

Agenda – Petitions Committee

Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 1 – Senedd

Meeting date: 14 February 2017

Meeting time: 09.00

For further information contact:

Graeme Francis – Committee Clerk

Kath Thomas – Deputy Clerk

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National
Assembly for
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Agenda Item 2.1

P-05-734 Ban Letting Agent Fees to Tenants

This petition was submitted by Shelter Cymru, which collected 328 online signatures.

Text of the Petition

We, the undersigned, call on the National Assembly to urge the Welsh Government to end the unfair practice of charging letting agent fees to tenants.

Earlier this year Shelter Cymru campaign supporters mystery-shopped letting agents across Wales and found that more than half (55%) are not advertising fees on their websites as required by law. The study found that a tenant could pay between £39.99 and £480 for the same service depending which agent their landlord had chosen to go with.

The reality is that there is no such thing as consumer choice in tenants' fees, and a real risk that tenants and landlords are being double-charged for the same service. We believe that Wales should follow Scotland's example and ban fees to tenants. The private rented sector in Scotland is still going strong and three-quarters of Scottish agents say the ban has had no impact, or a positive impact, on their business.

Welsh letting agents are enjoying a business boom thanks to Rent Smart Wales which is encouraging smaller landlords to sign up with agents. However, extortionate letting fees are pushing tenants into debt and making it harder for local authorities to prevent homelessness. Please act now to give a fair deal to Wales' growing numbers.

Assembly constituency and Region.

- Swansea West
- South Wales West

Letting agent fees

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 14 Chwefror 2017

Petitions Committee | 14 February 2017

Research Briefing:

Petition number: P-05-734

Petition title: Ban Letting Agent Fees to Tenants

Text of petition: We, the undersigned, call on the National Assembly to urge the Welsh Government to end the unfair practice of charging letting agent fees to tenants.

Earlier this year Shelter Cymru campaign supporters mystery-shopped letting agents across Wales and found that more than half (55%) are not advertising fees on their websites as required by law. The study found that a tenant could pay between £39.99 and £480 for the same service depending which agent their landlord had chosen to go with.

The reality is that there is no such thing as consumer choice in tenants' fees, and a real risk that tenants and landlords are being double-charged for the same service. We believe that Wales should follow Scotland's example and ban fees to tenants. The private rented sector in Scotland is still going strong and three-quarters of Scottish agents say the ban has had no impact, or a positive impact, on their business.

Welsh letting agents are enjoying a business boom thanks to Rent Smart Wales which is encouraging smaller landlords to sign up with agents. However, extortionate letting fees are pushing tenants into debt and making it harder for local authorities to prevent homelessness. Please act now to give a fair deal to Wales' growing numbers of private renters.

Background

It is common practice for letting agents in the private rented sector to charge prospective tenants fees prior to the tenancy commencing. These fees typically cover the costs of referencing and other administration charges connected with setting up the tenancy. Additional fees may also be charged at a later date. For example, when a tenancy is renewed. Landlords are also commonly charged a range of fees at the commencement of a

tenancy and when a tenancy is renewed. However, this petition is purely concerned with fees charged to tenants.

The *Consumer Rights Act 2015* requires letting agents in Wales to display or publish a list of their relevant fees and charges. Local authorities enforce this legislation. They are able to impose a civil penalty of up to £5,000 on agents who fail to comply with the requirements. Agents in Wales can appeal to the Residential Property Tribunal against any civil penalty.

Letting agents in Scotland are not been able to charge tenants fees in addition to the rent and a refundable deposit when granting, renewing or allowing certain tenancies to continue. This has been the case for some time. In November 2012, existing law was clarified to make this clearer.

The UK Government recently announced in the [Autumn Statement](#) that it intended to ban letting agents from passing on fees to tenants in England:

The government will ban letting agents' fees to tenants, to improve competition in the private rental market and give renters greater clarity and control over what they will pay. The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) will consult ahead of bringing forward legislation.

Welsh Government action

The Welsh Government in the Fourth Assembly brought forward the *Housing (Wales) Act 2014*. The 2014 Act requires letting agents to obtain a licence from [Rent Smart Wales](#) and to adhere to a [Code of Practice](#) as a condition of their licence. The Code of Practice restates existing legal requirements regarding publicising fees that may be charged to tenants and suggests some areas of best practice, such as listing any additional fees that could be charged to the tenant in the tenancy agreement.

On [29 November 2016](#) during First Minister's Questions, the First Minister confirmed that a ban on letting agents' fees was "actively under consideration", in response to a question from Leanne Wood AM. However, the First Minister did emphasise the importance of analysing evidence from Scotland of the impact banning fees had there, particularly in terms of whether additional costs were being passed on to tenants through higher rents. This point was also made in plenary by the Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children on [7 December 2016](#).

The Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children has written to the Committee and confirmed his earlier stance, commenting:

"I am reluctant to go rushing into legislation without carefully studying all the evidence and thinking through the potential consequences first."

National Assembly for Wales action

A Plaid Cymru amendment to the *Renting Homes (Wales) Bill* tabled at [stage 3 debate](#) in November 2015 would have allowed Welsh Ministers to make regulations restricting the fees

which may be charged by an agent for preparing a notice or document under the Bill. This amendment was defeated.

On 7 December 2016, in a [UKIP Cymru debate](#) on letting agent fees, the Assembly supported a motion that included calls for the Welsh Government to:

- (a) consider how legislation on this subject might work in light of the evidence on the impact of abolition in Scotland and the responses to the consultation in England.
- (b) consult with other parties in the Assembly and stakeholders on the best way forward for Wales.

In the recent [Member Bill Ballot](#), held on 25 January 2017, five Assembly Members proposed Bills that would have taken action in this policy area. None of those Bills were successful in the ballot.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

Carl Sargeant AC/AM
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gymunedau a Phlant
Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-734
Ein cyf/Our ref CS/06110/16

Mike Hedges AM
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January 2017

Dear Mike

Thank you for your letter of 7 December regarding the Petition the Committee has received from Shelter Cymru requesting the Banning of Letting Agents Fees to Tenants.

I am fully aware of the campaign which is led by Shelter Cymru and the wide support for such a ban amongst Assembly Members. Indeed the spotlight fell on the issue again very recently following the Chancellor's announcement in the Autumn Statement that England would be consulting on introducing a ban early in the New Year.

The Welsh Government is committed to ensuring a fair deal for private sector tenants. Most recently we have introduced the Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016 and Rent Smart Wales, both of which will benefit tenants. We are very much leading the way in cracking down on rogue agents and landlords and working to raise standards in the sector.

Nevertheless, I am concerned about the bad practices of some letting agents who are charging extortionate fees to tenants, who very often are in no position to refuse to pay such fees and agree they must be stopped. Some of the examples we hear about are simply shocking and action is required to tackle this.

I appreciate there are many good letting agents operating across the country and that many of their fees are legitimate and necessary in recouping business costs for the services they provide. Therefore any measures introduced to stop the charging of letting agent fees to tenants needs to be carefully considered. They must be proportionate and effective, and must not result in unintended consequences or simply create new problems in their place.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

Pack Page 55

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

I have already made a commitment to review the evidence currently out there, before deciding what action we should take in Wales. We will take into account the effect of the Scottish legislation. We will also be reviewing the proposals in England, taking into account the findings of their consultation which is due to be held in the coming months.

We must also consider the impact of the different route we have taken in Wales, by introducing Rent Smart Wales and whether this will impact on how we approach any further regulation of the sector. In summary, whilst I agree action is needed to address this issue, I am reluctant to go rushing into legislation without carefully studying all the evidence and thinking through the potential consequences first.

Yours sincerely

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

Carl Sargeant AC/AM

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gymunedau a Phlant
Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children



Additional evidence to the Petitions Committee on banning letting agents' fees to tenants

6th February 2017

Introduction

Shelter Cymru welcomes the opportunity to provide a response to the Cabinet Secretary's letter of 4th January outlining his current thinking on whether Wales should introduce a ban on letting fees.

We have already had useful and constructive discussions with the Cabinet Secretary over this issue, and we welcome that he recognises action is needed.

We understand that the Welsh Government has already spearheaded important reforms to the private rented sector. Implementation of these reforms is very much a work in progress. Changes to the Welsh private rented sector are likely to continue for a number of years to come. We agree that further reforms must be planned carefully, but we hope that implementation of Rent Smart Wales, and also the Renting Homes Act (not likely to commence before autumn 2018) won't hold up action where it's needed.

We understand that in England the Department for Communities and Local Government will issue the consultation in March or April, with primary legislation potentially to follow within the year.

Wales has been pursuing effective distinctive policies from the rest of the UK and will continue to do so, but if Wales chooses not to go ahead with a ban, or introduces a ban much later than England, then a difference in policy between England and Wales, in this instance, could present a number of risks. For example:

- There's a possibility that some unscrupulous letting agents may be tempted to set up in Wales rather than England. Although Rent Smart Wales is an additional safeguard to help protect professional standards in Wales, an influx of potentially unlicensed agents from England does represent an enforcement challenge at a time

when the resources of Rent Smart Wales are already stretched with implementation activity.

- A ban on letting fees has been a long-standing campaigning goal of the National Union of Students. If fees were banned in England and Scotland but not in Wales, this may represent a disincentive for students to study here.
- PRS access will be comparatively more expensive for tenants in Wales than in England or Scotland, making it harder to prevent and relieve homelessness. Anecdotally, we have heard a number of instances of Welsh letting agents hiking fees in order to take advantage of increases in local authorities' homelessness prevention budgets that were necessary to help councils implement Part 2 of the Housing (Wales) Act.

We understand that the Welsh legislative programme is very full but we hope that the Government can find time to prioritise this important measure that will complement Rent Smart Wales in professionalising the sector.

To conclude, we would like to share some comments from the 145 current and former tenants in Wales who responded to our recent online survey. This survey found that:

- 41 per cent had to get into debt to pay letting fees
- 84 per cent disagreed that the service they received from their agent was worth the fees they paid
- 85 per cent agreed that letting fees to tenants should be abolished.

Here are some of the comments they shared with us:

'Absolute rip-off. Did not get house but I passed all credit checks. Letting agent took fees from at least six different people for the same house. It was only when I threatened to contact Trading Standards I got my fee returned. In short it was just a scam.'

'Complete rip-off. I paid admin fees on a previous property only to fail the credit search, and subsequently lost the admin fee.'

'I had to pay a month's rent (£425) and a bond of £425 and £200 agency fees just to check if I passed the credit check. If I failed they would still keep the £200 so it was a risk to take.'

'They have a severe lack of ownership. They are willing to take your money but very unwilling to handle health and safety issues and maintenance. Being charged over £250 for a phone call to my employer to confirm I work there, and be emailed an Excel document with the

breakdown of costs, is diabolical. With my bond, fees and rent, my first month was close to £2,000. I fully support this cause to help more people get reasonable housing.'

'(I paid) £90 for a credit check, £75 admin fees and £70 to take the property off the website!'

'I have a 12-month contract. At renewal they charged me a £60 admin fee. I asked what it was for, and it was to photocopy the new agreement. I offered to print it free of charge but they wouldn't let me.'

'This agent also keeps the first month's rent paid, so they make a lot of money up front from the tenant and owner. This agent does not have enough competition in the area. Fees (£240) were said to be for credit checking and drawing up the tenancy. Online credit checking costs a few pounds per check. A standard tenancy is a computerised pro-forma. The agent only needs to insert a few details such as name and address.'

'We signed the initial contract for 12 months. After the 12 months was up we wanted to renew the tenancy and were charged £152.75 for a renewal fee which we had not been told about previously.'

'We have been private renting for seven years and used a couple of agents. The fees have become extortionate and I doubt we will be able to afford again if we have to move.'

'The only reason I have stayed in this residence this long is because I can't afford to pay the agency fees involved in moving house. I've wanted to move for over a year.'

'The fees charged to the landlord were just as horrific. She (the agent) even tried to persuade the landlord to invent things so she could get more fees. We both feel we were misled.'

More information on this survey and on our letting agent mystery shop exercise, carried out last year by our campaign supporters, can be found here:

<https://sheltercymru.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Letting-Go-Email.pdf>.

For more information please contact Jennie Bibbings, Campaigns Manager

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Agenda Item 2.2

P-05-735 Make Foundation Phase more Effective for our Children, Provide more Teachers and Abolish Year 2 Stats.

This petition was submitted by Tamsin Osborne, which collected 14 signatures.

Text of the Petition

I would like the Welsh Assembly to stop letting our children down in the Foundation Phase.

To follow the lead of the most successful education systems in Europe, such as Finland and throughout Scandinavia.

To provide schools with training and funding for appropriate child teacher ratios, to enable the effective delivery of the Foundation Phase pedagogy.

I call for the abolishment of Nationalised tests, SATS, in the Foundation Phase. They simply do not correspond with the Foundation Phase ethos.

Additional information

We love the ethos of the Foundation Phase, the approach Welsh Assembly have taken is refreshing, and in line with the heaps of research that supports child-led play up to the age of seven. However, it is unfortunate, that the ethos of the Foundation Phase is lost in many schools across Wales. This is because of a lack of training in early years play provision; even if the teacher had the training, passion and knowledge to deliver the Foundation Phase pedagogy, the ratios of teachers to child makes it near impossible. How can any teacher follow a child's lead in play when there are up to 30 children in that class, with only one TA to support all of those children as they play, discover and learn?

We do not believe that nationalised tests, SATS, have any place in the Welsh foundation phase. The foundation phase is about supporting children in their Play:

To develop gross motor skills through movement,

To develop finer motor skills needed for writing,

To take risks and learn responsibility,

To give them the time they need to develop solid building blocks for language and numeracy,

To have opportunities to revisit and learn as and when a child needs/chooses too,

To develop the skills to self access and discover,

To learn key social skills with their peers and adults.

This is a proven approach to fully prepare children ready for primary education at the age of seven. This is how Europe's most successful education systems do it, yet children of six and seven years old in year two are expected to sit and write in tests to compare our children to those in England. This forces teachers in the Foundation Phase to start drilling phonetics and numbers into our children when they start Reception and by Year-one to be expected to sit read and write, "readying" them for these tests which reflect on the school.

Our children are being robbed of their childhoods, children who are starting school at just turned four years old in Wales, who are then forced into this system, six hours a day of classroom drilling. This is not the progressive Foundation Phase ethos that Welsh assembly put into play in 2010. I urge you all to consider the effectiveness of the Foundation Phase across Wales, provide the funding needed for more TAs and training for Foundation Phase practitioners, so that the Welsh Primary Education can be one Welsh Government can be proud of; delivered exceptionally at EVERY school across Wales. Give every child in Wales fair access to productive play, paving the way for them to have positive, rewarding, Learning Journeys.

Assembly constituency and Region.

- Cardiff South and Penarth
- South Wales Central

Research Briefing:

Petition number: P-05-735

Petition title: **Make Foundation Phase more Effective for our Children, Provide more Teachers and Abolish Year 2 SATs.**

Petition text:

I would like the Welsh Assembly to stop letting our children down in the Foundation Phase. To follow the lead of the most successful education systems in Europe, such as Finland and throughout Scandinavia.

To provide schools with training and funding for appropriate child teacher ratios, to enable the effective delivery of the Foundation Phase pedagogy.

I call for the abolishment of Nationalised tests, SATS, in the Foundation Phase. They simply do not correspond with the Foundation Phase ethos.

We love the ethos of the Foundation Phase, the approach Welsh Assembly have taken is refreshing, and in line with the heaps of research that supports child-led play up to the age of seven. However, it is unfortunate, that the ethos of the Foundation Phase is lost in many schools across Wales. This is because of a lack of training in early years play provision; even if the teacher had the training, passion and knowledge to deliver the Foundation Phase pedagogy, the ratios of teachers to child makes it near impossible. How can any teacher follow a child's lead in play when there are up to 30 children in that class, with only one TA to support all of those children as they play, discover and learn?

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Background

The three main points made in the petition are that:

- Wales should follow the Scandinavian model of early education;
- There should be funding and training for appropriate adult pupil ratios;
- Testing at Year 2 should be abolished.

The Foundation Phase for children aged 3–7 in Wales was introduced in 2004/05 and rolled out across Wales in September 2010. It is **based on early years approaches in Scandinavian countries**. It is the statutory curriculum for pupils aged 3 to 7 in maintained and non-maintained settings.

The Foundation Phase aims to meet the needs of children through developmental, experiential and active learning. Through engaging activities, children can practise and consolidate their skills, experiment with ideas, use their creativity and imagination, take

risks, solve problems, and make decisions individually, as well as in small and in large groups.

Welsh Government Action

The Welsh Government commissioned the Wales Institute of Social and Economic Research, Data & Methods (WISERD) to evaluate the Foundation Phase. The [Final Report](#) was published in May 2015.

Training

As part of the Foundation Phase evaluation programme, a number of research summaries were published during 2014. Key findings on [Training, Support and Guidance](#) include:

- That the **vast majority** of leaders were **generally satisfied** with the training that they had received and that teachers who reported completing more of the eight Welsh Government Foundation Phase training modules had a better understanding and more positive views of the Foundation Phase;
- Of those who would change the training provided, it was felt that mixed messages from the Welsh Government – specifically the change of focus from play to literacy and numeracy – had led to misunderstanding among practitioners about how to deliver the Foundation Phase as it was intended.

The [Final Evaluation](#) made a number of recommendations with regard to training including:

- Specific attention (through training and guidance for practitioners) should be given on how to use Foundation Phase pedagogies in Year 1 and especially Year 2 classes;
- Foundation Phase training modules should be revised in order to improve practitioners' understanding of the approaches and pedagogies now being emphasised.
- Greater emphasis on the Foundation Phase should be given within Initial Teacher Education courses and other professional courses (including Masters' Level courses). This should include Foundation Phase curriculum and assessment, but particular attention needs to be given to Foundation Phase pedagogies.

The Welsh Government published the [Foundation Phase Action Plan](#) in November 2016. It sets out actions to support and share learning on effective practice and ongoing staff development. In relation to training, it includes short term action points (by September 2017):

- Welsh Government to work with regional consortia challenge advisers and local authorities (where appropriate) to ensure that settings and schools are adequately assessing the skill levels and requirements of those delivering the Foundation

Phase and including the appropriate access to professional learning within their development plans.

- Local authorities and their regional consortia to ensure that they have appropriate staffing expertise in place to lead on professional learning within the Foundation Phase.
- Regional consortia and local authorities to review the training resources and other professional learning opportunities available to practitioners, including those in leadership roles, and share current good practice and materials, developing revised materials and approaches where needed. This will include professional learning in child development, leadership, environment experiences and pedagogy of Foundation Phase.

It also includes the long-term action points (by September 2019)

- Higher education institutions to ensure that all undergraduate and postgraduate programmes awarding qualified teacher status must include delivery of child development following revalidation of courses. Where courses have recently been through this process, opportunities for incorporating child development into existing courses should be considered.

Adult child ratios

In the Foundation Phase, adult to pupil ratios are 1:8 for three–five year olds and 1:15 for five–seven year olds. The *Final Evaluation report* found on average, the staff to child ratio for three to five–year–olds (i.e. Nursery and Reception) was **not being met**, whereas the staff to child ratio for five to seven–year–olds (i.e. Year 1 and Year 2) was, on average, **being exceeded**.

The evaluation found that:

- In 2013/14 the Welsh Government allocated just over £92 million for the employment of additional practitioners to help schools meet the recommended adult:child ratios. This revenue was allocated to local authorities based on their pupil population who then distributed it to schools using their own funding formulae.
- Of those surveyed, 72 per cent of head teachers and 79 per cent of funded non-maintained setting lead practitioners said they did not have any difficulties in meeting the recommended adult:child ratios. Nine out of every ten head teachers who reported that they had experienced obstacles in meeting the recommended adult:child ratios also cited funding issues as a major obstacle to the successful implementation of the Foundation Phase.

Welsh Government funding for maintaining adult to child ratios is made through the Education Improvement Grant (EIG). The grant's terms and conditions stipulate that the

funding must be used to support the requirement to work towards Foundation Phase staff to pupil ratios as part of a high quality and effective Foundation Phase curriculum. In evidence to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee on 10 November 2016](#), Kirsty Williams, the Cabinet Secretary for Education, said:

“most of our education improvement grant goes in supporting, for instance, settings to meet the ratios between children and adults.”

From 2015–16, there has been a single EIG to support the activities and intended outcomes from previous 11 separate (ring-fenced) grants¹. In the Children, Young People and Education Committee’s [draft budget scrutiny](#), the Cabinet Secretary for Education said that £133 million has been allocated to the EIG in 2017–18. This compares to a total of £153 million for the 11 individual grants in 2014–15. The amount of money to be spent on each individual purpose of the EIG is **not ring-fenced** and local authorities and consortia spend their allocations as they consider appropriate

Testing

The Minister for Lifelong learning and Welsh Language states in his response to the Committee that children in Year 2 do not sit SATS (standard attainment tests) and that the National Reading and Numeracy Tests taken by learners in years 2 to 9 are not the same as the SATs tests that are taken by learners in England . ‘SATS’ is generally a term for the tests or assessment taken at the end of a Key Stage.

National Reading and Numeracy tests were introduced on a statutory basis in May 2013 for all pupils in Years 2 to 9. Previously, many schools used commercially produced reading and numeracy tests as well as cognitive ability tests. The introduction of the National Reading and Numeracy tests was intended to provide uniformity of practice. The tests complement the Welsh Government’s National Literacy and Numeracy Framework (LNF) and aim to track pupils’ progress in reading and numeracy skills from Year 2 (the end of Foundation Phase) through to Year 9 (the end of Key Stage 3). The tests are designed to give teachers a clearer insight into a learner’s development and ensure that all schools are identifying the needs of their pupils in order to progress their ability in reading and numeracy. This will allow them to identify strengths and areas for improvement and to intervene at an earlier stage if learners are falling behind.

Both the OECD review, [Improving Schools in Wales](#) (2014) and Professor Donaldson’s [Independent review of curriculum and assessment arrangements in Wales](#) (2015) recommended that the Welsh Government use assessment primarily to inform teaching and

¹ The 11 grants amalgamated were the Foundation Phase Revenue Grant; School Effectiveness Grant; 14-19 Learning Pathways; Minority Ethnic Achievement Grant; Welsh in Education Grant; Gypsy Children, and Traveller Children Education Grant; Lead and Emerging Practitioner Grant; Reading and Numeracy Test Support Grant; Additional funding for Band 4 and 5 schools; Teacher Induction; and the Higher Level Teaching Assistant Grant

learning rather than for accountability purposes. In [a paper to the Children, Young People and Education Committee on 12 January 2017](#), the Cabinet Secretary for Education said:

“Crucially future assessment arrangements will give priority to using assessment as a means to inform better teaching and learning. This will be a move away from the Welsh Government gathering information about children and young people’s performance on a school-by-school basis for accountability purposes.”

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

Alun Davies AC/AM
Gweinidog y Gymraeg a Dysgu Gydol Oes
Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-735
Ein cyf/Our ref ARD/05537/16

Mike Hedges AM
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3 January 2017

Dear Mike

Thank you for your letter of 7 December to the Cabinet Secretary for Education, seeking views on petition P-05-735 'Make Foundation Phase more effective for our children, provide more teachers and abolish Year 2 stats'. This has been passed on to me for response as early education provision falls within my portfolio.

I welcome Ms Osborne's statements that she and her colleagues love the ethos of the Foundation Phase. This is something that came out strongly from the independent evaluation of the Foundation Phase. The Foundation Phase is based on approaches in Scandinavian countries and we know from the evaluation that the approach also works in Wales and has led to improvements in attainment and attendance. The Foundation Phase was also identified as a particular strength of the curriculum by Professor Graham Donaldson in his wider review of the curriculum and assessment arrangements, particularly the aspect of experiential learning which will be a key element for all ages in the new curriculum which we shall be implementing across Wales from 2021.

The Welsh Government clearly stated its ongoing commitment to the Foundation Phase in Taking Wales Forward. Given the cut in public spending from the UK Government there remain challenges in maintaining funding for all public services. However, we have demonstrated our commitment to the Foundation Phase by retaining the funding for local authorities to be able to fund the enhanced adult to pupil ratios which are needed for the Foundation Phase.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
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CF99 1NA

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Gohebiaeth.Alun.Davies@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Alun.Davies@gov.wales

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

The Foundation Phase ratios were set in order to enable delivery of the Foundation Phase curriculum and its pedagogy, as evidence showed that high staff to pupil ratios are needed to deliver the approach of structured, active educational play and experiential learning, through outdoor as well as indoor learning.

The staff to pupil ratios are as follows:

- 1: 8 for 3 - 5 year-olds (Nursery and Reception classes); and
- 1:15 for 5 - 7 year olds (Year 1 and Year 2).

The terms and conditions of the Education Improvement Grant (EIG), the funding source for maintaining staff to pupil ratios, stipulate that the funding must be used to support the requirement to work towards Foundation Phase staff to pupil ratios as part of a high quality and effective Foundation Phase curriculum.

I recognise the importance of ensuring that the workforce has the necessary skills and knowledge to be excellent Foundation Phase practitioners. As Ms Osborne points out in her petition, training is important as a specific tool but it is more important that we consider a variety of approaches to professional learning, which fit in with a wider approach of practitioners in schools and nurseries learning from each other in a self-improving system. This is a more integrated and sustainable approach which will embed development at a deeper level and this will become increasingly important as we move towards implementing a new curriculum from 2021. Foundation Phase practitioners are also able to access the Progress for Success European Structural Funds programme which provides support for anyone in the early years, childcare and play workforce to up-skill in recognised sector qualifications at Levels 2 and 3.

I must clarify that the National Reading and Numeracy Tests taken by learners in years 2 to 9 are not the same as the SATs tests that are taken by learners in England, neither is the purpose of our tests to make comparisons between children in Wales and those in England. First and foremost, the aim of the National Reading and Numeracy Tests is to help schools across Wales assess their learners' reading and numeracy skills and gain a clearer insight into learners' development and progress. The age-standardised score from each test shows how well each learner has done compared to others of the same age in Wales. The diagnostic information from the tests is used alongside other forms of assessment to allow teachers to identify strengths and areas for improvement. The results of the tests are not included in the set of performance measures for primary schools or secondary schools in Wales. In England, by contrast, primary schools are ranked by their learners' test scores.

The Welsh Government always stresses to schools and parents that learners should not practice for the tests and that a broad and balanced curriculum must be maintained throughout the school year, including leading up to and during the test period. Schools that engage in drilling their learners for the tests are going against the guidance issued by the Welsh Government which states that teaching to the tests and overemphasis on preparation is unacceptable.

We do know from the evaluation that there is inconsistency in delivering the Foundation Phase according to its full pedagogical principles. This is something that we are addressing and we set out our approach to doing so in our Foundation Phase Action Plan which was published in November 2016.

The Action Plan, developed through an expert group of key stakeholders, sets out our vision and aims for early education over the next few years - to embed high-quality Foundation Phase pedagogy and practice in order to give children the best possible start in their education. It sets out a national approach to continuously improve the way in which our Foundation Phase curriculum for three to seven year olds is implemented and delivered in our schools and nurseries.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alun', with a horizontal line underneath it.

Alun Davies AC/AM

Gweinidog y Gymraeg a Dysgu Gydol Oes

Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language

Agenda Item 2.3

P-05-736 To Make Mental Health Services More Accessible.

This petition was submitted by Laura Williams, which collected 73 signatures.

Text of the Petition

To make mental health services more accessible the Government should ensure that no-one who approaches a mental health service should be turned away without help. Anyone who goes to their GP or any other health care professional who is experiencing a mental health problem should be automatically referred to the crisis team who should act immediately. The onus should not be on the individual to contact the Crisis Team on their own. There should also always be a one to one therapy option, rather than group therapy.

Many people will know I haven't had an easy time with life or with mental illness; I suffer with depression, anxiety, PTSD and OCD. Recently, I've hit rock bottom and have screamed for help but have been let down by mental health services who I thought would help, instead they have let me down majorly.

I want my experience to help others around Wales and to get the help they need.

Assembly constituency and Region.

- Cardiff West
- South Wales Central

Briefing for the Petitions Committee

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 6 February 2017

Petitions Committee | 6 February 2017

Research Briefing:

Petition number: P-05-736

Petition title: To Make Mental Health Services More Accessible

To make mental health services more accessible the Government should ensure that no-one who approaches a mental health service should be turned away without help. Anyone who goes to their GP or any other health care professional who is experiencing a mental health problem should be automatically referred to the crisis team who should act immediately. The onus should not be on the individual to contact the Crisis Team on their own. There should also always be a one to one therapy option, rather than group therapy.

Many people will know I haven't had an easy time with life or with mental illness; I suffer with depression, anxiety, PTSD and OCD. Recently, I've hit rock bottom and have screamed for help but have been let down by mental health services who I thought would help, instead they have let me down majorly.

I want my experience to help others around Wales and to get the help they need.

Background

The Mental Health Foundation in its publication [Mental Health in Wales: fundamental facts](#) notes that, based on data available from [Welsh Health Survey](#), 13 per cent of adults (aged 16 and over) living in Wales were reported to have received a treatment for a mental health problem in 2015, an increase from 12 per cent in 2014. This briefing provides information about access to mental health services in primary and secondary care as well as some information about crisis care.

Access to mental health services in primary and secondary care

In 2010 the Welsh Government passed the [Mental Health Wales Measure 2010](#) (the Measure), which came into force in 2012 and covers both primary and secondary mental health services in Wales. In relation to primary care, local authorities and health boards are required under

the Measure to provide Local Primary Mental Health Support Services (LPMHSS), with services operating within or alongside existing GP practices.

The Welsh Government issued guidance on LPMHSS in the [National Service Model for Local Primary Health Support Services](#). It states that individuals will be typically referred to LPMHSS through a GP (para 3.5). GPs may choose to refer to other services within the mental health care system (e.g. Community Mental Health Teams, CAMHS, substance misuse services, etc.) Following a referral to other services:

3.24 It is for the recipient of the referral to consider and decide whether the provision of any services to which the referral relates is called for.

The purpose of LPMHSS is to address mild to moderate mental health problems using a variety of treatments:

3.16 Local primary mental health support services should offer a portfolio of evidence-based, time limited interventions which are appropriate to individual clinical need to treat common mental health problems in all age groups. The short-term interventions (i.e. treatment), should be delivered either at an individual level or through group work, dependent on which approach the assessment has identified as appropriate. Such interventions may include counselling, psychological interventions, (including cognitive behavioural therapy, solution-focussed therapy, family work, online support, stress management), bibliotherapy and education.

Patients with mental health problems are often referred on to secondary services which are specialist mental health services not provided within primary care. In relation to secondary care, Part 2 of the Measure gives all patients the right to a care co-ordinator as well as a care and treatment plan. Part 3 of the Measure allows patients discharged from secondary mental health services to refer themselves back to those services.

The Measure required the Welsh Government to review of effectiveness the Measure within four years of implementation. The Welsh Government published [an interim report](#) (PDF 848 KB) in 2014 and [a duty to review final report](#) (PDF 912 KB) was published a year later. It noted that the change of culture was becoming evident even though more work was required. The report stated that LPMHSS are meeting a significant, previously unmet demand, which resulted in longer waiting times, particularly for psychological therapies. These findings resonate with [Mind Cymru's report](#) which suggests that individuals are not offered a choice of therapy and might be offered treatment which does not best address their needs (more information about psychological therapies available in Wales can be found in a [research briefing published by the Research Service](#)).

Apart from the Welsh Government review, the Measure was also subject to [post-legislative scrutiny by Health and Social Care Committee of the 4th Assembly](#). Its report also noted that access to mental health care and support had improved overall, but the Committee voiced its

concern about capacity within primary mental health services, which may not be sufficient for the increased demand. A summary of the Committee's report can be found [in a Research Service blog post](#).

Crisis care

Crisis care is delivered by crisis resolution and home treatment (CRHT) teams. There is no consistency across different teams in terms of referral policy. Some crisis teams will accept self-referrals while others will only accept patients referred by a GP or another healthcare professional. Availability of crisis care has also been of concern, as [Mind Cymru suggest](#) that services are not equally accessible to everyone in Wales and vary depending on geographical area.

Welsh Government action

The previous Welsh Government launched a ten year strategy aiming to improve mental health and well-being *Together for Mental Health* in 2012. The strategy seeks to consider long-term solutions and has emphasis on prevention and well-being. The most recent [Delivery Plan 2016–2019](#), second in the series of three, was published in October 2016. The delivery plan identified 11 priority areas, setting desirable outcomes, identifying key actions to achieve the goals, and specifying performance measures. Issues of access to care have in particular been identified in two priority areas:

- Priority area 3 – Services meet the needs of the diverse population of Wales. It focuses on diminishing inequalities in access for vulnerable individuals and ensures appropriate provision of services through the medium of Welsh; and
- Priority area 8 – People with mental health problem have access to appropriate and timely services. It touches on a number of issues, such as giving mental well-being equal priority with physical well-being in the development and delivery of services, working with the third sector to provide an integrated approach, or ensuring that there are robust links between primary care and mental health. It also requires (key action 8.3i) health boards to improve access to evidence based psychological therapies for adults in line with the National Psychological Therapies Management Committee (NPTMC) Action Plan by March 2017.

National Assembly for Wales action

Mental health features frequently on the Assembly's agenda. On 12 October 2016 Plaid Cymru held a [debate on mental health](#), focussing on the issue of changing attitudes and challenging stigma surrounding mental health, and the Members were in agreement that the issue needs to be recognised.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at

the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

Vaughan Gething AC/AM
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Iechyd, Llesiant a Chwaraeon
Cabinet Secretary for Health, Well-being and Sport



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Our ref VG/07054/16
Your ref: P-05-736

Mike Hedges AM
Chair - Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
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CF99 1NA

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20 December 2016

Dear Mike,

Thank you for your letter of 7 December about this petition (ref P-05-736) which relates to mental health services. I was sorry to read about the difficulties Laura has experienced with her mental health.

When somebody presents to the health service with mental health problems, the GP or other professional will use their professional judgement and decide the most appropriate next step. Many people will be offered advice or support directly by their GP, or offered access to more information, such as books on prescription or medication.

For others, the GP or other professional may refer on for a more detailed assessment. This referral may be to the Local Primary Mental Health Support Service (LPMHSS). Over the last two years, we have invested an additional £2.3m in LPMHSS. Since the Mental Health (Wales) Measure came into force in 2012, over 115,000 people have been seen by LPMHSS in Wales.

Other people may need to be seen by specialist mental health services which might include the community mental health team, or if more acute, to the crisis team or other service. This will be a professional judgement which is made following discussion with the individual.

We introduced new targets for services last year and now expect people to be assessed within 28 days, compared to the previous target of 56 days. Urgent referrals are expected to be seen within 48 hours and emergency referrals within four hours.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

Pack Page 77

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

We have also invested an additional £4m over the last two years in psychological therapies. Welsh Government officials have been in detailed discussions with each health board to agree how they will use the additional funding to improve access to psychological therapies.

I hope the signatories of the petition and the committee find this helpful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Vaughan Gething". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'V'.

Vaughan Gething AC/AM

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Iechyd, Llesiant a Chwaraeon
Cabinet Secretary for Health, Well-being and Sport

**P-05-736 To Make Mental Health Services More Accessible -
Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 07.02.17**

To whom it may concern

I set up a petition to be able to access mental health more easily I was asked about any more comments towards my petition I would like to add one more comment towards my petition which should be highly considered.

Upon applying for pip myself last year I found I was being discriminated against I was asked could I walk and I said yes physically I can walk I was then told that because I can walk 50 yards there was nothing wrong with me and I didn't need to claim for pip.

Pip forms should be separated one form for physical problems and another form for mental health problems both forms mixed in together is confusing and a lot of people probably get turned down because they can physically move around mental health is not visible however does not mean we do not suffer physically aswell as mentally people with mental health like myself suffer and we get told no to pip claims because we can physically moved therefore if forms were to be made to be separate it would make it a lot easier for not only us people who are suffering but also the accessors who look at our forms.

My petition is to be heard on 14th of February I look forward to hear the outcome and any updates.

Yours sincerely
Laura Williams

Agenda Item 2.4

P-05-737 Save our Bus.

This petition was submitted by Patricia Threadgill, which collected 60 signatures.

Text of the Petition

Just learned today the bus I use regularly from Gilfach Goch-Pontypridd is being "wiped out". In Jan 2016 the Welsh Government said it was committed to improving the quality + accessibility of local bus services. In Gilfach Goch we have older + poorer people + people with disabilities who use this bus, which can be the difference between getting around or feeling trapped. So please save the 150 to PONTY !!!!

Assembly constituency and Region.

- Ogmore
- South Wales West

Petition P-05-737: Save our bus

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 14 Chwefror 2017

Petitions Committee | 14 February 2017

Research Briefing:

Petition number: P-05-737

Petition title: Save our bus

Petition text: Just learned today the bus I use regularly from Gilfach Goch-Pontypridd is being "wiped out". In Jan 2016 the Welsh Government said it was committed to improving the quality + accessibility of local bus services. In Gilfach Goch we have older + poorer people + people with disabilities who use this bus, which can be the difference between getting around or feeling trapped. So please save the 150 to PONTY!!!!

Background

Deregulation of local bus services

Local bus services in Great Britain, with the exception of London, were deregulated by the *Transport Act 1985* (as amended) ('the Act'). The policy of the Act is that local bus services will normally be provided on a commercial basis, without local authority subsidy. As such most services in Wales are commercial and may be registered (or deregistered / varied) by the bus operator, normally with 56 days' notice to the Traffic Commissioner.

Section 63(1) of the Act imposes a duty on county councils to secure services (emphasis added below):

- (1) In each non-metropolitan county of England and Wales it shall be the duty of the county council –
 - (a) to secure the provision of such public passenger transport services as the council consider it appropriate to secure to meet any public transport requirements within the county **which would not in their view be met apart from any action taken by them for that purpose.**

These "socially necessary" services are procured by local authorities via tender.

The duty is qualified in England and Wales by section 63(5)(a) which says that their powers to enter into an agreement to subsidise services “shall be exercisable only where the service in question would not be provided, **or would not be provided to a particular standard**, without subsidy” (emphasis added).

Changes to the service 150 (Pontypridd to Gilfach Goch)

Stagecoach operated the 150 service on a 15 minute frequency between Gilfach Goch and Porth extending twice per hour from Porth to Pontypridd. The company notified the Traffic Commissioner of its intention to make changes to the service in October 2016. Notice of the change appeared on the UK Government website, published in the Traffic Commissioner’s [notices and proceedings for 20 October 2016 \(PDF 370KB\)](#), as an application to vary an existing service. The change took effect from 4 December 2016.

Stagecoach has provided the Research Service with details of the alterations to the service and its rationale for the changes. It indicates that these were as a result of reductions in passengers and revenue and followed a review of the service which, it commented, provided “a strong background for adjusting resources to better suit the market and retention of this bus service for the future” including removal of duplication on the section of the route between Porth and Pontypridd which is also served by the 120, 130 and 132 services. Stagecoach describes the change as follows:

no service has been withdrawn, rather the frequency [from Gilfach Goch] has been reduced from every 15mins to every 20mins and the service curtailed at Porth rather than Pontypridd with other services [the 120, 130 and 132] offering 11 journeys per hour between Porth and Pontypridd. Customers changing buses in Porth for Pontypridd do so at the same bus stop with through fares.

The 150 service is delivered without local authority subsidy. The Cabinet Secretary’s letter to the Chair regarding this petition highlights the fact that, unless in receipt of subsidy, service decisions are a commercial matter for the bus operator. It continues:

In this case it would be a matter for Rhondda Cynon Taff Council to consider whether it wishes to publicly fund the retention of the Pontypridd extension and the former 15 minute frequency.

Welsh Government action

Bus policy

The Welsh Government’s Programme for Government, [Taking Wales Forward 2016–2021](#), contains a commitment to “deliver a more effective network of bus services once powers have been devolved” by the Wales Bill.

Additionally, the Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure, Ken Skates AM, [issued a written statement](#) on 15 September indicating that he was keen to deliver a stable or growing bus network in Wales, and setting out a five-point plan to support the sustainability of the bus industry. This comprised:

- Offering all Welsh bus companies assistance through Business Wales and Finance Wales;
- Working with local authorities to identify vulnerable bus services and put in place strategies to respond to planned withdrawals of bus services;
- Working with Cardiff and Newport local authorities and their municipal bus companies to “gather intelligence on how sustainable bus networks can be operated whilst maintaining the social dividend”;
- Funding two bus co-ordinator posts in north and south Wales; and
- Holding a bus summit (subsequently held on 23 January 2017).

Funding

As the Cabinet Secretary’s letter indicates, the Welsh Government provides funding to Welsh local authorities to support bus services through the Bus Services Support Grant (BSSG). The BSSG, and its predecessor the Regional Transport Services Grant, have remained frozen at £25 million since 2013–14, representing a cut in real terms.

Welsh Government BSSG guidance for 2016–17 describes the purpose of the grant as being “to support local authorities’ expenditure in exercise of their powers under the relevant legislation”, including “to support and maintain the core strategic bus network in their area to improve connectivity”. In addition to BSSG, local authorities are able to support “socially necessary” bus services through their core revenue funding.

National Assembly for Wales action

This issue has not yet been considered by the Assembly.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.



Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-737
Ein cyf/Our ref KS/07569/16

Mike Hedges AM
Chair - Petitions Committee

government.committee.business@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Dear Mike,

10 January 2017

Thank you for your letter of 7 December regarding the petition received from Patricia Threadgill following Stagecoach's changes to its Gilfach Goch to Pontypridd bus service.

I fully appreciate the importance of bus services in Wales and I am disappointed with the decision by Stagecoach to reduce the frequency of its service 150 between Porth and Gilfach Goch, and to discontinue the half-hourly extension to Pontypridd.

Unless in receipt of a subsidy from the local authority, decisions about service changes are made at the commercial discretion of bus operators. In this case it would be a matter for Rhondda Cynon Taf Council to consider whether it wishes to publicly fund the retention of the Pontypridd extension and the former 15 minute frequency.

We are providing £25m to local authorities in 2016-17 under the Bus Services Support Grant to help subsidise socially-necessary bus and community transport services. Each authority is responsible for determining which services it supports utilising its grant allocation.

In the circumstances, the correspondent may wish to ask Bus Users Cymru, which the Welsh Government funds to represent the interests of bus passengers, to take up their concerns with Stagecoach in South Wales. The appropriate contact, who would be more than happy to assist, is Barclay Davies, who can be reached on 029 2034 4300, or Barclay.Davies@BusUsers.Org.

*Yours ever,
Ken*

Ken Skates AC/AM
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros yr Economi a'r Seilwaith
Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh and only correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Agenda Item 2.5

P-05-739 Save TWF Services

This petition was submitted by Cymdeithas yr Iaith, which collected 912 signatures

Text of the Petition

I call on the Welsh Government, in collaboration with Mudiad Meithrin, to revisit the previous government's detrimental decision to cancel the TWF project. Specifically I call on the Government to take urgent action to:

- reverse the decision to cut £200,000 from TWF's successor project
- restore the continuity of support offered by TWF which focussed on language transfer and national, rather than piecemeal, support for parents and children. This would entail the reappointment of officers to posts with a presence in Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Gwynedd, Anglesey, Monmouthshire, Torfaen and Wrexham
- ensure funding for activities that promote the Welsh language for parents with links to services such as Welsh for Adults, the Mentrau Iaith (Language Initiatives), libraries and leisure centres, including activities that also provide support for post-natal mental health.

Assembly constituency and Region.

- Ceredigion
- Mid and West Wales

Save Twf – Cymraeg o’r Crud Services

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 14 Chwefror 2017

Petitions Committee | 14 Februarv 2017

Research Briefing:

Petition number: P-05-739

Petition title: I call on the Welsh Government, in collaboration with Mudiad Meithrin, to revisit the previous government’s detrimental decision to cancel the TWF project. Specifically I call on the Government to take urgent action to:

- reverse the decision to cut £200,000 from TWF’s successor project
- restore the continuity of support offered by TWF which focussed on language transfer and national, rather than piecemeal, support for parents and children. This would entail the reappointment of officers to posts with a presence in Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Gwynedd, Anglesey, Monmouthshire, Torfaen and Wrexham
- ensure funding for activities that promote the Welsh language for parents with links to services such as Welsh for Adults, the Mentrau Iaith (Language Initiatives), libraries and leisure centres, including activities that also provide support for post-natal mental health.

Background

Twf – Cymraeg o’r Crud (or 2 languages from day 1 in English) was originally a pilot scheme funded by the Welsh Language Board in order to increase the number of bilingual families who transmit the Welsh language to their children. The focus of ‘Twf’ was to highlight the value of the Welsh language and bilingualism to new parents, prospective parents and the general population. The primary target audience for ‘Twf’ was mixed language families where only one parent spoke Welsh.

Following an evaluation of the pilot, it was found to be an effective scheme, and was launched to the public in March 2002. An independent evaluation of the scheme was conducted between April 2005 and March 2008 to understand the long term impact of the

initiative. The report made a number of broad ranging recommendations, including the need to produce clear guidance for midwives and health visitors regarding how to present 'Twf' to parents, and to extend its activity in family centres in disadvantaged areas.

In the Welsh Government's [Welsh Language Strategy Annual Report 2014-15](#), 'Twf' was described as the 'main scheme' in the area of encouraging use of Welsh in the home. It was operated across north and south-west Wales mainly, in order to encourage parents or carers who speak Welsh to transmit the language to their children.

It was reported in March 2016 that the scheme was to be replaced, and in April 2016 the Welsh Government launched its successor, 'Cymraeg i Blant'.

Reverse the decision to cut £200,000 from TWF's successor project

'Cymraeg i Blant', the successor to 'Twf' has a contract value of £500,000 per year. The contract was awarded to Mudiad Meithrin who will deliver 'Cymraeg i Blant' services on a local level. In July 2016, [Golwg 360 reported](#) (available in Welsh only) that the new Cymraeg i Blant has a £200,000 lower budget than its predecessor 'Twf'.

The letter from the Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language, Alun Davies, states that the old and new schemes are not "directly comparable", as 'Twf' included a role of working with other partners on a national level – this element according to the Minister now lies with Welsh Government officials. The Welsh Government's [Welsh Language Strategy Annual Report 2015-16](#) states that the new scheme, 'Cymraeg i Blant' will be:

Jointly managed by Mudiad Meithrin and the Welsh Government. The Welsh Government will undertake the national promotional activity with the support of a number of partners, including the NHS. Whereas Mudiad Meithrin will undertake activities on a local level.

In addition to the time spent by Welsh Government officials working with the NHS and other national partners, the Minister states in his letter that the Welsh Government is also investing "£130,000 this year to promote Welsh-medium education".

Restore the continuity of support offered by TWF

'Twf' as reported did not operate on a national level, with 'Twf' officers focused on specific areas in Wales, operating across 12 local authority areas. 'Cymraeg i Blant' officers are reportedly working across 14 local authority areas, and that various data sources have been used to guide the process of selecting the areas where officers will be working.

It is unclear from current information however which local authority areas 'Cymraeg i Blant' officers are currently working in, and whether a presence has been maintained within the local authority areas as indicated by the petitioner.

Ensure funding for activities that promote the Welsh language

The Welsh Government provide funding for a number of organisations, projects and schemes in support for the Welsh language. For 2017–18, a total of £36.195 million was allocated for the Welsh language in the [Final Budget 2017–18](#). Of this, £29.231 million was allocated to Welsh in Education, and £6.964 million was allocated for funding organisations such as:

- Mentrau Iaith (Welsh language initiatives);
- National Eisteddfod; and
- Urdd Gobaith Cymru;

along with schemes and initiatives such as:

- Papurau Bro (community newspapers); and
- Technology and Digital Media grants

According to the Welsh Government, promotion and awareness raising of the advantages of Welsh-medium education is a central part of the ‘Cymraeg i Blant’ programme. Since the new programme started in April 2016, some 8,000 children are reported to have already attended a ‘Cymraeg i Blant’ session.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.



Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-739
Ein cyf/Our ref ARD/05580/16

Mike Hedges AM
Chair - Petitions Committee
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11 January 2017

Thank you for your letter to the Cabinet Secretary for Education regarding the petition submitted by Cymdeithas yr Iaith regarding 'Twf'. As Welsh-medium education is part of my portfolio, your letter has been passed on to me to respond.

This petition was presented to me in July 2016. A letter was sent at that time addressing the issues of concern to Cymdeithas and the signatories of the petition.

'Cymraeg i Blant' began in April 2016, and is the successor to 'Twf'. A contract valued at £500,000 per year was awarded to Mudiad Meithrin to deliver local 'Cymraeg i Blant' services. Unlike 'Twf', this does not include working with other partners on a national level – responsibility for this now lies with Welsh Government officials. The two programmes are therefore not directly comparable. As well as officials time spent working with the NHS and other national partners, we will also invest £130,000 this year to promote Welsh-medium education.

'Twf' did not operate on a national level – their officers focused on specific areas of Wales. 'Cymraeg i Blant' officers have been appointed in areas where evidence suggests there is an opportunity to achieve the greatest impact in numbers of children reaching Welsh-medium education. 'Twf' officers operated in 12 local authorities, whilst 'Cymraeg i Blant' officers are currently working in 14 local authorities. A number of data sources, including child population forecasts and parental surveys, were used in order to guide the process of selecting these areas, and they will be reviewed throughout the life of the project in order to ensure as many families as possible benefit from the support available.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

The relationship has also been strengthened between the mentrau iaith, cylchoedd Ti a Fi and cylchoedd meithrin and, where relevant, 'Cymraeg i Blant' officers to ensure support is available to parents and prospective parents in all parts of Wales to use Welsh with their child.

Promoting and raising awareness of the advantages of Welsh-medium education is a central part of the 'Cymraeg i Blant' programme, and a budget has been allocated for this work. As well as this marketing work, information is also incorporated into existing programmes, including the Family Information Services, the Personal Child Health Record (also known as the 'red book') and maternity services to ensure clear and consistent messages are shared with parents about the advantages of bilingualism throughout the journey of raising a child.

Nearly 8,000 children and parents have already attended a 'Cymraeg i Blant' session since April 2016, and we are already considering how the programme will develop during 2017. I hope this information helps to show that encouraging and supporting parents and prospective parents to use Welsh with their child remains a priority for the Welsh Government, and is a core part of our aim to reach a million speakers by 2050.



Alun Davies AC/AM

Gweinidog y Gymraeg a Dysgu Gydol Oes

Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language

Agenda Item 2.6

P-05-740 Petition to Protect our High Street.

This petition was submitted by Sally Stephenson, which collected 939 online signatures and 729 paper signatures.

Text of the Petition

- We, the undersigned, believe that the Welsh Government's transitional rate-relief relief scheme is inadequate to meet the needs of businesses affected by the most recent re-valuation of premises and call on the Welsh Government to develop a package of permanent rate-relief measures to alleviate the financial pressure on small businesses..

Assembly constituency and Region.

- Vale of Glamorgan
- South Wales Central

Petition To Protect Our High Street

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 14 Chwefror 2017
Petitions Committee | 14 February 2017

Research Briefing:

Petition number: P-05-740

Petition title: Petition To Protect Our High Street

Text of petition:

We, the undersigned, believe that the Welsh Government's transitional rate-relief relief scheme is inadequate to meet the needs of businesses affected by the most recent re-valuation of premises and call on the Welsh Government to develop a package of permanent rate-relief measures to alleviate the financial pressure on small businesses.

Many small businesses in Wales will face closure as a result of higher business rates due to mandatory revaluation.

Enhanced Small Business Rate Relief will be available in England from April 2017 – lowering rates and mitigating the impact of revaluation.

We are calling on the Welsh Government to make this relief available to businesses in Wales to protect our High Street.

Background

Business rates revaluations usually happen every five years, and the independent Valuation Office Agency has been conducting the 2017 business rates revaluation [on behalf of the Welsh Government](#). The Welsh Government highlights that a revaluation is revenue neutral and redistributes business rates liabilities in a way that reflects changes in the property market, rather than seeking to increase revenue raised from business rates. Further detail on the impact of the 2017 revaluation is available in [a Research Service blog article from December 2016](#). The transitional relief schemes established in response to the draft 2017

revaluation by the Welsh Government are aimed at mitigating the negative impact of the revaluation on businesses who have seen a rise in their rateable value.

On small business rate relief, the Welsh Government's Programme for Government, [Taking Wales Forward](#), commits to 'deliver a tax cut, meaning smaller bills for 70,000 businesses and reducing business rates bills to zero for half of all eligible firms.' Under [the Welsh Government's current small business rate relief scheme](#), eligible business premises with a rateable value of up to £6,000 receive 100% relief and those with a rateable value between £6,001 and £12,000 receive relief on a tapered basis from 100% to zero.

The [small business rate relief scheme in England](#) currently uses the same rateable value range as the Welsh scheme. However, [it will be expanded from April 2017](#) so that business premises with a rateable value of up to £12,000 receive 100% relief and those with a rateable value between £12,001 and £15,000 receive relief on a tapered basis from 100% to zero. However, there are some operational differences between the schemes in Wales and England. In England if a business has more than one premise, it can only receive small business rate relief on the main premise if the rateable value is less than £2,600 whereas in Wales there is no limit on the number of small properties that a business can receive relief on. There is also a small business multiplier in England, meaning that small businesses pay less pence in the pound in business rates than larger businesses. The larger businesses pay a standard multiplier which is set at a level; which partially funds the cost of the small business multiplier. The rateable value threshold for the small business multiplier will also be increased from April 2017, so that businesses with a rateable value of up to £51,000 pay the small business multiplier.

The [Devolution of Business Rates to Wales](#) report produced by the Business Rates Panel for the previous Welsh Government estimated that to increase the small business rate relief thresholds to the level that will be in place in England would cost an additional £44 million per financial year.

The [Welsh Government's small business rate relief scheme](#) assists more than 70 percent of business premises in Wales, more than half of which pay no rates at all. [In England](#), half of all business premises will receive some support from the expanded small business rate relief scheme and/or the small business multiplier from April 2017.

Welsh Government action

The Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government's [written evidence to the Assembly's Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee from October 2016](#) sets out his priorities on business rates for this Assembly term. These include the immediate priority to provide certainty and security to small businesses to enable them to plan for the future with confidence, and to review the current small business rate relief system.

In September 2016 [the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government announced that the current small business rate relief scheme will be extended to 31 March 2018](#). He also stated that the Welsh Government will be introducing a permanent small business rate relief scheme from 2018–19 onwards following a review of the current scheme.

Two transitional reliefs have been announced over recent months to mitigate the impact of the revaluation on businesses that it has negatively affected. The first scheme, [announced in September 2016](#) and [approved in Plenary on 13 December 2016](#), will provide £10 million funding, provided by the Welsh Government. Businesses who currently have premises with a rateable value of up to £12,000 and are eligible for small business rate relief in 2016–17, but will receive either less or no relief in 2017–18 due to the rateable value of their property increasing will benefit from this scheme. The proposed transitional relief will spread increases in business rates liability over a three-year period.

Following this, in December 2016 [the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government announced that](#) an additional £10 million transitional relief would be provided in 2017–18, targeted at high-street ratepayers such as shops, pubs and cafés, including those which have seen their rates increase significantly as a result of the 2017 business rates revaluation.

National Assembly for Wales action

The Assembly's Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee undertook a one-day inquiry into business rates in October 2016, and [produced a report](#) with five recommendations to the Welsh Government. The Welsh Government [responded to this in January 2017](#), accepting all of the recommendations in full or in principle. The main recommendation that relates to this petition is around improving the transparency and consistency of business rates, which referenced the differing views of the Federation of Small Businesses and the Welsh Government on whether the continuation of the current small business rate relief scheme is in fact a tax cut.

There have also been a number of recent debates in the Assembly on business rates, focussing on issues including small business rate relief, transitional relief and wider reform of business rates. Debates have been held on business rates relief and reform on [23 November 2016](#), business rates issues affecting small businesses [on 30 November 2016](#), and the regulations approving transitional relief [on 13 December 2016](#).

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

Mark Drakeford AM/AC
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gyllid a Llywodraeth Leol
Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-740
Ein cyf/Our ref MD/05640/16

Mike Hedges AM
Chair - Petitions Committee
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5 January 2017

Den Mike,

Thank you for your letter of 15 December, regarding a petition from Sally Stephenson proposing that the Welsh Government should develop a package of permanent rate relief measures to alleviate the financial pressures on small businesses.

I am committed to supporting small businesses and have given careful consideration to targeted measures to help support small businesses in Wales adversely affected by the revaluation.

The current Small Business Rates Relief scheme (SBRR) in Wales was due to end on 31 March 2017, but it has been extended for a further year to provide small businesses with the certainty and security that this important source of support will continue. A permanent SBRR scheme will then be introduced from 2018 onwards and I will be using the coming year to review the operation of the current scheme so that we can target our investment to meet the needs of businesses in Wales and provide this support where it will have the most impact. I intend to consult widely throughout this process and would welcome the views of all interested parties and key stakeholders, to ensure that the scheme not only meets the needs of local communities but also maintains the vital source of local authority funding that non-domestic rates revenue provides.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

Pack Page 96

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

I have also introduced a £10m transitional rate relief scheme to assist businesses currently in receipt of SBRR but which will be adversely affected by increases in their rateable value following the revaluation. This transitional relief will assist eligible ratepayers by enabling them to phase in any increases in the amount they have to pay over a three-year period. There will be no application process as the relief will be automatically applied to rate bills by local authorities. The relief is being fully funded by the Welsh Government, in contrast to the transitional arrangements being introduced by the UK Government which are financed by restricting decreases in liability for ratepayers whose rateable value is falling.

Following concerns raised by some ratepayers and stakeholders regarding the effect of the revaluation on some businesses, on 17 December I also announced that a further £10m will be made available to help high street retailers such as shops, pubs and restaurants with their non-domestic rates. This is in addition to the £10m transitional relief scheme. The relief will be available from 1 April 2017 and will be administered by local authorities. My officials will be working alongside local authorities to finalise the details on how the new relief scheme will operate and the full details will be available on the Welsh Government website in due course.

Taking into account SBRR, transitional relief and the other mandatory and discretionary reliefs the Welsh Government will be providing more than £210 million of financial assistance in 2017-18 which will assist three-quarters of all ratepayers in Wales and which many ratepayers in Cowbridge High will benefit from.

In terms of the enhanced SBRR scheme in England to which the petitioner also refers, it is important to understand there are fundamental differences in the tax base, distribution of businesses and average rateable value in Wales compared to those in England which need to be taken into consideration when designing relief schemes. The SBRR scheme in Wales already supports over 70% of properties meaning most businesses in Wales are already eligible for relief, and more than half pay no rates at all. This is quite different to England where the majority of businesses have a rateable value over £12,000 and even under the enhanced SBRR scheme to be introduced from 1 April 2017, only around a third of properties will pay nothing. The SBRR scheme in Wales is also fully funded by the Welsh Government rather than through a higher multiplier on larger businesses, as in England.

Best wishes,

Mark

Mark Drakeford AM/AC

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gyllid a Llywodraeth Leol
Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government

Mike Hedges AM
Chair of The Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
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18 January 2017

Dear Mr Hedges,

Petition to Protect Our High Street - Business Rates

Please find enclosed the paper copies in support of the above petition. In total we have gathered 1,668 signatures - 939 online and 729 on paper.

This petition is part of a wider campaign calling on the Welsh Government to

- 1) help SMEs facing astronomical increases in their business rates bills when the new rateable values come into force in April;
- 2) develop a package of permanent rate-relief measures to alleviate the financial pressure on small businesses in Wales.

Business rates is a tax which has been fully devolved from Westminster to the Welsh Government. At the moment, business rates in Wales are calculated in broadly the same way as they are in England. However from April the situation will change, and not in Wales' favour.

The first issue we face stems from the recent revaluation of the rateable values of commercial properties across the UK. Many businesses have found that their rateable value is to be dramatically increased and as a result their business rates bill will rise astronomically in April. Rural market towns such as Cowbridge and Monmouth appear to have been hardest hit and this is seriously threatening the future viability of many high street businesses.

The second issue concerns the Small Business Rates Relief scheme. The UK Government has announced it will double the threshold below which small businesses will be exempt from business rates from £6k to £12k, and introduce tapered relief for those valued between £12k and £15k. Unfortunately the Welsh Government has chosen not to implement this policy, meaning that from April, all small businesses in Wales valued between £6k and £12k will still have to pay tax whilst their counterparts in England will be rates free. Those valued between £12k and £15k will have to pay the full amount and, unlike in England, will not benefit from any rate relief at all.

The combination of these two issues is understandably causing considerable concern in Wales, where small businesses make up more than 96% of the economy.

The Welsh Government has announced a three year transitional rates relief scheme and more recently, in response to the concerns we have raised, a further £10m support fund for those businesses facing significant increases in their rates bills. This will help many of them survive over the next 12 months whilst a new permanent business rates scheme is developed ready for April 2018.

Although this support is welcome, we do not believe these transitional arrangements go far enough and are calling on the Welsh Government to introduce a permanent Small Business Rates Relief scheme that is at least as good as, if not better than, the one being introduced in England in April 2017. It cannot be right that small businesses in Wales are knowingly being put at a significant competitive disadvantage to those over the border, especially by a Welsh Labour government which promised in its 2016 manifesto to “cut taxes for all small businesses”.

There are many small business owners and representatives in Cowbridge and Monmouth who have been fully engaged in this campaign and thoroughly understand the issues facing SMEs. We would therefore like to offer our help, advice and experience to the Welsh Government in order to shape the development of a new permanent Small Business Rates Relief scheme which will benefit all small businesses across Wales. We do hope that you will take us up on our offer and look forward to working with you.

Yours sincerely,

Sally Stephenson
Director

Mike Hedges AM
Chair of The Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

8 February 2017

Dear Mr Hedges,

Petition to Protect Our High Street - Business Rates

I have received the response from Mark Drakeford in response to the above petition.

As you know, this petition is part of a wider campaign calling on the Welsh Government to

- 1) help SMEs facing astronomical increases in their business rates bills when the new rateable values come into force in April;
- 2) develop a package of permanent rate-relief measures to alleviate the financial pressure on small businesses in Wales.

Alongside the covering letter which I presented to you when I formally handed over the petition on Wednesday 18 January, I would be grateful if the following points would also be considered by the Petitions Committee when they meet on Tuesday 14 February.

Rateable values are increasing dramatically

Following the recent revaluation of the rateable value of commercial properties across the UK, many Welsh businesses are facing an astronomical increase in their business rates from April. Rural market towns, such as Cowbridge and Monmouth, appear to have been hardest hit and this is seriously threatening the on-going viability of many businesses.

The Welsh Government is not increasing the threshold for SBRR

Business rates is a tax which has been fully devolved from Westminster to the Welsh Government. At the moment, business rates in Wales are calculated in broadly the same way as they are in England. However from 1 April the situation will change, and not in Wales' favour.

The UK Government has announced that from 1 April 2017 it will double the threshold below which small businesses will be exempt from business rates from £6k to £12k, and introduce tapered relief for those valued between £12k and £15k.

Unfortunately the Welsh Government has chosen not to implement this policy, meaning that all small businesses in Wales valued between £6k and £12k **will still have to pay rates whilst their counterparts in England will be rates-free.**

Those businesses valued between £12k and £15k will have to pay the full amount since, unlike in England, they will not benefit from any tapered rates relief at all.

To put it simply, from 1 April 2017 small businesses will be worse off in Wales under the devolved Welsh Government than they would be if they were under Westminster. The situation is even worse when compared to Scotland, where the SBRR threshold is being raised to £15k. SMEs in Wales are being left behind.

Welsh Labour's broken manifesto promise

During the Welsh Assembly elections last year, one of Welsh Labour's six manifesto pledges was "to cut taxes for ALL small businesses". Now they are in government, they are doing the exact opposite. Business rates is the only tax which the Welsh Government has the power to change, yet for many it is being increased dramatically.

We know from discussions in the Senedd that the Welsh Government's justification for not raising the SBRR threshold is that they need the revenue to pay for public services. In other words, small businesses in Wales are being penalised for being located on the wrong side of the River Severn and for having a devolved government. This is wholly unacceptable.

Additional £10m support announced in December

Before Christmas Mark Drakeford announced an additional £10m specifically for high streets which are facing huge increases in their business rates bills. We welcome this additional support, however nearly two months later he has still not clarified how and when this money will be allocated. With fewer than eight weeks until we start paying the new bills, many businesses still do not know how much they will have to pay. We cannot plan properly or make investment decisions whilst there is such uncertainty hanging over us. It must be resolved as a matter of urgency.

In his letter in response to the petition, Mark Drakeford mentions that three-quarters of rate payers will receive some form of relief. Please could you provide the data to back up this claim? We would particularly like to know, both for 2016/17 and from 2017 onwards, how many businesses in Wales fall into the different business rate bands - less than £6k, £6k-£12k, £12k-£15k, £15k-£51k, more than £51k - and how that compares to England.

Small businesses are the backbone of the Welsh economy

In 2015, SMEs in Wales accounted for 99.4% of private sector business and 61% of employment – equating to 673,600 employees. The vast majority are 'micro-businesses' like mine (with nine employees or fewer), which qualify for SBRR. If every small business in Wales employed just one more member of staff, it would wipe out unemployment across Wales. Imposing this significant and unfair additional regional tax burden has the real potential to put many of us out of business and create further unemployment.

It cannot be right that the Welsh Government is knowingly putting small businesses in Wales at a significant competitive disadvantage to those in England - especially as they came to power having made a manifesto pledge to "cut taxes for ALL small businesses".

Yours sincerely,

Sally Stephenson
Director

Agenda Item 2.7

P-05-741 Natural Resources Wales (Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru) needs tighter restriction

This petition was submitted by John Thomas, which collected 19 signatures.

Text of the Petition

Natural Resources Wales (Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru) needS tighter governance and scrutiny. Stop turning profitable agricultural land into habitat & SSSI areas where the farmer has to comply with even more restrictions in order attempt to make a living!

NRW (Environmental side) are currently an organization made up of officers not willing to listen to local knowledge, and will only advise in accordance with what they can read from books! They have only one aim in life, and that is to turn our countryside into a massive unprofitable nature reserve at the expense of the taxpayer and rural communités at large! They need closer scrutiny from our elected representatives!

Therefore, we call on the Assembly to review the current practices and policies of NRW in respect of the way that it administers land subject to, or annexed into habitat or SSSI areas. The body is currently making more damage to the countryside than good! A balance needs to be struck that will benefit all.

Assembly constituency and Region.

- Dwyfor Meirionnydd
- Mid and West Wales

Petition: P-05-741 Natural Resources Wales needs tighter restriction

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 14 Chwefror 2017
Petitions Committee | 14 February 2017

Research Briefing:

Petition number: P-05-741

Petition title: **Natural Resources Wales needs tighter restriction**

Petition text:

Natural Resources Wales (Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru) need tighter governance and scrutiny. Stop turning profitable agricultural land into habitat & SSSI areas where the farmer has to comply with even more restrictions in order attempt to make a living!

NRW (Environmental side) are currently an organization made up of officers not willing to listen to local knowledge, and will only advise in accordance with what they can read from books! They have only one aim in life, and that is to turn our countryside into a massive unprofitable nature reserve at the expense of the taxpayer and rural communities at large! They need closer scrutiny from our elected representatives!

Therefore, we call on the Assembly to review the current practices and policies of NRW in respect of the way that it administers land subject to, or annexed into habitat or SSSI areas. The body is currently making more damage to the countryside than good! A balance needs to be struck that will benefit all.

Background

Natural Resources Wales

Natural Resources Wales (NRW) was established by the Welsh Government in April 2013, replacing three bodies: the Countryside Council for Wales; Environment Agency Wales and Forestry Commission Wales. It also incorporated some of the Welsh Government's own responsibilities. Later, in April 2015, the Welsh Government transferred the functions of the three Internal Drainage Boards operating wholly or partly in Wales into NRW.

NRW has a broad range of roles and responsibilities, which are set out on its website: [NRW: What we do](#). These include

- **Regulator:** protecting people and the environment including marine, forest and waste industries, and prosecuting those who breach the regulations that we are responsible for; and
- **Designator:** for Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) – areas of particular value for their wildlife or geology, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), and National Parks, as well as declaring National Nature Reserves

The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 defines NRW's statutory purpose as pursuing the 'sustainable management of natural resources' in Wales. Amongst other things, the Act also gives NRW powers to enter into land management agreements with land owners to promote the achievement of any objective within its functions. These agreements will replace existing land management agreements in relation to SSSIs (commonly referred to as 'triple SIs') and broader nature conservation goals.

NRW receives a [Remit Letter](#) at the start of each financial year setting out what the Welsh Ministers want it to achieve during that year. The 2016–17 remit letter stresses that the sustainable management of natural resources should be implemented 'as quickly as possible' across NRW's functions 'within the framework and powers provided by the Environment (Wales) Act'.

Sites of Scientific Interest

A SSSI is an area protected under the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* because it contains wildlife or geological or land features that are of special importance. There are over 1,000 SSSIs in Wales covering almost 12% of the country. SSSIs provide statutory protection for areas which are assessed as being the best examples of the UK's flora, fauna, geological or physiographical features and often underpin other national and international nature conservation designations. NRW works in partnership with land managers (owner/occupiers) to secure management agreements that further protect sites.

NRW is required to select sites based on scientific criteria (published by the UK Joint Nature Conservation Committee). NRW must notify the Welsh Ministers (and other interests, including affected landowners and occupiers) of their opinion that an area is of special interest. This is then followed by a formal consultation process. The owner or occupier then has three months to make any objections to the SSSI notification.

Land managers must apply to NRW for permission if they wish to carry out operations that are likely to damage the scientific interest of part or all of a SSSI, such as tree felling, ploughing grassland, draining a wetland or making major changes to the way the land is grazed.

Welsh Government action

Lesley Griffiths AM, the Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs, wrote to the Committee on 17 January 2017. The letter contains a detailed explanation of NRW's role in relation to SSSIs.

National Assembly for Wales action

The Assembly's Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs (CCERA) Committee undertook [scrutiny of NRW on 2 November 2016](#). While the CCERA Committee did not consider NRW's role in designating new SSSIs, it did challenge NRW on the condition of existing protected areas in Wales.

Following the session, the CCERA Committee wrote to NRW on 2 December 2016 stating that it 'expect[ed] to see considerable improvement in this area evidenced by progress toward NRW's corporate target of 95% of international sites (SACs, SPAs and Ramsar) to achieve favourable condition'. SACs (Special Areas of Conservation), SPAs (Special Protection Areas) and Ramsar sites are examples of international designations that are often underpinned by existing UK SSSI designations.

[NRW responded on 3 January 2017 \(PDF 183KB\)](#) stating that:

Achieving or maintaining appropriate conservation management in the longer term, on sites owned and managed by a diverse range of owners, occupiers and organisations, requires consultation and ongoing dialogue with NRW on proposed operations. NRW officers from our locally based teams visit sites to assess condition and to discuss management practices and sources of funding with owners and occupiers. In some circumstances we can offer to enter into a management agreement where a management plan for the site is developed and agreed. Owners and occupiers can also enter into Glastir which provides financial support to carry out management which is compatible with protection and/or restoration.

NRW is developing a programme focused on embedding sustainable natural resource management into all of its work, including reviewing the contribution of protected sites to the ecosystem approach and natural resource management.

The Special Sites Programme is NRW's high level 'plan'. It identifies the conservation management issues and actions required on all management units across all SSSIs in Wales, including land directly managed by NRW (Welsh Government Woodland Estate and National Nature Reserves) and sites managed by all other owners and occupiers. This data is used to prioritise how the NRW budgets are spent, to inform NRW annual work programmes, and to inform forward planning. We work with individual landowners and land owning organisations to share information on conservation management issues advising, and guiding their priorities.

Glasir is the Welsh Government's agri-environment scheme funded through the Rural Development Programme for Wales 2014-2020.

The CCERA Committee intends to undertake scrutiny of NRW on an annual basis during the Fifth Assembly.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.



Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-741
Ein cyf/Our ref LG/00038/17

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17 January 2017

Dear Mike

Thank you for your letter of 3 January 2017, regarding petition P-05-741 Natural Resources Wales (Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru) needs tighter restriction.

The Welsh Government's policy on biodiversity is set out in our Nature Recovery Plan, and reflects the legal framework set by the Wellbeing for Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. Our ambition is to reverse the decline in biodiversity, and build ecosystem resilience, by 2020. The Nature Recovery Plan includes the following objectives:

- Objective 2: Safeguard species and habitats of principal importance and improve their management
- Objective 3: Increase the resilience of our natural environment by restoring degraded habitats and habitat creation

The Well-being of Future Generations Act offers an opportunity to bring biodiversity into the central decision making process for public bodies – influencing biodiversity action and resourcing. The Environment (Wales) Act introduced an enhanced biodiversity and ecosystem resilience duty for public authorities in Wales, to seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of functions in relation to Wales, and in so doing promote the resilience of ecosystems, so far as consistent with the proper exercise of those functions. This provides a strengthened lever to drive biodiversity action within public authorities, as well as assist them in meeting their well-being objectives.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Partnership working and collaboration will be key to delivering the Nature Recovery Plan's objectives. Defining the roles and responsibilities of all involved in the delivery of biodiversity action in Wales, by strengthening the role of local nature partnerships, will be vital in helping Natural Resources Wales (NRW) develop Area Statements as required under the Environment (Wales) Act.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) are the most important sites for Wales' natural heritage. They help conserve and protect the best of our wildlife, geological and physiographical heritage for the benefit of present and future generations.

SSSIs include coastline, freshwater, upland and lowland sites and range from small fens or sand dunes to woodlands and mountain. They contain important types of land, plants and wildlife. Geological sites range from quarries to rocky outcrops and sea-cliffs.

NRW is responsible for selecting and notifying SSSIs in Wales. Sections 28 to 33 of Part 2 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act detail the law regarding SSSIs.

Under Sections 28 (1) and 28 (5) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended, where Natural Resources Wales (NRW) is of the opinion that any area of land is of special interest by reason of its flora, fauna or geological or physiographical features, it has a duty to notify that fact and thereafter, within nine months, either give notice withdrawing the notification or confirming the notification (with or without modifications).

NRW choose sites carefully after detailed survey and evaluation against published criteria which are available on the website of the Joint Nature Conservation Committee.

When notifying a new SSSI, NRW contacts every owner and occupier to discuss why they are proposing the designation and what it would mean to the owner or occupier. This is then followed by a formal consultation process. The owner or occupier then has three months to make any objections to the SSSI notification.

All SSSI notification and denotification of sites are submitted to an Executive Director of NRW for approval. Sites with no outstanding objections following the consultation period will be approved for confirmation by an Executive Director.

For sites with unresolved objections after the consultation period, the NRW Board has delegated down to the Protected Area Committee (PAC), a subcommittee of the full NRW Board, the confirmation of SSSIs. These meetings are open to anyone who has a pecuniary interest in the site(s) under consideration.

Details of the PAC are available on the NRW web site <https://naturalresources.wales/about-us/our-chair-board-and-executive-team/our-board-committees/our-board-committees/?lang=en>

When considering any proposal to confirm the notification of an SSSI, the PAC will have due regard to socio-economic issues as laid down in Section 37 of the Countryside Act 1968. In particular the PAC must have due regard to the needs of agriculture and forestry and to the economic and social interests of rural areas. If there are any such issues (potentially or actually) in a particular case, the PAC should have this matter in their mind when taking their decision concerning the confirmation of the notification of any SSSI.

NRW has published guidance to SSSI owners and this is also available on their website:
<https://naturalresources.wales/conservation-biodiversity-and-wildlife/find-protected-areas-of-land-and-seas/guidance-to-site-of-special-scientific-interest-sssi-land-owners-and-occupiers/?lang=en>

Regards
Lesley

Lesley Griffiths AC/AM

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros yr Amgylchedd a Materion Gwledig
Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs

P-05-741 Natural Resources Wales (Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru) needs tighter restriction – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 07.02.17

This is a short statement regarding the way NRW use their power.

I took on the farm in 2013 following a sea flood that destroyed the farm and house. I was faced with a choice of either selling all my livestock or find other land. Purely by chance, this parcel of 100 acres came up for rent. At that time the land had no restrictions in force at all. In previous years, the owner had been taking payments for a section 15 agreement with the NRW, but this had lapsed, and the owner did not want to enter into another agreement.

Soon after I acquired the land, I began to clear rushes, brambles etc. to try and tidy the holding, and encourage new grassland growth. This action marked the start of my troubles.

In 2013 NRW reported me to the rural crime team, North Wales Police for destruction of habitat. (There was no evidence to support this) and no charges were ever brought.

Following this the land was designated emergency SSSI because I was a threat to the "habitat".

I have attached the notes from my NFU representative Mr Dafydd Jarrett who was present in the SSSI appeal. Unfortunately I could not attend, as I teach full time in a secondary school. The notes mentions all points that we had hoped to raise, but these were sadly ignored.

I also question the "appeal process". This is not a fair hearing procedure given that the panel members are all NRW nominated board members, with no independent representation. Thus the members in my view have a vested interest.

When NRW Notified me of the emergency SSSI they had also included land which were former hay and silage fields and had never supported the butterfly. Their reasoning for taking more land into the SSSI ,was that they would like to expand the area. I really cannot see how land can be turned into SSSI without proper evidence being presented.

As regards monetary compensation, to date the payment they have offered me, following the SSSI designation to help promote the habitat is very disheartening. The figure does not even cover half the rent on the designated! I am therefore struggling from the very start. farming the land at a loss!

I am more than happy to help promote environmental schemes, where they are needed, because I feel there should be a balance on every farm.

I am in essence now paying for NRW's negligence. The body should have taken the land and turned it into an SSSI as and when the voluntary agreement with the land owner came to an end. They decided then not to proceed, even when the owner declined to re-enter into a voluntary agreement. Unfortunately, as I view it, they have tried to use every trick in the book to make me sign a whole farm (100ac), over into a Section 15 agreement. I have said no to this from the start, as I want to farm the parcel, and make the land work for me. It was never my intention to live on subsidies!

I was willing to sign an agreement to help the rare species of butterfly on the land that was recorded some years ago, but unfortunately the local NRW officers were not interested in this offer.

Soon after this NRW had reported me to Rural payments Wales, for reseeding outside of the SSSI area, even though the land had been used by the land owner and myself as tenant, to crop both hay and silage. I appealed the decision to RPW but again, despite submitting photographic evidence that I had taken 2 cuts of silage off the land in the previous year, my appeal was rejected.

I have endeavoured to give a brief glimpse of the way that I feel that I have been treated, and sincerely hope that some measure of change can be implemented, to encourage agriculture and environmental needs to work in unison, and to benefit everyone in our communities. As you have already noted I'm sure, I certainly feel aggrieved, and I'm not the only one within the agriculture/environmental sector. I'm afraid I cannot include all the information as I would have desired, given that I am limited to 4 pages. I am however more than willing to submit further detail, and to discuss and meet with any party or body if so desired.

The attached document gives a snap shot of the way that I have been dealt with and hopefully also sheds light on my claim that officers from NRW have been negligent in their duty, and somewhat lacking in their proper conduct.

Diolch yn fawr
John Edward Thomas

Agenda Item 3.1

P-04-539 Save Cardiff Coal Exchange

Petition wording:

This petition seeks a commitment from the Welsh Government to set up a public enquiry into the events surrounding the Coal Exchange and to support public opinion which seeks to protect and conserve the building.

The Coal Exchange is one of Cardiff's most important buildings and one of the finest buildings in Wales. It's where the world's first million pound deal was struck during the city's industrial heyday (equivalent to over £100m today). Yet far from cherishing this building, Cardiff council proposes to demolish the main body of the building, keeping only the facades.

If this happens, then the magnificent interior with its immense historical significance will be lost forever. This grade 2* listed building deserves better, and the views of the public need to be heard.

The Council have been claiming for the past year that it is on the point of collapse. No works have been done, yet there is no apparent evidence that the building is about to collapse. It is questioned if Cardiff Council were able to use section 78 powers under the building act to progress their plans, and this needs to be investigated openly.

So much of Cardiff Bay's social and built heritage has already been destroyed; it seems inconceivable that more can be cast aside with cynical abandon.

It's unclear why the council refuses to see the value of restoring the Coal Exchange to protect this iconic building for the use and enjoyment of future generations.

The issues are of the highest level of public interest, and it is considered essential that an open public consultation occurs to review matters.

Petition raised by: Jon Avent

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 11 March 2014

Number of signatures: 389 signatures. An associated petition hosted on another website collected 2680 signatures.

P-04-539 Save the Coal Exchange - Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Clerking Team, 23.01.17

Kayleigh

The leader of Cardiff Council continues to write loads and say nothing.....

I feel let down by the Welsh Government in respect of my petition just being kicked around in the long grass. I feel that my request for a public enquiry is being ignored. Can this question please be put to the next committee meeting?..... a simple Yes or No please....

It is of course commendable and welcome that someone is interested in developing the building. However as this seems to have occurred after being asked by Cardiff Council (Pat Thompson??), and apparently striking a 'deal' with them behind closed doors it remains a significant concern.

Businesses in Wales that are involved with public procurement have to follow the most convoluted and bureaucratic processes to ensure that meet the 'highest standards of scrutiny'..... Yet somehow those who should set exemplary examples of the standards to be followed fall spectacularly short. If this was anyone else they would have been put under the spotlight years ago.

This link shows an example of where we currently appear to be with Signature Living and the fact that reasonable questions are still being asked from a wide range of sources.

http://planning.cardiff.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=neighbourComments&keyVal=_CARDIFF_DCAPR_118542

Please can Welsh Government stop being walked over by Cardiff Council and deal with this.

Sorry to be blunt, but I feel this has gone on long enough for a decision to be reached on my Petition.

Regards

Agenda Item 3.2

P-04-594 Cilmeri Community Council Appeal for The Prince Llywelyn Monument

Petition wording:

Due to the National importance of our Prince Llywelyn Monument we, the Community of Cilmeri call, on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to:

- Install locational signage boards, incorporating a brown signage battlefield icon, to denote the historical significance of our village, on the A483 at both main road entrances to the village;
- Work in partnership with Powys County Council, Cilmeri Community Council and CADW to help maintain the famous monument, so that visitors can enjoy our national historical amenity in a safe and befitting environment;
- Help identify resources to implement, in a phased manner, the Lloyd Brown Interpretation Plan (January 2013), commissioned by CADW.

Additional Information:

The interpretation plan highlights the fact that Llywelyn was the last native Welsh Prince to fall in battle, marking the effective end of the powerful dynasty of Gwynedd, which played an important role in forging a sense of Welsh nationhood and identity.

Petitioner: Cilmeri Community Council

First considered by the Committee: 23 September 2014

Number of Signatures: 305

P-04-594 Cilmeri Community Council Appeal for The Prince Llywelyn Monument – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Chair, 17.01.17

Your ref P-04-594

Dear Chairman,

Petition P-04-594 Cilmeri, Powys.

I write to thank you and your committee for your assistance to date, in relation to the petition for appropriate signage at Cilmeri village.

Cilmeri Community Council, who instigated the petition to highlight the national importance of Llywelyn in the context of this location, discussed this matter recently and also had sight of the proposed design. They are fully supportive of the proposed design that incorporates the year of the battle, as indeed do I as the local County Councillor.

As you are aware, I have written to Ken Skates AM to ask how this project can be taken forward, and ask who will fund the new signage. Any assistance that can be gained by your committee would be welcomed to ensure we do not lose momentum in ensuring that the agreed signage is in place as soon as possible.

I must also go on to enquire how we might progress other matters highlighted within the original petition? This relates to maintenance of Llywelyn's monument and identifying resources to implement the Lloyd Brown Interpretation Plan. For ease of reference, I have copied the wording of the original petition below.

Due to the National importance of our Prince Llywelyn Monument we, the Community of Cilmeri call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to:

- Install locational signage boards, incorporating a brown signage battlefield icon, to denote the historical significance of our village, on the A483 at both main road entrances to the village;*
- Work in partnership with Powys County Council, Cilmeri Community Council and CADW to help maintain the famous monument, so that visitors can enjoy our national historical amenity in a safe and befitting environment;*
- Help identify resources to implement, in a phased manner, the Lloyd Brown Interpretation Plan (January 2013), commissioned by CADW.*

I hope you will be able to assist us as previously, and can I thank you again for your support to date.

Regards,
Cllr David Price.
Llanafan Fawr Ward, Powys County Council.

Agenda Item 3.3

P-05-709 The Circuit of Wales

This petition was submitted by Don Wilcox, having collected 3,279 paper signatures.

Text of the Petition

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to expedite the start of work on the Circuit of Wales as quickly as possible in order to help with the regeneration of Blaenau Gwent, the Heads of the Valleys and South Wales generally.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Blaenau Gwent
- South Wales East



Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-709
Ein cyf/Our ref KS/07531/16

Mike Hedges AM
Chair - Petitions Committee

SeneddPetitions@assembly.wales

10 January 2017

Dear Mike,

Thank you for your letter of 2 December regarding Petition P-05-709 on the Circuit of Wales.

I share the frustration of many about how long the project is taking. This is a privately financed project, and not driven by Welsh Government. Contrary to the statement by the practitioner, the proposed promoter has not confirmed that private funding of at least 50% is committed and I await their revised proposals. However, I would like to see the project progressed by the company as early as possible in the new year.

As I have previously stated, I must be satisfied that public investment into this project represents value for money. During plenary before Christmas I gave an update on progress with the Circuit of Wales which you can access through the following link

<http://www.assembly.wales/en/bus-home/pages/rop.aspx?meetingid=4011&assembly=5&c=Record%20of%20Proceedings#448152>

Yours sincerely

Ken Skates AC/AM
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros yr Economi a'r Seilwaith
Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
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Correspondence.Ken.Skates@gov.wales

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

TITLE **Update on Circuit of Wales**

DATE **8 February 2017**

BY **Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure**

In July 2016 I updated members on developments relating to the Circuit of Wales project. I said that I had met with the Heads of the Valleys Development Company (HOVDC) and clarified that in order for the Welsh Government to consider any new proposal, they needed to ensure that at least 50 per cent of the finance and 50 per cent of the risk of the project was taken by the private sector.

Since that time my officials have been working closely with the project team and offered every assistance possible. I have been very clear with the Circuit of Wales team that the onus is on them to come to us with a new proposal which meets those gateway requirements.

On Wednesday 25 January, mindful of the time that had passed and the need to give clarity to the community of Blaenau Gwent, I challenged the Circuit of Wales team to make faster progress with the proposals and to provide me with the names of private sector investors to the project within two weeks.

The HOVDC has submitted a fresh proposal for the Circuit of Wales, that includes the names of the private investors and which they assert meets the criteria I set in July.

The Welsh Government will now consider the submission in detail, and commence a rigorous process of due diligence on the proposal itself, as well as the investors and the directors behind the project.

The due diligence exercise will include rigorous value for money testing and a Fit and Proper Person assessment of the directors. It will also assess deliverability and the long term sustainability of the proposal. We will seek clarity on the types and number of jobs directly and indirectly resulting from the project; how those job numbers compare to the initially reported figure of 6,000, as well as the likely number of jobs that would be filled by local people.

There will also be an assessment to ensure that the risks and rewards taken by all parties is proportionate and fair for a part-publicly underwritten project.

As we move to due diligence it is important that we remain focused on whether or not this is a project which can benefit the people of Blaenau Gwent and the wider economy of the South Wales Valleys for the long term.

We understand investors will carry out their own due diligence separately but in parallel with the Welsh Government. Upon completion of the above exercise the proposal will then be considered by Cabinet.

Agenda Item 3.4

P-05-714 Include a Mynachdy and Talybont Station as Part of the Cardiff Metro Proposal

This petition was submitted by Dr Ashley Wood, having collected 137 paper signatures.

Text of the Petition

We, the undersigned, call on Cardiff Council and the Welsh Government to bring forward plans to include a Mynachdy and Talybont station as part of any Cardiff Metro proposal.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Cardiff North
- South Wales Central

Ken Skates AC/AM
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros yr Economi a'r Seilwaith
Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-714
Ein cyf/Our ref KS/07706/16

Mike Hedges AM
Chair - Petitions Committee

government.committee.business@wales.gsi.gov.uk

18 January 2017

Dear Mike,

Thank you for your letter of 21 December regarding the petition from Dr Ashley Wood about plans to include a Mynachdy and Talybont station as part of the South Wales Metro proposals and for the further comments received from the petitioners.

As I mentioned in my previous letter, we are currently working on prioritising the list of 26 potential new stations in the National Transport Finance Plan and once that work is completed, we will plan how the development work is taken forward.

I would be happy to contact you with an update once that prioritisation work has been completed.

*Yours ever,
Ken*

Ken Skates AC/AM
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros yr Economi a'r Seilwaith
Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
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Correspondence.Ken.Skates@gov.wales

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Agenda Item 3.5

P-05-731 Land & Access Lane Sale at Abercwmboi.

This petition was submitted by Sue Waterson, which is collected 66 paper signatures.

Text of the Petition

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to halt their sale of the land and access road to the rear of properties numbered 1 to 67 Park View Terrace, Abercwmboi until representations from the local community have been heard and other options are explored. This sale is being negotiated without prior consultation or notification to parties who will be affected by such a sale.

Assembly constituency and Region.

- Cynon Valley
- South Wales Central

P-05-731 Land & Access Lane Sale at Abercwmboi – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee.

Dear Kayleigh

Thank you for your email. Please find below a copy of the email sent your office on 18 January with attachments. I followed this up with an email to Graeme Francis to confirm I had done this.

My additional comments are that there have been contradictory statements emerging from Ken Skates AC/AM office which have confused the whole situation. In October the Ministers' department confirmed in writing that the land & rear access lane are up for sale (see attachment 1) & they have several interested parties who they are talking to. This despite the land not being posted as available on Space Cymru. It seems a coincidence that after I organise the petition, submit a Freedom of Information Act request, contact Elected Members of RCT & make other enquiries that I & subsequently the Petitions Committee are informed that the land & rear access lane is not for sale, for the moment. I have met with an official of Ken Skate AC/AM office & presented him with some alternative ideas. During this conversation I was very surprised to learn that The Welsh Government is under no obligation to inform or consult with interested parties who are directly affected by their decisions.

Obviously to the lay person the petition process is a little confusing & I trust that the information I have given is sufficient. It is difficult to chose, from a growing file of correspondence what to submit. I would say, though, that despite the information that the land & lane are not currently for sale they will be in the future therefore the essence of the petition that prior consultation should take place with the residents of 1-67 Park View Terrace stands.

Kind Regards

Sue Waterson

First may I present my apologies for not contacting the committee sooner. I was not aware that you required additional information from me. Thank you for giving me additional time.

The petition resulted from rumours, circulated by a prospective purchaser and fellow Abercwmboi resident, about an impending sale of the land & the rear access lane which I followed up with our AM Vikki Howells. I attach a copy of the letter

which she received from Skates AM/AC which confirmed this was the case. The prospective purchaser of the land who lives in Abercwmboi had stated publicly that once the land & lane were in their ownership that the land would be fenced to the curb & both ends of the lane would be gated & locked. There are 22 garages & 12 hard standing in gardens which would be inaccessible if this happened. Indeed fencing to the curb alone would not allow sufficient room to pull in or out of garages as the lane is under 4 metres wide. This would devalue properties & make lives difficult for all residents. On road parking issues are identified in attachment 4. The lane is adopted by RCT & is identified on RCT's plan of highways. It is the land beneath the road that will be sold. Assurances that rights of way will be preserved will be of little use after the sale as any disputes will place the onus on us to litigate. The prospective purchaser has a long history of land & boundary disputes. I must emphasise that as a new comer to Abercwmboi that I have no historical axe to grind I just wish to continue to access my garage.

Since submitting the petition there have been contradictory emails & letters from officials. My latest information is that current negotiations re improving the access road to an adjacent industrial estate are taking place & when these have been resolved the land & lane will be placed on the open market. I was dismayed to be told that the Welsh Government are under no obligation to consult with any residents therefore I would request that the petition stand. At a time when openness & transparency are the by words of good governance I cannot understand why those residents who may be materially affected do not have the right to be consulted.

Attachments include Letter from Ken Skates AM/AC, OS map of site, Aerial photo of site & my correspondence to Vikki Howells AM secretary in response to Ken Skates letter.

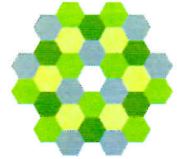
Thank you for your consideration.

Sue Waterson

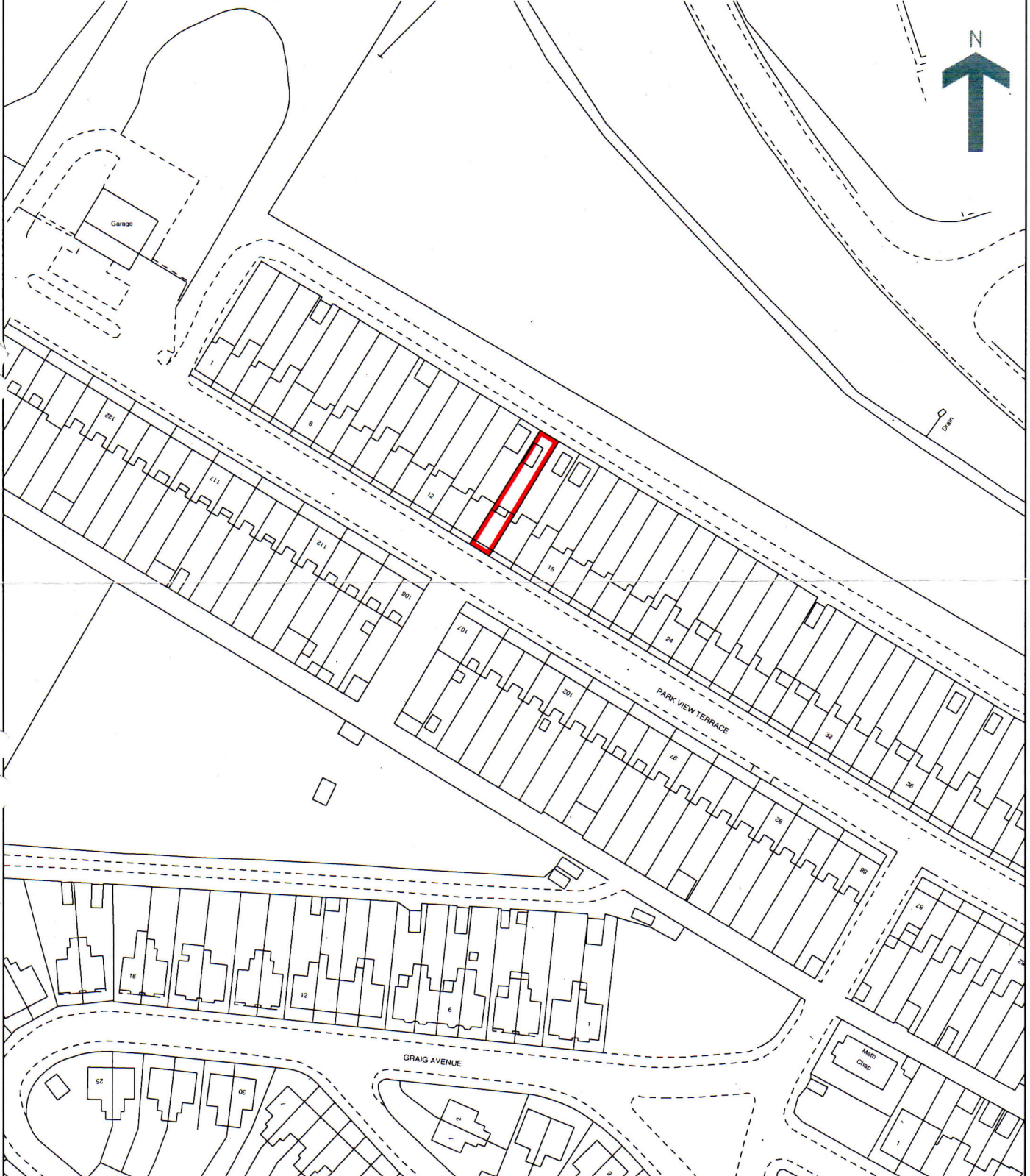
Land Registry

Official copy of
title plan

Title number **WA966461**
Ordnance Survey map reference **SO0200SW**
Scale **1:1250**
Administrative area **Rhondda Cynon Taff / Rhondda Cynon Taf**



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This official copy issued on 23 June 2010 shows the state of this title plan on 23 June 2010 at 09:17:14. It is admissible in evidence to the same extent as the original (s.67 Land Registration Act 2002).

This title plan shows the general position, not the exact line, of the boundaries. It may be subject to distortions in scale. Measurements scaled from this plan may not match measurements between the same points on the ground. See Land Registry Public Guide 19 - Title Plans and Boundaries.

This title is dealt with by Land Registry, Wales Office.



Ken Skates AC/AM
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros yr Economi a'r Seilwaith
Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref KS/06834/16

Vikki Howells AM

Vikki.Howells@assembly.wales

26 October 2016

Dear Vikki,

Thank you for your email of 11 October regarding land in Abercwmboi, Aberdare,

I can confirm that the land you refer to is owned by Welsh Government. My officials are currently in discussions with different parties regarding the sale of the site, one of which is a grazier. The access lane is included in the land identified for sale, however, public access rights over the lane will be protected.

I must advise you, that there are no formal agreements in place with any organisation or the public to provide parking off the lane.

*Yours ever,
Ken*

Ken Skates AC/AM
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros yr Economi a'r Seilwaith
Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Agenda Item 3.6

P-04-519 Abolition of Park Homes Sales Commission

Petition wording:

We call upon the National Assembly For Wales to urge the Welsh Government to remove from Legislation the right of Park Owners to demand commission on the private sale of park homes now that they are no longer involved in the selling process.

Petition raised by: Caerwnon Park Residents Association

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 10 December 2013

Carl Sargeant AC/AM
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gymunedau a Phlant
Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children




Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-519
Ein cyf/Our ref CS/06141/16

Mike Hedges AM
Chair - Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

government.committee.business@wales.gsi.gov.uk

 January 2017

Dear Mike,

Thank you for your letter of 13 December, relaying the concerns of Mr Bob Mountford about the review of commission rates in the park home industry.

You may be aware that Mr Mountford, along with a small group of other park home owners, has been a long-time campaigner for the complete abolition of the commission rate which can currently be charged by a site owner on the sale of a park home. He was amongst a group of campaigners involved in a specially convened meeting with the researchers during the fieldwork stage. Feedback received by my officials from members of that group was positive, indicating they felt their views had been taken into account.

Regarding Mr Mountford's concerns about perceived lack of representation from park home owners, residents were urged to contact the researchers if they did not receive a questionnaire, and extras were sent out on request. The deadline for completion was extended, and coverage of 74% of parks was achieved.

In relation to the issue about access to the audited accounts of park home owners, you will appreciate I do not have powers to compel any site owner to grant such access to those acting on my behalf, or indeed, to others.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

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0300 0604400

Gohebiaeth.Carl.Sargeant@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Carl.Sargeant@gov.wales

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

I am currently considering the researchers report in detail, and considering how best to proceed. However, as you will appreciate, I am unable to meet with every individual or group who may have an interest in the research findings. Please be assured that I will take account of feedback such as Mr Mountford's in arriving at my final decision.

Yours sincerely

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

Carl Sargeant AC/AM

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gymunedau a Phlant
Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children

CAERWNON PARK RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

February 3rd 2017

Dear Mr. Chairman,

Thank you for the copy of the Minister's reply to you.

I feel it is only right to reply to some of the comments made.

Firstly the Minister mentions that I along with a group of fellow campaigners was involved in discussions with the researchers for the PACEC report, I was, but it was a question and answer meeting with the researchers asking the questions and we were all disappointed with the format.

If any of us had known at the time that the survey was not going to involve the opportunity of a transparent review of the certified accounts of Park Owners by the report authors I do not believe the meeting would have taken place, I certainly would not have been there. I believe that the money spent, all £45,594 was a total waste of taxpayer's money and the Welsh Assembly Government should own up and apologise. How can a survey into the economics of anything take place without financial figures being available for scrutiny?

This report was so important to thousands of retired and semi-retired people, generally at the lower end of the financial spectrum and it now looks as if a decision is going to be made on the hearsay word of the park owners who, by the way, were taken out of the private sales equation by The Welsh Assembly Government because of unsavoury tactics by some of them, yet their word is deemed reliable enough on which to base a decision affecting the future of thousands of elderly residents.

The Minister may not have the "clout" to demand the financial accounts be made available but there are others who can, and I am aware that it was not this Minister who commissioned this survey but the previous one.

There have always been campaigners and I am proud to be included, it is called progression and without it they may still be sending children up chimneys. Many residents have been intimidated for far too long by certain park owners and without


associations like ours would still be living without the latest legislation for some protection. These residents rely on campaigners like us to move forward.

If we thought that removing the 10% charge would jeopardise the livelihood of park owners we would not be pursuing this objective. **We know it would not.**

We have asked our AM. Ms.Kirsty Williams to give our secretary and myself the opportunity to put our arguments to the Minister face to face, this would mean a round trip of approximately 140 miles for us, not a lot to ask I would have thought for maybe an hour of his time.

We are not alone on this issue, thousands of park home residents in England and Scotland are also attempting to remove this injustice. I will give you a typical example of our problem: Someone purchases a home for £100.000 and then within a few months for whatever reason health, bereavement has to sell, this would mean that the park owner takes £10.000 for doing absolutely nothing. If that is not an injustice please tell me what is? How many park owners or politicians for that matter would allow 10% of their assets taken from them? Not many methinks.

The Minister states that this survey is the most in depth survey to ever take place into the park home industry, as far as I am aware there has only been one other which took place in 2002, this supposedly "independent" survey was found not to be quite so independent when it was revealed that one of the authors of that survey was employed by a very large park owning company, vested interests maybe?

If you would like to meet with us at any time or require further information please e.mail Sue at 

Yours sincerely

R.G.Mountford

Chairman.

Caerwnon Park Residents Association

P-04-597 Protect the future of Funky Dragon, the Children and Young People's Assembly for Wales

Petition wording:

We, the undersigned, call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to protect the future of Funky Dragon, the Children and Young People's Assembly for Wales by restoring core funding. Wales must have an independent, youth led, publically funded, national platform for children and young people, democratically elected at a local level, to give voice to their views and opinions and to hold the Welsh Government to account. The national platform must be empowered to work with all elected members to further children and young people's issues and to report directly to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child as Funky Dragon did so successfully in 2008.

Funky Dragon still believes that:

1. Young people, democratically elected at a local level, should have a National Platform to voice their views and opinions.
2. That platform should be called The Youth Assembly for Wales.
3. It should be able to work with all Elected Members including Assembly Members and Members of Parliament to further young peoples issues.
4. It should be supported to allow Welsh young people to report directly to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child.

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, in commenting on the last UK State report stated: Concluding observation 33. That governments' 'Support forums for children's participation, such as the United Kingdom Youth Parliament, Funky Dragon in Wales and Youth Parliament in Scotland should be implemented.

Petitioner : Catherine Patricia Jones

First considered by the Committee: 23 September 2014

Number of Signatures: 1,212 electronic signatures and 429 paper signatures. Total 1,641

Agenda Item 3.8

P-04-662 – It is hard to conceive what life would have become without my support worker

This petition was submitted by Lisa Pritchard having collected 664 signatures

Text of the Petition

After two years of hard, challenging yet rewarding support from my support worker I am today studying at University whilst living a life fuelled by lots of love, hope, happiness and laughter. I'm working to put myself in a position to provide a good life for my family. My support worker is still my daily affirmation to 'Live my Dreams'.

The post is funded by the Supporting People Programme. Without the programme me and my family wouldn't have had that life changing and life-saving support.

I would like the whole of Wales to know what Supporting People money does and I call upon our Welsh Government to continue to support and commit to protect it in future, so that thousands of people in Wales will get the same kind of life-saving support I received.

I'm grateful for the Supporting People Programme, it helped save my life. If you want to ensure that the same support will always be available to others, please sign my petition.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Cardiff West

- South Wales Central

Agenda Item 3.9

P-04-490 Antiretroviral Medication in Cardiff

Petition wording:

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to act in regards to the very limited supply of antiretroviral HIV medications. Recent changes by the Cardiff University Hospital means that every single patient receiving antiretroviral medications has to come either to the hospital pharmacy with restricted opening times or opt for home delivery. Stable patients with good adherence are seen every 4-6 months for an appointment with the consultant yet distribution of medication is limited to a monthly supply only. The minister of health does not feel responsible and does not step in. Patients should receive a fair distribution of medication that is according to the guidance of the UK HIV association.

Petition raised by: Joerg Thieme

Date petition first considered by Committee: 18 June 2013

Number of signatures: 150

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

Mike Hedges AC/AM
Chair
The Petitions Committee of the National
Assembly for Wales

Direct Line: 0300 062 8377
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E-mail: Kathryn.chamberlain@wales.gsi.gov.uk

By email: SeneddPetitions@assembly.wales

Eich cyf / Your ref
Ein cyf / Our ref 19456

13 January 2017

Dear Mr Hedges

RE: Petition P-04-564 Restoration of Inpatient Beds, Minor Injuries Cover and X-Ray Unit to the Ffestiniog Memorial Hospital.

Thank you for your letter dated 21 December 2016 relating to the above, seeking Healthcare Inspectorate Wales' (HIW) conclusions on health care in the Blaenau Ffestiniog area.

I cannot provide a comprehensive view of the quality of health care in the Blaenau Ffestiniog area, as we have not inspected all of the services in the locality. However I can offer a view on the work that we have completed, and also offer a view on the health board's response to HIW's letter.

HIW's most recent inspection to any healthcare service in the Ffestiniog area was an inspection of the Blaenau Ffestiniog Health Services Centre in November 2015. You can access a copy of the report relating to this inspection using this link: <http://hiw.org.uk/find-service/service-index/bcuhbmanagedpractice318?lang=en>

This inspection found that the majority of patients we spoke to rated their experience of the GP practice between good or excellent, however there were indications that the patient experience was affected by GP shortages and the use of GP locums. We also found that further work needs to be done by the health board, in collaboration with the practice staff, to identify and develop other key services for patients living in an area where high deprivation levels are prevalent. Furthermore we had 'concerns regarding the practice sustainability under its current climate and about the impact on patients'.

Further to this inspection, and following receipt of concerns raised separately by the Older People's Commissioner for Wales, and a member of the Blaenau Ffestiniog Defence Committee raising regarding the quality of health care provision in the Blaenau Ffestiniog area, HIW wrote to the health board in November 2016.

We wanted to understand how the health board addressed concerns such as those raised by the Defence Committee. In addition we wanted to know what steps has the health board taken with regards to public engagement, ensuring that it develops an approach and strategy to meet the needs of its population. Furthermore we asked how the health board is ensuring that in the meantime, patients in the Blaenau Ffestiniog area have an adequate level of local service provisioned for them.

The health board provided HIW with a comprehensive response describing the challenges facing the health board in meeting its aim of being able to care for more people at home or closer to home wherever possible avoiding the need for admission to hospital. It described several of the measures and initiatives put in place to assist it in achieving this aim, and provided some evidence of measures put in place to ensure satisfactory services are being provided in the meantime. We are therefore broadly assured that the health board has taken and is continuing to take appropriate steps in ensuring that the services it provides in the Ffestiniog area are adequate.

However it is clear that significant challenges remain for the health board in gaining the confidence of both the local and wider North Wales population; a key element of this challenge is the need for the health board to develop an overarching Clinical Services strategy for the medium to long term. The health board acknowledges the importance of developing any such strategy in conjunction with engaging effectively with its population.

We are currently in the process of devising our work programme for 2017/18 and as such the information received from the health board will inform our planning process. We are also shortly due to commence with the Wales Audit Office a joint follow-up review of governance arrangements at the health board. We are yet to revisit the Blaenau Ffestiniog Health Services Centre. As our inspection programme consists mainly of unannounced visit I hope that you will understand that I cannot share the details of this, however all inspection reports are published promptly three months after visit has taken place.

I trust that the Committee will find this response helpful.

Yours sincerely



DR KATE CHAMBERLAIN
Chief Executive



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LL17 0JG

Mr Mike Hedges AM
Chair of the Petitions Committee

By email:
SeneddPetitions@assembly.wales

Ein cyf / Our ref: GD/FJ/2533/544

Eich cyf / Your ref:

☎: 01745 448788 ext 6364

Gofynnwch am / Ask for: Renné Evans

E-bost / Email: Renné.Evans@wales.nhs.uk

Dyddiad / Date: 6th January 2017

Dear Mr Hedges,

RE: Petition p-04-564: Restoration of Inpatient Beds, Minor Injuries Cover and X-ray Unit to the Ffestiniog Memorial Hospital

Further to your recent letter dated 21st December 2016 requesting an update on the latest situation in Blaenau, I have set out below an update for the Committee on the provision of healthcare services in Blaenau Ffestiniog.

In addition, a number of appendices are also enclosed which are:

Appendix 1 – A review of community health services delivered in Blaenau Ffestiniog in the context of overall service delivery in the locality undertaken by the Locality Lead GP for Meirionnydd.

Appendix 2 – A table detailing the current service provision in Blaenau by service and also identifying which services will be increased and which are new services to be delivered in the new Centre (Canolfan Goffa Ffestiniog) when it opens in Summer 2017.

Appendix 3 – Update on improvement plan following HIW inspection of the practice.

a. In-patient Services

In line with national and organisational strategic direction, the Health Board's aim continues to be to care for more people at home or closer to home, avoiding the need for admission to hospital wherever possible.

The decision to close the 12 inpatient beds in Ffestiniog Memorial Hospital and replace with an integrated health and social care centre was taken in January 2013, following a lengthy (18 months) and detailed wide consultation process called '*Health Care in North Wales is Changing*' overseen by the Consultation Institute and approved by the Minister for Health. This process followed the earlier decision taken by the former North West Wales Trust as a result of the Chris Jones' Report. There was absolute support during the consultation for the following three key principles:



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- **Targeted prevention** – taking action to promote good health and prevent illness
- **Enhanced care at home** – providing more care in their own homes for people who might otherwise need to go into hospital
- **Moving care from acute hospitals to the community** – moving services into local areas to bring better results for patients

To ensure the sustainability and consistency of services. *'Health Care in North Wales is Changing'* proposed a greater focus for some community services on a range of ten community hospital hubs across North Wales. Ffestiniog Memorial Hospital (FMH) was not recommended as one of the ten hospital hubs, with Ysbyty Alltwn in Porthmadog being proposed as the local community hospital hub for the North Meirionnydd area.

As envisaged within the Rural Health Plan, the Health Board has sought to provide more holistic approaches to care provision rather than perpetuating a historical model of care. This includes providing more care at home, improved hours of community nursing, greater skill mix in community services, improved integration with social care and a wider range of specialist services delivered locally. The new Centre being constructed in Blaenau Ffestiniog will incorporate all of these principles.

When the decision to close the 12 inpatients beds in FMH was made, it was agreed that six additional beds should be subsequently opened in Ysbyty Alltwn and that Enhanced Care would be rolled out across the locality to care for higher acuity medical patients at home wherever possible. Meirionnydd locality began rolling out enhanced care in September 2013 with additional resources provided in nursing, social services, third sector and admin support. All 6 GP Practices in Meirionnydd are signed up to supporting Enhanced Care and refer patients to the service. The service is valued by patients, carers and GPs (from feedback from CHC questionnaires). Patients appreciate the opportunity to be cared for in their own homes rather than being admitted to hospital. In addition, overnight community nursing has recently been rolled out across Meirionnydd and a full 24/7 community nursing service will follow when recruitment is completed in the next few weeks.

By improving care services (enhanced care and overnight community nursing), providing 6 beds in Alltwn and 3 beds in Bryn Blodau Residential Home in Llan Ffestiniog (for respite, step up/down and enablement), a full range of care options are available for patients who would otherwise have been admitted to hospital. From the 1st April this year to date 32 people have received a total of 511 nights care in the three short term care beds in Bryn Blodau.

It is of note that over the last few years, the North Meirionnydd Community Nursing Team has been caring for more and more palliative care patients in their chosen / home environment. Previously these enhanced care and palliative care patients would have been admitted to hospital. Currently there are on average 11 to 12 patients at any one



time receiving end of life care from the Blaenau Community Nursing Team which is the highest number of all the areas across Meirionnydd.

b. X-ray / Diagnostics

4 x-ray sessions used to be provided in Ffestiniog Memorial Hospital per week. The numbers seen were generally half the recommended level for a session and this was unsustainable for the Radiology Service in terms of maintaining staff competences and the efficient use of resources and equipment. Bala Health Centre also lost their X-ray sessions a number of years ago for the same reasons. This was accepted by the Bala GPs as being unsustainable.

An x-ray service is now available 5 days per week in Ysbyty Alltwn. We consider the distance needed to travel for an x-ray is reasonable for Meirionnydd (see appendix 1). It should be noted that the community heart scanning and heart failure service for Gwynedd was first piloted in Meirionnydd and it will be delivered in the new centre in Blaenau.

With regard to minor injuries, a minor injury service is provided by the practice in Blaenau during surgery hours, in line with that provided by GP practices under an enhanced services specification.

Ysbyty Alltwn (12.6 miles away, 21 minutes) has a Minor Injuries Unit (MIU) open from 8.00am until 8.00pm seven days per week (soon to be extended to midnight once staff are recruited). The decision as to whether any particular injury can be managed in the MIU is, however, a clinical decision to be made by the clinician seeing the patient. Hand injuries can often involve hidden damage to tendons or nerves. Increasingly facial injuries are dealt with by specialist maxillofacial teams and it is reasonable for a minor injury clinician to refer on to a DGH if they think that is the right option for a patient. The high speed injuries generated by the mountain bike centre in Blaenau are unlikely to be amenable to treatment in a MIU. Indeed the frequency of an air ambulance response would support this.

When the MIU in Ffestiniog Hospital was operating in the hospital unit, an average of 2 to 3 patients were seen per day and most of those were dressings or venesection for outpatients.

c. Quality of Primary Care

Since taking over the management of the GP practice, we have enhanced the range of services provided by recruiting an Advanced Nurse Practitioner to support the GPs on a full time basis, as well as 3 sessions of Advanced Practice Physiotherapy and 4 sessions of Advanced Practice Pharmacist. There is evidence that antibiotic prescribing is reducing and referrals to hospital physiotherapy services reduced through having this local primary care provision. The Quality Outcomes Framework (QOF) achievement was 83% in 2015-16 compared to 64% in the previous year.



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We regularly have three GPs working in the practice daily, and while at present we only have one salaried GP, working for three days, we do have 5 regular locums who work in the practice, who know the patients and provide continuity of care. The practice is currently able to offer a significant number of same day appointments for patients requiring them as well as home visits for patients who clinically require them. We have recently advertised for additional salaried GPs and have offered a post to one of the current locums and we are re-advertising further vacancies in the practice.

The Meirionnydd Cluster Lead has reviewed the annual rate of GP appointments in Blaenau Ffestiniog and has identified that this is currently 2.91 which compares favourably with a similar sized rural practice in the County having a rate of 2.7. If the appointments booked with advanced nurse, physiotherapist or pharmacy practitioners are included, then the rate increase to 3.63 appointments per patient per year. In addition he has confirmed that home visiting rates are similar.

Blaenau Ffestiniog is the only GP practice in Gwynedd where point of care haematology and biochemistry is available and has been for several years. This is an example of technology being rolled out and Blaenau being in the vanguard. The clinical staff in the practice have access to step up and down beds in Bryn Blodau Residential Home, commissioned specifically to support the local population, supported by the community nursing teams.

Due to the extended absence of the practice manager, interim management support has been put into the practice with support from the Primary Care Support Unit and an experienced practice manager from an independent practice in the area as well as targeted support from the Primary Care Development Nurse and Primary Care Development Manager on specific projects and initiatives.

Regular staff meetings take place to discuss a range of issues and Protected Education Time sessions are also held regularly and involve both clinical and non-clinical staff.

Reception staff keep a log of concerns and compliments raised with them and these are discussed at staff meetings. The practice has instigated a suggestion box and plans are in place to undertake a patient access survey in January with the CHC. The Area Engagement Officer will progress the establishment of a Practice Participation Group over the coming months, to provide on-going feedback about current and future services in the area.

An update against the improvement plan published following the HIW inspection of the practice is attached as appendix 3.

d. Engagement

The recently appointed West Area Engagement Officer supports the Area Team to co-ordinate the current and future engagement activities in Blaenau Ffestiniog in which she will build and sustain relationships with stakeholders and community groups which will



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include bi-monthly engagement events in Blaenau Ffestiniog to keep all members of the community updated on the new build.

In conjunction with the Health Board's Communications Team, a regular newsletter is now being produced for the wider Blaenau community, with the second edition planned for December 2016. The aim is to keep residents informed of developments, including the new and enhanced services that will be available in the new Health Centre. In addition, a new local Patient Participation Group (PPG) is being planned, initially in Blaenau Ffestiniog that will provide valuable input on specific services to influence local service delivery and future service development. The aim is to focus on a particular service or client group at each meeting. It is proposed that the first priority for this Group will be Older People.

A public engagement event was held in Blaenau at the end of September 2016 providing an opportunity for the local community to see the latest plans for the new centre and discuss the future range of services to be provided. Feedback from the event has resulted in discussions to include a new twice monthly audiology clinic and in some minor design changes to the primary care accommodation. Two further engagement events in November and December 2016 were held in the Blaenau GP Surgery to encourage members of the community to be part of the new PPG. The Surgery events were successful in generating names for the PPG and in giving feedback with regard to the vision for Older People's Services and Outpatient Services as well as giving out information packs on voluntary sector services and organisations. Much praise was given by members of the public on the services offered at the surgery and swift access to appointments and health services.

The date of the Surgery engagement event arranged for November fell on National Carers Rights Day at which the Engagement Officer was also able to highlight the information and support available for unpaid carers in the area.

In addition to the above events, the Engagement Officer is planning to engage with the community in an informal setting by working with the local 'Eurospar' in Blaenau Ffestiniog to set up an information and engagement stand in the retail shop to engage with local residents (between January – March 2017). In the New Year she will also be meeting with the local Secondary School Headmaster and the local childcare provider "(Caban Bach)" to improve engagement with parents and young people in the area too.

The Area Team has been meeting regularly with Gwynedd Council and Blaenau Town Council representatives to update them with regard to the construction progress and planned service provision in the new Centre. They are fully supportive of the plans for Blaenau. There is also ongoing engagement with the third sector through Mantell Gwynedd, who are represented on the Blaenau Project's Service Transition Group and with Age Cymru who are currently running a Living Well Centre in Blaenau.

Finally, the Health Board is currently developing a longer term overarching Clinical Services strategy setting out its strategic vision and how it will provide healthcare for the



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medium to longer term. As part of this strategy we will be developing a programme of engagement across North Wales. This will ensure we continue to learn from feedback and patients' experiences and will inform service improvements for people across the age range.

e. Ensuring adequate level of local service provision

Since the closure of Ffestiniog Memorial Hospital, all services delivered from the site were transferred to the nearby Health Centre in Blaenau and there has been no halt in any service provision. There is an extensive range of services being currently delivered in Blaenau which can be seen in Appendix 2 (see services marked in blue and pink). This also sets out those new services which are planned to be delivered from the new Centre in the future.

Separately, the Meirionnydd Locality Lead has undertaken a review of community health services delivered in Blaenau Ffestiniog in the context of overall service delivery in the locality (Appendix 1). This shows that overall community health service delivery in Blaenau Ffestiniog favours comparably with other small populations in Meirionnydd.

I think it's important to note that we have been responding to specific and general concerns from the Defence Committee relating to health care provision in the Blaenau Ffestiniog area for a number of years.

I trust that this response and the enclosed appendices (detailed at the beginning) provide a helpful update on the situation in Blaenau in terms of giving a comprehensive understanding of how the Health Board has addressed the concerns regarding health care provision raised by the Defence Committee.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Gary Doherty'.

Gary Doherty
Chief Executive

Appendix 1

Review of Community Health Service Delivery in Blaenau Ffestiniog within context of Meirionnydd

A recent document produced by the Blaenau Ffestiniog defence committee raised a series of concerns about healthcare provision in Blaenau Ffestiniog alleging that the level of care provision constituted elder abuse and that health care provided locally was primitive. This short paper addresses some of the issues raised and describes the negative effects of such allegations.

- The first significant issue raised was around access to health services for patients living in Blaenau

Meirionnydd is a very rural county with poor public transport links and relatively poor roads. Many of the issues which are described as significant for Blaenau Ffestiniog apply equally across the county.

Road travel distances and times from significant locations to the nearest district hospital and community hospital are given below:

Location	Distance to DGH	Time to DGH	Distance to Comm Hosp	Time to Comm hospital
Bala	30.5	51	18.4	28
Dolgellau	48.3	1hr 17	0.5	5
Tywyn	33	1hr 01	0.5	5
Aberdovey	28.9	53	4.5	9
Fairbourne	43.2	1hr15	9	18
Barmouth	47.8	1hr22	9.9	18
Trawsfynydd	39.6	1hr03	12.4	19
Harlech	37.1	1hr02	9.9	18
Blaenau Ffestiniog	32.2	54	12.6	21

All population centres in Meirionnydd have significant transport times to the nearest DGH, the majority with transport times in excess of one hour. Some communities have community hospitals embedded within them, but most do not. It is over 18

miles from Bala to the nearest DGH, the practice list size for Bala being very similar to that of Blaenau Ffestiniog.

Access to GP surgeries is clearly also an issue and many areas have seen the closure of branch surgeries or rural consultation facilities. There have been many factors which have driven this change, but a modern GP surgery requires full staffing with nurses and clerical staff, IT, resuscitation and assessment facilities. This is rarely possible in isolated branch surgeries. There is a significant community in Fairbourne and Ffriog who have to travel 10, 12 or 13 miles to their GP surgery, depending upon where they are registered.

Much of health care delivery is provided by outpatient clinics and services. Communities who live in Blaenau, Dolgellau and Tywyn are fortunate in that they have a wide range of outpatient services and physiotherapy delivered locally. Bala also has outpatient physiotherapy and some outpatient clinics, but patients in Fairbourne, Llwyngwril, Barmouth and the coastal strip to Talsarnau and Pnerhyndeudraeth all have significant distances to drive in order to access local outpatient services and, overall, Blaenau appears to have better access to services than many other significant population groups.

- Concerns have been raised concerning long journeys to A&E and long waits because the MIU has closed

Full MIU services are provided by the practice in Blaenau during surgery hours and up to 8.00pm 7 days per week (soon to be extended to midnight) in Ysbyty Alltwen. The decision as to whether any particular injury can be managed in the MIU is, however, a clinical decision to be made by the clinician seeing the patient. Hand injuries can often involve hidden damage to tendons or nerves. Increasingly facial injuries are dealt with by specialist maxillofacial teams and it is reasonable for a minor injury clinician to refer on to a DGH if they think that is the right option for a patient. When the MIU was operating, the vast majority of patient contacts took place in the practice. In the hospital unit an average 2 ½ patients were seen per day and most of those were dressings or venesection for outpatients.

The high speed injuries generated by the mountain bike centre are unlikely to be amenable to treatment in a MIU. Indeed the frequency of an air ambulance response would support this.

The distance needed to travel for an xray is reasonable for Meirionnydd as has been demonstrated. Meirionnydd was the county where the community heart scanning and heart failure service for Gwynedd was piloted and it will be delivered in the new centre in Blaenau. Blaenau Ffestiniog is the only GP practice in Gwynedd where point of care haematology and biochemistry is available and has been for several years. This is an example of technology being rolled out and Blaenau being in the vanguard.

Patients who need monitoring, irrespective of their age, have access to home telehealth which is available and is used. Step up beds are available in the elderly care home in Ffestiniog, community hospital beds are available in Tremadog and the GP's have access to those beds, but have chosen not to use them. Enhanced care is fully available in Blaenau Ffestiniog with routine community care being provided from 8 until 8. There are plans further to increase this. Obtaining night sitters and Marie Curie nurses is a problem throughout Meirionnydd and Blaenau is not unique in facing this difficulty, but there is now an overnight community nurse available, although the nurse will be covering a large area.

The map of Gwynedd used in the 'elder abuse' paper is grossly misleading as it correctly identifies the community hospitals with beds, but it fails to map the 13 other centres which provide daytime health care across Gwynedd in addition to Blaenau Ffestiniog.

In summary there are a wide variety of health services available within Blaenau Ffestiniog and distances to other sources of health care are comparable with other centres in Meirionnydd and often are shorter.

- The assertion of elder abuse suggests that the population of Blaenau is somehow different from other rural areas and has a different demographic

The Welsh Health Observatory provides high quality data looking at practice demographics, markers of health need and chronic disease prevalence. Blaenau Ffestiniog is clearly rural, but less than the mean for Meirionnydd with 41.5% of the Blaenau population living in small villages or isolated communities compared with a mean of 44.9% for Meirionnydd as a whole.

The population of Blaenau is younger than Meirionnydd as a whole. 15% of the Blaenau population is aged over 70 compared with 19.2% of Meirionnydd and 17.8% of the Blaenau population are aged under 15 compared with 14.5% of the population of Meirionnydd as a whole.

The chronic disease registers for Blaenau are interesting in that they show a relatively high prevalence of asthma and epilepsy, but a lower than average prevalence of COPD, heart failure, hypertension and coronary heart disease. This could represent the age sex distribution of the population in Blaenau or it could represent under diagnosis or disease recording by the previous practice.

There is no doubt that there are significant issues in Blaenau, it has higher rates of deprivation, poor diet, obesity and older people living alone than in other areas of Meirionnydd and approaches to delivering health and social care in Blaenau must recognise these issues. Nevertheless, the real issues of rurality and access to health care apply just as much to the whole of Meirionnydd as to the population of Blaenau Ffestiniog.

- There are assertions of poor primary healthcare provision in Blaenau Ffestiniog

Medical care

The surgery in Blaenau is fully manned by doctors, most of whom have a regular commitment to the practice, some of whom have salaried posts and are not simply locums. The practice has an advanced practice physiotherapist, pharmacist and nurse practitioner with special experience in chronic lung disease and heart failure. Other practices in Meirionnydd will have access to either an advanced pharmacist or an advanced physiotherapist. No other practice in Gwynedd has the same open access to these advanced practitioners.

The activity of this service in Blaenau compares favourably with other practices of a similar size:

- The annual rate of GP appointments in Blaenau Ffestiniog is currently 2.91 which compares favourably with a similar sized rural practice in the County having a rate of 2.74. A recent audit of appointments in Blaenau revealed unfilled GP appointments demonstrating that capacity outstrips demand, which is unusual. If the appointments booked with advanced nurse, physio or pharmacy practitioners are included, then the rate increase to 3.63 appointments per patient per year.

This clearly shows that there are more than sufficient GP appointments in Blaenau and the availability of advanced practitioners adds to the service and is not there to make up for a shortage of GP appointments.

- The annual home visit rate is virtually identical to another local practice with the Blaenau rate being 1.0 home visits per patient per year compared with 0.9.
- It is easy to demonstrate the availability of services, assessing quality is more challenging, but there are useful metrics. The QoF results in Blaenau Ffestiniog have been maintained. The practice prescribing performance was a historical outlier with the highest rates of antibiotic prescribing in North Wales. Similarly, the prescribing of tranquilisers and sleeping tablets was the highest in Gwynedd. The rates of antibiotic prescribing are now approaching the average for Gwynedd and the rates of hypnotic and sedative prescribing are falling. These are clear indicators of improvements in clinical care.

So Primary Care in Blaenau provides more appointments than local practices, a greater range of expertise with pharmacy, specialist nursing and physiotherapy being available and access to advanced technology with point of care testing available for haematology and biochemistry.

Nursing care

The district nurse caseload in Blaenau is 600 patients per month compared to 650 in a similar sized local practice with similar demographics and travelling times. The skill mix in the Blaenau district nursing team is greater than in any other practice in

Blaenau with practitioners available at band 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7. The weekly nursing hours available in Blaenau is 217 compared with 139 in Penrhyndeudraeth and 117 in Barmouth. Thus Blaenau has more nursing time but a lower workload.

Blaenau delivers more palliative care where patients prefer to be, that is at home, than in other local practices which reflects the excellent availability of community nursing services.

Intermediate care is well used in Blaenau with 24 referrals Jan – March 2016 compared with 10 in Barmouth and 31 referrals from April to the current date in Blaenau. Enhanced care does take place with 27 referrals from Blaenau.

So, in summary, Blaenau has as good access to health services as anywhere else in Meirionnydd and has much better access to a wide range of primary care services. To describe these services as primitive is astonishing. All areas have examples where care goes wrong or does not work out as expected and Blaenau is no different. Lessons should and are learned from these examples, but this report utterly fails to mention the massive numbers of compliments and success stories generated by the care in Blaenau Ffestiniog.

It is well accepted and, indeed the GMC has just pointed out the risks to patients from poor morale in clinical staff. There is a clear perception that some individuals are constantly searching for examples of care which don't go as one would hope in order to generate political ammunition. To work in an environment where people are constantly searching for mistakes poses a genuine risk to the morale of all the individuals who deliver care in Blaenau Ffestiniog and the culture of complaint and dissatisfaction is simply not born out by the facts.

Dr Bill Whitehead

November 2016

**CURRENT SERVICE PROVISION
& PROPOSED SESSIONAL USE OF CANOLFAN GOFFA FFESTINIOG
(updated Nov 2016)**

<i>Service</i>	<i>Name of Clinic</i>	<i>Current no. of Sessions (One session = ½ day)</i>	<i>Current weekly sessional use</i>	<i>Future / proposed no. weekly sessions</i>	<i>Service statu: – new / increase / same</i>	<i>Proposed room to be used</i>
District Nursing	Dressing & leg ulcer clinic	1 (am) daily	5	5	Same	In dedicated Treatment Room
	Continence clinic	1 (pm) monthly	0.25	0.25	Same	In dedicated Treatment Room
	Doppler clinic	1 fortnightly	0.5	0.5	Same	In dedicated Treatment Room
	Intravenous / day Therapies (& home treatments)	Ad hoc	Ad hoc	1	Increase	In dedicated Treatment Room
Midwifery	Antenatal clinic	3 weekly	3	4	Increase	Multi-purpose Treatment Room
	Parent Education Group	(Currently in Dolgellau)	-	Ad hoc (pending recruitment)	New	Group / Teaching room
Children & Young People:						
Community Paediatrician	Comm Paeds Consulting Clinic	1 monthly	0.25	0.25	Same	Young People's exam / consulting room
Consultant Paediatrician	Consultant Paediatric Clinic	1 monthly	0.25	0.25	same	Young People's exam / consulting room

Health Visitors	HV Child Assessment Clinic	1 weekly	1	3	Increase	Young People's exam / consulting room
	HV Postnatal Group	(In Dolgellau)	-	2	New (transfer)	Group / Teaching Room
Paed Comm Nurse	Paed Community Nurse clinic	1 weekly	1	1	Same	Young People's exam / consulting room
CAMHS	CAMHS Consultant clinic	-	1 monthly	0.25	New	Young People's exam / consulting room
	Other CAMHS Consulting clinics	3	3	5	Increase	Young People's exam / consulting room
	CAMHS Group / Family sessions	-	-	3	New	Group / Teaching Room
Family Planning / Well Woman	Family Planning clinic	1 weekly	1	1	Same	Multi-purpose Treat't & Clin Cons rm
Substance Misuse Service	Service user interviews	2 weekly	2	4	Increase	Multi-purpose non-clinical consulting rm
OPMH Specialised Day Service	Dementia day service (just started)	1 day weekly	2	4-6	New / Increase	Older Person's Day Room / Dining Rm
OPMH Carer Support	Carer Support Group	1 day weekly	2	2	New / Increase	As above
Adult Mental Health	AMH primary assessments clinic	4 weekly	5	5	Increase	Multi-purpose non-clinical consulting rm
	AMH Group sessions	Ad hoc	0.25	0.5	Increase	Group / Teaching room
Learning Disability Services	Dialectic Behaviour Therapy Service	1 part day weekly	1 part day weekly	2 full days	Increase	OPMH / Day / Activities Rooms
	LD MDT Outpatient Clinic	-	-	1	New	OPMH / Day / Activities Rooms
	LD DBT Group sessions	-	-	1	New	Teaching / Group Room

	LD Drop-in Service (users, parents, carers)	-	-	1	New	OPMH / Day / Activities Rooms
Counsellor	Counsellor interviews	2 weekly	2	2	Same	Multi-purpose non-clinical consulting rm
Community Dental	Dental 2 Surgery Suite	2-3 days per week in 2 surgeries	8-12	(12-20 dependent on attracting GDP)	Increase	Dental Suite Surgery 1 & 2
<i>Palliative Care:</i>						
Palliative Care	Consultant Palliative Care Outpatient Clinic	-	-	0.25 (mthly)	New	Multi-purpose clinical consulting rm
	Macmillan CNS Clinic	-	-	0.25	New	Multi-purpose clinical consulting rm
	Hospice at Home Nurse drop-in clinic	-	-	0.25	New	Multi-purpose clinical consulting rm
	Specialist Pharmacist clinical review	-	-	0.25	New	Multi-purpose clinical consulting rm
	Therapies Review	-	-	0.25	New	Multi-purpose Treatment rm
	Complementary Therapy	-	-	0.5 (2 x mth)	New	Multi-purpose Treatment room
	Patient & Family Support Service	-	-	0.5	New	Multi-purpose non-clinical consulting room
	Macmillan Libraries Support Advisor	-	-	0.5	New	Multi-purpose non-clinical consulting room
	Benefits Advice / Welfare Rights	-	-	0.5	New	Multi-purpose non-clinical consulting rm
	Carer support / education programme	-	-	Ad hoc	New	Teaching / Group Room
<i>Therapies:</i>						
Physio	Neuro rehab, rehab,	3 weekly	3	3	Same	Physio Activities Area &

	musculo-skeletal outpats					treatment cubicles
Orthotics & Podiatry	Podiatry clinic	1 day weekly	2	2	Same	Podiatry room
Speech & Language Therapy	Paediatric SALT clinic	1.25	1.25	3	Increase	Young People's exam / consulting room
Dietetics	Dietetics clinic	1 monthly	0.25	0.75	Increase	Multi-purpose clinical consulting rm
	Dietetics group sessions	-	-	0.25	New	Group/Teaching room
Outpatient clinics:						
Rheumatology Outpatient Clinic	Consultant Rheum Clinic	1 monthly	0.25	0.25	Same	Multi-purpose clinical consulting rm
Specialist Nurse Diabetes Clinic	Spec Nurse Diabetes Clinic	1 day monthly	0.5	0.5	Same	Multi-purpose clinical consulting rm
Ophthalmology Outpatient Clinic	Consultant Ophthalmology clinic	2 days monthly	1	1	Same	Multi-purpose clinical consulting rm
Orthoptic Eye Clinic	Orthoptic clinic	1 day monthly	0.5	0.5	Same	Multi-purpose clinical consulting rm
Heart Failure Clinic	Specialist Nurse Heart Failure Clinic	1 full day monthly	-	0.5	New	Multi-purpose clinical consulting rm
Dermatology Phototherapy Service	Phototherapy Clinic	TBC	-	TBC	Potential	Under discussion
Specialist Nurse Respiratory Clinic	Respiratory Clinic	1 monthly	-	0.25	New	Multi-purpose clinical consulting rm
Audiology Clinic	Audiology Clinic	1 monthly	-	0.25	New	Multi-purpose clinical consulting rm
Virtual clinics using	TBC – e.g. Respiratory, Acute medicine,	-	-	2 - 5+	New	Multi-purpose clinical consulting / Treatment

Technology Suite	Dermatology, Care of Elderly, Gastro, plus for education & training					rooms
Third Sector	Input to be confirmed with range of Third Sector orgs e.g. Age Cymru (benefits advice, nail cutting, advocacy etc, Alzheimers Soc, Citizens' Advice etc	-	-	TBC	New	Multi-purpose non-clinical consulting rm & Interview & Hotdesk room
Public Health Wales	Stop Smoking Wales Clinic	-	-	10 week programmes	New	Teaching / Group Room
	Making Every Contact Count (MECC) Training	-	-	TBC	New	Teaching / Group Room
Wellbeing:						
NERS Falls Prevention	Falls prevention exercise class				TBC	Physio Activities Area
NERS Foodwise programme	Foodwise Programme				TBC	Physio Activities Area
TOTALS			Total Current sessions	Total anticipated future sessions		
			46.25	76.3		Does <u>not</u> include potential Dental GDP additional sessions or Third Sector use

Health Centre Blaenau Ffestiniog - Improvement Action Plan

Nov-16

Action Number	Ref	Improvement Recommendation	Planned Action	Progress	Status
HIW Improvement Actions					
1	7	The Health Board should have processes in place to regularly assess and evaluate patients' experience and to act upon feedback in a way that demonstrates learning and improvement. Maintain a log of informal concerns or compliments raised by patients, to monitor common themes and to consider what actions could be taken to alleviate or address these.	The practice will undertake a Patient Satisfaction Survey by Sept 2016	Planning on establishing patient participation group for the area. Engagement officer attending practice on November and December to encourage participation. WT in discussions with the CHC to conduct patient satisfaction survey about access	
			The practice will undertake an initial 3 month trial of a patient suggestion and comment card system. If successful it will be made permanent.	Patient suggestion box in reception area. Limited interest to date.	
Pack Page 158			The reception staff will establish and maintain a log of informal concerns and compliments	The reception staff are maintaining a log at reception and these are considered at staff meetings.	
	10	Review the Practice Development Plan. Services need to be developed with consideration to patient needs in an area where high levels of deprivation are prevalent.	The Area Head of Primary Care and the Practice Manager will review the current Practice Development Plan in the context of local demographic information and the Meirionnydd	Practice Development Plan completed August 2016 and submitted. Plan has updated demographic information and responds to identified local needs.	
3	11	Advise HIW of the systems in place to regularly review and audit medication	Rolling plan in place to audit and review medication use within the practice, looking at: Patient Safety Reviews - High risk medication National Prescribing Indicators - Focusing on areas where the practice is an outlier. Health Board specific targets	The practice has taken numerous steps to improve its medication review processes within the practice. 1. More pharmacy input:- a. Pharmacist 24 hrs/week i. Face to face medication review clinics – 2 morning clinics a week (increased in September to 3 morning clinics a week) – 8 hrs/week previously ii. Project work - 1. PPI step down – health board target 2. Review of antibiotic prescribing – health board target 3. Review of 7 day prescriptions 4. Reduction of anxiolytic and hypnotic prescribing (as currently an outlier) – PET session used in September to develop action plan iii. Screen medication reviews iv. Admin work - discharge letters,	

				medication changes etc v. Medication reviews for patient in care homes planned from September vi. Targeted 'face to face' medication reviews with patients aged over 85 yrs	
			Individual patient reviews - by phone, screen review or face to face. Target of 80% to have had a review annually	Medication review of patients on four or more medication currently at 81%	
4	12	Introduce a clinical peer review system to ensure adequacy and consistency in areas such as record keeping	In conjunction with the Area Medical Director we will review the procedures and systems to enable peer review audits to take place and will develop a schedule of audit plans to be undertaken annually.	Former HB AMD commissioned to review GP record keeping and produce action plan - November 2016	
5	13	Take action to prevent the likelihood of conversations in one of the treatment rooms being heard by people using the disabled toilet. The interconnecting doors between these two rooms should be permanently blocked off.	The work required to block the interconnecting will be undertaken by the end of March 2016	Work completed	
6	14	Consider how patients' overall experience of the GPs can be improved through better understanding, knowledge and awareness about their individual treatment and medical history by GPs	The Health Board will advertise to recruit additional salaried GPs.	Adverts placed, 1 GP offered position - awaiting acceptance. Advert remains open for any future interest.	
Pack Page 159			The Health Board will secure a core number of locums for the practice and ensure they are integrated into the training and peer review processes so as to ensure the continuity of care	Practice currently has 1 Salaried GP (T Parry) and 5 regular Locums (SPierce/RDavies/RKeating/IWilliams/P Smith). Locums participate in PET and clinical meetings when they are available.	
	14	Provide HIW with a business continuity plan, taking into consideration the sustainability of the service to ensure adequate GP cover and the provision of timely access for patients who need care and treatment. This plan should include contingency arrangements for unforeseen events.	The current continuity plan will be reviewed and updated and a copy forwarded to HIW	BCP submitted annually as part of ISMS submission to be reviewed. Revised Business Continuity Plan produced.	
8	15	Disabled toilet needs to be refurbished and redecorated. Additional adjustments should be taken to ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010.	The disabled toilet will be refurbished and redecorated to ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010	Disabled toilet has been re-decorated.	
9	16	Urgently review governance, management and leadership of practice. HIW has requested a business continuity plan, which should also address the management and leadership concerns identified in this report.	A review of governance, management and leadership of the practice will be undertaken by 31 March 2016	Review completed July 2016, recommendations built into improvement action plan for monitoring with HIW actions	
10	17	Review and clarify individual staff members' roles, responsibilities and job descriptions.	A review of the staffing structure, roles and responsibilities structure and updated job descriptions will be undertaken by the end of March 2016	All staff Job Descriptions have been reviewed and updated. All staff apart from PM transferred to A4C with effect from April 1st 2016.	

				Updated JDs issued to staff	
11	17	System should be in place to improve communication between the health board, clinicians and the practice team. Regular team meetings should be introduced as soon as possible to ensure staff receive updated information and that collaborative team working improves.	Regular team meetings will be established from January 2016	Team meetings held in April, June, August, September and November 2016. Dates for next 12 months agreed and circulated. PET sessions being utilised to train and update clinical and administrative staff.	
12	18	Review the overall staffing levels and ensure that the number of support staff is sufficient to sustain the service.	A review of the staffing structure roles and responsibilities structure and updated job descriptions will be undertaken by the end of March 2016	Review undertaken, 25 extra hours for reception cover approved and advertised, interviews planned early December. Automatic checking system approved and in process of being ordered, to release reception activity. Additional responsibilities role identified and advertised to current reception staff. Appointment made.	

Mr Mike Hedges,
Chair of Petitions Committee

Dear Mr Hedges,

Re. Petition p-04-564: Restoration of Inpatient Beds, Minor Injuries Cover and X-ray Unit to the Ffestiniog Memorial Hospital

Thank you for forwarding to us a copy of BCUHB Chief Exec. Gary Doherty's letter whose comments are supported in *Appendix 1* by Lead Practitioner Dr Bill Whitehead. We assume that the Health Board was asked to respond to correspondence sent by us to your Committee on November 15th and also December 10th 2016. But it seems that Mr Doherty elected to ignore the first of those letters i.e. our correspondence with the First Minister (again attached for your convenience).

Suffice it to say, first of all, that many of Mr Doherty's statements are open to question.

(a) He again refers to a '*detailed wide consultation process*' but, from the outset, the Betsi's definition of '*consultation*' has always been – *We invite your responses but we have no intention of changing our plans, whatever you say!*

(b) his 3rd bulleted point on Page 2 – ***Moving care from acute hospitals to the community***. The fact is that, since closure of the Ffestiniog Memorial Hospital, **the Welsh Uplands no longer have a community hospital**. However, given that he hasn't acquainted himself adequately with the geography of the area, then Mr Doherty either doesn't realise, or prefers to ignore, that fact. Ysbyty Alltwn in Dwyfor is in a different locality to that of the Welsh Uplands, which are located in north Meirionnydd and South Conwy.

(c) 3rd par., same page – '***Meirionnydd locality began rolling out enhanced care in September 2013***'. Were he to consult previous correspondence between ourselves and every one of his predecessors, then Mr Doherty would know that we have always challenged such a claim. In fact, so-called '*enhanced care*' never really materialized in this community. It was intended to give weekday care from 8am to 5pm (but not at week-ends) and was **planned for just 8 patients across the whole of Meirionnydd**, with the service being limited to 2 weeks per patient. To claim otherwise would be disingenuous of him.

Our initial enquiries at the time revealed that this enhanced care was to be **undertaken by existing staff** who were already over-worked and unable to cope. So, whatever Mr Doherty (or Dr Whitehead in *Appendix 1*) may claim, the enhanced-care service here has always been patchy, at best.

There are several other statements in his letter which need to be challenged, possibly by someone other than ourselves:-

eg (i) the '***extended absence of the practice manager***' (Page 3). For whatever reason, this person has been suspended from his post, presumably on full pay, for the past seven or eight months! Why is that? Is it yet another example of the systemic failure of healthcare provision by the Health Board in this area?

(ii) '***3 beds in Bryn Blodau Residential Home in Llan Ffestiniog for 'respite care'***' – Because locum doctors serving the Betsi-run Practice are always unwilling or unable to answer house calls to this Old Peoples' Home, then this has often resulted in elderly residents being triaged directly to Ysbyty Gwynedd, a journey of 1hr+, for treatment that a practice doctor should otherwise be able to deal with (eg. monitoring glucose levels). One example, in this respect, is of a 92 year old lady having to endure such an experience 9 times in a matter of 4 months; only to be sent back from YG within 24 hours, often at the dead of night. She

was subsequently moved (against the wishes of her son it has to be said) to a private nursing home 17 miles away, where she died within two months.

However, despite receiving letters of concern and criticism from family members to such cases, the Board has continually refused to respond, preferring to hide behind the excuse of '*patient confidentiality*'.

Little wonder, therefore, that Mr Doherty's fine words cut no ice whatsoever with the people of the Welsh Uplands.

(iii) Mr Doherty claims a distance of *12.6 miles* to a minor injuries unit! (Up to now, the Board has been quoting 14 miles!) but he chooses to ignore the fact that the distance from outlying areas in the Welsh Uplands - such as Dolwyddelan to the north - can be 20 miles or more! Are we to assume that he considers that distance to be acceptable as well?

There are several other points of contention in Mr Doherty's letter which we would be quite happy to respond to, should members of the Petitions Committee require more detail.

In fact, BCUHB's Chief Exec. wasn't asked to provide a rosy picture of healthcare in the Welsh Uplands but rather to respond to matters raised by us through the Petitions Committee, and those include the 5 questions that we put to the First Minister in our November 15th e-mail. We have sought answers to those questions, time and time again, not only from successive Betsi Chief Executives, but also from successive Health Ministers and now from the First Minister himself. But we still await answers!

Our hope is that the Petitions Committee feels, like we do, that Mr Doherty needs to answer those questions once and for all, and to do so relevantly and honestly.

Question 3 is just such an example and has to be seen for what it is, namely a blatant attempt by the Welsh Government and by Health Board officials, to build a false case against the Welsh Uplands. Simon Dean, Mr Doherty's predecessor, made this claim - '*...it is noted that Tywyn as a community is viewed as being more remote than Blaenau Ffestiniog. In terms of accessibility, the **Welsh Index of Deprivation** scores Blaenau fairly well as it benefits from a train line, bus routes and good roads. This was an important factor taken into account by the Welsh Government when approving the Tywyn Business Case and also by the Health Board in its discussions with the CHC, culminating in the decision to retain the MIU in Tywyn.*'

In fact, as we pointed out in our letter to the First Minister, Tywyn scores as well, if not better, than the Welsh Uplands in this respect. So how did the *Welsh Index of Deprivation* reach its conclusion, unless it was deliberately fed with false information? Are we to believe that neither highly-paid Betsi executives nor civil servants in Cardiff knew that Tywyn also has a train line with connections to the Midlands and on to London Euston?

Hopefully, the Petitions Committee will see the need for a credible answer to Simon Dean's claim. As also to Question 1, '*Re. the appointment of Dr Whitehead as chair of the Project Group.*' You will note that Mr Gary Doherty chose to ignore this question as well, preferring instead to give that very same individual an opportunity to justify the actions of his Project Group (see *Appendix 1*).

Appendix 1

The gist of Dr Whitehead's argument in *Appendix 1* is this:- Blaenau Ffestiniog - (still the third largest town in Gwynedd, although Dr Whitehead describes it as 'rural'!) - didn't need these services because villages along '*the coastal strip*' didn't have them either, thus implying that the Welsh Uplands, of which Blaenau Ffestiniog is the focal point, doesn't have

the same needs as the smaller towns of Dolgellau and Tywyn, where community hospitals have not only been retained but where services have been improved rather than decimated. What Dr Whitehead attempts here is to show that Blaenau Ffestiniog, in fact, **deserved** to have its services removed, whilst at the same time admitting *'that there are significant issues in Blaenau, it has higher rates of deprivation, poor diet, obesity and more older people living alone than in other areas of Meirionnydd ... delivering health and social care in Blaenau must recognise these issues.'* (*Appendix 1 page 3 last par.*)

Muddled thinking, if nothing else!

He also claims that *'Full MIU services are provided by the practice in Blaenau'*. **This, again, is not true**, and we have provided the health board with several examples to prove as much. Surely, Dr Whitehead, as Lead Practitioner, should be recognising that fact, rather than turning a blind eye and seeking excuses.

And finally, he claims that *'the Blaenau Ffestiniog Town Council and the Gwynedd County Council are **fully supportive** of the plans for Blaenau.'* What he fails to mention, however, is that in a recent referendum - **organised by the town council itself, no less!** – in which 52% of the electorate voted, 99.6% were in favour of restoration of the services that are listed in our petition.

Again, as with Mr Doherty's letter, there are several other points in *Appendix 1* that we could challenge, if called upon to do so.

Yours, most sincerely, on behalf of the Ffestiniog Memorial Hospital Defence Committee,



Geraint V Jones (Chair)

Pwyllgor Amddiffyn Ysbyty Coffa Ffestiniog

Mr Mike Hedges AM
Chair, Petitions Committee
Welsh Assembly

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140 Manod Road
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LL41 4AH
Tel 01766 830 305

February 6th, 2017

Dear Mr Hedges

RE: Petition P-04-564 Restoration of Inpatient Beds, Minor Injuries Cover and X-Ray Unit to the Ffestiniog Memorial Hospital. – Re HIW Letter

May we thank you and your Committee for obtaining responses from both Healthcare Inspectorate Wales and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) to your enquiries regarding our petition. Both letters to you require a response from us since neither is satisfactory. This letter relates entirely to the letter to you from Dr Kate Chamberlain of HIW.

[Referral to Healthcare Inspectorate Wales](#)

The primitive level of services in the Welsh Uplands that has existed since BCUHB withdrew a wide range of healthcare services from the area, has generated a substantial number of serious cases of patients' suffering. Following meetings with 8 AMs and with legal advisors in Cardiff in September 2016, our Defence Committee assembled and presented evidence of multiple cases of "Elder Abuse" as defined by the World Health Organisation. These multiple cases were presented to the Older People's Commissioner for Wales and discussed with her in a video conference in which the North Wales Community Health Council also participated.

The Older People's Commissioner decided to refer the matter to Healthcare Inspectorate Wales in a letter which included the following:

"The Ffestiniog Memorial Hospital Defence Committee are clearly of the view that the initial assessment and consultation that underpinned the development of the north Wales plan is fundamentally flawed. They also however clearly hold the view that the current level of healthcare provision constitutes elder abuse. I have attached their evidence base for this, and confirmed with them that they are happy for me to share this with you.

As this contains very serious allegations relating to the experiences of older people accessing healthcare in that region, I am passing this to you as the Regulator and Inspector of healthcare to act upon."

On 15 January 2013, before BCUHB made the decision to withdraw services from the Welsh Uplands, the Executive of the Local Medical Committee of North Wales, the statutory body representing the voice of General Practice across North Wales, wrote to each member of the Board individually.

"We reject any of the current proposals that involve closure of Community Hospital beds in North Wales, without prior thought regarding the impact of such change. There has been no convincing argument put forward that such closures will improve patient care, it seems to be being proposed as purely a cost cutting exercise.

We feel that the overall number of beds in the system is too small to deliver the service that the population is encouraged to expect, from a National Health Service, by their political leaders.

We do not accept that Minor Injury units, their associated X-ray or Out Patient departments **can be closed in our more rural communities without significant hardship being inflicted on those communities.** The nurses running these units also have other roles, as they are senior members of staff who run outlying specialist clinics.

Pwyllgor Amddiffyn Ysbyty Coffa Ffestiniog

This service review process has taken thousands of manpower hours to come to its conclusions. The conclusions of this process are not supported by Primary Care and we urge you to reject its conclusions”

Subsequent events in the affected areas such as the Welsh Uplands have confirmed the accuracy of the North Wales GPs’ professional warning.

HIW Action

The response of HIW to the Older People’s Commissioners referral has been more than disappointing. We question the level of professionalism that HIW has applied. Ten weeks after receiving a referral of service provision causing Elder Abuse, Dr Chamberlain writes to you, “I cannot provide a comprehensive view of the quality of health care in the Blaenau Ffestiniog area, as we have not inspected all of the services in the locality.” There is no indication as to when, if ever, HIW will examine the very serious complaint that has been referred to them by the Older People’s Commissioner.

Dr Chamberlain rejected two offers by members of this Defence Committee to meet with her team. One letter said,

“It seems sensible to offer to you and your investigation staff the opportunity to explore the examples in more depth with us and to seek further detail where that is felt desirable. We are perfectly prepared to visit Merthyr at an early date. Perhaps you would let me know whether such a meeting would be agreeable to you.”

Dr Chamberlain however records that HIW received “a comprehensive response” from BCUHB from which it concluded that HIW is “broadly assured that the health board has taken and is continuing to take appropriate steps in ensuring that the services it provides in the Ffestiniog area are adequate.”

Dr Chamberlain qualifies her letter with caveats about the challenges BCUHB faces. Dr Chamberlain will be aware that her Inspectorate has been inspecting Community Hospitals in the BCUHB area and is due to report publically in late February. We would have hoped that she would be comparing the health service provided to residents in areas with community hospitals to that provided in the Welsh Uplands where BCUHB has closed the hospital and hence have been able to provide you with better targeted observations than in her letter.

In explicable, Dr Chamberlain has not shared the “comprehensive response” she received from BCUHB with the Defence Committee which registered the original complaint. It is regrettable that Dr Chamberlain has not shared with us her correspondence with BCUBH. Secrecy is totally inappropriate when “Elder Abuse” alleged.

We reiterate, the residents of the Welsh Uplands do not consider that the services in their rural area “are adequate”.

We have written to the Older People’s Commissioner to ask for a copy of all correspondence between her office and HIW on this issue and any conclusions that she may have drawn. Your Committee may wish to ask the Older People’s Commissioner some similar questions.

We conclude by reiterating that we have not found the HIW involvement in any way gives residents of the Welsh Uplands confidence that the primitive level of healthcare service they are now experiencing is likely to substantially improve and the request from our original petition to your Committee stands. Our petition to you was supported by a formal community poll in which 52% of the population turned out and voted, almost unanimously, for the return of services the absence of which were already causing deep pain to many of our residents.

With grateful thanks for your Committee’s support,

For Ffestiniog Memorial Hospital Defence Committee,

Evan G Williams

Secretary

Pwyllgor Amddiffyn Ysbyty Coffa Ffestiniog

Mr Mike Hedges AM
Chair, Petitions Committee
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February 6th, 2017

Dear Mr Hedges

RE: Petition P-04-564 Restoration of Inpatient Beds, Minor Injuries Cover and X-Ray Unit to the Ffestiniog Memorial Hospital. – Re BCUHB Letter

May we thank you and your Committee for obtaining responses from both Healthcare Inspectorate Wales and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) to your enquiries regarding our petition. Both letters to you require a response from us since neither is satisfactory. This letter relates entirely to the letter to you from Mr Gary Doherty of Betsi Cadwaladr University Local Health Board (BCUHB) and its appendices.

Overview

The essence of our petition is quite straightforward. In 2013, the now discredited Betsi Cadwaladr Board, under the leadership of the subsequently dismissed Chief Executive Mary Burrows, and in defiance of professional advice from the North Wales Local Medical Committee, discriminated against the residents of the rural Welsh Uplands and withdrew basic healthcare services. The subsequent impact on patients in the area has been such that a complaint has been lodged that treatment received amounts to institutional elder abuse.

The current management team, struggling under budgetary and staffing constraints, has proved ineffective in rectifying the situation with the Welsh Uplands healthcare service being said to be one of the most primitive in the UK, based on international measures. The present Board, underperforming itself, and in special measures, have declined through their Chief Executive to commission an independent enquiry into the primitive healthcare service now provided in the Welsh Uplands, despite a request from the MP of the area to commission one.

The Assembly in 2014 approved the “Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014” which “requires persons exercising functions under this Act to seek to promote the wellbeing of people who need care and support and carers who need support”. Gwynedd Council has defined four “wellbeing areas” under the Act one of which covers Ffestiniog and adjoining Welsh Uplands. We contend that BCUHB is not promoting the wellbeing of residents of the Welsh Uplands and we provide more evidence of this later in our letter.

We agree with our Member of Parliament that an independent enquiry is needed to provide BCUHB with appropriate guidance. We ask you to consider referring this petition to the Assembly’s Health, Social Care and Sport Committee for them to evaluate if sponsoring or conducting such an inquiry would be beneficial to their work programme. We have already met with the Chair and several other members of that committee and expressed our wish that they intervene.

Introduction

The information provided to you in the letter from Mr Doherty is disingenuous, inaccurate, selective and incomplete and appears in places to be designed to mislead the reader. In Appendix 1 to his letter he is relying upon the statement of a Dr Bill Whitehead, the same official who was prominent in supporting the advice to the Betsi Cadwaladr Board in 2012-13 to withdraw services from the Welsh Uplands in defiance of other clinical opinion.

Pwyllgor Amddiffyn Ysbyty Coffa Ffestiniog

In mitigation of Mr Doherty, it perhaps relevant to point out that he has been in post for just 9 months, and hence appears to possess personally only a limited knowledge of the service reductions that have affected the Welsh Uplands.

You will be aware of the report in 2013 by the Healthcare Inspectorate Wales and the Wales Audit Office said that leadership at the Board was "fundamentally compromised". It was this 'leadership' under Mrs Mary Burrows (a predecessor of Mr Doherty) as Chief Executive, which created many of the problems that North Wales faces in its healthcare system, and which 'leadership' made the obtuse decision to withdraw fundamental healthcare services from the Welsh Uplands.

Mrs Burrows' 'leadership' led to the establishment of a sub-standard management team which has resulted in BCUHB being subjected to 'formal special measures' from which recovery may be very slow. The on-going 'scandal' in mental health services in North Wales, the excessive waiting lists for many surgical procedures, the departure of many General Practitioners from the NHS and the fragility of the Out of Hours service is indicative that the current management team, despite being partly refreshed, is finding it very difficult to recover from the errors of the Mrs Burrows era.

Patients across North Wales are suffering an unsatisfactory service as local AMs continually point out, and those from the Welsh Uplands, are particularly suffering a primitive healthcare service which has caused much suffering and to which, in a substantial number of cases, we consider that the World Health Organisation definition of 'Elder Abuse' applies.

Betsi Cadwaladr UHB is able to review all of the cases that we have published as potentially Elder Abuse. All of them have been reported to BCUHB as various levels of complaint or concern by the families involved, or the family has made the complaint to the Community Health Council which has taken the issue up with BCUHB, or the details have appeared in the local press. BCUHB DOES NOT CONTEST THAT THIS LEVEL OF MALTREATMENT TO PATIENTS HAS ARISEN. We can confirm that cases are still being brought to our attention at regular intervals as they will continue to do unless basic community healthcare services are restored in the Welsh Uplands.

[The Warning Ignored](#)

On 15 January 2013, before BCUHB made the decision to withdraw services from the Welsh Uplands, the Executive of the Local Medical Committee of North Wales, the statutory body representing the voice of General Practice across North Wales, wrote to each member of the Board individually.

"We reject any of the current proposals that involve closure of Community Hospital beds in North Wales, without prior thought regarding the impact of such change. There has been no convincing argument put forward that such closures will improve patient care, it seems to be being proposed as purely a cost cutting exercise.

We feel that the overall number of beds in the system is too small to deliver the service that the population is encouraged to expect, from a National Health Service, by their political leaders.

We do not accept that Minor Injury units, their associated X-ray or Out Patient departments **can be closed in our more rural communities without significant hardship being inflicted on those communities.** The nurses running these units also have other roles, as they are senior members of staff who run outlying specialist clinics.

This service review process has taken thousands of manpower hours to come to its conclusions. The conclusions of this process are not supported by Primary Care and we urge you to reject its conclusions"

Pwyllgor Amddiffyn Ysbyty Coffa Ffestiniog

Subsequent events in the affected areas such as the Welsh Uplands have confirmed the accuracy of the North Wales GPs' professional warning.

Mr Doherty's Involvement

Since his appointment, Mr Doherty has held just one meeting with the residents' representatives which included the Member of Parliament for the constituency, Mrs Liz Saville-Roberts. Understandably, Mr Doherty's grasp of the background was limited. Of concern was the fact that when asked by Mrs Saville-Roberts to initiate a formal enquiry into the state of the healthcare service in the Welsh Uplands, Mr Doherty refused as "he did not want to reopen previous decisions, however dis-satisfied residents were with them".

A formal request to Mr Doherty for an external review of the healthcare services in the Welsh Uplands followed. A month later Mr Doherty replied that "I want my team to design a process whereby we can identify improvements. I want to prioritise this rather than to commission an external review". His team has made little subsequent effort to address the needs of the population with improvements and the situation continues to deteriorate.

Mr Doherty struggled with finance in his last post in Blackpool where the budgetary overspend doubled. Understandably, in his new role in North Wales he will be concerned about budget overruns and financial constraint. But we feel sure that any such concerns should not over-ride measures to address the Elder Abuse and other healthcare deficiencies that would be confirmed by an independent enquiry.

Your committee might wish to explore with Mr Doherty the financial implications for the Trust of reopening beds, X-ray and MIU in the new building in Blaenau Ffestiniog so that a healthcare service can again be provided to the Welsh Uplands residents.

Mr Doherty failed to mention in his letter to you that the principal 'values statement' adopted by BCUHB is "Put patients first" and that the Board's 'purpose' is declared as "to improve health and deliver excellent care". The treatment of the residents of the Welsh Uplands makes these BCUHB statements of intent sound rather hypocritical!

In-Patient Service Comments

Mr Doherty refers to an "earlier decision" to close beds by North West Wales Trust and a "Chris Jones" report. This demonstrates his lack of knowledge of the background and his failure to enquire carefully into the historical facts. In 2008, Gwynedd Local Health Board Director of Development, Clare Jones, made a proposal to close the beds in the Ffestiniog Memorial Hospital, Gwynedd LHB having already closed one ward in the hospital a year earlier.

The Minister appointed Mr Michael Williams to review the situation. He found that the closure of beds in Gwynedd over the previous few years had already caused bed blocking at Ysbyty Gwynedd. The Gwynedd Local Health Board proposal was in conflict with the Gwynedd Community Services Plan which included the priority to "Develop and enhance services outside the district general hospitals". Following his report to the then Minister, Mrs Edwina Hart ordered the suspension of any more bed closures until at least more beds could be brought on line in Gwynedd.

Betsi Cadwaladr ULHB came into effect on October 1st 2009. The Ffestiniog Memorial Hospital continued to provide a valued inpatient bed service until 2013.

Ffestiniog Memorial Hospital Hub served the villages of North Meirionnydd centred upon Blaenau Ffestiniog, Llan Ffestiniog, and Trawsfynydd, and the neighbouring Uplands areas at the extreme south of the Conwy Valley. The map below illustrates the area that the Memorial Hospital Hub served so well.

BETSI SERVICES 2012



 24 HOUR HOSPITAL HUB BASED HEALTHCARE

It is unclear in the collection of random jottings that Mr Doherty has reproduced under “In-Patient Services” what case he is trying to make. The facts are that:

- Betsi Cadwaladr in 2013 decided to withdraw inpatient facilities, X-ray and MIU services from the Welsh Uplands and within the North West Wales area, the only community from which services were withdrawn was the Welsh Uplands. This was an act of discrimination against an impoverished, intensely Welsh speaking area and many residents still consider that it included racial discrimination.
- Local censuses taken of residents of the various Welsh Uplands villages in hospital from time to time, have shown that the number of Welsh Uplands residents bed blocking in Ysbyty Gwynedd or occupying beds in other community hospitals, in Dolgellau, in Tremadog, in Bryn Beryl and in Caernarfon has remained consistently between 9 and 12. Mr Doherty confirms the need to cater for this number of patients in care pathways that involve inpatient nursing, by referring to 6 extra beds BCUHB is alleged to have provided in Ysbyty Alltwen, Tremadog and the 3 beds procured by BCUHB in Bryn Blodau residential home, Llan Ffestiniog, i.e. 9 beds in total.

Pwyllgor Amddiffyn Ysbyty Coffa Ffestiniog

- However since BCUHB has closed the beds in the Memorial Hospital, it has outsourced patients to whatever 'out of area' community hospital' in Gwynedd temporarily has a spare bed. These are all distant from the Welsh Uplands and patients have been accommodated in beds in Dolgellau, Tremadog, Bryn Beryl and Caernarfon. For elderly couples when one partner is unwell, to have to travel so far to see their partner amounts to cruelty.

The healthcare service provided by BCUHB is NOT meeting the aim of the "Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014" which "requires persons exercising functions under this Act to seek to promote the wellbeing of people who need care and support **and carers who need support**". Nor is the BCUHB healthcare service in the Welsh Uplands meeting the Welsh Government's declared objective of providing care nearer to home.

Use of Residential Home

The Welsh Uplands residents value the Bryn Blodau residential home in Llan Ffestiniog. It is the only residential home that they have. There is no nursing care home or hospice or any other residential care home in the Welsh Uplands. The demand for residential care from the area exceeds the capacity of Bryn Blodau to satisfy.

Losing three residential care home places for residents who needed such accommodation, because BCUHB had commissioned three beds as a result of the Memorial Hospital being closed, has added to the waiting list for long term admissions. The community, already starved of amenities for older people, does not view three beds taken from it in Bryn Blodau as a substitute for inpatient care in its Memorial Hospital.

Concerns have been expressed about the safety of care provided in Bryn Blodau for patients who are in need of nursing care. There are no resident nurses in Bryn Blodau, the district nursing service calls once or twice a day to deliver services to the 3 NHS patients in an intermediate care unit, to 8 patients in a dementia unit and as scheduled to others of the 31 additional residents. However in May 2016, CCSIW formally issued a non-compliance notice over drug errors by the non-nursing staff at the home.

The "Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014

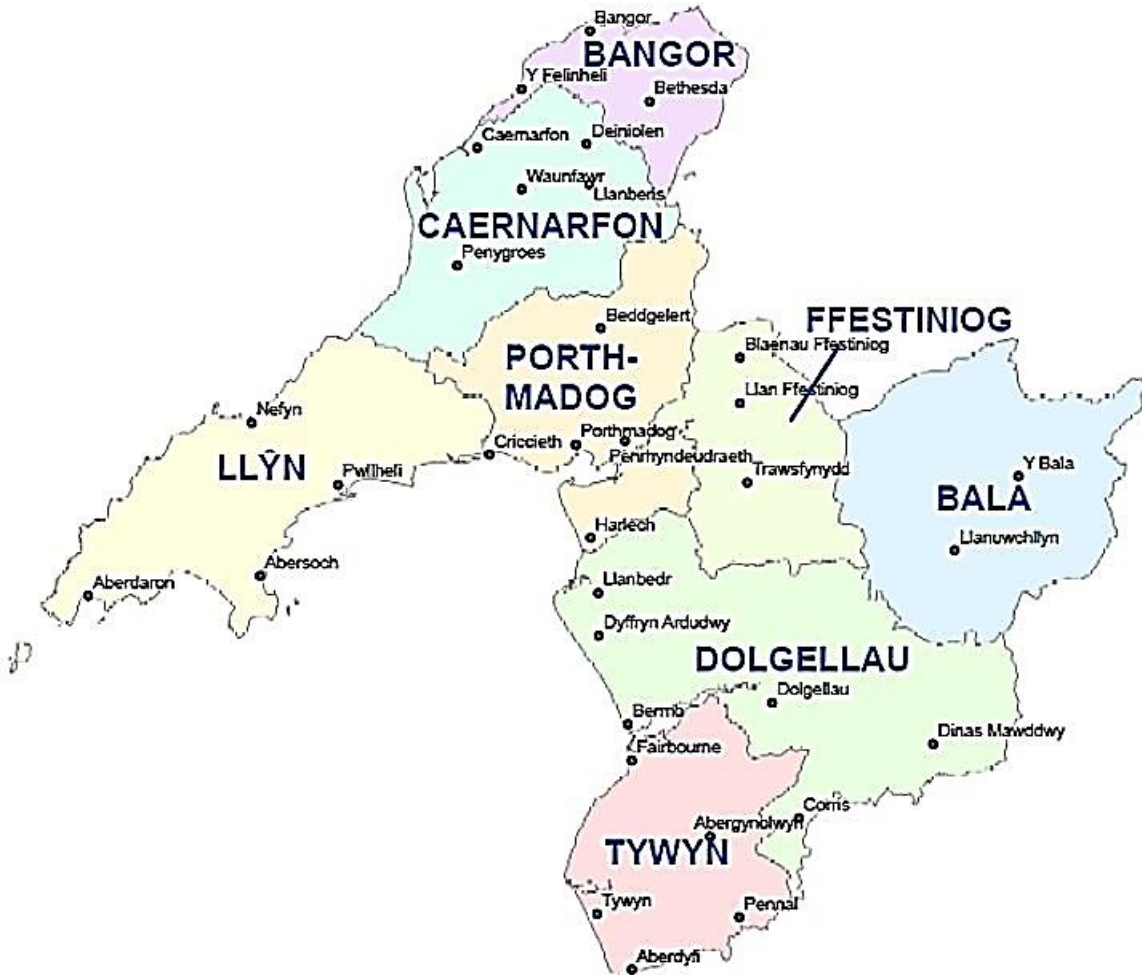
In response to the requirements of the Act and in accordance with consideration of the Act by the Gwynedd and Môn Public Service Board, Gwynedd Council has determined a number of "well-being" areas under the Act as shown in the diagram below.

Two of the defined areas, Ffestiniog and Tywyn particularly bear comparison. Both are similar in geographic size, similar in the size of population at circa 7,000 residents, (2011 Gwynedd census area MSOA *middle layer super output area* 009 equates exactly to Ffestiniog well-being area known also previously as Y Moelwyn and Gwynedd census area MSOA 017 equates to Tywyn well-being area – name unchanged). Until March 2013, both localities possessed a community hospital providing valued service to their respective communities and also into inland rural areas outwith their actual defined area.

In submitting Appendix 1 Mr Doherty is being disingenuous. He refers to statistics from just one GP practice in the Welsh Uplands, and should have been aware that the residents of the area are registered with several different GP practices. His figures are therefore incorrect for any meaningful comparative purpose, but correct in one respect. The life expectancy of the residents of the Welsh Uplands has been and is significantly less than Gwynedd and Meirionnydd as a whole. The multiple co-morbidities suffered by the residents of the Welsh Uplands demand more in locality healthcare services and not the withdrawal of major community hospital facilities.

Mr Doherty's Appendix 1 makes reference to the 'Welsh Health Observatory' (sic) data. Regrettably he fails to inform the Committee that 'Public Health Wales Observatory' small area data is not yet available and is scheduled for release in the summer of 2017. As is typical in a document seeking to be disingenuous, the comparative data area that he purports to use is not specified but kept anonymous.

GWYNEDD WELL-BEING LOCALITIES



Appendix 2 of Mr Doherty's letter gives a list of the current service provision and that planned for the Welsh Uplands centre. Of course such services will be provided in every well-being locality. BUT WHY JUST THESE SERVICES? HOW DOES THIS SERVICE PROFILE COMPARE WITH OTHER WELL-BEING AREAS?

Mr Doherty has not provided any comparative proforma, not even for other well-being areas in Meirionnydd.

However, Prof Marcus Longley in his report "MID WALES HEALTHCARE STUDY" of September 2014 did adopt a proforma for comparison based on international scorecards. He evaluated rural localities in Scotland and Wales using this method. He produced scorecard tables for both Dolgellau and Tywyn localities but for Blaenau Ffestiniog he received no data from BCUHB and hence recorded "The precise pattern of services in this hospital is currently being reviewed".

We have completed the Ffestiniog scorecard in the table below with the current and planned situation.

COMPARISON OF CURRENT & PLANNED HEALTHCARE SERVICES IN THREE 'WELL BEING' COMMUNITIES IN MEIRIONNYDD

SERVICES	DOLGELLAU	TYWYN	FFESTINIOG
24 hour on site medical cover	YES	YES (GP - OOH)	NO
24 hour nursing cover	YES	YES	NO
Minor Injuries Unit	YES - 8-8	YES 10-6	NO
Radiography cover	YES - Daily	YES Several days	NO
Beds available	YES - 20	YES - 10 now 16	NONE
Out of Hours treatment service	YES	NO -Dolgellau	NO -Tremadog
Emergencies	YES	YES	NO
Inpatient alcohol detox	YES	NO	NO
Integrated Midwifery service	YES	YES	YES
Diagnostic Ultrasound service	YES	NO	NO
Palliative Care	YES	YES	PLANNED NEW
Terminal Care	YES	YES	NO
Minor Surgery	YES	YES	NO
Podiatry	YES	YES	YES
Physiotherapy	YES	YES	YES
Speech and Language Therapy	YES	YES	YES
Occupational Therapy	YES	YES	NO - Tremadog
24 Hour BP monitoring	YES	YES	YES
Event Monitoring	YES	YES	NO
Community Paediatric Clinic	YES	YES	YES
Community Dental Service	YES	YES	YES
Video Conferencing Facility	YES	YES	NO
Visiting Services			
General Surgery Clinic	YES	YES	NO
Audiology Clinic	YES		
Healthy Hearts Clinic	YES	YES	YES
Continence Promotion Clinic	YES	YES	YES
Eye Clinic	YES	YES	YES
Chest Clinic	YES		PLANNED NEW
Rheumatology Clinic	YES	YES	YES
CKD Nurse Clinic	YES		
Diabetic Retinopathy Clinic	YES		
Tele Medicine Clinic	YES		
Paeds Clinic	YES	YES	YES
Diabetic Nurse Clinic	YES	YES	YES
Orthopaedic Clinic	YES	YES	
Orthoptist Clinic	YES	YES	YES

Pwyllgor Amddiffyn Ysbyty Coffa Ffestiniog

The residents of the Welsh Uplands welcome the copy of the list of services in Appendix 2, but stress, supported by the above scorecard, that they are insufficient in themselves to provide more than a service ranked as primitive. The residents accept that the level of services provided in the Tywyn well-being area provides a basis for appropriate community care and would expect equivalent healthcare services to be provided **within** the Welsh Uplands.

One of Mr Doherty's closing paragraphs to his letter states disingenuously, "overall community health service delivery in Blaenau Ffestiniog favours comparably with other small populations in Meirionnydd". He does not identify the "small populations" which he is using to compare with the Welsh Uplands. The proforma table above demonstrates how unfavourable the provision of healthcare services in the Welsh Uplands is compared with the Dolgellau and Tywyn communities.

Healthcare Inspectorate Wales and the Ffestiniog Health Centre

Appendix 3 of the letter from Mr Doherty to you is the action plan requested by HIW of BCUHB after its inspection of the GP practice. HIW have stated that they will monitor progress on their next inspection.

We would point out in addition to the closure of the hospital, two branch surgeries have been subsequently closed, forcing some patients to travel up to 8 miles to the remaining surgery or to register with another practice. A branch surgery of another practice continues to provide a service four mornings a week 9 miles away in Trawsfynydd.

In a letter to HIW, a retired GP from the Ffestiniog practice, Dr O W Evans, has pointed out that a practice based on frequently changing and part time locum GPs can produce very poor continuity of care. We have seen one set patient notes demonstrating that in a little over 6 months the patient was treated by seven different locums. The lack of effective continuity of care led to hospitalisation for which BCUHB subsequently apologised. A letter with apologies after the event is not a substitute for good treatment when the patient needs it.

We hope that HIW will examine more closely on their next visit the impact on patients of a regime of frequently changing and part time locum GPs.

Conclusion

Mr Doherty ends his letter to you by expressing the hope that you have "a comprehensive understanding of how the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board has addressed the concerns regarding health care provision raised by the Defence Committee".

We trust you will agree that the BCUHB response has been totally inadequate. BCUHB under Mrs Mary Burrows made a decision which discriminated against the residents of the Welsh Uplands. BCUHB has struggled since then and continues to struggle in special measures. It has proved itself unable to rectify the service to meet the residents' needs. An independent external review to give the Board some guidance on providing an acceptable level of healthcare in the Welsh Uplands is long overdue.

We trust that you conclude that our petition has still not been adequately responded to. The Minister has "washed his hands" of the matter and refers it consistently to BCUHB. You may be able to steer our case into Assembly channels that can arrange for determining an acceptable course of action.

Yours sincerely,

For Ffestiniog Memorial Hospital Defence Committee,

Evan G Williams

Secretary

Agenda Item 3.11

P-04-682 Routine Screening for Type 1 Diabetes in Children and Young People

This petition was submitted by Anthony Cook, having collected 2,570 signatures. An associated petition collected 3,670 signatures

Text of the Petition

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to introduce routine screening for Type 1 Diabetes in children and young people.

In January of this year we tragically lost our beloved 13-year-old grandson, Peter Baldwin, to Type 1 diabetes that had been undetected until it was too late to save him. Peter was a well-loved and highly respected pupil at Whitchurch High School in Cardiff where he is greatly missed but for his family the hurt is unimaginable.

Our daughter Beth was recently presented with an award from The Pride of Britain for her fundraising efforts and for raising awareness of this terrible illness but with your help, and that of your friends and family we can really make a difference.

Please spare a couple of minutes to sign our petition calling on the Welsh Government to introduce a screening programme and to raise the profile of the need to check for Type 1 Diabetes in anyone presented to a health care professional with unexplained flu-like symptoms or general feeling of being unwell. The test involved is merely a finger prick or urine sample and takes less

time than you have spent reading this paragraph; it also only costs pennies. It is our intention to make this test as routine within GP surgeries and clinics as temperature and blood pressure checks presently are.

Your signature on this petition really could help save lives and prevent further terrible loss within families.

Additional Information:

The ideal standard would be for screening of all youngsters in order to catch this stealthy condition in the early stages. Many parts of the world are seeing the benefit of this screening and are now introducing it, the most recent being North Carolina in the U.S. Below is a link to the North Carolina implementation.

<http://insulinnation.com/living/reegans-rule-passes-north-carolina/>

The devolved Scottish Parliament is ahead of the rest of the U.K. and is already committed to debate the issue and appear very likely to implement screening. We want this for our children in Wales and are calling on the Welsh Government to introduce screening at the earliest opportunity.

PLEASE SIGN THE PETITION AND SHARE IT FAR AND WIDE

(now give yourself a pat on the back, you may have saved a child's life)

A petition campaigning for this change across the UK is currently collecting signatures on Change.org:

<https://www.change.org/p/craig-williams-mp-screen-children-for-type-1-diabetes>

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Cardiff North
- South Wales Central

Mike Hedges AM
Chair, Petitions Committee
Tŷ Hywel
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

17 January 2017

Dear Mike,

Petition P-04-682 Routine Screening for Type 1 Diabetes in Children and Young People

Further to my letter of the 1 November 2016, I am writing to update you on recent correspondence regarding the above petition.

You will be aware that the Committee wrote to the Children and Young People's Wales Diabetes Network to seek up to date information on action to improve outcomes for children and young people with Type 1 diabetes in Wales. The Network provided us with information on the study currently underway in Germany into whether a screening programme for Type 1 diabetes is feasible across a large population (attached).

Following receipt of this information, the Committee agreed to await the outcome of that study, which we understand is due to conclude later in 2017.

This will then inform any further work the Committee may decide to undertake in this regard or any other correspondence it may decide to send to the Cabinet Secretary for Health, Well-being and Sport.

I hope you find this update helpful.

Yours sincerely,



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dai Lloyd". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D'.

Dr Dai Lloyd AM
Chair, Health, Social Care and Sport Committee





GIG
CYMRU
NHS
WALES

Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Abertawe Bro Morgannwg
University Health Board

☎ Direct line/Rhif Ilinell union: 01792 530745

📠 Fax/ffacs:

✉ email:

DEPARTMENT OF CHILD HEALTH
Morrison Hospital
Morrison
Swansea, SA6 6NL

Our ref: CB/hjw
Your ref:

Date: 16/11/16

Dr Dai Lloyd
AM & Chair of Health & Social Care & Support Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Health & Social Care & Support committee
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Dear Dr Lloyd

Thank you for your letter dated 10th November 2016. The Children and Young People's Wales Diabetes Network (& Brecon Group) welcomes the aim of the petitioners to see an earlier diagnosis of type 1 diabetes and a reduction in the number of children and young people where a delay leads to potential life-threatening Diabetic Ketoacidosis (DKA).

The Children and Young People's Wales Diabetes Network (& Brecon Group) is comprised of multi-disciplinary team members working in all 14 paediatric diabetes units in Wales. Our membership includes paediatricians, specialist nurses, dietitians and child psychologists. We also have representation from the third sector and parent representatives on our steering group.

Engaging primary care colleagues to reduce the incidence of DKA at diagnosis is one of the priority areas for our network. We continue to pursue a number of different themes to attempt to reduce the frequency of DKA at the time of diagnosis for children and young people with Type 1 diabetes in Wales by making an earlier diagnosis where possible. This includes:-

Research

The Early Detection of Type 1 Diabetes in Youth (EDDY) study carried out in Cardiff University recently reported the results of their feasibility study. The study aimed to assess the feasibility of developing / delivering a community educational intervention for parents of children under 18 years of age and GP / practice nurses in Cardiff, the Vale of Glamorgan and Bridgend, to increase the awareness of early symptoms of type 1 diabetes. The intervention included 120,000 reusable shopping bags and bilingual leaflets for delivery via 329 schools and nurseries (covering 105,000 children) and for GP's and practice nurses the delivery of glucose / ketone meters and single use lancets with posters, stickers and education sessions delivered to 102 practices.

The conclusion of the study was that delivery of the intervention was feasible and although the study was not designed to show a clinical effect, (such as a reduction in rates of DKA at diagnosis), anecdotal reports suggest the impact from the process evaluation is encouraging. The study authors are now looking for funding to conduct a much larger study that would be powered to show a reduction in DKA at diagnosis.

Collaboration with third sector organizations

The network continues to work closely with Diabetes UK Cymru regarding their planned 2017 public health campaign. We have met regularly with Diabetes UK Cymru to provide advice and support for their activities and will continue to do so.

As part of this collaboration we are working on conveying key clinical messages to primary care colleagues through NHS communication channels. These messages will urge primary care colleagues to proactively ask

about the '4 Ts' used to diagnose Type 1 (Toilet, Thirsty, Thinner, Tired) and encourage the use of a fifth and sixth 'T' – to TEST TODAY. Immediate near patient blood glucose testing of suspected diabetes in children and young people is the NICE standard.

Collaboration with primary care colleagues

The network coordinator has met with Dr Alistair Roeves and Dr David Miller-Jones, who both have leadership roles with regard to diabetes in primary care in Wales. We will continue to work with them to develop interventions and education to support learning in primary care. Dr Roeves has suggested making every new diagnosis of a child with diabetes a learning event within GP Clusters, led by primary care colleagues and we will explore this further with him. Dr Roeves has also suggested including a commitment to following the correct procedure at diagnosis within GP Cluster plans as part of this learning programme. This would be in addition to the communications campaigns listed above.

We have recently heard of a scheme in the West Midlands introducing a prompt on the electronic request system that the GP's use, such that should they ever request a formal laboratory blood glucose test for a child under the age of 18, then a message will appear on screen reminding them that this should be done as an immediate finger prick glucose. We will raise this with our colleagues and see if a similar electronic prompt is feasible in Wales.

Dr David Millar-Jones has also suggested that all GPs in Wales complete the e-learning module on diagnosis of diabetes produced by the Primary Care Diabetes Society. As a network, we support this proposal and would like to see all primary care clinical colleagues complete this learning.

Research and screening

There are a number of research pathways being explored around the world to consider the potentially attractive possibility of screening for Type 1 diabetes in children. One suggested pathway would be to identify children at increased risk, either because of their family history, through genetic screening of all children done at the time of birth or through screening of all children via blood testing for auto-antibodies around the age of 2 years. I believe the petitioners refer to the FR1DA study in their correspondence currently taking place in Bavaria. It is suggested that if 2 auto-antibodies are present in the blood stream, then children should be repeatedly screened at 1-6 monthly intervals with oral glucose tolerance tests looking for the emergence of abnormal blood glucose levels. Once abnormal blood glucose levels are present, some authors suggest that it may be possible to intervene with as yet unproven immune therapy to either prevent or defer the onset of Type 1 diabetes. In addition to repeated blood glucose testing, the FR1DA study is evaluating education for families to attempt to reduce the incidence of DKA at diagnosis. The FR1DA authors acknowledge that a limitation of their study is that it does not attempt to address the socio-economic cost of screening. Given the highly intensive nature of the screening process described, it is unclear whether it will be possible to prove that it will be of overall health benefit, or deliver a health economics model that makes it applicable to clinical practice. Indeed, in a journal article in 2015, the conclusion drawn from a health economics evaluation of population screening was that current screening costs far outweigh the economic benefits.

The Wales network continues to work closely with the 10 English networks to evaluate research and introduce best practice into our clinics.

Difficulties with the petitioner's proposal to screen unwell children

As a clinical network, we are unable to support the specific proposal raised by the petitioners calling for, "a **mandatory** duty for all GPs and healthcare professionals in a primary care setting to carry out the finger prick blood test for all children who present to them with an illness that could be masking Type 1." There are several reasons why such an approach would not meet the essential criteria of a good screening test:

- 1) There is a lack of evidence from research studies that testing whole populations of unwell children is of benefit to prevent DKA at diagnosis. Tragic cases, such as that of Peter Baldwin, appear to be exceptionally rare.
- 2) Transient stress hyperglycaemia is very common in unwell children. Studies report that between 3.8 and 4.7% of children presenting to emergency departments for any reason have elevated glucose levels and for febrile children this rate rises as high as 11.9% in one study. Transient stress hyperglycaemia does not appear to be associated with an increased risk of later developing diabetes.
- 3) Due to the lack of specificity of glucose testing in unwell children, there is a significant risk of harm from this approach; i.e. that in order to identify a very small number of cases such as Peter's, very

large numbers of normal children with transient stress hyperglycaemia then undergo follow up including unnecessary painful investigations and anxiety for their families.

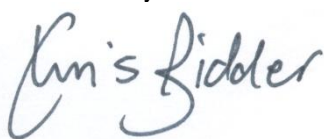
As a Network we strongly recommend all NHS staff adhere to NICE guidelines, which state that the characteristics of type 1 diabetes in children and young people include polyuria, polydipsia, weight loss and tiredness and that children and young people with suspected type 1 diabetes should be referred immediately (on the same day) to the Paediatric Diabetes team.

Many of the recommendations the petitioners make in their correspondence to the committee are of excellent value and many are being pursued by ourselves, primary care colleagues and Diabetes UK Cymru. These include additional training for primary care staff, the provision of glucose meters to GP's / practice nurses and a need for health boards to be aware of and report on pathways of care and DKA rates at diagnosis.

I am happy to be contacted to answer further queries if this would be beneficial to the committee

Best wishes,

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chris Bidder". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr Christopher Bidder

On Behalf of Children & Young People Wales Diabetes Network (& Brecon Group)

13th December 2016

Dear Petitions Committee Members,

Petition P-04-682 Routine Screening for Type 1 Diabetes in Children and Young People

Thank you for your letter relating to the above petition currently under your consideration. Your request for more information is welcomed and we are very happy to provide assistance to the Committee. The Baldwin family, who are the petitioners in this case, have worked closely with us since Peter's death in January 2014.

Approximately 1,500 children and young people have Type 1 diabetes in Wales. 16% will have been diagnosed late in the life-threatening stage of DKA, or diabetic ketoacidosis. In the under 5s age group, this increases to 24%. A range of common childhood illnesses, such as flu, water infections or chest infections can be misleading and can lead to misdiagnosis. Type 1 diabetes is a rapid onset condition, resulting in a child becoming critically ill. If left without immediate testing, referral and treatment, this can be fatal.

Please find our views on the petition itself and additional information below:

Screening

- Routine screening for Type 1 diabetes has not been successfully adopted by any nation worldwide, although there is current research in Germany that has not yet been finalised. It is thought to be very difficult to do and the the numbers affected would be small.
- The National Screening Committee doesn't screen for a condition that can't be treated or prevented and so screening would not come under the Committee's remit.

Diabetes UK Cymru and Diabetes UK are operating names of the **British Diabetes Association**. Company limited by guarantee. Registered in England no. 339181. Registered office: Macleod House, 10 Parkway, London NW1 7AA. A charity registered in England and Wales (215199) and in Scotland (SC039136).

Diabetes UK Cymru a Diabetes UK yw enw gweithredol **Cymdeithas Diabetes Prydain**. Cwmni cyfyngedig drwy warant. Cofrestredig yn Lloegr rhif 339181. Swyddfa gofrestrdig: Macleod House, 10 Parkway, Llundain NW1 7AA. Elusen gofrestrdig yng Nghymru a Lloegr (215199) ac yn yr Alban (SC039136).

- If population-wide screening were to be adopted, a test for genes or antibodies to detect high risk would first be needed, followed by a blood glucose test to narrow this down. The evidence is not clear that a national screening programme is the right thing to do, at present.
- The petitioners highlight a situation in North Carolina as an area that does carry out screening. This is not the case when looked at in more detail. The commitment in North Carolina is to raise awareness amongst parents via family healthcare visitors of the symptoms of Type 1 diabetes. This is similar to the Personal Child Health Record or 'Red Book' system that we have in the UK in providing health information to new parents in baby packs.
- Regardless of the above, the primary element of the petition, and clearly the intention of Peter's family, is the need to reduce the instances of undiagnosed Type 1 diabetes.
- The recommended way to action this within current systems is via testing for Type 1 diabetes in primary care if a child presents with the 4Ts (tired, thirsty, toilet, thinner) or unexplained symptoms.

Awareness of undiagnosed Type 1

- Diabetes UK Cymru is currently working with Baldwin family and other families affected by late diagnosis to develop and deliver an awareness raising campaign targeting primary care staff, education staff and parents.
- We note that the recently published Welsh Government *Together for Health: A Diabetes Delivery Plan* commits the Children & Young People's Wales Diabetes Network (the Network) to a number of actions in this area.
- We are aware that in October 2016, the Health & Social Care Committee intended to contact the Network for more information and to potentially use the response in writing to the Cabinet Secretary. We would be interested to learn of any outcomes so as to enable all parties to work collaboratively.

Next steps:

- We would welcome the Committee's experience and expertise in (i) raising awareness amongst primary care staff in Wales and (ii) influencing primary care procedures so as to increase the testing of blood glucose in Wales.
- On 8th March 2016, the Petition Committee of the Fourth Assembly made the following commitments. The Baldwin family and Diabetes UK Cymru were encouraged by the planned action of its members and would like to request that these are taken forward:

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Diabetes UK Cymru a Diabetes UK yw enw gweithredol **Cymdeithas Diabetes Prydain**. Cwmni cyfyngedig drwy warant. Cofrestredig yn Lloegr rhif 339181. Swyddfa gofrestredig: Macleod House, 10 Parkway, Llundain NW1 7AA. Elusen gofrestredig yng Nghymru a Lloegr (215199) ac yn yr Alban (SC039136).

- (i) The Committee will write to all Local Health Boards in Wales requesting more information on their DKA/Type 1 diagnosis policies and pathways. When all responses have been received, the Committee will write a Research Paper on DKA/Type 1 diagnosis in Wales to assist them in their work and to raise awareness of the issue amongst other AMs who may sit on the relevant Committees.
- (ii) The Committee will write to Health & Social Services Minister to request clarification of his Ministerial response to the petition following the initial response received. The Committee will request to see the evidence on which the Ministerial response is based, as this is also unclear, especially to those who are not familiar with diabetes.
- (iii) The Committee will recommend that the Minister meet with the Baldwin family to discuss the possibilities available to us in Wales to implement any future procedural measures that could be put in place for testing for Type 1.

The family has requested that I pass on the message that they are particularly impressed and pleased with the Committee's discussions and commitments thus far.

We are happy to provide further evidence to the Committee and would like to extend this offer to the Health & Social Care Committee. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas,



Sara Moran

Policy & Public Affairs Lead, Wales

Health & Social Care Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

6th February 2017

Dear Chair,

Re: National Assembly for Wales: Petition submission P-04-682 (Campaign to prevent late diagnosis of Type 1 diabetes)

We would like to thank the Committee for continuing to review our petition to reduce DKA diagnosis of Type 1 diabetes. We would like to respond to the recent evidence provided to the Committee by the Children & Young People Wales Diabetes Network and the recent letter from yourselves to the Petitions Committee.

We appreciate the Committee researching and following the German study currently underway but are disappointed to learn that the Committee might await its outcome prior to taking action in Wales.

As previously noted, we accept that a screening programme for Type 1 diabetes may not be feasible across a large population at present. We re-emphasise the aim of our campaign is for detection of Type 1 to take place as early as possible in primary care settings. As advised by Diabetes UK Cymru's evidence to the Petitions Committee, approximately 1,500 children and young people have Type 1 diabetes in Wales. Up to 20% will have been diagnosed late in the life-threatening stage of DKA, or diabetic ketoacidosis. In the under 5s age group, this increases to 24%.

We were very heartened by the previous Petition Committee's promises to take the following actions to help us:

1. Write to local health boards for Type 1 Diagnosis/ DKA policies & on receipt of responses commission a research paper to form basis to raise awareness and shared best practice on best policies/ pathways and systems.

2. Request a response from the Cabinet Secretary for Health, Well-being & Sport on the evidence from the initial response given.
3. Recommend that the Cabinet Secretary meet with us to discuss how Wales can lead the way with prompt procedures for primary care testing and prevent unnecessary hospital stays/stress/ costs/ death from late diagnosis.

These actions were suggested by Bethan Jenkins AM and unanimously adopted by the other members of the previous committee.

Whilst we wait for the results from the study in Germany, will the Committee take these actions now?

We are not asking primary care / GP's to test ALL children, we appreciate the complexities and demands on GP's. We would like a process in place that 'prompts' the right questions if a child is unwell to eliminate cases like Peter's. NICE guidelines exist however it all comes back to interpretation and the questions asked at the time of appointment. It's not on many GP's radars to check for Type 1, a prompt is needed; the 4T's questions need to be mandatory to eliminate risk (with a blood glucose monitor readily available if there is any doubt). Type 1 needs to be a consideration, a thought; targeted questioning (4T's) can help differentiate between those who are at risk.

If our GP had followed NICE guidelines, Peter may still be with us.

Peter was unwell, had laboured breathing and was 'flu like'. We attended our GP and told them that he was drinking lots of water, not eating, lethargic and was coughing. They diagnosed a chest infection, used a stethoscope, checked his glands and gave us antibiotics for him. The GP did not notice ketones on his breath or ask about any of the 4T's symptoms of Type 1 diabetes (toilet, thirsty, thinner and tired). Had they asked and pricked his finger, Peter would have had a 24 hour head start. The onset of Type 1 can be very quick. We now know Peter was already in DKA when we were at the surgery.

We await your response and proposed actions moving forward and thank you for your time.

Yours faithfully,

The Baldwin family



Agenda Item 3.12

P-05-713 The Wildlife Warriors

This petition was submitted by Lee Kabza, having collected 13 online signatures and 83 paper signatures.

Text of the Petition

Caerphilly Junior Forum works with children aged 7-11 years old in Caerphilly borough to give children a voice on issues which are important to children.

Each year the Junior Forum identifies a priority issue to address. The priority for 2015-2016 is to protect the natural habitat of wildlife.

Junior Forum members believe that every primary school in Wales should have an environment club called the "Wildlife Warriors" to help to protect the natural environment of local wildlife.

This club would:

- be different from schools eco committees as it would allow anyone to join at any age. Children would not need to be elected to the club.
- be active all year to help protect wildlife.
- be hands on in their community and do practical activities to help protect wildlife. These activities could include, cleaning rivers, building wildlife homes, planting flowers and trees.
- be flexible so different people can join at different times.

National Assembly for Wales
Petitions Committee
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

09/01/17

Dear Mr Hedges AC/AM

Thank you for your letter dated 13th December and the opportunity to respond further to the petition regarding the Wildlife Warriors.

Firstly, Caerphilly is a great county for Eco Schools, with every school registered on the programme and over a third of schools at Platinum status. This figure shows that schools view the Eco-Schools programme as an important mechanism for engaging pupils in a wide range of environmental issues/projects, which includes the protection of wildlife.

The Eco-Schools programme is strategic; however, it encourages many projects and initiatives to be included as part of the individual modules that pupils tackle to make environmental improvements. The framework of the Eco Schools programme enables schools to focus and gives structure. This umbrella approach means a variety of activities can be presented as evidence in a holistic way towards International Eco-Schools status. A club such as the Wildlife Warriors would be a perfect example of what schools could include as evidence for Eco Schools status for the biodiversity and school grounds modules. (other activities may include energy usage, waste minimisation or healthy living).

In answer to some of the points raised by the proposed Wildlife Warriors Club:

- *be different from schools eco committees as it would allow anyone to join at any age. Children would not need to be elected to the club*

Whilst Eco Committees are encouraged to include a democratic element, whether it's in choosing Eco Committee members or roles on the committee, many schools encourage extra children to attend meetings. Eco Committees are encouraged to have members from all year groups throughout the school, and many schools do. Teachers often say that the Eco Committee enables students who would never think of being on the school council (for various reasons), to have a chance and play a part. There is a great video of a student from Rhymney Comprehensive, who was in year 11 and just about to leave last summer, saying that being on the Eco Committee helped him overcome his

shyness, helped him make friends and gave him confidence to do lots of things he never would have done.

A crucial point is that one of the cornerstones of Eco-Schools is that it is a **whole school** programme, with all students involved in a particular aspect. The Eco Committee simply acts as

a hub to coordinate ideas. All pupils within the school can suggest ideas and activities, whether it's directly in meetings, helping with the Environmental review, being involved in a particular themed action (for example energy monitors or mini beast inspectors) or just simply posting something on the Eco Board. It is one of the Eco Schools essential criteria that the whole school community contributes towards the attainment of Eco Schools.

One recent great example: Cwmfelinfach Primary run an after school Eco Club for anyone to attend, with the committee as the hub. The students in the club realised that not many Foundation Phase children were coming, so they decided to run their own 'Mini Eco Club' (their name) on a Friday lunchtime for Foundation Phase children to attend. This is Year 4,5 and 6 children organising and running a club for any Foundation Phase student to go to. They even set eco challenges to do at home with parents/guardians!

This work would be part of the Eco Schools Action plan and would be used as evidence for Eco Schools work.

- ***be active all year to help protect wildlife***

Eco Committees / club meet all year round, with the school grounds topic being one of the most popular topics tackled. There are countless examples of schools carrying out habitat creation, pollinator plants being planted, wildlife surveys etc... Just look at the Eco Schools twitter feed.

- ***be hands on in their community and do practical activities to help protect wildlife. These activities could include, cleaning rivers, building wildlife homes, planting flowers and trees.***

Most Eco schools, at any stage in the awards structure, undertake environmental projects out in the community. As part of the Platinum criteria (4th Flag schools) schools have to show these activities as part of their evidence. Recent projects carried out by schools have included beach cleans, litterpicks, fence construction, planting for pollinators, surveys and monitoring. Please see the attached case study of a litterpicking and bulb planting project carried out by Plasyfellin, Park and Tyn y Wern Primary Schools within Caerphilly County.

- ***be flexible so different people can join at different times.***

As mentioned, all schools involved on the Eco Schools programme have a core Eco Committee. The main role of that committee is to involve and encourage other pupils to join in, or run additional eco type clubs (wildlife club, gardening club) or to hold events such as Eco Week, where many activities/projects are carried out. But the really important thing is that Eco Schools is a whole school project with inclusivity at its heart.

Essentially, Keep Wales Tidy supports initiatives like Wildlife Warriors as part of action to deliver the Eco Schools programme.

I hope this has answered all the questions raised. Please get in touch if you require any further information.

Yours sincerely,

Pamela Bacon
Regional Manager
Keep Wales Tidy

Agenda Item 3.13

P-05-717 Establish Statutory Public Rights of Access to Land and Water for Recreational and Other Purposes.

This petition was submitted by Waters of Wales – WoW, having collected 3,045 paper signatures and 433 paper signatures – Total = 3,478

Text of the Petition

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to implement a Bill to establish statutory public rights of access to land and water for recreational and other purposes. The bill should enshrine access rights and responsibilities for the public in the same way that the 2003 Land Reform (Scotland) Act encourages co-operative use of the outdoors for healthy, low impact recreation. This Bill must enshrine public rights of navigation for inland water, and permit access to and along water. It must remove the lack of legal clarity and restrictions which act as a barrier to sport and recreation and the promotion of Wales as a welcoming place for healthy recreation, tourism and adventurous activity at all levels of participation and enjoyment.

Additional information

The Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000 (i) was intended to deliver much-needed public access to the countryside. Before CRoW was enacted, however, it had already been stripped of many of its intended public benefits. For example, it sought to exclude the public from inland water. CRoW was complicated, expensive, and fails to deliver the access to land and water needed by the wider public. The CRoW mapping exercise alone cost nearly £8m, to address the needs of the small percentage of the public who want to access upland areas. Welsh Government took ownership of this issue in 2009 (ii), yet at the end of 2015, recreational access to land fails to meet the needs of the wider public, and the issue of access to water has not progressed. To the contrary, costly initiatives endorsed and supported by Welsh Government have led in some cases to reduced access to inland water. Two successive Welsh Governments have acknowledged the need for change, but instead chose a process which serves only to maintain the status quo. Welsh Government's 3-year process costing at least £2.4m has, by their own admission, not delivered. Rather, it has demonstrably reduced access opportunities, for example to inland

water. Scotland implemented a permanent solution through land reform legislation (iv) for the legislative cost of £200,000, with a final cost of approx. £3m including the cost of television campaigning and public education (v).

(i) Countryside and Rights of Way Act(2000)

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/37/contents/enacted>

(ii) Report of the Petitions Committee's Short Inquiry into Access along Inland Water, March 2009 (iii)

https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/62377602/Welsh_Government_Letter_RefTOJG0126513_16Oct2013.pdf (iv) Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2003/2/contents/enacted>

(v) LAND REFORM (SCOTLAND) BILL–EXPLANATORY NOTES (AND OTHER ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTS)

http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S1_Bills/Land%20Reform%20%28Scotland%29%20Bill/b44s

Lesley Griffiths AC/AM
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros yr Amgylchedd a Materion Gwledig
Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05- 717
Ein cyf/Our ref LG/06920/16

Mike Hedges AM
Chair - Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

government.committee.business@wales.gsi.gov.uk

13 December 2016

Dear Mike

Thank you for your letter of 2 December, regarding the petition to establish statutory public access to land and water.

Thank you for sharing the most recent comments from the petitioner which demonstrates the strength of feeling which exists on this matter. As I confirmed in my previous letter to you, I intend to issue a Written Statement in January setting out the scope and timetable for developing reform proposals.

Regards
Lesley

Lesley Griffiths AC/AM

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros yr Amgylchedd a Materion Gwledig
Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Gohebiaeth.Lesley.Griffiths@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Lesley.Griffiths@gov.wales

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

Pack Page 194

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Additional information to accompany Waters of Wales – WoW Petition:

P-05-717 Establish Statutory Public Rights of Access to Land and Water for Recreational and Other Purposes currently with the Petitions committee.

Failure to secure public access to the countryside, including inland water, by voluntary agreement, and the need to legislate.

Following a petition for Land Reform submitted in 2008, the petitions committee conducted a short Inquiry and recommended that:

“... [legislation] would provide clarity, certainty and permanence and we believe that the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 provides a basis from which a unique Welsh model may be developed. ...”ⁱ.

Welsh Government chose not to follow these recommendations and embarked on a process of facilitated and mediated voluntary negotiations. The project was an expensive failure, but in spite of overwhelming evidence to the contraryⁱⁱ, some people continue to assert that public access to the wider countryside, including water, can be sustainably achieved by voluntary negotiation.

This summary sets out briefly why we believe that the proposed legislation is the only solution to the problem of meeting the need for public access. We focus on inland water, but the principles can be applied to all water and land where public rights of access are disputed.

Background.

Historical evidence shows that until very recent times, the public enjoyed unfettered access to, and navigation of, inland water for a variety of recreational activities, including swimming, boating and skatingⁱⁱⁱ.

Challenges to access and navigation arose in the 20th Century, and the newly-formed British Canoe Union (BCU), responded by trying to negotiate access ‘permission’, to avoid conflict and secure sites needed for canoeing. Internal BCU records show that many people advised against this, saying that the policy would ‘do more harm than good’^{iv}.

As people started trying to negotiate permission in response to challenges on waters which they had previously enjoyed unfettered by restrictions, an assumption spread that permission was needed to navigate inland water. A vicious circle was largely if not wholly created by the first, misguided, attempts to resolve occasional local issues by adopting a position of inequality in the face of hostility.

Voluntary negotiation has been tried repeatedly, over decades, and failed.

For about 50 years, scores of people and groups ranging from volunteers supplemented by paid officers of representative bodies, to officials of organisations such as Environment Agency/NRW, National Parks, Forestry and local authorities, attempted to negotiate voluntary agreements to enable the public to enjoy wider access to land and water without experiencing hostility, abuse or violenceⁱ.

The huge volume of records from official meetings for canoeing alone, on only a few riversⁱⁱ, represents only a small fraction of the effort expended, with little, if any, return, on the wider effort to enable the public to enjoy our natural heritage in peace, and illustrates the amount of time and money spent without getting any closer to resolution. Even on Forestry Commission land, Welsh Government ‘exemplar projects’ failed to achieve sustainable public access to water!ⁱⁱ

In 2008 WCA wrote:

*“... officers, volunteers and participants have been threatened, intimidated and marginalised in a bid to secure public recreational access. This unfortunate scenario continues today. Attempts by other parties to secure access via voluntary means have not been successful in that the resultant arrangements are not fit for purpose. This is as true for the recent Welsh government pilot projects as it is for the Brighton University projects carried out in England”.*ⁱⁱⁱ

In 2017, following another round of Welsh Government sponsored ‘pilot projects’, the above statement could be used verbatim. Only the amount of public money wasted has changed.

Welsh Government took ownership of the problem when it embarked on a process based on the ‘Splash’ programme^v.

“...the setting up of voluntary access agreements by landowners” ... “that SPLASH funding be targeted at these pilot projects” ... “the effects of the pilot projects should be closely monitored and the outcomes widely disseminated.”^{vi}

The Dee is an example of the ‘Splash’ pilot rivers. Recent history of the River shows that vast attempts at negotiation, much of which were initiated or ‘brokered’ by EA/NRW, failed to achieve a sustainable agreement.ⁱⁱ Following the Sustainability Committee report, the Dee became one of Welsh Government’s flagship projects. It is not always easy to identify exactly how SPLASH funding has been allocated, but figures show a sum of £25,700 for the Dee, an unspecified amount of which was spent on setting up the Welsh Dee Partnership (WDP) and ‘agreement’ for use of the river.^{vii}

The ‘agreement’ set up by the WDP has been criticised by recreational paddlers, swimmers and many others: even photography is among the activities highlighted for restriction in the partnership’s ‘agreement’. There have been threats, unsuccessful attempts to have river users charged with criminal offences^{ix}, and an attempt to “Close the river” to canoeists by erecting a dangerous barrier from one bank to the other^x. Anecdotal evidence suggests that vandalism of users’ vehicles, abuse and threats against river users is not uncommon. 2017 began with a case against a paddler alleged to have travelled along the river outside the ‘permitted’ terms.

BBC News 21 November 2004 – **Canoeist Demo over river access**^{viii}

Mail Online 27 June 2008 – **Canoeist is arrested, held for two hours, and has his DNA taken, all for the ‘crime’ of paddling down a river.**^{ix}

BBC News 31 July 2008 – **No charges for fees row canoeist**^x

Daily Post 8 September 2014 – **Row over River Dee access rumbles on despite new arrangements. ‘Landmark agreement over use of water in Llangollen area, but issue over access rights remains unresolved.**^{xi}

BBC News 17 May 2016 – **Row breaks out over rights to use Llangollen’s River Dee**^{xii}

Clearly, the Dee cannot be described as a success story. The Wye ‘agreement’ was a ‘rubber-stamping’ of a previous arrangement between specific parties, which has been largely rejected by the public, and a similar history could be described, space permitting.

With Government backing, facilitation and mediation, why did voluntary agreement by negotiation fail?

Failure is built into the process, and is therefore inevitable.

Anyone involved in the process of attempting to negotiate public access soon became aware that all the effort and expense was doomed to failure because negotiations were predicated an assumption that one party had an automatic right to present the terms and a right of veto.

In 2007 Church et al published their research: **Negotiating Recreational access under asymmetrical power relations: the case of inland waterways in England.**^{xiii,xiv} Their findings confirm what everyone with experience of negotiating public access by voluntary agreement, whether volunteer, paid officer or government official, already knew: it is the very issue of “sharing” that causes conflict, because the weaker party have little power to secure fair and equitable access through voluntary agreements.

Do voluntary agreements have a role in public access arrangements?

Yes. Following legislation to recognise and enshrine equal rights and responsibilities of all, the way will be open, when need arises, for genuine, meaningful and equitable local agreements.

Conclusions:

Attempting to secure public access by voluntary agreement by negotiation is the cause of the problem, not the solution.

Clearly voluntary negotiation for public rights is beneficial to those with an interest in preventing or restricting public access. However, as has been outlined in research and demonstrated in practice, the strategy fails to deliver the access needed by the public, does nothing to resolve conflict, and can exacerbate it.

If we continue to repeat the process that has consistently failed over six decades, it is unreasonable to expect success. Success in resolving similar issues has, however, been recently demonstrated, in Scotland.

Figures supplied by the Scottish Government^{xv} show that legislation and implementation of land reform, including TV campaigning and public education, cost £3m. This compares well with the amount spent on water-related recreation alone, on a 5-year process which simply repeated, at the taxpayers’ expense, the same failed strategy which has failed the people of Wales.

i

http://www.assembly.wales/NAfW_Documents/canoe_inquiry_report__with_cover__e_.pdf_2014042009/canoe_inquiry_report__with_cover__e_-English.pdf

ii WCA Petition Committee 2008 summary of evidence:

https://1drv.ms/b/s!AvvhfAJqO9K8gdhPif_UwBYzMaHuzw

iii There is a considerable body of evidence on this subject. A summary of which we can make available if required.

iv Canoe Wales (formerly Welsh Canoeing Association – WCA) Archives

v https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/62377602/Inquiry-into-Access-to-Inland-Water-in-Wales-Committee_Report-2010-06.pdf

vi https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/62377602/Inquiry-into-Access-to-Inland-Water-in-Wales-Committee_Report-2010-06.pdf

vii http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/wales/north_east/4030685.stm

viii http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/wales/north_east/4030685.stm

ix <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1029813/Canoeist-arrested-held-hours-DNA-taken--crime-paddling-river.html>

x <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/wales/7535626.stm>

xi <http://www.dailypost.co.uk/news/north-wales-news/row-over-river-dee-access-7731861>

xii <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-north-east-wales-36306201>

xiii Executive Summary of Church et al 2007 <https://1drv.ms/b/s!AvvhfAJqO9K8gdhJfolxLXQXvN7jmQ>

xiv Church et al, 2007 Negotiating Recreational Access Under Asymmetrical Power Relations: The Case of Inland Waterways in England, Society and Natural Resources, 20:213-227 Full Paper.

<https://1drv.ms/b/s!AvvhfAJqO9K8gdN7q6GnKOUvOOUBdQ>

xv LAND REFORM (SCOTLAND) BILL-EXPLANATORY NOTES (AND OTHER ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTS)
http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S1_Bills/Land_Reform_Scotland_Bill/b44s

Waters of Wales' Charter for Sustainable Recreational Enjoyment of Water and Waterside

This is our charter for sustainable public enjoyment of the countryside, land and water, not involving extractive activities, the use of motorised equipment or built facilities, under comprehensive legislation.

- 1. Sustainable, responsible, recreational enjoyment of the countryside, land and water on land or water to be available to all on an equal basis, and not depend on ability to pay.**
 - The public will have the right to enjoy our countryside, and open spaces in urban areas, without charge.
 - Our waters, mountains, lowlands, parks, coast, public paths and parks, will be enshrined in perpetuity as public spaces which are free to traverse for all.

- 2. People will be empowered to take responsibility for their own actions.**
 - The legislation will be underpinned by the principle '*volenti non fit injuria*'. Fear of litigation need not be a reason to deny public rights, and may not be used as such.
 - Landowners and public will be given clear information about their rights and responsibilities.
 - Signage will be minimal, factual and informative, to allow people to make informed decisions.

- 3. Presumption will be in favour of public access.**
 - Access will be allowed anywhere, for any sustainable purpose, unless a case has been made, and accepted, for exclusion.
 - Exclusion, whether temporary or permanent, should be considered as an exceptional case and applications should be subject to scrutiny. Reasons for exclusion will be publicly available.
 - Exclusion must be fact-based and equitable, not favouring or disadvantaging one activity or user-group over another.

- 4. Recognition that everyone's needs are different.**
 - The legislation should not attempt to pre-determine what people will want to do, where they will want to go, at what times and seasons, or how far they will want to travel.
 - Provision of facilities such as launching and parking used to create a honeypot and/or steer activity towards or away from certain points, should not *per se* be used to preclude access/egress elsewhere.
 - On water, the presumption will be that access and egress may occur in all places along linear waterways and on large bodies of water, save where there is genuine need for exclusion.

- 5. Everyone is equal and should respect other's enjoyment.**
 - Where equal rights are exercised responsibly, there will be few occasions where activities are genuinely incompatible.
 - Management arrangements should be viewed as exceptions, needed only in circumstances where activities genuinely conflict.
 - On the rare occasions where management arrangements are needed, they will be reached voluntarily on the basis that all parties to the arrangement have equal rights and responsibilities.
 - Management arrangements will be subject to need on a case-by-case basis as outlined above, and should not be seen as a precedent at other times and in other places.

- 6. An outdoor code will clearly define rights and responsibilities for all.**
 - An outdoor code will set out the responsibilities that go along with public rights, promote co-operation and define unacceptable behaviour.
 - The outdoor code will be publicised widely and integrated into the curriculum.
 - Should sanctions become necessary these will be applied on the basis of individual accountability, not public or user-group exclusion.

This document, along with further information about the Waters of Wales - WoW Charter, will shortly be published on our website www.watersofwales.org.uk

P-04-499 Kick Start The Welsh Language Curriculum

Petition wording:

We the undersigned call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to change the Welsh Language Curriculum in Secondary Schools; in order to encourage the Welsh Language to be used in a conversational manner rather than teaching Cymraeg to pass an examination.

Additional information : We as pupils in a Secondary School in Wales believe that the current system for teaching Welsh does not encourage long term learning for real life use outside of school. We believe that the current focus on passing an exam does not address the use of real welsh effectively and most people leave school and forget most of what they have learnt during their five years of Secondary Education. We want the assembly to address the issue of life long welsh language learning in English medium Secondary Schools in order to keep the Welsh language alive all across the Country. We believe that this change needs to be made soon before irreversible damage is done and Welsh becomes a language for road signs and the museums.

Petition raised by: Eva Bowers and Lauren Davies

Date petition first considered by Committee: 24 September 2013

Number of signatures: 19

Agenda Item 3.15

P-05-724 Rights to Primary Health Care in Welsh

This petition was submitted by Cymdeithas yr Iaith, having collected 766 paper signatures.

Text of the Petition

We call upon the Welsh Government to look again at the proposed Standards in the health field, to include primary health service providers such as surgeries and pharmacies, to ensure that people have full and robust rights in this all-important area.



Mike Hedges AC
Cadeirydd
Y Pwyllgor Deisebau
Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru
Bae Caerdydd
CF99 1NA

4 Ionawr 2017

Annwyl Gadeirydd

Deiseb P-05-724 Hawliau i Ofal Iechyd Sylfaenol yn y Gymraeg

Diolch i chi am eich llythyr dyddiedig 21 Rhagfyr 2016 mewn perthynas â'r ddeiseb uchod, ac am y gwahoddiad i gyflwyno gwybodaeth neu sylwadau i'ch cynorthwyo wrth drafod y materion y codir yn y ddeiseb.

Fel rwy'n siŵr eich bod yn ymwybodol, cyflwynais adroddiad safonau mewn perthynas â'r sector iechyd at sylw Gweinidogion Cymru ar 29 Mai 2015. Fel rhan o'r adroddiad safonau hwnnw, cyflwynais y casgliad isod:

Gan mai gofal sylfaenol yw cyswllt cyntaf mwyafrif aelodau'r cyhoedd gyda'r gwasanaeth iechyd, cred Comisiynydd y Gymraeg ei bod yn hanfodol sicrhau cysondeb ymddygiad ieithyddol ar draws y gwasanaeth iechyd yng Nghymru yn ei gyfarwydd. O ganlyniad, rhaid i ddarparwyr gwasanaethau gofal sylfaenol fod yn ddarostyngedig i safonau'r Gymraeg o dan yr un fframwaith statudol â'r sefydliadau iechyd a fu'n destun i'r ymchwiliad safonau hwn. Daw'r Comisiynydd felly i'r casgliad bod angen safonau ychwanegol er mwyn galluogi hyn i ddigwydd.

Ymhellach i hynny, gallaf gadarnhau fy mod hefyd wedi ymateb i'r ymgynghoriad y cynhaliodd Llywodraeth Cymru ar reoliadau drafft i'r sector iechyd rhwng Gorfennaf a Hydref y llynedd. Rwyf yn rhannu'r ymateb hwnnw â chi fel atodiad i'r llythyr hwn. Gobeithiaf fod yr uchod yn ddefnyddiol i chi wrth i chi drafod y ddeiseb uchod ymhellach.

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Welsh Language
Commissioner

Yr eiddoch yn gywir,

GU K' PP.

Meri Huws
Comisiynydd y Gymraeg



Alun Davies AC
Gweinidog y Gymraeg a Dysgu Gydol Oes
Llywodraeth Cymru
Parc Cathays
Caerdydd
CF10 3NQ

14/10/2016

Annwyl Weinidog,

Ymgynghoriad Llywodraeth Cymru: Rheoliadau Safonau'r Gymraeg (Rhif [Y Sector Iechyd]) 2016

Diolch am y cyfle i gael ymateb i ymgynghoriad Llywodraeth Cymru ar Reoliadau Safonau'r Gymraeg mewn perthynas â'r sector lechyd. Sylweddolaf faint cyfrifoldeb Llywodraeth Cymru wrth iddi fynd rhagddi gyda'r gwaith o'u drafftio, gan sicrhau bod y safonau a osodir ar y sector iechyd yn rai fydd yn sicrhau bod siaradwyr Cymraeg yn gallu derbyn gwasanaethau iechyd yn Gymraeg. Fel y gwyddoch, mae'r Gymraeg yn rhan annatod o ansawdd gofal, ac mewn nifer o achosion yn fater o angen, ac nid dewis.

Rwy'n cydnabod y gall ceisio cynnwys ymrwymiadau clir mewn rheoliadau gyflwyno heriau i'r Llywodraeth wrth iddi geisio sefydlu cysondeb yn yr hyn mae'r gyfraith am ei gymell mewn cysylltiad â defnyddio'r Gymraeg o fewn y sector lechyd. Yn ogystal â hynny, rwyf yn llwyr ymwybodol o'r angen i reoliadau adlewyrchu swyddogaethau'r cyrff yr ymdrinnir â hwy, a bo hynny'n anochel yn golygu y bydd newidiadau o un set o reoliadau i'r nesaf ble bo hynny'n briodol. Fodd bynnag, nid yw'n eglur i mi ymhob achos beth yw'r rhesymeg tu ôl i'r newidiadau y gwelir yn y rheoliadau drafft yma o gymharu â'r setiau blaenorol. Rwyf wedi tynnu sylw at y rheiny ble bo'n berthnasol.

Mae fy sylwadau ar gynnwys y rheoliadau fel a ganlyn:-

Nodyn Esboniadol

Fel rhan o'r nodyn esboniadol sydd ynghlwm â'r rheoliadau drafft, fe gadarnheir bod y rheoliadau yn pennu safonau mewn perthynas ag ymddygiad nifer o gyrff sydd yn perthyn i'r sector lechyd. Mae'r rheiny yn cynnwys Byrddau Iechyd Lleol ac Ymddiriedolaethau

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Gwasanaeth Iechyd Gwladol yng Nghymru, Cyngorau Iechyd Cymuned Cymru ac Awdurdod Gwasanaethau Busnes y GIG. Dylid nodi bod Awdurdod Gwasanaethau Busnes y GIG yn berson a ddaw o fewn y categori o berson a enwir yn 'Awdurdodau Iechyd Arbennig' yn Atodlen 6 y Mesur.

Er fy mod yn cydnabod bod y rheoliadau yma yn pennu safonau i'r holl gyrff y cynhaliwyd ymchwiliadau safonau iddynt, credaf fod lle i ddadlau y dylai Gweinidogion Cymru ystyried y graddau y dylai gwneud y safonau'n benodol gymwys i'r holl gyrff a ddaw o fewn y cofnod 'Awdurdodau Iechyd Arbennig' e.e. *Gwaed a Thrawsblaniadau'r GIG*, a hynny er mwyn sicrhau ymagwedd gyson â'r holl gofnodion eraill perthnasol. Byddai hynny'n fy ngalluogi i osod safonau ar unrhyw gorff a ddaw o fewn y cofnod hwnnw, a hynny i'r graddau eu bod yn cyflenwi gwasanaethau i bersonau yng Nghymru.

Fel y gwyddoch, cynhaliais ymchwiliad safonau mewn perthynas â Phartneriaeth Cydwasaethau GIG Cymru, ynghyd â'r Gwasanaeth Gwybodeg GIG Cymru rhwng Tachwedd 2014 a Chwefror 2015. Deallaf mai safbwynt Gweinidogion Cymru yw nad oes angen gwneud safonau yn benodol gymwys iddynt hwy, a hynny oherwydd yr ystyrir y bydd disgwyl iddynt gydymffurfio â'r safonau y gosodir ar Ymddiriedolaeth GIG Felindre. Ymhellach i hynny, deallaf y bydd hi'n ofynnol i'r adrannau isod gydymffurfio â'r safonau y caiff eu cyflwyno mewn hysbysiad cydymffurfio i'r Ymddiriedolaeth uchod.

- Gwasanaeth Gwaed Cymru
- Canolfan Ganser Felindre
- Canolfan Genedlaethol Cydweithredu dros Ganser (CGC-G)

Rwyf o'r farn y byddai'n fuddiol pe byddai'r rheoliadau yn nodi hynny'n glir, a hynny er mwyn osgoi unrhyw ddryswch wrth symud i weithredu Rhan 4 a 5 y Mesur.

Noda rheoliad 1 (9) a (10) y rheoliadau drafft yr isod:

Nid oes dim byd yn y Rheoliadau hyn sy'n ei gwneud hi'n ofynnol i gorff gydymffurfio â safon mewn perthynas â gweithgaredd a gyflawnir ganddo neu wasanaeth a ddarperir ganddo pan fo'r gweithgaredd hwnnw'n cael ei gyflawni neu pan fo'r gwasanaeth hwnnw'n cael ei ddarparu ar ei ran gan ysbyty preifat yng Nghymru, ysbyty y tu allan i Gymru neu gan ddarparwr gofal sylfaenol.

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Cymeraf mai'r bwriad tu ôl i'r rheoliadau yw eithrio'r safonau rhag bod yn gymwys i wasanaethau a ddarperir drwy drydydd parti gan y grwpiau hynny o bersonau. Fodd bynnag, gellid dehongli'r cymal uchod i olygu nad yw'r rheoliad hwn yn gymwys i ysbytai preifat y tu allan i Gymru. Credaf y dylai Gweinidogion Cymru ystyried addasu'r cymal hwn, a hynny er mwyn sicrhau bod ystod y personau yr eithrir o'r is-ddeddfwriaeth yn gwbl eglur.

Diwygio Rheoliadau Safonau'r Gymraeg (Rhif 4) 2016

Wedi i'r rheoliadau iechyd gael eu cyflwyno a'u pasio yng Nghyfarfod Llawn Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru, fe'm hawdurdodir i roi hysbysiad cydymffurfio i'r personau hynny a enwir ynddynt. Fodd bynnag, fe ymddengys mai Rheoliadau Safonau'r Gymraeg (Rhif 4) 2016 fydd yn gymwys i'r cyrff proffesiynol lechyd, a hynny'n hytrach na'r rheoliadau sydd dan sylw yn yr ymgynghoriad hwn.

Er nad ydwyf yn gwrthwynebu'r penderfyniad hwnnw mewn egwyddor, a hynny gan ystyried swyddogaethau'r cyrff proffesiynol, credaf mai'r offeryn priodol ar gyfer gwneud hynny yw drwy orchymyn yn hytrach na'r rheoliadau yma. Gan na fydd y rheoliadau yr ymgynghorir arnynt ar hyn o bryd yn effeithio ar y dyletswyddau y bydd yn ofynnol i gyrrff proffesiynol gydymffurfio â hwy, credaf y dylai Gweinidogion Cymru ystyried cyflwyno gorchymyn at ddibenion gwneud y safonau hynny'n benodol gymwys iddynt. Golyga hynny na fyddai oedi diangen yn y broses o osod safonau arnynt, a hynny drwy orfod aros i reoliadau terfynol gael eu llunio a'u cymeradwyo ar gyfer y cyrff iechyd eraill.

Ceir diwygiad yn nhudalen 10 y rheoliadau drafft sydd yn eithrio'r angen i'r Tribiwnlysoedd orfod cydymffurfio â safonau 167 i 168. Mae'r safonau hynny yn ei gwneud hi'n ofynnol i gorff gydymffurfio â safonau sy'n ymdrin â materion atodol mewn perthynas â chadw cofnodion. Fel y gwyddoch, fe gyflwynais hysbysiadau cydymffurfio i bob un o'r tribiwnlysoedd sydd wedi eu henwi yn Rheoliadau (Rhif 4) 2016 ar 30 Medi. Yn gyntaf, nid yw'n glir i mi beth yw'r rhesymeg dros gynnwys yr eithriadau yma yn y rheoliadau. Deallaf fod trafodaethau wedi bod rhwng ein swyddogion, ac mai camgymeriad gweinyddol yw'r testun hwn. Byddai'n fuddiol pe bai Gweinidogion Cymru yn gallu cadarnhau hynny â mi, gan ystyried bod goblygiadau posibl o ran cynnwys hysbysiadau cydymffurfio sydd eisoes wedi eu cyflwyno i gyrrff.

Ymhellach i hynny, noda Rheoliad 4(1)(b) nad awdurdodir y Comisiynydd i'w gwneud hi'n ofynnol i rai cyrff gydymffurfio â safonau penodol. Yr unig gyrrff sydd yn eithriad i hynny ar

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hyn o bryd yw Cyngor Gofal Cymru a'r Cyngor Meddygol Cyffredinol. Deallaf mai'r rhesymeg tu ôl i hynny yw'r ffaith nad oes unrhyw bresenoldeb gan y cyrff eraill yng Nghymru.

Fe fyddwch yn ymwybodol bod y rheoliadau yma, yn yr un modd â'r gweddill a basiwyd gan Gynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru, yn gymwys o ran Cymru. Gyda hynny mewn golwg, nid yw'n glir i mi pam bod detholiad o'r safonau yma wedi eu heithrio fel rhan o'r rheoliad hwn. Mae'r rheiny yn cynnwys nifer o safonau cyflenwi gwasanaethau a gweithredu ble gellid dadlau y dylai'r safonau gael eu gwneud yn benodol gymwys iddynt, a hynny oherwydd nad ydynt yn ddibynnol ar leoliad daearyddol y corff.

Ymhellach i hynny, ceir cyfyngiadau ar rai safonau sydd yn gyd-ddibynnol ar safonau eraill. Un enghraifft o hynny yw'r cydberthynas rhwng safon 11 ac 14. Yn gyfreithiol, ni fyddai modd i mi osod safon 11 yn unol â'r tabl yn Atodlen 1, Rhan 2 y rheoliadau er fy mod wedi fy awdurdodi i wneud hynny. Yn yr un modd, os gosodir safon 14, mae disgwyl i mi fel Comisiynydd y Gymraeg osod safon 16. Ar hyn o bryd nid yw'r safon hwnnw wedi ei wneud yn benodol gymwys i'r cyrff perthnasol. Ceir goblygiadau tebyg mewn perthynas â'r cyrff fydd yn gymwys i Reoliadau Safonau'r Gymraeg (Rhif 4) 2016.

Sylwadau Cyffredinol

Ystyr 'darpariaeth sy'n ymwneud ag iechyd'

Croesawaf yr arweiniad a ddarperir gan y rheoliadau mewn perthynas â 'darpariaeth iechyd'. Fodd bynnag, byddai'n fuddiol pe byddai modd i Weinidogion Cymru gynnwys enghraifft o'r math o ddarpariaeth a ddaw o fewn y diffiniad o 'darpariaeth sy'n ymwneud ag iechyd' yn yr un modd ag y gwneir gyda'r diffiniad blaenorol.

Ystyr 'unigolyn'

Ar dudalen 6 y rheoliadau, fe nodir nad yw'r term 'unigolyn' yn cynnwys yr isod:

- (a) *aelod o'r cyhoedd sy'n gweithredu yn rhinwedd ei swydd fel cyflogai person; neu*
- (b) *aelod o'r cyhoedd i'r graddau y mae'n gweithio i berson;*

Hyderaf mai'r bwriad polisi yma yw sicrhau nad yw'r safonau yn berthnasol i unigolyn sy'n gweithio i gorff arall, pan fo'n gweithredu yn rhinwedd y swydd honno. Fodd bynnag, fe ymddengys bod isadran (b) yn golygu na fyddai'r safon yn gymwys i unrhyw unigolyn sy'n

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gweithio i gorff arall. Ystyriaf hynny'n gyfyngiad gormodol, ac y dylai Gweinidogion Cymru ystyried priodoldeb y testun uchod wrth gyflwyno'r rheoliadau terfynol.

Nid yw'n eglur i mi ychwaith pam fod y dehongliad o "unigolyn" yn y rheoliadau yma'n wahanol i'r dehongliad a geir yn y rheoliadau safonau eraill.

Atodlen 1, Rhan 3 y Rheoliadau

Yng ngoleuni paragraff 32 o'r rheoliadau drafft, fe ymddengys fod paragraff 43 sy'n cyfeirio at safonau 33 ac 82 mewn cysylltiad ag argyfwng yn ddiangen.

Yn yr un modd, nid yw paragraff 47 yn ei gwneud hi'n eglur a yw deunydd hysbysebu a gynhwysir mewn dogfen, llyfryn, taflen, pamffled neu gerdyn wedi'u heithrio'n gyfan gwbl o'r safonau. Fe ymddengys nad yw hynny'n gyson â gweddill yr adran lle nodir y cymal isod:

(gweler safon 34 mewn perthynas â deunydd hysbysebu a lunnir gan gorff.)

Dylai Gweinidogion Cymru ystyried cywirdeb y testun uchod wrth gyflwyno'r rheoliadau terfynol.

Safonau ynghylch gohebiaeth a anfonir gan gorff

Fe ymddengys bod newid yng ngeiriad Safon 4 y rheoliadau drafft i'r rheoliadau blaenorol, a hynny drwy gyfeirio at 'unigolyn' yn hytrach na 'pherson'. Fel y byddwch yn ymwybodol, mae'r term 'person' yn ehangach nag aelod o'r cyhoedd, ac felly fe ymddengys bod ymgais yma i gyfyngu ar y gofyniad. Byddai'n fuddiol pe byddai eich swyddogion yn gallu cadarnhau ei rhesymeg tu ôl i'r newid hwn.

Safonau ynghylch galwadau ffôn i adrannau, ac i aelodau o staff corff

Nodaf nad yw'r safon sy'n ymdrin â delio a galwadau yn Gymraeg yn ei chyfanrwydd wedi ei gynnwys yn y rheoliadau drafft. Dylid nodi bod y safon hon wedi ei gynnwys ymhob set o reoliadau blaenorol a basiwyd gan Gynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru, gan gynnwys rheoliadau mewn perthynas â'r gwasanaethau brys. Fel y gwyddoch, mae gan Gomisiynydd y Gymraeg yr hyblygrwydd i osod un neu ragor o'r safonau a bennwyd mewn hysbysiad cydymffurfio, a hynny ar sail rhesymoldeb a chymesuredd. Byddai'n fuddiol pe byddai eich swyddogion yn gallu cadarnhau ei rhesymeg tu ôl i'r newid hwn.

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Safonau ynghylch corff yn llunio ac yn cyhoeddi dogfennau

Nodaf nad yw'r safon sy'n ei gwneud hi'n ofynnol i gorff lunio unrhyw ddogfen sydd at ddefnydd y cyhoedd yn Gymraeg. Yn yr un modd a'r uchod, dymunaf dynnu eich sylw at y ffaith bod y safon hon wedi ei gynnwys ymhob set o reoliadau blaenorol a basiwyd gan Gynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru. Nid yw'n glir o fewn y ddogfennaeth ymgynghori beth yw'r rhesymeg tu ôl i drin y cyrff iechyd yn wahanol i'r cyrff sydd eisoes wedi eu cynnwys mewn rheoliadau.

Ymhellach i hynny, dylwn nodi nad ydwyf wedi gosod y safon hon ar bob un o'r cyrff a enwyd mewn rheoliadau blaenorol, a hynny ar sail rhesymoldeb a chymesuredd. Yn yr un modd, rwyf wedi gosod amgylchiadau ar y safon hon mewn rhai hysbysiadau, a hynny'n unol â darpariaethau adran 44(3) y Mesur. Credaf mai'r dull hwn o weithredu yw'r un mwyaf priodol, ac y dylai Gweinidogion Cymru sicrhau bod y safon yma wedi ei bennu yn y rheoliadau terfynol.

Safonau ynghylch corff yn llunio ac yn cyhoeddi ffurflenni

Fe ymddengys bod newid yng ngeiriad Safon 48 y rheoliadau drafft i'r rheoliadau blaenorol, a hynny drwy gyfeirio at 'unigolyn' yn hytrach na'r cyhoedd yn ehangach. Byddai'n fuddiol pe byddai eich swyddogion yn gallu cadarnhau ei rhesymeg tu ôl i'r newid hwn.

Ymhellach at hynny, dymunaf dynnu sylw at y ffaith bod y safon mewn perthynas â mewnosod gwybodaeth yn Gymraeg ar ffurflenni wedi eu hepgor o'r rheoliadau drafft. Nid yw'n eglur i mi beth yw'r rhesymeg tu ôl i hynny. Byddai'n fuddiol pe byddai Gweinidogion Cymru yn gallu cadarnhau'r bwriad tu ôl i'r newid hwn.

Safonau ynghylch derbyn ymwelwyr i adeiladau'r corff

Nodaf fod ystyr 'derbynfa' at ddibenion safonau 60-63 wedi newid o gymharu â'r safonau cyfatebol mewn rheoliadau blaenorol. Mae paragraff 54 o'r rheoliadau yn nodi mai ystyr derbynfa yw 'ardal yn ysbytai, swyddfeydd a lleoliadau gwasanaeth corff lle croesawu personau yw prif rôl staff'. Fe ymddengys bod hynny'n cyfyngu ar yr ystyr sydd wedi ei gynnwys yn Rheoliadau (Rhifau 1, 2, 4 a 5). Nid yw'n eglur i mi o fewn y ddogfennaeth ymgynghori beth yw'r rhesymeg tu ôl i drin y cyrff iechyd yn wahanol i'r cyrff sydd eisoes wedi eu cynnwys mewn rheoliadau.

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Ymhellach i hynny, nodaf fod safonau mewn perthynas â gwasanaeth derbynfa lle bo ymweliad neu apwyntiad wedi ei drefnu ymlaen llaw ddim yn ymddangos yn y rheoliadau yma. Byddai'n fuddiol pe byddai eich swyddogion yn gallu cadarnhau'r bwriad tu ôl i'r newid hwn.

Safonau ynghylch gofal sylfaenol

Mae safon 85 o'r rheoliadau drafft yn ei gwneud hi'n ofynnol i gorff sicrhau fod unrhyw ddogfen a lunnir mewn perthynas â gofal sylfaenol i'r cyhoedd ar gael yn Gymraeg. Fodd bynnag, nid oes safon gyfatebol i hynny mewn perthynas â ffurflenni a lunnir mewn perthynas â gwasanaethau gofal sylfaenol.

Safonau ynghylch ystyried effeithiau penderfyniadau polisi a wneir gan gorff ar y Gymraeg

Croesawaf fod gofyniad o fewn y rheoliadau drafft ar gyrff i lunio a chyhoeddi polisi ar ddarparu gwasanaethau gofal sylfaenol, gan ystyried pa effeithiau y gallai penderfyniadau eu cael ar gyfleoedd i bersonau ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg, a pheidio â thrin y Gymraeg yn llai ffafriol na'r Saesneg. Fe ymddengys bod camgymeriad yng ngeiriad 107A sydd yn cyfeirio at safon 106 yn hytrach na 107. Dylid sicrhau bod y rheoliadau terfynol yn cyfeirio at y brif safon gysylltiedig.

Materion ehangach mewn perthynas â Gofal Sylfaenol

Cyflwynais adroddiad safonau at sylw Gweinidogion Cymru, gan ddod i gasgliadau ar ba safonau ddylai gael eu gwneud yn benodol gymwys i'r cyrff lechyd a enwir yn Atodlenni'r Mesur. Fel rhan o'r adroddiad hwnnw, fe nodais yr isod:

Gan mai gofal sylfaenol yw cyswllt cyntaf mwyafrif aelodau'r cyhoedd gyda'r Gwasanaeth Iechyd, cred Comisiynydd y Gymraeg ei bod yn hanfodol sicrhau cysondeb ymddygiad ieithyddol ar draws y gwasanaeth iechyd yng Nghymru yn ei gyfanrwydd. O ganlyniad, rhaid i ddarparwyr gofal sylfaenol fod yn ddarostyngedig i safonau'r Gymraeg o dan yr un fframwaith statudol â'r sefydliadau iechyd a fu'n destun i'r ymchwiliad safonau hwn'. Daw'r Comisiynydd felly i'r casgliad bod angen safonau ychwanegol er mwyn galluogi hyn i ddigwydd.

Yn ychwanegol i hynny, lluniais gyfres o argymhellion at sylw Gweinidogion Cymru fel rhan o'm hymholiad i faes Gofal Sylfaenol, o dan Adran 7 Mesur y Gymraeg (Cymru) 2011. Roedd y rheiny'n cynnwys yr isod:

Comisiynydd y Gymraeg
Siambrau'r Farchnad
5-7 Heol Eglwys Fair
Caerdydd CF10 1AT

0845 6033 221
post@comisiynyddygybraeg.org
Croesewir gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg

Welsh Language Commissioner
Market Chambers
5-7 St Mary Street
Cardiff CF10 1AT

0845 6033 221
post@welshlanguagecommissioner.org
Correspondence welcomed in Welsh and English



Gofynnaf i Weinidogion Cymru gymryd safiad polisi o blaid y model 'cynnig rhagweithiol' fel bod modd ei weithredu'n systematig ac yn effeithiol ar draws gwasanaethau gofal sylfaenol, er mwyn sicrhau ansawdd profiad a chychwyn diogel i lwybr iechyd y claf.

Gofynnaf i Weinidogion Cymru a chyrrff y gwasanaeth iechyd yng Nghymru sicrhau bod technoleg ac unrhyw ddatblygiadau technolegol i'r dyfodol yn ateb anghenion siaradwyr Cymraeg gan hwyluso darpariaeth gwasanaethau gofal sylfaenol ddwyieithog.

Nid ydwyf yn ystyried bod safonau 83-97 o'r rheoliadau drafft yn mynd i'r afael â'r uchod yn ddigonol, nac ychwaith yn arwain at sicrhau sefyllfa lle bo modd i'r cyhoedd dderbyn gwasanaethau gofal sylfaenol yn Gymraeg.

Deallaf fod y Llywodraeth yn ystyried y dull mwyaf priodol er mwyn gosod safonau ar y sector gofal sylfaenol, a hynny gan ystyried y casgliadau uchod ynghyd â'r berthynas contractio sydd rhwng y Byrddau Iechyd a'r darparwyr eu hunain. Mae eich dogfen ymgynghori yn nodi opsiynau gwahanol ar gyfer rhoi dyletswyddau ar ddarparwyr gofal sylfaenol. Eglurir eich bod yn ffafrio'r trywydd o roi dyletswyddau arnynt drwy osod safonau ar y Byrddau Iechyd, a bod hynny'n well opsiwn na'r trywydd o osod safonau yn uniongyrchol ar gannoedd o ddarparwyr. Edrychaf ymlaen at drafod eich casgliadau ar ôl i'r cyfnod ymgynghori ddod i ben.

Hyderaf y bydd y sylwadau uchod o gymorth i chi wrth symud ymlaen gyda'r gwaith, ac edrychaf ymlaen at weld rheoliadau terfynol yn cael eu cyflwyno ar gyfer y sector hollbwysig hwn yn fuan.

Yr eiddoch yn gywir,

Meri Huws
Comisiynydd y Gymraeg

Comisiynydd y Gymraeg
Siambrau'r Farchnad
5-7 Heol Eglwys Fair
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By virtue of paragraph(s) ix of Standing Order 17.42

Document is Restricted

Document is Restricted

Agenda Item 3.16

P-05-726 Give rate relief to Local Authorities for Leisure and Cultural facilities.

This petition was submitted by Ryan Dansie, which collected 17 signatures.

Text of the Petition

Due to ever increasing budget pressures, Local Authorities in Wales are looking at creating charitable trusts to take over the running of public services like libraries and leisure centres.

The main benefit of such an arrangement is the rate relief which a charity would be entitled to. This amounts to moving money from the central pot of non-domestic rates and into the authorities budget. No public money is saved overall, although there are overheads involved in setting up such arrangements which can involve payments being made to specialist private consultants.

Pembrokeshire County Council is about to begin the process of creating a charity to take over the running of all leisure and cultural services in the whole county. It's almost inevitable that other local authorities in Wales will follow suit in order to deal with their own impossible budget pressures.

I call on the Welsh government to change the rules of rate relief so that all Local Authority run leisure and cultural facilities are covered on an equivalent basis to that which a charity would be entitled to. If this is not done then the end result of losing this business rate income will still happen through the creation of these charitable trusts, but we will be unnecessarily losing control of our public services in the process.

Please take away this unnecessary incentive to outsource our important leisure and cultural services.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Preseli Pembrokeshire
- Mid and West Wales

Mark Drakeford AM/AC
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gyllid a Llywodraeth Leol
Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-726
Ein cyf/Our ref MD/05656/16

Mike Hedges AM
Chair - Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

SeneddPetitions@assembly.wales

12 January 2017

Deur Mike,

Thank you for your letter of 21 December regarding future improvements to the non-domestic rates system.

My immediate priority for the NDR system is supporting small businesses. In 2017-18 this is being delivered through the extension of the £100 million Small Business Rates Relief scheme and the provision of transitional rate relief to assist those adversely affected by the revaluation.

I am also committed to introducing a new permanent Small Business Rates Relief scheme from 2018 onwards and will be using the coming year to review the operation of the current scheme so that investment can be better targeted to meet the needs of businesses in Wales. I intend to consult widely throughout this process and I welcome views to ensure that the scheme not only meets the needs of local communities, but also maintains the vital source of local authority funding that non-domestic rates revenue provides.

In the medium term, my focus will be on delivering administrative improvements to lessen the burden on ratepayers. This will include measures to tackle abuse within the system, to improve data-sharing and to reform the appeals process. These administrative changes will be developed with support from local authorities and key stakeholders and will be subject to consultation to provide all interested parties an opportunity to express their views.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Gohebiaeth.Mark.Drakeford@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Mark.Drakeford@gov.wales

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

In the longer term, the Welsh Government intends to take steps to improve the local government finance system, including local taxation. There are opportunities to make the local tax liability across businesses, other ratepayers and households fairer. There are also steps which could be taken to simplify the system of local government funding so that people can understand and engage with how and where decisions are made about the funding and delivery of local services. As part of this, I will explore more wide-ranging and longer term reform of the local government finance system, looking internationally at the best examples. A working group of external experts has been established to provide advice and the Welsh Government is committed to open discussions about this work.

Best wishes,

Mark

Mark Drakeford AM/AC

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gyllid a Llywodraeth Leol
Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government

Agenda Item 3.17

P-05-727 Funding for the Education Workforce Council Registration (EWC) Fee for Learning Support Workers in Schools.

This petition was submitted by UNISON Cymru Wales, which is collected 752 signatures.

Text of the Petition

Since April 2016, Learning Support Workers in schools and colleges in Wales have been required to register with the Education Workforce Council (EWC) – the same body that regulates Teachers and Further Education Lecturers.

This year the actual fee for Learning Support Workers to register was £15. It was £45 for teaching and lecturing staff. The fee from April 2017 is not yet clear. UNISON lobbying secured an agreement from 12 Local Authorities to pay, in whole or in part, the 2016 fee on behalf of Learning Support Workers in Schools – therefore recognising that these workers are amongst the lowest paid in the public sector, largely due to their term time worker status.

The remit of the EWC has so far been concerned with Teachers and Lecturers who are on significantly better wages than Learning Support Workers.

Learning Support Workers are predominantly women, the vast majority are paid term time only, unlike teachers and lecturers; their contracts are more likely to be fixed term and at the mercy of school budget cuts. Many work more than one job already.

Those Local Authorities who committed to pay the fee last year should be acknowledged. But, at a time of ever squeezed budgets, there are no guarantees for April 2017. Additional money must be ring fenced in the Local Government settlement to ensure that Learning Support Workers are not expected to bear the burden of the cost of registration next April.

For these reasons we the undersigned call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to ring fence monies in the Local Government settlement to fund the EWC fee for Learning Support Workers in Schools in April 2017

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Cardiff Central
- South Wales Central



Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-727
Ein cyf/Our ref KW/06400/16

Mike Hedges AM
Chair - Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales

6 January 2017

Dear Mike

Thank you for your letter dated 21 December regarding the Education Workforce Council registration fees for learning support workers.

On 27 June 2016, the Welsh Government launched an 8 week consultation seeking the views on the proposals for the registration fee model from April 2017, for which all comments were taken into account to help and inform the development of a new set of regulations to be made under the Education Wales Act 2014; and which will be subject to the approval of the National Assembly by resolution within the coming weeks.

The proposed fee structure is set out below (it should be noted that the registration fee for all practitioners before the inclusion of any subsidy is £46), with the actual contribution paid by all practitioners remaining unchanged from last year.

Practitioner Group	Registration Fee	Subsidy*	Actual Contribution
School Teachers	£46	£1	£45
FE Teachers	£46	£1	£45
School LSW	£46	£31	£15
FE LSW	£46	£31	£15
WBL Practitioners	£46	£1	£45
Professional Youth Workers	£46	£1	£45
Youth Support Workers	£46	£31	£15

**All subsidies in this model will be paid to the Council via the Welsh Government.*

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

This proposed model will continue to see lower earning practitioner groups (learning support workers and youth support workers) receiving a £31 subsidy towards their registration fee.

In setting the fee models for registrants there has been recognition that during these times of austerity and on-going pay freezes in the public sector, the Welsh Government has a duty to protect the education workforce from unnecessarily high fee levels. With this in mind the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government and I approved the transfer of £1million, with effect from 2017-18 (subject to the approval of the new fee regulations by the National Assembly), from the Revenue Support Grant to support the registration subsidy for all practitioners.

I believe that there have been clear benefits of registering this sector of the education workforce. It has enhanced their status and recognised that they play a vital and valued role in supporting teaching and learning. It also raises and maintains standards, as part of a single and coherent education workforce.


A link to the aforementioned consultation (supported by the majority of respondents), summary of responses and the associated Government response is enclosed

https://consultations.gov.wales/sites/default/files/consultation_doc_files/160624-registration-fees-for-education-workforce-council-consultation-en.pdf

https://consultations.gov.wales/sites/default/files/consultation_doc_files/161125_registrationfee_sfortheeducationworkforceinwales_summaryofresponses_en.pdf

I trust you find my response helpful.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kirsty Williams'.

Kirsty Williams AC/AM

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg
Cabinet Secretary for Education

Our ref:

Your ref:

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Tuesday 7 February, 2017

Dear Mike,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the correspondence you received from the Cabinet Secretary for Education, dated 6 January 2017.

UNISON is disappointed with the response from the Cabinet Secretary. The letter makes reference to a subsidy of £31 towards the registration fee. The fact remains, this subsidy is not guaranteed for future years and could be withdrawn at any stage – a point we made in our recent consultation response on Education Workforce Council (EWC) registration fees. Furthermore, the registration fee level has already increased, yet the subsidy level has remained the same – so school support staff are already worse off.

Whilst we welcome the transfer of £1 million from the Revenue Support Grant to support the registration subsidy for all practitioners, this does not fully address our concerns. School support staff, many of whom are low paid, have not previously been expected to pay for any form of registration, yet there is now the expectation for them to pay an annual expense in order for them to undertake their jobs – the simple implementation of a registration cost means school support staff are financially worse off.

Support staff have reported to us that any additional costs are a burden at a time when family budgets are already stretched and reliance on ‘in work’ benefits is higher than ever. We also have growing concerns about the use of zero hour contracts and agency staff in the education sector.

Pack Page 230

Further to this, no distinction is made between full and part time members of staff. The 2015/16 Pupil Level Annual School Census for Wales shows that 51% of support staff work part-time compared to 19% of teaching staff. This highlights the disproportionate effect this decision will have on the lowest paid members of staff.

Additionally, we have ongoing concerns about the benefit school support staff get as a result of registration. It is important to note at this point, the EWC code of conduct to professional standards does not exist for school support staff. Therefore, the EWC is currently only able to provide a sub-standard service for support staff. The education system typically focuses on teaching staff – a situation UNISON sees repeatedly replicated in negotiations. This is a fundamental requirement of code of conduct that omits a significant proportion of the workforce. Without addressing the issues of disparity in the sector, there is no value to registering and so it is unreasonable to expect these workers to pay any level of registration cost, irrespective of subsidy.

UNISON also finds it very difficult to accept the Cabinet Secretary's comments:

"I believe there are clear benefits of registering this sector of the education workforce. It has enhanced their status and recognised that they play a vital and valued role in supporting teaching and learning. It also raises and maintains standards, as part of a single and coherent education workforce."

Our experience and that of school support staff generally across Wales is completely at odds with this statement and we would like to see the evidence regarding this point. Qualified teachers in schools and lecturers in further education benefit from nationally agreed terms and conditions, pay levels, progression and professional development which reflect their status. Pay levels for support staff remain low and don't recognise the level of professional commitment and dedication to their pupils that is expected of them in practice.

As noted above, there is no clarity in regard to professional boundaries of support staff roles, no professional standards, no clear structure, varied rates of pay, no standard job descriptions, and hundreds of job titles covering the same roles. Additionally, support staff have had limited access to training and development and what little that is available is susceptible to cuts.

We remain hopeful that registration will achieve the improvements the Cabinet Secretary has laid out in her letter and that there will be parity for all workers across the sector, but we are nowhere near meeting this aspiration.

In fact, this issue has been raised by UNISON once again the week commencing 30 January and addressed in a press release:

Responding to Cabinet Secretary Kirsty Williams AM's statement today on how school supply staff will be managed in future, Jess Turner, UNISON Cymru organiser for schools said,

"We believe that support staff make up to half of the supply workforce and they will feel the taskforce has completely ignored them with this announcement. To not be mentioned at all is a glaring omission which shows that despite the professional registration of teaching assistants and the crucial role all support staff play, they are again an afterthought in the education system.

"The task was to evaluate how the provision of supply staff to schools could be better managed in future and this report has failed to properly answer that question.

"This report goes against the spirit of social partnership. Even though UNISON was asked to meet with the taskforce to discuss this, there is no mention of a single one of the recommendations we made."

ENDS

An example of support staff supply work can be found on this link to the New Directions website. <http://www.new->

directions.co.uk/education/jv_office/cardiff/ Seven out of ten jobs on page one are all support staff roles yet they are not addressed in the report on school supply staff.

Lastly, we are aware that many local government workers who are required to professionally register have the cost of registration met by the employer – examples include town planners, social workers, and human resource professionals. We firmly believe this benefit should be extended to school support staff, who are also local authority employed, especially given that the workforce is dominated by low paid, part-time, women workers.

I hope you find this response helpful.

Yours sincerely,

Jess Turner
UNISON Cymru/Wales schools lead

Agenda Item 6

P-05-710 Ensure Disabled People can Access Public Transport As and When They Need it.

This petition was submitted by the Whizz-Kidz, Cardiff Ambassador Club, having collected 22 online signatures and 75 paper signatures = 97 signatures

Text of the Petition

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to ensure that [young] disabled people get the right to accessible public transport when required without the need to plan assistance at least 24 hours in advance. This will then give us the ability to be independent, seek employment, travel to work and meet friends at short notice. Whizz-Kidz Ambassadors are also campaigning to get essential training for taxi and bus drivers as well as train staff in disability awareness and disability support.

Additional information

Young people at the Cardiff Ambassador Club have worked hard to campaign for improvements to public transport. All have had difficulties with taxis, buses and trains over the years and their independence is being compromised by not being able to travel as they need to. Whilst they recognise improvements have been made there is still a lot of work to do.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- N/A