

Agenda – Petitions Committee

Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 1 – Senedd

Meeting date: 9 May 2017

Meeting time: 09.00

For further information contact:

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Ken Skates AM – Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure

Rhodri Griffiths – Deputy Director, Transport Policy, Planning & Partnerships

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Agenda Item 2.1

P-05-750 For single use items: introduce a Deposit Return System for drink containers and make fast food containers and utensils compostable

This petition was submitted by Marine Conservation Society having collected 1,993 signatures.

Petition text

The Marine Conservation Society calls on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to act upon the globally responsible Wales goal within the Well Being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015. Build on the excellent results achieved by the carrier bag charge, by implementing two further actions that would help Wales to achieve a zero waste, circular economy. Namely:

1. Introduce a deposit return system in Wales for all single use beverage containers such as glass and plastic bottles and aluminium cans.
2. Legislate that all fast food containers and utensils, as well as take-away cups and lids, if not reusable or refillable or collected for recycling in store, are fully compostable.

Deposit return systems are already in operation in over 40 countries around the world and have been proven to reduce litter, increase recycling by creating a more certain supply of affordable, high-quality materials, reduce costs for Local Authorities and create jobs.

Fast food wrappers and takeaway cups are a common litter item on our streets and making them refillable/reusable, easily recyclable or compostable would reduce litter.

Manufacturing new drinks containers and fast food containers and cups use up huge amounts of energy, which contribute to greenhouse gas emissions. The more we recycle, and the less we litter, the better for our environment and our economy.

Assembly Constituency and Region.

- Ross-on-Wye
- Herefordshire

Deposit return system/compostable packaging

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 9 Mai 2017
Petitions Committee | 9 May 2017

Research Briefing:

Petition number: P-05-750

Petition title: For Single Use Items: Introduce a Deposit Return System for Drink Containers and Make Fast Food Containers and Utensils Compostable

Text of petition:

The Marine Conservation Society calls on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to act upon the globally responsible Wales goal within the Well Being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 and build on the excellent results achieved by the carrier bag charge, by implementing two further actions that would help Wales to achieve a zero waste, circular economy. Namely:

1. Introduce a deposit return system in Wales for all single use beverage containers such as glass and plastic bottles and aluminium cans.
2. Legislate for a charge on all drinks and fast food containers and utensils that are not fully compostable, unless they are reusable, refillable, part of a return scheme or collected in store for recycling.

Deposit return systems are already in operation in over 40 countries around the world and have been proven to reduce litter, increase recycling by creating a more certain supply of affordable, high-quality materials, reduce costs for Local Authorities and create jobs.

Fast food wrappers and takeaway cups are a common litter item on our streets and making them refillable/reusable, easily recyclable or compostable would reduce litter.

Manufacturing new drinks containers and fast food containers and cups use up huge amounts of energy, which contribute to greenhouse gas emissions. The more we recycle, and the less we litter, the better for our environment and our economy.

Background

Waste policy (including recycling) is a devolved issue. As such, UK Government policy applies to England only and it is for the devolved administrations to develop and implement their own policies and approach, within the framework of the EU requirements. The Welsh Government's [Towards Zero Waste strategy](#) (2010) sets out its policy in this area.

Deposit return scheme/deposit refund system (DRS)

A deposit-refund system is the surcharge on the price of potentially polluting products. When pollution is avoided by returning the products or their residuals, a refund of the surcharge is granted. (OECD, Glossary of Statistical Terms)

The purpose of a DRS is to encourage the return of materials into an organised reuse, recycling or treatment/disposal process. The basic principle of deposit systems on beverage packaging is that retailers, on purchasing beverage products, pay an additional fee on the packaging in the form of a deposit. The fee is generally determined by the packaging material and the container size and is indicated via a label on the packaging. On purchasing the beverage product in store, the consumer will pay the additional fee to the retailer and the fee is then reimbursed when the consumer returns the empty packaging. Drinks containers are the most common target of DRSs but there have been suggestions that it could be applied more widely, for example to batteries and tyres.

There has recently been renewed interest in the use of deposit systems and the use of reverse vending as a collection method for beverage containers. There are currently no deposit return schemes in operation in the UK. Research carried out for the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) suggested that the deposit scheme will save money for the consumer in the long term, and that a deposit of 15p for containers smaller than 500ml and 30p for those larger would generate return rates of around 90%.

The 2010 [report](#) produced by Eunomia for the CPRE outlined a number of possible benefits of DRS:

- Increasing the recycling of containers covered by deposits (for refill or recycling);
- Reducing the extent of littering (as people will be less likely to discard things that are worth money);
- Increasing the use of/reducing the extent of decline in the use of refillables; and
- Avoiding harmful chemicals being mobilised in the environment (although not in beverage schemes e.g. batteries or pesticides).

The report concluded:

The combined overall cost benefit analysis indicated that, even with the additional costs incurred in the running of the DRS, there is a high likelihood of a significant net benefit to society. The influence of the reduction in dis-amenity associated with litter appears to be particularly strong.

Defra commissioned a [report on deposit schemes](#) (PDF 1.44MB) in 2008, its findings suggesting that a deposit system would be problematic. The report also concluded that a deposit system would increase the total tonnages of materials collected, although a significant amount of the deposited packaging would be cannibalised from existing collection schemes. The report also suggested that the introduction of deposits would have a detrimental effect on existing collection mechanisms in general, and council kerbside collections in particular.

Critics of DRS also express serious concerns about the level of infrastructure that they say will be required if such schemes are to go ahead. The Defra report outlines some of the pre-conditions for a DRS; producers and importers need to have registered and labelled their products, retailers will need a collection system in place, hauliers and reprocessors must be set to receive the returned packaging through the new channels, and consumers must be informed about the new systems. DRS could be seen to impose an additional cost to householders who are not easily able to participate e.g. by returning containers to collect deposits.

The [Climate Change \(Scotland\) Act 2009](#) contains powers to introduce deposit and return schemes. In May 2014, Zero Waste Scotland published a [report on A Scottish Refund Deposit System](#). The report assessed the key design features and feasibility of a DRS in Scotland. More recently, Coca-Cola has [backed a campaign for a DRS](#) for cans and bottles in Scotland.

Compostable food packaging

Expanded polystyrene (EPS) is one of the most problematic non-recyclable materials. It is used in food packaging markets for containing meals and hot drinks. It is exceptionally lightweight and a good insulator, so is effective for keeping food warm. Though some industries have made efforts to promote recycling of polystyrene, within the fast food sector no industry-wide approach has been attempted. Some of the largest fast food chains have taken action to replace EPS with biodegradable alternatives, but smaller independent fast food businesses still regularly use EPS packaging due to its lower per-unit cost.

In Wales, evidence suggests EPS litter is a considerable problem, particularly at the coast. In a [2008 report](#), Keep Wales Tidy (KWT) identified fast food waste on an average of 17.2% of Wales' streets. This includes EPS as well as paper, cardboard and food waste itself. In coastal areas polystyrene waste is the 3rd most common form of rubbish found on beaches in the UK according to the [Marine Conservation Society's 2013 Beachwatch Survey](#). Keep Wales Tidy's 2011 [Marine Litter Policy Paper](#) estimated the cost of cleaning up litter on the shore at £18m,

representing a 37.4% increase over the previous 10 years. Whilst this is not exclusively down to polystyrene waste, it is a large component of the problem. Away from the shore it costs taxpayers around £40 million a year to keep the streets of Wales clean, according to Keep Wales Tidy's [Fast Food Litter Policy Paper](#) (2008).

Biodegradable plastics (or biopolymers) have been used for some time. Biopolymers are generally designed to be composted rather than recycled, and as such require a different collection / disposal route to conventional plastics. Biopolymers have a higher cost compared to conventional plastics (normally made from crude oil derivatives) and as such are less prevalent in the marketplace.

Ahead of a Westminster Petitions Committee debate in January 2017, the House of Commons Library produced a [debate pack](#) for Members. This detailed briefing sets out the legislative framework for food packaging and producer responsibility, including relevant EU Directives. Following the debate any ban on unrecyclable packaging was rejected and the UK Government Resources Minister reiterated the government's preference for a voluntary approach. The UK Government's response suggested that it is the responsibility of businesses and customers to decide which packaging materials are supplied and purchased, rather than the government to enforce the use of certain materials.

Welsh Government action

In her letter to the Committee the Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs states that "the issues relating to single use and compostable food and drink packaging are many and complex". She suggests that, in order to achieve a long term solution, the issues need to be looked at in the round, and that she intends to do this as part evaluation and refresh of the Welsh Government's 2010 Towards Zero Waste strategy. The evaluation has already been carried out, and she says that the results will be published in the summer of 2017, with the consultation on the refreshed strategy planned for summer 2018.

The original Towards Zero Waste strategy was accompanied by a number of sector plans, one of which was the [Industrial and Commercial \(I&C\) plan](#). Whilst not specifically mentioning deposit return schemes, the plan aims to ensure products, including food and drink packaging use fewer resources, are more durable and/or have extended life. It also outlines that products should generate less waste at end of life, be recyclable, and have a higher recycled content. The plan also highlights extended producer responsibility (EPR) – that the producer should take greater responsibility for the product's management at end of life, including the costs of end of life management. The Cabinet Secretary suggests that potential products which could be considered for an EPR approach include disposable food and drink related packaging, including plastic cutlery.

National Assembly for Wales action

On 14 March 2017, in response to a [plenary debate on recycling](#), the Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs stated that a DRS would be considered as part of the Towards Zero Waste policy refresh.

On 5 April 2017, Simon Thomas AM led a [Members Legislative Proposal debate on a Waste Reduction Bill for Wales](#). The motion called for a DRS for plastic, cans, bottles and glass) and a ban or levy on polystyrene (non-recyclable) packaging. The debate discussed a number of issues relating to DRSs and non-recyclable packaging, a number of which are summarised below:

- There are **new powers in the Wales Act to introduce innovative taxes**, for example a tax/levy on polystyrene packaging, which could be extended to all non-recyclable plastics;
- DRS fits with the move towards a **circular economy**;
- Suggestion that we should be moving towards a position of all packaging in Wales being recyclable;
- There is little motivation for retailers to use more sustainable packaging when polystyrene is much less expensive;
- The need to encourage **behaviour change** amongst citizens, and improve education about what is recyclable and what is not;
- The need to think carefully about potential unintended consequences of a DRS scheme, such as people making additional car journeys to return bottles etc; and
- Recognition that Wales is currently leading the way in the UK in terms of recycling performance, and the potential impacts that a DRS could have on this. Also how a DRS might impact upon existing local authority waste collection arrangements.

The proposal received cross-party support, and the motion passed with 34 For, 0 Against and 12 Abstentions.

The Petitions Committee considered a [previous petition on banning polystyrene packaging](#) between 2014 and 2016. Following the response from the Cabinet Secretary the Committee agreed that there was little more that the Committee could do to take the issue forward and agreed to close the petition.

In December 2015, William Powell AM led a [plenary debate](#) on 'A Deposit-return Scheme for Drinks Containers: An Idea Whose Time Has Come...Again'. In response to the debate, the then Minister for Natural Resources stated:

It's also tempting to say about DRS working in other countries and that it would work here in Wales, but we have to find and work out a solution that best suits our business needs, our consumers and

our communities, and we will need to work together to understand these interventions, and ensure that no unintended consequences result in changes or a shift in recycling and reuse, as opposed to additionality [...] **I'm not opposed to the scheme in principle.**

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.

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-05-750
Ein cyf/Our ref LG/00640/17

Mike Hedges AM
Chair - Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Ty Hywel
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SeneddPetitions@assembly.wales

16 April 2017

Dear Mike

Thank you for your letter of 27 March 2017 regarding the petition P-05-750 for single use items: introduce a Deposit Return System for drink containers and make fast food containers and utensils compostable.

The issues relating to single use and compostable food and drink packaging are many and complex. I believe that to achieve a long term solution, and to achieve our goal of a globally responsible Wales, we need to look at the issues in the round. We intend to do this as part of the evaluation and refresh of *Towards Zero Waste*, our waste strategy for Wales.

An objective outlined in our Industrial and Commercial (I&C) sector plan is to ensure products, including food and drink packaging, use fewer resources (reducing especially those which are non-renewable), are more durable and/or have an extended life. Products should also generate less waste at end of life, be more recyclable, and have a higher recycled content.

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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 53

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 I&C plan also states the producer should take more extended responsibility for the product's management at end of life, including in respect of the costs of end of life management. I have now called for research into the extended producer responsibility (EPR) of such materials. This will include analysis into compostable packaging.

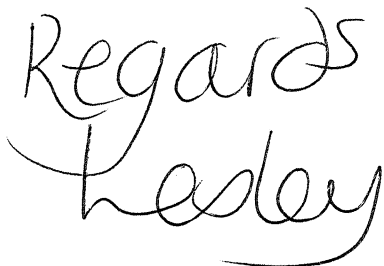
True EPR means producers taking direct responsibility for the full net cost of the collection, sorting, recycling and other treatment of separately collected waste derived from the products and packaging they put onto the market. Full costs theoretically also include the collection, transport and treatment costs for non-separately collected waste, the costs for public information and awareness raising to ensure participation of consumers within the scheme; costs related to waste prevention, and costs for litter prevention and management.

Potential products which could be considered for an EPR approach include disposable food and drink related packaging, including plastic cutlery.

We shall be commissioning a study to fully appraise the feasibility, including costs and benefits, of the options to increase waste prevention of products and packaging, increase recycling and reduce litter under EPR schemes in Wales. The study will include options to increase recycling rates and the reduction of the littering of food and drink packaging.

We have carried out the evaluation of Towards Zero Waste the results of which will report in the summer. The EPR research will be commissioned shortly and will also report in the summer. The consultation of the refresh of Towards Zero Waste will be published during the summer of 2018.

We will consider the results of the evaluation, the EPR study and will evaluate the evidence presented. We will carry out comprehensive stakeholder engagement as part of the consultation process to ensure we seek the views of all sectors ahead of the refresh of Towards Zero Waste.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Regards Lesley". The word "Regards" is written in a cursive style on the top line, and "Lesley" is written below it, also in a cursive style.

Lesley Griffiths AC/AM

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

Agenda Item 2.2

P-05-751 Recognition of Parental Alienation

This petition was submitted by Families Need Fathers Both Parents Matter Cymru having collected 2,058 signatures – 752 on paper and 1,306 online.

Text of the Petition

We call upon the Welsh Assembly to persuade the Welsh Government to protect children and young people in Wales by formally recognising 'Parental Alienation' as a form of emotional abuse of children. We further call upon the Welsh Government to take specific actions to reduce the impact of Parental Alienation on children and their families.

Additional Information

We propose the following action by Welsh Government

- Recognise 'Parental Alienation' as emotional abuse of children with a definition incorporating the one given by the Ministry of Justice (paragraph 1) here <https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/164983>)
- Commission and fund mandatory training for professionals including but not Social Work and Cafcass Cymru staff, in recognising Parental Alienation including pathways to protect children from harm.
- Establish and fund a national campaign to inform children and families about Parental Alienation and the harm that it causes.
- Place a duty on Welsh Ministers to act to protect children from abuse and harm where Parental Alienation has been identified.

Parental Alienation has been defined by the Ministry of Justice as:

‘In cases where parents are separated, parental alienation refers to a situation in which one parent (usually the parent with whom the child lives) behaves in a way which creates anxiety in the child, so that it appears the child is opposed to living or spending time with the other parent.’

This definition is taken from the first paragraph of the Government's response to Mr. Darren Towill's petition. <https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/164983>

CAFCASS in England have already recognised Parental Alienation as an abuse of children. CAFCASS CEO Anthony Douglas stated in an article in the Telegraph online dated 12th Feb 2017 about Parental Alienation that "It's undoubtedly a form of neglect or child abuse in terms of the impact it can have".

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/02/12/divorced-parents-pit-children-against-former-partners-guilty/>

Assembly Constituency and Region.

- West Cardiff
- South Wales Central

Briefing for the Petitions Committee

Petition number: [P-05-0751](#)

Petition title: **Recognition of Parental Alienation**

Text of petition: We call upon the Welsh Assembly to persuade the Welsh Government to protect children and young people in Wales by formally recognising 'Parental Alienation' as a form of emotional abuse of children. We further call upon the Welsh Government to take specific actions to reduce the impact of Parental Alienation on children and their families.

We propose the following action by Welsh Government

- Recognise 'Parental Alienation' as emotional abuse of children with a definition incorporating the one given by the Ministry of Justice (paragraph 1) here <https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/164983>).
- Commission and fund mandatory training for professionals including but not limited to Social Work and Cafcass Cymru staff, in recognising Parental Alienation including pathways to protect children from harm.
- Establish and fund a national campaign to inform children and families about Parental Alienation and the harm that it causes.
- Place a duty on Welsh Ministers to act to protect children from abuse and harm where Parental Alienation has been identified.

Background

As highlighted by the petitioner, the UK Ministry of Justice has described 'parental alienation' as follows:

In cases where parents are separated, parental alienation refers to a situation in which one parent (usually the parent with whom the child lives) behaves in a way which creates anxiety in the child, so that it appears the child is opposed to living or spending time with the other parent.

A recent [petition](#) called on the UK Government to 'introduce a law that recognizes Parental Alienation as a criminal offence'. In [response](#), the UK Government stated that it did not believe legislation was needed to criminalise parents who alienate their children against the other parent as the court already has the power to take effective action:

The family court has a range of powers to deal with cases where alienating behaviour features. A parent who has concerns about such behaviour could make an application to the family court about the arrangements for their child. The Children Act 1989 contains adequate provisions to deal with these concerns and the welfare of the child is the court's paramount concern in making its decision. Under legislation introduced in 2014, family courts are legally required to presume that the involvement of a parent in the life of the child concerned will further that child's welfare, unless there is evidence to the contrary.

That petition was closed on 16 February 2017.

The 2014 legislation referred to in the UK Government's response is the [Children and Families Act 2014](#). Part 2 of the Act relates to family justice and applies to both England and Wales. It includes a number of provisions which seek to improve the operation of the family justice system, as recommended by the 2011 [Family justice review](#). Section 11 of the Children and Families Act aims to reinforce the importance of children having an ongoing relationship with both parents after family separation, where that is safe and in the child's best interests. Courts are required to presume that a child's welfare will be furthered by the involvement of each of the child's parents in his or her life, unless it can be shown that this would not be the case. Involvement means any kind of direct or indirect involvement, but not any particular division of the child's time.

Welsh Government response

Responding to the Assembly petition, the Welsh Government stated that the Family Justice Network for Wales had reviewed its position on parental alienation on 28 March 2017, and had agreed that the family court already has sufficient powers to deal with cases where alienating behaviour features, and that parental alienation should continue to be dealt with under existing legislation. The response also highlights that the court can ask CAFCASS Cymru (the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service in Wales) to prepare a welfare report on any matters relevant to the child or family, and that CAFCASS Cymru professionals are trained to recognise the potential for implacable hostility in separation cases, and how this might impact on a child.

Further information about the Family Justice Network for Wales can be accessed via the [Welsh Government website](#).

CAFCASS Cymru

The Welsh Government assumed responsibility for CAFCASS' functions in Wales from 1 April 2005 (in the main, family law/proceedings are not devolved matters however the functions of CAFCASS are). CAFCASS is appointed by the courts but is a social work service, rather than a legal service. Its role is to:

- safeguard and promote the welfare of children;
- give advice to the court about applications in family proceedings;

- make provision for children to be represented in such proceedings;
- provide information, advice and other support to children and their families;

A [Child and Adolescent Welfare Assessment Checklist \(CAWAC\)](#) is used to assist CAFCASS Cymru practitioners in assessing the emotional/psychological risk to children who are exposed to parental conflict. Some concern about whether the CAWAC tool was fit for purpose was raised during consideration of an earlier Assembly petition ([P-04-588 Charter for Children and Fathers](#); this closed in February 2016). CAFCASS Cymru's most recent [annual report](#) states that it had commissioned a 'refresh and update' of CAWAC, and that the improvements identified will be completed in 2016-17.

Child protection and safeguarding in Wales – overview

The Welsh Government is responsible for child protection in Wales. The child protection system in Wales is similar to that in England, although the [Social Services and Well-being \(Wales\) Act 2014](#) introduced a new framework for social services and aimed to strengthen the arrangements for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults in Wales. Child protection concerns that result in court action continue to be dealt with in the same way as in England.

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 established six regional safeguarding children boards (previously, there was a local safeguarding children board in each local authority area). The regional boards co-ordinate, and ensure the effectiveness of, local work to protect and promote the welfare of children. Each regional board includes any local authority, chief officer of police, local health board, NHS trust, and provider of probation services that falls within the safeguarding board area. The Act also established a National Independent Safeguarding Board to provide support to the regional safeguarding boards and to monitor their effectiveness.

[All Wales Child Protection Procedures](#) inform child protection practice in each of the safeguarding children boards across Wales. They are based on the principle that the protection of children from harm is the responsibility of all individuals and agencies working with children and families, and with adults who may pose a risk to children. They are overseen by the [All Wales Child Protection Review Group](#), which represents all of Wales' safeguarding children boards and partner agencies.

[Safeguarding Children – Working Together Under the Children Act 2004](#) sets out how organisations and individuals should work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

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



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref CS/00498/17

Mike Hedges AM
Chair - Petitions Committee

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

12 April 2017

Dear Mike,

Thank you for your letter of 27 March seeking my views on the issues raised by the Recognition of Parental Alienation petition (Petition P-O5-751).

In light of recent developments, the Family Justice Network for Wales reviewed its position on parental alienation at its meeting on 28 March. The Network recognises some parents can behave in a way that alienates the other parent from their child's life and acknowledges the significant impact this type of behaviour can have on the emotional well being of the child.

Network members agreed that under existing legislation, the Family Court already has sufficient range of powers to deal with cases where alienating behaviours feature and where appropriate, cases can and have been considered by Welsh local authorities under child protection procedures. On that basis, the Network's view remains unchanged in that parental alienation should continue to be dealt with using current legal provisions.

The court has wide discretion to make arrangements designed to meet a child's needs and has the power to ask CAFCASS Cymru to prepare a welfare report into any matters relevant to the child or family. CAFCASS Cymru practitioners, as professionally qualified social workers, are trained to understand and recognise the potential for implacable hostility by a party in divorce or separation cases and its potential impact on the child..

Yours sincerely

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

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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.



FNF BOTH PARENTS MATTER CYMRU

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1st May 2017

Mike Hedges AM

Chair, Petitions Committee

National Assembly for Wales

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Dear Mr Hedges

P05-751 Parental Alienation

Thank you for the opportunity of responding to the correspondence from the Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children. We note that the response is almost exactly the same as those shared with our service users who have raised the issue with him directly. We had assumed that in responding to a Committee of the Assembly that officials would have provided a more detailed and comprehensive response for the Cabinet Secretary.

We are shocked at the seemingly complacent response from Welsh Government. They recognize the harm that Parental Alienation can cause to children but do not believe that any consistent approach is required to identify and combat the abuse.

There are 2 key points in the Welsh Government's position. Firstly they assert that **'the Family Court already has sufficient range of powers to deal**

with cases where alienating behaviours feature’. The Cabinet Secretary is no doubt relying on the fact that Family Justice is a non-devolved matter so that responsibility for preventing the abuse of Welsh children can be passed to Westminster.

Recognition and prevention of Parental Alienation is at best patchy in the Family Courts. This view is borne out by the words of the most senior judge in the Family Division, Sir James Munby speaking at a conference we attended in Bristol in March 2017:

‘...we have got to recognise openly and frankly the existence of parental alienation.’

Sir James followed this up by stating that the Family Justice system must:

‘...recognise its reality, identify it for what it is when it is, and take steps to ameliorate things’.

The Welsh Government has a legal responsibility under s35 (1) b of the Children Act 2004 in relation to Family proceedings to *‘give advice to any court about any application made to it in such proceedings’*. The Family Court cannot use the powers that Welsh Government asserts it has without clear and unequivocal advice that must be grounded in a consistent and transparent framework for assessment and action. The provision of advice to the Family Court- unlike almost every other front line delivery aspect of the devolved settlement - rests with Welsh Ministers directly.

The second key point is the Cabinet Secretary’s assertion that:

‘CAFCASS Cymru practitioners, as professionally qualified social workers, are trained to understand and recognise the potential for implacable hostility by a party in divorce or separation cases and its potential impact on the child’

We know of no requirement in social work training in Wales to comprehensively recognise ‘implacable hostility’ or any other form of Parental Alienation or alienating behaviour. We would be interested to see

evidence from Welsh Government that contradicts our view. We have no evidence that Cafcass Cymru or Local Authorities have any training to identify parental alienation or any form of alienating behaviour.

Training for professionals to identify and combat Parental Alienation is available in Wales, and has been approved by the British Psychological Society. More than 300 practitioners have undertaken this training in the UK so far. They are asked to rate their understanding of Parental Alienation at outset and at end of training and to state what they would do differently in their practice from what they have learned. A consistent theme in the responses is that practitioners felt that training on the subject should be more widely available.

Speaking in a recent debate on Parental Alienation in the House of Commons Simon Danczuk MP stated

*'According to the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service, parental alienation is responsible for some 80% of the most difficult cases that come before the family courts.'*ⁱ

Cafcass in England have various assessment tools and frameworks - that are available to the public to examine via their websiteⁱⁱ that is in stark contrast to the lack of any form of transparency by Welsh Government

The Chief Executive of Cafcass Sir Anthony Douglas was quoted in the Daily Telegraph in February of this year as saying about Parental Alienation that

"It's undoubtedly a form of neglect or child abuse in terms of the impact it can have.....I think the way you treat your children after a relationship has broken up is just as powerful a public health issue as smoking or drinking."

iii

In light of the above we are asking the Petitions Committee to press the Welsh Government for the following specific actions

P-05-751 Parental Alienation - Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 03.05.17

- To provide the Committee with the details of the training and assessment frameworks and materials that are currently in use by social workers in Local Authorities and Cafcass Cymru that specifically enable them to identify various forms of Parental Alienation and make recommendations to Courts as a result
- Provide to the committee the number of cases of Parental Alienation, alienating behaviour and 'implacable hostility' identified by Cafcass Cymru and Local Authorities in the most recent latest 12 month period
- To agree to a debate on the subject of Parental Alienation in Plenary in the Assembly.

We look forward to the consideration of our Petition by the Committee on the 9th May.

Regards

PAUL APREDA

National Manager, FNF Both Parents Matter Cymru

ⁱ <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2017-03-15/debates/1920253C-C972-40A3-9A63-714220EDE50D/ParentalAlienation> column 496

ⁱⁱ https://www.cafcass.gov.uk/media/215246/impact_of_parental_conflict_tool.docx

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/02/12/divorced-parents-pit-children-against-former-partners-guilty/>

Agenda Item 2.3

P-05-752 Building Resilience To Cyber-Bullying In Children

This petition was submitted by Jamie Denyer having collected 421 signatures.

Text of the Petition

We petition the Welsh Assembly government to fund and undertake evidence based research, and produce a strategy with recommendations for building resilience in our children – from infancy – against the devastating effects of Cyber-Bullying.

Additional Information

The strategy should include advice for parents and schools as to:

- * how to create healthy views and relationships around social media
- * how to prepare children to identify and guard against the behaviours that cyber-bullies use
- * how to teach children to emotionally separate their online experiences from their 'real life' ones
- * how to build emotional resilience to personal attacks online

Assembly Constituency and Region.

- Gower
- South Wales West

Briefing for the Petitions Committee

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 09 Mai 2017

Petitions Committee | 09 May 2017

Research Briefing: Building Resilience to Cyber-Bullying in Children

Petition number: [P5-05-752](#)

Petition title: Building Resilience to Cyber-Bullying in Children

Text of petition:

We petition the Welsh Government to fund and undertake evidence based research, and produce a strategy with recommendations for building resilience in our children – from infancy – against the devastating effects of Cyber-Bullying.

The strategy should include advice for parents and schools as to:

- how to create healthy views and relationships around social media
- how to prepare children to identify and guard against the behaviours that cyber-bullies use
- how to teach children to emotionally separate their online experiences from their 'real life' ones
- how to build emotional resilience to personal attacks online.

Background

Legal duties

Every school in Wales is subject to a legal duty to ensure that any form of bullying, is dealt with effectively. There is a range of legislation applicable to Wales that aims to protect children and young people from abuse, including bullying. Existing legislation with relevance to bullying includes: *Equality Act 2010*; *Education and Inspections Act 2006*; *Children Act 2004*; *Education Act 2002*; *Government of Wales Act 1998*; *Human Rights Act 1998*.

Guidance

In Wales this legislation is supported by **Welsh Government guidance and circulars**. These do not directly impose legal duties, but give guidance to local authorities and schools on how to implement bullying policies on a day to day basis. The guidance is intended to support the discharge of the legal duties.

The Welsh Government's [*Respecting Others: Anti-bullying Guidance: Circular 23/03*](#) states that **headteachers and governing bodies must, by law, have a policy to prevent all forms of bullying among pupils**. The circular sets out the types of information that should be included within a school's policy and how schools can tackle bullying.

It sets out a whole school bullying policy into four stages:

- Stage 1 – Awareness raising and consultation;
- Stage 2 – Implementation;
- Stage 3 – Monitoring;
- Stage 4 – Evaluation.

The circular also sets out that a senior member of staff should oversee the policy; that there is a regular renewal of the principles of the policy to remind both pupils and staff; and that the **school governing body should review the policy on an annual basis** to ensure that it is effective. The circular states that:

It is good practice to give a senior teacher the overall responsibility for both managing the anti-bullying policy and dealing with incidents of bullying, once the policy is established.

In 2011, the Welsh Government built on this circular with **a series of anti-bullying materials** that provide guidance and practical solutions on preventing and responding to incidents of bullying in schools: [*Respecting Others; Anti-bullying overview \(Guidance document 050/2011\)*](#). It includes a brief overview document and detailed guidance on the following five areas of bullying:

- Bullying around race, religion and culture
- Bullying around special educational needs and disabilities
- **Cyber-bullying**
- Homophobic bullying
- Sexist, sexual and transphobic bullying.

Guidance on Cyberbullying

As stated above, one of the Welsh Government's items of [anti-bullying guidance deals specifically with cyberbullying](#) (PDF 869KB). This is aimed at schools; local authorities; parents/carers, families; learners; school governors; social workers; health professionals; and voluntary organisations involved with schoolchildren.

The Welsh Government's 66 page guidance on cyberbullying includes the following sections:

- **Understanding** cyberbullying (including definitions, levels as of 2011, and forms it can take)
- The **law** relating to cyberbullying
- **Preventing** cyberbullying
- **Responding** to cyberbullying
- **Resources** and further reading.

Pages 33–34 provide guidance on promoting awareness and understanding about cyberbullying. Pages 43–45 gives guidance on how to support the person being cyberbullied. This includes the following key principles:

- Encouraging learners to seek help
- Reassuring them that they have done the right thing by telling someone
- Recognising that it must have been difficult for them to deal with
- Reiterating that no one has a right to do that to them
- Taking steps to ensure the school adopts a culture that does not tolerate cyberbullying, as this can also help to make the target of cyberbullying feel safe.

The guidance contains the following '**advice on online empowerment**', which might be particularly relevant to the call for a strategy to build children and young people's emotional resilience to personal attacks online:

It is important to advise the person being bullied **not to retaliate or return the message**. Replying to messages, particularly in anger, is probably just what the bully wants, and by not replying the bully may think that the target did not receive or see the message, or that they were not bothered by it. Instead, the person should keep the evidence and take it to their parent/carer or a member of staff.

Advise the learner to think about the information they have in the public domain and where they go online. It is **important that learners are careful** about to whom they give their mobile phone number, and that they consider whether they should stay members of chatrooms, for example, where people are treating them badly.

Advising a child to **change their contact details**, such as their instant messenger (IM) identity or mobile phone number, can be an effective way of stopping unwanted contact. However, it is important to be aware that some children may not want to do this, and will see this as a last resort for both practical and social reasons, and they may feel that they are being punished. (pages 43–44)

Estyn report, 2014

In June 2014, Estyn published a thematic report, [*Action on bullying*](#). The report examined the **effectiveness of action taken by schools** to address bullying, with particular reference to bullying on the grounds of pupils' protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation). On cyberbullying, Estyn reported:

In most secondary schools, **pupils and staff are concerned about the rise in cyberbullying**, particularly in relation to the protected characteristics. Cyberbullying has **created new forms of bullying that are unfamiliar to some staff**. In the best practice, staff keep up-to-date with the technologies that pupils use and understand their potential for misuse inside and outside school. (para 10)

In most secondary schools, the rise in cyberbullying, as a **vehicle for anonymous bullying**, is a **concern for pupils and staff**. In general, schools find this type of bullying **difficult to manage**. It is also often **unreported**, because pupils feel too ashamed or embarrassed to talk about it. Often, by the time the school becomes aware of cyberbullying, it has been taking place for some time. Many pupils feel that once adults address individual issues, and talk about the victim's feelings openly, the situation improves. This often involves contacting police liaison officers who work with groups of pupils and remind them of the possible legal implications of cyberbullying. (para 28)

The increase in cyberbullying has created new forms of bullying that staff are often unfamiliar with. Many **staff are unaware of the software** used by pupils to communicate with one another through mobile phones and online activities, both inside and outside school. In 2012, a report by Ofcom ('Children and parents: Media use and attitudes in the nations') found that 80% of children aged 5–15 years of age use the internet at home. Technology is now a major part of the lives of children and young people and their knowledge of it has overtaken that of some parents and staff. In **the best practice, staff keep up-to-date with technology** and maintain an awareness of the software pupils use and its potential for misuse. (para 69)

The report included case studies of best practice illustrating how the best practice schools deal with bullying. It includes a particular **case study** of how the educational psychology service in Denbighshire supports staff, pupils and parents with tailored information about cyberbullying and how to prevent it.

Estyn's report also included an **anti-bullying checklist**. This includes:

- whether schools have a range of strategies to address cyberbullying;
- whether school staff keep up-to-date with new forms of bullying, such as cyberbullying; and
- whether schools address cyberbullying both inside and outside school.

As part of its recommendations, Estyn **recommended** that schools should 'ensure staff have a clear understanding of the extent and nature of bullying that may take place in school, including cyberbullying'.

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.

Kirsty Williams AC/AM
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg
Cabinet Secretary for Education



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-752
Ein cyf/Our ref KW/00530/17

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

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

4 April 2017

Dear Mike,

Thank you for your letter of 27 March.

I would like to be absolutely clear that I will not tolerate any form of bullying within education in Wales. The Welsh Government has undertaken significant work to ensure that children and young people are free from the consequences of cyberbullying, and that all learners contribute positively to the digital world. I also expect schools and education services to adopt a similar approach and to tackle all incidents of bullying and cyberbullying vigorously, ensuring that pupils are properly supported

The Digital Competence Framework (DCF) was made available on 1 September 2016. This is the first element of the new curriculum to be made available and it will form one of three cross-curricular responsibilities, alongside literacy and numeracy. The DCF is about embedding digital skills and knowledge in everything learners do as they progress through school and teachers will increasingly apply relevant digital skills in their lessons.

The Citizenship strand of the Framework includes a focus on identify, image and reputation; health and well being and online behaviour and cyberbullying. The strand focuses on learners developing the skills needed to contribute positively to the digital world around them. These skills will help learners to critically evaluate their place within the digital world, so that they are prepared to encounter the positive and negative aspects of being a digital citizen.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

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

Gohebiaeth.Kirsty.Williams@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Kirsty.Williams@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.

Since January 2014, the Welsh Government has worked in partnership with South West Grid for Learning (SWGfL) to promote and provide a range of online safety activities on issues including cyberbullying.

Activities to date include delivery of training sessions for education professionals and school governors across Wales, and the development of resources to support children, parents, carers and teachers. Over 60 training days have been delivered over the past three years, with further sessions scheduled to take place in May specifically on 'Safe Use of Social Media'. In the autumn term, 12 bilingual training events on 'Tackling cyberbullying and online hate' for education practitioners will be rolled out.

As part of the contract with SWGfL, we have developed the [Online Safety Resource for Wales](#). This was designed to empower learners to think critically, behave safely, and participate responsibly in our digital world. These materials are based on Common Sense Media resources from the United States. There are five individual lessons for every year group with a suite of supporting materials.

In February, I was pleased to launch the [Online Safety Zone](#) on [Hwb](#) to provide a one-stop shop for information about online safety issues. The zone provides access to sources of guidance and advice to learners, parents and schools, in addition to hosting a range of useful resources and links to training and further expert support.

To support schools in Wales in dealing appropriately with issues of 'sexting', my officials are working with SWGfL and education stakeholders to adapt, contextualise and translate the UK Centre for Internet Safety guidance 'Sexting in schools and colleges: Responding to incidents and safeguarding young people'. This will be available for school in Wales in the summer term.

The Welsh Government has produced a series of anti-bullying guidance materials - 'Respecting others' – which provides advice and support to schools and education services in managing incidents of bullying. As more and more schools respond to the growing challenge of cyberbullying, it is vital that schools understand the issues, know how to prevent and respond to incidents, and are updated on the legal issues surrounding this challenging subject. That is exactly why – within this series of guidance materials – we have produced specific advice on how schools and education services should respond to incidents of cyberbullying.

All schools must, by law, have a school behaviour policy in place. Effective anti-bullying strategies should be central to that behaviour policy and be developed and put into practice by everyone in the school, including the pupils.

I am conscious however that we operate in an ever-changing world and we must be constantly vigilant about new technologies and the way in which they impact – positively and negatively – on young people's lives. I have therefore agreed that the current 'Respecting others' guidance should be reviewed and up-dated to ensure that it remains fit for purpose and continues to support schools and practitioners in Wales.

The Welsh Government has also published statutory safeguarding guidance 'Keeping learners safe' to help schools and FE colleges ensure that child welfare issues are identified and acted upon. The guidance outlines the responsibilities of education services to build children's understanding, awareness and resilience through the curriculum and also provides specific advice on e-Safety.

The Welsh Government also published e-learning safeguarding modules last autumn, aimed at all school staff, to help practitioners understand their safeguarding roles and responsibilities. These can be accessed on the Hwb. Two modules specifically focusing on online safety will soon be added to this suite of support, to help improve practitioners' and school governors understanding of online safety issues. Cyberbullying will form part of this module.

I would like to take this opportunity to reassure you that considerable work is already being undertaken in this critical area, to help learners stay safe online and to prepare them to become safe and responsible, think critically, behave safely, and participate responsibly in our digital world.

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

Agenda Item 3.1

P-05-712 A Welsh Government Department for Europe Would Ensure a Clear, Strategic and Accountable Voice for Wales in Ongoing Negotiations.

This petition was submitted by Tegid Roberts, having collected 22 online.

Text of the Petition

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to create a Department for Europe as a matter of urgency, tasked with understanding and developing a strategy for Wales' continued engagement with the EU and our future relationship with the European partners.

Since the Brexit referendum the UK Government's response has been slow and ambiguous – A Cabinet office unit for Brexit was initially proposed then abandoned to be replaced with the new post of “Minister for Brexit”, a role seemingly bereft of clear objectives, and led by an MP who has spent the last 20 years on the back benches.

In Wales the Welsh Government response has been muted to say the least and it is time now that Wales itself took action so that negotiations between the UK and the rest of the EU work smoothly and that Wales – a net beneficiary of EU membership – has a decisive role in shaping our future relationship with the EU. As things currently stand, England and Scotland dominate all negotiations with the wider EU and without a concerted strategic plan of action from the Welsh government, this situation is likely to continue.

This Department should have a strong Cabinet Secretary with experience of working in Europe who can work across all departments. The Secretary should be supported by a cross-party committee to scrutinise all areas of current engagement and to help devise what our future relationship with the EU should look like. This committee should in turn be advised by a group of external expert advisors brought in from legal, economic, business, agricultural, cultural, and academic sectors.

A Welsh Government Department for Europe would ensure a clear, strategic and accountable voice for Wales in ongoing negotiations. We also need a strong voice in Europe to make sure that we continue to benefit and contribute to the areas we are already involved in and to develop relationships with the EU in sectors that we are not currently fully engaged with post Brexit.

P-05-712 A Welsh Government Department for Europe would ensure a clear, strategic and accountable voice for Wales in ongoing negotiations – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 13.04.17

Dear Ms Driscoll

Thank you for sending this report which I have previously read. My comments are as follows:

1. I would like to know how many staff have been allocated full time to the Brexit project in Wales as there is a danger that it could be under resourced. Brexit will touch many of the devolved areas the Welsh government and Welsh Parliament concern themselves with. They also have direct interaction at the Brussels level.

2. I am still concerned that a dedicated Minister has not been allocated to a specific Brexit department. Mark Drakeford though extremely able is also responsible for other important areas of government in Wales.

3. I would like to better understand if the WG has done a detailed SWOT analysis of Brexit as the report you have forwarded does not cover this most basic of analysis.

4. Given that the JMC process has been shown to be flawed by evidence given by Prof Drakeford to the Brexit Parliamentary select committee how does the WG expect relations between the WG and the UK brexit departments to work in future.

5. Given that Brexit and the great repeal bill now introduces a further challenge to the Welsh Assembly sovereign on devolved matters how will the department mitigate these.

With kindest regards

Tegid Roberts

Agenda Item 3.2

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

Petition wording:

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

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

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

Petition raised by: Mike Parry

Petition first considered by Committee: 19 March 2013

Number of signatures: 306

RE: P-04-466 Petitions Committee – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee,
28.04.17

28/4/2017

RE: P-04-466 Petitions Committee (F AO)

Dear Sir(s)

In relation to your latest communication I would wish to comment as follows:

I am firmly of the opinion that the articulate **and precisely worded petition that I submitted – should not be considered any further**. Sadly and clearly, the inaction by the Committee suggests that they were not open-minded and that it was given lip service only.

I am also firmly of the opinion that the Petitions Committee seriously need to review and consider their position as an alleged functional entity – as they have clearly not covered themselves in glory here.

The rationale for the last statement is simple and brief.

Had the **precisely worded petition** been seriously and thoroughly considered when submitted – then by default the **predicted meltdown** of the BCUHB would have been foreseen and perhaps some pre-crash action should have ensued or been recommended by the Petitions Committee to the Welsh Government.

Clearly enough detailed evidence was supplied to the Petitions Committee, that patently gave unambiguous indicators of the direction of travel of the BCUHB – yet the Petitions Committee chose to ignore the information supplied (assuming it was even read!).

I consider this element to be absolutely appalling and the fact that my evidence was ignored is clearly demonstrated by the fact that the BCUHB went into special measures not long afterwards – and that **is a status it still enjoys!**

Insult to injury was added, by the fact that the petition was lumped in for consideration under the banner of the Tywyn Hospital Committee petition – which was the complete reverse of what should have happened in my view– as I had resisted in the petition wording, to be parochial – as my concerns were clearly for the Health service **as a whole in North Wales**.

Clearly had our petition been addressed seriously by the petitions Committee – it could have avoided my accusation of “I told you so “!

The ones I feel sorry for here are of course the general public, who are *the ones that ultimately suffered* – from the inefficiency and incompetency of Government and administrations. **Even inaction has its side effects.**

My conscience is completely clear in this matter and whilst I am clearly not a rocket scientist, a few quotes from **some of the information originally provided** would not go amiss

-

"BCUHB like it or not are presiding over the biggest meltdown of Health services in North Wales"

"WAG need to intervene to ensure that we do not come to any harm!"

"This will be an acid test to see if WAG really does care about our communities and our wellbeing - and that they are willing to do something about it!"

"Indeed demand that the Welsh Government and its Assembly Members intervene and protect what is literally OUR LIVES ! "

To conclude, the above quotes, which are by no means not exhaustive – says it all does it not?

I can hold my head up high in this matter- can the Petitions Committee? I doubt it.

Special measures happened on their watch and clearly they were forewarned and failed to act in the best interests of the public this matter.

I would therefore be obliged if you could inform me as to what course of action is available to me to formally complain about the lack of a reasonable response to our petition. Would that be the Ombudsman or is there a preceding hurdle? Please advise accordingly.

Sincerely,

Michael Parry
Petitioner

Agenda Item 3.3

P-04-505 Eating Disorder Unit in Wales

Petition wording:

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to inform the Welsh Government of the urgency and necessity to provide a specialist eating disorder unit in Wales.

Additional Information:

We would like to see a specialist eating disorder unit built in Wales to reduce the stress and disruption of traveling so far from family and friends by having to go to England to receive treatment. In 2007 the government acknowledged that there was no specialist treatment in Wales and that this needed to change, yet 5 years on we are still waiting for that change. I know from personal experience how hard it is to be in hospital so far away from home and believe that an eating disorder unit in Wales would make the process of treatment and recovery easier for Welsh sufferers.

Petition raised by: Keira Marlow

Date petition first considered by Committee: 8 October 2013

Number of signatures: 526

**P-04-505 Eating Disorder Unit in Wales – Correspondence from the
Petitioner to the Clerk of the Committee, 23.04.17**

Dear Graeme,

I would like the committee to consider my petition again.

Since I created the petition there has been another campaign set up, known as the cwtched campaign, which is to open the first inpatient treatment centre for eating disorders in Wales, it will be privately funded but accessible through local authority funding. There is no date yet for when this will happen but it is a great step forward, however it will be a private hospital so the majority of eating disorder patients are unlikely to be able to afford private treatment and if they receive local authority funding there is likely to be a very long waiting list and limited spaces available. However, if a specialist NHS hospital was built, it would allow sufferers to hopefully access and receive treatment quicker, without having to travel all over the country to receive it.

Best wishes,

Keira

Agenda Item 3.4

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



CYNGOR IECHYD CYMUNED
COMMUNITY HEALTH COUNCIL

CIC GOGLEDD CYMRU / NORTH WALES CHC

Uned IB a D Parc Busnes Wilkinson |
Unit IB and D Wilkinson Business Park
Ffordd De Clywedog | Clywedog Road South
Wrecsam /Wrexham
LL13 9AE

Ffôn | Tel: 01978 356178

Ebost | Email: admin@waleschc.org.uk

18th April 2017

FAO Kayleigh Driscoll
The Petitions Committee – Welsh Assembly
BY EMAIL ONLY
SeneddPetitions@assembly.wales

Dear Kayleigh

Petition Reference: P-04 -564 / Restoration of Inpatient Beds, Minor Injuries Cover & X-Ray Unit to the Ffestiniog Memorial Hospital

North Wales Community Health Council's Council's Gwynedd and Conwy Local Committees have previously offered their support for the concerns regarding the provision of healthcare in Blaenau Ffestiniog outlined in the above petition by the Ffestiniog Memorial Hospital Defence Committee. On 13th March 2017 the Gwynedd Local Committee received a further update from the Defence Committee and they confirmed their continued support.

These concerns are similar in many aspects to the concerns being raised by HIW and the Older Persons' Commissioner and they accord with the findings of the CHC on recent visits – as well as concerns received by our complaints and advocacy service. I attach for your attention a range of correspondence with the Health Minister, Betsi Cadwaladr UHB and the Older Persons Commissioner.

You will note from this correspondence that there is a consistent concern from the CHC that BCUHB has failed to deliver the changes promised in the consultation "*Healthcare in North Wales is Changing*" in 2012. Whilst the construction of the Health Centre has recently commenced, Enhanced Care at Home has not delivered the promise replacement for the community hospital beds and the continuing issues with recruitment



Croesawir gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg neu'r Saesneg – Correspondence welcomed in Welsh or English
Cyngor Iechyd Cymuned Gogledd Cymru yw enw gweithredol Cyngor Iechyd Cymuned Betsi Cadwaladr
North Wales Community Health Council is the operational name of the Betsi Cadwaladr Community Health Council

are making it extremely difficult to replace GP Principals who left the local practice following the closure of the hospital. This has led to concerns about the continuity of care, particularly for older people. The solution of replacing GPs with specialist nurses raises its own problems, as these nurses are no easier to recruit.

The current situation means that step up and step down care is not provided in the community as was promised in 2012. Instead, local people travel large distances to access such care. For example Ffestiniog residents with a dementia diagnosis are often placed in Penrhos Stanley Hospital in Holyhead and there is now no local facility for end of life care.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G.A. Ryall-Harvey'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'G' and 'A'.

Geoff Ryall-Harvey
Chief Officer – North Wales CHC

NORTH WALES LOCAL MEDICAL COMMITTEE
PWYLLGOR MEDDYGON TEULU GOGLEDD CYMRU

SECRETARIAT:

MS A LLOYD WILLIAMS

JESSUP

'Yr Allt'

Ffordd Tan y Gopa

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CHAIRMAN: DR E D

SECRETARY: DR P W WHITE

TREASURER: DR G O JONES

ACCOUNTS: MS J

Welsh Assembly Petitions Committee Ref P-04-564 Restoration of in-patient beds, Minor injuries cover and X-ray Unit.

To the Clerk Mr Graeme Francis

National Assembly for Wales

Cardiff Bay

Cardiff CF99 1NA

30th. March, 2017

Dear Sir

Re: Hospital Services in Blaenau Ffestiniog

Members of the LMC Executive met with a group representing Blaenau Ffestiniog Hospital earlier this month.

Previously the LMC supported the retention of inpatient facilities, a minor injuries unit and x-ray facilities at Blaenau as it was in keeping with Welsh Government policy of provision of services close to home.

We appreciate the rural nature of the area and transport difficulties experienced, especially by the elderly, in reaching other NHS sites. This problem is further exacerbated when the weather is bad.

We noted argument that the Meirionnydd area is equally rural and equally populated but decisions have been made there to maintain and expand facilities, in contrary to the situation in Blaenau Ffestiniog. We also note that the argument regarding tourists

now applies equally to both areas given the increasing number of tourist attractions in the area.

We also note that there are no registered nursing homes in the area and a care home that has been used as a step-down facility does not have the capability for such a role. In patient facilities would provide this service.

We understand that in the past the hospital support group has consulted consulted architects and for some £300,000 the building, it was felt at this stage, could be enlarged sufficiently to include a ward facility, x-ray facilities and a minor injuries unit at a future date were additional revenue funding to be identified as, hopefully, the country's economic situation improved.

We also noted that The Hospital League of Friends had suggested some time ago, £150,000 funding towards this.

North Wales LMC would fully endorse and support the campaign to alter the current development sufficiently to include space for the facilities currently being withdrawn, as a future proofing. We foresee with tele medicine and IT links for radiology reporting that remote provision of such services will be the way forward for rural Wales, such that local provision of service is the norm. At this stage, such provision would prove far cheaper than future additional building work, were contingency plans not introduced at this stage

We would also support the reintroduction of those withdrawn services as soon as possible, to maintain service provision close to home as is the stated policy of Welsh Government

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized loop at the top and a smaller, more complex scribble below it.

Dr Phil White, LMC secretary and CEO

c.c. Sally Baxter

c.c. Local Health Board

c.c. Mr Geoff Ryall-Harvey Community Health Council, Cartrefle, Cefn Road, Wrexham
LL13 9NH

P-04-564 Restoration of Inpatient Beds, Minor Injuries Cover and X-Ray Unit to the Ffestiniog Memorial Hospital – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 03.05.17

Dear Kayleigh,

We would be obliged if you bring the attachment to the notice of members of the Petitions Committee. It contains our recent email correspondence (dated 01.03.2017 and 04.04.2017), with Dr Peter Higson, Chair of BCUHB, together with his interim response of 21st March.

All three emails relate to Betsi Chief Exec Gary Doherty's letter to Mr Hedges on 6th January, which the Petitions Committee discussed at their last meeting. Appendix 1 in that letter was penned by Dr Whitehead, lead practitioner for Meirionnydd, some of whose statements are challenged in our emails to Dr Higson.

Hopefully, the members will see once again how disingenuous and intentionally misleading the Board's argument continues to be. Since the Betsi was formed in 2009, Mr Doherty is the FIFTH chief exec. that we have had to deal with, the others being Mary Burrows, Geoff Lang (in office during Mrs Burrows' prolonged absence), David Purt and Simon Dean (Mark Drakeford's 'trouble-shooter!'), all in the space of seven years. And yet the Board is still being kept under special measures! And as if that fact alone hasn't made it difficult for us to hold meaningful discussion over the years, we have also had to correspond with as many as FOUR different Health Ministers, all of whom have refused to involve themselves in the argument, implying that the buck stops with BCUHB, which is surely an uncommon stance for any Minister to be taking.

We thank the members for respecting our petition and hope that they will continue to seek a full and honest response from BCUHB to the true level of healthcare now being delivered in the Welsh Uplands.

Diolch yn fawr,

Geraint V Jones (Chair of Ffestiniog Memorial Hospital Defence Committee)

01.03.2017

Pwyllgor Amddiffyn Ysbyty Coffa Ffestiniog

Dear Dr Higson,

On behalf of the above Committee, I wish to issue a formal complaint about comments made by Dr Bill Whitehead in *Appendix 1* of Mr Doherty's recent response to the Petitions Committee.

There are several issues that we could challenge even in Mr Doherty's own e-mail but, for the present, we will confine ourselves to pinpointing misleading and blatantly inaccurate statements by Dr Whitehead that could only have been intended to mis-inform the Petitions Committee. In fact, what Dr Whitehead sets out to prove in this *Appendix* is that Blaenau Ffestiniog actually **deserved** to lose its services, simply because some villages '*along the coastal strip*' don't have them either, and he applies a rationale that could just as easily apply not only to Tywyn and Dolgellau but also to most other parts of Gwynedd. In fact, his whole argument seems to be based on astounding geographical ignorance when he claims that '*Blaenau Ffestiniog is clearly rural*' whereas, in fact, Blaenau is still recognized as the third largest town in Gwynedd, behind Bangor and Caernarfon.

Dr Whitehead claims that '*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.*' Such a statement is both incorrect and clearly intended to misinform Members of the Petitions Committee. For instance these words – '*The surgery in Blaenau is fully manned by doctors, most of whom have a regular committment to the practice, some of whom have salaried posts and are not simply locums.*' Dr Whitehead knows full well – or at least he should know, being the lead practitioner for the area! – that our **only** salaried doctor is semi-retired (working 3 days a week) and that all others are locums who, bar one, have to travel 30 miles or more to attend daily surgery. The gist of Dr Whitehead's reasoning, however, is that the people of the Welsh Uplands should be thankful for what is now on offer to them!

In fact, his arguments are more in keeping with those of the hard-nosed businessmen running the health board than those of a medical practitioner whose main concern should be to prioritize patient care. He must surely know that his views are at odds with those of his colleagues on the north Wales LMC? Some might even argue that he was appointed chair of the Project Board merely as a stooge to ensure that BCUHB's wishes were carried out!

When Dr Whitehead argues against having 'isolated' branch surgeries, then he should list those that come within his definition. For instance, is Trawsfynydd an isolated branch surgery despite it being open four days a week? Can we please be given the health board's official definition of an '*isolated branch surgery*' and perhaps be told how many others are being targeted for closure by the likes of Dr Whitehead on the excuse that they are not *adequately staffed* or don't have the *necessary facilities*? By implication, Dr Whitehead's definition leads us to believe that the Blaenau GP Practice, before it was taken over by BCUHB, acted irresponsibly for over 60 years in maintaining 'inadequate' and 'isolated' surgeries in Dolwyddelan and Llan Ffestiniog!

He goes on to claim that '*Full MIU services are provided by the practice in Blaenau during surgery hours*'. Let him therefore respond professionally, if not to the numerous examples that we have already provided but at least to the case of the 87 year old pensioner living alone in Llan Ffestiniog who fell on her garden path last year whilst hanging out her washing. Dr Whitehead's so-called '*full MIU services*' in Blaenau wanted to send her on to Alltwen (14 miles distant), and Ysbyty Alltwen on from there to Ysbyty Gwynedd! Fortunately, an off-duty district nurse took pity on her and attended to her injuries at her own home. When we sent in details of her case, BCUHB refused to respond, preferring instead to hide behind the old excuse of '*patient confidentiality*'. But I have the elderly lady's permission to attach a photograph of her that was taken at the time, but with name with-held. Are the Health Board and Dr Whitehead, our so-called lead practitioner, honestly of the opinion that a woman of her age should be expected to find her own way to a hospital 35 miles from home, simply because the MIU at her own surgery, or that in Alltwen Hospital, weren't prepared to do what an off-duty

district nurse was perfectly capable of doing? In the light of this case, it would be interesting to hear Dr Whitehead's definition of *'full MIU services'* as provided in Blaenau.

There are several other of his statements that need to be challenged but we take particular offence when he makes the spurious claim of *'a clear perception that some individuals are constantly searching for examples of care ... in order to generate political ammunition'*. How dare he make such an accusation! We challenge him to name the *'individuals'* that he has in mind! In fact, our Committee was presenting Blaenau's case well before he ever arrived on the scene; otherwise he would not show such ignorance and would know that we have sought the backing of all political parties over the years. The newly elected Petitions Committee, in its response, already respect that fact.

We have always maintained that Dr Whitehead had a vested interest in seeing the Blaenau Memorial Hospital closed in order to safeguard and to enhance services at Dolgellau Hospital. That claim has never been challenged by anyone in authority. Some of Dr Whitehead's tenuous arguments in *Appendix 1*, recently sent by Mr Doherty to the Petitions Committee, give further credence to our claim.

You will know better than anyone, Dr Higson, that we have asked consecutive Chief Executives, as well as both yourself and your predecessor as BCUHB Chairs, not to mention the Health Minister himself, the following questions regarding Dr Whitehead's appointment as chair of the Project Group that decided on the future of health services in the Rural Uplands – (i) *'How ethical was it for the health board to place him (i.e. Dr Whitehead) in such an influential position? And also (ii) How ethical was it for Dr Whitehead himself to accept the responsibility? Should he not have declared a vested interest and refused to take part? Why is it that we still await answers from every single one of you?*

Another question that was put to you several times (albeit in Welsh) was this

'Os na ddangoswyd ffafriaeth i un ardal mwy nag arall, ga i ofyn sut yr aeth BIPBC ati i bwyso a mesur rhwng gwahanol ardaloedd yng ngogledd orllewin Cymru. Roedd rheidrwydd ar y Bwrdd i gynhyrchu dogfen yn cloriannu'r sefyllfa, nid yn unig yma yn Stiniog ond hefyd yn nalgylchoedd Tywyn,

Dolgellau, Alltwen, Pwllheli a Chaernarfon. Carwn wneud cais am gopi o'r ddogfen honno, ... er mwyn gweld beth yn union oedd y dadleuon dros roi gwell gwasanaeth i drefi llai poblog ond mwy Seisnig y glannau.'

I wonder why that request was also ignored at every asking?

In the meantime, the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, with the blessing of a dispassionate Labour government, has seen fit to completely desecrate a war memorial to the sacrifice of 353 young men of the Welsh Uplands who lost their lives in the Great War; a war memorial that the people of this area have held in high esteem for the best part of a hundred years. Rather than taking pride in the new construction, successive BCUHB executives, plus Dr Whitehead, should be hanging their heads in shame.

We have been assured by a qualified architect that, even at this late stage, plans for the new building can easily be adapted without any significant extra cost to include those facilities that were stolen from us – namely an inpatient ward, X-ray equipment and a MIU worthy of the name.

There has to come a point, Dr Higson, where high-handed bureaucracy must answer to the democratic process, otherwise we might as well be living in a one-party state that is answerable to no one but to itself and where the wishes of the people can be totally ignored, even when expressed in a democratic referendum.

Is it too much to hope for a response to each of the matters that are being raised in this letter?

Yours sincerely,

Geraint V. Jones (Chair of Ffestiniog Memorial Hospital Defence Committee)

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21.03.2017



Geraint Vaughan Jones
Chair of Ffestiniog Memorial Hospital Defence
Committee

Via E-mail: geraintvaughanjones@gmail.com

Ein cyf / Our ref: PH/RE

Eich cyf / Your ref:

☎: 01248 384290

Gofynnwch am / Ask for: Mandy Williams

E-bost / Email:

Mandy.williams7@wales.nhs.uk

Dyddiad / Date: 21st March 2017

Dear Mr Jones,

Thank you for your letter received via e-mail on 1st March 2017.

I think it is important to state that we do not accept that Dr Bill Whitehead has misinformed the Petitions Committee with his analysis of statements made recently by the Defence Committee in the 'Elder Abuse in the Uplands' pamphlet. As Cluster Lead for Meirionnydd and Barmouth GP, he is well placed to provide an analysis from a primary care perspective of local health service provision in the locality.

It is important to be clear that his appointment as Chair of the Blaenau Integrated Health & Social Care Project Board in June 2013 was entirely appropriate as the Meirionnydd Cluster Lead and post-dates the decision made by the Health Board (following Health Care in North Wales is Changing) on the closure of Ffestiniog Memorial Hospital. His remit was to lead the Project Board in developing the business case for a new integrated health and social care centre in Blaenau and to secure a wider range of services for delivery from the new building.

I do not understand your assertion that the war memorial has been completely desecrated by the Health Board. It was an important principle agreed with the Design Team at the beginning of the project design, that the original core memorial building would be retained, the stonework restored and features such as the pillars at the rear of the building would be extended to the front. The contractor has also worked hard to ensure that the external war memorial has been suitably covered and fully protected during the construction phase, with the internal plaques having been removed and stored safely in Ysbyty Alltwen. These plaques will of course be displayed prominently in the new Centre when it opens.

Following the last Remembrance Day commemoration, Anwyl Construction and the Health Board received comments of appreciation from the British Legion for the assistance given both on and before Remembrance Sunday.

Cyfeiriad Gohebiaeth ar gyfer y Cadeirydd a'r Prif Weithredwr / Correspondence address for Chairman and Chief Executive:

Swyddfa'r Gweithredwyr / Executives' Office,
Ysbyty Gwynedd, Penrhosgarnedd

Bangor, Gwynedd LL57 2PW

Gwefan: www.pbc.cymru.nhs.uk / **Web:** www.bcu.wales.nhs.uk

Final par.

The Building Design is in line with the approved business case by Welsh Government and is on course to complete in the late summer and open following a short period of commissioning.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Higson, Chairman

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04.04.2017

Dear Dr Higson,

Your response dated 21st March 2017 to my e-mail of the first of that month is again hugely disappointing, in that you yet again avoid most of the matters raised and persist in trying to defend the mistakes and the half-truths and the deceptions of past Health Board executives.

You further insist that Dr Whithead's appointment as Chair of the Blaenau Integrated Health and Social Care Project Board was *'entirely appropriate'*. Of course, that was probably the case from the Health Board's point of view, but *'appropriate'* and *'ethical'* are hardly synonymous, are they? As you well know, *'ethical'* has direct moral implications which is why we again challenge not only yourself and the Board but also Dr Whitehead himself to argue the case that it was ethical for him to oversee the closure of essential services in the Ffestiniog Memorial Hospital whilst at the same time ensuring that those very same services were safeguarded at the Dolgellau-Barmouth Hospital that serves his own Practice. And for him to claim that *'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'* is totally shameful, coming from one who is professionally in a better position than anybody to know the true facts, should he choose to face them.

However, it has become patently obvious, that you have no intention of responding directly to matters that we have raised with you time and time

again, not even to the case of the elderly lady who was refused minor injuries treatment both at the Health Centre in Ffestiniog and in Alltwn Hospital, only to be treated by a compassionate off-duty district nurse at the nurse's own home. Are we to assume, therefore, that you and the BCUHB concur with Dr Whitehead's biased opinion that such a case exemplifies the *'good access to health services'* now being delivered in the Welsh Uplands and that we should be satisfied with our lot?

Finally, permit me to draw your attention to yet another example of undue hardship to elderly patients in the Welsh Uplands. It seems that BCUHB's policy now is for patients needing longer-term nursing care to find alternative arrangements in private nursing homes, as a means of alleviating the bed-blocking dilemma created by the closure of community hospitals such as our own. With assistance from Cyngor Gwynedd, we now know that pressure is being brought to bear on patients and family members to make such arrangements. Does it, therefore, not concern the Health Board that, of the eight so-called *'well-being areas'* in Gwynedd, the Welsh Uplands is the only area without a single nursing home? Compare that with the number of such establishments in the more affluent anglicized areas. For instance, Porthmadog and the small town of Cricieth between them can boast at least seven! Furthermore, Bryn Blodau in Llan Ffestiniog is the only care home for the elderly throughout the Uplands and that has a permanent waiting list.

Consequently, patients from this area, having spent time in Ysbyty Gwynedd or Glan Clwyd before being moved to Alltwn, and even Bryn Beryl or Dolgellau, are eventually expected to find alternative nursing care, if not at home then more often than not in a private and costly nursing home. To

my knowledge, as many as NINE elderly patients, from Blaenau and Llan Ffestiniog alone, are now permanent residents, through no choice of their own, in nursing homes in Llandudno (38 miles distant), Cricieth (17m.), Pentrefelin (15m.), Llanrwst (15m.), Porthmadog (13m) ... and that within the past twelve months a number of others have passed away in some of those same establishments, as also in Cartref Bryn yr Eglwys, Pentrefoelas (18m. distant).

The most recent death was that of an elderly lady from Tanygrisiau who was moved earlier this year from Alltwen to a nursing home in Tywyn of all places, 42miles from home! Her partner had no car, nor could he drive, so please consider what a day visit entailed for him – clippa bus from Tanygrisiau to Blaenau (10 minutes), bus ride (hourly service) from Blaenau to the Oakeley Arms in Maentwrog (20 + minutes) to catch a connection (two hourly service) to Dolgellau (c. 1 hour) and a further connection from there to Minffordd near Talyllyn for yet another connection to Tywyn (c. 1½ hours) and then an additional 10 minutes on foot to the nursing home, totalling over 3 hours one way! Alternatively, he could have used bus connections from Tanygrisiau to Penrhyndeudraeth (10 + 35minutes) to catch a less frequent railway connection (2-hourly service) on to Tywyn (1hr16m), totalling over 2 hours one way, provided of course that convenient connections were available for outward and return journeys.

Within two months of being moved, the lady passed away with no family member at her bedside and was buried in Ffestiniog a fortnight ago. The irony and the callousness of such an example must surely be obvious to you all.

So where does the blame lie, Dr Higson? Everywhere else but ... , presumably! In the meantime the discrimination and the injustice continues against the indigenous Welsh population of the Uplands!

The Board's publication *'Health Care in North Wales is Changing'* promised *'more care closer to home'* and claimed that its aim was *'to improve health, not just extend life'*. With due respect, successive BCUHB members, together with the lead practitioner whose views you so readily condone, should today be hanging their heads in shame as far as the Welsh Uplands are concerned. But rather than do that, you will, no doubt, be reminding us yet again that we are getting a £4m new building, to house not only the few services that are left to us (see attachment), but also a very impressive Administrative Block and office accommodation overlooking the wonderful panorama that was originally intended for the benefit of inpatients of the Ffestiniog Memorial Hospital.

Yours, with increasing concern,

Geraint V Jones (on behalf of members of Ffestiniog Memorial Hospital
Defence Committee)

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

SERVICES	DOLGELLAU	TYWYN	FFESTINIOG
24 hour on site medical cover	YES	YES (OP - OOH)	NO
24 hour nursing cover	YES	YES	NO
Minor Injuries Unit	YES - 8-4	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

03.05.17 – Petitioner to the Committee

Dear Kayleigh,

Thank you for confirming that our e-mail to Dr Higson (dated 1st March of this year), in which we challenged claims made by Betsi Chief Exec Gary Doherty in Appendix 1 of his letter to the Petitions Committee, will be included on the agenda next Monday. Permit me also to remind the members of the following facts –

1. In 2014, Blaenau Ffestiniog Town Council and Dolwyddelen Community Council instigated community polls calling for the return of inpatient beds, X-ray facilities and minor injuries cover to our Memorial Hospital. Of the 52% turnout, over 99.6% voted in favour of restoration of those services. Dr Peter Higson's response however was to say that the health board was not in any way obliged to take account of such a poll. (He had similarly rebuffed the results of an earlier petition that had over 4,000 signatories.). In other words, he was telling us that the health board is not obliged to respect any form of democratic process.
2. Your members will be well aware that neither the community nor the various interested professional bodies support the Health Board's discriminatory stance against the Welsh Uplands.
3. The North Wales LMC opposed the closure of the services in 2013 (the original letter, which the LMC sent to every member of the Health Board personally, is attached) and have confirmed this view in the letter which the current LMC has sent to the Petitions Committee.
4. The CHC did not originally refer the closure of the beds, X-ray and MIU to the Health Secretary having received assurances, statements and promises from the Health Board that proved totally false. Since then the CHC has frequently complained about the on-going discrimination, as confirmed by correspondence already supplied to the Petitions Committee by the Chief Officer.
5. A request from the MP for the area, first in person and then in writing, to the Chief Executive of Betsi Cadwaladr to initiate an independent enquiry into the inadequacy of the healthcare in the Welsh Uplands was rejected by Betsi Cadwaladr, thus again indicating that the health board does not consider itself answerable to democratic process. Meanwhile, people in the

predominantly Welsh-speaking Uplands still have to suffer an unreasonably bad health service.

Given the impasse between the Health Board and the community and the reluctance of the Cabinet Secretary to take any personal interest in the residents' plight, we wonder if the Petitions Committee would consider recommending to the "Health, Social Care and Sport Committee" that that Committee uses its scrutiny powers to examine the petitioners' request and to report upon it?

Yours very sincerely as always,

Geraint

Agenda Item 3.5

P-04-570 Inequitable Access to Treatments That Have Not Been Nationally Appraised in NHS Wales

Petition Wording

We the undersigned call on the National Assembly for Wales to review the use of the "exceptionality rule" in determining whether a patient can access a treatment through the Individual Patient Funding Request process.

Additional Information: To access treatments through the IPFR process, a patient population must demonstrate its exceptionality. For common illnesses, it may be possible to identify a subset of patients within the larger population who are more likely to respond to a particular therapy. For rare disease patients, demonstrating that you are a unique patient when you are part of a small group of patients whose condition is considered rare is practically impossible. The exceptionality criteria place an onus on clinicians to provide evidence that the patient's clinical condition is significantly different to the general population of patients with the same condition and is likely to gain significantly more benefit from the intervention than might normally be expected. This evidence requirement is too onerous to apply to patients with rare diseases due to small patient numbers within rare disease populations. Patients with great clinical need are prevented from accessing life-changing/ life-saving treatments.

Petition raised by: Genetic Alliance UK, Tuberous Sclerosis Association, Association of Glycogen Storage Disorders

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 15 July 2014

Number of signatures: 1089

STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

TITLE The Individual Patient Funding Request Review

DATE 21 March 2017

BY Vaughan Gething AM, Cabinet Secretary for Health, Well-being and Sport

Last July I announced the establishment of an independent review of the IPFR process. The purpose of the review was to look afresh at the clinical criteria, usually referred to as “clinical exceptionalism”, used to make IPFR decisions and the potential to reduce the number of IPFR panels in Wales.

My approach to this review has been to be open, inclusive and transparent from the outset involving all political parties, the public and the NHS in Wales. For example:

- Health opposition spokespeople have been fully involved in the whole process, including briefing sessions with the chair of the review group at the outset and conclusion of the review;
- The patient perspective featured strongly – two patients were members of the review group and discussion sessions were held across Wales for patients, their families and carers and patient organisations; and,
- The pharmaceutical industry, health boards and clinicians participated fully giving their views on how the process could be improved.

I published the report in January as soon as it was available to provide everyone with the earliest opportunity to consider the findings and recommendations. In parallel, my officials have been discussing the report with health boards, the

Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry (ABPI) Cymru Wales and our medicines experts at the All-Wales Therapeutics and Toxicology Centre (AWTTC).

The consensus is that this is a helpful report that makes thoughtful and pragmatic recommendations that will help health boards to deal with what are sensitive and very often complex decisions. I am particularly pleased that the patient voice has centre stage in the report.

I will now deal with the review group's recommendations on the issues they were asked to consider:

Clinical Exceptionality

Clinical exceptionality has been the underpinning principle upon which IPFR decisions have been made across the UK. It is not a well understood concept and is open to varying interpretation. This is discussed fully in the report with practical recommendations to reform the IPFR decision criteria which have been broadly welcomed.

The proposed changes cover situations where there is a recommendation from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) or the All-Wales Medicines Strategy Group (AWMSG) and where a recommendation from NICE or AWMSG has not been made. The review group recommends a new two-part test covering:

- Significant clinical benefit to the patient; and,
- Value for money.

This means assessing the degree of clinical benefit expected by the treatment and whether the cost of the treatment is in balance with the expected benefits.

Number of Panels

In relation to whether the number of IPFR panels should be reduced, the review group concluded the risks inherent in moving to a single panel or reducing the number of panels negated any compelling argument for change. The review group has however, made other helpful recommendations to support health boards in making further improvements to the process. This includes clarifying commissioning policies and embedding IPFR policy within those frameworks and

strengthening the central expert support, quality assurance and governance function of the AWTTTC.

Implementation

Health boards, supported by AWTTTC, have already begun the initial work to reform the clinical decision criteria with the aim of making this change to the guidance by May. Today, I have written to health board chairs to confirm the arrangements for implementing all of the recommendations by September.

Health boards will always have to make difficult choices about the relative clinical benefits versus the cost and value for money at an individual patient level, balanced against the health needs for their local population. IPFR decisions will therefore always be sensitive. However, taken together, all of the recommendations when implemented will have a positive impact on the IPFR process, making it more easily understandable and less prone to being misused.

The IPFR process has a place within the policy framework for access to treatment for relatively small numbers of individuals. For the majority of the population, we will continue to place the appraisal process at the centre of our evidence-based approach; ensuring people have access to clinically and cost effective treatment. The new £80 million treatment fund I announced in January supports this approach by providing earlier access to new, medicines recommended by NICE or the AWMSG.

The review group endorses our policy position of placing appraisal at the heart of decisions on the routine availability of treatment. They also highlight the importance of appraisal as the best way to evaluate clinical effectiveness and value for money. In particular I welcome their recommendation that the pharmaceutical industry should submit their medicines for appraisal as soon as possible after licensing to ensure a timely and transparent appraisal of the clinical benefits.

We have a good relationship with industry and the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry (ABPI) Cymru Wales. The ABPI and individual companies engage with us and AWMSG on the appraisal agenda and the wider new medicines work. The ABPI contributed to the review group's work and are supportive of implementing the report's recommendations. I will continue to support and encourage industry to work with us and the NHS in Wales to ensure the earliest possible access to innovative treatments.

I would like to finish by thanking the review group for their effort and commitment in tackling a highly complex area, compassionately and intelligently and delivering their recommendations within a challenging timeframe.

Agenda Item 3.6

P-05-693 Give Every Child in Wales the Meningitis B Vaccine for Free

This petition was submitted by Rhian Cecil, having collected 1,195 signatures.

Text of the Petition

Health is completely devolved to Wales. We ask the Assembly and Mark Drakeford to change the age range that all children receive the vaccine .

*All children are at risk from this terrible infection, yet the Government in Wales only vaccinate 2-5 month olds. There needs to be a rollout programme to vaccinate all children, at least up to age 11. Meningococcal infections can be very serious, causing **MENINGITIS, SEPTICAEMIA & DEATH***

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Pontypridd
- South Wales Central

Rebecca Evans AC/AM
Gweinidog Iechyd y Cyhoedd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Social Services and Public Health



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref RE/00331/17

Mike Hedges AM
Chair - Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
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government.committee.business@wales.gsi.gov.uk

5 April 2017

Dear Mike,

Thank you for your letter on behalf of the Petitions Committee about Petition P-05-693 Give Every Child in Wales the Meningitis Vaccine for Free.

The joint letter from Meningitis Now and the Meningitis Research Foundation provides a helpful summary of the understandable public concerns about meningococcal infection and the views supporting the wider use of the Bexsero® Meningitis B (MenB) vaccine.

At its meeting in June 2016, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) undertook a comprehensive review of the evidence for extending MenB vaccination to older age groups. The Committee noted the significant public opinion represented by the number of signatures to the petition and the evidence presented by the Meningitis charities in supporting the wider use of the vaccine.

The JCVI considered the cost effectiveness of extending the programme to a number of older age groups and other factors such as a vaccine supply and concluded that the routine programme as currently offered remained the priority.

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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 108

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.

No further advice has been provided since that time. The JCVI will continue to monitor the programme and its impact on meningococcal disease. Any updated advice received from the JCVI will be given careful consideration by the Welsh Government at that time.

Yn eiddo
Rebecca

Rebecca Evans AC/AM

Gweinidog Iechyd y Cyhoedd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Social Services and Public Health

Agenda Item 3.7

P-04-472 Make the MTAN law

Petition wording:

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to make the MTAN Guidance Notes, notably those relating to a 500 metre buffer zone around open cast workings, mandatory in planning law for Wales.

Additional information:

On 20th January 2009, Jane Davidson, the Minister for the Environment, introduced newly published Coal Minerals Technical Advice guidance Notes (MTAN) for Wales, and stated: “.. the Coal MTAN will fulfil the pledges (in 2008) to introduce Health Impact Assessments for coal applications, together with buffer zones, and with an emphasis on working closely with local communities. It reaffirms the commitment (in 2008) to a 500m buffer zone.” In 2009 the Welsh Government did not have the power to make its planning guidelines law. It does now.

Petition raised by: Dr John Cox

Date petition first considered by Committee: 16 April 2013

Number of signatures: 680. Associated petition collected 330 signatures.

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-04-472
Ein cyf/Our ref LG/00474/17

Mike Hedges AM
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28 March 2017

Dear Mike

Thank you for your letter of 27 February regarding petition P-04-472 Make the MTAN Law. As you will be aware, I cannot comment on specific cases but I can give you an outline on what has happened since the petition was last mentioned during the No-Named Day Motion debate in April 2015.

In July 2015, the previous Minister for Natural Resources and officials held a summit on opencast coal where a number of stakeholders from industry, local authorities and residents, including Dr Cox, the lead petitioner, attended and a number of speakers were heard. One of the actions to emerge from the summit was a focused review of MTAN2 Coal.

Following this, in January 2016, officials held a consultation event on focused changes to MTAN2 attended by industry, local authority officers and local residents. Discussions centred on exceptions to the buffer zone policy, extensions and restoration/financial arrangements. Other views raised at the event included the need for coal, the environmental dis-benefits of coal, the need for a presumption against coal, the need to give health and well-being more importance and the need for better quality information. However some respondents felt MTAN2 worked well, that no changes were necessary and that coal would continue to have a role.

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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 position of coal has since been shown as uncertain, particularly following Amber Rudd's energy statement in November 2015 outlining no unabated coal fired power stations following 2025 and the subsequent consultation paper *Coal generation in Great Britain: The pathway to a low-carbon future* published in November 2016. In the Energy Statement which I gave in plenary in December 2016 I stated support for the phasing out of unabated coal fired power and indicated my intentions to amend planning policy to limit the opportunities for new coal development.

Proposed amendments to Planning Policy Wales will be subject to consultation later this year.

Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lesley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Lesley Griffiths AC/AM

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

P-04-472 Make the MTAN Law – Correspondence from the Petitioner for P-04-575 Call in All Opencast Mining Planning Applications to the Committee

Response letter for Petitions Committee

UVAG would like to make some comments on the petition; UVAG totally supports the petition and would like to give some background on the MTAN 2.

I am chairman of the Residents Against Ffos-y-Fran group (RAFF) as well as the chairman of United Valleys Action Group (UVAG), RAFF was instrumental in getting the 500 metre buffer zone put in the MTAN 2, initially the Welsh Government (WG) wanted only a 200 metre buffer zone in the draft MTAN 2, but RAFF campaigned and obtained 5,500+ letters calling for the WG to have a 500 metre buffer zone in the MTAN 2, these letters came from 24 towns around South Wales from Llanelli in the west to Newport in the east and from Brecon in the north and Cardiff in the south, these letters were presented to WG at the Senedd, from this the WG put in a 500 metre buffer zone in the MTAN 2.

Our utopia was short lived and was soon dismissed when it was apparent that although we won the battle for a 500 metre buffer zone in the MTAN 2 the WG cleverly had included up to 10 clauses or opt outs as we called them included in the MTAN 2 that allowed the local planning authority or planning inspector to interpret the MTAN 2 as they wanted and therefore they could dismiss the 500 metre zone on opencast applications and allow opencast right up to a properties garden, like myself who lives just 37 metres from the Ffos-y-Fran opencast in Merthyr Tydfil, this is basically ruling out everywhere in South Wales that would qualify for a 500 metre buffer zone.

An example of this interpretation of the MTAN 2 500 metre buffer zone is the Varteg opencast application, the Torfaen Council refused permission because a school and residents were only 200 metres from the opencast, the planning inspector overturned this and approved the opencast only for the WG Minister to overturn the inspector decision and refuse permission making a complete mockery of the MTAN.

So basically it came down to the decision makers interpretation of the MTAN, this is why we want the MTAN to be made law, so every decision maker on opencast planning application would make the same decision regarding a 500 metre buffer zone.

Therefore Petitions committee we support this petition to make the MTAN law that cannot be open to miss interpretation by any local authority, planning inspector or decision maker

Terry Evans UVAG

Agenda Item 3.8

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

Petition Wording

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

Petition raised by: United Valleys Action Group

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 15 July 2014

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

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-04-575
Ein cyf/Our ref LG/00475/17

Mike Hedges AM
Chair - Petitions Committee
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7 March 2017

Dear Mike

Thank you for your letter, on behalf of the Petitions Committee, in which you ask for an update on the circumstances relating to the petition from the United Valleys Action Group. The petition calls upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to call in all opencast mining planning applications.

My predecessor, Carl Sargeant, the former Minister for Natural Resources wrote to the Petitions Committee in November 2014 setting out the Welsh Government's position on the petition. The letter, which I have attached for information, sets out the Welsh Government's policy on calling-in planning applications and specifically applications for the mining and working of minerals. I can confirm the Welsh Government's policy has not changed since.

Regards
Lesley

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

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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.

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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.

Petition P-04-575

Response to Ministers letter for Petitions Committee

The demand for coal is reducing so quickly due to market demand and the world reduction in coal use for power stations that opencast coal is no longer required in the long term, UVAG stand by their petition that all opencast mine applications over 10 years or 350 hectares in size should be called in by the Welsh Government.

Here in Wales there are numerous abandoned and mothballed opencast sites because the demand for coal is falling, Aberthaw power station can no longer use the low volatile coal found in South Wales, some of these opencast sites will not have the restoration done and it will be left to the Welsh Government or Local Authorities to find the finance to complete the sites, if there is no finance available then the sites will be left abandoned, some with a massive dangerous big hole in the ground, this it is a very worrying situation.

There are large opencast mine planning applications in progress at the moment where the Welsh Government should intervene.

Given that opencast mining and coal markets are changing very quickly and in light of the above, UVAG would like the petition to go to Plenary for debate by all parties with the view of implementing the petition.

Terry Evans UVAG

Agenda Item 3.9

P-05-705 Encourage Planning Committees to Ensure that Planning Decisions Take Due Regard of the Impact on, or Closure of Local Community Groups and Voluntary Organisations.

This petition was submitted by Mike Walker, having collected 79 signatures.

Text of the Petition

Increasingly local churches and community buildings are closing and being sold for development, despite them still being actively used by community groups. Often these sales are subject to planning permission being given for the conversion or demolition of the building before the purchaser will complete the sale.

Unfortunately this process often means that community groups like nurseries and scout groups are forced to vacate the premises during the planning process. We call, therefore, for the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to change planning law or guidance to ensure that planning committees must take into account in the planning approval process consideration of the impact on the local community of the eviction of community groups.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Cardiff North
- South Wales Central

Our ref AN/00

Date 15/04/17

Mike Hedges AC/AM
Cadeirydd/ Chair
Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff

Dear Mike Hedges AM

Petition: P-05-705 Planning decisions taking due regard of the impact on, or closure of, local community groups and voluntary organisations.

Thank you for your letter seeking WCVA's views on the scale of the issues raised by the above petition. In developing this response, we have consulted colleagues in County Voluntary Councils (CVCs).

Access to affordable spaces where community and voluntary groups can meet and undertake activities is hugely important and a foundation for many groups.

We are aware of examples where developments which are subject to planning have impacted negatively on voluntary groups.

Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary Services (PAVS) has recently supported groups in relation to two developments which have threatened voluntary and community activity. PAVS is supporting two community groups in their efforts to negotiate continued use of a church hall in light of new development plans for the church.

PAVS is also working to support Transition Bro Gwaun, a community project in Abergwaun, Fishguard that uses surplus waste from supermarkets to produce food in a community café. Their future is now threatened by a new road development. Despite having been offered alternative premises, the costs of refurbishment are proving prohibitive. PAVS is now working with the project to secure funds for new premises, but it is difficult.

Swansea Council for Voluntary Service (SCVS) has been contacted by Friends of Stepping Stones about their concerns in light of redevelopment plans. The charity exists to provide additional funding for the Stepping Stones Children's Centre to maximise the services it provides for disabled children and their families in Swansea. The charity understands that the building where the Centre is currently based is being sold and may be redeveloped. Trustees are concerned that the future location of the Centre will put at risk the ongoing success of the project.

However, it is not clear from the level of enquiries and requests for support received by WCVA and CVCs that this is a large scale issue for groups across Wales.



Wales Council for Voluntary Action

Registered Office - Head Office
Baltic House, Mount Stuart Square
Cardiff CF10 5FH

WCVA Helpdesk 0800 2888 329
Fax 029 2043 1701
Minicom 0808 1804 080
help@wcva.org.uk
www.wcva.org.uk

Offices also at Rhyl
and Aberystwyth

Cyngor Gweithredu Gwirfoddol Cymru

Swyddfa Gofrestredig - Prif Swyddfa
Tŷ Baltig, Sgwâr Mount Stuart
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Swyddfeydd hefyd yn y
Rhyl ac Aberystwyth



Chair/Cadeirydd:
Peter Davies CBE
Vice-Chair/Is-Gadeirydd:
Catriona Williams OBE
Chief Executive/Prif Weithredwraig:
Ruth Marks MBE
Treasurer/Trysorydd:
Mair Gwynant
Secretary/Ysgrifennydd:
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yng Nghymru

VAT Registration No/Rhif TAW 991 2938 79

There are some examples where the system has supported new community buildings or where local authorities are increasing engagement with community groups. Powys Association of Voluntary Organisations (PAVO) is aware that the Scout Hut in Llandrindod Wells was closed as part of the Tesco development, but also that it was replaced by a new youth centre constructed as part of Tesco's community benefit payment related to the development.

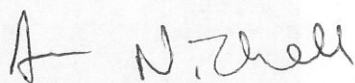
In Conwy, Community and Voluntary Support Conwy (CVSC) has developed positive relationships with Conwy Council planning team and are now sent any planning applications that may affect children and their play. The CVC is also working with planning officers to support improved consultation in relation to other areas of voluntary and community activity, such as youth provision and youth clubs. Early engagement with voluntary and community and access to information supports good decision making and there may be opportunities for more local authorities to work with CVCs to support this engagement.

There are a number of factors that can result in the loss of community buildings and community facilities. Reduced funding and withdrawal of funding can lead to buildings previously being used by community and voluntary groups no longer being viable. Many public bodies are struggling to maintain assets that have previously been important resources for the community. Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations (GAVO) recently ran a successful Community Asset Transfer pilot. The findings suggest that there are cost effective ways of empowering more third sector organisations to manage community assets previously managed by public bodies.

In summary, voluntary and community activity is sometimes negatively affected by developments which require planning permission. However, we do not have evidence to suggest that this affects third sector organisations on a significant scale across Wales.

I hope this supports the Committee in its considerations. Please do contact me at anicholl@wcva.org.uk or on the number above if you would like to any further information.

Yours sincerely



Anna Nicholl
Director of Strategy and Sector Development

Agenda Item 3.10

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

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

22 March 2017

Dear Mr Hedges,

P-05-741 Natural Resources Wales (Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru) Needs Tighter Restriction

Thank you for your letter and enclosures of 23rd February seeking a response to the points raised by the petitioner. We note that the Committee is seeking clarification on how Natural Resources Wales takes account of competing interests and any agricultural usage of land in the process of designating Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs).

Sections 28 to 33 of Part 2 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act detail the law regarding SSSIs and Natural Resources Wales' responsibility for selecting and notifying SSSIs in Wales. Specifically, Section 28 gives NRW a duty to notify land in Wales that, in its opinion, is of special interest by reason of any of its flora, fauna, or geological or physiographical features.

SSSIs are only identified and evaluated carefully after detailed survey and evaluation against published criteria available on the [Joint Nature Conservation Committee website](#).

Once a site has been identified and evaluated, and discussions with owners and occupiers of the land and a formal public consultation have taken place, a site may be proposed to an NRW Executive Director for approval to confirm the notification. Where a site has unresolved objections, a sub group of the NRW Board, the Protected Areas Committee (PAC), will consider the notification.

When the Committee meet to consider a notification proposal anyone who has a pecuniary interest in the site(s) under consideration can attend. At the beginning of every committee meeting NRW's legal advisors advise Committee Members that when coming to a decision on whether or not to approve the confirmation of notification, that due regard be given to the needs of agriculture and forestry and the economic and social interests of rural areas (as laid down in Section 37 of the Countryside Act 1968) as well as to relevant human rights considerations. They are also reminded that SSSI designation is one of the material

considerations taken into account by local planning authorities in their decisions to consent or refuse planning permission. Socio economic issues are discussed during the question and answer session, especially if any objections are based on such matters.

Natural Resources Wales is committed to working with the owners and occupiers of SSSIs to achieve the most appropriate conservation management to benefit the habitats or species which are of special interest, and has the powers to offer to enter into a management agreement. Management agreements are a voluntary contract between Natural Resources Wales and a landowner or occupier in which a payment is made in return for land being managed to an approved plan. The management agreement is generally for positive actions which would otherwise be uneconomic. These actions may be ongoing annual activities such as grazing with cattle, or one-off capital works such as fencing or scrub clearance (or most commonly both). We recognise that without this financial support landowners may not be willing or able to manage their land in a way that supports the designated features.

Natural Resources Wales is currently in discussion with the petitioner and his agent regarding a possible management agreement in order to secure the longer term future for the habitat supporting the rare marsh fritillary butterfly.

Yours sincerely,



Emyr Roberts

**Prif Weithredwr, Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru
Chief Executive, Natural Resources Wales**

P-05-741 Natural Resources Wales (Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru) Needs Tighter Restriction - Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 23.04.17

Mike Hedges AM

Chair, National Assembly for Wales Petitions Committee

National Assembly for Wales

Cardiff Bay

Cardiff

CF99 1 NA

23rd April 2017

Dear Mr Hedges,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the new correspondence submitted by NRW for your Committee's consideration. I submit the following views:

1. The letter from the Chief Executive contains little or no detail as to how the body takes into account competing interests, including agricultural land usage when designating Sites of Special Scientific Interest. It merely outlines the process to be followed, without any mention as to protocol details, or exact process guidelines. In my view, it is merely a broad policy statement.
2. The process of making SSSI designations as set out, in the letter, is designed in the first instance to include all interested parties, statutory and non-statutory bodies and this after survey and reference to the published relevant criteria. No mention is made of either the landowner/tenant at this preliminary stage. Indeed from personal experience, there is little or no consultation with the party managing the land on a daily basis, and certainly no meaningful dialogue, which I would suggest, that in the majority of cases would lead to a better understanding of the needs of all parties. It could even in certain cases, do away with the need to instigate Section 28 processes, with all parties working together for the common good. Nature will always strive to redress any imbalance, and the majority of land utilisation in the agricultural sector, will always accommodate these natural processes.

3. With reference to the procedure as outlined by NRW, again from personal experience, the limited and minimal discussion that took place between local officials and myself as tenant farmer, did not once encompass my farm business plan for the new venture, and the significant financial and operational burden, that the Section 28 designation would incur. In my case, the local officer chose to enter into discussion with the land owner direct, despite the fact that he is elderly, and in poor health. I would suggest that this course of action was utterly deplorable. The same officer,, chose to involve the wildlife crime unit of North Wales Police, and I was subjected to formal interview, but subsequently no charges were even laid or brought before a court .I question the officer's integrity, and that of NRW in giving sanction to such a course of actions.
4. The Committee stage of the Section 28 process, although formal in nature, does not in my view allow for the views of all stake holders to be either presented or considered. Having witnessed the proceedings, I accept that the scientific and legal documentation submitted in general terms was impressive little was made of its significance in relation to the specific parcel of land, and the implication thereof. Whilst represented at the hearing, the committee was seemingly not concerned with the practicalities of day to day management and financial restraints imposed on the business. A wider focus of both interests and outcomes , could possibly have resulted in a fairer and certainly a much more practical solution to all concerned.
5. NRW emphasises its commitment to working with all owner and occupiers of SSSI controlled land, and I welcome that assertion. However, from the preliminary discussions that have recently taken place, it is clear that payments in return for any management agreements do not in any way compensate for the loss that the business as a whole will have to support. Again, I understand that 'purse strings' have been tightened in recent years, but the financial loss to the predicted business plan for the enterprise is seemingly to be sacrificed . In my particular case, I have lost nearly 44% of the available productive land to SSSI governance, with no or little prospect of any financial remuneration.
6. My petition relates primarily to the way the body, or more precisely its officers, act in their day to day operation, and would emphasise that my

views are based on personal experience, although I have also discussed and gained insight into the problems encountered in similar situations, with other land owners and tenants, over a much wider area. In my view decisions are made locally and nationally, with little or no regard to either the socio or local land management practices of the specific locality. Morfa Harlech has been managed in much the same manner for centuries past, and both agriculture and natural habitats have thrived consistently over the years. There was never any intention on my part or the part of others, to modify this eco system in any way. Nature has and will always provide a buffer, an outcome and solution to any pressures placed upon it. It cannot however respond positively to any 'artificial' pressures without unwelcome consequences.

Diolch yn fawr,

John Edward Thomas

Agenda Item 3.11

P-05-743 End the Exotic Pet Trade in Wales

This petition was submitted by David Sedley, having collected 222 signatures.

Text of the Petition

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to take action against the trade in exotic animals captured and bred for the pet trade in Wales, and to forbid the licensing of all businesses involved in this destructive, cruel and unethical trade, with clear exemptions for rescue centres and licensed rescue centres. We further urge the Welsh Government to follow the example of the Scottish Government which committed to a review of the trade and importation of exotic animals for the pet trade in Scotland in February 2015, led by The Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment. For Wales to be taken seriously in the global conservation community, we maintain that we cannot be seen to be allowing this trade – which elicits the concerns of the British Veterinary Association (BVA), The Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) and the RSPCA – to continue in our own country.

Additional Information

Animals such as monkeys, meerkats, reptiles and turtles are wild animals who belong in their natural habitat, not in cages and glass tanks in somebody's home. Over 1000 species of mammals, birds, invertebrates, reptiles, amphibians and fish are bred and captured for the exotic pet trade, and it is our argument that the complex social, physical and behavioural needs of these animals cannot be met other than in their natural habitats. Furthermore, there is strong evidence linking the trade in exotic animals with habitat destruction and the extinction of species in the wild. In tandem with the suffering of such animals in transit – including many documented deaths – young animals can grow into dangerous adults which can become unmanageable in domestic environments not conducive to satisfying their welfare needs for increased space and food.

Assembly Constituency and Region.

- Swansea West
- South Wales West

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-05-743
Ein cyf/Our ref JH/00014/17

Mike Hedges AM
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 April 2017

Dear Mike

Thank you for your letter of 15 March regarding 'End the Exotic Pet Trade in Wales' petition.

The welfare of any animal, including exotic pets, is of concern for the Welsh Government.

There are a number of strands of work which could be addressed and we are monitoring the work which the Scottish Government has been undertaking and the work of the Federation of British Herpetologists on ensuring compliance with the Animal Welfare Act 2006.

The Chief Veterinary Officer for Wales has historically added this topic to the agenda of a UK CVO meeting to commence a UK-wide discussion.

The way we treat animals is an important reflection of the values of our society. Since the implementation of the Animal Welfare Act 2006, we have been developing policies to promote animal welfare and responsible ownership. The Wales Animal Health and Welfare Framework (AHWF) sets out our plan for continuing and lasting improvements in standards of animal health and welfare for kept animals. The Framework Group's Implementation Plan for 2016-17 includes responsible ownership as Welsh Government priority. Both the Framework and Implementation Plan are available on our website here:

<http://gov.wales/topics/environmentcountryside/ahw/wales-animal-health-welfare-framework/?lang=en>

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Correspondence.Jane.Hutt@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.

A short discussion paper on the trade in exotic pets was been presented to the Framework Group and they have now requested a presentation from experts working in this specialist field.

Officials met with representatives from RSPCA Cymru to discuss their briefing document calling for a ban on exotic pets, specifically primates and further meetings on this subject are expected to take place.

Regards
Lesley

Lesley Griffiths AC/AM

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

P-05-743 End the Exotic Pet Trade in Wales – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 25.04.17

Dear Mr Hedges,

Many thanks for forwarding the reply you received from Lesley Griffiths AC/AM, dated April 10 2017, in reference to the consideration of my petition to end the sale of exotic pets in Wales (P-05-743), and to the specific questions sent in relation to such for the consideration of your committee. I am delighted that there will be a further discussion on May 9.

I was very pleased to read that a 'short discussion paper' on the issue of exotic pets was presented to the AHWF group, and that, as a result, the group is to be addressed by experts. Although I do not have any further details of the expertise concerned, I trust that the welfare needs of exotic, wild animals kept as domestic pets will be paramount to their concerns and interests. It is also of great encouragement that RSPCA Cymru's important campaign to ban the keeping of all primates as pets is receiving the attention of the Wales Executive.

At this time, I am grateful for this opportunity to direct your committee's attention to the following.

Ms Griffiths states that a paper on the exotic pet trade has been presented to the Wales Animal Health and Welfare Framework (AHWF) group. Please see below the Government Implementation Plan 2016-17 concerning the Wales Animal Health and Welfare Framework (AHWF) which gives a commitment to review the Welsh Government's Codes of Practice as published under the Animal Welfare Act 2006. This includes considering whether additional Codes of Practice are required for other species. I have attached a copy of the link for ease of reference: <http://gov.wales/docs/drah/publications/160804-animal-health-welfare-framework-2016-implementation-plan-en.pdf>

It is my understanding that the Framework Group is due to meet with a reptile specialist in a forthcoming meeting. In addition, the Chief Veterinary Officer for Wales (CVO) has historically added this topic to the agenda of a UK CVO meeting to commence a UK-wide discussion.

Whilst the AHWF briefing makes it clear that the Welsh Government can begin the process to revise the Animal Welfare Codes of Practice, no specific timescales are given. Also, there does not appear to have been any progress to tighten the rules, despite the Welsh Government having had devolved powers over budgets for the

Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) since 2011. APHA are an executive arm of the Department for Environment and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) who are very specific in their Code of Practice on implementing the Animal Welfare Act 2006 – you will find the link

here: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/218679/primate-cop.pdf

It should be possible to tighten the licensing process to ensure exotic pets are not housed with other animals and are kept in conditions appropriate to their natural habitat, i.e. diet, temperature, bedding etc. Also, banning the import of exotic pets, thereby allowing these animals only to be traded within their existing country, would have the long-term impact of significantly reducing the industry in the UK, as well as sending out the clear message that such a trade, wherever perpetrated, is detrimental to the animals concerned and their environment. By tightening the guidelines we could, potentially, significantly reduce the number of exotic pets in Britain and thereby combat the industry domestically and abroad.

I would therefore ask that the following questions, as yet unaddressed in the latest correspondence from Ms Lesley Griffiths, AC/AM, Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs, be foremost in the committee members' minds when considering the fate of my petition:

Will the Minister be undertaking a review of animal welfare, including the welfare of exotic pets?

What discussions have taken place between the Chief Veterinary Officer on behalf of the Minister and her counterparts in Scotland and England regarding the welfare of exotic pets?

What discussions have taken place between the Welsh and Scottish Governments on the Scottish Government's review of the trade in exotic pets? What would plans for a similar review in Wales be dependent on?

What proposals does the Minister have to regulate the sale of exotic animals?

What were the outcomes of the meeting between the Minister's officials and RSPCA Cymru on the matter of the keeping of primates as pets?

It may be of interest to you that 21 of 22 local authorities in Wales replied to my request for information regarding the number of licenses issued to businesses selling exotic pets (not including on the web). I can therefore report that there are

134 such licensed premises in Wales. Although I do not have the figures for the numbers of animals involved – that is, reptiles, birds, mammals and fish – it is clear that many thousands are being kept and traded. This situation – the capture, breeding, transportation, sale and care of wild animals, unsuited to lives as domestic pets in a northern climate – continues to need urgent redress.

As mentioned by Ms Griffiths in her letter to you, she is aware of the current review of the trade in exotic pets instigated by the Scottish Government. This was in response to the successful campaign launched by the charity One Kind and supported by the RSPCA, PDSA, Captured Animals Protection Society, Four Paws, Wild Futures, and Born Free Foundation amongst others. I am sure that a similar campaign here in Wales would attract an identical level of support. As I write, The Assembly is in receipt of a briefing document from RSPCA Cymru highlighting the unsuitability of keeping primates as pets, and calling for a ban on the practice. A meeting with RSPCA Cymru to discuss its concerns has since taken place.

At the very least, I am asking that the petition to end the exotic pet trade in Wales be considered for further actioning on the grounds that a wider debate of the welfare issues occasioned by it are long overdue. I would urge that there be no complacency on the part of the committee, or concerned members thereof, as many thousands of captured wild, and domestically bred, animals are enduring unnatural and cruel lives in shops and domestic homes throughout the country, today and everyday.

I further ask the committee that short of asking The Assembly to debate a total end to the trade in exotic pets that it, at least, consider the introduction of a Positive List System. This would permit the keeping of an exotic pet only if its suitability to life in private ownership were incontrovertibly assessed by such a system using clear, transparent and evidence based criteria collated on species conservation, the dangers of invasive disease, ease of good husbandry – including proof of appropriate knowledge of needs and care – and the clear availability of care guidelines, and enforcement measures.

For your convenience I include the notification from the Scottish Government about the review instigated by The Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment, Richard Lochhead:

<http://news.scotland.gov.uk/News/Review-of-exotic-pet-trade-15ea.aspx>

Thank you for your kind attention.

Sincerely, and faithfully yours,

David Sedley

Agenda Item 3.12

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

Petition wording:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Additional Information

Our video petition and an accompanying report can be downloaded at www.ndcs.org.uk/ClosetheGapWales

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

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

Petition raised by: NDCS

Date petition first considered by Committee: 14 May 2013

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



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref ARD/00241/17

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

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

April 2017

Amwy Mike,

Thank you for your letter of 20 March following my previous response to you with regard to the petition 'Close the Gap for deaf pupils in Wales' (P-04-481).

Funding of the 21st Century Programme has not been reduced and we are currently developing the next five year wave of investment for the Programme, commencing in April 2019. I can assure you that compliance of good acoustic standards as a condition of funding will continue under this second 21st Century Schools investment.

I am aware of the evidence that the petitioners have submitted to the Children, Young People and Education Committee. The Committee will consider this, along with all evidence submitted, as part of the scrutiny process for the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal Bill (ALNET Bill). The matters raised within the evidence are being considered by my officials as we continue to work towards a new system for supporting learners with additional learning needs (ALN).

With regard to the skills of the education workforce, teachers in Wales are required to understand and be aware of the well being, personal, emotional and social development of all learners. For learners with disabilities in particular, they should improve access to the curriculum, make physical improvements to increase participation in education and provide information in appropriate formats.

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.

Pack Page 136

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 requirement is embedded very early on in the profession as the current Qualified Teacher Standards (QTS) require student teachers to demonstrate they understand the diverse learning needs of all learners. In doing so, they should endeavour to provide the best possible education for the learner to reach their potential, whatever their personal circumstances.

The QTS standards are underpinned by the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) – that all children and young people are entitled to an education that develops their potential and widens their opportunities having regard to the well being, additional learning needs and disabilities of all learners.

The new accreditation criteria for initial teacher education (ITE) in Wales require future accredited providers of ITE to develop future teachers to meet the needs of all learners including those with ALN such as hearing impairment. The Criteria for the accreditation of ITE programmes in Wales can be found at <http://learning.gov.wales/resources/browse-all/initial-teacher-education-accreditation-criteria/?lang=en>.

We are continuing to consult with stakeholders about scope and content of the ALNCO qualification. The new ALNCo role will be a strategic one, with a focus on leadership and management. It is not yet decided at what level the content could include an emphasis on specialisms. This will emerge as the development of the qualification moves forward. However, as I referred in my letter of 11 January, the national workforce planning system will help to ensure that training and recruitment of staff delivering specialist learning provision, including for learners who are deaf, will be in place. Working with the WLGA, we are currently undertaking a survey of local authority specialisms. The data gathered will provide us and the WLGA with the intelligence needed to understand the issues and action required. We expect the findings of the survey to be available in the autumn.

We will be working across education sectors to develop the skills of the education workforce. This will help to ensure that we plan and deliver for the training needs of those working in early years, schools, and post 16 providers.

We recognise the importance of ensuring we have an education workforce that is skilled and confident in meeting a wide range of additional learning needs. I have recently announced a £20m package of funding to support implementation of the ALNET Bill and delivery of the wider Transformation Programme. This funding builds on investment we have already made, for example, a £2m Innovation Fund aimed at developing multi-agency practices; and the roll out of person centred practice. A substantial amount of the £20m will be targeted at workforce development, to ensure practitioners are fully equipped to deliver the new ALN system.

I hope this response use useful to you and the Petitioner.



Alun Davies AC/AM

Gweinidog y Gymraeg a Dysgu Gydol Oes
Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language

Petition P-04-481, April 2017

NDCS Cymru is grateful for the opportunity to comment on the Minister's response of 11.04.17 in relation to our correspondence of February 2017.

As previously outlined, we welcome many of the points identified by the Minister. However, much of the response outlines initiatives that span across the ALN spectrum and does not address our specific calls for deafness to be included. As such, further assurances and commitments are required to ensure that these generic initiatives will benefit deaf learners.

Teacher Training

For the young deaf people submitting the original petition, the need to increase deaf awareness among staff was of paramount importance. This is an issue that continues to hold prominence for many deaf young people in Wales. In addition, school teachers have also told NDCS Cymru that they have a need for specific deaf awareness training.

While we welcome the inclusion of ALN within the new Initial Teacher Education accreditation criteria, we remain concerned that there is **no direct reference to basic deaf awareness**. As such, we are unconvinced that training providers will specifically cover deafness.

This is a real issue. In many instances, deaf awareness is not just about including a deaf child, but can also be about acknowledging that a child has a hearing loss in the first place. Indeed, there is a general misconception that assistive listening devices restore typical hearing levels, which they do not. Therefore, a learner's deafness can often go unacknowledged.

We seek a commitment from the Welsh Government that ITE providers will have a clear expectation placed on them to cover basic deaf awareness.

Furthermore, we acknowledge that the recently published ITE accreditation criteria outlines the possibility of a thematic Estyn inspection report on ALN within ITE courses. We welcome this suggestion and urge that such a report specifically assesses whether providers are covering discreet ALN needs, including deafness.

ALNCO training

NDCS Cymru is aware of the intention to develop a qualification for the new ALNCo role. We are disappointed that the Welsh Government has not yet determined whether this training programme will cover specialisms such as deafness.

Under the proposed ALN reforms, the ALNCo will play a crucial role in coordinating IDPs and determining which professionals are included within assessments. As such, it is imperative that they have a basic understanding of deafness, as well as an awareness of the specialist advice that should be accessed.

ALN Transformation Programme Funding

We welcome the funding package referred to by the Minister to assist workforce development and to ensure practitioners are fully equipped to deliver the new ALN system. However, we seek assurances that this development will include deaf-specific training.

Acoustics and the 21st Century School Programme

NDCS Cymru welcomes the Minister's commitment to continue the contractual clause for compliance with acoustic standards within the second wave of investment in the 21st Century School Programme. As with previous changes to contracts, we would welcome the opportunity to work with officials on any alterations to existing wording to ensure the clause remains as robust as possible.

Furthermore, NDCS Cymru notes with interest the following statement on the 21st Century Schools Programme website:

The long term aim is to develop an overarching capital investment programme for all education sectors including both Further and Higher Education Sectors that will aim to deliver priority improvement projects.

As outlined in our initial petition, existing building regulations do not cover FE or HE buildings, other than sixth form colleges that are linked to school buildings. It would, therefore, be imperative to ensure that the contractual clause for the next wave of 21st Century Schools Programme clearly covers FE and HE buildings. After all, accessible classrooms are important to learners of all ages.

Furthermore, NDCS Cymru would repeat our calls for the Welsh Government to extend its commitment to good acoustics by amending legislation. This issue was not addressed in the Ministerial response. A change in law would ensure that good acoustics will continue to be on the agenda should the 21st Century Schools Programme come to a close in the future.

In addition, our offer to work with the Welsh Government to raise awareness of measures to improve acoustics in existing buildings within the schools estate was not addressed within the Minister's response. We would welcome further discussion in this regard.

Workforce planning

As outlined within our former submission, we welcome the review of the specialist education workforce in Wales. We would like to repeat our offer to work with the Welsh Government in this regard. We seek firm assurances that this review will include action to address existing difficulties in accessing Teachers of the Deaf, Communication Support Workers with an appropriate level of BSL and specialist Speech and Language Therapists.

Ongoing monitoring of the attainment gap

The Close the Gap Petition began after Welsh Government statistics revealed significant attainment gaps between deaf children and their peers. In addition to seeking the assurances that we have outlined above, we feel it is imperative that the attainment of deaf learners continues to be monitored so that we can ensure such initiatives are working appropriately.

However, we are concerned that proposals within the Donaldson Review to change the way in which pupil census information is collected would present difficulties for monitoring attainment levels among small cohorts of learners, including deaf pupils. We call on the Welsh Government to ensure that this issue is avoided.

Conclusion

NDCS Cymru is grateful to the Petitions Committee for its ongoing consideration of our *Close the Gap* petition. In response to our petition, the Welsh Government has outlined a number of initiatives that span across different ALN types. In order to address the attainment gap for deaf learners, a specific focus is required. At this stage in the process, we seek clear and deaf specific assurances from the Welsh Government.

The key assurances we seek are as follows:

1. That a clear requirement be placed on ITE providers to include specific deaf awareness training.
2. That a firm commitment is made to specifically include basic deaf awareness training within the new ALNCo qualification.
3. That the ALN Transformation Programme includes deaf specific training.
4. That the Welsh Government works with NDCS Cymru on any alterations to the acoustics clause within future 21st Century School funding contracts.
5. To ensure that FEIs and HEIs are appropriately covered by the acoustics clause when extending the 21st Century Schools Programme to cover such buildings.
6. That the Welsh Government works with NDCS Cymru to raise awareness of measures to improve acoustics in existing buildings within the schools estate.
7. That the workforce planning exercise will specifically address existing issues relating to access to Teachers of the Deaf, Communication Support

Workers with an appropriate level of BSL and specialist Speech and Language Therapists.

- 8. That ongoing review of attainment levels for deaf learners as a discreet group is not compromised by plans to change the way in which data is collated within the Donaldson Review.**
- 9. That the Welsh Government commits to keep under review whether sufficient progress in closing the attainment gap between deaf learners and their peers is being made.**

NDCS Cymru is happy to assist in further consideration of our petition – please contact campaigns.wales@ndcs.org.uk or call 02920 373474.

P-04-576 Allow Children in Wales to Have a Family Holiday During Term Time

Petition Wording

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to review the guidance to Local Authorities on head teachers being able to authorise absence for family holidays during term time. Many families from poor backgrounds can only afford to go on holiday during term time, as holidays are about 60% more expensive during the holiday period. Also, many families where parents work are unable to take time off during the school holidays. Holidays can be extremely educational, giving the children awareness of the world in which we live.

Petition raised by: Bethany Walpole-Wroe

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 15 July 2014

Number of signatures: 1008 – An associated e-petition has collected over 10,300 signatures.

Kirsty Williams AC/AM
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg
Cabinet Secretary for Education



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-576
Ein cyf/Our ref KW/00548/17

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

seneddpetitions@assembly.wales

4 April 2017

Dear Mike

Thank you for your letter of 28 March about holidays in term time. I am grateful for the Committee's continued interest in this matter.

I believe it is important that attendance remains a priority for schools and that all absence from schools is taken seriously. My focus is on ensuring children attend school at every possible opportunity to reduce any adverse impact on their education, so they are able to reach their full potential.

In terms of allowing children in Wales' holidays during term time, as you will know, the *Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010* provide headteachers with a discretionary powers to authorise leave for a family holiday during term time where parents seek permission. In determining whether to authorise a parent's request to take their child out of school, headteachers should assess the merits of each request on a case by case basis.

I do of course recognise that this is a very important area for parents and education services alike and it is critical that there is a consistent understanding right across Wales to ensure that there is public confidence in the arrangements we have in place. Since taking up post as Cabinet Secretary for Education, I have established arrangements to review and, where appropriate, revise the current attendance policy in Wales. I have asked my officials to work closely with education practitioners, children, young people and their parents to make certain the policy remains fit for purpose and supports continued improvement in pupil attendance. As part of this review, I have specifically commissioned an independent evaluation of fixed penalty notice arrangements in Wales to ensure it provides a robust, objective base for future arrangements across Wales.

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

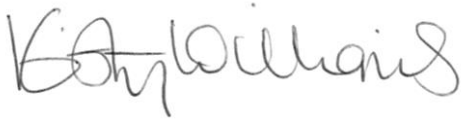
Gohebiaeth.Kirsty.Williams@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Kirsty.Williams@gov.wales

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 have noted that the parental holiday notification form for Ysgol Iau Ton Pentre Junior School does not appear to allow for applications for holidays in term times to be considered on an individual basis as required by our Regulations. My officials have contacted Rhondda Cynon Taff about this matter and have received assurances that the issue will be taken up directly with the school.

Yours sincerely

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

Kirsty Williams AC/AM

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg
Cabinet Secretary for Education

P-04-576 Allow Children in Wales to Have a Family Holiday During Term Time – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 13.04.17

Dear Petitions committee,

This farce has to end, there needs to be some honesty, on the part of the Assembly Education department, Every time we tell them there is a problem with the way the Consortia are dealing with parents and head teachers and present evidence of the misuse of Welsh Assembly legislation, we get told there is no problem and that head teachers in Wales have the right to allow Holidays during term time. This is a lie, in just a couple of hours I had all these responses, when I asked for schools that are still operating blanket bans, this means there are many more, I have also attached documents that are representative of those being given to parents across Wales. We keep getting told that the situation in Wales under Labour is different to England, as far as I can see, the only difference is that in England the government tells the truth about the situation and stands by it, whilst in Wales the Assembly hides the real situation, with lies and falsehoods, do you have no shame? It is despicable to hold the threat of reporting parents for putting their child's welfare at risk, when all they want to do is take them on holiday, this disgusting cowardly bullying behaviour has to stop. Families are put under strain and are being permanently damaged, you need to stop messing around, telling lies and being ineffective cowards in general, and do something about this now.

Bethany Walpole-Wroe



The Governing Body at Narberth School are in agreement with ERW's directive not to grant holiday leave during term time. However, it acknowledges that there may be 'special' circumstances when families may need to be absent from school and will therefore consider each application on its own merit.

If the pupil/s do/does not return by the agreed date, they are at risk of losing their school place/s and they will be removed from the school register in accordance with the admissions guidance Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 Section 4 which states 'the pupils has ceased to attend the school and no longer resides within a reasonable distance from the school'.

Please note that we cannot guarantee that a place will be available for your child in the school of your choice on your return but you will be offered a place at the nearest school with room available in the year group.

Failure to return on the agreed date will prompt welfare concerns; a child who goes missing from education may be considered to be at risk of significant harm. Any such concerns will immediately be referred to the statutory authorities for consideration.

SIGNED : _____ Parent or Guardian DATED : _____

SIGNED : _____ Headteacher DATED : _____

For Office Use Only :

Granted Not Granted

Reason given : _____

Signed : _____ Dated : _____



YSGOL ARBERTH NARBERTH SCHOOL

APPLICATION FOR TERM TIME ABSENCE/CAIS AM ABSENOLDEB YN YSTOD TYMOR

Please note that the decision has been taken at Consortium level that all absences due to holidays and extended visits should not be authorised by any Head Teacher within the six Local Authorities in the South West and Mid Wales Consortium.

Pupil/s Personal Details :	Enw/Name	Dosbarth/Class
Manylion Personol Disgyblion :		
Name of Parent/Carer : Enw'r Rhiant/Gofalwr :		
Contact Number/s : Rhif/au Cysylltu :		
Reason for Term Time Absence : Rheswm am Absenoldeb Ystod Tymor :		
Place of visit : Lle'r Ymweliad :		
Date of Visit : Dyddiad yr Ymweliad :	From/O :	To/I :
Date of Absence for Pupil/s : Dyddiadau Absenoldeb Disgybl/ion :	From/O :	To/I :
Date pupil/s will return to School : Dyddiad bydd y disgybl/ion yn dychwelyd i'r Ysgol :		
Contact details (Name, address and contact number of a relative or friend who we can make contact with if you do not return on the stated date) Manylion Cyswllt (Enw, cyfeiriad a rhif cyswllt perthynas neu ffrind y gallwn cysylltu a os na fyddwch yn dychwelyd ar y dyddiad penodig)		

PLEASE TURN OVER...

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

Document is Restricted

P-05-694 School Hours an Hour Later

This petition was submitted by Cai Ellerton, having collected 16 signatures.

Text of the Petition

I am writing to ask you to consider my petition. As parents, teachers and students/pupils know, primary schools start at 08:45 and secondary schools start at 08:30. I would like schools to start an hour later in the mornings meaning primary schools would start at 09:45 and secondary schools at 09:30.

A test in England has shown that students get better exam results if school starts an hour later.

Thank you for your consideration.

Cai Ellerton, 13.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Vale of Glamorgan
- South Wales Central

P-05-694 School Times an Hour Later - Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 04.04.17

Dear Petitions Committee,

I would like my petition to be given as a recommendation to schools across Wales, as I think that it is vital for young people to have both a longer sleep and a chance to properly wake up in the morning.

The Teenage years are a crucial time for everyone's education and I believe that the schools that follow my proposed recommendation would show improved exam results from previous years.

Thank you very much,

Cai Ellerton, 14

Agenda Item 3.15

P-05-707 Teachers' Training Must Include Statutory Training in Autism

This petition was submitted by Tim Thomas, having collected 313 signatures.

Text of the Petition

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to ensure that teachers' training must include statutory training in Autism.

One of the major concerns for people caring for people with Autism is the lack of understanding from teachers and others working in the education profession. While teaching in Wales is of high quality, improvements could be made in raising awareness of Autism, especially given how common it has become in society.

It is proposed, as part of the English Teacher's training review, Special Education Needs, including Autism will be a key part of teachers' training in England.

The review of the Initial Teacher Education in Wales must ensure that teachers get specific and statutory training in supporting people with Autism within the school environment.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Bridgend
- South Wales West

**P-05-707 Teacher Training must Include Statutory Training in Autism –
Correspondence from the National Autistic Society to the Chair, 17.01.17**



Dear Mike,

RE: P-05-705 Teachers' training must include statutory training in autism

Please find enclosed a submission to the National Assembly for Wales' Petitions Committee outlining the National Autistic Society Cymru's position on initial teacher training in Wales.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this discussion and please do let me know if you require any further information.

Yours sincerely,

Meleri Thomas

Meleri Thomas
External Affairs Manager

**P-05-707 Teacher Training must Include Statutory Training in Autism –
Correspondence from the National Autistic Society to the Chair, 17.01.17**

P-05-707 Teachers' Training Must Include Statutory Training in Autism

**Submission to the National Assembly for Wales' Petitions Committee from The
National Autistic Society Cymru 17 January 2017**

Background

According to the Welsh Government, more than 5,300 autistic pupils were supported in mainstream schools either through School Action, School Action Plus or a Statement of Educational Need in 2016. This represents an increase of 254 per cent in the number of autistic children in maintained schools in Wales since 2003.

The vast majority of autistic pupils are in mainstream education rather than in specialist provision and so all teachers should expect to teach autistic children during their career. This means that all school staff who come into contact with, or make decisions about autistic pupils would benefit from an understanding of the condition.

We note that in England the UK Government has already confirmed that from September 2018 every new teacher will have to learn about the needs of autistic children and young people as part of their teacher training programme. We welcome this development in England.

The Welsh Government is currently transforming its autism provision through its new integrated autism service and its Additional Learning Needs reform. The National Autistic Society Cymru believes therefore that it is timely to consider including autism as a specific component of Initial Teacher Training and would strongly support such initiatives in Wales.

Why autism should be included within Initial Teacher Training

The first step in improving the educational experience and outcomes of autistic children is to improve the training that teachers receive. Autism should be included as a specific component within Initial Teacher Training courses for the following reasons:

- Autism is a common condition affecting one in one hundred pupils. This means that every teacher is likely to have an autistic child in their class

P-05-707 Teacher Training must Include Statutory Training in Autism – Correspondence from the National Autistic Society to the Chair, 17.01.17

during their career, and probably several.¹ There are more than 5,300 school-aged children with autism in Wales receiving additional support because of their autism, with the vast majority educated in mainstream schools;

- Understanding the reasons why children may respond in particular ways to particular situations, and knowing what to do to help, results in better outcomes for those children. Children with autism may need adjustments to be made to the classroom environment to enable them to focus on their learning.² Teachers should be provided with the right help to be able to make those adjustments for children with autism;
- Being taught in an environment in which autism is understood benefits not just children with autism but also their classmates, by helping everyone be more aware of each other's needs, offering a wider range of learning materials and reducing the risk of potentially disruptive behaviour;
- Strategies that are good practice in supporting children with autism are also good practice for children with various other special educational needs; and
- It is not uncommon for autistic children to develop mental health problems and fall behind both socially and academically if they are not adequately supported at school. In Wales, only one in five (21 per cent) of autistic pupils were achieving expected outcomes in Foundation Phase Indicator Assessments in 2015.

Benefits for newly qualified teachers

NAS Cymru believes that trainee teachers need an introduction to two things in relation to learners with additional learning needs (ALN):

- The personal attitudes, values, knowledge and skills that are required to enable them to support inclusion and diversity in their classroom; and
- The specific characteristics of the most commonly occurring conditions that their students are likely to have, including autism. In particular, they need to understand that disabilities such as autism can be 'hidden', with the result that children may have significant needs that are overlooked, because they 'don't look disabled'.

While a broad understanding of ALN is essential, this should not remain overly generalised, as this will not necessarily be effective in addressing the unique

¹ Baird, G. et al (2006), *Prevalence of disorders of the autism spectrum in a population cohort of children in South Thames: the Special Needs and Autism project (SNAP)*, *The Lancet*, 368 (9531), pp. 210-215.

² The National Autistic Society (2011), *Great expectations*.

P-05-707 Teacher Training must Include Statutory Training in Autism – Correspondence from the National Autistic Society to the Chair, 17.01.17

challenges of teaching autistic pupils. Initial Teacher Training courses should begin the process of equipping new teachers to meet the individual needs of every child, and to give them the knowledge and tools to provide the best possible support to autistic students. This should be backed up by continuing professional development throughout teachers' careers. The training they receive should:

- Prepare new teachers for the situations they are most likely to experience in the classroom;
- Offer a way of thinking about meeting the needs of children with autism for their career ahead, recognising that children on the autism spectrum think and learn differently and are often affected by severe anxiety; and
- Focus on treating children as individuals and overcoming specific barriers to learning,

This training should be put in place regardless of training route, whether as part of a traditional college or university-based course or via a schools-based route.

What autistic children and their families currently experience at school

Our recent Act Now survey showed that of those who responded over a quarter of parents or carers (27 per cent) of autistic pupils currently in primary school are not satisfied with their teachers' understanding of autism.

Parents also report having to fight to get the right help for their child in school. Recent statistics from the Special Educational Needs Tribunal Wales (SENTW) showed that families with autistic go to Tribunal more often than families with any other special educational need. In 2013-14, more than a third (35 per cent) of all SENTW hearings involved families with autistic children. A better trained workforce – of which Initial Teacher Training will be one part – would help ensure that teachers are better equipped to support autistic children. If autistic children receive better support at school this could improve their outcomes and potentially reduce the need for families to go to Tribunal.

Agenda Item 3.16

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:

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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,

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At its meeting on 14 February 2017, the Committee considered this petition and asked for some information on the pupil to teacher ratios in Scandinavian countries.

The OECD publication, [*Education at a Glance 2016*](#), provides some data on early childhood education staff ratios. Early childhood education: Refers to programmes with an intentional education component aimed at developing cognitive, physical and socio-emotional skills for participation in school and society. They are grouped into two categories:

- ISCED (International Standard Classification of Education) 010, early childhood educational development – programmes designed for younger children (between the ages of 0 and 2);
- ISCED 020, pre-primary – programmes designed for children from the age of 3 to the start of primary education (ISCED level 1).

The data in Table 1 is extracted from Education at a Glance and shows data for ISCED levels 01 and 02 for pupil to contact staff (teachers and teachers' aides) and pupil to teachers.

The figures should be interpreted with some caution because the indicator compares the teacher/student ratios in countries with 'education-only' and 'integrated education and daycare' programmes. In some countries, the staff requirements in these two types of provision are very different. A variety of job roles exist within the early childhood and education sector, and any classification of staff is problematical particularly when comparing across countries.

Table 1: Pupil to staff ratios in early years in selected countries, 2014

	<u>ISCED 01</u>		<u>ISCED 02</u>	
	Pupils to contact staff	Pupils to teaching staff	Pupils to contact staff	Pupils to teaching staff
Denmark	4	12	6	10
Finland	-	-	-	10
Sweden	5	5	6	6

Source: OECD, Education at a Glance 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.

Agenda Item 3.17

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 Powys County Council to the Committee, 10.04.17

Dear Ms Driscoll,

Thank you for your e-mail.

Powys County Council (PCC) undertook to work with CADW to provide an improved visitor experience at the Prince Llywelyn Monument, Cilmeri. In line with the report and available funding at the time a number of specific items from the plan were implemented. These items included; a new well cover (image attached) to provide improved access to the well head and additionally, the installation of a number of interpretation panels around the site to enhance visitor knowledge.

Unfortunately, due to funding restrictions on both the part of CADW and the PCC managing service further access improvements were not undertaken in line with the design proposal. The site remains an important visitor attraction for the area but funding restrictions will continue to prevent further improvements to the site. PCC will support the free transfer of the asset to the Community Council as this would enable the Community Council to access grants currently unavailable to PCC to improve the site.

Yours sincerely

Barry Thomas
Executive Leader
Powys County Council



P-05-692 Build an International Mother Languages Monument at Cardiff Bay

This petition was submitted by Mohammed Sarul Islam, having collected 16 signatures.

Text of the Petition

We the undersigned call on the National Assembly of Wales to urge the Welsh Government to build an International Language monument at Cardiff Bay for all International mother languages lovers.

Additional information

A plaque has been laid by Cardiff Lord Mayor in 2012 at Grange moor Park, Cardiff Bay. But due to lack of funding not constructed..

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Cardiff West
- South Wales Central

**P-05-692 Welsh Assembly to Build a International Mother languages
Monument at Cardiff Bay – Correspondence from the Petitioner to Chair
20.04.17**

FAO

The Chair,
Petition committee,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to write to you again. I am very disappointed to say that the Welsh government did managed to find 85k to pay for the bills for the barristers to fight against 53% of Welsh (brexit) voters' wishes at supreme court. However this is even more important for all Welsh communities for community cohesion and all kinds of diversity. Language is the Identity for a Nation and I am very shocked to see the minister write to me about how serious he is about community cohesion and linguistic diversity whereas no actions are taken from his desk.

Recently on the 21st February at a Dinner party at City Hall Cardiff the Leader of Assembly Jane Hutt AM, Julie Morgan AM and Lane Rathbone AM said in their speeches that Welsh Labour government will support financially to build this monument and this project will only cost around 81k to complete.

I therefore like to urge your committee to recommend this petition for the all members to discuss at the Senedd please.

Looking forward to hear from you.

Your sincerely,

Mohammed Sarul Islam
Joint Chair,
International Languages Monument Project Committee

Agenda Item 3.19

P-05-716 Free Train Transport for school pupils with Arriva Trains Wales

This petition was submitted by Elin Tuckwood, having collected 937 signatures on an alternative e-petition website

Text of the Petition

Here in the UK we are entitled to free education so surely we should be allowed free, safe transport to and from school? the answer to this is yes for many years Arriva trains Wales have been providing Treorchy Comprehensive pupils with Free train transport which is a huge benefit to those who live outside the catchment areas, however recently this has changed they have now called for all pupils to buy a train pass to get to and from school and these prices range from £19.95 to £32.90 per school term. For some parents with more than 1 child this can work out to be very costly and because these passes are provided through Arriva Trains Wales the school is unable to help parents with this funding. Arriva trains have stated that this is for safety precautions however children who have these designated train passes are in front of a "protective" metal barrier closer to the platform edge and the children that do not have these passes are in this small enclosed barrier space which actually causes more of a safety hazard due to overcrowding in such a small space. By being allowed free train transport once again every pupil will be able to have a fair chance to gain an education and will be able to go on to what they want to do in life we will all be treated as equal and money will not be a major concern for anyone.

Assembly Constituency and Region:

Rhondda

South Wales Central

**P-05-716 Free School Transport for all Children in Wales -
Correspondence from Arriva Trains Wales to the Committee**

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

24 April 2017

Dear Kayleigh

Thank you for enabling me the opportunity to respond to the Petition p-05-716 regarding free train transport for school pupils attending Treorchy Comprehensive school.

We have been very clear in all of our communication about the change from the previously free to a paid arrangement that we are having to manage platform safety differently due to an updated risk assessment. We introduced safety officers from our security contractor with pupils now being held behind barriers until the train has come to a stand in the platform. This operation has a cost and we are therefore bringing Treorchy School in line with all other schools on our network where scholar tickets are paid for.

It may be helpful if I remind readers of this response that in January 2007, a pupil of Treorchy School died as the result of impact with a train on Treorchy station. The pupil was looking in the opposite direction from where the train was approaching, wearing headphones and had moved very close to the platform edge leaning over the side. His head was hit by the arriving train, despite the train horn being sounded. That dreadful and tragic incident has remained with all of us and influences our regular engagement with schools on the importance of railway safety across our network.

Since that incident we have had a number of safety measures in place at Treorchy station based on the risk assessment. They have included educational sessions at the school on rail safety, trains approaching the platform at a reduced speed whilst sounding their horn, the retiming of the train to arrive earlier into the platform and a yellow line painted on the platform as a guide

to where to stand safely. British Transport Police (BTP) officers also regularly attended to review and monitor the situation along with review of the platform by our CCTV monitoring team. Despite all of those measures and with increased numbers using the train service, our employees and the British Transport Police raised new concerns of platform crowding and behaviour by pupils that pointed to a lack of awareness of the risks of being on an operational train platform. This required a further risk assessment as a matter of urgency. The results of that risk assessment warranted immediate action and we arranged for security staff to be present to ensure pupils remained behind the yellow line until the train was at a stand. That has made an enormous difference and reassured me that this was an important course of action to have taken.

The CCTV images below come from footage taken on a typical day after school. In the moving images, pupils can be seen touching the side of the train as it approaches and are exceptionally close to the moving train and platform edge.



The educational season ticket arrangement brings Treorchy School in line with all other schools on our network and has also been successful in spreading the modal shift, particularly as RCT Council continues to provide free bus travel for pupils within the catchment area.

The petitioner asks Arriva Trains Wales to maintain free school transport for the following reasons (in black) with our responses to the point made in bold:

1. Buses are limited, so train represents the best travel option for many although it is only the bus service that is provided for free

We had seen pupil numbers grow enormously over the years of the free arrangement. We re-iterate that the introduction of the paid season ticket is a consequence of the updated risk assessment and the requirement to staff the platform to manage pupil safety. The introduction and images above set that point out in more detail.

2. Pupils that have to buy tickets often miss trains due to the queue at the ticket office

We have tried to make this process as easy as possible by offering the scholar season ticket which is a discounted product and eliminates any queue time at the ticket office. Putting an educational season ticket arrangement into place brings Treorchy School in line with all other schools.

3. The good name of the school draws in pupils from a wider catchment area

We are proud of our longstanding relationship with Treorchy School and our actions are solely about ensuring pupil safety at Treorchy station. We have a very positive and constructive relationship with the school which continues to this day. The school understands the rationale for our decision and has valued the free travel arrangement which they recognise has been an exceptional benefit for a number of years.

4. Some trains are only two carriages

Passenger counts taken by conductors shape train formations used on specific schedules on the ATW network. The key train that leaves Treorchy after school is always a 4 car train, unless there are exceptional operational issues that have made that impossible to deliver. However, it's important to remind the petitioner that our key safety concern has been on the platform rather than on the train

5. The barriers put pupils closer to the platform edge

Pupils are not able to get to the platform edge until the train has come to a stand in the platform. The introduction of this additional safety measure ensures pupil safety from the previous issues we had seen of pupils close to and touching the train on its approach into the platform

6. Perception that safety has got worse as pupils are standing on the trains

I can assure the petitioner that our safety specialists are reassured that the key safety risk was that of the interface with the train at the platform edge. This has been satisfactorily mitigated through our actions. Safety on board remains high, even when trains are busy with people standing. Trains are built to robust industry standards that ensure this situation.

7. The cost of the tickets should be spent on improving safety

That is exactly what the cost of the ticket is contributing to – the costs of stewarding and barriers

8. The cost of the ticket is expensive, even with a 55% discount

The discount makes the ticket as affordable as we can make it. In addition we have given a commitment to the school that pupils in receipt of free school meals will continue to receive a free travel ticket and a number of pupils are taking advantage of that offer

9. As stated in petition ‘because the passes are provided through ATW, the school is unable to help parents with the funding’

If the school wishes to support parents with the funding of season tickets, we would facilitate a way to make that happen

I do hope that my responses enable the petitioner to understand the rationale for our decision and I will be happy to clarify or provide any further information as required.

Yours sincerely

Lynne Milligan
Customer Services Director

Camera 4 : Camera Post 2 - 22/04/2015 15:16:59



Camera 2 : Help Point - 22/04/2015 15:16:59



Camera 6 : Shelter - 22/04/2015 15:16:59



Camera 5 : Platform - 22/04/2015 15:16:59



22-Apr-15

22-Apr-15



P-05-716 Free Train Transport for school pupils with Arriva Trains Wales – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 02.05.17

To whom it may concern,

In response to the correspondence received I still stand by the view that the safety issue was not the main priority of Arriva Trains Wales and the reason why they chose to start to charge Treorchy pupils for these transport services, even though the company claim that these barriers are safer to pupils, I have witnessed first-hand the Arriva staff pushing these barriers into pupils further enclosing them into the already claustrophobic space a 'precaution' I fail to believe is for safety reasons only.

When asked the question about why bus transport is free and not train transport which is the only means of transport to and from school for many pupils out of the catchment area they have labelled it as a "consequence" yet by charging pupils over £60 per term for these passes I don't see why pupils should suffer because Arriva need to employ more staff. I have witnessed that pupils that have to buy their tickets from the ticket office are being prevented from boarding the train due to the time it takes to dispatch these tickets and the staff are physically bordering and preventing these pupils from boarding the train which I don't think is fair because majority of pupils are unable to pay the price of the season ticket that Arriva want. Even though Arriva repeatedly mention how this money contributes towards the safety of the pupils I have not yet seen the effect of this money being put towards this, if anything the barriers that are put up on the platform are even more restricting and to reiterate the staff push these barriers in towards pupils which causes the area to be very restricted and tight which contradicts the 'safety' that Arriva repeatedly say charging pupils contributes towards.

Arriva have stated that this discounted ticket price is affordable yet the price of these tickets are increasing per term seeing them going from around £52 to £60 which I cannot see the reason for the inflation in prices as there has not been more staff employed nor any safety implications installed. I have witnessed when standing on the platform that members of the public are repeatedly asking Arriva why they have used such a small enclosure for pupils and have raised concerns about it not being very safe and Arriva respond with very little answers or explanation and often say that it's because of the behaviour of pupils which in my opinion behaviour on the train platform has only increased since the barriers were installed as pupils become very agitated and anxious in such a small enclosure.

To conclude I still stand by my original response to the issue and hope that Arriva Trains Wales take into consideration my views and opinions on the charging of school pupils.

Yours sincerely, Elin Tuckwood

Agenda Item 3.20

P-05-720 Hirwaun and Penderyn Community Council Petition for the Installation of Fibre Optic Broadband

This petition was submitted by Cllr James Campell, having collected 166 paper signatures.

Text of the Petition

We, the residents of Penderyn have signed the below petition to express our desire that Fibre Optic Broadband be installed in our village. The use of this service will transform our community, enhancing us the users in our social use of the internet as well as those who work within the village either in local business or those who work from home.

Assembly Constituency and Region:

Cynon Valley

South Wales Central

P-05-720 Hirwaun and Penderyn Community Council Petition for the Installation of Fibre Optic Broadband – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 25.04.17

Dear Kayleigh,

Thank you for your email and I apologise to you and the committee for the delay in my reply.

I must express how disappointed I am in the response received by Julie James AM and the reasons given for the lack of Fibre Optic Broadband in the village of Penderyn.

Firstly, I note in her response that the number of signatories was 163 – This is incorrect as the number of signatories gained on this petition was actually over 350 – An overwhelming response that shows how much interest there is in having use of this facility.

I note that there is also mention that work will be undertaken to install Fibre to the property (FTTP) and this was scheduled to start this spring. I was made aware of Email correspondence between a resident and BT where an email was received from Susi Marston (Communications and Stakeholder Engagement Manager – Super Fast Cymru – BT Group. Stadium House, Cardiff) where she stated "FTTP will be installed and estimated build work will be completed by the end of April (2017) and 6–8 weeks after this before customers can place an order".

FTTP is only going to service an extremely small proportion of the village, all of these being located in the Southern part. The petition started for the installation was completed by more than 350 people located in the Northern part of the village and this will not come as good news.

It appears from the response by Julie James AM that the only suggested way for the majority of Penderyn to benefit from Fibre Optic Broadband is to look at the Access Broadband Cymru (ABC) Scheme. I find this very disappointing as it would appear that all neighbouring areas to Penderyn do not have the struggle in gaining Fibre Optic Broadband and have been able to take advantage of this now every day technology simply by being in the right postcode.

Since our last correspondence I have also met with Vikki Howells AM Cynon Valley on this matter due to her involvement with Hirwaun and Penderyn Community Council. I have copied her in for her information.

Kind Regards,

James

Agenda Item 3.21

P-05-721 Penegoes Speed Limit Petition

This petition was submitted by Isabel Bottoms, Peter Bottoms and Sarah Holgate, having collected 298 paper signatures.

Text of the Petition

We call on the National Assembly for Wales urge the Welsh Government to introduce a 30 miles per hour speed limit throughout the village of Penegoes (from the Penegoes village sign entering from Machynlleth, to the other side of the Maesperthi Caravan Park's Proposed new entrance) on the A489 road towards Newtown; and a 40 miles per hour speed limit from Machynlleth to Pengoes.

Assembly Constituency and Region:

Montgomeryshire

Mid and West Wales



Ein cyf/Our ref KS/01231/17

Mike Hedges AM
Chair - Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales

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

20 April 2017

Dear

Mike,

Thank you for your letter of 28 March regarding an update on the outcome of discussions on the Penegoes Speed Limit Petition between the petitioner, Mr Bottoms, and my official.

I can confirm that my official, Mr Ed Burness, Network Management Division, contacted Mr Bottoms via email on 28 March to request a location map of the surveys he had undertaken by Gwynedd. Mr Bottoms responded with maps later that day along with further background information on the issues at the site.

Mr Bottoms and Mr Burness had a telephone conversation the following day and discussed what the Welsh Government will do with the data and what the community would ideally like done such as a reduced speed limit.

Mr Burness explained the background to setting speed limits. I have been informed that Mr Bottoms did not require any further response following his conversation with Mr Burness, however that he would make contact in the near future to seek a progress update.

I am pleased to confirm that our commitment is to include the site in the new Speed Limit Review commencing this summer 2017.

*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
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

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

Gohebiaeth.Ken.Skates@llyw.cymru
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 3.22

P-05-748 School Buses for School Children

This petition was submitted by Lynne Chick, having collected 1,239 signatures – 502 on paper and 737 on-line.

Text of the Petition

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to ensure every child's safety is put first when traveling to and from school.

We want designated school buses so children can travel safely to and from school, each with a seat and seat belt, with no child forced to travel on overcrowded public buses. Children's safety must come first.

Our children have a right to feel safe. Public buses can become over crowded. We have no clue who may board a public bus. Public buses are for public use not school transport. We are not asking for this service to be free, We don't want something for nothing, Just peace of mind that our children are safe when traveling to and from school. We teach our children about stranger danger yet we are expected to send them on a public bus full of strangers daily.

Having lost my daughter under the wheels of a public bus she had travelled home from school in, I feel it's only a matter of time before another parent lives my nightmare if something isn't done to ensure children have a safe means of transport to and from school.

Additional Information

A lot of people will remember my Daughter Louise and the horrific way she lost her life. For those that don't, Louise was 11 years old and had not long started high school. Because of the distance to get to school my children relied on using a public bus. On the 19th March 2001 Louise was due home from Connah's Quay High school at her normal time, only this day the bus was late. I started to worry as I headed out the door I was greeted by Louise's friends telling me she had been run over. I ran to the end of my street to find my beautiful Daughter clinging to life in the road, distressed school children all around. I couldn't understand what had happened. Over months it emerged the bus Louise had travelled home from had been over crowded, adults had stood talking to the driver, there was an alleged push, also a mention her bag had got caught in the door or wheel causing her to be

dragged under the bus she had just alighted from, it was proven the mirrors had blind spots that had been a contributing factor.

After the decision to close a local school, John Summers High School, a lot of parents have spoken to me with concerns for their Child's safety travelling on public buses to and from school. Points have been raised that totally alarm me, So I'm heading a campaign in my Daughter's name to make sure no Child is forced to use public transport buses as school transport.

Assembly Constituency and Region.

- Alyn and Deeside
- North Wales

P-05-748 School Buses For School Children – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 20.04.17

Good Morning,

Thanks for emailing me for clarification re: LouiseOldfield school bus campaign petition. I thought details had been explained in detail.

The petition goal is for School buses for school Children regardless of distance, the aim being a dedicated school bus so no members of the public can ride on with children, each child to have a seat rather than be expected to travel standing up on public transport buses, seat belts to each seat regardless of age, and of course drivers to be CRB checked. We do not expect the service to be free as nothing in life is free, the petition aim is for maximum child safety.

Dedicated school buses each child with a seat, seat belts pre child regardless of age, drivers would have to be checked unlike those driving some public buses, but like I said we don't expect children to travel for free, may be subsidised or a fair price.

I hope I have explained things a little clearer and look forward to hearing back from you.

Kind regards

Lynne

#SchoolBusesForSchoolChildren

Agenda Item 3.23

P-04-526 Please make Senedd TV accessible to deaf people

Petition wording:

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to provide subtitling and signed language access to televised debates and proceedings, to enable the 300,000 with hearing loss and deafness in Wales to follow the democratic processes hearing people already enjoy.

Petition raised by: Mervyn James

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 21 January 2014

Number of signatures: 25

**P-04-526 Please make Senedd TV accessible to deaf people -
Correspondence between the Petitioner and the Clerk to the Committee,
28.04.17**

Hi

My e-mail/computer was changed and ISP replaced etc. Yes please consider the petition as written, I still feel deaf people do not have access to the workings of the Senedd, whilst we are aware some has gone online, all party areas like the sensory and deaf ones now appear to have folded in 2014/15, so I feel even more so now, there is a need to make certain meetings like the health areas far more accessible via video means and of course subtitled or captioned. The consensus in the hearing loss area of Wales which is made up of 300,000+ needs to have this access.

errata: I also contacted, the Senedd website area regarding utter confusion as regards to having a valid 'search' option we can use to update ourselves on issues relevant to our sector via the Senedd website, where we found at least 11 differing descriptions of hearing loss and deafness in the health area alone, there seemed no attempt to define which sector they were talking about. They were all listed as 'Deaf' which is allied to a cultural area, a minority of those with hearing loss in Wales. We pointed out this was at odds with the Senedd;'s own equality area as well, and by default had set up some 'hierarchy' by decibel loss or background. We also read the all-party committee on deaf issues attended by various charities in Wales, had to provide own support to follow, and, that grass roots people were not invited to attend.

Thank you for contacting me.

Petitioner

M E James

Dear Mr James

Thank you for getting back to me. I am glad that we have been able to make contact with you regarding your petition.

I will happily put your comments below to the Committee at their next meeting on 9 May. However, it would help us if we could clarify a couple of points so that I can ensure that the Committee Members fully understand the issues you are raising.

In relation to your first paragraph below, does your concern relate to Cross Party Groups – such as the one on Deaf Issues – or other Assembly business (for example plenary sessions or committees)? Clarity on this issue will help the Members to decide how they can take the petition forward.

In the second paragraph, are you referring to using the ‘Search’ function on the general Assembly website (www.assembly.wales) or somewhere else? If so, this might be difficult for the Committee to take forward because the search brings up a wide range of results from different parts of Assembly business and the references to ‘deaf’ or hearing loss will often be from contributions made by Assembly Members in debates or committees and not official publications or articles by the Assembly.

Please let me know if I have misunderstood either of your points.

Many thanks

Graeme

Graeme Francis

Clerk/Clerc

Petitions Committee/Pwyllgor Deisebau

Hi

Yes, primarily we were concerned at the total lack of access to the cross-party area on deafness and hearing loss, and other coverage of the assembly, which has 'in house' video coverage that isn't accessible either. Apart from being inaccessible, it lacks inclusion too, and appears to vanish altogether it never disseminated proceedings effectively either. I would have much preferred as this all-party committee was set up for us, if we had the coverage and access to it, we never did in reality, and we are in limbo at present as to who if anyone, is forwarding access concerns to the Senedd. I did contact several welsh AM's but they insisted they couldn't comment?

In part the difficulties to accessing the website, because we cannot use that website as an alternative to gaining information on our area. I contacted the web site people and they were not really helpful.

Hope this helps.

M E James

Agenda Item 3.24

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

P-05-726 Give Rate Relief to Local Authorities for Leisure and Cultural Facilities – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 16.04.17

Hi Kayleigh,

This is my response to the letter from Mark Drakeford dated 12 Jan 2017 in ref to petition p-05-726.

With regards to the planned changes to the NDR system to support small businesses, this sounds like something I would fully support and I would agree that supporting small businesses should be a priority.

However I would also suggest that local authority funding should also be an immediate priority. It's quite concerning to see that improving the local government finance system is considered to be a long term goal, coming even lower in the priority list than making administrative improvements to the NDR system. It seems to me that local authority funding will reach crisis point within the next term of council for many authorities. Local authorities have already been forced to implement so many cuts and efficiencies over the last few years and some authorities are at the point where there is simply no more savings to be made without severely degrading essential services.

It is my strong view that short/medium term action is needed to alleviate the financial pressures on local authorities.

With regards to the specific terms of the petition, there is an inherent unfairness in providing rate relief to outsourced local authority services while charging full rates to exactly the same services which are run by the local authority. This effectively rewards local authorities for outsourcing while penalising local authorities who decide to keep services in house. To put it another way, council tax payers are paying a premium for the privilege of keeping public services run by the public sector. Additionally, as local authority funding pressures keep increasing it can be expected that more and more of them will choose the outsourcing option and therefore the loss of NDR income will come whether this suggested rate relief is implemented or not. The only difference is we will have unnecessarily have lost control of many of our services in the process.

I would urge members to consider the difficult position which local authorities are in right now and show a willingness to support them.

Regards,

Ryan Dansie

Agenda Item 3.25

P-05-742 Stop Forsythia Closing!

This petition was submitted by Forsythia Youth Centre, having collected 74 signatures. The petition has also collected 533 signatures on an alternative e-petition website.

Text of the Petition

Forsythia Youth Centre is at risk of closing due to the uncertainty surrounding Welsh Government's Communities First funding. Forsythia Youth Centre is a FREE access youth provision which is open: –

- 4 nights a week for 51 weeks of the year;
- Open during the day and the evenings throughout school holidays;
- Open on the weekend if completing project work.

Without fail, Forsythia has a minimum of 50 young people aged 11–20 from across Gurnos, Galon Uchaf, Pant, Dowlais and Penydarren, attending every night. Without Forsythia Youth Centre, young people would not have a safe place to access within their community and they would not have anywhere else to go due to a lack of other provision aimed at young people.

Forsythia Youth Centre offers young people the opportunity to take part in youth projects, such as 'Commit to Quit' with Ash Wales, Erasmus+ project on 'Attitudes and Values of Youth Work', and the 'Agenda Project' with Cardiff University. Young people are also provided the opportunity to access organisations such as Drug Aid, Sexual Health projects, Smoking Cessation, Mental Health and Confidence Building, Skills and Qualifications and receive in house support from qualified youth workers.

Young people and the workers are very concerned about the uncertainty surrounding the Communities First funding, as without this funding, Forsythia will have to close down.

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to ensure that potential changes to the Communities First programme do not cause the closure of Forsythia Youth Centre.

Additional Information

1. The young people involved with Forsythia Youth Centre have been part of a campaign to improve community safety, which resulted in having a zebra crossing installed outside of the Youth Centre, lighting installed on the hospital pathways and the dangerous subway closed which was always full of drug paraphernalia.
2. The young people are involved with going into local schools and Merthyr Tydfil College to deliver peer education on Smoking Cessation.
3. The young people of Forsythia have been involved with the National Assembly for Wales Health and Social Care Committee during the Forth Assembly, where young people took part in a focus group meeting with Assembly Committee Members on the new Psychoactive Substances Inquiry.
4. The Forsythia Youth Centre has won 18 awards over the past 13 years both locally, nationally and internationally.
5. Young people at Forsythia have collected 533 signatures using change.org to support this petition.

Assembly Constituency and Region.

- Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney
- South Wales East

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



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref CS/00446/17

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

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

April 2017

Dear Mike

Thank you for your letter of 15 March in which you request further information on the support available to successful schemes and projects currently being delivered through Communities First, along with information on Families First and Flying Start support.

In reaching the decision to phase out Communities First, I listened and considered very carefully the responses to the engagement exercise. There has been evidence of much success at individual level, and I pay tribute to the hard-working Communities First workforce and delivery partners for their role in this. However, Communities First has not had an impact on overall poverty levels in Wales, which remain stubbornly high. I, along with Welsh Government colleagues, will take forward a new all-Wales approach to deal with the root causes of poverty. There was widespread support, throughout the engagement, for this approach.

This approach will involve a Welsh Government-wide commitment to building Resilient Communities across Wales as well as supporting the wider Employability Plan. The Valleys taskforce, the North and South Wales Metros, promoting financial and digital inclusion, the Better Jobs closer to Home project and the new childcare offer are part of a significant cross-Government investment in our communities.

I have recognised however that there will be an impact of phasing out Communities First and to mitigate this, I announced that there would be a year-long transition period to March 2018, providing budgets at 70% of the 2016-17 allocation. From April 2018, there will be a £6m Legacy Fund to preserve some of the most effective projects from Communities First across Wales. I have also made available a £4m capital budget to help protect valuable community assets.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
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Gohebiaeth.Carl.Sargeant@llyw.cymru
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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 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.

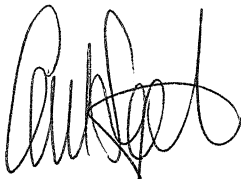
The new approach to building resilient communities will be a cross-government, all-Wales approach focused on helping people into work, giving children the best start in life, and ensuring people's voices are heard in the design of local services.

To support the delivery of one of my key priorities, employment, an additional £12m will be invested to support Communities for Work and Lift programmes and provide a community-based programme focussed on those furthest from the jobs market.

To address your questions about the support available from other programmes, unfortunately Flying Start is an Early Years programme and its funding would have no official role in supporting core sustainability of youth centres. With regard to Families First, delivery of the programme takes place at a local level and each local authority commissions services which respond to the identified needs of local populations. From April 2018 the strategic services commissioned through Families First will be refocused around parenting and support for young people, however, this does not mean that Families First funding could be used to support open access youth centres as part of this, as funding will need to be used to provide targeted support for young people.

All local authorities have a statutory duty to ensure all 11-25 year olds have access to the services they need to achieve their potential. In delivering services which support young people, Families First will be seeking to build on this core provision to ensure it can add value to services which are already available rather than funding it.

Yours sincerely



Carl Sargeant AC/AM

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

P-05-742 Stop Forsythia Closing! – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 24.04.17

The situation at Forsythia has sadly got worse. Here is a bullet point update for you:

- All staff have been issued 'at risk of redundancy' letters
- Staff will be finishing at the end of June, with [the Manager] finishing at the end of July
- They have now lost 1 full time member of staff (37.5 hours per week), and 1 sessional member of staff (6 hours per week).

Some better news:

- They were nominated and won 1st place for the High Sheriff's Association of England and Wales' National Crimebeat Awards 206/17, and were presented their award in London.
- Have continuously achieved (and in most areas overachieved) their targets, and in one area, they have helped to get 12 young people into Full Time Employment as a direct result of their engagement with Forsythia.
- Have 248 young people attending the centre at least 3 nights a week.

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Agenda Item 3.26

P-04-524 Planning Control and the Welsh Language

Petition wording:

We the undersigned call upon the National Assembly for Wales, during its consideration of the Planning Reform Bill, to include a provision making the use of bilingual signage a legal planning condition requirement for all new builds in Wales where the public have access whether on payment or otherwise.

Additional information:

More than 50 years after the Welsh Language Society started their campaign for bilingualism in Wales the private sector are still a long way off compliance. Legislation is required to ensure compliance with Paragraph 13 of TAN 20. Individual campaigns like the Premier Inn campaign should not be necessary an a blanket policy is required that puts Welsh on an equal footing within the private sector.

Petition raised by: Owain Arfon Jones

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 21 January 2014

Number of signatures: 123

P-04-559 Secondary School Awareness of Self-Harm

Petition wording:

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to put in place more educational programmes (specifically in Secondary Schools) to counteract many people's misunderstanding of self-harm.

A growing issue amongst teenagers in Wales, 43% of people know somebody who has self-harmed according to a BBC survey. In the same survey, it was reported that 41% think that self-harm is selfish.

Additional Information: Due to the sheer volume of occurrences in self-harm among teenagers in Wales, I feel that there should be more awareness and approachability of the subject. Why should a teenager suffer in silence? This is why I believe that as a country we should provide more substantial resources for a sufferer to find free assistance in battling self-harm.

Petition raised by: Eleanor Price

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 17 June 2014

Number of signatures : 12

Agenda Item 4

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

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