blant, pobl ifanc a'u teuluoedd mewn partneriaeth gyda Biwrô Cenedlaethol y Plant a Clann an Alba

Registered Charity Number: 1020313 A company limited by guarantee registered in Wales: 2805996 / Elusen Gofrestredig Rhif: 1020313 Cwmni cyfyngedig trwy warant a gofrestrwyd yng Nghymru: 2805996

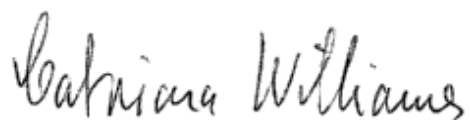
Pack Page 80

examples. The design of the website is to enable work from across Wales on participation to be

found in one place. A national good practice sharing event is now being planned for a half term date that is suitable for the Forums.

I can reassure the Committee that Children in Wales is not going to let the children and young people's participation standards drop off the agenda.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Catriona Williams".

Catriona Williams OBE
Chief Executive

**P-04-511 Support for children and young people participation standards –
Correspondence from the petitioner to the Committee, 24.06.15**

Powys Youth Forum Response to NAFW Petition Committee

1) Regarding involvement in meetings, the timings and location of the meetings have made it impossible for both the attendance of staff and young people at them. However we have raised concerns regarding the standards at All Wales Participation Workers Network meetings (at which Welsh Government and Children in Wales were in attendance). Concerns have also directly related to Powys' Children in Wales link during a Powys Youth Forum residential.

2) While we appreciate that the picture of practice around the Standards differs across Wales – Welsh Government and Children in Wales have continually reiterated their support for the standards. We feel that this very limited and slow progress only adds to the differing picture across the Local Authorities, with loss of staff who had been funded specifically to support the standards, self assessment, young inspectors and kitemarking process and with the perceived value of the Kitemark lessening with no formal sign off from any National body. This is despite Children in Wales agreeing that a National sign off and certificate is needed, however we are still waiting.

3) This petition was first submitted in October 2013 and to date there has been one national meeting (held in Cardiff) with the next meeting due in early July (also in Cardiff). We feel that very little progress has been made during these meetings to reach the end objective.

Finally we appreciate that the petitions committee have shown a real commitment to ensuring that this important issue is highlighted and is not one which is left behind.

Agenda Item 3.9

P-04-573 – Call on the Welsh Government to Investigate the Residential Leasehold System in Wales.

Petition Wording

We the undersigned call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to instigate an investigation into the way in which the residential leasehold system is operating in Wales despite the changes made by the Leasehold Reform Act and to consider whether there should be a cap on increases to leasehold agreements in Wales.

Additional Information:

This petition has been submitted in light of the fear that residents on the Elba estate in Gowerton are currently experiencing, due to the demands of up to 5000% increases in annual ground rent that Swansea Council are demanding of these leaseholders.

Petition raised by: Residents of Elba Estate

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 15 July 2014

Number of signatures: 583

P-04-573 - Call on the Welsh Government to Investigate the Residential Leasehold System in Wales.

Correspondence - 04.06.15 - Petitioner to the Chair

To Mr William Powell AC / AM Chair of Petitions Committee

Dear Sir

Thank you for allowing me this final opportunity.

In answer to Mr Griffiths AM, I am not a member of the Elba Gowerton negotiations team, so I do not know why they did not involve the Lease Valuation Tribunal, other than I understand it is a costly exercise legally, being seen as a refuge of the last resort. Mr Llewelyn, chair of the negotiations team may well be able to enlighten you further.

As you are no doubt aware Mr Powell, the 12 month negotiations have been finally concluded, with the annual ground rent being set at £400. Although this may well seem an impressive reduction, 800% against 5000%, it is still £400 per year on top of an ever increasing Council Tax, Energy, Water and Transport costs, with many families still fearful of meeting this extra burden on their household bills.

Also within the settlement, Swansea council have agreed to offer discounts on their admin/legal fees, while a local solicitor has very kindly offered to act for all the residents for a fixed sum of £50 each. This is a considerable saving ; however it will only apply to those residents that agree to purchase their lease within the agreed time scale.

The finally agreed annual cost now set at £400, except for those residents who agreed to a fixed rate of £250p.a, following letters received from Lliw Valley Borough Council (approx 1996). Unfortunately, not all residents received the letters.

We are also informed the Purchase of Freehold valuation will be based on three properties:-

			Bulk purchase discount £446				
Terraced	-	£6500	plus discounted legal/land registry/admin				
fees etc.,		£6946.00					
Semi-detached	-	£6750	"	"	"	"	
£7196.00							
Detached	-	£7000	"	"	"	"	
£7446.00							

Those residents who agreed the fixed ground rent of £250, will have the opportunity to purchase their freehold at a fixed price of £5000, while receiving the same discounts as above, providing they also purchase within the agreed time scale.

For those who delay purchasing their freehold, will not receive the bulk purchase discounts, resulting in addition costs of £1896.00 or £2196.00.

The terms of the current lease will be subject to a rent review every 25 years, based on the RPI, over the proceeding 25 years. Fixed Rate Leaseholders have the option of keeping this lease or changing it to the £400 p.a, lease, which is fixed for the remaining term of the lease, this removes the risk of any further large rises: it will of course require a Deed of Variation.

The above are a very brief breakdown of the negotiated main points, I do hope they have been of some help to you.

Yours sincerely

Kenneth J Douglas

Agenda Item 3.10

P-04-538 Involving lecturers to ensure a Further Education Inspection Framework that is fit for purpose

Petition wording:

We believe that: 1. The inclusion of the views of lecturing staff, in the early decision making process would be of great benefit to the development of an inspection framework that is fit for purpose; 2. Due to the increased emphasis there will be on soft skills, professional input from those who understand and work with the complexities of balancing pedagogy, with the demands of students, employers and Welsh Government priorities, it would seem prudent to include those that are at the heart of delivering this agenda; 3. Education services in Wales should be seen as part of a wider family, but are concerned that the FE sector and in this case in particular, FE lecturers are rather excluded from this family and are not being afforded the professional respect that they deserve.

Additional Information: 1. As the largest Union representing Further Education lecturers in Wales, the University and College Union has been excluded from the Estyn Advisory Group that has been set up to develop the new inspection framework for Further Education Institutions in Wales; 2. The Advisory Group currently consists almost entirely of Principals or Vice Principals and representatives of Estyn; 3. The University and College Union has been excluded from being involved in the Advisory Group despite making numerous requests to Estyn to be involved.

Petition raised by: Ian Whitehead-Ross

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 11 March 2014

Number of signatures: 145

P-04-319 Newtown Traffic Petition

Petition wording

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to:

1. Install a roundabout at the Kerry road junction and, if flow improves, reinstate a permanent roundabout.
2. Issue an early start date for construction of a Newtown Bypass and for works to be fast-tracked through to completion.

Petition raised by: Paul Pavia

Petition first considered by Committee: June 2011

Number of signatures: 10 (an additional petition collected approximately 5,000 signatures)

Edwina Hart MBE CStJ AC / AM
Gweinidog yr Economi, Gwyddoniaeth a Thrafnidiaeth
Minister for Economy, Science and Transport



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref EH/02587/15

William Powell AM
Chair - Petitions Committee

committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

17 June 2015

Dear William

Thank you for your email of 4 June regarding P-04-319 Newtown Traffic Petition.

Powys County Council is seeking to complete the purchase of land to allow the completion of the remaining scheme.

I will advise further when an update is available.

Edwina Hart

P-04-373 School Exclusion Zones for Mobile Hot Food Vans

Petition wording:

The Petitioners call upon the Welsh Government to consider legislation to exclude Mobile Fast Food Vans from operating within a 400 metre exclusion zone around all schools in Wales during the hours of 8am to 4.30pm weekdays during term time.

Petition raised by: Arfon Jones

Date petition first considered by Committee: 13 March 2012

Number of signatures: 43

Supporting information: Wrexham Council have recently agreed a Planning Guidance note which states that – New Hot Food Takeaways should not be located... within 400 metres of the boundary of a school or tertiary college. Planning conditions cannot be used to restrict use of mobile fast food vehicles and if they comply with highways and environmental health regulations they can operate unlicensed. It is therefore argued that to legislate as suggested will serve to promote a social objective of reducing the availability of cheap unhealthy foods to children, to reduce obesity and to promote healthy eating.

Edwina Hart MBE CStJ AC / AM
Gweinidog yr Economi, Gwyddoniaeth a Thrafnidiaeth
Minister for Economy, Science and Transport



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref EH/02588/15

William Powell AM
Chair
Petitions committee

committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

17 June 2015

Dear William

Thank you for your letter of 1 June regarding Petition P-04-373 which relates to exclusion zones for hot food vans outside schools.

Ensuring the highest level of safety for vulnerable road users is of paramount importance. This is why I am rolling out a programme of 20mph zones outside schools on the trunk road network.

However, it is likely that the majority of food vans near schools would be on the local road network, rather than on trunk roads. Local authorities are responsible for local roads.

My officials are currently looking at the standard of trunk road lay-bys and enforcement of existing trading on the trunk road network, from a traffic management and safety perspective.

I am copying this letter to the Minister for Health and Social Services who may wish to consider more generally the issue of vendors providing unhealthy food near schools.

Edwina Hart

P-04-514 A Welsh clean coal and/or renewable energy power station instead of the proposed Wylfa B nuclear plant at Anglesey

Petition wording:

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to work with the new owners of Wylfa B, Hitachi, to encourage the use of clean Welsh coal or our other plentiful supplies of viable technologies/resources instead of a dangerous nuclear power plant.

In a report on clean coal technology from the 2010 XXI World Energy Congress in Montreal Canada, Hitachi state that they are developing a full portfolio of new clean coal technologies aimed at further efficiency improvement, 90% CO2 reduction, and near-zero emissions of other pollutants. As world leaders in clean coal technology, why don't Hitachi work alongside the Welsh Government to implement this technology at Wylfa B instead of an archaic and poisonous nuclear plant station like the failed Fukushima plants they helped to build?

Additional information:

Nuclear plants are a dangerous and uneconomical method of producing electricity, with a short unviable operational time span which costs tax payers tens of billions in development, subsidies and decommissioning costs. As well as being vulnerable to attack and natural disasters as seen in Fukushima, nuclear power has known health risks. A major German government report showed increased rates of childhood cancers and leukaemia around nuclear sites. With no known method of disposing of the nuclear waste, it will also contaminate the planet for thousands of years.

Welsh clean coal, gas, hydrogen, solar, wave, tidal, hydro, Maglev wind, geo thermal, refuse incineration, anaerobic digestion, biomass or a combination of all of these could be implemented at Anglesey and elsewhere instead of nuclear power. Ynys Mon's PAWB manifesto states that, whilst the current Wylfa only has up to 600 workers, up to 3650 new jobs could be found by developing local renewable energy projects alone.

Petition raised by: Sovereign Wales

Date petition first considered by Committee: 26 November 2013

Number of signatures: 104

Edwina Hart MBE CStJ AC / AM
Gweinidog yr Economi, Gwyddoniaeth a Thrafnidiaeth
Minister for Economy, Science and Transport



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-514
Ein cyf/Our ref EH/02600/15

William Powell AM
Chair - Petitions Committee
committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

17 June 2015

Dear William,

Thank you for your letter of 5 June to the Minister for Natural Resources regarding Petition P-04-514. I am replying in view of my portfolio responsibilities.

As outlined in the Energy Wales Statement, published on 20 April, energy is one of our most important economic imperatives and the cost and security of energy continues to be one of our priorities. Fossil fuel energy generation continues to have an important role in ensuring security of supply. Carbon capture and storage (CCS) will be key to ensuring fossil fuels have a longer term role in the future energy mix.

CCS technology has not yet been successfully commercialised. We are supportive of demonstration projects, such as the one being undertaken at Aberthaw, which is furthering our understanding of both reducing emissions from coal fired power stations and the viability of running commercial scale carbon capture operations at power plants. My officials will continue to monitor CCS technologies including the Peterhead CCS project in Scotland and the White Rose project in Yorkshire, which will help provide a clearer picture on future commercial scale CCS and the prospects for potential deployment of the technology in Wales.

With regard to the development of Wylfa Newydd, we want to ensure that Wales maximises opportunities and benefits associated with nuclear related investment in Wales and beyond and the successful and timely delivery of this project is one of our key priorities. Hitachi's investment will help enable Wales to effect a low carbon transition and might enable access to future low carbon developments the company may undertake.

In addition, whilst not CCS, Mitsubishi Hitachi Power Systems Europe GmbH, the successor to Hitachi Power Europe GmbH, are working on a pilot project in Germany which would convert carbon dioxide from a coal power plant.

Edwina Hart

Highly Efficient Power Stations with Carbon Capture

Christian Bergins, Dr. Eng.
Song Wu, Ph. D.

OVERVIEW: Worldwide, coal currently contributes over 40% of electricity generation and its share is expected to increase steadily over the coming decades. The continued dominance of coal in the global energy structure and growing concerns about climate change necessitate accelerated development and deployment of new technologies for clean and efficient coal unitization. Coal-fired power plants with CCS are widely expected to be an important part of a sensible future technology portfolio to achieve the overall global CO₂ reductions required for stabilizing atmospheric CO₂ concentration and global warming.

INTRODUCTION

AS a global technology and equipment provider for complete thermal power plants, Hitachi is actively developing CO₂ (carbon dioxide) capture technologies for coal power with the following approach:

- (1) Development of two flexible CO₂ capture processes utilizing advanced amine-based PCC (post-combustion capture) and oxyfuel combustion technologies
- (2) Design of optimized heat integration of the processes
- (3) Total plant re-optimization involving the boiler, turbine, AQCS (air quality control system), and CCS (CO₂ capture and sequestration) system
- (4) Pilot scale evaluation of the technologies
- (5) Capture-ready design of new power stations as a first step toward enabling future CCS addition and sustained operation in a carbon-constrained world

ADVANCED ULTRASUPERCRITICAL POWER PLANT

To offset the expected loss in efficiency resulting from carbon capture, further improvement of the power plant is necessary. The most effective way to increase power plant efficiency is to increase the live steam temperature. The state-of-the-art boiler materials of today limit the boiler outlet steam temperature to approximately 600°C. A step change is required to further increase the steam temperature. That is, the 700°C boiler of the future will need to use nickel-based alloys for the superheaters, turbine, and some parts of the waterwall. Hitachi has been involved in the associated R&D (research and development) and manufacturing testing since the beginning of this 700°C power plant concept in the 1990s in Europe. Similar development efforts were started in Japan years ago and Hitachi together with other suppliers and

utilities is driving forward the development.

Fig. 1⁽¹⁾ shows the key R&D programs performed since the mid-90s. In numerous publicly sponsored and privately financed programs all of the important components of the steam generator were qualified. Feasibility studies and basic engineering for 700°C power plants were carried out based on different steam generator types and different pressure ranges (THERMIE 1+2, NRW PP 700). Semi-finished products such as tubes and pipes were manufactured, welding procedures were tested, and laboratory testing of mechanical properties was performed. Superheater test loops exposed to real flue gas atmospheres have provided information about corrosion and oxidation behavior. Components such as superheater wall panels, superheater surfaces, headers, piping, and different types of welds were tested in the COMTES 700 Component Test Facility. Components with original

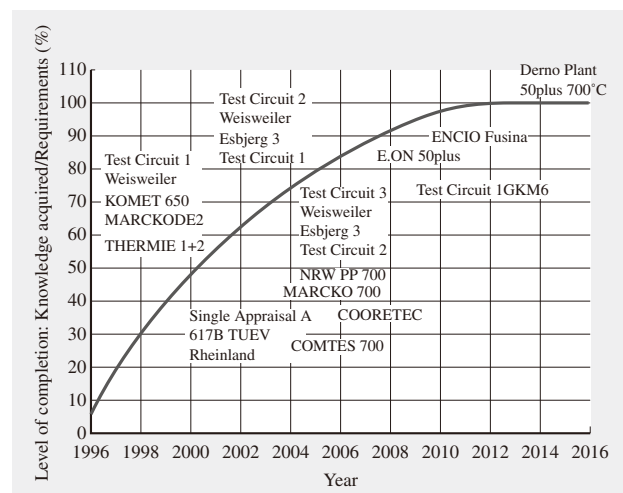


Fig. 1—Road to 700°C Technology in Europe. The know-how to construct demonstration plants will be available in the near future.

dimensions for a 500-MW demonstration plant such as membrane walls, superheater tubes with high wall thicknesses, HP (high pressure)-pipes, RH (reheat)-pipes, and different welds have been designed and fabricated using various manufacturing technologies. Even though there are still some open problems among the lessons learnt from the COMTES 700 test facility, sufficient knowledge of the manufacturing process has been gained and sufficient investigations into material qualifications have been completed that a demonstration plant could be ordered in the near future.

Hitachi Power Europe GmbH (HPE) actively participated in most of the projects, taking a leading role in material and manufacturing development for the nickel-based materials. These materials are needed in the upper part of the furnace walls and for superheater and reheater surfaces. Examples are given in Fig. 2. The photograph on the left shows an A617 membrane wall successfully welded and bended in HPE's workshop. Through this work, HPE gained the know-how to fabricate membrane walls for 700°C boilers. The photograph on the right of Fig. 2 shows a full-scale superheater bundle for a 700°C application. The bundle consists of Alloy 617B, Alloy 740, Sanicro 25, and HR3C tubes and was successfully tested for 30,000 hours in the COMTES 700 test plant. It represents an important part of HPE's experience in the manufacturing of pressure parts for the forthcoming 700°C technology.

PCC

Amine-based CO₂ separation is a leading technology expected to be available commercially within the next decade for large fossil-fueled power stations. However, the traditional CO₂ capture process utilizing conventional amine solvents is very energy intensive and is also susceptible to solvent degradation by O₂ (oxygen), SO_x (sulfur oxides), and NO_x (nitrogen oxides) in coal-fired flue gas, resulting in large operating costs. Therefore, concepts for improved AQCS have to be developed and proven. The development of amine systems that consume less energy and the recovery of waste heat are the most essential measures for further decreasing the efficiency penalty. These measures already have to be defined for new power stations, and the changed heat balance and necessary equipment for retrofits has to be pre-designed in advance as per the definition of capture-readiness because all new power stations in the EU must be capture-ready. Additionally, the technology has to be proven in pilot

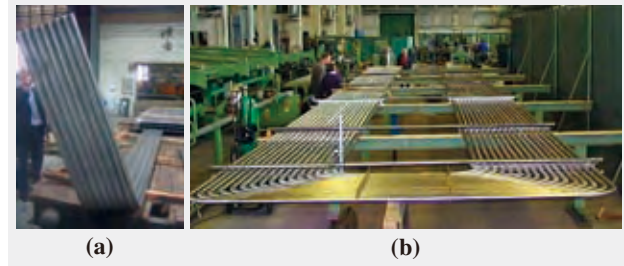


Fig. 2—Membrane Wall (a) and Superheater Panel Using Nickel-based Alloy (Alloy 617B)(b).

Hitachi Power Europe GmbH is working on the development of technologies required to construct 700°C-class boilers.



Fig. 3—Pilot Plant for PCC (post-combustion capture) Testing in Europe.

Testing is being undertaken in Europe using the flue gas from power plants.

and demonstration scale plants to be commercially available for new builds and retrofits in 2020.

For the PCC process, HPE has completed a 5-MWth pilot facility (see Fig. 3) for CO₂ capture based on amine absorption. It will be set up in cooperation with E.ON AG and GDF SUEZ at a power plant site in the Netherlands in mid-2010 and be subject to tests involving various scrubbing agents up to 2015. One of the pilot plant's assets is its transportability which allows it to be deployed to various plant sites. Moreover, because it is not limited to any specific scrubbing or amine solution, the operator is free to use their reagent of choice. In conjunction with German power companies and universities, HPE is also supporting the construction of a second mobile pilot plant for testing CO₂ scrubbing agents, which are not subject to protective rights, at a power plant in Duisburg.

Thanks to the system integration capabilities within the group (power plant boilers, turbines, air quality control systems, and CO₂ compression), HPE has developed overall plant technology which

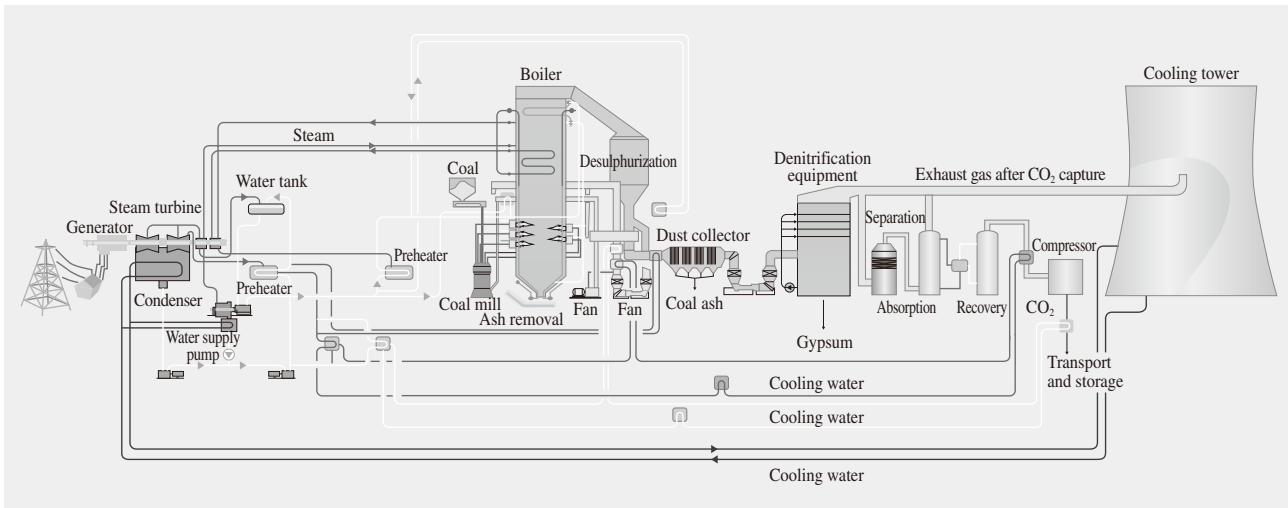


Fig. 4—Heat Integration of PCC.

It is anticipated that the thermal losses in 600°C-class boilers will be able to be reduced to 8% or less.

for future plants can cut the total efficiency loss from CO₂ capture to under 8% compared to 11% to 14% for today's commercial amine solvents with minimum integration. Fig. 4 shows the design of the heat integration and optimized flow scheme which can achieve an efficiency loss as low as 7.8% points for a 600°C power plant⁽²⁾.

As a part of the commercialization effort, Hitachi is actively pursuing opportunities for demonstration of CCS technologies, partnering with industry and government. In October 2009, the US DOE (Department of Energy) selected a CCS demonstration project run by Wolverine Power Supply Cooperative, Inc. (WPSCI) to be one of the ICCS (Industrial Carbon Capture and Storage) Phase 1 Projects. The project plans to demonstrate Hitachi's technology to capture 300,000 t of CO₂ per year (1,000 t/d on a 50-MWe slipstream) from a 600-MW power plant to be built near Rogers City, Michigan. The captured CO₂ will be sequestered through EOR (enhanced oil recovery) operations near the project site. The Wolverine project team includes WPSCI (the owner), Hitachi Power Systems America, Ltd. (CO₂ capture technology provider), Core Energy Group (EOR host), Burns and Roe (owner's engineer), and Western Michigan University (geology evaluation for CO₂ storage). Hitachi will provide an integrated CO₂ capture system and the advanced H3-1 amine-based solvent for the project.

In February 2010, Hitachi and SaskPower in Canada agreed to long-term cooperation in developing low-carbon energy technology including CCS. Hitachi was also selected to supply the steam turbine for the SaskPower Boundary Dam Integrated Carbon Capture

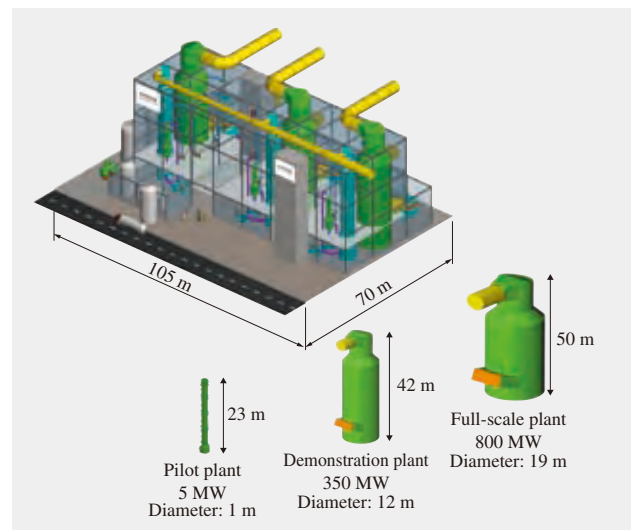


Fig. 5—Relative Sizes of Commercial-scale CO₂ Scrubbers.⁽²⁾ The technology has already progressed to the demonstration plant stage and Hitachi is working on scaling this up for full commercial use.

and Sequestration Demonstration Project, which will retrofit an existing unit to produce 115 MW of clean base-load electricity, while enhancing local oil production and reducing CO₂ emissions.

Scaling-up of the CO₂ capture system components has been investigated in detail under several ongoing projects for engineering and design study. Fig. 5 shows the absorber dimensions of different sizes and the layout of an 800-MWe CO₂ capture system.

OXYFUEL COMBUSTION

Oxyfuel combustion is another promising technology to enable CO₂ capture and sequestration for new and existing coal-fired power plants where the

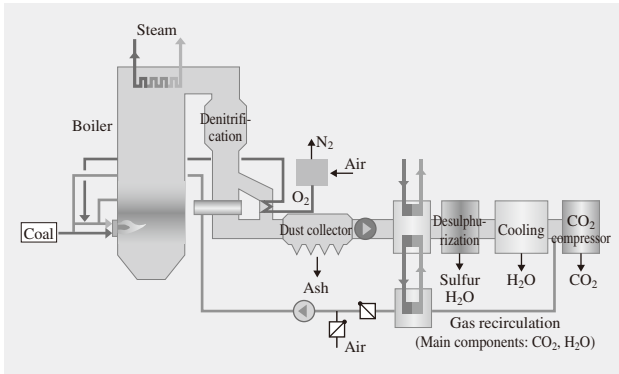


Fig. 6—Optimized Oxyfuel Process.⁽³⁾

Pilot testing is planned in Europe to verify the underlying performance of oxyfuel boilers.

coal is burned with pure oxygen diluted by recycled flue gas resulting in highly concentrated CO_2 and some H_2O in the flue gas. Fig. 6 shows a block diagram of the oxyfuel process. To determine the impact on the process of using a totally different flue gas composition, Hitachi and others have been working on extensive development programs to commercialize oxyfuel combustion technology through design studies, laboratory scale experiments, CFD (computational fluid dynamics) modeling, as well as small and large pilot plant tests.

As for PCC, the immediate focus is to ensure that the coal-fired power stations commissioned in recent years and in the near future can be easily converted to oxyfuel for CCS operation. The development work to date has shown that existing state-of-the-art coal-fired power stations can be converted to oxyfuel combustion with minor changes to the plant water-steam cycle and other equipment, as shown in Fig. 6. The most important issue is to have space available inside and around the power station for the new equipment required for a CCS retrofit.

On the R&D side, studies of the basic technologies for oxyfuel combustion have been conducted over many years by Hitachi and others at various pilot-scale plants. In cooperation with universities and industrial partners, small- and medium-scale experiments have been performed to prove design models and correlations for combustion systems (see Fig. 7)^{(4), (5)}.

Valuable findings from the experimental studies have been implemented into the design models and programs for a variety of plant components that will be adopted to meet the new requirements under oxyfuel conditions. These findings have been applied to, for instance, the design of a new DS-T burner for firing dry fuels. This burner was successfully tested in a



RWTH Aachen University



Dresden University of Technology



IFK at University Stuttgart



IFK at University Stuttgart



E.ON UK



Hitachi

Fig. 7—Oxyfuel Test Rigs Used for Basic Investigations. Hitachi is working on basic research in conjunction with European universities and industry partners. (Images courtesy of P. Winandy, RWTH Aachen University, IFK (formerly IVD) at University Stuttgart, and E.ON UK.)

30-MWth experimental combustion facility under air combustion conditions in 2009 and 2010 in Europe. The fuels used were dry lignite, bituminous coal, and biomass (saw dust). The fact that stable combustion was maintained while meeting all relevant emission limits for all fuels tested is proof of the high flexibility of Hitachi's technology (see Fig. 8).

Under a technology partnership with Vattenfall AB, the DS-T burner was successfully installed and commissioned at the Schwarze Pumpe oxyfuel pilot plant in Brandenburg, Germany in April 2010 and will be tested under various air and oxyfuel conditions⁽⁶⁾. The results from this testing will be used for the validation of the burner and firing system design by CFD (see Fig. 9) as well as for the further optimization



Fig. 8—DS-T Burner Flames for Different Fuels (Air Combustion).

Stable combustion is being achieved that complies with appropriate flue gas standards.

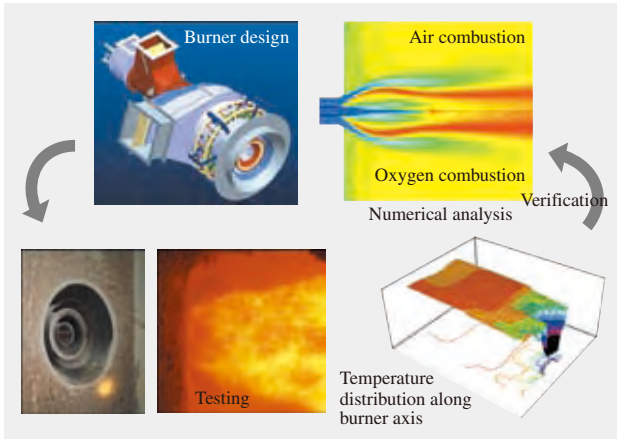


Fig. 9—Design and Validation of Firing System and Burner. The overall process will be optimized by numeric-analysis-based design and by validation through testing.

of the overall process to achieve lower emissions and higher efficiencies.

In conjunction with sister companies in the Hitachi Group, HPE has also been validating the design fundamentals and materials (including catalysts) for other major components such as the desulphurization and denitrification equipment for the oxyfuel flue gas, the boiler, and the CO₂ compressor. The findings will be implemented into the design of an oxyfuel demonstration plant which is currently being planned.

CONCLUSIONS

As an all-round provider of power generation technologies and equipment, Hitachi's aim is to find the optimum total-system solution for the highly efficient power stations of the future, both with and without CO₂ capture. By developing in parallel the technologies for improving efficiency through higher steam temperatures and for CO₂ capture processes such as post-combustion capture and oxyfuel combustion, Hitachi's next generation ultrasupercritical power plants with CCS will enable carbon storage and near-zero emissions within the next decade.

REFERENCES

- (1) Y. Shimogori et al., "Design and Operation Experience of the First 600°C Boiler in Europe Torrealvaldaliga Nord 660MW — a Step to 700°C Advanced USC Boiler," presented at Power Gen Europe 2010 (June 2010).
- (2) W. Schreier et al., "Post Combustion Capture Plants — Concept and Plant Integration," VGB PowerTech **89**, Issue 12, pp. 47-51 (Sep. 2009).
- (3) K. D. Tigges et al., "Oxyfuel Combustion Retrofits for Existing Power Stations — Bringing 'Capture Ready' to Reality," Proceedings of the 33rd International Technical Conference on Coal Utilization & Fuel Systems (June 2008).
- (4) S. Rehfeldt et al., "Basic Experiments and CFD Calculations of Air and Oxyfuel Firing of Lignite and Bituminous Coals in 0.5 and 1 MW Scale Combustion Test Facilities," Proceedings of the 34th International Technical Conference on Clean Coal and Fuel Systems (May 2009).
- (5) C. Kuhr et al., "Experimentelle Untersuchungen und CFD-Simulationen zur Kohlenstaubverbrennung unter Oxyfuelbedingungen," Proceedings 24. Deutscher Flammentag (Sep. 2009) in German.
- (6) C. Bergins et al., "Overall System Development for Oxyfuel Combustion," 1st IEA GHG Oxyfuel Conference (Sep. 2009).

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Christian Bergins, Dr. Eng.

Joined Hitachi Power Europe GmbH in 2006, and now works as the Head of Research & Development. He is currently engaged in the development of oxyfuel combustion, CO₂-scrubbing, 700°C power plant technology, and dry lignite power plant technology. Dr. Bergins is the HPE Representative for Technology at European Power Plant Suppliers Association, Brussels (EPPSA) and Information Centre for Climate-Friendly Coal-Fired Power Plants, Berlin (IZ-Klima).



Song Wu, Ph. D.

Joined Hitachi Power Systems America, Ltd. in 2006, and now works as a Director of Advanced Technologies. He is currently engaged in the development of clean-coal technologies, including CCS. Dr. Wu is a member of the Air & Waste Management Association.