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Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Lywodraeth Leol a Thai
Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref 20250429 Chair to CSSJTCW re
democratic engagement grant

Jenny Rathbone MS
Chair, Equality and Social Justice Committee
Senedd Cymru

8 May 2025

Dear Jenny,

Thank you for your letter of 29th April requesting information about the Democratic Engagement Grant (DEG), which arose during your Committee's evidence session on democratic health. As the grant falls within my portfolio, I am responding on behalf of the Government.

I am glad to hear the Grant mentioned in Committee as an example of the positive steps the Welsh Government has taken to encourage democratic engagement in Wales. The Committee might be interested to know that the Scottish Parliament has legislated (the [Scottish Elections \(Representation and Reform\) Act 2025](#)) to give Scottish Ministers powers to fund activities to increase democratic engagement. The Scottish Government cited our grant scheme and projects we have funded as examples of what they would look to carry out in introducing the legislation.

I have been pleased to talk about the grant several times in the Siamber, highlighting how work funded by the grant is helping to remove barriers and encourage participation in democracy in Wales. Since the launch of the DEG in February 2022 and up to 30 June 2025, we have allocated £657,093.85 of Welsh Government funding to support democratic engagement activity in Wales. This funding supported 22 organisations to deliver 27 projects across Wales, reaching a diverse range of people and communities, including young people (in school and out of school settings), adults with Additional Learning Needs, foreign-national communities, the gypsy and traveller community and disabled people. For your reference, I have attached a list of the projects funded to date.

In March I agreed the continuation of the Democratic Engagement Grant for a further 3 years from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2028, funded at £400 000 per year. Further information is available at <https://www.gov.wales/democratic-engagement-grant>, and Officials are currently managing the application process for the next cohort of projects.

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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.


As part of our consideration of whether to continue, we commissioned an evaluation by Welsh Government researchers into the Grant and its operation of the grant during its first full financial year (2023-24). In that year, sixteen organisations were delivering projects, including four organisations with multi-year projects. The evaluation aimed to review the Grant's design and delivery, understand its perceived impact of the DEG, and understand how monitoring and evaluation could be improved. The report is being translated and will be published soon on the Research and Statistics pages of the Welsh Government's website.

As a condition of receiving DEG funding project leads must attend meetings of the Welsh Government's Democratic Engagement Partnership. The Partnership brings funded groups together alongside others active in the democratic engagement space like the Electoral Commission, Senedd Commission, local authorities, civil society groups and third sector organisations. Grant holders are invited to report on their work at these meetings which actively seek to encourage collaboration to reduce duplication, overcome barriers with collective problem and share best practice within the democratic engagement sector in Wales.

I think it is helpful that the committee recognises the importance of democratic health as part of its consideration of social cohesion. As highlighted by Professor Matt Ryan, Mick Antoniw MS, my predecessor as Elections Minister, asked the Wales Centre for Public Policy to explore how Wales's democratic health can best be defined, measured, and monitored. This was with a view to helping focus efforts on increasing participation and engagement in national and local democratic processes in Wales, especially among under-represented groups. Following that report we have commissioned work to identify options for specific measures and indicators to track, monitor and assess different components of democracy in Wales. The outcome of this work will be options of five or six indicators and a series of recommendations that the Welsh Government can use to measure and monitor democratic health in Wales. We expect the study to be finalised by the end of this calendar year.

I will be happy to write to the Committee again to provide updates on any of the issues raised in this letter and I am copying this to the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jayne Bryant". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jayne Bryant AS/MS

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Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government

ANNEX

DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT GRANT

Below lists the organisations who were successful in bidding for funding via the Democratic Engagement Grant. Funding figures shown represent the total amount of funding they were awarded, not actual expenditure.

No project has exceeded its budget allocation.

2022-2023 Projects

1. The Politics Project (**£208,125 – 2 year & 1 month project, ends 31 March 2025**) will continue to run their successful Digital Dialogue Sessions in schools across Wales. The sessions allow young people to ask questions and discuss issues of importance to them to their elected representative. Throughout the life of the project, the aim is to deliver 160 engagements between young people and politicians, working with 80 schools in total from 2022-23 through to the end of 2024-25.

2023-2024 Projects

2. Ceredigion County Council (**£10,000**) will create content specifically designed to reach out and engage with qualifying foreign nationals in their communities.
3. City of Cardiff Council in partnership with Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council and Vale of Glamorgan Council (**£6922**) are creating digital content (videos) in multiple languages focusing on what to expect at a polling station.
4. City of Cardiff Council (**£984**) have been awarded funding for a second, separate project which is focused on engaging and working with members of the Gypsy and Traveller community on the importance of democracy through workshops.
5. Democracy Club (**£35,000**) will look to expand their poll station finder's capabilities to include more accessibility information about the buildings that host polling places.
6. I Have a Voice (**£11,763**) will train and support young people studying in colleges in the Colleges Wales network to deliver voter registration drives in their college.
7. Innovate Trust (**£27,811.60**) will raise democratic awareness, increase voter registration and participation amongst people with learning disabilities in Wales.
8. Llanelli Town Council (**£1000**) will produce materials and run sessions in local schools focusing on good citizenship, the role of the Mayor in Llanelli, why we vote and the history of voting and democracy.
9. Llansteffan and Llanybri Community Council (**£940**) will establish a Youth Forum, encouraging young people to be involved with local issues and have a strong link with the Community Council (YF reps will attend meetings and cover topics of interest).

10. PLANED (**£15,000**) will hold activities centred around connecting young people to elected officials from town and community councils in west Wales.
11. South Riverside Community Centre (**£1000**) will support the democratic engagement of foreign nationals living in Cardiff - specifically asylum seekers, refugees and migrants for whom English is a second language.
12. Tenby Town Council (**£1000**) will establish a community forum to increase participation in their community on local matters.
13. *Vocal Eyes (**£3625.20**) project ended early due to the company informing officials of their inability to continue delivery in line with their grant award letter.*
14. Y Ty Gwyrdd (**£1600**) will hold a 'People's Assembly' focusing on how to make a community more sustainable, involving people in deliberative democracy and look to help people not normally engaged and vocal in local democratic processes, to find their voice.
15. Boys & Girls Club Wales (**£109,684.95 – 2-year project, ends 31 March 2025**) will continue to run their Pizza and Politics workshops and Raise your Voice Projects, with an emphasis on those who are marginalised. Including: people from ethnic minority backgrounds, LGBTQ+ young people and disabled young people and those with poor mental health.
16. British Deaf Association (**£33,165.96 – 2-year project, ends 31 March 2025**) will run in-person and digital workshops to their stakeholders on how democracy works to empower Deaf people.
17. Swansea MAD (**£44,886.90 – 2-year project, ends 31 March 2025**) will facilitate activities with young people/adults in Swansea (who are underrepresented and/or newly enfranchised), supporting them to engage with the democratic process; promoting/increasing meaningful/sustainable voice/participation and ensuring every citizen in Swansea can play their full part in democracy.

2024/25 Projects

18. Scouts Cymru (**£17,720**) will strengthen their Democracy Challenge Badge, creating an engaging programme to involve young people in the democratic process of Wales. It will create a blended approach combining existing activities for the challenge badge with digital resources, working with the Electoral Commission and participatory events with the Welsh Centre for International Affairs.
19. Elect Her (**£53,534.88**) aim to help women to engage with democracy, designing and developing and develop a series of digital resources for grassroots women's community groups to host democracy circles, demystifying democracy and supporting women to develop action plans for engagement. Alongside this, digital resources will be created, and training courses delivered specifically for Welsh women including self-led downloadable resources, video recordings, blended learning courses to equip them to move through the journey towards elected office.
20. Eco Hub Aber (**£11,490**) will enhance a popular existing community App to promote greater understanding of democracy and easier pathways for engagement. The grant will fund an additional democratic engagement section on the app to allow users to easily access information about democracy and be directed to relevant websites.

21. Aberystwyth Students Union (**£23,870**) aim to increase student participation and engagement with the democratic process in Wales, including creating content tailored towards the interests of students, holding voter registration drives and supporting students to engage with elected officials.
22. Aberystwyth Students Union (**£7130**) This separate project utilising the same activity but allows for a coordinator specifically focused on engaging and supporting international students with their democratic rights in Wales.
23. Shout Out UK (**£15,583.86**) will deliver media literacy training directly to young people in via schools on drop-down days, with a specific focus on students in years 11, 12 and 13, aiming to reach 330 students' total. The training will equip students with the knowledge and skills to identify various forms of misinformation, disinformation and extremist content, understand the motivations behind their dissemination and critically evaluate information sources in line with the Digital Competence Framework of the Curriculum for Wales.
24. Tenby Town Council (**£984**) will continue with their youth and community forums which were created in 2023/24 with support from this grant, with the aim to continue increasing participation in their community on local matters.
25. Boys & Girls Club Wales (**£9497**) assemble a diverse steering group consisting of marginalised young people who are care-experienced, LGBTQ+, homeless, adopted, travellers, ethnic minorities, and have disabilities from their partnerships and clubs. The steering group will collaborate in selecting impactful clips, drafting educational content, and providing personal insights to ensure the toolkit accurately reflects their experiences and needs. This toolkit will include guidelines, tips, and real-life examples to help politicians engage effectively with young people facing trauma and life challenges.
26. City of Cardiff Council (**£3775.50**) will hold their 'Democracy in Action' workshop. The workshop will allow Democracy Ambassadors from the 7 partnering schools to see what activities they could do in their setting. The workshop will contain 4 different activities: different governments lecture, a mock election, local ideas workshop with councillors and meet the lord mayor.

To note: The Politics Project, Swansea MAD, Boys & Girls Club of Wales (2023-24 multi-year project), Scouts Cymru, Elect Her, Eco Hub Aber, Aberystwyth Students Union, Shout Out UK, Tenby Town Council and City of Cardiff Council had their projects extended beyond their original end date of 31 March 2025 to 30 June 2025.

2025/26 Projects

27. Llanelli Township (**£1000**) will run a series of public engagement sessions across Llanelli, targeting a diverse cross-section of the local population. Activities will include interactive displays, workshops, and informal open consultations hosted at accessible community venues. Sessions will be designed to demystify governance structures, show how community benefit societies and community interest companies interface with public authorities, and provide practical ways people can get involved.