

## Petitions Committee

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Meeting Venue:

**Committee Room 1 – Senedd**

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Meeting date:

**9 December 2014**

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Meeting time:

**09.00**

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Cynulliad  
Cenedlaethol  
Cymru

National  
Assembly for  
Wales



For further information please contact:

**Steve George**

Committee Clerk

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## Agenda

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- 1 Introduction, apologies and substitutions**
- 2 New petitions**
  - 2.1** P-04-606 Ensure schools exercise their statutory powers under regulation 7 of The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 without interference or bias. (Pages 1 – 10)
  - 2.2** P-04-607 Call for the welsh government to purchase Garth Celyn (Pages 11 – 26)
  - 2.3** P-04-608 Inquiry into the Welsh NHS (Pages 27 – 32)
  - 2.4** P-04-610 Reverse the Cuts to Hardship Funds in Universities (Pages 33 – 35)
- 3 Updates to previous petitions**
  - 3.1** P-04-541 Support for the Mentrau Iaith (Language Initiatives) (Pages 36 – 42)

- 3.2** P-04-549 Make 'Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau' the Official Welsh National Anthem (Pages 43 – 44)

### **Economy, Science and Transport**

- 3.3** P-03-315 New Dyfi River Crossing Petition (Pages 45 – 46)
- 3.4** P-04-574 Bus Services in Burryport (Pages 47 – 50)
- 3.5** P-04-590 Funding for the Cardi Bach Coastal Bus Service (Pages 51 – 55)

### **Natural Resources**

- 3.6** P-04-547 Ban Polystyrene(EPS) Fast Food and Drinks Packaging (Pages 56 – 63)
- 3.7** P-04-445 Save our Welsh cats & dogs from death on the roads (Pages 64 – 66)
- 3.8** P-04-533 Environmental Planning for Small Scale Wind Turbine Sites (Pages 67 – 72)
- 3.9** P-04-544 Ban the Shooting of Greenland White-fronted Geese (Pages 73 – 75)
- 3.10** P-04-555 Stop the unethical and draconian proposed compulsory microchipping of dogs (Pages 76 – 80)
- 3.11** P-04-575 Call in All Opencast Mining Planning Applications (Pages 81 – 85)
- 3.12** P-04-584 Wales Planning Bill to Protect Town and Village Greens in Wales (Pages 86 – 87)

### **Health**

#### **The following two petitions will be considered together**

- 3.13** P-04-466 Medical Emergency – Preventing the introduction of a poorer Health Service for North Wales (Page 88)

- 3.14** P-04-479 Tywyn Memorial Hospital X-ray & Minor Injuries Unit Petition (Pages 89 – 93)
- 3.15** P-04-560 Provision of IBD Services in Wales (Pages 94 – 99)
- 3.16** P-04-564 Restoration of Inpatient Beds, Minor Injuries Cover and X-Ray Unit to the Ffestiniog Memorial Hospital (Pages 100 – 102)
- 3.17** P-04-568 Public Inquiry into ABMU Health Board (Pages 103 – 108)
- 3.18** P-04-580 Restrictions on Donating Blood (Pages 109 – 114)
- 3.19** P-04-588 Charter for Children and Fathers (Pages 115 – 125)

### **Communities and Tackling Poverty**

- 3.20** P-04-511 Support for children and young people participation standards (Pages 126 – 130)

## **4 Evidence Session – P-04-481 Close the Gap for deaf pupils in Wales (10.00 – 10.30) (Pages 131 – 137)**

- Jayne Dulson, Director NDCS Cymru
- Elin Wyn, Policy Adviser NDCS Cymru
- Danyiaal Munir, Student Cardiff & Vale College
- Peter Rogers, Director Sustainable Acoustics Ltd

# Agenda Item 2.1

## **P-04-606 Ensure schools exercise their statutory powers under regulation 7 of The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 without interference or bias.**

### **Petition wording**

We ask the National Assembly for Wales to ensure that schools are free to exercise their statutory powers under regulation 7 of The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 without interference from bodies such as regional educational consortia and local authorities and without threat of penalisation through school inspection, performance judgement and banding processes.

Local authorities in Wales and their consortia are recommending that schools do not exercise their statutory powers under the above legislation leaving more families exposed to the threat of penalty notices under the Education (Penalty Notices) (Wales) Regulations 2013 than would have been otherwise. These recommendations are made on the basis that they can improve attainment despite the lack of evidence that absence of the type allowed under regulation 7 of The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 results in poorer attainment.

Currently schools in Wales can be penalised through inspection, performance judgement and school banding processes for authorising legitimate absences such as sickness, family holidays or other events or instances which enable families to participate fully in a normal, private family life.

These recommendations and processes bias schools against the authorisation of legitimate absence and make schools reluctant to exercise their statutory powers under regulation 7 of The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010. This can damage the home/school relationship and child well-being. Where a family disagrees with a decision to refuse authorisation of absence on the grounds of equality, human rights

or child well-being there is no independent route of appeal. Where a family disregards a decision to refuse authorisation of absence the issue of a penalty notice and potential criminalisation can result. There is an economic impact on the Welsh tourism and leisure industry which provides employment and income to many of our families.

### **Additional Information**

Regulation 7 of The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 gives schools the discretionary power to authorise up to 10 days absence during a school year for family holidays and more than 10 days absence in exceptional circumstances.

Schools are being advised against exercising this power by their local authorities. They are feeling pressured to improve school attendance figures by Estyn, the education and training inspectorate for Wales, who can penalise them if attendance falls below a certain level.

The drive to improve attendance is based on an assumption that it will improve educational attainment. This is an over-simplification of a very complex issue. Attendance and attainment are linked but a causative relationship is not proven. Research shows that absence for family holidays does not affect attainment at primary school level, and a small degree of absence is unlikely to have any effect at secondary school level. ("A Profile of Pupil Absence, 2011, DfE").

A school's refusal to authorise an absence which is allowable under the law can seriously damage the home/school relationship, particularly if the family believe that the absence is important to their child's well-being and take their child out of school anyway. The family can receive a penalty notice (fine) or be criminalised.

There are many legitimate reasons why children and families need the flexibility to be absent from school during term time which include difficulty obtaining annual leave during school holidays, important family events, geographical remoteness from non-resident parents, grandparents and

extended family. Families employed in the Welsh tourism and leisure industry have felt a significant economic impact from the English term time holiday ban this year. The Good Childhood Report 2014 identified school as only ONE of the ten aspects of life with the greatest influence on child well-being. Family, home, finances, friends, health and choice were among the others.

**Petitioner:** Pembs Parents Want a Say / Rhieni Pembs eisiau cael dweud

**First considered by the Committee:** 9 December 2014

**Number of Signatures:** 812 electronic signatures

Huw Lewis AC / AM  
Y Gweinidog Addysg a Sgiliau  
Minister for Education and Skills



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref  
Ein cyf/Our ref HL/05246/14

William Powell AM  
Chair Petitions Committee

committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

4 November 2014

Dear William

Thank you for your letter of 16 October, regarding a petition from Jane Douglas which is currently collecting signatures.

I am committed to ensuring that children attend school regularly. If a child misses school he or she can fall behind with their work and not reach their full potential. The Department of Education's 'A Profile of Pupil Absence', found a negative impact on attainment in cases of absence for family holidays at Key Stage 4, except when the absence was for a very short period. A child's education needs to be considered holistically, and we want schools to deliver consistent messages on the importance of school attendance throughout children and young people's time at school.

Parents do not have an automatic right to remove their children from school for a holiday during term-time. Schools and local authorities do, however, have discretionary powers to authorise up to 10 days absence per year for a family holiday during term time. There may well be circumstances that warrant a pupil taking time off in term time and this is why head teachers are best placed to make the decision. Parents may apply to the head teacher for permission in advance.

I expect schools, local authorities and consortia to have due regard to the Regulations. Upon receiving a request the school should consider the time of year of the proposed trip, length and purpose of the holiday, impact on continuity of learning, circumstances of the family and the wishes of parents as well as the overall attendance pattern of the child. Head teachers should treat each request fairly and on a case by case basis.

If a head teacher decides to refuse a parents request for holiday in term time this will be recorded as an 'unauthorised absence'. Penalty Notices are issued for failing to regularly attend school, in other words regular unauthorised absence.

Pupils' attendance is an area that all Estyn inspection teams consider. The lead inspector analyses the attendance data and makes a decision whether attendance should be a line of inquiry for the inspection team. The data is a starting point for the inspection team and inspectors judge each school on an individual basis, taking into account any contextual factors. However, if a school has been continuously in the lowest 50% of similar schools over the past few years and there is a weak trend of improvement, the team may come to the judgement that attendance is an area requiring significant improvement. If the team judges that attendance requires significant improvement, the overall judgement for wellbeing can be no higher than adequate. Estyn is an independent body and you may wish to take this up with Her Majesty's Chief Inspector directly.

Currently secondary school banding includes attendance measures. These are the total numbers of half day sessions missed due to absence (both authorised and unauthorised) compared to schools with similar levels of free school meals and a progress measure. The weighting of these items in the banding methodology is half of the other measures included within banding.

I announced in September that banding would be replaced by School Categorisation for both primary and secondary schools. The methodology for primary schools has been announced and it includes attendance data. The methodology for Secondary Categorisation has not yet been announced.

The Welsh Government included guidance for local authorities on the authorisation of absence during term time for school holidays in the All Wales Attendance Framework. I have provided a link to the relevant section, section 1 page 74, for ease of reference:

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/pupilsupport/framework/?lang=en>

Yours sincerely



**Huw Lewis AC / AM**  
Y Gweinidog Addysg a Sgiliau  
Minister for Education and Skills

# PEMBROKESHIRE PARENTS WANT A SAY

pembspwas@gmail.com

Kayleigh Driscoll  
Petitions Committee Deputy Clerk  
Chamber and Committee Service  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

3<sup>rd</sup> December 2014

**RE: P-04-606 Ensure schools exercise their statutory powers under regulation 7 of The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 without interference or bias.**

Dear Kayleigh,

We thank the Minister for Education and Skills for his letter dated November 4<sup>th</sup> 2014.

However, we note that the Minister has not outlined any actions being taken to address the concerns raised in our petition that Welsh schools are struggling to exercise their statutory powers under regulation 7 of The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 without interference or bias.

Please may we refer you back to the text of our petition with the additional points below.

## **1) INTERFERENCE AND BIAS**

The Minister states that “*head teachers are best placed to make the decision*” on authorisation of absence for family holidays but, as we have highlighted, head teachers in Wales are being advised against authorisation of absence for family holidays by their local authorities and regional educational consortia. For example

the most recent advice to head teachers from the ERW consortium via Pembrokeshire County Council on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2014 was;

*“...advice from the Local Authority and from ERW is to continue to advise schools not to authorise absences during term time due to holidays, but that each application will be judged on an individual basis.”*

Effectively this local authority is advising schools against exercising their statutory powers and while their recommendation pays lip service to Welsh Government guidance regarding individual assessment of circumstances<sup>1</sup> it is a paradoxical statement heavily biased against the authorisation of absence.

Estyn, the education and training inspectorate for Wales, considers attendance data when judging school performance during inspections and when “banding” secondary schools. As the Minister states in his letter, attendance will now also be considered under the new School Categorisation system for primary schools. Schools in Wales can currently be penalised through Estyn rankings for authorised absences, even when these absences are authorised for reasons which support child well-being such as absence due to illness or to participate in family life as permitted under The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010. While Estyn is an independent body, its inspection processes regarding attendance influence head teachers against exercising their statutory powers under Welsh law. They create a conflict between a school’s desire to be seen to achieve performance targets and its duty to support the needs of the individual child.

Recommendations against authorisation of absence for family holidays and any link between levels of authorised absence and Estyn ratings make it harder for schools to consider requests for authorised absence in an unbiased manner under the relevant legislation and within the terms of the All Wales Attendance Framework 2011.

## **2) IMPACT OF FAMILY HOLIDAYS ON ATTENDANCE**

Attempts to drive up attendance figures by discouraging the authorisation of absence for family holidays can only have a limited effect. Absence for term time holidays accounted for 0.5% school sessions missed in Welsh secondary schools in 2011/2012 and 0.4% sessions missed in 2012/2013. Only 6.8% of total absences

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<sup>1</sup> All Wales Attendance Framework, WAG, 2011

from Welsh secondary schools are due to term time holidays. 93.2% of school absence is for reasons other than a family holiday.<sup>2</sup>

### 3) IMPACT OF FAMILY HOLIDAYS ON EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Evidence suggests that attempts to improve attainment by discouraging the authorisation of absence for family holidays (as permitted under Welsh law) are misguided. Educational consortia and local authorities are justifying their recommendations against authorisation of absence for family holidays on the basis that it will improve attainment. There is no strong evidence base to support this assertion.

In 2011 the UK Department for Education commissioned a piece of research "A Profile of Pupil Absence" which, while stating that there "is a clear link between absence and attainment" (p55), notes that the absence it refers to is "persistent non-attendance" which it defines as missing at least 46 sessions a year. This research notes a correlation between attendance and attainment but does not assert causation. The research paper went on to explain;

*"The likelihood of pupils achieving the expected KS2 level, not only differ greatly by the amount of absences accrued, but also by the different reasons behind these absences. The proportions of pupils achieving the expected level stay relatively similar for increasing levels of absence due to authorised family holidays, religious observance and study leave. However, long term absences due to exclusions or illnesses tend to be associated with significantly lower proportions of pupils achieving the expected level"*(p58).  
(my emphasis).

The Minister notes a negative correlation between attainment and absence for family holidays at KS4. Looking at the chart on page 63 it can be seen that there is no evidence of a correlation with lower attainment levels for children with up to 4% absence for family holidays at KS4. This is equivalent to 7.8 days absence.

But most importantly, the researchers *"cannot isolate whether the absence from school is the cause of the poorer attainment, or whether both persistent absenteeism and poor attainment are caused by other factors – for example, since persistent absentees are more likely to report being bullied or have negative*

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<sup>2</sup> Attendance in Secondary Schools, ESTYN, September 2014  
<http://www.estyn.gov.uk/english/docViewer/329401.8/attendance-in-secondary-schools-september-2014/?navmap=30,163>

*aspirations and perceptions of school, improving attendance rates might not improve attainment to this extent.”(p67). (my emphasis).*

This evidence suggests that interventions to improve educational attainment should not be targeted at primary school pupils who are absent for up to 10 days per year for events such as family holidays and possibly not secondary school pupils who are absent for up to 8 days for similar reasons. It would be more appropriate to direct limited resources towards addressing proven causes of poor attainment.

#### **4) PROSECUTION OF PARENTS**

As the Minister states in his letter, where a school declines to exercise their discretionary power under regulation 7 of The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010, what could legitimately be an authorised absence will be categorised as unauthorised and could result in the issuing of a Fixed Penalty Notice under The Education (Penalty Notices) (Wales) Regulations 2013. Any influence or bias against the authorisation of absence will leave more families exposed to the threat of penalty notices than would have been otherwise. A refusal to pay a Fixed Penalty Notice on the grounds that the absence was in the child’s best interests and legitimate in the eyes of the family can result in prosecution under section 444 of the Education Act 1996 for the offence of failing to secure the child’s regular attendance at school. There is no statutory right of appeal against the issuing of a penalty notice. Schools will be required to inform the local authority regarding individual pupil’s attendance levels and so instigate the process leading to the issuing of a Penalty Notice – this is likely to damage the home–school relationship. Fixed Penalty Notices are likely to have the greatest impact on lower income families and promote inequality. There is strong evidence to suggest that children living in poverty are already at a higher risk of poorer educational attainment.

In summary, there is currently considerable pressure on head teachers not to exercise their statutory powers under regulation 7 of The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010. A large part of this pressure is coming from local authorities, regional educational consortia and Estyn. Most recent figures suggest that that a refusal to authorise absence for family holidays could only improve school attendance by a maximum of 0.4%. There is no evidence to suggest that refusal to authorise absence for family holidays, at the level permitted under Welsh law, will improve educational attainment. However, recommendations against authorisation of absence for family holidays are likely to leave more families exposed to the threat of penalty notices and prosecution than would have been otherwise. This is unlikely to be in our children’s best interests, particularly those children whose families are already living in poverty.

We kindly request that the Petitions Committee seek further opinion from Estyn, the Regional Educational Consortia, the WLGA and other expert opinion as appropriate.

Yours sincerely,

Jane Douglas  
for Pembrokeshire Parents Want A Say

# Agenda Item 2.2

## **P-04-607 Call for the welsh government to purchase Garth Celyn**

### **Petition wording**

This historic building and grounds are up for sale.

Such is the importance of this building/grounds to wales and its history we call upon the welsh government to do whats right and secure Garth celyn for the welsh people once and for all.

About the year 1200, Prince Llywelyn ap Iorwerth constructed a royal home on Garth Celyn. To the east of the Llys was the newly endowed Cistercian Monastery of Aberconwy; to the west the cathedral city of Bangor. Between Garth Celyn and the shore the fertile farmland provided food for the royal family, members of the court, and the local community. The sea and the river had fish in abundance and there was wild game to be hunted in the uplands.

The village of Aber Garth Celyn on the west side of the river was a bustling, thriving place. Travellers negotiating the dangerous Lafan Sands were given food and lodging in the valley. Goods brought by sea to the Port of Llanfaes were being distributed to other points on the mainland from here. Animals were herded along this routeway to and from the mountains. Grain was carted to the mill. The community came to attend services in the church. Pilgrims from far and wide walked the trackway and paused for refreshments. Bards came to recite poetry recalling the deeds of the heros, the great defenders.

### **Aditonal Information**

Part of a Letter from Llywelyn, Prince of Wales to John Peckham, archbishop of Canterbury. November 1282

Garth Celyn.

To the most reverend father in Christ, the Lord John, by the Grace of God, Archbishop of Canterbury, primate of all England, from his humble and

devoted son Llywelyn, prince of Wales, lord of Snowdon, greetings and filial affection, with all manner of reverence, submission and honour. For the heavy labours which your fatherly holiness has assumed at this time, out of the love you bear to us and our nation, we render you grateful thanks, all the more since, as you have confided to us, you come against the king's will. You ask us to come to the king's peace. Your holiness should know that we are ready to do so, provided the lord king will truly observe that same peace as is due to us and ours.

We rejoice that this interlude granted to Wales is at your instance and you will find no impediments placed in the way of peace by us, for we would rather support your efforts than those of any other. We hope, God willing, there need be no occasion for you to write anything to the pope concerning our pertinacity nor will you find us spurning your fatherly entreaties and strenuous endeavours, indeed we embrace them with all the warmth of our heart. Nor is it necessary for the king to weigh his hand yet further against us, since we are fully prepared to render him obedience, always saving our rights and laws, a reservation legally permitted to us.

**Petitioner :** Kevin Bates

**First considered by the Committee:** 9 December 2014

**Number of Signatures:** 650

Ken Skates AC / AM  
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Diwylliant, Chwaraeon a Thwristiaeth  
Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-607  
Ein cyf/Our ref KS/05243/14

William Powell AM  
Chair – Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Ty Hywel  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

William.powell@wales.gov.uk

11 November 2014

Dear William,

Thank you for your letter of 28 October addressed to the Minister for Economy, Science and Transport, seeking her views on the Petition received by the Committee calling on the Welsh Government to secure Garth Celyn for the nation. This has been passed to me for reply.

The village of Abergwyngregyn is recognised as being of great historic importance as the location of Garth Celyn, one of the *llysoedd*, or courts of the Princes of Gwynedd. There are a number of important surviving historic sites in and around the village including the house now known as Garth Celyn (and previously known as Pen-y-Bryn) and the medieval motte known as y Mwd. Both sites have been proposed as locations of the historic royal court.

In recognition of their historic importance, elements of both sites have been given legal protection. Y Mwd, and the remains of an adjacent building revealed through excavation, has been scheduled as an ancient monument. The house has been listed as grade II\* and the nearby remains of an enclosure, thought to be medieval in date, have also been scheduled as an ancient monument.

Scheduling and listing are both important ways of protecting historic sites and thus securing them for future generations. Listing means that a house can continue to be occupied, whilst providing an important safeguard for managing future change. Consent is required for any proposals that might affect the historic significance of a scheduled or listed site.

Acquisition of historic properties into guardianship by the Welsh Government/Cadw is generally regarded as an option of last resort and is not usual practice for properties that are either occupied or capable of being occupied. However, I am confident that their protected status will give these important sites the care and protection that they need for the future.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ken Skates', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

**Ken Skates AC / AM**

Y Dirprwy Weinidog Diwylliant, Chwaraeon a Thwristiaeth  
Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism

**P-04-607 Call for the Welsh Government to Purchase Garth Celyn –  
Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 02.12.14.**

We ask that the property be acquired without delay by the National Assembly for Wales, and then placed in the hands of independent, respected Trustees, to safeguard its future, with a Management Committee and Friends of the Trust, who will then be enabled to use it as a bilingual Welsh Cultural Centre as a permanent living Memorial to the memory of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, the Prince of Wales, and his ancestors.

For the information of the Committee, it should be known that the open market sale of the house 'Pen y Bryn', together with land that includes the promontory Garth Kelyn / Garth Celyn, is the result of an Order by a Judge in the Final Financial Hearing in the Divorce Court between Kathryn Pritchard Gibson and her former husband Brian Gibson.

The suggested selling price of £750,000, was the figure provided to the Court by the appointed Official Valuers Geoffrey Butterworth & Co.

The house is, as the advisors to Ken Skates AM, Minister for Culture, Sports and Tourism, have informed him, Grade II\* Listed and the double bank and ditch enclosure has been Scheduled by the Ancient Monuments Board'.

It can be confirmed however that he has been misinformed in that the house has NOT recently been renamed Garth Celyn. (The name of the house Pen y Bryn can be traced back over 300 years to the time of Bulkeley ownership of the Manor of Aber.

Garth Celyn is the ancient, well established name of the promontory itself.)

**It is NOT the request of this Petition that the property be taken into 'Guardianship' by CADW.**

Over the past 50 years highly respected scholars have examined various documentary sources relating to the settlement that was prior to the Edwardian conquest known as Aber Garth Celyn (now Aber Gwyn Gregyn or Aber), and the promontory Garth Celyn on the opposite side of the river; they have concluded that the evidence points beyond all reasonable doubt to Garth Celyn being the site of the main home of the Princes in the thirteenth century.

T. Jones Pierce

Colin Gresham

Saunders Lewis

A. H. Dodd

David Austin

J. E. Caerwyn Williams

Gweneth Lilly

Gwynfor Evans

John C. Davies

Nick Barrett

Jonathan Foyle

Paul Martin Remfry

Professor David Austin, Head of Archaeology at Lampeter, examined the structure of the house. He dated the tower and parts of the walls of the house to “c. 1200 or earlier.”

Howard Thomas, then with the RCAHM Wales, agreed. He also dated the double bank and ditch enclosure on top of the promontory to “Roman to early medieval in origin.” Artefacts found on the site include a Roman oil lamp, a coin of the Emperor Carausius (c. 290), a coin of Edward I (c. 1290).

Historian / medieval building specialist Paul Martin Remfry dated parts of the structure of the house to 12<sup>th</sup> century. He has transcribed and translated many of the documents specifically relating to the area.

Historian / medieval building specialist Jonathan Foyle dated parts of the structure of the house to 12<sup>th</sup> century. He also examined the elaborately carved sandstone that has been found within the Scheduled enclosure, and dated it to late 12<sup>th</sup> / early 13<sup>th</sup> century.

The list goes on.

In 2012 /13 independent archaeologists from the Caer Alun Research Group and Wirral Archaeology, working outside the Scheduled area in Cae Celyn, uncovered a substantial section of Roman road and the remains of a Roman bridge abutment below the promontory. Geophysical survey using a magnetometer revealed signs of large circular anomalies in Cae Celyn and what might possibly be a Shrine alongside a spring near the road in the field just to the east. Substantial stone walls and enclosures are clearly visible alongside the river. Others can be traced as rises in the soil. These archaeologists agree that the medieval palace was “substantial” and that it sits on a much earlier site. (A Neolithic burial was discovered when a driveway to the house was being constructed in 1824.) Only time and patience can prove the full extent and purpose of the buildings.

Professor J. E. Caerwyn Williams, then Head of Canolfan Uwchefrydiau Cymreig a Cheltaidd Prifysgol Cymru, Aberystwyth, studied the documentary evidence. Together with Dr Gweneth Lilly, in 1998, he published 'Tystiolaeth Garth Celyn' ('Garth Celyn Evidence). ISSN 0969 893 0 07

Gwynfor Evans, in 2001, 'Abergwyngregyn' in 'Cymru o Hud'. ISBN 0-86243-545-5

Ieuan Wyn in 2005, 'Aber Garth Celyn a Llyrhyrau 1282' ISBN 0-86381-999-0

Paul Martin Remfry, 'Astudiaeth Castell Ymchwil A Cyhoeddi' in 2012 published 'A Brief Report on Pen y Bryn and Aber, Gwynedd.' (118 pages) ISBN 1-899376-87-9

Dr Elizabeth Peterson, Senior Lecturer, University of Helsinki, in 2013 'Llywelyn's Last Battle? A Real-Life Story of the Consequences of the *Wikipedia*System.' ISBN 978-951-9040-46-2

BBC have featured the site in several documentaries including:- "One Foot in the Past", 'History Mysteries', 'House Detectives', 'The Story of Wales', 'The Making of the Story of Wales'.

Within Wales, additional interest in the site has come from students studying the play 'Siwan' by Saunders Lewis and 'Llywelyn Fawr' by Thomas Parry.

People interested in the Mabinogion story 'Culhwch ac Olwen', the earliest Welsh folk tale that features Celyn ap Caw and his family. (Celyn's brother Gildas ap Caw wrote 'De Excedio Britonum'. He is recorded as having died in 570

From further afield, interest in the story of the Llywelyns has been generated by the best selling novels that feature the 13<sup>th</sup> century royal home including:-

'The Brothers of Gwynedd' Edith Pargeter

'The Green Branch' Edith Pargeter

'Here Be Dragons' Sharon Penman

'The Reckoning' Sharon Penman

'Child of the Phoenix' Barbara Erskine

'Tre Lywelyn' Myrddin ap Dafydd (1991) ISBN 0-86381-203-1

'Ar ben tomen, mae un tŵr

Yn g adarn, a hwn geidw'r

Wrogaeth yng Ngwynnegrain;

Creu caer y mae'r cerrig hyn

Rhag rwydd roi'r gorau iddi,

Rhag ildio i'n hildio ni.'

From the numerous letters of support from many parts of the world that have been received supporting this Petition, we ask that the following letters, together with photographs, be put in full before Members of the Petitions Committee for their attention:-

Dr. Elizabeth Peterson

Tudur Dylan Jones

Dafydd Bullock

## **THE PROMONTORY OF GARTH CELYN**

### **GENERAL BACKGROUND.**

In Spring 1282 Edward 'Longshanks', the king of England, led a massive, well equipped army into Wales, moving to attack Gwynedd on several fronts. On the 16th June, at Llandeilo Fawr in the Towy valley, the Welsh won a decisive victory

over Edward's southern army. On 6th November there was another great Welsh victory on the shore of the Menai Strait, near Bangor.

As winter was drawing in, and with the Welsh royal home on the promontory of Garth Celyn surrounded, John Peckham, the Archbishop of Canterbury, intervened. Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, the Prince of Wales, and his Ministers responded. The correspondence, now preserved in a Register in Lambeth Palace Archives, London, written from 'Garth Kelyn', has been described as '**the most sublime compositions of the Welsh Nation**'. ('A History of Wales' John Davies.)

At this time, Prince Llywelyn was offered and firmly rejected a bribe of £1000 a year and a baronial estate in England on the condition that he would surrender independent Wales into the hands of the King of England. The leading men of Snowdonia, responded on behalf of the Walenses (the Welsh people). 'The Prince should not, they stated, **throw aside his inheritance and that of his ancestors in Wales and accept land in England, a country with whose language, way of life, laws and customs he is unfamiliar....Let this be clearly understood: his Council will not permit him so to yield.... and even if the Prince wishes to transfer [his people] into the hands of the king, they will not do homage to any stranger as they are wholly unacquainted with his language, his way of life and his laws. ...**'

Documentary evidence can now attest to the fact that on the evening of Thursday 10th December 1282, Prince Llywelyn, lured into a carefully planned trap, was seized by men under the command of Roger l'Estrange, and killed; early the next morning, some 3,000 or so Welsh foot soldiers, with their arms laid down under truce, were massacred. In June 1283, Llywelyn's brother Prince Dafydd ap Gruffudd and his family were captured at Bera, a secluded hideout in the uplands above Aber Garth Celyn. Prince Dafydd 'seriously wounded' in the struggle, was taken to King Edward who was waiting at Rhuddlan castle. On 3rd October 1283 Prince Dafydd was dragged through the streets of Shrewsbury at the tail of a horse, then hanged, drawn and quartered. The royal children were locked away, never to be set free. With thousands of men, women and children killed, Welsh resistance to the invasion virtually came to an end.

In March 1284 King Edward issued a Statute from his base at Rhuddlan castle. The ancient kingdom of Gwynedd, now annexed to England and in effect its first colony, was carved into the new counties of Anglesey, Caernarfonshire and Meirionethshire, to be overseen by a Justiciar of North Wales with a provisional exchequer based at Caernarfon, run by the office of the Chamberlain of North Wales who accounted for the revenues collected directly to Westminster. The English officials, sheriffs, coroners and bailiffs, appointed by the Crown collected taxes and administered

justice. That justice was administered though the medium of English, a language the majority of people could not speak or understand.

On 1st February 1301, in Lincoln, King Edward created his son Edward, Prince of Wales.

Following the capture of Prince Dafydd, the Welsh royal home on Garth Celyn was seized by King Edward. The king and his entourage stayed in the palace for brief periods in 1283 and 1284. The Palace and its farmland were to remain in Crown of England ownership from that time until 1553.

In 1303 and again in 1306 extensive repair works were carried out to the royal building complex. A total of 12,640 gallons of lime and 37,920 gallons of sand were used to make mortar and plaster; the walls and windows were repaired; doors were rehung; new wooden chests made for the solar and garderobe; the garden was cleared. Priests were paid to continue to say masses in the Court Chapel. The documentary evidence shows that repairs to the buildings continued until the reign of Henry VI but then gradually they were left to fall into disrepair.

In 1537, John Leland, Henry VIII's Antiquary noted that in the parish of Aber, Llywelyn '**...had a castel or palace on a hille by the Chirch, wherof yet parte stondesth.**'

In 1553 Rhys Thomas of Aberglasney, and his wife Jane acquired the property. They restored the medieval palace buildings on the promontory of Garth Celyn, turning them into an Elizabethan manor house complex.

From 1553 to date those buildings, standing in a site that has been reused for at least 4000 years have undergone many transformations.

**Broadcaster and historian Huw Edward's in the BBC documentary production 'The Story of Wales' described Garth Celyn as 'probably the most important site in the history of Wales.'**

The present owner of the property, Kathryn Pritchard Gibson, has since 1988 opened the house freely and willingly to groups interested in the local history, archaeology, literature, music, poetry, drama, art, traditional building skills and ecology. With the enforced sale of the property that open door approach will come to an end if the Welsh Assembly Government stands back and does nothing to prevent it.

We have this opportunity to make a bilingual Welsh Cultural Centre a thriving reality.

Garth Celyn lies at the Gateway to the ancient kingdom of Gwynedd. With goodwill and enthusiasm, we can keep that Gateway open, and turn this into an international project of the greatest benefit and merit.



1 December 2014

Dear Mr. Powell and other members of the Assembly,

I am writing to express to my deep concern that the Welsh nation is at a risk of losing a vital part of its history and identity as a nation. I am not Welsh, nor do I have any ties to Wales, but I am a scholar who investigates the vestiges of the British Empire, mostly from a linguistic point of view. I point this out to make it clear that I have no hidden agenda and nothing personal to gain: my concern about Garth Celyn comes only from the perspective of knowing full well what a physical place like this means for the self-worth and identity of a people.

During the December 9 hearing and the days leading up to it, I am certain that many powerful and persuasive people have and will come forward stating that Garth Celyn is not what Kathryn Gibson and others say it is, stating, in essence, that is nothing more than Elizabethan manor house and that there is no “proof” that a royal *llys* ever stood there. As I am sure you are aware, this debate is all part of a vehement struggle that has been going on for many years. I have documented the effects of the negative discourse about Garth Celyn, as well as calling into question the strategies used by the adversaries of Garth Celyn, in an academic article that was published last year. In the article, I trace the main strategies that the adversaries of Garth Celyn have used in order to elevate their own position and denigrate that of Garth Celyn, in some instances using official documents, manipulation of public opinion, and especially by using Wikipedia as a tool—and a very effective tool, at that, as, unfortunately, many people look no further than Wikipedia as their source of information.

By now this mess of opposition between two factions has run its course, and we find ourselves in a position where something must be done to put these arguments to rest. A few clear facts remain.

- 1) At this exact moment in time, the Government of Wales has the opportunity to invest in a site that, despite all of the negative discourse surrounding it in recent years, continues to hold a vital interest and sense of connection to the history and identity of Wales as a nation—as evidenced by the public outpouring of interest concerning the future of the site. With this in mind, any claims for or against the “authenticity” of Garth Celyn by a select few are irrelevant: this exact place, no other, embodies a sense of identity and the past and future of Wales for the Welsh people. Despite any claims to the contrary (on Wikipedia and elsewhere) the love and honour for Garth Celyn comes through in myriad large and small ways every day—from the school groups who visit there, to the fresh flowers that are without fail affixed by strangers to the lower fence perimeter of the property, to the visits from elderly Welsh patriots who want to touch the walls of Llewelyn’s Tower before they die. To ignore or belittle the value of these connections would be callous indeed. Who better to have ownership of such an important site for the Welsh people than the government of Wales?
- 2) Despite claims to the contrary (as demonstrated in the article I wrote), there is evidence provided by scholars who confirm that Garth Celyn is a site of great importance to Wales. Further, thorough, non-biased investigations carried out by professional teams of archaeologists and historians is of tantamount importance at this point, so that we can be

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sure of what is or is not there. Such investigations have yet to take place. The sale of this property to developers or even unsympathetic private owners could lead to irreparable damage – and furthermore, would take Garth Celyn out of the hands of the Welsh people, where it firmly belongs.

- 3) From a strictly practical point, this location already contains the buildings and other infrastructure that make it possible for Welsh people and those interested in Welsh history to visit, think about their past, and, in a best-case scenario, make art, music and poetry relating to the past and future of Wales. In other words, this is a good investment: the visitors and interested parties are guaranteed—they already come, and, once in the hands of the Welsh government, this flow of invested visitors would only increase.

This exact sense of circumstances – the great pride and interest of the Welsh people in Garth Celyn, coupled with the opportunity to properly investigate its past—create an opportunity for the Nation of Wales that may never repeat itself. I fervently hope that the Assembly will not pass up this unique and vital opportunity to invest in an endeavor that has so much meaning to the people of Wales, and, indeed, to those from throughout the world.

Most sincerely yours,

*Elizabeth Peterson*

Elizabeth Peterson, PhD  
University Lecturer, University of Helsinki  
Faculty of Arts

# Sir Dafydd Bullock

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William Powell AM  
Chair Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales

Dear Sir

I write to you as a member of the Gorsedd, and as a patriotic Welshman now living in Luxembourg. I am a composer and have written many works based upon Welsh history and legend, which have been performed and listened to throughout the world.

I am greatly worried about the future of Garth Celyn, in Gwynedd. I am sure you have been made aware of the political, archeological and historical dimensions of this case, and I will not repeat them here.

I simply wish to ask that the Welsh Assembly Government take the opportunity of the enforced sale of Garth Celyn to provide the funding for the acquisition of this historically significant site by the Welsh Government for the Welsh Nation, and to ensure that Garth Celyn should then be placed in the hands of an independent Trust to manage and run it as a Welsh Cultural Centre as a permanent living Memorial to the Welsh Princes and their achievements.

I have been to Garth Celyn on many occasions and I have seen the selfless work of Kathryn Gibson, in the face of highly organised, academically unsubstantiated and at times vindictive opposition which surely must count as a disgrace to public life. Many prominent commentators have attested to the value and significance of Garth Celyn to the Welsh nation. Its survival, always a matter of some fragility, is now directly threatened.

Living away from Wales, I see the vast resources given to culturally and historically significant sites, many of infinitely lesser significance than Garth Celyn. Surely it is not too much to expect that the devolved Government of our country now do something to preserve such an important part of our heritage.

Yours faithfully,

(Dafydd Dolbadarn)

Sir Dafydd Bullock

## Agenda Item 2.3

### **P-04-608 Inquiry into the Welsh NHS**

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to hold a full and comprehensive inquiry into the Welsh NHS. This diagnostic inquiry will ensure that all matters of concern are identified and addressed, and that standards in the Welsh health service are continually improved for the sake of NHS staff, patients and the people of Wales

**Petitioner :** PJ Vanston

**First considered by the Committee:** 9 December 2014

**Number of Signatures:** 146

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-04-608  
Ein cyf/Our ref MD/05616/14

William Powell AM  
Assembly Member for Mid & West Wales  
Chair Petitions Committee  
Ty Hywel  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA  
committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

16 November 2014

Dear William,

Thank you for your letter of 28 October on behalf of the Petitions Committee regarding Petition P-04-608 asking for a comprehensive inquiry into the Welsh NHS.

Patient safety and care quality is of paramount importance. The majority of people in Wales receive excellent care from the NHS in Wales and its caring, dedicated workforce and are very satisfied with their overall experience. The Welsh NHS is the most closely inspected and scrutinised health service of all the four nations in the UK, with more bodies charged with ensuring that quality and safety standards are maintained for patients.

Where problems are identified or concerns are raised, the NHS and the Welsh Government will, and has, intervened and taken action when there is a need to do so. The Welsh Government remains firmly of the view that the need to ensure action is part of a continuous monitoring and learning process, without the need to resort to inquiries which would undoubtedly take resources away from direct patient care.

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  
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English Enquiry Line 0845 010 3300  
Llinell Ymholiadau Cymraeg 0845 010 4400  
Correspondence.Mark.Drakeford@wales.gsi.gov.uk

**P-04-608 Inquiry into the Welsh NHS – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 03.12.14.**

Petitioner: PJ Vanston

Key Points:

- 1) Cost. An inquiry into the Welsh NHS would be affordable and would, I am sure, pay for itself many times over in the long run. (Might an independent cost analysis be commissioned by the Welsh Assembly government?)
- 2) Comparison. England has had the Keogh report (2013) on its health service – so why can't Wales have something similar (which could be called a 'review', rather than an 'inquiry', if preferred)? Don't the Welsh deserve the same level of transparency in their health service as those over the border?
- 3) Opinion. Most Welsh people seem to want an inquiry, based on all polls I have seen and anecdotal evidence. (But again, might an independent poll be commissioned by the Assembly?)
- 4) Nurses. An inquiry – with its honest, independent overview of the way things are, and recommendations for action – would surely be of benefit to all NHS staff who are always liable to be criticised for things out of their control because they are on the front line.
- 5) Patients. Again, an inquiry and its recommendations, if carried out, would surely be likely to save lives by improving hospital care, addressing ambulance response times and reducing unacceptably long waiting lists for urgent operations (e.g. heart procedures).

Detailed Explanation:

Firstly, many thanks for considering my petition today.

I would initially like to focus on the cost argument put forward by Mark Drakeford (in his letter to William Powell AM of 16 November 2014) that there is no need for ‘inquiries which would undoubtedly take resources away from direct patient care.’

I consider this much-touted ‘cost argument’ to be a herring as red as the Welsh dragon itself.

An inquiry would cost a reasonable amount of money – for a nation of three million people – and almost certainly pay for itself many times over in the long run, with all the improvements any recommended changes would lead to, not to mention the savings made in the NHS compensation budget.

Mr Drakeford also states that the majority of people ‘receive excellent care from the NHS in Wales and its caring, dedicated workforce’ and are ‘very satisfied with its overall experience.’

To my knowledge, nobody campaigning for an inquiry has ever argued anything else, or is against the NHS or its workforce. Indeed, my own father was a nurse in the NHS in the 1950s and 60s, and that ‘caring, dedicated workforce’ in Swansea saved my mother’s life in 2007 after she suffered a major heart attack. And, indeed, I was born on the NHS myself – and am moderately satisfied with the overall outcome so far...

I would like to see an inquiry into the NHS precisely *for* the sake of its staff, because their lives would be undoubtedly made better in the long run by improvements resulting from an inquiry’s recommendations, as would the lives of all patients and their families.

All polls I see – (and anecdotal evidence) – suggest more than two thirds of people here are in favour of holding an inquiry into the Welsh NHS – (considerably more than the majority enjoyed by the Assembly government,

it should be noted). Perhaps this is because they realise that, although their beloved NHS is good, it could be better, and they can see that it clearly does have issues in certain areas, with scandals uncovered on what seems like a monthly basis, and people dying needlessly (as I am sure will happen even more this winter, unfortunately). Would it not be better to have everything out in the open in a transparent manner, so everyone could know what was going on? An inquiry would do that.

The only people perhaps justified in fearing the findings of an inquiry are those – (and one or two may be politicians, perhaps) – who have been complacent, negligent, or even complicit, in the failings of the Welsh NHS.

Moreover, at present, the people of Wales are being treated like second class British citizens. In England, they had the Keogh report (2013) which has undoubtedly improved many aspects of the English NHS. The Welsh, meanwhile, are effectively being told to that they are being unreasonable when they ask for the same. Why? Is it not reasonable to seek honesty and transparency in one's own country in order to improve the health service for its own people? Again, if so, why?

A cynic might conclude that the 'idle overlings' who rule over us are often more concerned with their future political careers than in being honest with the Welsh people by allowing them to see what is happening in their own NHS by means of a full independent inquiry.

Incidentally, my petition for an NHS inquiry is in no way party political, no matter how politicians may choose to use it as a 'political football' – and I am not, and never have been, a member of any political party.

But, having said all this, I do understand how some NHS staff and members of the public may perceive a call for an inquiry as somehow an attack on NHS staff, or even the NHS itself. To those people I say this:

What would Nye Bevan have wanted?

Would he have wanted Welsh politicians telling the people they couldn't have an inquiry into the NHS they pay for because those politicians have decided, like some patrician aristocrats of old, that it is not in the people's best interests? I doubt it. I believe Nye Bevan would have realised that most of his compatriots both want and deserve an inquiry. And by goodness, if he were in charge of Wales, I am convinced we would have had such an inquiry two or three years ago and would now be enjoying the benefits of the recommendations it made and the action plans it put into force.

So, in summary, why have an inquiry into the Welsh NHS?

Why? Because we need one, we deserve one, and because it is the right thing to do for patients, NHS staff and the people of Wales.

And the bottom line is this:

If we don't have an inquiry, (or a review, an investigation, a powwow – or whatever anyone wants to call it), and carry on as we are, then more people will die unnecessarily in our hospitals and on long waiting lists – and for reasons we don't even know about yet, as we have not had the benefit of a full, independent inquiry to identify them.

Alternatively, if we do have such an inquiry, fewer people will die unnecessary deaths.

That, surely, is reason enough.

Many thanks for considering my petition today

(Mr) PJ Vanston

Swansea

## Agenda Item 2.4

### **P-04-610 Reverse the cuts to hardship funds in Universities**

The hardship fund given to Universities by the Welsh government, the Financial Contingency Fund, has been cut for 2014/15. We believe this to be a damaging decision and call on the Welsh government to reverse the cuts immediately. This vital fund provided financial support to thousands of students who found themselves in difficulty mid-way through the year, and with no other means to support themselves. Without this fund, many students will be unable to afford to study, entrenching social inequalities in Wales' education system. The announcement that the Fund is to be cut also breaks a promise Assembly members made to students in 2011 whereby they signed an NUS Wales pledge not to cut the Fund. We, the undersigned, want the Welsh Government to know that we will not accept broken promises and further cuts to our education system.

### **Additional information**

Small businesses form the backbone of our Town Centres and High Streets. In order that business recovery and start up is supported, and the deterioration in our towns and communities is arrested, this matter is urgent.

**Petitioner:** Beth Button/ NUS Wales

**First considered by the Committee:** 9 December 2014

**Number of Signatures: 134**

Huw Lewis AC / AM  
Y Gweinidog Addysg a Sgiliau  
Minister for Education and Skills



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-610  
Ein cyf/Our ref HL/05441/14

William Powell AM  
Chair Petitions Committee

committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

24 November 2014

Dear William

Thank you for your letter dated 14 November about the petition from the National Union of Students (Wales) regarding the proposed closure of the Financial Contingency Fund - Higher Education (FCF HE) Scheme from academic year 2014/15.

I am proud of the support the Welsh Government has provided to students and to further and higher education institutions in Wales, but the cuts imposed by Whitehall have meant I have had to take some very difficult decisions on education support this year. From 2012, universities have been able to charge home students tuition fees of up to £9,000 per year and they have also recruited increased numbers of international students. As a result, I decided they should now provide help to disadvantaged students from their own substantial income. I initially removed FCF support for higher education institutions from September this year.

However, after listening to stakeholders, I decided to re-establish the Fund for this year only and this was welcomed by NUS(W). But I think it is appropriate that from academic year 2015/16 universities should establish their own discretionary hardship funds, and my officials will be discussing with institutions how they intend to accomplish this.

Higher education student support in Wales still remains the most generous package offered by any of the UK administrations.

Yours sincerely

**Huw Lewis AC / AM**  
Y Gweinidog Addysg a Sgiliau  
Minister for Education and Skills

# Agenda Item 3.1

## **P-04-541 Support for the Mentrau Iaith (Language Initiatives)**

### **Petition wording:**

We call on the Assembly to ask the Welsh Government:

to congratulate the Mentrau Iaith for their innovative work in promoting the use of the Welsh language across Wales;

to confirm that the Mentrau are a key partner for the Government in the context of implementing its Welsh-language strategy;

to provide a prompt response to Cardiff University's survey of the Mentrau's work, ensuring that the funding that is given to them is a fair reflection of the scale of the task that they face – while accepting that the amount of money that is available to them needs to be increased substantially;

to accept that there is a need for consistency between the Mentrau in terms of funding and that the current inconsistency needs to be addressed;

to fund Mentrau Iaith Cymru fairly, ensuring that it can play a full role in co-ordinating the work of the Mentrau and providing them with assistance and guidance;

to ensure that the Welsh-language standards compel Welsh local authorities to support the work of the Mentrau and to ensure that the authorities work closely with the Mentrau;

to play a full role in providing strategic guidance in the context of community planning.

**Petition raised by:** Heini Gruffudd

**Date Petition first considered by Committee: 29 April 2014**

**Number of signatures: 1346**



Eich cyf/Your ref: P-04-541  
Ein cyf/Our ref:FM -/05174/14

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

[committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk)

17 November 2014

Dear William,

**Petition: P-04-541 Support for the Mentrau Iaith (Language Initiatives)**

I am writing in response to your letter concerning the petition submitted to the Petitions Committee by Dyfodol i'r Iaith in relation to their request to hold an "independent assessment of the resources required by the Mentrau Iaith to operate to their full potential."

In March 2013 the Welsh Government appointed Cardiff University to undertake a "Review of the Work of Mentrau Iaith, Language Action Plans and the Aman Tawe Language Promotion Scheme" The main aim of the review was to prepare a report for the Welsh Government on a number of matters including:-

- the methods used by the organisations to promote and facilitate the use of Welsh
- identifying the whole range of activities conducted by the organisations - and assessing to what extent they reflect local needs, and to what extent the organisations collect data effectively in order to assess the impact of activities;
- do the organisations' structures ensure effective working, partnership working and sharing of good practice
- the potential to further develop the role of the Mentrau
- are the Mentrau doing work that should be done by others (such as local authorities)
- is the level of funding provided by the Welsh Government appropriate.

The report included numerous recommendations for the Welsh Government to consider in relation to the above matters. Regarding the future funding of the Mentrau Iaith, the recommendation of the review was as follows:-

*'end the current funding system, review all funding allocated to the organisations, placing ambitious expectations and asking for plans from the organisations and other parties*

*interested in implementing the above sub-action plan in the form of a new grant application. Ensure appropriate funding to do this'.*

The Moving Forward policy statement on the Welsh language recognises that the Mentrau Iaith are an integral part of the communities they serve. I announced in August that we will be investing £1.2m over the next 2 years to promote the use of Welsh in the community, of which £750,000 will be to develop the Mentrau Iaith across Wales, with £250,000 allocated within the 2014-15 financial year and £500,000 allocated in 2015-16.

As part of the funding package discussed for 2014-15, Welsh Government officials recommended that an independent review of the structures of the Mentrau Iaith be commissioned in order to advise on the future staffing, management and financial resources required by the Mentrau Iaith to operate effectively. This option was declined by the network of Mentrau Iaith and the Mentrau Iaith Cymru operational Committee.

Welsh Government funding to individual Mentrau Iaith ranges from £25,550 to £107,768 annually. I agree that there is a need to increase the baselines of those Mentrau Iaith that receives the smallest grant allocation, and officials are currently investigating this matter and will be advising me on this in the near future.

The role of the Mentrau Iaith is key for the future in respect of the implementation of the Welsh Language Standards, the Future Generations Bill, and the recommendations of the Williams Report in respect of the reorganisation of Local Authorities. It is important that the role and influence of the Mentrau Iaith is strengthened in light of the future challenges of language planning.

As requested in the correspondence received by the Petitions Committee from the Operational Committee of Mentrau Iaith Cymru, Welsh Government officials will work closely with Mentrau Iaith Cymru officials to discuss and plan the structures and capacity needed in the future. This will ensure that they are able to adapt effectively in order to develop a strong partnership to work strategically with organisations such as Local Authorities to promote the use of the Welsh language. I am also content to meet Dyfodol yr Iaith representatives to discuss the matter further.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carwyn Jones', written in a cursive style.

**CARWYN JONES**

**TO DO  
DYFO**

2 Lôn Rhianfa

Ffynhonne

Abertawe *Llais i'r laith*

SA1 6DJ

heini@gruffudd.org

William Powell AM

Cadeirydd, y Pwyllgor Deisebau

Tŷ Hywel

Bae Caerdydd

CAERDYDD

CF99 1NA

3 Rhagfyr 2014

Annwyl Mr Powell

**Deiseb: P- 04-541 Cefnogaeth i'r Mentrau laith**

Hoffwn ddiolch i chi ac i'r pwyllgor am roi ystyriaeth fanwl i'r ddeiseb a luniwyd gennym i gefnogi gwaith y Mentrau laith, ac i geisio sicrhau eu bod yn cael cyllid digonol sy'n cyfateb i alwadau cynllunio ieithyddol yng nghyd-destun adfer y Gymraeg.

Atodaf lythyr gan Fentrau laith Cymru sy'n cydnabod y datblygiadau a fu yn y drafodaeth ar hyd y misoedd diwethaf.

Rydym yn derbyn yn llawen farn y Prif Weinidog fod gan y Mentrau laith rôl ieithyddol allweddol, ac rydym yn gwerthfawrogi ei gynnig i gwrdd â ni i drafod hyn ymhellach.

Byddaf yn sgil hyn yn cysylltu â'r Prif Weinidog i drefnu cyfarfod er mwyn parhau'r drafodaeth ar lefel gweinidog.

Llawer iawn o ddiolch ichi eto, ac edrychaf ymlaen at glywed canlyniad trafodaeth eich pwyllgor ar y ddeiseb.

Yn gywir,

Heini Gruffudd

Heini Gruffudd

Cadeirydd

Dyfodol i'r Iaith

**Mentrau**

**Iaith**

**Cymru**

2 Rhagfyr 2014

Mr William Powell, Cadeirydd Pwyllgor Deisebau Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru,

Annwyl Mr Powell,

Ysgrifennwn mewn ymateb i'r ohebiaeth ddiweddaraf rhwng y Pwyllgor Deisebau a'r Prif Weinidog, sef y llythyr dyddiedig 17 Tachwedd 2014.

Hoffem ddechrau trwy ymateb i'r sylw yn llythyr y Prif Weinidog ynglŷn â'r cynnig i gomisiynu adolygiad annibynnol o strwythurau'r Mentrau Iaith fel rhan o'r pecyn cyllido ar gyfer 2014-15. Cafwyd penderfyniad unfrydol i beidio â derbyn y cynnig hwn gan y rhwydwaith o Fentrau a gan Bwyllgor Gweithredol Mentrau Iaith Cymru mewn cyfarfod Cenedlaethol Mentrau Iaith Cymru ym mis Gorffennaf 2014 am ddau brif reswm. Yn gyntaf, nid oedd y cynnig wedi son yn benodol am gynnal asesiad annibynnol o'r adnoddau sydd angen ar y Mentrau iddynt ddatblygu a gweithredu i'w potensial llawn ond yn hytrach yn canolbwyntio'n benodol ar strwythurau, sef maes oedd o fewn cwmpas yr adolygiad a gynhaliwyd yn 2012. Yn ail, rhoddwyd amcan gost gan Llywodraeth Cymru o £150,000 ar gyfer y gwaith ymgynghorol hwn, cost fyddai'n cael ei dynnu oddi wrth y cyllid ychwanegol i'r Mentrau (£750,000 ar y cyfan) a gyhoeddwyd ym mis Mehefin 2014.

Oherwydd y pwyntiau uchod cafwyd penderfyniad gan y Mentrau i beidio â derbyn y cynnig gan nad oedd yn ymateb i'n gwir anghenion, ac yn fwy difrifol, byddai'n

golygu llai o adnoddau yn cyrraedd y Mentrau eu hunain ar gyfer eu gwaith holl bwysig o hybu a hyrwyddo'r Gymraeg yn eu cymunedau.

Fel y mae'r Prif Weinidog yn sôn yn ei lythyr, rydym ar hyn o bryd yn trafod y pecyn cyllido ar gyfer yr adnoddau ychwanegol gyda Swyddogion Llywodraeth Cymru ac fe fyddwn ni'n parhau i drafod a chydweithio er mwyn sicrhau'r defnydd gorau o'r adnoddau hynny.

Rydym hefyd yn croesawu sylwadau'r Prif Weinidog ynglŷn â rôl y Mentrau fel rhan annatod o'r cymunedau maent yn eu gwasanaethu. Cytunwn yn llwyr fod angen i rôl a dylanwad y Mentrau gryfhau wrth i'r maes cynllunio ieithyddol yng Nghymru ddatblygu. I'r perwyl hwn mae'r cyllid ychwanegol o £750,000 dros ddwy flynedd yn cynrychioli buddsoddiad ychwanegol i'w croesawu *fel cam cyntaf* yn y broses o gryfhau a datblygu ein gwaith. Mae angen adnoddau pellach, dros dymor hwy, ynghyd â sicrwydd ariannol tymor hwy ar y Mentrau er mwyn iddynt ddatblygu a thyfu i gwrdd â'r heriau y mae'r Gymraeg yn ei wynebu ac i'w paratoi i chwarae rôl lawn yn y maes cynllunio iaith yng Nghymru fel y mae'r Prif Weinidog wedi sôn. Yn ein hymateb gwreiddiol i'r adolygiad o waith y Mentrau iaith rydym yn galw am fuddsoddiad ychwanegol o £3.1m dros dair blynedd. Rydym ni dal i gredu'n gryf bod angen yr adnoddau hyn er mwyn datblygu fel cyrff sydd â dylanwad digonol i weithredu dros y Gymraeg a siaradwyr Cymraeg ym mhob rhan o Gymru, gyda'r gallu i gydweithio gyda Llywodraeth Cymru i gyrraedd y nod o weld y Gymraeg yn ffynnu a chyrraedd nodau'r strategaeth iaith.

Fe fydd Mentrau iaith Cymru yn trafod y materion sydd wedi codi yn sgil y ddeiseb gan Dyfodol i'r iaith yn uniongyrchol gyda'r Prif Weinidog a Llywodraeth Cymru o hyn ymlaen, gan ein bod mewn trafodaethau gyda nhw yn barod.

Hoffem ddiolch i'r Pwyllgor Deisebau a Dyfodol i'r iaith am eu gwaith yn ystod y broses o gyflwyno'r ddeiseb a'r ohebiaeth sydd wedi dilyn. Mawr obeithiwn gydweithio â chi eto yn y dyfodol.

Yr eiddoch yn gywir,



Meirion Ll Davies

Ar ran Pwyllgor Gweithredol Mentrau iaith Cymru

## Agenda Item 3.2

### **P-04-549 Make 'Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau' the Official Welsh National Anthem**

#### **Petition wording:**

January 2016 will mark the 150th anniversary of the composition of Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau by Evan and James James of Pontypridd. December 16th 2015 will be the centenary of Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau being used as Wales' anthem at sporting events. For the first time ever the players and crowd sang an anthem before an international match. This would become a staple tradition of international sporting events across the world. But it all started in the old Arms Park because Wales wanted to mitigate the infamous haka used by New Zealand. Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau became our battle cry and we won the game 3-0. Now, it is time to make this battle cry the official Welsh national anthem.

**Petition raised by:** Stuart Evans

**Date Petition first considered by Committee:** 29 April 2014

**Number of signatures:** 1012

**P-04-549 Make 'Hen Wlad fy Nhadau' the Official Welsh National Anthem –  
Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Clerking Team, 25.11.14**

My apologise Jessica, I thought I had replied.

It would appear that Carwyn is taking the easy way out and instead of looking for a way in which Wales can join the other nations of the world that have an official national anthem he would rather reject the idea without it even being discussed further.

My belief is that he would choose this option so he doesn't upset his masters in London. For if Wales had its own official national anthem then it could no longer have any other anthems forced upon us or made to take priority as we had to endure for so long before internationals and other events. (See link for example <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DiF4QI5nIIY>)

I'm not shocked he lacks the confidence in our country, but I am a little saddened he didn't see the obvious cultural and linguistic benefits this could have.

Stuart Evans

# Agenda Item 3.3

## **P-03-315 New Dyfi River Crossing**

### **Petition wording**

We, the undersigned, are in favour of and support, any proposition to create a new crossing of the Dyfi River (or the re-routing of the A487) linking South Meirionnydd with Powys, Dyfed and Ceredigion, to accommodate and suite the demands of modern day traffic and urge prioritisation of funding and action. We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to create this crossing as a matter of priority.

**Petition raised by:** South Meirionnydd Older People's Forum

**Petition first considered by Committee:** February 2011

**Number of signatures:** 3204

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-04-315  
Ein cyf/Our ref EH/057111/14

William Powell AM  
Chair  
Petitions Committee

[Petition@wales.gov.uk](mailto:Petition@wales.gov.uk)

10 November 2014

Dear William,

Thank you for letter of 29 October regarding Dyfi Bridge.

As announced in our budget statement, we are investing £6 million to enable construction of the new bridge at the earliest opportunity. This is a very positive development which will allow us to provide certainty over delivery of this important project.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Edwina Hart', written in a cursive style.

# Agenda Item 3.4

## **P-04-574 Bus Services in Burryport**

### **Petition Wording**

We the undersigned, request that the direct service from Burryport to Prince Philip Hospital be reinstated with immediate effect.

**Petition raised by:** John James

**Date Petition first considered by Committee:** 15 July 2014

**Number of signatures :** 572

KM/SGP/BH

12<sup>th</sup> November, 2014.

Mr William Powell AC/AM  
Chair Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

Dear Mr. Powell,

Thank you for your letter concerning a petition from John James, regarding a direct bus service from Burry Port to Prince Philip Hospital.

You will be aware that the local bus sector, together with Local Authorities, has seen a reduction in funding support since 2012. Carmarthenshire County Council has worked with local bus operators to mitigate the impact of reductions in support and has tried to sustain the local bus network, as much as possible. This exercise has been extremely challenging for Carmarthenshire. Rural authorities typically have to subsidise over seventy percent of their network.

Consequently, service reductions were implemented in accordance with the priorities set out below

Priority 1: Remove services where alternatives are available for users

Priority 2: Remove evening and Sunday services with the lowest level of social need

Priority 3: Remove remaining evening and Sunday services

The Authority also worked with operators to identify any potential savings in the network where individual journeys, or, parts of journey could be removed resulting in cost savings whilst having minimal effects on passenger numbers.

Specifically in relation to Burry Port, services were reduced as a result of a withdrawal of a commercial, unsubsidised service. The former "L4" and "L5" services interworked and provided a direct service to Prince Philip Hospital, seven times per day. Four of the seven workings involved a journey time of forty eight minutes, passengers were therefore likely to have changed buses at Llanelli bus Station to reduce the overall journey time. The L4 and L5 services were withdrawn by the commercial operator in May, due to a lack of patronage.

Burry Port is still served by public transport. The X11 service provides a half hourly service, with a connection to a service to Prince Philip Hospital at 30 minutes past the hour, from Llanelli bus station. The Authority also provides a demand responsive service around Burry Port for the community. This Demand Responsive service connects with the main X11 service up until 1545 six days a week.

Given the extent of funding reductions in the Local Government settlement moving forward , I am unable to commit and indeed find any revenue, to support any additional public transport services. Officers, will however work, with the bus operators and the Local Community to promote the existing services that are available.

Yours sincerely,

Councillor Kevin Madge,  
Leader of the Council.

Dear Mr. Powell,

In response to Carmarthenshire County Council's letter regarding the petition to reinstate the direct bus service to Prince Philip Hospital from Burry Port, I have the following observations.

#### Priority 1

There are now 2 buses leaving for the Hospital at the same time from Llanelli, which usually is out of synch with the service that comes from Burry Port.

#### Priority 2

Surely hospital appointments and visiting the poorly is one of the highest social needs. Also, as recorded previously, the hospital has introduced Sunday appointments, in what I consider is an effort to speed up the appointment procedure and alleviate the strain on the system. The 2 authorities should be working together on this crucial medical service.

As for the comment that "passengers were therefore likely to have changed buses at Llanelli bus station" this is purely an opinion with no hard evidence to support it.

The services withdrawn due to lack of patronage is understandable due to the fact that one of the services was going to Llanelli same time as the X11 to Llanelli, a point that was highlighted to the operator at meeting with Burry Port Ward Members.

Finally, the Minister has provided £25m in grants this year to support such services as this one, that is very important to a community such as ours, why can't we access the money needed?

Many thanks to all the committee for the time and effort you have spent on this issue concerning the people of Burry Port.

Yours sincerely,

*John*

Cllr. John James

## **P-04-590 Funding for the Cardi Bach Coastal Bus Service**

### **Petition wording:**

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to re-instate the funding of the Cardi Bach coastal bus service in Ceredigion.

### **Further information :**

The Cardi Bach coastal bus service that runs between Cardigan and New Quay will be stopped on 30th September due to a lack of funding. The service received some funding from the Welsh Government under the Rural Development Plan 2007-2013.

There has been a noticeable increase in visitors to this area, particularly walkers, since the opening of the Wales Coast Path in 2012. The coastal bus service has enabled visitors to go to the towns and villages along the route.

This bus service brings custom to local businesses.

It is popular with walkers on the Wales Coast Path, enabling them to enjoy linear walks.

It provides both residents and visitors with an alternative to using the motor car.

Some rural areas will be particularly inconvenienced if the bus service ceases. For example, Cwmttydu is a popular village on the coast path, midway between New Quay and Llangrannog. If someone wanted to access a bus from here he would have to walk 4 miles to the nearest service bus route. He would have difficulty calling a taxi as there is no public phone box and the mobile phone signal is very poor.

**Petitioner :** Janet Richardson

**First considered by the Committee:** 23 September 2014

**Number of Signatures:** 1,084 paper signatures and 121 electronic signatures. Total 1,205

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-04-590  
Ein cyf/Our ref EH/05286/14

William Powell AM  
Chair Petitions Committee

[committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk)

13 October 2014

Dear William

Thank you for your letter of 30 September regarding the Cardi Bach coastal bus service petition.

At plenary on 17 September, I agreed to update Members once Ceredigion County Council makes the necessary contractual arrangements for alternative services to the current Cardi Bach bus service. My officials are in touch with Council officers about this, and I will provide an update when I have that information.

I appreciate the importance of providing good public transport links to support sustainable tourism along the Cambrian coast. I have made funding available to Ceredigion County Council to improve the key TrawsCymru T5 / X50 bus service which will link Aberystwyth to Cardigan via New Quay, and an improved service on this route will start early in the New Year. I have also recently approved funding to provide additional rail services to Fishguard which started over the summer as well as an enhanced service on the Cambrian Line which will start next year.



**Subject:     Cardi Bach Petition Additional Comments**

Since the petition was submitted a community group consisting of local residents and business owners have been working to develop proposals for a viable alternative service.

The group has had a meeting with representatives of Ceredigion Council and our AM, Elin Jones. We are encouraged by the support we have received from the respective politicians whilst appreciating the difficult financial environment existing at the moment.

It is because of these financial constraints that the Community Group's approach has been to examine critically the delivery of a Cardi Bach type service developing proposals to operate a community service with reduced costs and an increase in income. Whilst at an early stage these proposals have been discussed with representatives of the company who ran the Cardi Bach, the Green Dragon Bus Service, who are supportive of the Group's aims.

Our proposals need further development but there is confidence that a cost effective community transport scheme operating under a Section 22 Permit could be developed given appropriate support from the Welsh Government and Ceredigion County Council.

The communications we have received to date does however give us some concern. We are not clear if the Welsh Government is waiting for the Council or vice versa and therefore we are uncertain with whom to develop our proposals.

The Group welcomes the recent funding made available to support sustainable tourism along the Cambrian Coast but would like to bring to the Committee's attention that many of the areas served by the previous Cardi Bach service will

not benefit from this investment. Businesses in remote areas such as Cwmttydu will lose out as this was a key location for users of the service.

The Cardi Bach also served the local community (45% usage by residents). Loss of the Cardi Bach has severed the residents' link to these services. Examples of the impacts within the area already includes loss of transport to work, loss of access to social services and loss of transport to doctors.

23% of the population of Ceredigion is 65+. There is a projected 47% increase in the local 65+ age group by 2026 and a 67% increase in the 85+ age group (Draft Health, Social and Well Being Strategy for Ceredigion 2011-2014). It is inevitable that with such changing demographics there will be an increasing demand for public transport as increasing numbers of elderly will mean increasing numbers unable to drive.

An Age UK study showed that a viable public transport service was vital in enabling older people to remain independent and lead fulfilling lives, preventing isolation and loneliness.

Without public transport older people are often forced to make a choice between paying for taxis and staying at home curtailing their cultural, social and exercise activities. Improving the health of the elderly will reduce the burden of escalating social services costs, reduce the demand on scarce NHS services and the cost of delivering those services.

A sustainable transport policy needs to consider the impact of future significant social changes. It needs to ensure that everyone is able to access jobs and services via reliable public transport.

We ask for the support of the Welsh Government and Ceredigion County Council, working in partnership with the local community, to achieve this.

Janet Richardson

02/12/2014

# Agenda Item 3.6

## **P-04-547 Ban Polystyrene(EPS) Fast Food and Drinks Packaging**

### **Petition wording:**

The time has come to halt the sight of millions of polystyrene food and drinks cartons littering the beaches and countryside of Wales.

Polystyrene(EPS) is a major component of urban litter and marine debris. It is detrimental to wildlife that ingests it and costs millions for Welsh Councils to remove from our streets. Polystyrene takes hundreds of years to degrade.

Over 100 US (including New York),Canadian, and also European cities have banned polystyrene food packaging as a result of the negative impacts of the Environment. We hope that wales will have the vision to join that list.

Therefore, with so many alternatives to polystyrene(EPS) packaging now available which has significantly less impact on the environment and human health and also to save Welsh taxpayers millions of pounds in street cleansing costs we, the undersigned, request that the Welsh Government introduces a ban on all polystyrene fast food and drink packaging.

**Petition raised by:** Friends of Barry Beaches

**Date Petition first considered by Committee:** 29 April 2014

**Number of signatures:** 295

**P-04-547 Ban Polystyrene Fast Food and Drinks Packaging -  
Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Clerking Team, 25.11.14**

Hello Jessica,

After consulting with our membership I can confirm that we would like to continue with our petition in order to get the best chance of either a ban or taxing single use polystyrene food cartons.

Thanks

Rob Curtis

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## Agenda Item 3.7

### **P-04-445 : Save our Welsh cats & dogs from death on the roads**

#### **Petition wording:**

We, the undersigned, call on all Welsh Residents who own cats and dogs to support our petition to the Welsh Government to remove the ban on electronic collars linked with invisible boundary fencing/hidden fencing so that we can protect our companion pets from harm either from: a) Road Traffic b) Straying into Danger c) Causing accidents for which we owners of cats & dogs might legally be held liable.

**Petition raised by:** Monima O'Connor

**Date petition first considered by Committee:** 15 January 2013

**Number of signatures:** 10 – Associated petition collected approximately 500 signatures

Rebecca Evans AC / AM  
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Ffermio a Bwyd  
Deputy Minister for Farming and Food



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-445  
Ein cyf/Our ref RE/05161/14

William Powell AM

Chair Petitions Committee  
Ty Hywel  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

13 November 2014

Dear William,

Thank you for your letter regarding petition P-04-445 "Save our Welsh Cats and Dogs from Death on the Roads".

It was the intention to start the review of the policy intent behind the Animal Welfare (Electronic Collars) (Wales) Regulations 2010 earlier this year. However, other pressing priorities on companion animal welfare concerns have taken priority and consequently this review has had to be delayed. It is the intention to start the process of setting out to seek evidence before Christmas 2014 using the expertise of the Welsh Framework Group on Animal Health and Welfare.

I have noted the content of Ms. O'Connor's letter: please pass on my appreciation for the invitation for myself and/or my officials to witness a demonstration of how an 'invisible' fence system works. However, as Ms. O'Connor lives in Wales where these devices are prohibited, it would be wholly inappropriate.

Yours,  
Rebecca

Rebecca Evans AC / AM  
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Ffermio a Bwyd  
Deputy Minister for Farming and Food

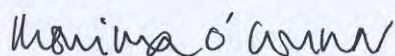
**P-04-445 Save our Welsh Cats & dogs from death on the roads –  
Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 02.12.14**

**Save our Welsh Cats & Dogs from Death on the Roads**

Further to the recent correspondence from The Deputy Minister Rebecca Evans AM of 13<sup>th</sup> November to The Chair of the Petitions Committee, William Powell AM, I am pleased to read that the Deputy Minister has the intention to review the Animal Welfare (Electronic Collars) 2010 legislation in the coming weeks.

I would like to raise a few points here, if I may:

1. The law prohibits anyone attaching a collar capable of giving an electric shock to a cat or dog, so my offer was always to bring a qualified trainer to demonstrate the system - without any cat or dog - to the Minister and her Team - I must apologise for not making that clearer.
2. This law was introduced with only the human-activated electronic training collars for dogs having been debated in the Assembly. Quite rightly, the Assembly voted unanimously for a ban.
3. It is absolutely vital today that the Minister witnesses the British/European animal-activated accredited fencing system for herself to understand how it operates.
4. There are about 170 different types of electronic collar available in the world and there are only 5 that qualify for the British/European Standard.
5. For the Minister to arrive at a fair decision having explored every angle, I sincerely hope she will include evidence from external expertise – including myself.



Monima O'Connor

2<sup>nd</sup> December 2014

## **P-04-533 Environmental Planning for Small Scale Wind Turbine Sites**

### **Petition wording:**

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to ask the Welsh Government to pass legislation to enable the following planning law. The laws would place conditions on all wind turbine applications, which do not form part of a commercial wind farm development. 1) We ask that such turbines shall not exceed 47metres to blade tip. 2) That the consent of 50% of residents, over the age of sixteen, living within 3Km.of the proposed site give signed approval of the plan. 3) That all turbines outside Wind Farm Developments are restricted to an operational period between 06.00 Hrs and 21.00Hrs to protect nocturnal birds and mammals. 4) That public consultation and written evidence is offered, and supplied to all residences within 4Km. of a proposed site to comply with the Aarhus convention. 5) All turbines should be constructed of materials which are 100% recyclable and all ground works removed at the end of operations.

**Petition raised by:** GALAR

**Date Petition first considered by Committee:** 4 February 2014

**Number of signatures:** 433

Carl Sargeant AC / AM  
Y Gweinidog Cyfoeth Naturiol  
Minister for Natural Resources



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-533  
Ein cyf/Our ref CS/05404/14

William Powell AM  
Petitions Committee Chair

Petition@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

13<sup>th</sup> November 2014

Dear Bill,

Thank you for your letter of 30 October regarding the petition from GALAR being considered by the Petitions Committee. I note that the issues raised in the latest correspondence from the petitioner appear to depart quite significantly from the original petition. I have however addressed the issues raised.

Item 1 relates to how the public are consulted and can comment on planning applications. The planning system provides the opportunity for members of the public to make representations on applications and their views should be taken into account in the decision making process. The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012 sets out the publicity requirements to be undertaken by local planning authorities. As stated in my previous response to you on this issue, I do not believe that local referenda would be an appropriate way of consulting the public on planning applications.

Item 2 relates to the subsidy of energy development in Wales which, as indicated in the petitioner's letter, is the responsibility of the UK Government.

Item 2 and 5 refer to grid connection. National Grid administers the grid, in partnership with Distribution Network Operators on a UK wide basis, and answer to UK Ministers. The petitioner suggests the Petitions Committee takes advice from National Grid and I can confirm they are best placed to advise on how they manage grid capacity in line with DECC policy.

Items 3 and 4 relate to ensuring that a wind turbine which stops being operational, due to financial problems or damage, is removed. Local planning authorities can use planning conditions to require a development, including single wind turbines, which no longer produces electricity for a continuous period, for example 12 months, to be removed.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

Wedi'i argraffu ar bapur wedi'i ailgylchu (100%)  
Pack Page 68

English Enquiry Line 0845 010 3300  
Llinell Ymholiadau Cymraeg 0845 010 4400  
Correspondence: Carl.Sargeant@wales.gsi.gov.uk  
Printed on 100% recycled paper

I do not support the proposed changes to legislation put forward by GALAR and am of the view that those issues which are devolved are adequately addressed through the planning system.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'CS', written in a cursive style.

**Carl Sargeant AC / AM**  
Y Gweinidog Cyfoeth Naturiol  
Minister for Natural Resources

Attention of the Petitions Committee

Monday, 01 December 2014

Dear Sirs,

Ref. P-04-533

Members of GALAR would like to express our thanks to the Minister for addressing the five points raised in our evidence to the committee on the 8<sup>th</sup>. September 2014. We would apologise that the Minister feels we are addressing issues not in the original petition, but would point out that the Welsh Assembly Petition System is word limited, and on complex matters it is hard to encompass the full range of requests the petitioners are seeking to be addressed. (Please note, as petitioners we feel this is fair and a balance is needed to restrict the petition to those potentially affected).

Adhering to the same notation:

**Item 1.** The Minister does not agree in referenda as a way of consulting the public, and indeed the petitioners are not asking that any such referenda be binding, but it would at least inform the planning committee of local feeling.

This is a matter mainly affecting rural communities. Until the recent past these communities had pubs, schools and post offices/stores where community matters had a chance of being disseminated. This local communication can be no longer counted on. The multiplicity of applications means that beyond legal notices, little effort is made to report applications.

The Minister represents Alyn and Deeside one of the most densely populated areas of Wales, It would be inconceivable that a planning notice posted by a planning officer could be missed in an area where there are over 500 people per sq.km. Rural Wales has far less population per sq. km. and a higher percentage of retired. What may be acceptable in the Ministers Constituency is not acceptable in rural areas. The Town and Country Planning(Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012 does not differentiate between those in rural areas, and those in areas, such as his own, well endowed with community facilities, and population numbers.

Wind farm developers are bound by planning legislation to inform members of the public in rural areas of proposed developments. The multiplicity of single turbine

applications are creating wind farms much closer to communities, and with greater impact on rural dwellers.

If referenda is to be denied to rural dwellers by the WAG, then we would ask NRW, to propose an alternative which recognises the shortcomings of the present system, the impact on Welsh minorities; and the perceived bullying by both the planning authorities and landowners.

**Items 2 & 5** refer to grid connection, and as the Minister suggests we would be obliged if the committee took evidence from National Grid. If possible, we would like the opportunity to question the National Grid on these matters by submission of written questions through yourselves, when the National Grid responds.

**Items 3 & 4** Relates to the removal of turbines which are no longer financially viable, either through breakdown, at the end of their mechanical life, or by the removal of subsidies. Such turbines cannot be simply abandoned. The Minister quite rightly suggests that it can be made a condition of planning by the local authority, but this choice assumes that due diligence is undertaken by the council into the multiple agents and landowners and their financial viability and responsibility. The multiplicity of applications bring the day of subsidy reduction or cancellation ever closer. Devolvement of energy to Wales is the ambition of all the main parties, when it is only logical that subsidies of local energy will fall upon the new devolved exchequer to finance. Applications at the moment are on shifting financial sands, the only sure value is the land on which the turbine stands.

It cannot be reasonably expected that local council's should underwrite removal, or ratepayers pay for the taking away of a turbine and the renovation of the land. Therefore, we ask that each application should have a removals charge against the land on which the turbine stands, or that NRW, having responsibility for planning legislation for these structures, should assume responsibility, at the planning stage, for costs that occur later, (should the landowner or agent fail to meet their commitment).

**Conclusions** Local accountability set out in Item 1 is not addressed by the Town and Country Planning Act. Residents in rural areas feel that turbines are being imposed upon them by arrogant planners and bullying landowners. Farmers have always been regarded of pillars of the community in rural areas, this is no longer so. NRW are not in command of the situation, and there is no planning as to the numbers or positions of turbines. Direct notification to rural residents of the type size and position of an application, and if this is a single or a future multiple submission is little to ask; and in the absence of local referenda the very least NRW can do.

We are content that items 2 & 5 are referred to the National Grid.

Items 3 & 4. It should be made clear, and a condition of planning, that at last resort removal of turbines can be undertaken by the CC with a charge against the landowner and their property.

Yours faithfully

J. Shepherd Foster

GALAR Community Volunteer Group

## **P-04-544 Ban the Shooting of Greenland White-fronted Geese**

### **Petition wording:**

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to reverse their decision not to ban the shooting of an endangered species, the Greenland White-fronted goose, meaning that Wales remains the only country on the flight path of this endangered species where they can still be legally shot and killed. Scientific evidence has shown that the species is extremely vulnerable to hunting pressures. In their consultation report, the Welsh Government also admit that failure to take appropriate steps to reduce as far as possible Greenland White-fronted geese adult mortality could be seen as a failure to meet conservation obligations. Unlike Scotland, Ireland, Iceland and Greenland there is no current ban on the shooting and killing of this endangered bird in Wales. A voluntary ban is in place on part of the Dyfi estuary in Wales but there is evidence that the geese also use other areas away from the estuary in mid and North Wales where no voluntary agreements are in place.

The population of these geese, as a whole, is declining and they have been of conservation concern since the late 1970s when sharp declines triggered protection from hunting on their wintering grounds. They receive heavy statutory protection. However, since the mid 1990s the population has again declined sharply. While WOS has acknowledged that long running voluntary bans on shooting are in place at some wetlands such as the Dyfi Estuary, it believes that nothing less than a statutory ban on shooting will ensure its protection. The society is concerned that any voluntary ban could be lifted at any time and that the current approach does not cover all the sites where this declining subspecies spends the winter.

**Petition raised by:** Aaron Davies

**Date Petition first considered by Committee:** 29 April 2014

Number of signatures: 240

**P-04-544 Ban the Shooting of Greenland White-fronted Geese – Correspondence from the Welsh Ornithological Society to the Chair, 30.11.14**

Dear Kayleigh,

Please find attached correspondence from Professor Tony Fox regarding Greenland Whitefronts. Professor Fox is an internationally known expert who has been studying these geese for over 30 years. The reply from Welsh Government states they follow an 'evidence based approach' but appears to ignore all the evidence published by Professor Fox that shows that shooting has a major impact on this species. It also ignores the fact that while there is a welcome voluntary ban this only applies to members of certain associations. Only a legal ban can fully protect this declining species.

I would be grateful if you could bring the correspondence and my points to the Committee

Many thanks

Mick Green CEnv, FCIEEM,

Trustee, Welsh Ornithological Society.



# Greenland White-fronted Goose Study

As from:

Tony Fox  
Ramtenvej 54

DK-8581 Nimtofte  
Denmark

23rd October 2014

Dear Carl Sargeant AM, Minister for Natural Resources Wales

## Protection of Greenland White-fronted Geese from hunting in Wales

I write to you to urge you in the strongest terms that the Welsh Government provide the Greenland White-fronted Goose with protection from hunting in Wales by a change to current legislation at the earliest possible opportunity.

I write personally in my capacity as founder member and Secretary of the Greenland White-fronted Goose Study, a private NGO with the aim of promoting the effective research and conservation of this race of geese. I lived for more than 10 years on the Dyfi estuary in north Ceredigion which was where my great affinity for, and interest in, these geese arose. In my professional capacity, I am now Professor of Waterbird Ecology in the Department of Biosciences at Aarhus University and the Chinese Academy of Sciences in Beijing and have been associated with the research and conservation programmes of the Greenland White-fronted Goose for over 30 years.

You will appreciate that the Greenland White-fronted Goose is Red-listed in the United Kingdom, is recognised under IUCN criteria as an Endangered taxon and has recently been the subject of an international Flyway Action Plan adopted at the Fifth Meeting of Parties of the Agreement on the conservation of African-Eurasian Waterbirds (AEWA) in France in spring 2012. Since the mid 1990s, the small global population has shown consistent declines to the present day, and it is clear that all sources of additional mortality should be avoided at all costs.

The UK and Ireland have responsibility for supporting the whole of the world population of this rare goose in the non-breeding season, and with Iceland and Greenland share the global responsibility for its conservation.

The Action Plan drafted for AEWA at a specially convened international workshop congratulated wildfowling groups for their long-standing voluntary shooting ban on of Greenland White-fronted Geese on the Dyfi Estuary, Wales: *“which had probably avoided that flock becoming extinct. However, the geese remain legal quarry in Wales. Birds using the traditional wintering site of Grindon Loch in northern England are also still legal quarry. Government authorities in Wales and England were urged to remove Greenland White-fronted Geese from the quarry list in those countries at the earliest opportunity.”* In addition, it states: *“With low annual productivity it is critically important to reduce sources of mortality. This will conserve the very small numbers of successful breeders that produce subsequent generations and help restore the population to former levels. To this end, the workshop concluded that hunting cannot currently be undertaken on a sustainable basis and any kill would exacerbate the current unfavourable conservation status of the population.”*

Through a quirk of the existing legislation, Greenland White-fronted Geese are presently NOT protected from hunting in England or Wales, the last two countries in the entire flyway of the population where hunting can still place legally. For some years this has meant that the UK Government has been in breach of its AEWA obligations and the anticipated adoption of the international plan will highlight this.

This issue is more than just of trivial importance however, since it has come to our attention in very recent months that Greenland White-fronted Geese have continued to be shot regularly in Anglesey over the last 15 years, which suggests that the lack of statutory protection continues to be responsible for the population being subject to hunting mortality, in spite of its highly unfavourable conservation status. Given the perilously small numbers now found in Wales (we have just this week published the annual global report on the status of the population in 2013/14 which found just 33 geese on the Dyfi, down from 167 in spring 1998), this could have extremely serious consequences for the persistence of local flocks, their cultural significance and their contribution to maintaining biodiversity in Wales, all factors strongly emphasised as important in the international plan.

Whilst we fully acknowledge the complexities of the issues involved, not least with confusion between this race and the European White-fronted Geese that winter in south-eastern England, we would very much urge a meeting with all concerned stakeholders to seek, discuss and agree a legislative solution to the present iniquity under existing legislation. The Greenland White-fronted Goose Study is very willing and able to make its contribution to these deliberations and is very eager to work constructively with all parties to achieve this aim. Given the extremely tiny numbers of these geese that now resort to Wales and that no responsible wildfowlers are interested in hunting them, we urge you to follow the shining example shown by the governments of Greenland, Iceland, Ireland and Scotland in protecting these incredibly vulnerable birds from any further effects of shooting by protecting them in the Principality.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you require further information

Yours sincerely



Professor Anthony David Fox, D.Sc, Ph.D, B.Sc.



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref  
Ein cyf/Our ref TO/CS/05350/14

Professor Tony Fox  
Aarhus University

tfo@bios.au.dk

14 November 2014

Dear Tony

### **Protection of Greenland White-fronted Geese from hunting in Wales**

Thank you for your letter of 23 October to the Minister for Natural Resources concerning Greenland White-fronted Geese (GWfG), I have been asked to reply on the Minister's behalf.

As you acknowledge, the goodwill of the wildfowling community is already making a positive contribution to the conservation of GWfG in Wales. In particular, the voluntary shooting moratorium on GWfG has now been extended from the Dyfi, Dysyni and Mawddach Estuaries to cover the whole of Wales. Wildfowling in Wales are making a significant contribution to monitoring the population, and are continuing to work with our statutory advisers, Natural Resources Wales (NRW), and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), concerning the conservation of this iconic species.

The Welsh Government uses an evidence-based approach to policy making. Records show a cluster of 28 shootings on Anglesey between 1998 and 2004, and a single shooting in 2008/9. The cluster of shootings on Anglesey coincided with a peak of figures for GWfG on the Dyfi. The subsequent decline of numbers of GWfG on the Dyfi does not therefore seem to be correlated with shooting anywhere in Wales.

You state in your letter that your attention has been drawn to the shooting of GWfG in Anglesey over the last 15 years. If you have evidence of shootings since 2009, members of the wildfowling community in Wales would welcome the opportunity to honour their commitment to the voluntary moratorium by investigating. To enable them to do this, they would be particularly grateful if you could provide location(s) on Anglesey, dates, source(s) of the assertion(s), and any other relevant information. As I am sure you are aware, the wildfowling regime has sanctions available that could be used in response to inappropriate behaviour.

Rhodfa Padarn, Llanbadarn Fawr,  
Aberystwyth, Ceredigion, **SY23 3UR**  
**Pack Page 77**

**0300 062 2259**

TO/CS/05350/14

The Welsh Government welcomes engagement of all concerned parties in a concerted effort to better understand the actual pressures on this iconic species. We will continue to adopt an evidence-based approach to this issue, and to work with all parties to ensure successful conservation of this species.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Worker', written in a cursive style.

Chris Worker

**Nature Conservation Policy Officer**

# Agenda Item 3.10

## **P-04-555 Stop the unethical and draconian proposed compulsory microchipping of dogs**

### **Petition wording:**

We call on the Welsh Assembly to urge the Welsh Government to stop their proposed planned compulsory microchipping of dogs. Microchipping of dogs has not been proven to be more effective, cheaper or kinder to dogs. It has proven to be far more expensive than normal methods such as tattooing or permanent tags, is intrusive and brings in to question basic animal rights and ethics. There is also increasing evidence that chips can cause cancer in animals. A collar with a tag is by far the easiest and most effective way of reuniting a dog and its owner– anyone who can read can use this system. According to campaign groups such as ChipMeNot, there would also be a real environmental impact from microchips due to the chips themselves, the need for readers, batteries for each reader, the computers to administer the database and so on.

**Petition raised by:** Sovereign Wales + ChipMeNot

**Date Petition first considered by Committee:** 13 May 2014

**Number of signatures:** 11

Rebecca Evans AC / AM  
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Ffermio a Bwyd  
Deputy Minister for Farming and Food



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-555  
Ein cyf/Our ref RE/05117/14

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

10 November 2014

Dear William,

Thank you for your letter enclosed with your email of the 14<sup>th</sup> October on a petition by Sovereign Wales and ChipMeNot, about their concerns on adverse reactions by dogs to being microchipped.

The policy intention to require microchipping (implantation of a transponder device) of dogs is to improve the welfare of animals through more responsible ownership. Having a reliable method of identifying dogs and a robust system for reunification if a dog becomes separated from its owner should contribute significantly to improving the welfare of dogs.

There are additional benefits in identification beyond the benefit of reunification. For example, identification by a reliable method will contribute to the traceability of dogs produced out of commercial breeding kennels, and facilitate the identification of owners of dogs where powers under the Antisocial Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 have to be used.

While evidence exists that use of transponders in some laboratory animals (mice) has led to tumour formation, the evidence for this in dogs is very limited. Millions of dogs have been microchipped without issue.

Dog owners are still free to use a tag on their dog's collar, and I would encourage them to do so.

Yours,  
Rebecca

Rebecca Evans AC / AM  
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Ffermio a Bwyd  
Deputy Minister for Farming and Food

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

English Enquiry Line 0845 010 3300  
Llinell Ymholiadau Cymraeg 0845 010 4400  
Correspondence.Rebecca.Evans@wales.gsi.gov.uk

**P-04-555 Stop the unethical and draconian proposed compulsory micro chipping of dogs – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 27.11.14.**

Dear petition panel,

Thank you for sending on the Deputy Minister for Farming and Food's correspondence. It seems that the Minister has not yet grasped the points that have been previously sent regarding all the major flaws in the compulsory microchipping petition. I'll reply as briefly as possible to her points, with the Minister's points marked out in bold, and hope that this will once more be of constructive help in demonstrating why I believe this proposed bill is flawed.

**Ms Evans states that microchipping will improve animal welfare through more responsible ownership.**

As explained in my previous reply, microchipping will not improve animal welfare or encourage more responsible ownership. It will very likely actually physically harm the animal and increase its chance of getting cancer and other illnesses as the Minister herself admits. It will also likely drive illegal breeding underground creating more harm to dogs and the public in general.

**The Minister mentions that having a reliable method of identifying dogs and reuniting them with their owners should contribute significantly to improving dog welfare.**

The present methods of identifying dogs through a collar and tag and/or tattoo works perfectly well without causing harm to the dog and means no extra costs to dog owners, the Welsh Government or Local Authorities. As previously mentioned, microchipping will very likely do the opposite of improving the welfare of the dog. Microchipping will increase the likelihood that the animal will be physically harmed and increase its chance of getting cancer and other illnesses as the Minister herself admits.

**The Minister mentions that there are additional benefits in identification beyond the benefit of reunification as microchipping will contribute to the traceability of dogs produced out of commercial breeding kennels, facilitating the identification of owners where powers under the antisocial behaviour, crime and policing act 2014 have to be used.**

The same answer as above applies – the present methods of identifying dogs through a collar and tag and/or tattoo work perfectly well without causing harm to the dog and means no extra costs to dog owners/breeders, the Welsh Government

or Local Authorities. As stated above, microchipping will very likely do the opposite of improving the welfare of the dog, potentially physically harming the animal and increasing its chance of getting cancer and other illnesses as the Minister herself admits.

Additionally it will also likely drive illegal breeding underground creating more harm to dogs in general (it has already been established that microchipping will not stop dogs being harmed and will not make dangerous dogs any less dangerous in any way whatsoever)

**As mentioned, the Minister admits that microchipping in some laboratory animal has led to cancerous tumour formation, meaning that microchipping has been shown to increase cancer risk.**

As well as the unethical and intrusive factors surrounding the compulsory microchipping of animals, this admission alone should prevent both the Minister for Farming and Food and the Welsh government from carrying on with this microchipping plan under the basic scientific precautionary principle. If millions of dogs have been micro chipped as the Minister suggest, it is simply not yet known how the microchips will affect the health of these animals in the long term. I would be very grateful if the Minister could provide information as to where these millions of microchipped dogs are and what long term studies are being conducted on their health.

As also previously stated, under this proposed bill, the dog and owners' details will also be registered on an authorised commercial database, providing authorities with yet more information about people's whereabouts and activities at a time when civil liberty groups are campaigning against increased invasions of privacy.

And as pointed out in the previous reply, the government consultation responses (Question 1, page 11), showed that in a 2009 Welsh local authorities survey regarding microchipping, only seven authorities responded from the 12 asked (not all 22 authorities were asked for reasons unknown). A similar unclear picture can be seen with the responses of Welsh vets although many of the veterinary corporations and dog charities that are in favour of dog chipping also stand to benefit from their association with the scheme.

ChipMeNot (<http://www.chipmenot.org.uk/default.asp>) also point out that the intrusive microchipping procedure means responsible pet owners have to risk the health of their animal in a futile act that might well be in breach of the Animal Welfare Act 2006. As evidence emerges that chips can cause cancer and other illnesses, it might be presently possible to prosecute those who implant chips for

causing unnecessary suffering to animals. ChipMeNot states that according to The Animal Welfare Act 2006 [7] Section 4(3)(b), rather troublingly, if chipping becomes compulsory, any suffering will be state sanctioned and as a result, those who implant chips will have immunity from prosecution and cannot be prosecuted. In other words, owners and chip manufacturers will be allowed to potentially freely harm animals.

It would be astonishing and very worrying if the Welsh Government ignored the basic scientific precautionary principle in regards to the health risks of microchipping and carried on with this bill. As I hope I've shown, there isn't overwhelming support for this bill at all by the general public or by official bodies and groups. People in general have also simply not been made fully aware of the health risks, or indeed of the pointlessness of this draconian and unethical bill. For Ms Evans to admit that evidence shows that microchips causes tumours in animals whilst going ahead with this bill goes against all scientific precautionary principles recognised internationally and could seriously damage the international reputation of the Welsh Government and it's members. I would urge Ms Rebecca Evans the Deputy Minister for Farming and Food to make sure that she adheres to these scientific precautionary principles and the ethics involved in general, and rejects this bill outright.

G.Meredith

## **P-04-575 Call in All Opencast Mining Planning Applications**

### **Petition Wording**

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to call in all opencast mining planning applications over 10 years duration or over 350 hectares in size because the implications of these developments are far reaching and long standing with effects beyond the immediate locality.

**Petition raised by:** United Valleys Action Group

**Date Petition first considered by Committee:** 15 July 2014

**Number of signatures:** 130 – An associated petition relating to a specific planning application collected in excess of 6500 signatures

Carl Sargeant AC / AM  
Y Gweinidog Cyfoeth Naturiol  
Minister for Natural Resources



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-575  
Ein cyf/Our ref CS/05406/14

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

13 November 2014

Dear Bill

Thank you for your letter, on behalf of the petitions committee, in which you seek my views on the petition from the United Valleys Action Group calling upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to call in all opencast mining planning applications over 10 years duration or over 350 hectares in size because the implications are far reaching and long standing with effects beyond the immediate locality.

As advised in my previous letter, the Welsh Ministers' power to call in applications for planning permission is a discretionary power and the Welsh Government's policy on the exercise of that power is that development proposals are generally best determined locally by planning authorities which know their area, its needs and sensitivities and that the Welsh Ministers do not interfere with local planning authorities' jurisdiction unless it is necessary to do so. The Welsh Ministers' power to call in planning applications is used selectively and each application is looked at individually. The decision on call in must be made in the light of facts and circumstances of the particular case and the Welsh Ministers must not fetter their discretion by the rigid application of any particular policy towards such cases.

The petitioners have referred to applications for planning permission for opencast mining but the Welsh Ministers already have in place a system which enables them to have planning applications for this, and other, particular types of development referred to them, thereby providing them with the opportunity to consider whether or not they should exercise their discretionary powers and call in those applications. Under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Notification) (Wales) Direction 2012, applications for planning permission for minerals development, for the purposes of the Notification Direction means development which:

- (a) Consists of or includes the winning and working of minerals;
- (b) Is to be carried out at a new site or an extension to an existing site; and

(c) Does not accord with the provisions of the development plan in force in the area where the application site is situated, and which the local planning authority does not propose to refuse, must be notified to the Welsh Ministers.

In considering whether to call in an application referred to them under the Notification Direction the Welsh Ministers will consider whether the local authority has identified the national planning policies and legislation/directives relevant to those issues and, if so, whether it has assessed those issues in a reasonably robust way, using up to date methodology and knowledge.

Neither my position nor Welsh Government policy on call in has changed since the advice was provided.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Carl Sargeant', written in a cursive style.

**Carl Sargeant AC / AM**  
Y Gweinidog Cyfoeth Naturiol  
Minister for Natural Resources

2/12/2014

Steve George  
Clerk to Petitions Committee  
Welsh Assembly Petitions Committee  
Welsh Assembly  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

**Re-United Valleys Action Group (UVAG) Views to  
Petition Committee on Ministers second response to  
P-04-575 Call in on all Opencast Mining Applications over  
10 yearsDuration or 350 Hectares in Size.**

Petitions Committee

UVAG's reply to the Ministers second response is that UVAG would like to reiterate their initial response as justifiable reasons to call in all opencast mining applications over 10 years duration or 350 hectares in size.

UVAG would like to inform the petitions committee that the Welsh Government planning bill proposed for 2016 in actual fact, in part supports our petition because the planning act intends to take energy planning decisions including opencast mining away from Local Authorities, which in fact supports our petition, so therefore we are surprised that the minister response does not take this into account.

The response from the Environment and Sustainability committee would be interesting and hopefully welcome for our petition.

UVAG would like the petition go to Plenary for debate and with the purpose of them adopting the petition in principle

Terry Evans

Chair, United Valleys Action Group (UVAG)

# Agenda Item 3.12

## **P-04-584 Wales Planning Bill to Protect Town and Village Greens in Wales.**

### **Petition Wording:**

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to legislate to ensure that the public and their needs for public open space in Wales is favoured against private developers, land bankers and Local authority Local development plans.

Because the notion of accessible open space in Wales used for sports, recreation and pastimes for over 20 years should be protected and enhanced in the public interest for the citizens in Wales. The guidance and law should reflect the importance of town and village greens to the many communities in Wales.

### **Additional Information:**

Because the notion of accessible open space in Wales used for sports, recreation and pastimes for over 20 years should be protected and enhanced in the public interest for the citizens in Wales. The guidance and law should reflect the importance of town and village greens to the many communities in Wales.

**Petition raised by:** Nortridge Perrott

**Date Petition first considered by Committee:** 23 September 2014

**Number of signatures:** 19 on the Assembly's e-petition system with a further 184 signatures collected on an alternative e-petition website.

Carl Sargeant AC / AM  
Y Gweinidog Cyfoeth Naturiol  
Minister for Natural Resources



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-584  
Ein cyf/Our ref CS/05194/14

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

9th November 2014

Dear Bill

Thank you for your letter regarding the petition received from Nortridge Perrott on town and village greens in Wales. The Planning (Wales) Bill and Explanatory Memorandum introduced to the National Assembly for Wales on the 6 October sets out my current position on this matter. However, I note the contents of the petition and will reflect further on the matters raised together with evidence submitted to the Environmental and Sustainability Committee in its scrutiny of the Bill.

Yours sincerely

**Carl Sargeant AC / AM**  
Y Gweinidog Cyfoeth Naturiol  
Minister for Natural Resources

# Agenda Item 3.13

## **P-04-466 Medical Emergency – Preventing the introduction of a poorer Health Service for North Wales**

### **Petition wording:**

We the undersigned call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to ensure that the proposals contained within the Betsi Cadwalader University Health Board consultation– Health Care in North Wales is Changing does not result in poorer health provision and unnecessary deaths and suffering.

The proposals will have a detrimental effect on most areas of health provision and emergency services and in no way can the proposals be an improvement as is intimated. Already experiencing meltdown, the Health Service in Wales will head towards collapse, if these proposals are implemented in their present form

The current BCUIB consultation proposals in relation to Health Care in North Wales appear to be detrimental to general health provision and the safety of our communities. Accessibility, X-ray provision, Minor Injuries, Mental Health, the Ambulance Services, the Out of Hours service and the ability of GP' s to deliver an integrated service are going to be particularly hard hit by the proposals – as they are diametrically at odds with the Welsh Govt's vision in relation to the documents Together for Health, Setting the Direction, and Delivering Emergency Care Services – it appears also to be at odds with the Compact announced by the Health Minister on the 25th of September 2012.

**Petition raised by:** Mike Parry

**Petition first considered by Committee:** 19 March 2013

**Number of signatures:** 306

## **P-04-479 Tywyn Memorial Hospital X-ray & Minor Injuries Unit Petition**

### **Petition wording:**

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to stop the withdrawal of X-ray facilities & the reduction in provision of services by the Minor Injuries Unit as a matter of urgency.

**Petition raised by:** Tywyn & District Health Care Action Group

**Date petition first considered by Committee:** 14 May 2013

**Number of signatures:** 4486



Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol  
Betsi Cadwaladr  
University Health Board

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

**Ein cyf / Our ref:** TP/SB/2902/159

**☎:** 01248 384910

**Gofynnwch am / Ask for:** Linda Hughes

**E-bost / Email:** [linda.hughes@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:linda.hughes@wales.nhs.uk)

**Dyddiad / Date:** 18 November 2014

Dear Mr Powell

**Petitions:**

**P-04-466 Medical Emergency – Preventing the Introduction of a Poorer Health Service for North Wales**

**P-04-479 Tywyn Memorial Hospital X-ray & Minor Injuries Unit Petition**

Thank you for your letter of October 2014 enclosing further correspondence from the Petitioner regarding Tywyn Memorial Hospital.

The closure of the Minor Injuries Unit at weekends during winter months has not been overlooked. The previous correspondence appeared to focus on the overnight service, which formed the main basis of my previous response. For completeness, I can confirm that the proposals for changes to the overall hours of the unit – overnight and winter weekends – were put forward because of the increasing challenges in maintaining staffing in the smaller Minor Injuries Units, coupled with a very low level demand and the potential risk of loss of clinical skills because of the very small number of patients seen.

The closure at weekends was part of the formal consultation held in 2012 and confirmed by the Board at the meeting held on 18 January 2013. The decision was reaffirmed as part of the local resolution reached with the Community Health Council.

I acknowledge that there have been concerns in the Tywyn area regarding these changes and have previously noted the opportunity to improve services offered by the redevelopment of the Hospital.

Since my previous response, the report of the Mid Wales Healthcare Study, to which I referred, has been published. We welcome the publication and acknowledge the issues raised, and will be working with colleagues in Hywel Dda and Powys Health Boards on future service development and delivery.

Yours sincerely

**Prof Trevor Purt**  
**Chief Executive**

**P-04-479 Tywyn Memorial Hospital X-ray & Minor Injuries Unit Petition – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 03.12.14.**

Dear Kayleigh, Thank you for your information regarding the next hearing of this Petition on the 9th of December.

In response to the latest correspondence received regarding this petition from Prof Trevor Purt, Chief Executive, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board I would raise the following points; I am pleased that the closure of the Minor Injuries Unit at weekends has not been overlooked and would like to thank Mr Purt for responding to previous correspondence. We understand that the proposals for limiting the hours of availability of the Service were due to increasing challenges in maintaining staffing in the smaller Minor Injuries Units due to low levels of demand and potential loss of clinical skills because of the small number of patients seen. Now that the proposals are in effect it is possible to evaluate the situation.

At the consultation stage the Health Board indicated that, so as not to confuse the public, the opening times of the Minor Injuries Units should be standardised across the board although this idea was not implemented and the public here are confused regarding hours of availability which in all probability contributes to the lack of utility of the service. The hours of availability of the Minor Injuries service in Tywyn were reduced to 10am until 6pm seven days per week from late April until October and five days per week from October until late April which is unequal to the more extended Service provided by other community Hospitals at Dollgellau and Alltwen, although the populations and demand for the service are potentially at equally low levels. In January 2013 the Community Health Council argued that they were 'not persuaded by the Board's argument for Minor Injury Services for people living in rural Gwynedd' and reluctantly agreed to the reduction in Minor Injuries Services at Tywyn Hospital only with the recommendation that 'the Health Board would need to have plans for implementing and communicating its proposals so that people can be confident they will get the Minor Injuries Service they need from GP's Surgeries, Out of Hours services and Community Hospitals.'

The provision of cover for Minor Injuries, when the Unit is closed at the Hospital, is supplied by the GP's surgery from Monday to Friday between the hours of 8am and 10 am. Apart from this when the Minor Injuries Unit is closed the GP's Surgery is

also closed. The alternative Out of Hours provision for Minor Injuries that the Board has implemented as an 'enhanced service' may be from a Doctor on call who may have to travel miles to tend to a Minor Injury during the evening or the weekend while the Service is unavailable locally.

People needing Minor Injury treatment may also feel pressured to call the emergency services and request an ambulance or attend the nearest Accident and Emergency department requesting treatment. During the winter time people may have to travel 40 or 60 mile round trips to other areas in order to access Minor Injury treatment during the evening or at the weekend while there is hardly any availability of public transport. Alternatively people may leave getting treatment for a Minor Injury because there is no Service available which may potentially lead to more extensive treatment being required in the long run.

Would the Health Board agree that none of these alternatives are as convenient to the population or as cost effective as providing the Minor Injuries Service from an already established and dedicated Unit?

As far as the suggestion of the potential for loss of skills is concerned, it seems obvious that the most direct way to impact loss of skills would be to limit the hours, which in turn limits the number and range of cases, for which the skills could be needed and in which they could be practiced. The Minor Injuries Unit was created to support the Out of Hours service and over a ten year period the staff, some of which remain in the Unit, have refined their skills to include the diagnosis and treatment of minor illness as well as minor injuries. During this time span they have earned the respect and trust of the General Practitioners and have often saved patients from having to make long and arduous journeys for treatment elsewhere.

Tywyn is often cut off from other hospital services and by the same token is inaccessible to other emergency services due to adverse weather conditions during the Winter months. Surely it makes sense in every conceivable situation for the patient to be able to obtain treatment at their first point of contact in the locality where they reside.

Tywyn Hospital Redevelopment alone cannot supply an equal Minor Injuries Service in accordance to the Service which is available in other rural areas. If the hours of availability are not enhanced along with the redevelopment all that we will still have is a new Hospital which is closed to the public during the evening and at the

weekends because the Minor Injuries Service is unavailable and the GP's are off duty. Consequently people will still be expected to access Services elsewhere.

I am pleased that Professor Purt refers to the Mid Wales Healthcare Study and that the issues raised within the Report are acknowledged.

It is hoped that the future development and delivery of Services is tailored to the response to the report by Barbara Wallace in which she states that, 'We feel we must ensure that decision makers take on board the conclusions of the Report, implement the recommendations of the report and make their decisions based on clinical rather than solely financial reasons. Proposals from Health facilities and patients should be listened to and Health Boards should do more to reduce the impact of travel on patients. Changes should be made in order to make Services more sustainable rather than as stepping stones to withdrawal. All of these points are mentioned in the report. In agreement with us the report concludes that Mid Wales presents an unusual set of opportunities and challenges but that future provision must be defined by Accessibility, Quality, Safety and Sustainability.

# Agenda Item 3.15

## **P-04-560 Provision of IBD Services in Wales**

### **Petition wording:**

We, the undersigned, call upon National Assembly for Wales to encourage the Welsh Government to continue its commitment to improving standards of treatment and care for people with Crohn's Disease and Ulcerative Colitis, through the development of a gastroenterology delivery plan. This will ensure that people with these conditions receive the highest standards of care wherever they are in Wales."

Additional information – Standards of care for people with Crohn's and Ulcerative Colitis have improved in Wales, following the launch of the Standards for the Healthcare of People who have Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) in the Welsh Assembly in 2009. However, an independent audit of IBD care has shown that quality has not risen as quickly as other UK countries. There is therefore a need to encourage further improvement through the development of a Gastroenterology Delivery Plan, which will address variation and ensure that basic standards of treatment are being met.

**Petition raised by:** South Wales IBD Patient Panel

**Date Petition first considered by Committee:** 17 June 2014

**Number of signatures :** 664

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-04-560  
Ein cyf/Our ref MD/02929/14

William Powell AM  
National Assembly for Wales  
Ty Hywel  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

10 August 2014

*Dear William,*

Thank you for your recent letter on behalf of the Petitions Committee regarding Petition P-04-560 - The Secondary Provision of Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) Services in Wales.

I note the view expressed by the South Wales IBD Patient Panel that improvements in IBD would be best taken forward through a Gastroenterology Delivery Plan. However, it is not possible for the Welsh Government to produce a delivery plan for every health condition.

We have in place robust service standards for the delivery of IBD services in Wales, and take part in the UK IBD audit to monitor services against these standards. As the petitioners have acknowledged, the latest round of the audit showed continued improvement. It also showed Welsh patients were more satisfied with their inpatient experience than elsewhere in the UK.

We do expect health boards to take account of the audit findings and improve services where necessary. Where improvement is not made, action will be taken through our performance management arrangements.

*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

English Enquiry Line 0845 010 3300  
Llinell Ymholiadau Cymraeg 0845 010 4400  
Correspondence.Mark.Drakeford@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Apologies for the delay in responding. Response from ABM is as follows:

1. The all Wales Gastroenterology plan would be welcome.
2. The specific about the IBD: the standards for IBD are published; however the view of the clinicians is that there is no compulsion on the Health boards to provide the care as per the standards. It should become mandatory like cancer targets to serve this population better.

Karen

**Karen Pearman**

**Cyfarwyddwr Cynorthwyol Cynllunio Dros Dro / Acting Assistant Director of Planning**  
**Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board**  
**Pencadlys ABM / ABM Headquarters**  
**1 Porthfa Talbot / 1 Talbot Gateway**  
**Rhodfa'r Forffordd / Seaway Parade**  
**Port Talbot**  
**SA12 7BR**

**01639 683341**

**[karen.pearman@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:karen.pearman@wales.nhs.uk)**





Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol  
Betsi Cadwaladr  
University Health Board

Mr William Powell AM  
Chair  
Petitions committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

**Ein cyf / Our ref:** TP/GE/MA/2458/176

**Eich cyf / Your ref:** P-04-560

**☎:** 01248 384910

**Gofynnwch am / Ask for:** Linda Hughes

**E-bost / Email:** [linda.hughes@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:linda.hughes@wales.nhs.uk)

**Dyddiad / Date:** 1 December 2014

Dear Mr Powell

### **PROVISION OF IBD SERVICES IN WALES (P-04-560)**

The Gastroenterology Service within the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board provides local services for patients with Crohn's and Ulcerative Colitis across the three acute hospital sites. There is some variation in the models of care provided, ranging from Consultant only delivered Inflammatory Bowel Disease clinical services to Inflammatory Bowel Disease Nurse Clinics supported by local Consultant Gastroenterology Teams, between the three sites.

The Primary, Community and Specialist Medicine Clinical Programme Group, supported by the Health Board, has funded additional clinical posts that will support development of IBD services and create additional capacity to support local service provision. This includes the appointment of Nurse Endoscopists with IBD portfolios to support local Consultant Gastroenterology Teams in the provision of IBD services to patients; this is now a standard approach across all three sites.

Some Consultants have also developed sub-specialisation in the management of IBD locally; in other areas this is provided by a team approach from within the Consultant workforce. For example at Ysbyty Gwynedd two of the Consultant Gastroenterologists each have one dedicated IBD Outpatient Clinic per month. The service also has a dedicated weekly session at Llandudno General Hospital, further enhancing local services for local patients. We also have identified consultant leads at the sites for IBD provision.

We have also recently made a new Consultant Gastroenterologist appointment at Wrexham Maelor Hospital, which will provide further opportunity to review local pathways for the management of IBD.

The Gastroenterology Service would welcome further National work in this area in order to support the progress made to date within North Wales and ensure that we progress the delivery of the Standards for healthcare of people who have Inflammatory Bowel Disease.



Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol  
Betsi Cadwaladr  
University Health Board

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Trevor Purt', written over a horizontal line.

**Prof Trevor Purt**  
**Chief Executive**

# Agenda Item 3.16

## **P-04-564 The Restoration of Inpatient Beds, Minor Injuries Cover and X-Ray Unit to the Ffestiniog Memorial Hospital**

### **Petition wording:**

Until the Health Minister has had time to consider Prof Marcus Longley's recommendations on rural healthcare in Wales – a study that was commissioned by the Minister himself in January of this year – we, the undersigned, call on the National Assembly of Wales to urge the Welsh Labour Government to delay decision on Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board's Business Case aimed at downgrading our Memorial Hospital to a mere 'Memorial Centre'.

**Petition raised by:** Geraint Vaughn Jones

**Date Petition first considered by Committee:** 17 June 2014

**Number of signatures :** 2,754

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-04-564  
Ein cyf/Our ref MD/05647/14

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

12 November 2014

*Dear William,*

Thank you for your letter on behalf of the Petitions Committee regarding the petition P-04-564 – The restoration of Inpatient Beds, Minor Injuries Cover and X Ray Unit to the Ffestiniog Memorial Hospital.

In relation to Mr Jones' comment that the decision regarding the Health Board's proposals for the new model of community healthcare services in Blaenau Ffestiniog should be delayed pending consideration of the findings of the Mid Wales Healthcare Study, it should be noted that the terms of reference made it clear that it was not the remit of the Study to prepare an action plan or to make decisions about the future as these are statutory responsibilities of the three health boards and the other NHS organisations which cover this part of Wales.

The Mid Wales Healthcare Study was published on 23 October and I have made my expectation clear that Hywel Dda, Betsi Cadwaladr and Powys health boards and the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust should respond to the study's findings in a thorough and meaningful way through their planning arrangements, including the development of their 2015-16 medium term plans. I have written to each of the boards, setting out my expectations and requesting board-level discussions of the findings and a response before Christmas. I expect the response to build on the involvement of staff and patients' views.

I will consider the full detail of the Welsh Government's response to the report, but have asked officials to start work immediately in order to advise me about the options for securing improved joint planning between the four organisations, the three health boards and the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust, in the interests of people receiving healthcare in Mid Wales.

Finally, to clarify for Mr Jones, the role of the Welsh Government in the decision to close Blaenau Ffestiniog community hospital, this decision was made by the Health Board following widespread public consultation. The proposal was not referred to Welsh Ministers for determination by the local Community Health Council. However, mindful that the community hospital was closing, I was keen to ensure that the business case for the replacement primary care resource centre was treated as a priority project by my officials.

Best wishes,

Mark

**Mark Drakeford AC / AM**

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

## **P-04-568 Public Inquiry into ABMU Health Board**

### **Petition wording:**

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to hold a full public inquiry in order to investigate the serious concerns raised about standards of care and complaints handling within ABMU Health Board that have caused so much avoidable harm and suffering for patients and bereaved relatives at hospitals administered by the Board and its predecessor bodies and, where necessary, to hold the Chief Executive and the Management Team to account.

**Petition raised by:** ABMU Victim Support Group

**Date Petition first considered by Committee:** 1 July 2014

**Number of signatures :** 87 electronic signatures and 778 paper signatures.  
Total 865

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-04-568  
Ein cyf/Our ref MD/05469/14

William Powell AM  
Assembly Member for Mid & West Wales  
Chair  
Petitions Committee  
Ty Hywel  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

[Petition@Wales.gov.uk](mailto:Petition@Wales.gov.uk)

3 November 2014

*Dear William,*

Thank you for your letter of 17 October on behalf of the Petitions Committee regarding Petition: P-04-568 Public Inquiry into ABMU Health Board.

I have indicated that I do not believe that a public inquiry is likely to advance understanding of the cause of the failings identified at Princess of Wales and Neath Port Talbot Hospitals and the identification of remedial measures.

Welsh Ministers have accepted all 18 recommendations in the Trusted to Care Report and have, in addition, instigated additional measures including the comprehensive programme of Ministerial spot checks across all district general hospitals in Wales, the results of which have now been published and are being considered. The Evans Report on Complaints handling (together with the results of the engagement exercise that was conducted over the Summer) is also being considered.

I am aware of the ongoing criminal proceedings and investigations relating to this matter, and receive progress updates as appropriate, and am of the view that these investigations and reviews must be allowed to run their course.

The Welsh Ministers will continue to keep the requirements of articles 2 and 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights under consideration.

I note that the petition requests that the Petition Committee compels me to establish an inquiry. That is not in any event within the power of the committee. I can assure the committee that I take patient safety extremely seriously and you will be aware that a national working group to look at the administration, recording, review and storage of medicines has been set up.

The Trusted to Care steering group, which is jointly chaired by the chief medical officer and chief nursing officer, will consider many of the themes to emerge from the spot checks as part of its work on the *Trusted to Care* report recommendations.

The spot checks have proved to be a valuable source of learning from which the NHS can make further improvements to the quality of patient care.

Best wishes,

Mark

**Mark Drakeford AC / AM**

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

**Y Pwyllgor Iechyd a Gofal Cymdeithasol  
Health and Social Care Committee**

Cynulliad  
Cenedlaethol  
Cymru  
National  
Assembly for  
Wales



**William Powell AM**  
Chair of the Petitions Committee

11 November 2014

Dear Bill,

Thank you for your letter of 20 October 2014 regarding the petition P-04-568 Public Inquiry into ABMU Health Board.

Your letter asked if we would undertake work in this area given its relevance to our remit. The issue was discussed at our meeting on 6 November 2014. Members noted that this is not a matter that is currently on the Committee's programme, however we agreed to draw your attention to the Public Accounts Committee's on-going work on health board governance in NHS Wales. We agreed to await the publication of the Public Accounts Committee's report before considering the matter further.

Thank you again for drawing our attention to the issues raised in the petition.

Yours sincerely,

**David Rees AM**  
Chair, Health and Social Care Committee

Bae Caerdydd  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1NA  
Ffôn / Tel: 029 2089 8403

**Pack Page 106**

E-bost / Email: [PwyllgorIGC@cymru.gov.uk](mailto:PwyllgorIGC@cymru.gov.uk) / [HSCCommittee@wales.gov.uk](mailto:HSCCommittee@wales.gov.uk)

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg / We welcome correspondence in both English and Welsh

**P-04-568 Public Inquiry into ABMU Health Board – Correspondence on behalf of the Petitioner to the Committee, 03.12.14.**

Dear Sirs,

We are in receipt of Mr Mark Drakeford's letter addressed to Mr Williams Powell AM and dated the 3 November 2014. We understand that the same is to be considered at a meeting to be held on the 9 December 2014.

We note that Mr Williams has been invited to comment further. However, we would not wish to waste the committee's time in repeating the comprehensive representations put forward to the Committee on behalf of ABMU Victim Support Group, all of which are still relevant and rebuts the brief comments made by Mr Drakeford.

Specifically in relation to Mr Drakeford's response in which he states "...I do not believe that a public inquiry is likely to advance understanding of the cause of the failings identified at Princess of Wales and Neath Port Talbot hospitals...", we refer the committee to the information previously provided on behalf of ABMU Victim Support Group. Mr Drakeford is asked, in the absence of a public inquiry, to explain the cause of the failings identified. It is doubtful that Mr Drakeford would be able to provide a meaningful answer, on the basis that a public inquiry would do just that, get to the bottom of how such failings have been allowed to occur.

Mr Drakeford has referred to the unannounced spot checks. Sadly, the spot checks have revealed continuing issues that were highlighted in the Trusted to Care Report and that have been highlighted by members of ABMU Victim Support Group for a number of years. This only serves to demonstrate that the very limited report of Professor Andrews has not had the desired impact. Also, since the committee's last consideration of this issue two further nurses have pleaded guilty to the wilful neglect of patients at ABMU as part of the police investigation known as Operation Enfield. This makes the total who have pleaded guilty, three, and the total charged, five. There are 15 nurses suspended in total as part of the same investigation. This level of police investigation is unprecedented. Whilst it is admirable that these nurses have accepted responsibility, there is a strong feeling that they have been 'hung out to dry'. Responsibility and accountability does not just stop with these nurses. There has to be a 'root and branch' inquiry to understand how we have

reached this point in order for there to be any meaningful cultural change and restoration of public confidence.

Kind regards

Mrs Helen Rundle

Helen Rundle Associate Solicitor

## **P-04-580 Restrictions on Donating Blood**

### **Petition Wording:**

Giving blood is a very honourable and helpful thing for someone to do in this country to help out people in desperate need of it. However, not everyone is eligible to donate blood, some for reasons that are very understandable, but there is one reason that it not understandable at all. Homosexual men are not allowed to give blood if they have engaged in sexual intercourse with someone within the last year, it is wrong and unfair. The NHS is worried about getting blood infected with HIV/AIDS, however, anyone can contract AIDS, not only homosexuals, all the blood is processed and tested before offering it anyway, so there is no reason why a homosexual man should have to remain abstinent for a year in order to do a noble act. This inequality needs to end now and we must allow people of all sexual orientations the option to donate blood.

**Petition raised by:** Scott Dymond

**Date Petition first considered by Committee:** 23 September 2014

**Number of signatures:** 83

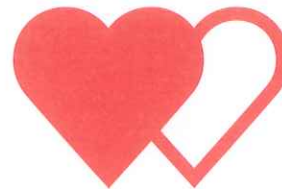
## Welsh Blood Service

Ely Valley Road, Talbot Green,  
Pontyclun CF72 9WB  
Tel: 01443 622000  
Fax: 01443 622199  
www.welshblood.org.uk

## Gwasanaeth Gwaed Cymru

Heol Cwm Elái, Tonysguboriau,  
Pontyclun CF72 9WB  
Ffôn: 01443 622000  
Ffacs: 01443 622199  
www.gwaedcymru.org.uk

Director/Cyfarwyddwr  
Mrs Cath O'Brien  
B Pharm(Hons) FRPharmS



Our Ref: H:/JAG/SF/LETTERS/WGMSM07102014  
Direct No: 01443 622016  
Secretary: 01443 622015

7 October 2014

William Powell AM  
Chair  
Petitions Committee  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1 NA

Dear Mr Powell

Thank you for your letter dated 30<sup>th</sup> September 2014 outlining the contents of a petition you have received from Scott Dymond and signed by 83 petitioners. The response of the Welsh blood Service is as follows:-

The Welsh Blood Service is regulated by The MHRA<sup>1</sup> who is the competent authority that ensures compliance of "Blood Quality and Safety regulations (2005)" as amended which apply the relevant European Directives. These regulations state that "Persons whose sexual behaviour puts them at high risk of acquiring severe infectious diseases that can be transmitted by blood" cannot be accepted as blood donors.

The Equality Act 2010 (c. 15) states in section 3

*"Blood services*

- 13 (1) A person operating a blood service does not contravene section 29<sup>2</sup> only by refusing to accept a donation of an individual's blood if—
- (a) the refusal is because of an assessment of the risk to the public, or to the individual, based on clinical, epidemiological or other data obtained from a source on which it is reasonable to rely, and
  - (b) the refusal is reasonable.
- (2) A blood service is a service for the collection and distribution of human blood for the purposes of medical services.
- (3) "Blood" includes blood components".

In the UK the risks associated with blood transfusion are determined by an expert committee known as SaBTO<sup>3</sup> who are an advisory group to the UK and devolved Government's respective departments of Health. This expert group assessed the risks on clinical and epidemiological grounds along with data on the current tests available for detection of transfusion transmissible diseases. This would include the risks associated with the transmission of viral diseases in gay men that practice safe sex. The review

<sup>1</sup> MHRA = Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency

<sup>2</sup> Equality Act 2010 section 29 Provision of services, etc.

(1) A person (a "service-provider") concerned with the provision of a service to the public or a section of the public (for payment or not) must not discriminate against a person requiring the service by not providing the person with the service.

<sup>3</sup> SaBTO= Advisory Committee on the Safety of Blood, Tissues and Organs

considered evidence from all sectors of the community including the Terrance Higgins Trust<sup>4</sup> and Stonewall

The statement following the review is as follows.

*“SaBTO completed a review of the evidence base for the blood donor selection criteria relating to sexual behavior in May 2011. As a result, they recommended to UK Health Ministers a change to the current donor deferral for men who have had sex with men. Men whose last relevant sexual contact was more than 12 months ago will now be able to donate, subject to meeting the other donor selection criteria”.*

This new guideline was approved by the Welsh Minister of Health and subsequently applied by the WBS in September 2011.

The evidence reviewed by SABTO is available on the internet at the following URL

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/donor-selection-criteria-for-men-who-have-had-sex-with-men>

This period of deferral following MSM<sup>5</sup> is now identical to those applied to high risk heterosexual behaviours. As a result of this change the UK has a more liberal approach to the acceptance of men that have had sex with men as compared to the approach of blood services in much of Europe and North America.

The petitioners refer to testing of the blood and whilst this has greatly improved over the years a negative result is still not an absolute guarantee that a virus may not be transmitted as there is still a small but significant window period. The window period is that time after an individual becomes infected during which the blood is infective but the viral levels (or antibodies) are undetectable by testing methods.

The Welsh Blood Service is committed to providing a safe blood supply to our hospitals and is reliant on prospective blood donors giving us honest answers when completing the Donor Health Check questionnaire.

Yours sincerely



Dr Stephen Field  
**Medical Director**  
Welsh Blood Service

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.tht.org.uk/our-charity/Campaign/Our-health-policies/Blood-donations/Different-for-gay-and-straight>

<sup>5</sup> MSM Males that have sex with Men

Document is Restricted

## 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 2014<sup>6</sup>. 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:** 335

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



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

Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-588  
Ein cyf/Our ref MD/05272/14

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

[committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk)

18 November 2014

Dear William

Thank you for your letter of 30 September concerning the petition from Families Need Fathers: Both Parents Matter Cymru (FNF:BPM) asking the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to adopt all six points in the *Charter for Action for Children and Fathers in Wales*. While I acknowledge the several important themes raised by the charter and the useful contribution this makes, I believe Welsh Government policies already encompass key points contained in the Charter as I outline below.

To begin with, supporting children and their families is the fundamental purpose of the *Families First* and *Flying Start* Welsh Government programmes. The Welsh Government works to encourage the participation and engagement of all family members regardless of gender and age. For example, *Flying Start* recognises the need to support fathers, mothers and carers in their parenting by providing them with access to parenting support at a level that is meaningful to them.

The Welsh Government is fully committed to supporting families, and recognises the importance of a positive relationship between parents and their child because it will help shape positive outcomes for children as they progress through to adulthood. As you will know, we promote parenting programmes that focus on early intervention to support vulnerable parents. Positive parenting aims to support and develop stronger relationships between parents and their children and helps them to address any issues as they arise, so that they do not lead to family relationship breakdown.

*Parenting in Wales: Guidance on Engagement and Support* was published September 2014. It sets out the Welsh Government's expectations on how parenting support should be provided; encourages the use of evidence based interventions and gives good practice approaches to delivery. The guidance is intended to inform the decisions made by those delivering and commissioning parenting services. It provides specific and practical guidance on engaging fathers, including those who are non-resident parents. We were keen to get the views of key stakeholders on the guidance and FNF:BPM was given an opportunity to provide comments to the guidance when it was being drafted.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff

English Enquiry Line 0845 010 3300  
Llinell Ymholiadau Cymraeg 0845 010 4400  
Correspondence.Mark.Drakeford@wales.gsi.gov.uk  
Correspondence.Lesley.Griffiths@wales.gsi.gov.uk

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

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Please note also revised *Flying Start* parenting support guidance has also been published. It complements the above Guidance and is for those who have responsibility for providing parenting support for *Flying Start*. This contains an expectation the father-child relationship will be taken into account when considering what parenting support should be provided to a family.

The FNF:BPM Charter raises the important matter of shared care and access to employment and training. On this, the Welsh Government's approach is an inclusive one in that we do not target specific groups in relation to the programmes we offer. We provide additional resource within our contracts to enable those who require specific additional support, such as childcare costs, to allow them to participate in our schemes.

The FNF:BPM have written previously regarding representation on the Family Justice Network (FJN) in Wales and the possibility of joining a sub-group to the FJN. While their offer of engagement is appreciated it is unfortunately not appropriate for the following reason. The purpose of the FJN is to support the Family Justice Board for England and Wales to implement the system changes detailed in the Family Justice Review. In this respect, the FJN brings together the agencies in Wales with a statutory responsibility within the family justice system to support the implementation of the changes. It is not a forum for the many non-statutory stakeholder groups who will have an interest in this field.

Please note, however, the FNF:BPM was invited and accepted an invitation to attend a meeting of the Family Justice Network (FJN) in order to make a presentation on the matter of 'parental alienation' as a form of emotional abuse, as outlined in their Charter. This led to a full paper and a constructive discussion on the subject by the FJN members. Subsequent correspondence from Albert Heaney, the chair of the FJN, to FNF:BPM explained the reasons why the FJN were unable to adopt the term. In brief, the current definition of emotional abuse (as identified by CAF/CASS Cymru through the *Wales Children and Adolescent Welfare Assessment Checklist*) is deemed still appropriate in enabling both parents and professionals to recognise the multiple adversities that children may face when families have problems.

Given the above background I do hope you will agree Welsh Government policies already encompass and move beyond many of the important issues and concerns raised by FNF:BPM. For that reason, Welsh Government do not feel it necessary to adopt the *Charter for Action for Children and Fathers in Wales* but, nonetheless, acknowledge the contribution the Charter has made to our ongoing policy deliberations in this field.

Yours sincerely,



**Mark Drakeford AC / AM**

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



**Lesley Griffiths AC / AM**

Y Gweinidog Cymunedau a Threchu Tlodi  
Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty

William Powell AM

Chair, Petitions Committee

National Assembly for Wales

3/12/14

Dear Mr Powell



**PETITION FOR CHILDREN & FATHERS - P-04-588**

Thank you for the opportunity of responding to the letter of the 18<sup>th</sup> November from the Minister for Communities & Tackling Poverty and the Minister for Health & Social Services.

We are happy to acknowledge that the Welsh Government has the best of intentions and that supporting children and families is the fundamental purpose of the Families First and Flying Start programmes. The difficulty however is the disparity between the aspirations and the reality. We understand the Welsh Government's commitment to driving forward delivery and focussing on outcomes and so in normal circumstances we would simply ask for the data around the success of these services in engaging with men as parents. On this occasion that would be unfair as we know that Welsh Government does not have this data.

**DATA AROUND MALE ENGAGEMENT**

In 2013 we raised with officials in the Welsh Government Family Support team the issue that our male service users across Wales were reporting to us that they felt disempowered, marginalised or excluded by family support services. We were told that these concerns could not be verified as data about the gender of the parents that services worked with was not collected.

To address this lack of data we undertook a small research project helped by Children in Wales to reach family support providers across Wales to enquire about their experience of engaging with men. Many services (particularly Flying Start) reported to us that they could not complete the survey as they did not record the gender of the parents they work with. We sought clarification on this point from the Welsh Government Family Support team and received a response from Lucy Akhtar on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2013 stating ‘

***‘The Welsh Government does not ask for information from local authorities in relation to the engagement with fathers and other male carers for Flying Start or Families First’.***

We would therefore ask how the Welsh Government is able to evidence that it has had ‘due regard’ for Article 18 of the UNCRC as required under the provisions of the Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011?

**FNF BPM MAPPING SURVEY**

In March 2014 we completed our summary report from the research we undertook. A total of 32 responses were received from family support providers covering 169,109 service users. Responses were received from 14 different local authority areas as well as some services that operate on a regional as well as a whole Wales basis. We have attached the 3 page report with this response.

The headline findings were that the average level of engagement with adult male service users was between 3 and 11% - with some services reporting no male service users. In addition a range of qualitative responses were received which indicated that professionals believed that barriers to inclusion by men included 'Apathy by men' 26%, Mothers as gate-keepers 59% while perhaps more worryingly 19% reported a 'Lack of interest by professionals in working with men'.

### **WELSH GOVERNMENT PARENTING GUIDANCE**

We acknowledge the opportunity that was given to us to comment on the new Parenting Guidance issued in September of this year. We offered to provide specific help to officials in the development of the Guidance in relation to engaging fathers on several occasions but this was never taken up. When we received the draft text approximately three weeks before publication we raised concerns around the misunderstanding of Article 18 of the UNCRC as well as drawing attention to our own mapping survey (mentioned above) and to the specific commitments made by the Scottish Government in relation to engaging with fathers in Section 6 of the Scottish National Parenting Strategy <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0040/00403769.pdf> that are clear, outcome focussed and measurable. Despite these concerns being shared during the consultation period no material alterations were made to the document. It is our view that in relation to fathers the document is not fit for purpose as it is high on aspiration and entirely devoid of any measurable outcome that would provide for an improvement on the current situation.

### **WHOLE FAMILY APPROACH**

At the launch of the Families First National Learning set in Cardiff in January 2013 we raised the problem of the absence of definition of the 'whole family' approach that lies at the heart of the Welsh Government aspirations in this area. This allows practitioners at local level to determine who is and who is not deemed to be part of 'the family'. We had previously shared with officials our concerns that a lack of definition resulted in the exclusion of 'Non resident parents', who are predominantly male. We conducted a short telephone survey of six local authorities that highlighted the problem with responses from two local authorities that stated that Non-resident parents would only be involved with the specific consent of the Resident parent and the children. Given that Welsh Government have specifically chosen not to require data about gender of the parents engaged by services it is of course impossible for them to evidence how successful services have been in fulfilling the aspiration of a 'whole family' engagement approach.

### **FAMILY JUSTICE NETWORK FOR WALES**

In relation to the Family Justice Network we have raised concerns from its inception about the lack of engagement of service users in a meaningful way as set out in the National Principles for Public Engagement <http://www.participationcymru.org.uk/national-principles>. The purpose of the Family Justice Network was set out in a Written Statement to the Assembly by the Deputy Minister, Gwenda Thomas here <http://wales.gov.uk/about/cabinet/cabinetstatements/2012/familyjusticereview/?lang=en>

When we questioned the lack of any service user representation in the Family Justice Network we received a response from Julie Rogers – then Deputy Director, Legislation and Policy Division in Welsh Government in October 2012 who stated that -

***'Given a number of third sector/service user organisations are also members of the CAF/CASS Cymru Advisory Committee, it was also agreed that CAF/CASS Cymru would provide a conduit for such input from this Committee into the Family Justice Network.'***

We do not feel that Cafcass Cymru – a division of Welsh Government – is the most appropriate body to represent the voice of service users in the Family Justice Network.

We are mindful of the commitment to placing the citizen at the centre of service re-design and delivery which flowed from the Beecham Report and the Welsh Government's response in Making the Connections -Delivering Beyond Boundaries

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20060715141954/http://new.wales.gov.uk/dpsp/publications/policies/delivering/Responsee?lang=en>

**'Putting citizens first and involving them in the design of public services is central to achieving radical change. We can deliver real improvements -improvements that people can recognise and understand - by engaging them in shaping and scrutinising our services.'**

Section 2.1

**'We need to strengthen the active partnership between services and citizens to achieve better outcomes - for example, in recycling household waste, improving outcomes for children and young people, and in helping disabled people or those with chronic health conditions to achieve the best quality of life. Success depends on teamwork between citizens and those providing the services.'**

Section 2.2

It would be useful to hear the views of the Minister as to why the Family Justice Network should be exempt from the normally inclusive approach that characterises Welsh Government.

## **PARENTAL ALIENATION AS EMOTIONAL ABUSE**

We are happy to acknowledge the offer to present a paper in which we asked the Welsh Government to officially recognise 'Parental Alienation' as a form of emotional abuse of children. In the paper we were able to draw attention to the two consultation events (in Cardiff & Llandudno Junction) that we had undertaken with professionals to discuss the concept and to test their understanding of the concept. We contend that an understanding and recognition of 'Parental Alienation' (PA) is fundamental to ensure the protection of children from abuse when the importance of their voice is being elevated to greater significance in Family Justice as in many other areas of public policy in Wales. Our presentation also referenced many Judgements in recent Family Law cases which demonstrated the acknowledgement of the concept by the Judiciary. Sadly we learned that the Family Justice Network was not prepared to recognise the concept and we remain concerned about the safety of children in Wales as a result.

## **CAWAC**

It is helpful that the Minister's letter references the Children and Adolescent Welfare Assessment Checklist (CAWAC) in relation to the concept of PA. We have sought to gain a better understanding of the way in which this assessment tool operates and how it might recognise PA. We sought to obtain information about the detail of this tool through our membership of the Cafcass Cymru Advisory Committee but were initially advised that there were copyright issues that prevented this.

Subsequent requests elicited the response that the copyright was wholly owned by Welsh Government so could not be an issue in this context. After several months we requested that one of our Trustees, Mark Isherwood AM should approach the Deputy Minister with a view to him obtaining a copy of the assessment framework. In a letter from the Deputy Minister dated 21<sup>st</sup> August the request was refused on the basis that

***'The CAWAC toolkit is solely the property of Cafcass Cymru and the contents are not to be passed or shared with any person or body outside of Cafcass Cymru. I am therefore unable to provide a copy.'***

It would therefore appear that Members of the Assembly are not able to assure themselves that the assessment tools used by Cafcass Cymru with their own constituents are 'fit for purpose'.

We have been concerned for some time that our service users were reporting a sense of 'being CAWAC'd' – in that they heard that a particular assessment tool was going to be used with their children but that they had no understanding of what or how this would be done. We shared these concerns with Cafcass Cymru through the Advisory Committee and a draft one page leaflet was produced. We shared this draft leaflet with our service users who overwhelmingly responded that they felt it did nothing to address their concerns over the mechanisms and outcomes that could be expected by the use of the tool. Sadly this feedback was rejected by Cafcass Cymru and a leaflet was produced which failed to address any of the concerns of service users.

#### **SUMMARY**

We deeply regret that the Welsh Government seems not to wish to engage with us on these issues in a collaborative way that recognises the concerns of our service users across the whole of Wales. We do however remain ready to offer assistance both to the Assembly in relation to the scrutiny of these issues and to the Welsh Government in terms of policy development and delivery.

Regards

Paul Apreda

National Manager, FNF Both Parents Matter Cymru

Member of



#### **ATTACHMENT**

Mapping Male Participation – report – April 2014





## MAPPING MALE PARTICIPATION IN FAMILY SUPPORT & PARENTING PROGRAMMES

Project by FNF Both Parents Matter as part of the Children & Families Organisational Grant outcomes for 2013/14.

### Methodology –

A Survey Monkey questionnaire with a set of 8 questions was created to capture data on the level of participation and engagement by men in family support services and parenting programmes during the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013.

We asked for responses from generalist family support or parenting programme providers – excluding those who had a particular focus eg disability, domestic abuse, dads projects etc. We also asked for details of ADULT service users to avoid counting of male children in the figures. However 3 responses received were from dads projects, one was focussed entirely at children & young people and didn't record gender of adult carers – while two had a disability focus.

A notable factor was the lack of recording of engagement by gender within some services. Several that were approached and would have liked to contribute were unable to disaggregate the data. It was subsequently confirmed by a senior official that ***'The Welsh Government does not ask for information from local authorities in relation to the engagement with fathers and other male carers for Flying Start or Families First'***.

### Questionnaire Distribution –

Having previously attempted to gain responses on a similar exercise within Cardiff we took the decision to target a small number of services we were already in contact with directly but rely on Children in Wales' distribution network to reach other providers.

### Responses -

To 26th March 2014 a total of 32 responses have been received. The geographical spread is as follows:

Cardiff – 6, Bridgend – 5, Denbighshire – 3, Anglesey – 2, RCT – 2, Caerphilly – 2 (\*), Conwy 2, Ceredigion 2, Torfaen 2, Newport 2

Gwynedd, Carmarthenshire, Blaenau Gwent (\*), Neath Port Talbot (\*) – 1 each

All Wales 1, North Wales 1

(\*) one service covered Caerphilly & Blaenau Gwent, while another covered Bridgend & Neath Port Talbot. Each response has been counted against both Local Authority areas.

### **Numbers of service users analysed**

The total number of service users from the various projects was 169,109. The figure included one service where the number was 165,000 - a health visiting and school nursing provider. Other services varied from a minimum of 4 service users to a maximum of around 700.

### **Male engagement (numbers and percentages)**

Excluding the three dads projects the highest percentages of male engagement were 50% at a child contact centre in South Wales and a North Wales Family Information Service.

Denbighshire stood out in terms of participation as two of the three projects that reported in the county had 25% and 30% male engagement. Whilst one of the projects only had 12 service users in total another achieved engagement with 25% male service users out of a total of 141.

Bridgend was highly engaged in the survey with a total of 5 responses. Two of those covered services with higher levels of need with one identifying itself as ‘an intensive intervention service operating at Tier 3 and 4 of service delivery’ and had a 39% engagement rate with men (15 from 39 service users) The other had a 48% engagement level (19 from 40 service users) and described itself as dealing with child protection issues. Within services which were more universal with lower levels of need one project achieved a 25% engagement out of a total service user population of 700.

Gwynedd saw one service achieve a 25% male engagement from a total of 40 service users whilst a Ceredigion parenting service achieved a 15% rate from a total population of 140.

### **Qualitative feedback**

Respondents were asked to identify one or more reasons from a list of six as the greatest barrier to successful engagement. (% figures rounded to the nearest whole number)

Getting men to see parenting as their responsibility	<b>48%</b>	Creating an environment that appeals to men as well as women	<b>63%</b>
Apathy by men	<b>26%</b>	Mothers as 'gate-keepers'	<b>59%</b>
Lack of interest by professionals in working with men	<b>19%</b>	Lack of ability by men to successfully parent	<b>4%</b>

In addition respondents were asked to identify any other issues. Their responses included:

*‘Fathers normally work during the hours that the parenting sessions run. Sessions in the locality are run during office hours. Fathers struggle to take time off to attend sessions. Fathers feel uncomfortable at attending sessions where the majority are females. Work is the priority for them especially during the period where there is a new baby as mums income has often dropped due to maternity leave. Fathers often work extra hours to generate more income for the family. Fathers make an assumption that the sessions are focused on the mother and the groups are for women only and parenting is a priority for mothers.’*

*'Lack of contact with absent fathers who do not appear to have any role within their Child's life, therefore offer of support cannot be provided.'*

*'The clientele is overwhelmingly female. The men locally tend to work during opening hours'*

*'All female workforce and their perceptions of fathers'*

*'working times often do not fit mens needs'*

## **Conclusions**

There was a clear pattern that emerged from the data. Services targeting both the higher levels of need, or, where access was universal eg FIS or Contact Centres saw the highest levels of engagement. The lowest levels were in early years and in generalist (i.e parenting support or services that targeted lower levels of need) where the engagement rate with men was disappointingly low.

The majority of mainstream projects achieved from 0% to 11% engagement.

It will be important to follow up with the successful projects to learn lessons from the successes.

The evidence shows that there is a significant problem with male engagement. Professionals assume men cannot be engaged as they work during the normal office hours that parenting support operates. There is also a perception that men choose not to engage. Interestingly almost 60% identify 'mothers as gate-keepers' as a significant barrier precluding male engagement. More research in this area needs to be undertaken to find ways to significantly increase engagement – including courses / services in the evenings as well as a strategy to engage men even if women seek to block this.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Welsh Government require all family support services to record the gender of the adults they engage with and support
- Services should be encouraged to set a target (KPI) for the level of engagement with men
- Welsh Government should assess to what extent it is currently having 'due regard' to Article 18 of the UNCRC incorporated into the Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011 in relation to family support policy.
- Services should be able to access training and other support to assist them in improving engagement with fathers
- A review of the gender of staff employed in front-line delivery of family support should be undertaken to determine whether a targeted programme of recruiting more men into these roles may have a positive impact on engagement levels.
- Specific proposals should be considered to overcome barriers to male engagement identified by professionals – i.e 'Mothers as gate-keepers' / getting men to see parenting as their responsibility / creating an environment that appeals to men as well as women

Paul Apreda, National Manager, FNF Both Parents Matter Cymru – March 2014

[paul@fnf-bpm.org.uk](mailto:paul@fnf-bpm.org.uk) / 07947 135864

# Agenda Item 3.20

## **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–ordinating 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-04-551  
Ein cyf/Our ref LG/05324/14

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

[committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk)

November 2014

Dear Bill,

Thank you for your letter of 29 October, regarding Petition P-04-551 - Support for children and young people participation standards.

The recommendations within *Small Voice, Big Vision* have been useful and we have moved forward on the majority of these. National Participation Structures have changed recently with Children in Wales now leading on a National model for the participation of children and young people and the National Participation Standards. As a result, there has been a need to update information and my officials have been working with Children in Wales, the Children's Commissioner and Local Authorities to make sure the new model is promoted and implemented.

The Participation Hub will continue to be supported and promoted by Children in Wales. It sets out clearly what is meant by participation and outlines the structures to support workers. Children in Wales have met with Save the Children to ensure this includes the resources developed as referred to in the Participation Unit's final report.

In terms of setting out the local and national structures to support participation, we have re-issued *Shared Purpose – Shared Delivery*, the statutory guidance for Local Authorities and their partners in developing Single Integrated Plans (SIP). This now includes an Annex which sets out the statutory guidance for providing and promoting children and young people's participation under Section 12 of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 within the context of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

To date, all 22 Local Authorities have received an assessment visit to examine how they are implementing the duty in the context of their Single Integrated Plans. During these visits officials met with Participations Workers, CYP Co-ordinators, Chief Executives, SIP lead officers, Lead Directors, Youth Forums, Youth Parliaments and Youth Councils.

We have been very pleased with the commitment, innovation and breadth of opportunities evident in most Local Authorities. For those who are exemplary we will be sharing elements of their good practice with others. Those who have not been able to evidence they have fully implemented the guidance will be re-visited within 12 months and will be informed about areas in which progress will be expected.

The Children's Rights Scheme 2014, approved by the National Assembly in May, ensures clarity and transparency around how Ministers will have due regard to Children's Rights, which of course includes their participation. We are grateful to the NGOs, Local Authorities and other organisations who advised us throughout this development and continue to do so in its implementation.

Regards  
Lesley

**Lesley Griffiths AC / AM**

Y Gweinidog Cymunedau a Threchu Tlodi  
Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty

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Children in Wales  
Plant yng Nghymru

17<sup>th</sup> November 2014

Dear William Powell AM,

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

Thank you for your letter of October 2014 regarding the petition from Powys Youth Forum on the above matter. Children in Wales is pleased to inform the Committee that we had already considered how best to ensure implementation of the National Children and Young People's Participation Standards (*the Standards*) through the kite-marking process that had been undertaken in the past. Although kite-marking was not in our original bid, because we didn't wish to duplicate work that we assumed Funky Dragon would be bidding for, we had indicated that we would actively promote the Standards in all of our work including sharing good practice and training of both workers and young people.

Since the outcome of the Children and Families Delivery Grant Scheme however, we have updated the work-plan to include enhanced work on the Standards including kite-marking, and this is due to be discussed with the National Participation Workers Network at a meeting in early December.

Following consultation with Save the Children, we will be introducing a process that they would have introduced had the funding for the Participation Unit not previously been withdrawn by them and by Welsh Government. This approach takes into account the final report of the Participation Unit 'Small Voice, Big Vision'

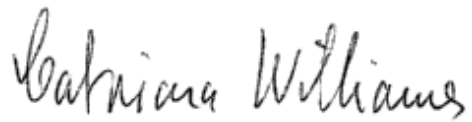
The work will include:-

- a process of updating the Standards and kite marking tool in collaboration with participation workers and young people through face to face and electronic means by February 2015 - this is not likely to involve changes in respect of principles, but will make the Standards fit for purpose for use in 2015 onwards in respect of legislation etc. It will also allow time for feedback as to what worked and what didn't work.
- resources such as the 'Blast Off Guides' will be held in Children in Wales and feedback sought from young people and participation workers about what was useful and what wasn't. On line resources will be developed and information provided to practitioners about participation, different strategies for different age groups, child friendly docs etc.
- train the trainers events on the Standards to train workers on the updated Standards
- training for workers on self-assessment of organisations and training young inspectors
- full days of verification activity (a minimum of twice per year), of submissions from young inspectors by a nationally convened group of young people and participation workers

- A national good practice exchange event in June 2015

I hope that this information is useful for the Committee and please contact me if there are any further queries.

Yours sincerely

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

Catriona Williams OBE  
Chief Executive

## **P-04-481 Close the Gap for deaf pupils in Wales**

### **Petition wording:**

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to develop a national strategy to Close the Gap in educational attainment between deaf pupils and their peers.

The National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS) Cymru presents this petition today as it is both Deaf Awareness Week and two years since 55 AMs pledged to take action to Close the Gap for deaf pupils.

Still, Welsh Government statistics demonstrate significant attainment gaps between deaf pupils and their peers. In 2012, deaf pupils were 26% less likely to achieve 5 GCSEs at A\*-C, and 41% less likely to achieve A\*-C passes in core subjects English/Welsh, Maths and Science.

Our video petition asks the experts (deaf pupils themselves) what matters most. They told us:

- We need appropriate support in school and college
- We need all classrooms to have good acoustics
- Some of us use sign language. Help us encourage our hearing peers and teachers to learn sign.
- We need more teachers and pupils to be deaf aware.

Too many deaf pupils are facing barriers in these areas. A national strategy is needed to address the barriers and Close the Gap!

### **Additional Information**

Our video petition and an accompanying report can be downloaded at [www.ndcs.org.uk/ClosetheGapWales](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/ClosetheGapWales)

The video petition was produced with the help of eight deaf young people outlines the four things that they feel are most important to deaf pupils at school and college.

The accompanying report outlines the barriers that many deaf pupils in Wales are facing in these areas. It also makes suggestions on how a strategy could help to overcome these barriers.

**Petition raised by:** NDCS

**Date petition first considered by Committee:** 14 May 2013

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

Document is Restricted