

Agenda – Petitions Committee

Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 3 – Senedd

Hybrid

Meeting date: 9 October 2023

Meeting time: 14.00

For further information contact:

Gareth Price – Committee Clerk

0300 200 6565

Petitions@senedd.wales

- 1 Introductions, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest**
- 2 Evidence session – Panel 1 – P-06-1335 Welsh Government should take steps to ensure vulnerable adults without bank cards can pay with cash**

Steven Mc Gee

Janet Jones

Wayne Crocker – Director of Mencap Cymru

Dot Gallagher – Chair of Mencap Mon

- 3 Evidence session – Panel 2 – P-06-1335 Welsh Government should take steps to ensure vulnerable adults without bank cards can pay with cash**

Ben Cottam – Federation of Small Businesses, Head of Wales

Trudy Davies – Woosnam & Davies News, Llanidloes



4 New Petitions

- 4.1 P-06-1359 Offer Welsh working parents the same financial support for childcare as England

(Pages 1 – 10)

- 4.2 P-06-1363 Save our Fire and Rescue Service

(Pages 11 – 16)

5 Updates to previous petitions

- 5.1 P-06-1161 Routine collection and publication of data of how many babies/children return to their care experienced parents care at the end of a Parent and Child Placement

(Page 17)

- 5.2 P-06-1337 Sycharth, the home of Owain Glyndwr, should be bought to safeguard the site for future generations

(Pages 18 – 19)

- 5.3 P-06-1358 Review the inadequate funding for Schools in Wales

(Pages 20 – 21)

6 Motion under Standing Order 17.42(ix) to resolve to exclude the public from the remainder of the meeting

- 7 Discussion of evidence – P-06-1335 Welsh Government should take steps to ensure vulnerable adults without bank cards can pay with cash**

Document is Restricted

Petitions Briefing:

Free Childcare

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 9 Hydref 2023
Petitions Committee | 9 October 2023

Reference: SR236196-4

Petition Number: P-06-1359

Petition title: Offer Welsh working parents the same financial support for childcare as England

Text of petition: In England from April 24 all working parents of 2 year olds get 15 hours free childcare. From September 24 this will be extended to parents of 9 months old+. From September 25 the free hours will be extended to 30.

In comparison Wales will take until September 25 to provide 12.5 hours to all 2 year olds. With no plan in place for 9 months + or increasing the hours to 15 or 30.

We're in a cost of living crisis where the Welsh Gov have the ability to support working parents but aren't.



1. Summary

There are different offers of free childcare in England and Wales which in summary are that:

- In Wales, **eligible 3 and 4 year olds of working parents** can receive the Childcare Offer for Wales of 30 hours a week for 48 weeks a year. The entitlement in England is for 30 hours a week for 38 weeks a year. In Wales, entitlement has recently been expanded to some parents in education and training.
- Both countries have some provision for certain groups of **two year olds**, but this provision is delivered in different ways. There are also plans for expansion of provision for two year olds in both countries. (detailed later in this brief).
- In the Spring Budget 2023, the Government announced its intention for the 30 hours entitlement to be extended in stages in England to children of working parents **aged nine months to up to three years from September 2025**. The intention is for the staged roll-out to include that from April 2024, working parents of 2 year-olds will be able to access 15 hours of free childcare per week. From September 2024, the intention is to then extend this 15 hours to working parents of children aged 9 month to 2 year-olds. Then finally from September 2025, all eligible working parents of children aged 9 months up to 3 years should be able to access 30 free hours per week.

In response to this Petition, the Deputy Minister for Social Services has said:

The Childcare Offer is available to eligible families of 3- to 4-year-old children and provides support for 48 weeks per year, compared to England's 38 week Offer, whilst this does include a minimum of 10 hours for early education during term time, 30 hours childcare is available each week for 9 of the holiday weeks.

The Deputy Minister also said:

You will be aware of the written statement which the First Minister issued in August, about the significant pressures Welsh Government is currently facing, consequently we are not currently in a position to confirm any new developments to childcare and how we will support families with childcare costs in the future.

2. Context

There are a range of ways that free childcare is provided, depending on the exact age of the child, the employment circumstances of the parents, and in the case of Flying Start in Wales, the exact geographical location where the child lives. England and Wales have different provision, registration and inspection processes for childcare in each country.

In addition to free childcare for some children, there are some other UK wide benefits such as [Tax-Free Childcare](#), other UK Government [financial help for parents](#). Parents can use Tax-Free Childcare at the same time as using 15 or 30 hours free childcare. Further advice for parents can be found on this website: [Help with childcare costs](#) | [MoneyHelper](#)

3. Wales

In summary:

- [Childcare Offer for Wales](#): 3 and 4 year olds of eligible parents are entitled to 30 hours a week free childcare for up to 48 weeks of the year. The 30 hours of childcare entitlement is made up of 20 hours of childcare and 10 hours per week of early years education. A [Co-operation Agreement](#) commitment has led to the expansion of the eligibility criteria in accessing childcare to also include parents of 3 and 4-year-olds, who are enrolled in further or higher education courses of at least 10 weeks in length.
- **3 and 4-year-old children of all parents** are entitled to a minimum of 10 hours a week early years education (also known as Foundation Phase Nursery provision). Local authorities are required to offer at least 10 hours a week from the term after their third birthday until they enter education full-time. In practice, some local authorities offer more. For those parents eligible for the Childcare Offer, these minimum hours are included within the 30 hours free provision.
- **All 2 and 3-year-old** children living in [Flying Start areas](#) are entitled to free childcare for 2.5 hours per day, 5 days a week for 39 weeks per year. At least 15 sessions of childcare provision must be made available during school holidays. Flying Start is a Welsh Government early years programme, in place since 2007 and delivered by local authorities. There is a [Programme for Government](#) commitment to “Deliver a phased expansion of early years provision to include all two year olds, with a particular emphasis on strengthening Welsh medium provision”. Welsh

Government says that more than 3,100 additional children have benefitted to date and that it is focused on the next phase of expansion.

4. England

In summary:

- **3 and 4 year olds of eligible parents** are entitled to [30 hours a week free childcare in England](#), for 38 weeks of the year (during school term time).
- **3 and 4-year-old children of all parents** are entitled to 570 hours of free early education or childcare a year. This is often taken as 15 hours each week for 38 weeks of the year.
- **2-year-olds of eligible parents on low incomes** are entitled to 15 hours a week for 38 weeks a year. From April 2024, the aim is for 15 hours of childcare to be extended to working parents of children aged two years old in England.
- In the Spring Budget 2023, the Government announced the 30 hours entitlement will be extended in stages to children aged nine months to up to three years from September 2025. The intention is that from April 2024, working parents of 2 year-olds will be able to access 15 hours of free childcare per week. From September 2024, the intention is to extend this to working parents of children aged 9 month to 2 year-olds. Then finally, from September 2025, all eligible working parents of children aged 9 months up to 3 years should be able to access 30 free hours per week.

Further information can be found here:

- [Research Briefings House of Commons Library](#)
- [Help with childcare costs in England: House of Commons Library](#)

5. Senedd Scrutiny

In 2021, the Equality and Social Justice Committee published a report [Childcare and parental employment: the pandemic and beyond](#).

In respect of this Petition, in March 2023, the First Minister was asked about the announced expansion plans in England and the comparison with the position in Wales. He said:

[...] what we see is an attempt in England to catch up with services that are already available here in Wales. It's quite certainly not the other way

around.[...]. For three and four-year-olds, here in Wales, families get 30 hours of childcare for 48 weeks of the year. In England, that's 38 weeks of the year; 10 weeks fewer in England than you get in Wales. Here in Wales, just last year, in our co-operation agreement with Plaid Cymru, we have extended the reach of the childcare offer for three and four-year-olds to people who are on the cusp of employment, and 3,000 more parents are able to take advantage of that childcare offer here in Wales just on that one aspect. My understanding is that the Chancellor says that 60,000 more people will enter the workforce as a result of his investment in childcare. We've already got 3,000 as a result of what we did for three and four-year-olds alone last year, and our record of expanding childcare for two-year-olds is something that is simply an aspiration in England.

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 amended to reflect subsequent changes.

Julie Morgan AS/MS
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Deputy Minister for Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1359
Ein cyf/Our ref JMSS/00536/23

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

20 September 2023

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your correspondence on 22 August, regarding the petition from Jade Richards asking the Welsh Government to expand childcare support in Wales to match the proposals that the Chancellor announced for England in his Spring budget.

I recognise that high-quality provision in the early years plays an important role in ensuring that every child has a wonderful experience of childhood, has the best start in life and fulfils their potential.

You will be aware that through our revised Programme for Government, we have already committed to expanding funded childcare to two-year-olds, and this is being taken forward through our Flying Start programme. The Flying Start programme is making a real difference to the lives of children in some of Wales' our most disadvantaged communities and from independent evaluation evidence, we can see Flying Start is having a positive impact on families' lives and has been life-changing for some 'high need families'. These parents have stated Flying Start has had a positive impact on their child's development as well as making a positive contribution to their own skills and knowledge as a parent.

The provision of funded, high quality, part-time childcare for 2-3 year olds is integral to Flying Start. This is why we have chosen to focus our expansion of provision through the Flying Start programme rather than through the Childcare Offer for Wales.

The Childcare Offer is available to eligible families of 3- to 4-year-old children and provides support for 48 weeks per year, compared to England's 38 week Offer, whilst this does include a minimum of 10 hours for early education during term time, 30 hours childcare is available each week for 9 of the holiday weeks.

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
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Gohebiaeth.Julie.Morgan@llyw.cymru
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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

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

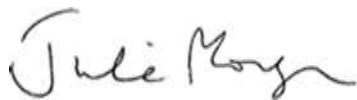
In September 2022, the eligibility criteria in Wales was widened to include parents in education and training. This expansion supported more than 500 additional families in its first year and reflects the value we place on supporting those who are seeking to improve their employment prospects by gaining qualifications, retraining or changing career paths.

As part of the Spring Budget the Chancellor announced that Wales was receiving an additional £178m over the next two years (2023-24 and 2024-25) as a result of all the spending decisions made in England, not just to the expansion of funded childcare. This meant that our financial position was up to £900m lower in real terms than what we expected – and what the UK Government said Wales needed – at the time of the last spending review in 2021.

When we made our budget for 2023-24, we drew on all our available resources to protect frontline services and provide targeted cost-of-living support to individuals and the economy. Ministers are now having to make very difficult decisions to make sure we can balance the budget and prevent a breach of our spending limits, while ensuring we honour all our legal commitments, including pay deals for teachers and NHS staff.

You will be aware of the written statement which the First Minister issued in August, about the significant pressures Welsh Government is currently facing, consequently we are not currently in a position to confirm any new developments to childcare and how we will support families with childcare costs in the future.

Yours sincerely,

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

Julie Morgan AS/MS

Y Dirprwy Weinidog Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Deputy Minister for Social Services

P-06-1359 Offer Welsh working parents the same financial support for childcare as England, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 26.09.23

Mrs Morgan's response has not adequately addressed any of the points I have raised. The Welsh Government response is deflecting by focusing on their current Flying start provisions, rather than explaining why they're unwilling to match England's financial support for working parents despite being given the money to do so by the UK Government.

In her email she talks about budget constraints and balancing this including pay deals for teachers and NHS. This is deflecting from the fact the Welsh Government were specifically given a budget from the UK Government to spend on childcare to match England's policy if they chose to do so, therefore we're not asking for teachers and NHS budget to be spent on childcare. The Welsh Government have made no announcement on how they intend on spending this money and yet they've been aware of it since March 2023. (Q1) What have they spent this money on? (Q2) And have England allocated the same amount of £ per child, as they've allocated for Wales in their consequential? If they have, then Wales should be able to afford the same childcare scheme as England, so why are they choosing not to?

In 2021 the Welsh Government lost 155 million and don't have the best track record for finances so someone needs to hold them to account and ask where this money is going.

I don't doubt Flying Start has been beneficial to high needs families but that's where the roll out should have ended. Most families are not high needs that require Flying Start provisions. Most families are suffering financially in a cost of living crisis and that's why the expansion of the childcare provision would have worked better, it would help financially. More parents could go out to work generating more income tax for Wales. The Welsh Government have produced no evidence that their Flying Start roll out has helped reduce the number of children in Wales facing poverty, as far as I'm aware Wales still have a high number of children living in poverty.

Reasons Flying Start are not helping the majority of Welsh families -

1. To use the Flying Start hours you need to have a Flying Start registered provider. A lot of providers, particularly child minders, don't intend on registering with flying start. In my village not a single child minder intends on registering with FS because of the additional paperwork and training when they're already registered with the CSSIW. This means if your child already has a childcare provider they are attached to and thriving with, but they're not FS registered, you have to take them out of that setting should you want to use the hours. (Q3) How is this helping children thrive? The thinking behind this is FS is high quality childcare but it's up to parents to decide the right setting for their child, not the Welsh Government. Parents can read the CSSIW reports and decide on the quality of a setting themselves. In comparison English parents get 15 hours (later increased to 30) to spend wherever they like.
1. The 12.5 Flying Start hours are spread over 5 days so a child gets 2.5 hours a day. This means working parents would have to collect their child and drop them to another provider or pay an additional fee for a "wraparound" service. As a result many parents who are eligible for the hours have had to decline using them due to the disruption caused for their child and their workplace, despite needing the financial aid. This is a further block for parents in the workplace, particularly mothers. In comparison English parents get 15 hours (later increased to 30) to spend however they like.

1. The postcode lottery roll out truly is a disgrace. I have spoken to hundreds of families, some of which are eligible for FS and have informed me they don't need the hours as they're financially stable. And then I've spoken to some families who are desperate, and yet they're not eligible. Mrs Morgan and Mr Drakeford ~~live in the area~~ are so may be familiar with the following area; Murch Crescent, Dinas Powys, a road with no affordable housing. Eligible for Flying Start. At the top of this is the Scholars Park estate. A new estate with a large proportion of affordable housing. Not eligible for Flying Start. (Q4) How is that helping children to thrive? In comparison English parents who work will all receive the 15 hours (later increased to 30) despite their postcode.

The parents of Wales have spoken, they've spoken to the media, they've sent the Welsh Government emails and they've signed the petition. It's very upsetting that despite this the Welsh Government are ignoring the needs of the many, and focusing on their own agenda meeting the needs of the few.

In preparation for a meeting with a minister I asked for stories from parents to share, I thought they would be worthwhile including here. It's worth noting that I had hundreds of responses and I didn't receive a single supportive response. Even those against the petition were not supportive of Flying Start -

█████ from Barry couldn't go back to work full time after having her daughter because her postcode wasn't eligible for flying start and after paying for childcare she would earn £4 a day.

█████ from Cardiff isn't living in a flying start postcode and has spent £28000 on childcare for her daughter in the last two years.

█████ from Cardiff is considering moving to a flying start area to qualify for free hours because paying her £1800 a month childcare bill for her two children is more than her £1300 monthly salary.

█████ from Caerphilly is living in a Flying Start area but was unable to use the 12.5 hours for her daughter because she was unable to pick her up due to work commitments, so she had to pay for private nursery anyway.

█████ from Newport lives in a flying start postcode but doesn't need the 12.5 hours as her family take care of her son. Her friends who live in the surrounding area desperately need the hours but aren't eligible.

█████ from Bridgend gave up work after her second child and now claims universal credit because it wasn't worth working after paying her childcare costs, she was not eligible for flying start.

█████ from Caernarfon and her husband both work but don't live in a flying start area. Childcare would cost them 1k + per month. They can't afford this without falling into debt so are not having children at the moment, despite wanting them."

(Q5) How is Flying Start helping these families in need?

My contact who runs a private nursery in North Wales has been working on this campaign with me. She gave me the following information from a childcare provider perspective -

“We feel we are currently being undermined and forgotten about as private day nurseries, in the government's plans for the expansion of the 2 year old funding. Flying start are accrediting and choosing their own settings over private day nurseries and we are being made to feel inadequate. I have yet to find online a flying start setting that has been awarded an excellent rating by CIW however my setting was awarded an overall excellent 2 weeks ago. My working parents are unable to use their funding as the hours are 9-11.30 in a designated flying start setting e.g a school as they are with me from 7.30-5.30pm as they are in work.

Working parents in Wales are at a loss compared to England, as from 2025 all children from the age of 9 months old of working parents will be eligible for 30 hours of funded childcare if they work 16 hours or more and earn under £100,000 a year. We get this in Wales currently for our 3 year olds with the same criteria. Working parents in Wales will only get 12.5 hours by 2025 in an accredited flying start setting. Is being registered with CIW not up to flying starts standards, this should be questioned?

Working parents should have the same funding as England to help with the costs of childcare, some of my parents work for nothing after paying childcare but they need to keep their professional jobs.

I find it a personal attack on private day nurseries when the Welsh government says they are providing better quality childcare in their flying start settings. This should be a parent's choice where they use their funding.

Flying start was set up for children in deprived areas mainly non-working parents and it has proven to be successful and rewarding for many children. Expanding this particular programme is not the way forward for the working parents in Wales as it doesn't give flexibility, affordability and causes displacement within childcare settings. Childminders have voiced their opinions that they will not be part of the programme as they feel they are already registered with CIW and meet the national minimum standards and this should be sufficient but it's not.”

Many thanks
Jade Richards

Save our Fire and Rescue Service

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 9 Hydref 2020
Petitions Committee | 9 October 2020

Reference: SR23/6916-5

Petition Number: P-06-1363

Petition title: Save our Fire and Rescue Service

Text of petition: North Wales Fire and Rescue along with the Fire Authority plan to downgrade Rhyl and Deeside Stations from 24hr Stations to Day staffed Stations leaving the Stations empty at night. Currently there are 3 Wholetime Stations in North Wales, Wrexham, Deeside and Rhyl. They are staffed 24/7. Under the current proposals Rhyl and Deeside would be downgraded to day staffed Stations, relying on on call personnel responding from home at night. The predicted delay could be as much as 8-10 minutes. In a fire every second counts and this will undoubtedly cause injuries and even deaths.



1. Background

In Wales, the responsibility for fire and rescue services sits with the Deputy Minister for Social Partnership, Hannah Blythyn MS. The Welsh Government is responsible for overseeing the operation and management of the fire and rescue services. It sets policy and strategy related to fire and rescue services, allocates funding, and ensures services are adequately equipped and prepared to respond to emergencies, including fires, road traffic accidents and other incidents.

The day-to-day management of fire and rescue services rests with **the Fire and Rescue Authority**, which operates under the direction and policies set by the Welsh Government. There are currently three Welsh Fire and Rescue Services in Wales, which are responsible for delivering fire and rescue services in their respective regions:

- Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Authority
- North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority
- South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority

Under section 21 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, the Welsh Ministers must prepare and keep under review a Fire and Rescue National Framework. The Framework must set out priorities and objectives for fire and rescue authorities. The current framework is the Fire and Rescue National Framework for Wales 2016.

Fire and rescue authorities must have regard to the National Framework in carrying out their functions (section 21(7) of the 2004 Act) and the **Auditor General for Wales** may carry out an inspection of an authority's compliance with this requirement (see the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009, section 24).

North Wales Fire and Rescue consultation

North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority launched its public consultation on the provision of future emergency cover services in North Wales on 21 July 2023. It closed on 22 September 2023. A decision hasn't yet been taken on this, three different options have been put forward.

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.

P-06-1363 Save our Fire and Rescue Service, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 03.10.23

Clwyd West MS Darren Millar has objected to all of three of the options North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority put forward in their consultation on the future provision of emergency fire and rescue service cover in North Wales.

Darren is concerned that all three options would lead to a reduction in cover at Rhyl Fire Station and in his response to the consultation has told the Authority that as such he is unable to support any of the options.

He also urged the Authority to consider the alternative option being proposed by firefighters.

His response states:

“While I applaud the Fire and Rescue Authority’s ambition to increase the ability to respond to incidents at more households within 20 minutes, I regret that I must strongly object to all of three of the options in the consultation document on the basis that they would all lead to a reduction in cover at Rhyl Fire Station.

“As you will be aware, crews in Rhyl provide cover for many of my constituents in the Towyn and Kinnel Bay area. This area has the largest number of households in Wales at risk of flooding and the population rises from around 10,000 to 70,000 in the summer months due to the large number of holiday caravans in the area.

“The catastrophic Towyn floods on 1990 are still etched into local memory and, should there ever be a repeat of such a major incident then it is critical that fire and rescue response crews are on hand immediately to assist, particularly if a flood took place at night during the visitor season.

“Holiday caravan fires can also be devastating and the density of these on some local holiday parks, along with the huge increase in the population during the visitor season does not appear to have been considered by the Authority in developing its proposals.

“Having discussed your proposals with local firefighters it would appear that, in their professional opinion, there is an alternative to the options in the consultation paper which is yet to be explored by the Fire and Rescue Authority which would enable the retention of 24/7 cover in Rhyl and increase the number of households able to receive a 20 minute response beyond those in your options while still creating three new hub stations to serve rural North Wales. I understand that the cost of the alternative is likely to add around £20 per annum to the annual precept which is literally less than the cost of a packet of peanuts each week for a year.

“Given the above, I would urge the Fire and Rescue Authority to consider the alternative option as a matter of urgency.”

I have also attached some further reading below which will give some background.

The reason the Fire Service is requesting £1000,000 from each Authority is because they have forecasted a budget deficit of £6,000,000 for the year 24/25. This is purely a forecast and is based on a number of factors.

Inflationary Pressures – These have been felt across all sectors and households and it is difficult to gauge exactly how much this has increased costs for the Service;

Energy Costs – Similar to inflationary increases but how much extra has it added to the bills?

The Firefighter pay award – The Service budgeted for 4% but it ended at 7%. This meant they had to find an extra

The new £48 million training facility – Fire Service management want to build a new training centre. They have forecasted £48 million and £1.1 million of the £6 million deficit is needed to pay JUST THE INTEREST ALONE on an initial £25 million loan. The £25 million capital will not reduce and the Service intend to take out an additional £20 million and £3 million in the coming years. This initial £25 million burden has been approved by our Fire Authority Members, hence why it is added to the budget deficit. ***It is worth noting that Cheshire Fire and Rescue built a new state of the art training centre, way and above what we need in North Wales, and it cost them £11.9 million.

Wastage and a culture of Spending – An over reliance on overtime (increased rates), buying “the best of the best kit”, constant renewal and upgrade of fire engines (the ones we have are fine), leasing buildings when we have ones we own, an abundance of white fleet vehicles, fruitless initiatives (the current consultation is expecting to cost £120,000+), a 3-fold increase in non-operational staff, creation of new departments (Finance), legal fees have increased and just recently, a massively costly project called The Direct Entry Scheme (£160k for 1 person).

Under the administration of the previous Chief Fire Officer Simon Smith, there was never an overrun-on budget and in some occasion, an underspend was achieved. It has only been in the last 2 years where we have seen this loosening of the purse strings.

Less than 2 years ago, the Chief Fire Officer requested £2.4 million extra from the Fire Authority to undertake a re-organisation of the Service management structure. The net result of this “re-organisation” was that every single manager from Station Manager through the Chief Fire Officer all received an above inflationary pay rise. This hadn’t been requested by any manager nor had it formed part of an annual pay award. This was an overnight uplift in all of their wages. Operational Firefighters received a selection of chocolates.

On Tuesday, Gwynedd Cabinet wrote to the Chief Fire Officer asking her to undertake a review of senior manager positions. They have identified that we as a medium-small fire service, serving a population 700,000 population, have the same, or in some cases, more managers than large metropolitan brigades. We are top-heavy in managers.

North Wales has the following:

1 x Chief Fire Officer
1 x Deputy Chief Fire Officer
4 x Assistant Chief Fire Officers (2 post currently vacant)

The combined cost for these 6 posts is in the region of £1 million. The Service has been operating with the 2 vacant positions for a number of months but intend filling them after the consultation. This is a cost of around £300,000. Frontline operational response is under threat and underfunded and yet principal posts are seemingly essential.

I will finish with the current costs of the Options that have been put out for consultation. Each one involves a decline or downgrading of operational response, in an attempt to prop up other failing areas. Each Option comes at a cost to the Tax Payer.

Option 3 - £1 increase per household per annum (70+ job losses, 5 station closures, downgrading 24hrs stations and loss of an appliance at Wrexham)

Option 2 - £1.43 increase per household per annum (downgrading 24hr stations, loss of an appliance, slower response to incidents in Clwyd area)

Option 1 - £1.68 increase per household per annum (downgrading Rhyl/ Deeside)

Option Growth - £2 increase per household per annum (maintain all standards of current cover but also open 3 stations in rural areas and create 20+ new jobs, investing in communities and massively improving response times across the region).

At the public consultation last week in Conwy, when the attending public were offered a Growth option (it can be re-branded if growth in a time of constraint is not palatable) voted unanimously for it. 100% agreement and appetite to pay for an improved service.

It is less than a pint of milk a month over Option 1.

Regards

Gavin Roberts

Agenda Item 5.1

P-06-1161 Routine collection and publication of data of how many babies/children return to their care experienced parents care at the end of a Parent and Child Placement

This petition was submitted by Nicola Jones, having collected a total of 60 signatures.

Text of Petition:

We believe that many care leavers walk out of their placements because little thought is given to their previous experiences or to their mental wellbeing even though a baby has the right to stay with its parent/s if it is safe to do so.

Additional Information:

Many care leavers have social services intervention, when they give birth. This is often due to their history and/or lack of their own parental guidance. These care leavers will undoubtedly have experienced trauma in their childhoods and often suffer from anxiety into their adult lives. They have often never felt safe in their homes as a child and having their own space has been their only safe haven where they are totally relaxed. Currently, if there is any concern, a parent is taken away from their home, family and friends then placed in a foster home or residential home to be assessed with little thought to the parents triggers and mental wellbeing. We believe that this often causes a roller coaster of emotions and parents then walk away from placements only to forever regret a rash decision made in a moment of anxiety that wouldn't have happened if the situation had been dealt with more empathically. We want to fact find to see if a better solution for parent and child is needed.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Cardiff West
- South Wales Central

Agenda Item 5.2

P-06-1337 Sycharth, the home of Owain Glyndŵr, should be bought to safeguard the site for future generations

This petition was submitted by Elfed Wyn ap Elwyn, having collected a total of 10,539 signatures.

Text of Petition:

History is such a key subject for us here in Wales. Stories from our nation show us how we have developed over the centuries to become what we are today. Notable characters have steered this interesting history, with none more prominent than Owain Glyndŵr, who has contributed so much to our identity, and for many, he is a symbol of the nation. It is very disheartening to see that Sycharth, Glyndŵr's home, is almost forgotten deep in the heart of rural Powys, and the place is not very accessible for people to visit.

Additional Information:

It is time for the Government to ensure that this vital site is safeguarded for the next generation, by purchasing it and ensuring that it is more accessible to enable people to visit and appreciate this wonderful site.

It is disappointing to see that all our castles throughout Wales are protected, but that this site is hardly advertised, not to mention celebrated.

It's time to change the way we view the history of Wales, and Sycharth would be a good starting point.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Dwyfor Meirionnydd
- Mid and West Wales

Document is Restricted

P-06-1337 Prynu Sycharth, Cartref Owain Glyndŵr, er mwyn cadw'r safle yn safff i genedlaethau'r dyfodol, Gohebiaeth - Deisebydd i'r Pwyllgor, 04.10.23

Mi oedd hi'n braf cael bod yn bresennol yn gwylio'r drafodaeth yn y Senedd ar y 13eg o Fedi, ac rwy'n ddiolchgar iawn o'r pwyntiau positif oedd wedi dod o'r llawr gan nifer o ASC yn cefnogi'r ddeiseb a'i hamcanion; ond, Siomedig iawn oedd clywed geiriau'r Dirprwy Weinidog y celfyddydau, Chwaraeon a Thwristiaeth, Dawn Bowden ASC. Yr unig ffordd gellir disgrifio ei geiriau yw eu bod yn sylwadau paradocsaid iawn, oherwydd bod y gweinidog wedi disgrifio sefyllfa Sycharth fel safle sydd ddim dan fygythiad, ac o fewn yr un araith wedi disgrifio'r lle yn rhy fregus i'w hysbysebu rhagofn iddo dynnu pobl yno i grwydro.

Tydi'r adnoddau ar y we sy'n egluro hanes y safle cafodd ei grybwyll gan y Gweinidog ddim yn ddigonol nac ychwaith yn ymateb i amcanion yr ymgyrch fod safle Sycharth ddim yn derbyn y parch a'r sylw y dylai ei dderbyn. Mae'r dal nifer o bobl Cymru ddim yn ymwybodol o hanes eu hunain, nac ychwaith o bwysigrwydd safle fel Sycharth fel rhan o ddatblygiad ein hanes a'n cenedl.

Ydi'r Llywodraeth felly yn dal i weld hanes Cymru fel rhywbeth dylid ei anghofio, a'i wthio i'r neilltu? Dyna'r ymdeimlad sy'n codi o ymateb Llywodraeth Cymru hyd yn hyn. Mae dal cyfle i rywbeth positif ddod o'r ymgyrch yma a dwi'n galw ar y Llywodraeth i gymryd y camau i brynu, hysbysebu a sicrhau'r safle yma er lles ein hanes, ac i annog i bobl Cymru ddeall hanes y genedl.

Agenda Item 5.3

P-06-1358 Review the inadequate funding for Schools in Wales

This petition was submitted by Martin Price, having collected a total of 7,007 signatures.

Text of Petition:

Many schools have set deficit budgets for 2023-24 financial year. More, perhaps most schools will be posting deficit budgets for 2024-25. The impacts on children in Welsh Schools are grave – poorer teaching and learning, poorer buildings, safety concerns and staff burnout.

Additional Information:

This petition was prepared by Chairs of Governor Associations throughout Wales.

The impacts of low funding on children in Welsh Schools are:

- Reduction in the quality of learning & teaching
- Increased adult/learner ratios
- Health & safety – less adult supervision, for example at lunchtime and breaks
- Fewer support staff, meaning that children with Additional Learning Needs are at risk of not receiving the help they need.
- Fewer adults in classrooms putting everyone at risk.
- Fewer teachers – either through non-replacement or redundancies.
- Less maintenance on buildings leading to safety concerns
- Increased stress on Headteachers and Senior staff, leading to increased sickness absence and burn-out.

And at the same time schools are struggling to implement educational reforms.

We urge the Welsh Government to urgently review the level of funding for Education for this and next financial years. Our children deserve the best education and must not suffer through funding cuts.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Vale of Glamorgan
- South Wales Central