

Agenda – Petitions Committee

Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 3 – Senedd

Meeting date: 27 February 2023

Meeting time: 13.00

For further information contact:

Gareth Price – Committee Clerk

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1 Introductions, apologies, substitutions and declarations of Interest

(Pages 1 – 16)

2 Evidence session – P-06-1307 The Welsh Government should commit to the adoption of the maintenance of new housing estates by local authorities

(Pages 17 – 22)

Hefin David MS

3 New Petitions

3.1 P-06-1317 Recognise Teaching Assistants as an important asset to schools by raising wage

(Pages 23 – 44)

3.2 P-06-1321 Protect leisure centres and swimming pools from closure during the current energy crisis

(Pages 45 – 52)

4 Updates to previous petitions

4.1 P-06-1212 Mark Allen's Law – we want throwline stations around all open water sites in Wales

(Page 53)

4.2 P-06-1213 Ban leisure use of Seadoo/jet ski in Cymru. Except in strictly controlled designated areas

(Pages 54 – 55)



- 4.3 P-06-1287 Investigate C&V UHB's refusal to keep north Penarth's surgery, allocating patients to distant GPs
(Pages 56 – 63)
- 4.4 P-06-1323 We request that the Welsh Government purchase St David's Hall as a national resource for Wales
(Pages 64 – 66)
- 5 Motion under Standing Order 17.42(ix) to resolve to exclude the public from the remainder of the meeting**
- 6 Discussion of Evidence – P-06-1307 The Welsh Government should commit to the adoption of the maintenance of new housing estates by local authorities**

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Commit to the adoption of the maintenance of new housing estates by local authorities

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 27 Chwefror 2023
Petitions Committee | 27 February 2023

Reference: SR23/5289-1

Petition Number: P-06-1307

Petition title: Commit to the adoption of the maintenance of new housing estates by local authorities.

Text of petition: The residents of the Mill, a new estate in Canton, Cardiff are having to pay an annual fee of £102 for the maintenance of a park bordering the estate. This payment must be made alongside other maintenance payments covering the unadopted highways, green spaces etc. Residents also must pay the full council tax required. Residents are not provided with a detailed breakdown of the costs of the park, just a notice to say they must pay the fee.

The Mill was regarded as a good example of Welsh Government policy due to its status as a mixed tenure estate including affordable housing alongside freehold purchasing – therefore with the current cost of living crisis we believe that the Welsh Government should support residents on estates like The Mill by encouraging and facilitating the adoption of maintenance by local authorities and to remove these punitive charges.



1. Background

Where the local authority has not adopted common areas like roads, open spaces and play facilities on housing estates, private arrangements can be put in place to ensure they are maintained. This will generally result in a charge being levied on residents by a management company, or their agent, to pay for maintenance costs.

According to a [2020 Welsh Government consultation](#), these spaces and facilities may include:

- *open areas,*
- *play parks,*
- *roads and paving,*
- *car parking areas,*
- *street lighting,*
- *landscaping,*
- *environmental initiatives such as wild flower verges, and*
- *provision of private shared sprinkler systems.*

These charges are often referred to as estate charges. Freeholders are likely to be charged directly, while leaseholders and tenants may have to pay through their service charges and rent. This briefing uses the term “residents” to cover all groups who may be liable for estate charges.

According to the [responses to the 2020 consultation](#), estate charges can range anywhere between £50 and £500 per year, with most amounting to £100-£150. Residents are still liable for council tax in addition to any estate charges.

A number of concerns have been raised about estate charges by Members of the Senedd and through the consultation referred to above. A key issue is transparency, with residents complaining that estate managers are able to [set charges without consultation](#). Residents have also commented that [developers often don't provide information on estate charges](#) during the sale of a property.

Respondents to the 2020 consultation questioned why they are being charged for the maintenance of what are largely public facilities when they already pay council tax. The 2020 consultation noted a ‘strong preference’ among respondents for ending estate charges and bringing the management of community infrastructure into the hands of local authorities.

At present, freeholders may only have limited powers to challenge estate charges. This differs from leaseholders, who can apply to a Leasehold Valuation Tribunal to challenge service charges.

The use of estate charges in Wales appears to have increased over the last decade, with the 2020 consultation reporting that 72% of respondents lived on estates built after 2010. There has been a corresponding rise in media coverage of estate charges and their impact on freeholders in particular, resulting in the popularisation of the term 'fleecehold' across the UK housing sector.

2. Welsh Government action

The Welsh Government consultation on estate charges ran between February and April 2020 and received over 600 responses. On 30 November 2020, the then Minister for Housing and Local Government, Julie James MS, released a written statement responding to its findings.

The Minister announced changes to the Help to Buy-Wales scheme to address some of the concerns raised in the consultation responses and committed to exploring different methods of estate management.

The Minister's statement highlighted the possible impact on local authorities if they were made responsible for communal areas or facilities covered by estate charges:

I recognise it is not simply the case that local authorities could take on these additional responsibilities in perpetuity without the necessary resources to provide for such a service. This question requires proper thought and investigation, to ensure any changes we make do not bring about unintended consequences and unforeseen adverse impacts.

The Welsh Government included estate charge reform in their June 2021 Programme for Government, stating that they would:

Ensure that estate charges for public open spaces and facilities are paid for in a way that is fair.

Following a question in plenary on 24 May 2022, the First Minister reaffirmed that the Welsh Government would not give a guarantee that local authorities would pick up maintenance costs of new housing estates. The First Minister noted:

If a developer believed that no matter how shoddy the work they carried out, no matter how poor the standard of communal facilities it provided, there was a guarantee that the public purse would pick that up and put it right, there's no incentive at all for them to do the job in the way that we want it to be done.

The First Minister also confirmed that the Welsh Government would introduce new building safety legislation during this Senedd term, including a new registration and licensing scheme. This scheme will cover residential property management companies. The First Minister said that it would “help to eliminate some of the abuses” relating to estate charges.

In addition, the First Minister commented that the Welsh Government was waiting for the UK Government to introduce leasehold reform (based on the recommendations of the Law Commission) that would give freeholders greater power to challenge estate charges and management. At the time of writing, these reforms have not yet taken place. On 30 January 2023, the UK Secretary of State for Levelling-up, Housing and Communities, Michael Gove MP, said that his aim was for a leasehold Bill to be included in the King’s Speech, expected to be in autumn 2023.

The Minister for Climate Change, Julie James MS, replied to the petition on 1 November 2022. In her letter, the Minister reiterated the Welsh Government’s expectation that the UK Government will introduce legislation to improve freeholders’ rights. The Minister noted in the letter that the Welsh Government was considering how to address communal infrastructure on new estates:

For new estates, we will explore the practicality of using legislation to bring together the various regimes to pay for the maintenance of communal infrastructure into a single approach. This will include consideration of placing a duty on local authorities to adopt communal infrastructure in return for an appropriate payment from the developer.

However, the Minister maintained that retrospective adoption of community infrastructure would remain a choice for councils.

3. Welsh Parliament action

On 14 March 2018, the Senedd debated a Member’s Legislative Proposal submitted by Hefin David MS, who proposed a Bill aimed at regulating estate

management companies. The proposed Bill would also strengthen the ability of freeholders to challenge estate managers.

In response, the then Minister for Housing and Regeneration, Rebecca Evans MS, committed to establishing a task and finish group to examine the issue. The group's findings were published in a [report](#) on 17 July 2019.

On 1 November 2020, a [petition](#) was submitted calling for freeholders in Wales to have greater powers to challenge estate management companies. The Minister for Climate Change [responded to this petition](#) on 5 October 2021, and the petition was closed by the Committee as the petitioner was satisfied with the Minister's response. The research briefing prepared for this petition can be found [here](#).

Estate charges have also been raised several times in plenary. Hefin David MS [raised the issue on 15 June 2021](#), receiving a response that the Welsh Government was considering 'all options' in addressing the matter.

On 24 May 2022, Rhys ab Owen MS [raised the question of estate management](#) following complaints from the [Mill estate in Canton](#), Cardiff (as referenced in this petition).

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.

Recognise Teaching Assistants as an important asset to schools by raising wage

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 27 February 2023
Petitions Committee | 27 Chwefror 2023

Reference: SR23/4917

Petition Number: P-06-1317

Petition title: Recognise Teaching Assistants as an important asset to schools by raising wage

Text of petition: Teaching Assistants (TA) are an extremely important part of the running of schools in Wales but are not currently recognised as this by our government when reflecting on the wage.

Without Teaching Assistants, schools wouldn't be able to cater to the high number of Special Educational Needs (SEN) students. They work hard and are discriminately underpaid for the work they do. A Teaching Assistant's role is demanding, and the workload they face in current times is massive. Duties include, but are not limited to, supporting SEN students (often on a one-to-one basis), teaching groups of children and sometimes even a whole class to cover teachers, lesson planning, organising extra-curricular activities, making sure that every child reaches their full potential. Sadly, as the wage is so low, this is not a job many TAs can afford to keep, and a huge number of highly skilled TAs are being forced to find other jobs. This needs to change.



1. Teaching assistant pay

Teaching assistants may be paid either through school budgets or through local authority budgets. A research report commissioned by the Welsh Government several years ago, [School support staff in Wales Research report on the employment and deployment of support staff in schools in Wales](#) (2008) found that:

Most schools said that the National Joint Council for Local Government Services (NJC) rates were used for teaching and learning assistants and administrative staff. Most also indicated that LEA [local authority] advice was the usual method of calculating support staff wages where the NJC scales were not used. A slightly different view was offered by the LEAs who said that decisions about the wages of staff not employed on NJC scales were taken by schools or jointly by schools and LEAs.

Latest data from the Education Workforce Council shows that the [number of registered school learning support workers](#) has increased by 27.4 per cent since 2017 and 10.1 per cent between 2021 to 2022 to 42,585.

2. Welsh Government action

On 18 February 2022, Jeremy Miles, Minister for Education and Welsh Language issued a written statement [Update on activities to support those assisting teaching](#). He said that a Task and Finish Group, which included Welsh Government, trade unions, local authorities, the Welsh Local Government Association, the Education Workforce Council, teaching assistants and headteacher representation, had identified several key areas for attention:

- **Deployment of teaching assistants** - a new Teaching Assistant Professional Learning Steering Group were to develop further resources for leaders and Governors on the deployment of teaching assistants. The Minister had also agreed to a comparative research project to look at the deployment of teaching assistants in other education systems.
- **Access to training and professional development** - Since 2017, the Welsh Government and the Regional Consortia have supported the development of a Teaching Assistants Learning Pathway to increase the number Higher Level Teaching Assistant candidates; provide training for all new teaching assistants; and offer opportunities to gain level 2

qualifications in certain core subjects. From September 2022, teaching assistants have access to a new **National Professional Learning Entitlement** to support the delivery of the Curriculum for Wales.

- **Standardisation of roles** - the Task and Finish Group were to consider whether, and if so how, a standard set of job descriptions can be implemented across Wales.
- **Pay** - as a longer term consideration for local authorities based on the outcomes of the above. While pay remains the responsibility of local authorities and/or schools, the Minister said that the work on deployment and standardisation of roles can bring greater coherence to support pay discussions, to work towards greater consistency between local authority areas and to support local authorities to reflect the important role that teaching assistants play, in their terms and conditions.

In addition, the Minister said he was writing to all school governing bodies recommending that they assign the role of '**Teaching Assistant Champion**' to one of their members. They would have a responsibility to ensure that the perspective and input of teaching assistants is sought and included when key decisions are being made.

The Task and Finish Group has evolved into the "School Support Staff Workforce Board". It meets every term and monitors progress in implementing the Task and Finish Group's recommendations.

3. Other Petitions

A [petition on this subject](#) to the UK Parliament closed on 2 February 2023. The wording of the petition was the same as that being considered by the Committee. The petition attracted 87,275 signatures (at the time of writing this briefing). The UK Government responded on 12 August 2022 saying:

- Schools are free to set their pay and most mirror local government pay scales.
- For most staff, including teaching assistants, schools have the freedom to recruit according to their own circumstances and set pay and conditions.
- Teaching assistant pay has increased year-on-year since 2017. Last year's pay rose by between 1.75 and 2.75 per cent for teaching assistants, which was backdated to April 2021.
- The government does not have a role in setting local government pay and there is no national pay body. Instead, most councils take part in

collective negotiations. The Local Government Association (LGA) represents the employer, negotiating with the National Joint Council (UNISON, Unite and the GMB) which represent the employee.

■

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Ein cyf/Our ref JMEWL/00049/23

Jack Sargeant MS
Chair - Petitions committee
Senedd Cymru
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff

6 February 2023

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your letter of 10 January 2023 highlighting the concerns raised by the petition P-06-1317 Recognise Teaching Assistants as an important asset to schools by raising wages.

The Welsh Government recognises and appreciates the hard work and dedication school support staff do to improve the lives of our young people in Wales. Teaching Assistants (TAs) are a valued and integral part of the school workforce and have an important role as part of a high-quality education profession.

I issued a Written Statement in February 2022 outlining some of the work being undertaken over the next 5 years to address workforce issues and access to professional learning to support those assisting teaching. My officials will continue the work underway with our partners to make improvements to:

- deployment of teaching assistants;
- access to training and professional development;
- standardisation of roles; and
- pay, as a longer term consideration for local authorities based on outcomes achieved above.

This is a really innovative piece of work initiated by government and highlights many of the concerns and issues that teaching assistants are facing.

I am committed to ensuring that Teaching Assistants have access to high-quality professional learning as identified through the National Professional Learning Entitlement however, pay and conditions for all non-teaching local government staff, including TAs, form part of the national pay negotiations for local authority employees. School support staff pay structures and policies, including any allocation of supplementary allowances remain the responsibility

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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.

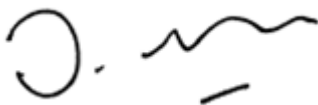
of individual employers, whether this is the school or the local authority. I understand a £1,925 pay award has been accepted for all NJC pay points which equates to a 10.5% increase for employees at the lowest pay point for 2022/2023 and this is a step in the right direction for these valued members of the education workforce. Although the Welsh Government has no authority in these matters we will continue to do everything we can to progress this work with our partners.

We realise that pay and deployment are difficult and complex issues and we as a government will play our part in reaching a good outcome however, we also recognise that this is a long term process. Teaching Assistants job descriptions are currently being considered by a WLGA sub-group of the School Social Partnership Group, which is comprised of the Welsh Government, local authority employers and education workforce unions and we are expecting them to make recommendations shortly on how job descriptions can be better aligned for all TAs. This will also consider the specific issues faced by TA's in Special Schools.

In order to support Teaching Assistants we have also been working with [Education Support Partnership](#) to provide independent, confidential support, to help people deal with stress and anxiety, bullying, career and money worries, and a range of other issues. This support is available to all the education workforce.

I would like to reiterate that the Welsh Government has a clear understanding of the issues being faced by Teaching Assistants and we appreciate their dedication and hard work. We will continue to support the work being undertaken to progress improvements in terms of their pay and conditions.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. Miles', with a wavy line and a short horizontal stroke below it.

Jeremy Miles AS/MS
Gweinidog y Gymraeg ac Addysg
Minister for Education and Welsh Language

Teaching assistants and school support staff – draft composite

UNISON's suggested amendments are in red

Congress notes that the majority of Teaching Assistants in Wales are on part time contracts for 27 hours to 32 hours a week and are generally only contracted for 39 weeks of the year. In contrast teacher's pay is set nationally at a Welsh level, while pay of Teaching Assistants is determined by local authorities creating inequalities between different areas. Consequently, Teaching Assistants typically work significantly longer hours than they are contracted. Therefore, Teaching Assistant's work life balance must be addressed as many have caring responsibilities for young families or elderly relatives resulting in stress and exhaustion while trying to balance work and home commitments.

Teaching Assistants' pay should reflect the significant and valuable contribution that they make to the education of the students in their care. The contracted working day for Teaching Assistants, along with the contracted hours for teachers, should equally reflect the school working day.

The inequality between Teaching Assistants and teachers exacerbates gender inequality as the majority of Teaching Assistants are female. The current pay arrangements condemn these workers to low pay and pay which does not reflect the hours they work, and the skills they use.

Across many local authorities in Wales due to job evaluation and individual pay and grading schemes, school support staff across Wales are on different pay grades resulting in a disparity which can result to be a race to the bottom!

There is also added detriment for some school support staff working in special schools where they are not receiving any recognition for the different role they are required to undertake due to the fact that through job evaluation their special skills and experience have not been recognised.

Congress calls upon the Welsh Government to eradicate this lottery for these dedicated workers and adopt a consistent approach to this workforce, whereby job descriptions, employee specifications and a proper pay and grading scheme will be adopted to recognise the different skills, qualifications and experience across the different roles within the school support staff workforce.

Congress calls upon the Wales TUC to lobby the [Welsh government WLGA](#) to:

- Bring Teaching Assistant pay under national control.
- Pay Teaching Assistants 35 hours a week.
- **Ensure Teaching Assistants' contracts are for the full year rather** than just term-time. 195 days.
- [Harmonise teaching Assistant pay through the councils within Wales](#)
- [Employ Teaching assistants on full contracts to have parity with teachers, including non-contact and preparation time](#)
- Work towards equity between teachers and TAs in the structure supporting payment i.e. the burgundy book which would allow pay portability as well as parity across Wales.

Community: Teaching assistant pay, with UNISON's suggested amendments in red

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- [Harmonise teaching Assistant pay through the councils within Wales](#)
- [Employ Teaching assistants on full contracts to have parity with teachers, including non-contact and preparation time](#)

GMB: Inequality - School Support Staff

Across many local authorities in Wales due to job evaluation and individual pay and grading schemes, school support staff across Wales are on different pay grades resulting in a disparity which can result to be a race to the bottom!

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Discussion Paper on the Role of Teaching Assistant in Welsh Schools July 2021

CONTEXT

The School Support Staff Task & Finish Group grew out of the Schools Social Partnership Forum (SSPF) subgroup which was established to look at the deployment of Support Staff during the pandemic. This paper (July 2021) will focus particularly on Teaching Assistants (TAs). The subgroup's discussions had expanded to include key aspects that have been of concern to school TAs for some considerable time, including deployment, professional learning, impact, and effective practice.

These issues had been covered by Welsh Government-commissioned 'Research into the deployment of primary school support staff in Wales' which reported in 2018. Despite the introduction of registration with the Education Workforce Council (EWC) and the creation of Professional Standards for school TAs, recent evidence shows that the position remains largely the same as when the research was undertaken. Furthermore, this paper will not focus on Professional Standards of TAs or HLTAs, rather that the consistency of employment and provision for the workforce across Wales.

The Terms of Reference for the Task & Finish Group states the following objective:

The aim of the group is to:

Secure evidence to contribute to a wider agenda in reaching a position where there is parity across Wales for TAs in relation to:

- Pay
- Deployment
- Access to training & professional development
- Standardisation of roles'

The identification of these 4 focus areas reflects the high degree of disparity in current arrangements in schools and local authorities throughout Wales. During the work of the T&F Group many overlaps between the areas have been apparent and in particular it is clear that 'Standardisation of Roles' and 'Pay' are closely linked. Therefore, in the narrative Pay and Standardisation of roles are merged, but separate recommendations are identified. This paper summaries the information that the T&F Group has gathered so far, identifies areas where further work is required and makes some interim recommendations.

FOCUS AREAS

1. Standardisation of Roles and Pay Range Classifications

The pay and grading systems within each local authority in Wales are based on the job evaluation process. The job evaluation process produces a score for each post and that score is then allocated to a points range. Points ranges create what are called pay lines and this establishes the cash value for each grade. As a very quick example:

Rhondda Cynon Taf Council Grade 7 (GR7), the points range is between 414 and 449, so when a post is evaluated if in this example it scores between that range, it is paid as a GR7 post, therefore a different cash value. Clearly if points are higher or lower than that is a different grade. Please note though that these, salary point ranges will be different in each LA. There is acknowledgement and recognition that Teachers have a national pay structure, whereas TAs have 22 different pay structures across Wales; not giving pay portability to employees who move to a different LA.

In terms of the current work on revising Job Descriptions/Person Specification (JD/PS) for all levels of TAs, once this has been endorsed by the SSPF and Education Cabinet Members, process wise those JD's/ PS would need to go back to local authorities to be reviewed, which is likely to involve a re-evaluation of the roles, which may or may not result in a grade change within that respective local authority.

Each local authority will have a Pay Policy which describes the parameters of how pay works (this is separate to the Schools Pay Policy). Within the policy it references things like secondments and honorariums (these are similar to TLR3 payments) that staff can access if requested to undertake higher graded work. However, secondments and honoraria are short term rewards and if there is a permanent change to an existing post then it should be re-evaluated to check the grade.

A salary analysis of the information we have had on TAs across Wales is shown below:

Grade	Lowest Max Salary value	Median Max Salary value	Highest Max Salary Value
TA - L1			
NJC 37 hrs	£17,364	£18,656	£19,312
32.5 hrs	£13,631	£14,645	£15,160
29.5 hrs	£12,372	£13,292	£13,760
TA - L2			
NJC 37 hrs	£18,426	£19,714	£21,748
32.5 hrs term time	£14,464	£15,475	£17,072
29.5 hrs term time	£13,129	£14,046	£15,495

TA - L3			
NJC 37 hrs	£19,953	£22,796	£27,031
32.5 hrs term time	£15,663	£17,895	£21,219
29.5 hrs term time	£14,217	£16,242	£19,260
TA - L4			
NJC 37 hrs	£23,369	£27,093	£31,346
32.5 hrs term time	£18,345	£21,268	£24,607
29.5 hrs term time	£16,650	£19,304	£22,334

In respect of the value shown above:

1. The 37 hours is the maximum salary on the NJC pay scale at full time rates;
2. Most TAs are on 29.5-hour contracts or lower, but the value is reduced both by the hours being a percentage of the full time grade and of course term time working is applied;
3. There are some TAs on 32.5 hrs but again the value is reduced both by the hours being a percentage of the full-time grade and of course term time working is applied;
4. In some local authorities they class a 29.5-hour worker within a school as a full time worker. This does not seem appropriate hence it has been flagged in this paper.
5. In the 2021 National Education Workforce Survey a question was included which asked school learning support worker respondents at which level their contracts of employment were. Responses to the questions will be covered in the resulting survey report when published by the EWC. There is a desire to understand the number of TAs across the different school settings, phases, LAs, language medium etc.

These figures demonstrate that at L3 and L4 the highest maximum salary value is 35% more than the lowest maximum salary value, and that staff at L1 and L2 on the lowest maximum value salaries are earning around £1000 per annum below the median maximum salary value. The Task and Finish Group encourages local authorities to work together with the aim of achieving a consistent level of pay for support staff throughout Wales.

Embedding of guardianship of TAs in their roles in education.

There is variability in consistency in how TAs are deployed by Headteachers, Senior Leadership Teams (SLTs) and teachers, and it appears that the level of understanding of the primary purpose of TA roles and their effective use also varies considerably. Disparity of practice between schools and Local Authorities (LAs) leads to TAs being unsure of their role; in contrast the role of a teacher is clear and consistent throughout Wales.

Questions were raised concerning lack of knowledge of the availability and function of honorariums or acting up secondments, there is a quite clear lack of consistent understandings of some of the remits of the role in exercising supervision/teacher cover for un/planned leave. Schools across Wales operate to different standards in relation to the provision of supervision to TAs, which are appropriate avenues for TAs to raise and discuss questions such as these, or others around accessing CPD and other development options such as shadowing. It is the role of the SLT to co-ordinator effective quality assurance (staff voice through feedback is key to this) to ensure standards of provision are consistently high and staff are appropriately trained to deliver this expectation of consistently high standards.

2. Access to training & professional development

TAs being given adequate paid time for training and professional learning.

TAs in schools/settings play an increasingly important role in supporting effective teaching and learning in and out of the classroom. Therefore, TAs should be given the same opportunities as teaching staff for professional development. TAs are given opportunity for appropriate training during INSET days; however feedback suggests less opportunity than teachers during term time.

Appropriate allocation of funds is essential and should be non-negotiable. Professional development opportunities for all staff within a school/setting should be aligned to the school's/setting's priorities. This is the case for the professional development opportunities for teaching staff as in most cases, this is planned and evidenced in School/Departmental Development Plans.

However, this is not the case for the professional development of TAs. Too often, it is reported that TAs are asked or directed to undertake training outside of their normal working hours, and therefore, often unpaid. Professional Development needs to be an integral part of the role for TAs, as is with the teaching profession, therefore there should be equity of opportunity for training across the school community.

Welsh Government should ensure that sufficient resources are made available for the provision of ongoing training for TAs and teachers, and schools, Consortia and LAs should allocate resources equitably and consistently to TA and teachers training.

Ensure TAs are aware of the availability of appropriate training opportunities and the different forms of training.

The Professional Learning Pathways (PLP) is covered by all four regional consortia, that was originated from the HLTA assessment approx. 4-years ago and funded/agreed by Welsh Government. Programmes such as the Teaching Assistant Learning Pathway (TALP – a template has been developed in the Professional Learning Passport at the request of the consortia to support the programme) was then developed and delivered, creating a professional learning vision, fit for the evolving education system in Wales; that covers all Teaching Assistant's (TA's)

within their roles, level of skills and training opportunities. This professional learning pathway was devised into a series of levels, (over a 2-day programme for each step), however a few adaptations were created for remote access:

- Induction - (for any new teaching assistant) (Delivered through playlists tasks, that provides an overview of school structure and language, H&S, accessing EWC passports, how to use social media responsibly, New Curriculum for Wales etc.) - The Code. GPGs
- Practising TAs (Engagement through Google classroom allows TAs to access this site at any time, providing a range of training & reading materials, resources on Hwb, ALN, outdoor learning, with GwE receiving 1,721 take-ups)
- Aspiring HLTA (A x2-Term Developmental Programme, which must include a criteria-of Level 2 in Numeracy and Literacy)
- HLTA Assessment (Comprises of a school visit by an assessor, looking at compared evidence, discussions and making recommendations for the HLTA award)
- Specialised TAs (Existing TAs or becoming HTLA assessors that lead the programme.

These programmes are written and delivered by TAs.

- Educators Wales (<https://educators.wales/professional-learning>) is an additional resource which allows TAs to browse available professional learning opportunities by sector

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3. Deployment

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The purpose of Rarely Cover was not to use teachers' non-pupil contact time to supervise other classes. Similarly, the purpose of PPA policy was to give teachers the opportunity of undisturbed non-pupil contact time to effectively plan, prepare and assess for pupil progress. Over time, due to varying constraints, the policy of Rarely Cover and PPA has remained but the supervision of the teacher's class during PPA has become less consistent, particularly in primary schools. On a weekly and regular occurrence, which is not in line with the Rarely Cover policy, TAs below Higher-Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA/Level 4) status have been deployed to supervise classes without a teacher present. Although the covering person would not plan the lesson, the expectation would be that the covering person would 'teach' the lesson and very often in primary school settings, mark the pupils' books. However, in order to teach in a maintained setting in Wales a person must hold Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). The requirements which need to be met by persons to be recognised as qualified teachers are set out in the Teachers' Qualifications (Wales) Regulations 2012. Therefore, what is happening in reality is not in line with regulation.

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The Education Workforce Council (Main Functions) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2016 Part 3A section 18A states ‘— (1) A school learning support worker is a person who provides the services specified in regulation 17 (“the services”) or supports the provision of the services by a school teacher’ and provides that A person can only be employed as a school learning support worker to provide the above services if **all** of the following requirements are met:

- they are registered with the EWC in the category of school learning support worker;
- they provide the above services with direct interaction with learners to assist or support the work of schoolteachers or nominated teachers in the school;
- they provide the services under the direction and supervision of such schoolteachers or nominated teachers in accordance with arrangements made by the head teacher of the school; and
- the head teacher is satisfied that they have the skills, expertise and experience to provide the services.

The Task and Finish Group is concerned that in many cases TAs are being required to carry out specified work without direction and supervision by a teacher, and when they are not employed at a level that recognises that they have the skills, expertise, and experience to provide the services.

It can be appropriate for TA level 4/5s to provide cover for teachers by leading classes on a pre-planned short-term basis, but this is not suitable for prolonged situations

Since the reduction in specialist external agencies working within schools, TAs have become increasingly responsible for direct intervention. TAs are employed to undertake roles that have evolved to include pastoral support, behaviour management, supporting pupils with Additional Learning Needs (ALN), engaging in 1:1 and group work sessions in both mainstream and specialist provisions. This can be especially apparent in areas such as Speech and Language, and Behaviour Support – Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Teachers often have little knowledge in these areas. TAs are sometimes given lead roles and responsibilities in these areas especially if they have undertaken training. While this may be welcomed by TAs as part of their professional development it would be beyond the role responsibility of a

TA who is not paid at the appropriate grade (eg HLTA) which stipulates responsibility to plan, prepare and deliver. In addition, in many cases there would be an enhancement/TLR when a teacher was taking on such a role.

TAs should be deployed according to their employed status

It is apparent that TAs are often employed at a level that differs from their perceived role; it is important to ensure that they are engaged at the correct level. Local authorities should guide schools to identify the appropriate TA level for the role they require and to appoint staff accordingly. In the aforementioned, the variation of 'pay lines' in awarding job/role levels may also be contributing to the reports of inconsistent deployment of TAs between LAs.

Schools are increasingly proactive in providing training and opportunities for leaders and teaching staff; this can often result in TAs being required to supervise classes without another teacher present. TAs are also increasingly being required to carry out roles of responsibility beyond their job descriptions as a result of pre-planned or prolonged absence. School Leaders need to be reminded that TAs must not be asked to work to roles/responsibilities outside of their job description.

HLTAs commented that they enjoyed the independence of delivering lessons with pre-planned resources by the teacher, however on occasions HLTAs are expected to plan for the lessons. This is outside the job description of the HLTA.

TAs without HLTA roles, often fulfil the role of a HLTA as they are qualified, but do not have a post within the current school setting. TAs commented that they are happy to support the school and it also gives them opportunities to develop their own skills. In this situation, TAs would like to be remunerated for working beyond their substantive role.

Local authorities should have the flexibility and to be able to reflect short term changes without unnecessary burden of bureaucratic administration for school leaders.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Short term

Access to training recommendations:

- Improved communication to ensure TAs are made aware by Headteachers and senior leaders of the availability of appropriate training opportunities and the different forms of training.
- School leaders to continue to encourage staff use the Professional Learning Passport (PLP) appropriately to capture and evidence their professional development.
- Consistent and effective training provided for TAs s across all consortia.

Deployment Recommendations:

- Update training for School Leaders of all school settings, regarding deployment of TAs linked to their post responsibility and highlighting most effective / best practice.
- Introduction of consistent Appraisal/ Development Reviews of TAs leading to improved professional development and informed deployment.

Medium term

Standardisation Recommendations:

- Consistent role title and job descriptions/person specification (JD/PS) across Wales - remove ambiguity about what is expected in each role. (Link to Professional Standards)
- Job re-evaluation based on these revised JD/PS - consideration given to the new curriculum, ALN reform, blended learning, and different needs of school settings.

Pay Recommendations:

- Explore opportunities for a greater consistency of TAs pay scales across Wales; Local Authorities and parties to the SSPF to work together towards this aim.

Access to training recommendations:

- TAs being given adequate paid time for training and professional learning.
- Ensure that sufficient resources are made available for the provision of ongoing training for TAs and teachers.
- Schools, Consortia and LAs to allocate resources equitably to TA and teachers training.'
- Consistent approach across all regions - the awareness and consistency in training opportunities (offered by LA & consortia).

Deployment Recommendations:

- TAs should be deployed according to their employed status.
- Flexibility in remuneration to reflect short-term changes in role.

NEXT STEPS

1. Further discussion required to distinguish what constitutes appropriate supervision/direction of TAs
2. Undertake / commission work to develop consistent role titles and job descriptions/Person specification
3. To undertake a review of the numbers of TA's who have progressed through to HLTA status and to include evidence of their experiences, training and opportunities on how they progressed in their role.

REFERENCES

Education Workforce Council (EWC)

Welsh Government: Research into the deployment of primary school TAs in Wales

Welsh Government: Research into the Higher-Level Teaching Assistant Scheme

Institute of Education at University College London 'Unsung Heroes' Report

Teachers Union in Wales Survey's

Discussion Paper on the Role of Teaching Assistant in Welsh Schools July 2021

CONTEXT

The School Support Staff Task & Finish Group grew out of the Schools Social Partnership Form (SSPF) subgroup which was established to look at the deployment of Support Staff during the pandemic. This paper (July 2021) will focus particularly on Teaching Assistants (TAs). The subgroup's discussions had expanded to include key aspects that have been of concern to school TAs for some considerable time, including deployment, professional learning, impact, and effective practice.

These issues had been covered by Welsh Government-commissioned 'Research into the deployment of primary school support staff in Wales' which reported in 2018. Despite the introduction of registration with the Education Workforce Council (EWC) and the creation of Professional Standards for school TAs, recent evidence shows that the position remains largely the same as when the research was undertaken. Furthermore, this paper will not focus on Professional Standards of TAs or HLTAs, rather that the consistency of employment and provision for the workforce across Wales.

The Terms of Reference for the Task & Finish Group states the following objective:

The aim of the group is to:

Secure evidence to contribute to a wider agenda in reaching a position where there is parity across Wales for TAs in relation to:

- Pay
- Deployment
- Access to training & professional development
- Standardisation of roles'

The identification of these 4 focus areas reflects the high degree of disparity in current arrangements in schools and local authorities throughout Wales. During the work of the T&F Group many overlaps between the areas have been apparent and in particular it is clear that 'Standardisation of Roles' and 'Pay' are closely linked. Therefore, in the narrative Pay and Standardisation of roles are merged, but separate recommendations are identified. This paper summaries the information that the T&F Group has gathered so far, identifies areas where further work is required and makes some interim recommendations.

FOCUS AREAS

1. Standardisation of Roles and Pay Range Classifications

The pay and grading systems within each local authority in Wales are based on the job evaluation process. The job evaluation process produces a score for each post and that score is then allocated to a points range. Points ranges create what are called pay lines and this establishes the cash value for each grade. As a very quick example:

Rhondda Cynon Taf Council Grade 7 (GR7), the points range is between 414 and 449, so when a post is evaluated if in this example it scores between that range, it is paid as a GR7 post, therefore a different cash value. Clearly if points are higher or lower than that is a different grade. Please note though that these, salary point ranges will be different in each LA. There is acknowledgement and recognition that Teachers have a national pay structure, whereas TAs have 22 different pay structures across Wales; not giving pay portability to employees who move to a different LA.

In terms of the current work on revising Job Descriptions/Person Specification (JD/PS) for all levels of TAs, once this has been endorsed by the SSPF and Education Cabinet Members, process wise those JD's/ PS would need to go back to local authorities to be reviewed, which is likely to involve a re-evaluation of the roles, which may or may not result in a grade change within that respective local authority.

Each local authority will have a Pay Policy which describes the parameters of how pay works (this is separate to the Schools Pay Policy). Within the policy it references things like secondments and honorariums (these are similar to TLR3 payments) that staff can access if requested to undertake higher graded work. However, secondments and honoraria are short term rewards and if there is a permanent change to an existing post then it should be re-evaluated to check the grade.

A salary analysis of the information we have had on TAs across Wales is shown below:

Grade	Lowest Max Salary value	Median Max Salary value	Highest Max Salary Value
TA - L1			
NJC 37 hrs	£17,364	£18,656	£19,312
32.5 hrs	£13,631	£14,645	£15,160
29.5 hrs	£12,372	£13,292	£13,760
TA - L2			
NJC 37 hrs	£18,426	£19,714	£21,748
32.5 hrs term time	£14,464	£15,475	£17,072
29.5 hrs term time	£13,129	£14,046	£15,495

TA - L3			
NJC 37 hrs	£19,953	£22,796	£27,031
32.5 hrs term time	£15,663	£17,895	£21,219
29.5 hrs term time	£14,217	£16,242	£19,260
TA - L4			
NJC 37 hrs	£23,369	£27,093	£31,346
32.5 hrs term time	£18,345	£21,268	£24,607
29.5 hrs term time	£16,650	£19,304	£22,334

In respect of the value shown above:

1. The 37 hours is the maximum salary on the NJC pay scale at full time rates;
2. Most TAs are on 29.5-hour contracts or lower, but the value is reduced both by the hours being a percentage of the full time grade and of course term time working is applied;
3. There are some TAs on 32.5 hrs but again the value is reduced both by the hours being a percentage of the full-time grade and of course term time working is applied;
4. In some local authorities they class a 29.5-hour worker within a school as a full time worker. This does not seem appropriate hence it has been flagged in this paper.
5. In the 2021 National Education Workforce Survey a question was included which asked school learning support worker respondents at which level their contracts of employment were. Responses to the questions will be covered in the resulting survey report when published by the EWC. There is a desire to understand the number of TAs across the different school settings, phases, LAs, language medium etc.

These figures demonstrate that at L3 and L4 the highest maximum salary value is 35% more than the lowest maximum salary value, and that staff at L1 and L2 on the lowest maximum value salaries are earning around £1000 per annum below the median maximum salary value. The Task and Finish Group encourages local authorities to work together with the aim of achieving a consistent level of pay for support staff throughout Wales.

Embedding of guardianship of TAs in their roles in education.

There is variability in consistency in how TAs are deployed by Headteachers, Senior Leadership Teams (SLTs) and teachers, and it appears that the level of understanding of the primary purpose of TA roles and their effective use also varies considerably. Disparity of practice between schools and Local Authorities (LAs) leads to TAs being unsure of their role; in contrast the role of a teacher is clear and consistent throughout Wales.

Questions were raised concerning lack of knowledge of the availability and function of honorariums or acting up secondments, there is a quite clear lack of consistent understandings of some of the remits of the role in exercising supervision/teacher cover for un/planned leave. Schools across Wales operate to different standards in relation to the provision of supervision to TAs, which are appropriate avenues for TAs to raise and discuss questions such as these, or others around accessing CPD and other development options such as shadowing. It is the role of the SLT to co-ordinator effective quality assurance (staff voice through feedback is key to this) to ensure standards of provision are consistently high and staff are appropriately trained to deliver this expectation of consistently high standards.

2. Access to training & professional development

TAs being given adequate paid time for training and professional learning.

TAs in schools/settings play an increasingly important role in supporting effective teaching and learning in and out of the classroom. Therefore, TAs should be given the same opportunities as teaching staff for professional development. TAs are given opportunity for appropriate training during INSET days; however feedback suggests less opportunity than teachers during term time.

Appropriate allocation of funds is essential and should be non-negotiable. Professional development opportunities for all staff within a school/setting should be aligned to the school's/setting's priorities. This is the case for the professional development opportunities for teaching staff as in most cases, this is planned and evidenced in School/Departmental Development Plans.

However, this is not the case for the professional development of TAs. Too often, it is reported that TAs are asked or directed to undertake training outside of their normal working hours, and therefore, often unpaid. Professional Development needs to be an integral part of the role for TAs, as is with the teaching profession, therefore there should be equity of opportunity for training across the school community.

Welsh Government should ensure that sufficient resources are made available for the provision of ongoing training for TAs and teachers, and schools, Consortia and LAs should allocate resources equitably and consistently to TA and teachers training.

Ensure TAs are aware of the availability of appropriate training opportunities and the different forms of training.

The Professional Learning Pathways (PLP) is covered by all four regional consortia, that was originated from the HLTA assessment approx. 4-years ago and funded/agreed by Welsh Government. Programmes such as the Teaching Assistant Learning Pathway (TALP – a template has been developed in the Professional Learning Passport at the request of the consortia to support the programme) was then developed and delivered, creating a professional learning vision, fit for the evolving education system in Wales; that covers all Teaching Assistant's (TA's)

within their roles, level of skills and training opportunities. This professional learning pathway was devised into a series of levels, (over a 2-day programme for each step), however a few adaptations were created for remote access:

- Induction - (for any new teaching assistant) (Delivered through playlists tasks, that provides an overview of school structure and language, H&S, accessing EWC passports, how to use social media responsibly, New Curriculum for Wales etc.) - The Code. GPGs
- Practising TAs (Engagement through Google classroom allows TAs to access this site at any time, providing a range of training & reading materials, resources on Hwb, ALN, outdoor learning, with GwE receiving 1,721 take-ups)
- Aspiring HLTA (A x2-Term Developmental Programme, which must include a criteria-of Level 2 in Numeracy and Literacy)
- HLTA Assessment (Comprises of a school visit by an assessor, looking at compared evidence, discussions and making recommendations for the HLTA award)
- Specialised TAs (Existing TAs or becoming HTLA assessors that lead the programme.

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- 1. Plan, prepare and deliver specified learning activities to individuals, small groups and/or classes modifying and adapting activities as necessary under the (overall –5) direction and supervision of a teacher*
- 2. Assess, record and report on development, progress and attainment*

The Education Workforce Council (Main Functions) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2016 Part 3A section 18A states ‘— (1) A school learning support worker is a person who provides the services specified in regulation 17 (“the services”) or supports the provision of the services by a school teacher’ and provides that A person can only be employed as a school learning support worker to provide the above services if **all** of the following requirements are met:

- they are registered with the EWC in the category of school learning support worker;
- they provide the above services with direct interaction with learners to assist or support the work of schoolteachers or nominated teachers in the school;
- they provide the services under the direction and supervision of such schoolteachers or nominated teachers in accordance with arrangements made by the head teacher of the school; and
- the head teacher is satisfied that they have the skills, expertise and experience to provide the services.

The Task and Finish Group is concerned that in many cases TAs are being required to carry out specified work without direction and supervision by a teacher, and when they are not employed at a level that recognises that they have the skills, expertise, and experience to provide the services.

It can be appropriate for TA level 4/5s to provide cover for teachers by leading classes on a pre-planned short-term basis, but this is not suitable for prolonged situations

Since the reduction in specialist external agencies working within schools, TAs have become increasingly responsible for direct intervention. TAs are employed to undertake roles that have evolved to include pastoral support, behaviour management, supporting pupils with Additional Learning Needs (ALN), engaging in 1:1 and group work sessions in both mainstream and specialist provisions. This can be especially apparent in areas such as Speech and Language, and Behaviour Support – Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Teachers often have little knowledge in these areas. TAs are sometimes given lead roles and responsibilities in these areas especially if they have undertaken training. While this may be welcomed by TAs as part of their professional development it would be beyond the role responsibility of a

TA who is not paid at the appropriate grade (eg HLTA) which stipulates responsibility to plan, prepare and deliver. In addition, in many cases there would be an enhancement/TLR when a teacher was taking on such a role.

TAs should be deployed according to their employed status

It is apparent that TAs are often employed at a level that differs from their perceived role; it is important to ensure that they are engaged at the correct level. Local authorities should guide schools to identify the appropriate TA level for the role they require and to appoint staff accordingly. In the aforementioned, the variation of 'pay lines' in awarding job/role levels may also be contributing to the reports of inconsistent deployment of TAs between LAs.

Schools are increasingly proactive in providing training and opportunities for leaders and teaching staff; this can often result in TAs being required to supervise classes without another teacher present. TAs are also increasingly being required to carry out roles of responsibility beyond their job descriptions as a result of pre-planned or prolonged absence. School Leaders need to be reminded that TAs must not be asked to work to roles/responsibilities outside of their job description.

HLTAs commented that they enjoyed the independence of delivering lessons with pre-planned resources by the teacher, however on occasions HLTAs are expected to plan for the lessons. This is outside the job description of the HLTA.

TAs without HLTA roles, often fulfil the role of a HLTA as they are qualified, but do not have a post within the current school setting. TAs commented that they are happy to support the school and it also gives them opportunities to develop their own skills. In this situation, TAs would like to be remunerated for working beyond their substantive role.

Local authorities should have the flexibility and to be able to reflect short term changes without unnecessary burden of bureaucratic administration for school leaders.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Short term

Access to training recommendations:

- Improved communication to ensure TAs are made aware by Headteachers and senior leaders of the availability of appropriate training opportunities and the different forms of training.
- School leaders to continue to encourage staff use the Professional Learning Passport (PLP) appropriately to capture and evidence their professional development.
- Consistent and effective training provided for TAs s across all consortia.

Deployment Recommendations:

- Update training for School Leaders of all school settings, regarding deployment of TAs linked to their post responsibility and highlighting most effective / best practice.
- Introduction of consistent Appraisal/ Development Reviews of TAs leading to improved professional development and informed deployment.

Medium term

Standardisation Recommendations:

- Consistent role title and job descriptions/person specification (JD/PS) across Wales - remove ambiguity about what is expected in each role. (Link to Professional Standards)
- Job re-evaluation based on these revised JD/PS - consideration given to the new curriculum, ALN reform, blended learning, and different needs of school settings.

Pay Recommendations:

- Explore opportunities for a greater consistency of TAs pay scales across Wales; Local Authorities and parties to the SSPF to work together towards this aim.

Access to training recommendations:

- TAs being given adequate paid time for training and professional learning.
- Ensure that sufficient resources are made available for the provision of ongoing training for TAs and teachers.
- Schools, Consortia and LAs to allocate resources equitably to TA and teachers training.'
- Consistent approach across all regions - the awareness and consistency in training opportunities (offered by LA & consortia).

Deployment Recommendations:

- TAs should be deployed according to their employed status.
- Flexibility in remuneration to reflect short-term changes in role.

NEXT STEPS

1. Further discussion required to distinguish what constitutes appropriate supervision/direction of TAs
2. Undertake / commission work to develop consistent role titles and job descriptions/Person specification
3. To undertake a review of the numbers of TA's who have progressed through to HLTA status and to include evidence of their experiences, training and opportunities on how they progressed in their role.

REFERENCES

Education Workforce Council (EWC)

Welsh Government: Research into the deployment of primary school TAs in Wales

Welsh Government: Research into the Higher-Level Teaching Assistant Scheme

Institute of Education at University College London 'Unsung Heroes' Report

Teachers Union in Wales Survey's

P-06-1321 Protect leisure centres and swimming pools from closure during the current energy crisis

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 27 Chwefror 2023
Petitions Committee | 27 February 2023

Reference: SR23/4917 7

Petition Number: P-06-1321

Petition title: Protect leisure centres and swimming pools from closure during the current energy crisis

Text of petition: Swimming pools and leisure centres across the country are under threat as the energy crisis impacts communities across the nation. These facilities provide an essential service for the people of Wales, and are vital to the country's wellbeing.

We, the undersigned, call on the Senedd and Welsh Government to recognise the vulnerability of swimming pools by providing a ring-fenced package of financial aid above and beyond the Final Local Government Settlement to ensure swimming pools remain open.

More details

40% of council areas are at risk of losing their leisure centre(s) or seeing reduced services at their leisure centre(s) before 31 March 2023

Three quarters (74%) of council areas are classified as 'unsecure', meaning there is risk of the closure of leisure centres and/or reduced services before 31 March 2024. (UK Active data: <https://www.ukactive.com/news/forty-per-cent-of-council-areas-at-risk-of-leisure-centre-and-swimming-pool-closures-and-restrictions-before-april-without-immediate-support/>)

61% of Welsh Primary School children want to swim more (Sport Wales School Sport Survey 2022)

Only 42% of children in Years 3-6 can swim 25m unaided in Wales (Source: Swim Wales Provider Audit, 2022)



Powys council to use cash reserves to keep pools open (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-64010393>)

80% of Community Leisure UK members are at financial risk (<https://communityleisureuk.org/news/sos-plea-to-chancellor/>)

234,000 Welsh adults want to swim more (National Survey for Wales 2021)

1. Background

In September 2022 the UK Government announced a scheme to offer support with energy bills for businesses and other non-domestic energy users (including charities and public sector organisations like schools). This followed a scheme for UK households announced earlier in the month.

After this initial 6 month scheme, the government said that it will provide ongoing focused support for vulnerable industries. There was a review 3 months after the scheme began to consider where this should be targeted.

A pared back scheme, announced in January 2023, and due to start in April, has led to concerns that widespread closures of leisure centres have been postponed, but not averted. From April 2023 a reduced level of support will be available, although some sectors – including museums, libraries and historic sites – will receive extra help.

UK Active – which represents gyms and leisure centres – said that it will cause “further service restrictions, closures, and job losses”.

2. Welsh Parliament action and Welsh Government response

2.1. “It would be a tragedy if we lost the swimming pools in which we teach our children to swim and offer accessible exercise to those who need it”.

In November 2022 the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee published a report into the impact of increasing costs on culture and sport.

During the inquiry, Andrew Howard from Welsh Sports Association told the Committee that operators of swimming pools – which have increased demand after disruption to swimming lessons during the pandemic – were reducing temperatures to save money. He added that one of his members “doubted whether there'd be swimming pools in his area in the next 12 months.”

He also described the particular vulnerability of swimming pools, which have high energy bills, and have experienced other shocks, such as increased costs for cleaning chemicals.

Once closed, the costs of reopening leisure facilities are extensive. Welsh Sports Association explained to the Committee that “restarting pumps, heaters and testing for contamination require significant investment”, and so “if increasing costs cause public and private leisure venues to close, we anticipate that it is unlikely that they will reopen”.

The Committee Chair said “It would be a tragedy if we lost the swimming pools in which we teach our children to swim and offer accessible exercise to those who need it”.

2.2. Call for additional targeted funding for bodies with “a sustainable future beyond the current crisis”

“The crisis now facing the sector”, the Arts Council told the Culture Committee “is as great as at any time over the last two years”. It called for additional investment from the Welsh Government to establish a £5-10 million fund, just for the arts, “that will help stabilise companies through the critical period”.

The Committee agreed, and recommended the Welsh Government provide “additional targeted funding to the sports and culture sectors to help venues and organisations that face closure but have a sustainable future beyond the immediate crisis.” Otherwise, it felt, the £140 million invested by the Welsh Government in keeping these sectors afloat during the pandemic would be wasted.

The Welsh Government accepted this recommendation. In its response it highlighted an additional £3.75 million for culture and sport during the 2022-23 financial year to help with “exceptional inflationary pressures to utility costs and costs of living pressures at the arm’s length bodies and also local sector organisations”. This extra funding has not led to targeted funding to help organisations survive the period of increased costs, as the Arts Council and Committee called for.

The 2023-24 draft budget includes increases in revenue funding of between 3% and 7% for culture and sport bodies funded by the Welsh Government (the National Botanic Garden is the only body to see its funding cut). These modest gains look set to be eroded by inflation, which is running at 10.5%.

The Deputy Minister for Arts and Sport said that extra funding “is not feasible”, and that the Welsh Government will “continue to press the UK Government to do all it can to try to ensure that these organisations are supported effectively”. She had previously rejected the Committee’s call to discuss a UK-wide culture and sport emergency funding package with the UK Government, saying “this is wholly a matter for UK Government”.

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.

Dawn Bowden AS/MS
Dirprwy Weinidog y Celfyddydau a Chwaraeon, a'r Prif Chwip
Deputy Minister for Arts and Sport, and Chief Whip



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref DB/00024/23

Jack Sargeant MS
Chair - Petitions committee
Senedd Cymru
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

31 January 2023

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your correspondence dated 11 January seeking my views on Petition P-06-1321, which calls upon the Senedd and Welsh Government to protect leisure centres and swimming pools from closure during the current energy crisis.

Firstly, I am acutely aware of, and equally concerned about, the pressures the current energy and cost of living crises are having on the sport and leisure sector, in particular swimming pools and leisure centres.

When it comes to responding to these crises however, the main policy levers lie not with Welsh Government, but the UK Government. I met with Swim Wales and WSA on 18 January to discuss these concerns, in particular the issues around the UK Government's new Energy Bill Discount Scheme. They both who acknowledged our position and the constraints that we the Welsh Government are facing but were grateful for our support in calling for pools to be categorised as 'intensive' energy users.

Together we hope the swell of support from the sport and leisure sector, and politicians in Wales and across the UK, will persuade the UK Government to reconsider its position given the importance of these facilities to people's health and wellbeing. As such the Welsh Government is not considering providing ringfenced funding of this nature to Local Authorities.

The final Local Government settlement, referred to in the petition text, has assisted the situation by enabling some local authorities to suspend plans to close some of their facilities. That said it is a concern that leisure centres and swimming pools have not and as it stands will not be equally protected from high energy prices.

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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.

We are also providing support to the sector through the provision of loans to Local Authorities through the Welsh Government Energy Service.

I hope this information is of use.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dawn Bowden'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D' and a long, sweeping tail on the 'y'.

Dawn Bowden AS/MS

Dirprwy Weinidog y Celfyddydau a Chwaraeon, a'r Prif Chwip
Deputy Minister for Arts and Sport, and Chief Whip



SWIM WALES
NOFIO CYMRU
125 YEARS

SWIM WALES
Wales National Pool
International Sports Village
Swansea
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T 01782 513 636

17/02/2023

Dear Petitions Committee Members,

I am writing in response to the correspondence you shared from the Deputy Minister for Arts and Sport, and Chief Whip Dawn Bowden MS, referencing Petition P-06-1321, which I, on behalf of Swim Wales, launched to call upon the Senedd and Welsh Government to protect leisure centres and swimming pools from closure during the current energy crisis.

I would like to begin by thanking the Minister and her team for taking such a proactive approach to the issue at hand, which has clearly demonstrated the Welsh Government's steadfast commitment to protect the health and wellbeing of the nation by keeping the pools and leisure centres at the heart of our communities open.

As outlined by the Minister in her correspondence to the Chair of the Petitions Committee, we met last month to discuss these issues. As a result of this meeting, both Swim Wales and the Welsh Sports Association gained insight and understanding of the financial constraints currently affecting the Welsh Government as they draft their Budget for 2023-24, titled 'A Budget in Hard Times'.

Whilst we were disappointed that the Welsh Government has no plans to provide ring-fenced funding to save facilities under threat during the current energy crisis, we recognise that it is the UK Government who operate the main policy levers to support the sector. We appreciate the Welsh Government's support in calling on the key decision makers in Westminster to include swimming pools and leisure centres as 'intensive' energy users in the Energy Bill Discount scheme.

The attached document, along with the time taken by the Minister, more than adequately addressed the issues raised in the petition text. Since receiving the information from Dawn Bowden MS, we have pivoted our campaign message to implore the UK Government to recognise leisure centres as vulnerable, and to include them in the Energy Bill Discount scheme alongside facilities such as libraries and pubs.

To conclude, we are grateful for the Welsh Government's support in lobbying the UK Government on the issue. Alongside our partners, we will continue to gather insight and data that will showcase the stark situation facing pools in Wales, and the huge impact it will have on the health and safety of the nation.

Yours sincerely,

James Candy



SWIM WALES
NOFIO CYMRU
125 YEARS

Communications Manager, Swim Wales

SWIM WALES

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International Sports Village
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T 01782 513 636

Agenda Item 4.1

P-06-1212 Mark Allen's Law – we want throwline stations around all open water sites in Wales

This petition was submitted by Leeanne Elizabeth Bartley, having collected a total of 11,027 signatures.

Text of Petition:

Mark Allen, aged 18, drowned after jumping into a freezing reservoir on a hot day in June 2018. In May 2019 we watched whilst 3 throwlines were installed where he died. Mark could have possibly been saved if they were in place beforehand.

Additional Information:

We, Mark's family and friends, feel that it should be law that throwlines like those placed where Mark died should be placed in designated places around every reservoir, lake, canal etc. Speaking to people who work in water safety, e.g. fire services etc., such throwlines have saved many lives. We want to save lives and save people from going through the heartbreak and tragedy of losing someone they love to drowning.

Plz help us make a positive difference in Marks memory.

Thank you, Mark's family and friends.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Clwyd West
- North Wales

Agenda Item 4.2

P-06-1213 Ban leisure use of Seadoo/jet ski in Cymru. Except in strictly controlled designated areas

This petition was submitted by Richard Jenkins, having collected a total of 1,432 signatures.

Text of Petition:

Our wildlife and their habitats are already under savage attack from creeping civilisation, resource exploitation, pollution and climate change. To allow the uncontrolled use of these noisy, dangerous, polluting leisure vehicles, to add to that damage is irresponsible! They offer no other service to mankind other than a fleeting spasm of excitement. This is both wasteful and irresponsible.

Additional Information:

There are daily recorded and unrecorded occurrences of disturbance, aggression and harm to both other sea users and wildlife. Many instances of physical harm and even death to both animals and humans. The recreational use of these dangerous high powered vehicle is almost completely uncontrolled. They must be banned from all areas excepting possible specific small areas set aside for these selfish people to damage themselves alone. This may prove too difficult. In that case ban them completely from Cymru.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Bridgend
- South Wales West

P-06-1213 Ban leisure use of Seadoo/jet ski in Cymru. Except in strictly controlled designated areas, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 10.02.23

Dear Petitions Chair & committee,

Many thanks for giving me the opportunity to comment on <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/reckless-jet-skiers-to-face-prison-and-unlimited-fines-thanks-to-law-change>

I'm encouraged by the movement towards legislation that will control reckless use of Jet Skis. However, I would hope & expect that the provisions in Cymru will not be constrained if the U.K. provision is faulty or ineffective.

For instance, compulsory identification of all Jet skis is not mentioned. It seems that without legislation in this area, it will be very difficult to identify miscreants.

Also, the proposals only seem to focus on jet skis offering a risk or danger to people. In Cymru, there should be far more consideration of protection for our wildlife, particularly interfering with seabirds etc.

JetSkis should also be required to perform below a certain noise level as noise pollution is now recognised as a serious problem for all sea life, particularly mammals. Many technical developments are available to reduce the extreme noise pollution, emitted by the vehicles and legislation should ensure that users/owners of JetSkis commission such advances.

The legislation doesn't seem to differentiate between 'user' & 'owner' when liability for misuse is enforced. Surely this legislation should be enforced against both, when appropriate and I believe that both would be liable in most instances. Both using & owning should carry distinct and enforceable rules & penalties.

I am still concerned that whilst proposals to restrict the 'anything goes' paradigm that currently exists for Jet skis in Cymru, are to be very much welcomed, unless the legislation is policed properly, it will be of little advantage to wildlife & the safety of the public.

I believe this is a devolved issue & as such the Senedd should introduce its own legislation to ensure U.K. government cannot overrule our provisions.

Again, many thanks for this opportunity to address the Petitions Committee.

Diolch a chofion,

Richard Jenkins MSc.Dip.M

Agenda Item 4.3

P-06-1287 Investigate C&V UHB's refusal to keep north Penarth's surgery, allocating patients to distant GPs

This petition was submitted by Max Scott-Cook, having collected 266 signatures online and 82 on paper, making for a total of 348 signatures collected.

Text of Petition:

We call to account UHB officials and politicians colluding with closure of Albert Rd surgery (north Penarth), allocating patients to Sully and Dinas Powys, and grossly overloading Stanwell surgery (Penarth Healthcare). We believe the local MS Vaughan Gething knew of the plan and he could have highlighted the concerns to the relevant Ministers and commissioners for Older Persons, Children and Future Generations, to uphold the principle of healthcare services close to home. The system has failed us.

Additional Information:

C&V UHB rejected buying the Albert Rd premises when warned, years ago, the GP's lease was due to expire. Their plan to instead provide new premises far away in Cogan was publicly rejected. It failed their principle of health services close to home.

Successive UHB designs for a Wellbeing Hub at Cogan ignored the poor accessibility. Their choice of site discriminated against the elderly and mobility limited persons. While declining to help Albert Rd continue, the UHB offered funds to GPs in Sully, Penarth and Dinas Powys to expand to take the 7000 patients. The UHB did not consult on this plan. The overload at Stanwell (Penarth Health Care) surgery has worsened the standard of care. We believe that there are only 7 GPs for 17 000 patients. The UHB pursuit of (newbuild) premises in the wrong place is at fault.

They could still recognise their error and buy the Albert Surgery from the property developer.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Cardiff South and Penarth
- South Wales Central

P-06-1287 Investigate C&V UHB's refusal to keep north Penarth's surgery, allocating patients to distant GPs, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 06.02.22

Deiseb / petition P-06-1287

UHB defaulting on candour

We find the story given in the UHB letter is at variance with the documents disclosed under FoI last August and the report on them we submitted to the Nov. Petition Committee hearing as comments on the Welsh Minister's letter (*PetCttee Response2ElunedMorgan FINAL 01Nov'22*). The UHB's response apparently disregards those documents, which shows disrespect to Committee. Their letter is inconsistent with the FoI documents, particularly over the surgery owners notifying the UHB in August 2021, and saying that the UHB had contracted to pay £31 000 per year rent/mortgage. It shows that Dr Leppik asked the UHB to extend the contract. Their apparent refusal forced her to hand in her own contract with the UHB.

As well as the UHB contracting £31 000/yr to the surgery owners, documents show the UHB had promised or arranged with Dr Leppik to support the GP practice at Albert Road surgery pending its move to the Cogan Hub. Dr Leppik asked the UHB to extend that contract in October, but they apparently refused, though the owners left this open in their August letter. Their delay and then refusal left her with no option but to hand in her own contract with the UHB. The UHB's Primary Care Team put the blame on Dr Leppik for suddenly ending the GP contract as the CHC meeting report shows. The UHB letter likewise contradicts the evidence of our FoI documents. The UHB's refusal to disclose documentation from the PCT's files is of a piece with maintaining the PCT's false story, rather than independently checking it.

Details of the FoI Disclosure and non-disclosure

The UHB delayed responding to our FoI request on May, claimed unclear wording, but did answer on 22 Aug 2022. We reported on the disclosures to the Petitions Cttee. They omitted many documents, in particular from the Primary Care Team and their involvement of the East Vale Primary Care Cluster. We asked for a review of non-disclosure. The UHB acknowledged it on 7 Nov. but have run far over time without sending further documents (see https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/closure_of_albert_road_surgery_a)

The Documents disclosed in Aug. show Dr Leppick declined to move to the Cogan Hub in Oct.2018 but agreed a year later with the UHB agreeing to meet the rent/mortgage of £31 000/yr in the interim till the Hub was ready (given as end 2021, Sept.2019 meeting with the Owners). The UHB claimed to the Surgery owners in 2021 that the Cogan proposal was 'in progress'. The owners wrote to the UHB on 26 August 2021 that they would sell the Surgery if the 2019 arrangement was not to be extended. The UHB did not inform Dr Leppik; she received a notice-to-quit on 1st October and immediately contacted the UHB, believing they had an obligation to continue the £31 000/yr.

The UHB say they were caught by surprise by a notification of 27 Sept.2021 The CHC meeting record reports the PCT's LD saying

the sale of the s which did come as a surprise to everyone, and that was to Dr Leppik, that was also to us in the Health Board

yet the UHB's FoI disclosures supplied no record of the Sept notice, nor of contacting Dr Leppik immediately. LD does not explain

- a) why the UHB did nothing when receiving the owners' 26 August email/letter
- b) why the PCT did not inform the CHC till 3 Nov. and did not meet them till 13 Nov.

There was a hint of self blame by the UHB in

Had the UHB better prepared and remained in regular contact with the landlord/Practice, the landlord may not have decided to sell the land. The UHB could have also anticipated ... the landlord selling and should have considered this as a risk to have planned for.

How hollow this reads when The UHB had set the limit of end 2021 in the £31 000/yr Contract and they had failed to act after receiving the 26 Aug. owners' letter.

The UHB had an understanding with Dr Leppik and may have had a formal contract with her as well as with the owners. They pretended they were ready to help with alternative premises, being offered the West House Annex (PTC) and having space in their own vacated offices in adjacent Avon House. Social media reports say they flatly refused to pay for adaptations. The UHB has failed to disclose any documents on the negotiations with Dr Leppik, but they left her with barely 4 weeks to decide and in effect no choice but hand back her GP contract. She notified the UHB by end October.

The news leaked out, so the PCT rushed out their first letter to patients dated 4 Nov. They claimed

...our focus services closer to home...

The Vale Council issued a statement 19 Nov. saying they and the UHB were committed to explore options, but did nothing. The PCT had decided on 4 Nov. with no consultation to distribute patients to other surgeries, despite existing lack of capacity and overloads.

The *Primary Care Plan for Wales* specifies the Cluster has prime role in deciding, with the UHB helping a vulnerable Practice. What happened was the opposite, the UHB forcing closure and telling the Practices in the cluster to take on the patients.

The behaviour of the UHB/PCT is less than candid; they imply blame on Dr Leppik for the sudden closure and talk of her as contractor and independent business. At the CHC meeting, the PCT's head Lisa Dunsford said condescendingly (and dishonestly)

... GP's are independent individuals, so as part of the contract, they are responsible for providing the building so Maxwell, this isn't anything WG would be able to do,

The *Primary Care Plan for Wales* on the contrary established a partnership relationship which the UHB was to facilitate. The primary case Cluster is to lead on decisions, yet the UHB took the decisions over their heads. (Details on the Primary Care Plan are in the SAS Annex below).

They claim they had meetings with Vaughan Gething MS; only one meeting is known (19 Nov.2021) and they have failed to disclose notes of that as we requested. The local East Vale Cluster has hardly operated (the Cluster lead GP blames the UHB) which explains why the UHB did not supply minutes of Cluster meetings to our FoI request. .

We corresponded with Charles (Jan) as chair. He wrote that they'd followed procedures, mentioning the Cluster and stated they'd reviewed other sites but "we believe Cogan is "most appropriate." We requested documents on this review (5th November) but no answer came.

Cogan plan Under Review

The Primary Care Team's lead, Lisa Dunford told the PCT's meeting with the Vale 50+ Forum, they would review locations linked to new plans. Those she said were due out in June 2022, but nothing.

The Minister's letter says:

new build integrated health and care centre for the Cogan area (is) under review.

Board reports continue to say "under" review. We submitted a question to the November Board meeting asking for details of this review and involvement in it, but the Board official squashed it. They promised a written reply, but none came.

The original Cogan decision was subject to public consultation, mostly critical with a major reason being access as in the CHC meeting report. The UHB officials (at the Town Council) said they couldn't delay and had to decide. They didn't consider the WGovt land at Cosmeston and refused to bring it into consideration. Continuing that stance 5 years on cannot be defended; several sites in the Town are now available.

Moreover, Government policy has come out for regenerating town centres and ensuring services being accessible by walking and cycling. Cogan fails on both grounds.

Cllr Neil Thomas (a main contributor at the CHC meeting) repeatedly presses for a minibus to secure access to Cogan, but no-one else supports this as an adequate or efficient solution. The UHB have not pursued it, still less offered to fund it. The UHB hired a London transport consultant who disregarded essential details – working from maps, they did not see the excessive slopes to reach bus and rail stops, they did not see the steps over the railway impeding and preventing physically limited people, and they did not see the poor provision of pavements and road crossings. They badly undercounted the need for car parking spaces. The UHB had no-one local to review their report, expecting the VoG planners to do the work. They asked the UHB to justify only a few new parking spaces and the UHB replied with faulty information from their London consultant.

The PCT's head told the CHC meeting

... we hear what you're saying about transport and that is usually an issue if we do change where services are provided, so I think we certainly do need to look at the transport and ensure that people can get there.

This in fact shows she's not listening about the particular problems of access to Cogan, with slopes too steep under Welsh Govt. active-travel criteria, difficult road crossings, steps to the rail station, difficult car access to the main Windsor Road, severe congestion at times on Cogan's Windsor, over steep walking/cycling routes from Penarth Haven and from Redlands etc. The UHB have been told in detail but don't appear to record objections, even though they can be linked to WGovt policy.

Programme of Wellbeing Hubs is stalled and in trouble

The VoG was to have 3 Hubs, but only Cogan is identified (Cardiff was to have 6). Llantwit Major has been pressing for 3-4 years for the UHB to join in with their Health Centre scheme at a vacant Primary School site, but have been told the UHB cannot decide for another 3 years.

A new-build Wellbeing Centre at Park View (old Ely hospital site) is going ahead but the price soared to £23M compared with ~£10M estimates. The Maelfa Hub is £14M

The UHB planners seem intent on new-build rather than adapting existing buildings. Their "Annex" at Cogan Leisure Centre was to be £10-12M. They now plan a stand-alone 'Hub' at £15-20M.

The £68M programme of 19 *Health and Care Hubs* throughout Wales (under £4M average) was approved in 2017 with Cogan Hub, Maelfa Hub and Pentyrch Surgery listed in C&V <https://businessnewswales.com/68m-unveiled-health-care-hubs/>. £14M per C&V Hub is quite excessive compared with the £4M average. Pentyrch Surgery is now to be closed after a dispute with the UHB - the "Plasdwr" replacement is not close to home and there's no provision for public transport to it. For the UHB to spend on Plasdwr plus Maelfa/Llanederyn (£14M) and now Cogan (over £14M) shows a review is needed on financial grounds. The UHB should count no longer on the 2017 approval of *Health and Care Hubs*.

The UHB letter contradicts the Board papers (see below) and the Minister's "reviews" in saying

We remain committed to this scheme and believe it will provide a fantastic integrated wellbeing centre, incorporating modern fit for purpose primary care services.

Community Diagnostic Centres now have priority

The Health Minister announced this last Easter. The UHB Board papers for 26 January 2023 say:

Diagnostics: work is progressing to finalise proposals for a number of community diagnostic centres to supplement health board capacity. Subject to a successful procurement process, it is anticipated the first facility would come on line in the second quarter of 2023/2024.

Priority for estates and planning resources needs diverting from the stalled Wellbeing Hubs (9 approved in principle in 2019). The UHB seems unable to make this strategic change. Is this related to the UHB being in Special Measures for its planning?

The programme of CDCs is already being implemented, with the first one "on line" within 12 months. This time-scale implies adapting existing buildings. Penarth has suitable town-centre premises, several banks and large shops are recently vacant; the old Police Station is being vacated. The UHB must surely be interested in seizing opportunities as they arise.

C&V UHB's Integrated Medium Term Plan 2022-2025 says (Board papers 26 January 2023)

Wellbeing Hub Penarth - Original scheme under review due to changing requirements of Local Authority

Previous wording has been ... *under review due to changing Board priorities.*

We submitted a question for answer at the Board meeting of 24th November:

Penarth Wellbeing Hub at Cogan

I note this is still under review and is unlikely to proceed. It was to provide premises for two of Penarth's GP Practices and the delay has led to the closure of one Practice and overloaded the other GP surgeries. Would the local Primary Care Cluster be fully involved in the "review" and could it include the possible restoration of a GP surgery to north Penarth, meeting the close-to-home objective?

The officials blocked the question, saying they would answer later in writing. They did not.

What Reviews could and should cover

The Health Minister said the Cogan project is under review.

Review should cover 1) the site at Cogan, being bad for access 2) availability of alternatives in Penarth, including the Albert surgery on which there is a covenant reserving it for health purposes, 3) whether a Wellbeing Hub with little participation of VoG social service, no dental or pharmacy services, no diagnostic services, but over half Penarth's GP patients is appropriate, 4) whether a community diagnostic centre merits priority.

The Review has to be transparent and involve consultation with the public. It needs to include a genuine Equality Impact Assessment covering access to the Cogan Hub, which was never done.

We ask the C'ttee to obtain full info of all the reviews of the Cogan Well-being Hub, including that mentioned by the Health Minister and any strategic review relative to rolling it forward rather than dropping it from the *2022-2025 Integrated Medium Term Plan*

ask the UHB if they are aware of the several premises in central Penarth that could be suitable for a *Health and Care Hub* including a GP surgery and Community Diagnostic Centre.

ask the UHB to justify its refusal to fund GP premises (unlike some other Health Boards) in the light of the 2019 *Primary Care Plan for Wales* (ANNEX below) that requires them to assist GP practices as core principle and sets *Primary Care Clusters* as the key decision-making body.

ask Vaughan Gethin to confirm what meetings he held with the UHB and supply notes from the 19 Nov.2021 meeting

ask the UHB to review their statement in view of documents in the public domain showing they received notice from the owners on 26 August 2021, not 27 Sept 2021 which is said to be a surprise, and that the UHB held the contract with the owners. Is it fair to blame Dr Leppik for closing the practice in the context of the UHB failing to notify her of the 26 August notice and to act to extend the contract, and context of the UHB failure to make the Cogan Hub available by the end of 2021?

ask the UHB if their officials have had proper regard to the Duty of Candour in their handling of information requests, questions to the Board, and writing this statement to the Petitions Committee.

Our Petition asks for a review to include the need for a surgery in north Penarth. The UHB keeps saying - bring services 'close to home' then 'closer to home' but does the opposite for Penarth and Pentyrch. Their response does not comment on Penarth's 'need'. They have not shown support for local surgeries, walkable from many or most homes, but are railroading their 'solution' of surgeries for more than half of Penarth far away at Cogan. The Committee /should press them for evidence of their real commitment to this Welsh health principle.

Ask the UHB to respond to our request for the UHB Board

to consider what can be done to consult with stakeholders with a view to restoring a surgery in north Penarth.

ANNEX Closure of Albert Road Surgery

SavePenarthSurgery group July 2022

Failure by the UHB Primary Care Team to comply with Welsh Government policy

Primary Care Model for Wales.

In presenting this for Cabinet approval in June 2019, the Minister stated

Stable general practice is at the heart of the Primary Care Model.

The model ensures that local health services are stable and can respond to future demands, while support from health boards can help vulnerable GP practices.

This put Health Boards in a supporting role

The **NHS Wales Planning Framework 2019 to 2023**. sets out the principles and specifies working collaboratively through *primary care clusters*.

The Primary Care Model for Wales sets out a whole system approach from a health perspective... timely care and support that is delivered collaboratively by all partners through the primary care clusters.

Instead, we received letters from the PCT telling us what they intended - to allocate numbers of us from Albert Rd surgery to the remaining other surgeries in the cluster and offer remaining surgeries some Health Board funds to assist the transfers.

The **Workforce Planning in Primary Care Guidance and Resource** outlines planning at a locality/cluster level, based on the NHS Wales workforce planning approach applied to primary care. It specifies six stages, with stage 3 *Create a vision and define outcomes*.

In Penarth, the PCT gave their 'vision' in the January 2022 statement with the Vale Council, after the closure of Albert surgery was well underway. There was no reference to the primary care cluster. The PCT declared the future of north Penarth's GP Practice would be in a *Wellbeing Hub* in Cogan.

Not only did the PCT decide the 'vision' of Stage 3, but they also ignored stages 1 and 2 which are:

Understand your population/ healthcare environment and Talk to your stakeholders

The PCT ignored that older people would especially suffer from no local GP surgery in north Penarth, because of mobility limitations. They ignored the Equality Act requirement to

*ensure that reasonable adjustments are made to deliver equity of access to healthcare services for all individuals (ref. Equality Act 2010; quoted from the *Planning Framework 2019-22 version*).*

Penarth people had told the UHB in 2020 that 'equity of access' could not be delivered to the Cogan site because of over-steep slopes, difficult and substandard walking and cycling routes, and congested traffic. The UHB failed to get their transport consultants to address this and omitted to conduct an Equality Impact Assessment that would have flagged up the problem. The Practice Cluster and CHC were not consulted, but just Penarth Town Council and the Vale 50+ Strategy Forum as representing stakeholder. The proposed Wellbeing Hub project stalled in part for the 'equity of access' reason.

Conclusion. The PCT strayed beyond their supporting role and disregarded policies and guidance set by the Welsh Government, both over the surgery closure and over deciding our GP services should be at Cogan in the longer term.

The UHB Board needs now to consider what can be done to consult with stakeholders with a view to restoring a surgery in north Penarth. The Senedd Petitions Committee is currently progressing a petition to them on this issue.

Sources:

Primary Care Model for Wales CAB-NW(18-19)02, 2019

gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-07/cabinet-committee-on-north-wales-paper-06-june-2019.pdf

NHS Wales Planning Framework for 2019-2023, Sept 2019

gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-09/nhs-wales-planning-framework-2020-to-2023.pdf

Workforce Planning in Primary Care Guidance and Resource

[www.nwssp.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/documents/1178/Workforce Planning Guidance and Resource.pdf](http://www.nwssp.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/documents/1178/Workforce%20Planning%20Guidance%20and%20Resource.pdf)

Agenda Item 4.4

P-06-1323 We request that the Welsh Government purchase St David's Hall as a national resource for Wales

This petition was submitted by Ben Herrington, having collected a total of 3,575 signatures.

Text of Petition:

This is a heartfelt plea to prevent the loss of a vital cultural resource to the people of Wales; We call upon the Welsh Government to step in.

Additional Information:

A transfer of management of The National Concert Hall of Wales to a commercial organisation would risk this vital and vibrant resource for the community and cultural life of Cardiff inevitably leading to impacts on the wider creative infrastructure of Wales.

The venue hosts over 330 performances per year, many of national and international profile, attracting attendees from every postcode in Wales as well as the highest percentage of English visitors of all Welsh venues.

It is the only purpose-built orchestral concert hall in the country able to host a full symphony orchestra. It is the home of Cardiff Singer of the World, National Orchestra of Wales, and the world class International Concert Series—alongside a varied cultural offering including ballet, pop/rock music, comedians, jazz and folk.

The venue delivers to all ages the opportunities for creative participation and engagement, representing a invaluable community and learning resource for the people of Cardiff and whole of Wales.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Cardiff Central
- South Wales Central

Dawn Bowden AS/MS
Dirprwy Weinidog y Celfyddydau a Chwaraeon, a'r Prif Chwip
Deputy Minister for Arts and Sport, and Chief Whip



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref Petition P-06-1323
Ein cyf/Our ref DB/00037/23

Jack Sargeant MS
Chair - Petitions committee
Senedd Cymru
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

7 February 2023

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your correspondence of 23 January about petition P-06-1323 and the request that the Welsh Government step in and purchase St David's Hall in Cardiff. The Welsh Government would like to see it continue to welcome diverse performers and audiences to its unique surroundings.

The future of the venue is an issue for Cardiff Council. The Council is not immune to the immense financial pressures faced by all local authorities in Wales, and while the best is being done to protect its budgets, the Welsh Government is aware that very difficult options must be explored.

Cardiff Council is mindful of the status of the building as a multi-purpose cultural venue and the need to maintain the integrity of the acoustics in the Hall and has committed to ensuring the venue retains its place as the National Concert Hall of Wales. If Cardiff Council choose to progress the deal with AMG, I would strongly encourage them to reflect this commitment in the contractually binding terms, including appropriate safeguards, to ensure the venue's cultural standing in Wales is maintained and protected for years to come.

With the cost-of-living crisis, spiralling energy costs and the slow recovery from Covid, it is a difficult time for theatres and arts venues. Venues are having to explore how they can be more resilient and sustainable. However, St David's Hall, with its exceptional acoustics, has a very important role in orchestral and classical music provision in the capital. It also hosts many community-based activities across a broad spectrum of interests, abilities and ages, and we are keen to understand how such programmes are to be protected or developed in any new proposal.

Cardiff Council has already engaged with the Welsh Government and with the Arts Council of Wales (ACW) about the venue's future. Cardiff Council is also engaging with the buildings

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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.

key stakeholders about their concerns and requirements, should AGM/Live Music take over the building's operation, and I have urged Cardiff Council to continue those discussions.

The Welsh Government only received a request for funding from Cardiff Council on 22 December, subsequent to the in-principle agreement from Cardiff Council to progress with the proposal to hand over the running of St David's Hall to AGM/Live Music, which was given on 15 December. Any funding request to the Welsh Government would need to be considered through the submission of a full business case and with the support of ACW.

Given the significant level of funding required, the Welsh Government is not in a position to pay for the repairs or subsidise the ongoing operation of the building. Any decision on funding would require a full five case business model to be submitted.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dawn Bowden'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D'.

Dawn Bowden AS/MS

Dirprwy Weinidog y Celfyddydau a Chwaraeon, a'r Prif Chwip
Deputy Minister for Arts and Sport, and Chief Whip