

Petitions Committee

Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 1 – Senedd

Meeting date:

1 July 2014

Meeting time:

09.00

Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales



For further information please contact:

Steve George

Committee Clerk

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Agenda Item 2.1

P-04-567 A Fair Deal for Welsh Students

Petition wording:

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh government to address growing commercialisation and introduce an open and transparent system to scrutinise the standards of service to students and value for public money offered by the Higher Education sector in Wales, and to ensure changes in service levels are subject to public consultation. To include: 1. A Welsh student complaints process with compulsory compensation, greater transparency and accountability than the current English scheme. 2. The teaching aspect of Higher Education Institutions should be subject to similar standards and safeguards as schools and colleges. 3. Statutory regulation, the Quality Assurance Agency as a registered charity with no powers of intervention is no longer fit for purpose. 4. The Letter of Understanding between the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales to provide value for money should include public complaint via the Welsh Audit Office. 5. An effective Whistle Blower process.

Petition raised by: Trevor Mayes

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 17 June 2014

Number of signatures : 18

Agenda Item 2.2

P-04-568 Public Inquiry into ABMU Health Board Petition wording:

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to hold a full public inquiry in order to investigate the serious concerns raised about standards of care and complaints handling within ABMU Health Board that have caused so much avoidable harm and suffering for patients and bereaved relatives at hospitals administered by the Board and its predecessor bodies and, where necessary, to hold the Chief Executive and the Management Team to account.

Petition raised by: ABMU Victim Support Group

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 1 July 2014

Number of signatures : 75

Agenda Item 3.1

P-04-472 Make the MTAN law

Petition wording:

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

Additional information:

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

Petition raised by: Dr John Cox

Date petition first considered by Committee: 16 April 2013

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

LYNNE NEAGLE AM

Assembly Member for Torfaen

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William Powell AM
Chair, Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

19th March 2014

Make the MTAN Law Petition

Dear Bill,

I noted with great interest the recent discussion in relation to the above named petition that took place during the Petitions Committee meeting held on Monday 10th March. As you will remember, I gave evidence in person last year to your committee, alongside the lead petitioner, Dr John Cox, who is a constituent of mine.

Given the events that took place at the Varteg Hill Planning Appeal, where the Planning Inspector appeared to interpret MTAN2 differently to the Welsh Government who introduced it, and the Assembly Members who lent it unanimous support, I believe it would be really sensible to clarify the view of the Planning Inspectorate by inviting their representatives to give evidence to your committee.

While I recognise that the petitions committee has many different priorities to balance, and that time is limited, I think this would provide a really important opportunity to clarify an ambiguity that has had already had serious repercussions for my constituents, and could impact on many more communities where opencast is either already taking place, or where planning applications have been submitted for future working.

I would be very grateful if, as a committee, you could take my views into account when deciding upon your next step. As you'll see below, I have copied in your fellow committee members to this letter.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,



LYNNE NEAGLE AM
Assembly Member for Torfaen
cc: Joyce Watson AM
Bethan Jenkins AM
Russell George AM

Printed on recycled paper

Carl Sargeant AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Tai ac Adfywio
Minister for Housing and Regeneration



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-472
Ein cyf/Our ref CS/00451/14

William Powell AM
Chair Petitions committee

committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

2017 April 2014

Dear William

Thank you for your correspondence of 25 March requesting views on additional comments from the petitioner in respect of the petition 'Make the MTAN law'.

With regard to commenting on specific cases, the position I adopted reflects standard procedure. I am not able to comment on 'live' cases because this could prejudice any decision that I may wish to make if a case comes before me. Nor am I able to comment on cases which I have determined, or were determined by an inspector on my behalf, because the law (section 79 (5) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990), states that any decision I may wish to make is final. The practical effect of this is that it is not open to me, or to a planning inspector, to comment on a decision made, the reasons behind a decision, or to reconsider a decision. In addition, I understand that it may be likely that a new application will be submitted in relation to the Varteg site. That anyone can submit an application at any time on the same site tends to reinforce the reasons for the standard procedure that I am bound by.

Therefore, the committee will wish to note that the Planning Inspectorate would not be able to answer questions about specific cases. In general, if objectors have concerns about the conduct of an inspector then they can instigate a complaint through the complaints procedure operated by the Planning Inspectorate. This should ideally be done at the time of the Inquiry, although it should be noted that this would not affect any decision made. A decision made can only be challenged in such circumstances by seeking a judicial review.

The issue about learning lessons from past cases can again only be considered in a general sense because cases are considered on their merits. National planning policy is kept under review as a matter of course and the comments made in the correspondence of 10 February 2014 have therefore been noted.

The petitioner expresses concern about the responses given at the evidence session and that the nature of the petition had been misinterpreted. I can say that the terms of the petition and the spirit of the petitioners' evidence was fully taken into account, but you will appreciate that as one of the motives for the petition was the Varteg application, care had to be taken to address the evidence in a general way.

It was noted that the concerns expressed were focused on perceived differences in the interpretation of MTAN 2 and that all people and organisations, including planning inspectors, should be 'singing from the same hymn sheet'. It was felt, however, that the most appropriate way of addressing the concerns was to put forward contextual evidence on the nature and characteristics of the planning system, as well as to advocate support for the current approach in which it is for both local authorities and planning inspectors to accord MTAN 2 'appropriate' weight in any given circumstance.

Finally, I promised to keep the Committee updated about the coal restoration research. I can now advise that I agreed to publish the report we have received on 18 April. The report can be found on our website at the following link:

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/planning/planningresearch/publishedresearch/failure-to-restore-opencast-coal-sites-in-south-wales/?lang=en>

I hope this information is of assistance.



Carl Sargeant AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Tai ac Adfywio
Minister for Housing and Regeneration

Our Ref/Ein Cyf:
Your Ref/Eich Cyf:
Date/Dyddiad: 17.06.14
Please ask for/Gofynnwch am: Tim Peppin
Direct line/Llinell uniongyrchol: 02920 468669
Email/Ebost: tim.peppin@wlga.gov.uk



WLGA • CLILC

William Powell AM
Petitions Committee Chair
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Dear William

RE: Make MTAN Law Petition

Thank for your letter dated March 2014 seeking further comment regarding the application of guidance in the Coal MTAN.

In terms of consistency of application of the guidance in MTAN2, Local Planning Authorities (LPA) in many parts of Wales work collaboratively on Minerals and Waste Planning. In practice, this means officers in one LPA processing applications on behalf of another local authority which results in a more consistent approach. A good example of a collaborative approach is highlighted by an application being dealt with by Caerphilly CBC (CCBC) for a site at Nant Llesg above Rhymney. As a direct result of this application, a meeting was arranged with Mineral Planning Officers from neighbouring LPAs enabling CCBC to draw on their knowledge and experience.

We would reiterate that each case must be dealt with on its own individual merits and that LPAs should have the flexibility to work with applicants to seek the best outcome given the local economic, social and environmental circumstances.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any further information.

Yours sincerely

Director of Regeneration & Sustainable Development

Steve Thomas
Chief Executive
Prif Weithredwr

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Pack Page 7

P-04-472 Make the MTAN law – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Clerking Team, 23.06.14.

Dear Kayleigh,

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the "Make the MTAN law!" item on your agenda for 1st July 2014.

I believe that the views of the petitioners were comprehensively addressed in my submissions of 18th and 27th February 2014 (again attached for circulation to the committee) and I submit that, as the Minister has not responded to a single one of the specific points made then, these submissions are as valid for this upcoming meeting as they were in February.

What the Minister is now saying, in his most recent letter, is that he is not prepared to comment on any application that is live, dead or merely a gleam in the eye of the applicant – and, moreover, that he does not wish the Planning Inspectorate to answer any questions on these matters, whether or not such questions relate to specific planning applications (also whether live, dead or hypothetical).

I have three points to make in response to his extraordinary letter:

1) If this is genuinely a government ruling, why did the Minister waste the time of the Petitions Committee by several times postponing his appearance before the committee from July of 2013 until February 2014 on the pretext that he would have to answer questions about the then undetermined Varteg Hill application (not, let me remind the committee, even mentioned in the petition)? If non-cooperation was Departmental policy in May 2013, they should have said so then and the issue could have been concluded many months ago.

2) Are we to infer from this that there is no mechanism for the National Assembly to assess if the MTAN 2 Guidelines are achieving their purpose and that, somewhere/sometime, the National Assembly decided that this specific

Ministry and its staff cannot be subjected to scrutiny? Could we have chapter and verse for this decision to exempt this Ministry from meaningful scrutiny?

3) I presume that the Minister does not dispute that the MTAN 2 Guidelines envisage a 500m buffer zone between "settlements" and the "site boundary" of a coal coaling application (other than for specifically designed exceptional circumstances) and is aware that, during the consultation and at its conclusion, an alternative (favoured by the coaling companies) of a 200m buffer zone between the settlements and the coaling boundary was specifically debated and rejected. Whilst the MTAN 2 are clearly defined as Guidelines (for Local Authorities to obey and the Planning Inspectors to take into account), surely it must be the case that any option categorically rejected by the consultation and the National Assembly, cannot be reinstated unilaterally by the Planning Inspectors?

I hope these thoughts will be of assistance to the Petitions Committee. Might it be appropriate that the Petitions Committee seek a Plenary Debate to enable the National Assembly simply to reconfirm its wish that the MTAN 2 Guidelines, that were unanimously approved by the National Assembly, should except in exceptional circumstances be adhered to by everyone involved in the planning process?

Sincerely.

John Cox (Dr)

William Powell AM
Chair, Petitions Committee,
National Assembly.

27 February 2014

Dear William,

Make the MTAN law ! petition

I listened with concern to the “evidence” session with the Minister at your last meeting and I have spoken at length with Steven since. I write now to confirm that I fear the Minister’s negative attitude calls into question whether there is any value in anyone presenting a petition on this topic in future.

I deduce, from the Minister’s written submission and the proceedings, that he and his Advisors did not read the evidence presented last May or, if they had done so, they decided to not acknowledge that they had done so. Their official excuse for their non-response to our submissions is that they claim they may not refer to “specifics” – even the specifics of planning applications that are now dead and buried history.

The first point to be said about this is that, supposing for the sake of argument that this excuse is 100% valid, this means that the Minister could have answered the same questions in July – instead of postponing this non-event, pending his decision on the Varteg Hill planning appeal. This was a gross discourtesy to the committee and has prevented consideration of the petition for over six months.

A more plausible scenario is that his excuses from July to the February had validity and it is only this latest excuse that is false, dreamt up specifically to avoid answering anything arising from the now dead Varteg Hill appeal. I suggest that your committee ask the Minister to produce the legal advice he received that justifies his refusal to refer to the lessons from this or any other past planning application.

In any event, the Minister made no reference whatsoever to the submissions made by Lynne Neagle AM and myself in May. In our submissions we had made it clear that we were not asking for planning law to be changed – what we did ask, and repeated several times in several ways, was that all persons involved in the planning process should “sing from the same hymn sheet”.

Given all these references (paragraphs §194, 195, 199, 200, 208, 211, 212, 214, 220, 225, 226), it is disingenuous of the Minister to suggest that we were asking for a change in the law rather than, as the transcript demonstrates, implementation of the existing law. I prefer to believe that he was misinformed by his Advisors on this.

I reiterated all these points in the written supplementary I made after reading the Minister's written submission to your committee – but clearly this also was not seen by the Minister. The point we have made throughout is that the MTAN policy guidelines – whether treated as policy or guidelines or both – should be given equal weight by all organisations and people, including the Planning Inspectors.

I suggest that the next step for the committee should be to invite the Planning Inspectorate to appear before the committee to answer the questions not answered by the Minister. Would that be feasible?

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Cox", with a stylized flourish underneath.

John Cox (Dr.)
Lead Petitioner

**Evidence session on the ‘Make the MTAN Law’ Petition
Tuesday 18 February 2014**

This submission is from the lead petitioner, Dr John Cox, after having read the written submission provided by the Minister for Housing and Regeneration prior to his oral submission, currently scheduled for 18th February 2014.

1 The Minister’s submission seems to have been written without reading the evidence presented by the petitioners in May 2013. As lead petitioner, I would prefer the Minister to first read and see our evidence before he appears before the committee – even if this necessitates yet another postponement. To assist the Minister, I include cross-references to the transcript paragraphs §180-227.

2 In any event, I believe it is appropriate to repeat several points made 9 months ago - to which we have had no response. Although the Minister outlines how planning is meant to proceed, he has not addressed any of the problems we have experienced. *(Note: as in May, we do not seek to influence any current or previous Planning Application. What we do seek is that the Minister reviews how the process is operating in practice and what may be done to ensure that all participants in the planning process are singing from the same hymn sheet.)*

3 As will be clear from reading our actual evidence, we did not advocate a rigid incorporation of the MTAN2 into law (notably see §194, 195, 209). Although many of us fail to see why this is considered so unthinkable, the lead petitioners argued that our difficulties are because MTAN2 policy guidelines have been misinterpreted and there seems to be no mechanism to ensure that Planning Inspectors do not wilfully misinterpret the well-considered objectives of the MTAN2 policy guidelines.

4 In answer to written questions, the First Minister unequivocally stated that the MTAN2 Guidelines are “there to be obeyed” (by Local Authorities). This led Torfaen County Borough Council to reject the Varteg Hill application - by virtue of its gross violation of the MTAN Policy Guidelines (by a factor calculated to exceed 1000 – a calculation not challenged either by the Inspector or by the Applicant at the Appeal). Faced with this reality, the Applicant argued instead at the Appeal that the Guidelines should be ignored (by the Inspector – not the Local Authority) as they were “only guidelines”. The Inspector, in a withering remark concurred, saying that the MTAN policy guidelines were “merely the aspirations of politicians, not law”.

5 As we argued before the committee in May, this must lead to a situation where Council after Council will reject coal opencasting applications that clearly violate the MTAN2 policy guidelines whilst Planning Inspector after Planning Inspector could uphold Appeals - at enormous cost to the public purse and prolonged worry for those living nearby. The only beneficiaries of this situation are the legal profession.

6 It may be argued that a Planning Inspector is a neutral arbitrator giving an impartial professional opinion on a matter with which he has extensive expertise. We dealt with both points in our evidence (for example, §212) and I will do so again now.

7 On the latter point, it is simply not true that any presumed technical expertise of a Planning Inspector is a critical factor. Like a Judge in a Criminal Court, he or she has to come to his or her decision based on the actual evidence that was presented by genuine recognised experts at the Appeal. This process was severely flawed during the Varteg Hill Appeal because the Planning Inspector made no distinction between genuine professional “experts” and those who were simply there and paid to make statements to support the Applicant.

8 I anticipate there will be concern at my suggesting that a Planning Inspector might not be neutral. I make this statement (in respect to Varteg Hill) not from my displeasure at his conclusions but from the prejudicial manner of presentation. As is normal for such Reports, he listed all the submissions received and included many paragraphs explaining his assessments. In view of the many pages devoted to this, readers may be expected to assume that the Planning Inspector thoroughly evaluated all the submitted objections before he reached his opinion. But he did not.

9 What is striking about this Inspector's report is that he deals with all but one of the objections raised at the Appeal – the sole omission being a presentation made about the interpretation of the MTAN2 Guidelines - previously to Torfaen and latterly at the Appeal hearings. Not one of its contentions was queried at the Appeal by either the Applicant or by the Inspector and not one argument appears in the Report to the Minister even to mention that a submission on this central issue had been made!

10 To further mislead the Minister (as must have been the intention), the Report refers to "*coaling*" being 200 metres from the nearest settlement rather than – as is specified in the MTAN2 Guidelines - the "*works boundary*" being 60 metres from the nearest settlement. This is not a matter of semantics – the size of the bund for this application was to be 20m high and would have involved 3 months of earthmoving to shift 750,000 CuMs and the same again to remove. What the Inspector has chosen to ignore in his report is any mention of *the major disruption* – focussing instead on the *relatively minor* disruption of the coaling after the quarry had been created.

11 This key issue for the Planning Authorities bears repeating. If the precedent is set that the coaling boundary (as opposed to the operational boundary) is used as the point of reference for measuring the 200/500 metres, this devalues the protection the MTAN was claimed by the then Minister to provide. The operational activities other than coaling can be as (and for Varteg Hill would have been more) disruptive than the actual coal winning activity. The Inspector spectacularly misinterpreted the MTAN in this respect (even Counsel for the Applicant disagreed with him when he revealed this to be his interpretation of the MTAN during the Appeal hearings).

12 So, on this specific issue, the Planning Inspector reinterpreted the MTAN in full knowledge that it was not the intention of the Guidelines adopted by the National Assembly and Welsh Government. He goes so far as, in Paragraph 308 to move the goalposts "to ensure coal working no nearer than 200 metres from the nearest houses" – a spectacular rewriting of the criteria announced when the MTAN was published.

13 In respect to noise, the Applicant had to admit that even with all the proposed mitigation measures, the level of noise experienced in homes in Pembroke Terrace would exceed acceptable levels for residential properties. What the Applicant argued was that, because they did not have front gardens, they should not be considered as residential and should be treated as if the side of an urban throughway. Here also the Inspector does not mention this issue, simply stating his opinion that the noise levels were acceptable – ignoring the class-prejudice inherent in such a contention (§192).

14 The key issue for us (and Torfaen Council) is that the criteria laid down in the MTAN2 Policy Guidelines should be taken seriously and that all participants in the planning process, including the Planning Inspectors, agree the same interpretation as emerged from the planning consultation spanning 10 years. I submit that no individual - whatever their experience and position – has or should be given authority to rewrite the well-considered conclusions of a ten-year democratic consultation process.

Agenda Item 3.2

P-04-519 Abolition of Park Homes Sales Commission

Petition wording:

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

Petition raised by: Caerwnon Park Residents Association

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 10 December 2013

Carl Sargeant AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Tai ac Adfywio
Minister for Housing and Regeneration



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-519
Ein cyf/Our ref MB/CS/2515/14

William Powell AM
Chair
Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales

18 June 2014

Dear William

Thank you for your letter of the 30 May in which you share your petitioners comments following my letter of 18 March about the commission on sales of mobile homes.

The consultation on regulations made under the Mobile Homes (Wales) Act 2013 ended on 6 May. The purpose of the consultation was to seek views on clarity and usability of the new processes set out in 3 different regulations made under the Act. Consequently, the rate of the sales commission was not the focus of views being sought from the consultation but rather the clarity and usability of the new processes being set out. Only 3 of the 28 respondents made reference to the existing rate of commission in their responses. Following the close of the consultation my officials have amended the regulations to remove references which could be open to misinterpretation and improve their clarity. A series of engagement events are taking place and easy to read factsheets and guidance are being prepared for implementation.

The existing evidence is that if the 10% commission rate is reduced or abolished, pitch fees will increase and for many residents who are on a fixed income this would not be welcomed. In 2006, a Department for Communities and Local Government consultation highlighted a number of alternative options and although some mobile home owners favoured a reduction or removal of the commission rate, others wished to retain the current level of commission in return for protected pitch fees. The vast majority of park home residents are retirees on a fixed income and this is an important consideration when reviewing policy options as the impact on residents' finances of any action that could directly or indirectly increase pitch fees. A reduction in, or abolition of, the commission rate could significantly weaken the business model for site owners with the subsequent risks to the homes of those residents who live on, and have invested in, the sites.

It is important to remember that the Mobile Homes (Wales) Act 2013 does not simply replicate the English legislation but goes much further in regulating the licences of mobile home site owners and providing enhanced protections to sites residents. All site owners must apply for a new site licence under the Mobile Homes (Wales) Act and unlike the English legislation we have introduced the requirement for site owner/managers to pass a 'fit and proper person' test before being granted a site licence from the local authority. This is designed to root out unscrupulous site owners who intimidate or harass site residents as you have mentioned in your letter.

Local Authorities have also been given enhanced powers to charge site owners for site licences and where there are poor management practices taking place, issue fixed penalty notices or compliance notices for breaches of condition. Any costs incurred as a result of enforcement under the new Act (site licences, fees and fines) may not be charged back to site residents through pitch fees, again to the benefit of site residents.

In Wales we have also changed the rate of inflation which pitch fee increases can be linked from the Retail Price Index to the Consumer Price Index. This has been made with residents in mind as many mobile home owners are on fixed incomes from pensions or benefits, which are linked to the rate of CPI. It was considered that a change in CPI would have less of an impact on site owners than an increase linked to RPI would have on individual mobile home owners, particularly those on fixed or CPI linked incomes

The Mobile Homes (Wales) Act will come into force on the 1 October and my current priority is to ensure its effective implementation. It is important that all local authorities, site owners and residents understand the new legislation and their rights and responsibilities under the new law. Currently my officials are working closely with local authorities in preparation for the task of renewing all existing site licences by April 2015. They are also preparing information leaflets and factsheets as well as holding a number of engagement events with site residents across Wales to ensure they understand their new rights under the legislation.

Considering the range of changes that are being introduced as a result of the new Act, it is important that we ensure that these are properly bedded in and that an assessment of the new law and its impact upon local authorities, mobile home businesses and site residents is undertaken. My priority must be to ensure the effective implementation of the new legislation before considering any changes to the law before it is even introduced.

Yours sincerely



Carl Sargeant AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Tai ac Adfywio
Minister for Housing and Regeneration

P-04-519 Abolition of Park Homes Sales Commission – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Chair, 19.06.14.

CAERWNON PARK RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

To Mr. William Powell
Chair: The Petition Committee

19th June 2014

Dear Mr. Powell,

I have read the correspondence sent to you by Mr. Carl Sargeant and I take this opportunity to state our case once again. You are aware of the changes in legislation that have taken place in the park home industry since the park owners were allowed to demand commission of up to 10% on the sale of private homes, plus a further unspecified amount to put the home on their website. Hopefully from the 1st October 2014 the new legislation will come into force and put right the many injustices that have taken place in the industry with unscrupulous park owners making life difficult and in some instances untenable for their residents. This legislation in a slightly different form is now in place across the border in England. Though the Welsh legislation has definite advantages over the English version it is not Utopia although it is a significant improvement on the ineffective law provided to protect residents living on protected sites some years ago.

Unfortunately the 10% commission charge could not be included when the last consultation took place yet Mr. Sargeant takes pleasure in pointing out that only a few of the respondents made comments about it, if it had been included I believe the majority of respondents would have pointed out the unfairness of it.

The existing evidence pointed out by the Minister can only be the survey submitted in 2002 by Berkeley Hanover which all but the park owners find unfair and extremely biased. Most of the information coming from the survey was from unscrupulous park owners and these are the very park owners that the new legislation is trying to remove from the industry. When a postal survey was carried out on the report the vast majority of park owners were contacted yet only approximately 3% of park home owners were asked for their opinions, hardly a fair assessment.

Mr Sargeant also points out that an increase in pitch fees would take place if the commission charge was removed or reduced, I was of the belief that increases above the inflation rate can only take place if the majority of residents agree, if I

am wrong and the park owner can increase it when he feels fit then what use is the new legislation.

You must be aware that on the 2nd July a petition signed by over 30,000 park home residents is being presented to No.10 Downing Street calling for change to the commission charge because residents feel that enough is enough. We are now in the 21st Century where the voice of the ordinary people should be listened to. There are very many residents in Wales who feel the same but are still (despite the new legislation) too afraid to form residents associations or voice their opinions because of repercussions from the park owners. One park in Wales is nicknamed Stalag Luft ***** because of the fear of incurring the wrath of the park owner. It should be remembered that many park residents are elderly and have been intimidated in the past or are simply frightened, it is down to us slightly more vocal residents who have strong residents associations and are not afraid to put our heads above the parapet to be a voice for them too, please listen to us, we are the voice of the majority.

Kirsty Williams AM requested on our behalf a face to face meeting with the Minister to discuss the commission charge but he has rejected this proposal out of hand.

Yours sincerely

Bob Mounford

Chairman Caerwnon Park Residents Association

Agenda Item 3.3

P-04-536 Stop Factory Dairy Farming in Wales

Petition wording:

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to update Planning Policy Wales and other relevant planning documents such as Technical Advice Note 6: Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities, to ensure that large scale indoor factory dairy farms are not created in the pursuit of short-term economic gain and to the possible detriment of many small-scale run farms. The recent approval of the farm in Welshpool, Powys cited paragraph 7.2.2 of Planning Policy Wales specifically in saying that it “...recognise(d) that there will be occasions when the economic benefits will outweigh social and environmental considerations.” and we believe this must be urgently reviewed since the possible creation of a small number of new jobs should not outweigh the long term economic benefits afforded by the plentiful, efficient and sustainable asset of grazing which many Welsh dairy farmers fully recognise.

Large scale indoor factory dairy farms are designed to keep cows indoors rather than out on pasture, and have been shown to increase environmental damage, impoverish local communities, can severely compromise good animal welfare and become a financial drain on their surroundings. We believe that following the Welsh Government’s decision to approve the farm in Welshpool, a review of planning legislation is of critical importance to ensure Wales fulfils its aspiration to become a truly sustainable country.

Petition raised by: World Society for the Protection of Animals

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 18 February 2014

Number of signatures: 9246

P-04-536 Stop Factory Dairy Farming in Wales – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 20.06.14

World Animal Protection

20th June 2014

Dear Petitions Committee,

Following the recent High Court judgement, World Animal Protection (formerly known as WSPA) would like to update its response to the letter received on 6th May 2014 from the Minister for Housing and Regeneration in the Welsh Assembly Government regarding Petition Number P-04-536 ‘Stop Factory Dairy Farming in Wales’. This submission supersedes our previous submission (28th May).

Our response falls into two parts, firstly responses to the substantive points made in the Minister’s response and secondly extracts from some case studies that provide evidence from our research into a number of factory dairy farms in South and West Wales. These case studies contain information we have gathered from talking to local people who are experiencing the problems that arise from living near a factory dairy farm. We would be happy to provide further details from these case studies to the Committee, to respond to the Minister’s view in his letter that there is no evidence to suggest that planning policy and guidance needs to be revised.

It was the Minister’s decision to grant planning permission for Lower Leighton Farm against his Planning Inspector’s advice and contrary to policies in the Unitary Development Plan for Powys that prompted World Animal Protection to petition the Welsh Government. We continue to have serious concerns about the inadequacy of existing planning policy and guidance in Wales in relation to factory dairy farms.

Factory dairy farms are more akin to industrial units than the pasture-based dairy farms traditionally found in Wales, with cows instead housed indoors with minimal or no grazing. Instead they rely on feed being brought in and waste taken out requiring round the clock operation. This type of large scale, intensive, indoor

livestock farming has been prevalent in the US for at least 30 years. The significant increase in problems arising from factory dairy farms in the US have been comprehensively reported on by the independent Pew Commission on Industrial Farm Animal Production (PCIFAP). The Commission was formed to conduct a fact-based and balanced examination of key aspects of the farm animal industry. The Pew Commission report ¹ found: poor animal welfare resulting in high culling rates, environmental pollution, negative consequences for the economic viability of other dairy farmers, impoverishment of the amenity of local communities and impacts on their health and wellbeing.

In March 2013, World Animal Protection (then WSPA) wrote to all 22 local authorities in Wales and asked them if they had planning policies in place to help determine planning decisions on intensive dairy farms. Half the local authorities replied. None of them had a specific policy to help make decisions on planning applications for intensive factory dairy farms.

Planning applications for new and from existing farms suggests the number and size of factory dairy farms is growing in Wales. Our research identifies a worrying trend for existing farms to expand first and then seek retrospective planning permission later

World Animal Protection believes factory dairy farms can be detrimental for animal welfare, and are unsustainable in economic, social and environmental terms. Wales now has a statutory sustainable development duty and therefore there is an urgent need to review how planning policy and guidance on factory dairy farms could impact on this duty.

We are grateful to the committee for considering our petition and we urge you to consider holding an inquiry into whether existing planning policies for factory dairy farms in Wales are fit for purpose. We believe the Committee is best placed to address the concerns of the 9,246 people who signed the petition calling for this issue to be looked at in more depth.

We believe due to the cross-cutting nature of this issue across several Governmental departments that such an inquiry would be of much benefit and that

¹ <http://www.ncifap.org/reports/>

the committee is in the strongest position to carry such an inquiry out. We believe the information we set out in this response makes a strong case for why the planning policies need to be reviewed to improve the decision making process for intensive indoor dairy farm applications.

Yours faithfully,

Ian Woodhurst

Campaign Manager
World Animal Protection

World Animal Protection's response to points in the letter from the Minister for Housing and Regeneration to the Petitions Committee

Sustainable development

The Minister states in paragraph 3 of his letter:

The Welsh Government is seeking to stimulate the investment and innovation needed to create the conditions to support long-term economic growth in rural Wales. It will use the next Rural Development Programme (RDP) to increase sustainability, resilience and diversity, and manage our natural resources efficiently in order to create a more prosperous future for Wales. It will also seek to put in place conditions to allow farm businesses to grow, become more efficient and economically viable with less public financial support. The Welsh Government does not have a policy on the scale of a farming enterprise and will continue to support farms of all sizes.

World Animal Protection is pleased to read that the next Rural Development Programme will aim to increase sustainability, resilience and diversity and for natural resources to be managed more efficiently to create a more prosperous Wales. However, we are concerned that the Welsh Government could put into place measures that assist some farm businesses to grow into factory dairy farms, when there seems to be little evidence to support the positive impacts it is claimed these farms will bring to Wales. This is particularly worrying as we believe existing planning policy and guidance is unable to adequately take into account problems arising from the size and scale of factory dairy farms.

Planning Policy Wales Edition 6, February 2014 states: *"The planning system manages the development and use of land in the public interest, contributing to the achievement of sustainable development. It should reconcile the needs of development and conservation, securing economy, efficiency and amenity in the use of land, and protecting natural resources and the historic environment. A well functioning planning system is fundamental for sustainable development"*.

World Animal Protection is concerned that despite the statement above local authorities have not been able to fully take account of the impacts this type of farming system will have on achieving sustainable development. World Animal Protection believes it is in the public interest for the Welsh Government to undertake an urgent review of planning policies and guidance on factory dairy farms to ensure that they are fit for purpose.

Animal welfare

The Minister states in paragraph 6 of his letter:

The health and welfare requirements of farmed animals are no different in a herd or flock of 10 animals to that of 1000 animals. The infrastructure, husbandry and management practices will vary and differ in scale, but the need to provide the same minimum level of care remains - the legal minimum health and welfare requirements apply to both.

World Animal Protection is a global animal welfare charity that works with the United Nations, international institutions and national Governments around the world advising on animal welfare. We have significant concerns about animal welfare within factory dairy farms when compared to traditional pasture-based dairy farms, particularly in terms of the health of dairy cows and their ability to express natural behaviour.

It is important to recognise the fundamental differences in how cows are managed in factory dairy farms and traditional pasture based farms. Cows kept in cubicles are more prone to lameness and mastitis, and high culling rates are caused by animals being pushed to their physical limits to produce high milk yields which impacts on their fertility (Farm Animal Welfare Council 2009). O'Connell et al (1989)² found that cows kept indoors were more aggressive and fearful and that keeping cows in cubicles resulted in them being more restless and less tolerant of each other.

Planning Policies

In paragraph 7 of the Minister's letter, he states there are no specific references to dairy farming in Planning Policy Wales or TAN 6. It is for this reason World Animal Protection submitted the petition which is now being discussed.

² A Comparison of Dairy Cattle Behavioural Patterns at Pasture and during Confinement; J. O'Connell, P. S. Giller and W. Meaney; *Irish Journal of Agricultural Research*; Vol. 28, No. 1 (1989), pp. 65-72; Published by: [TEAGASC-Agriculture and Food Development Authority](#)

In terms of national planning guidance, Planning Policy Wales (PPW) and Technical Advice Note (TAN) 6 Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities provide planning guidance about rural and agricultural development; neither makes specific reference to dairy farming. However, it is considered that existing planning policy and advice provides sufficient flexibility to allow the issues raised by dairy farms (or other types of farm), both large and small, to be properly assessed and determined on their planning merits.

Local residents in the case studies we have compiled are still trying to influence decisions about granting retrospective planning permission and have told us the planning process has failed to address the impacts the farms are having on their lives. Local councillors have raised concerns about how one of the farms in our case studies has obtained planning permission over time which has led to the current size and problems with the farm but consider there is nothing that can be done. Natural Resources Wales does not appear to recognise there is a problem and has not asked for environmental assessments for the farm, although it has been implicated and fined for pollution incidents. There does not appear to be any formal agency policy or guidelines in place able to deal with the problems caused by factory dairy farms and we believe this should be a serious concern for the Welsh Government as the trend for these farms continues to grow.

Environment, amenity and noise

The Minister states in paragraph 9 of his letter:

Local planning authorities are required to ensure that the economic benefits associated with a proposed development are understood, and that these are given equal consideration with social and environmental issues. PPW indicates that planning policies for economic development must provide developers and others with scope to make choices to secure the efficient and effective use of resources and land. The expansion of existing businesses located in the open countryside should be supported provided there are no unacceptable impacts on local amenity.

The definition of amenity is the pleasant or normally satisfactory aspects of a location which contribute to its overall character and its enjoyment by residents or visitors. A number of residents who live close to two existing factory dairy farms told our researchers that they believe their local amenity has been seriously compromised (please see quotes from case studies).

In one of the case studies where permission was granted retrospectively, a noise survey was not carried out. Residents have told us they are being kept awake all

night by traffic and operational noise at the farm and there is increased traffic on the roads during the day. This is contrary to the benefits stated in the planning application for the slurry lagoon at the farm which said there would be a reduction in traffic. The capacity of the slurry lagoon might have been sufficient when the farm had a herd of 1,150 as stated in the planning application but we believe this has been exceeded by at least 1,000 cows. The result is a convoy of large tankers shipping the waste from the farm every day causing traffic to increase not decrease.

Economic benefits

The Minister states In paragraph 10 of his letter:

Technical Advice Note 6 states that strong rural economies are essential to support sustainable and vibrant rural economies. A strong rural economy can help to promote social inclusion and provide the financial resources necessary to support local services and maintain attractive and diverse natural environments and landscapes.

In light of the evidence World Animal Protection has collected in relation to existing factory dairy farms, we question the extent to which these farms are supporting local services or maintaining attractive and diverse natural environments and landscapes. An attractive environment is not only important for local residents but for tourism as well. Tourism in Wales in 2013 was estimated as being worth £6.9billion. Factory dairy farms can damage local landscape character and also pollute the environment and this could prove costly to the local tourist economy.

Additionally, there is concern even amongst the farming community that large based factory dairy farms will damage the economic viability of traditional dairy farms. Farmers Union of Wales Dairy Committee Chairman, Eifion Huws said in 2010³: “The size of the average dairy herd in Wales is around 75, so it does not take a genius to work out that a single super-dairy milking three thousand cattle could take the place of forty average sized family farms. It also seems inevitable that the ability of super-dairies to supply large volumes will lead to those who supply more modest volumes being accused of being ‘inefficient’ and receiving a lower milk price as a result. ”

The statement from agricultural economics expert Prof Ikerd at the Planning Inquiry into the Lower Leighton Farm planning application provides further information

³ <http://www.fuw.org.uk/read-press-release/items/610.html>

about the economic impacts that large factory dairy farms have had on smaller farms in America. Given that the US has the most established intensive indoor dairy farming infrastructure, it is worth giving some consideration to understanding the consequences of giving permission to build more intensive indoor dairy farms, despite the differences in the Welsh and American economic landscapes.

World Animal Protection believes pasture grazing can be a key way to keep overheads low and keep farmers resilient to volatile price fluctuations. In the Republic of Ireland, the Moorepark Institute – one of the world's leading dairy research centres which specialises in pasture based systems of milk production – is helping dairy farmers anticipate the production needs of the industry and develop sustainable systems of milk production that will give a competitive edge in a global market.

This is particularly important in terms of food security. Encouraging a farming system that requires the use of feed crops on land that could be used to grow crops to feed humans is a false economy, when there is good quality grazing pasture already available in Wales.

Pollutants and Waste

Factory farming of livestock (including pig and poultry) is acknowledged as being responsible for releasing pollutants into the environment. As well as dust, odour and noise these include:

- ammonia
- nutrients from manure, litter and slurry
- effluent discharges

Intensive factory pig and poultry farms are regulated under the Environmental Permitting Regulations (EPR). These were formerly called the Pollution Prevention and Control (PPC) Regulations. However factory dairy farms do not need a special licence to operate, despite being responsible for releasing similar types and quantities of pollutants into the environment.

World Animal Protection has been unable to find documentation showing that the Environment Agency has conducted formal environmental assessments (including assessing waste and pollution issues) for the planning applications for two of our

case study farms. World Animal Protection believes to protect human health, and the environment factory dairy farms should at the very least be regulated under EPR regulations in line with pig and poultry farms.

This is particularly important for one of our case study farms which submitted a waste management plan to the local authority based on 1,600 cows being housed on the farm. In February last year the owner of the farm told a global dairy summit that the herd had grown to 2,150 cows plus around 1,000 young stock. Although the farm has now exceeded the number of cows by an additional 1,000 cows for the current waste management plan, no new plan for how the extra slurry will be disposed of safely has been submitted to the local authority.

The farm has also been implicated in several pollution incidents relating to slurry spreading and water contamination. When asked by our researchers the Environment Agency said that it had – between August 2008 and March 2011 – substantiated *'five pollution incidents in a nearby river, two of them categorised as being 'significant'*. The Agency said that a water course near the farm contained 'elevated levels of organic material' causing excessive 'algal growth', a possible contributor to 'fish failure' in the wider catchment.

Human Health

As stated by the local residents in the case studies they have experienced an increase in ill health. They have stated that they believe this is due to high concentrations of the same pollutants that arise from factory pig and poultry farms which include ammonia, nutrients from manure, litter and slurry, effluent discharges, dust, odour and noise.

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) states that one cow can produce the same amount of waste as 40 people⁴. As noted above one of the case study farms currently houses over 2,000 cows which means it produces on a daily basis the waste equivalent of 80,000 people, or a town twice the size of Caerphilly.

⁴ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (2004) Risk management evaluation for concentrated animal feeding operations US EPA National Risk Management Laboratory.

Local residents living near our case studies have told World Animal Protection about the strong odours that are emitted from the farms and the impacts this has had on their health and wellbeing, including high levels of ammonia which is suspected of causing conjunctivitis, and inhibiting respiratory function leading to a rise in incidences of asthma.

This reinforces our belief that through environmental assessments and comprehensive waste management plans are essential for making informed planning decisions, even for retrospective planning applications in order to help protect the health of local communities. However, we are concerned that the then Environment Agency and local authorities did not appear to believe such assessments were required even though human health and public safety are material planning considerations.

World Animal Protection recommendations

World Animal Protection is seriously concerned about the instances of inconsistent planning decisions we have found being made about factory dairy farms across Wales.

The Minister states in paragraph 11 of his letter:

- ✓ Planning Policy Wales Chapter 7 Economic Development was revised in November 2012, and TAN 6 was revised in July 2010. I do not feel it is necessary to review or make changes to PPW or TAN 6 at this point in time, and have not been provided with specific evidence to suggest otherwise.

World Animal Protection hopes the research we have conducted into factory dairy farms and our findings from the case studies will lead the Minister to reconsider his position that a review of Planning Policy Wales and planning guidance, for example TAN 6 is unnecessary.

We believe an essential first step is for the Petitions Committee to hold an inquiry into what improvements can be made to planning policy and guidance, so that the impacts of these farms on local communities and their environment can be ameliorated.

APPENDIX A – CASE STUDIES OF THREE INTENSIVE INDOOR DAIRY FARMS IN WALES

Case study 1

World Animal Protection researchers spoke to local residents impacted by the expansion of a large intensive indoor dairy farm in 2013 and 2014. The farm was once a traditional grazing farm with about 200 cows. Residents said they never had any problems with the farm until it reached a herd size of 500. The farm now has over 2,000 cows kept on a zero grazed system. Each expansion of the farm has been done without planning permission. Permission has been sought retrospectively after the buildings had been constructed.

At the last council meeting to decide the latest retrospective planning application in October 2013, local councillors commented that had the plans been presented in full, planning permission would probably not have been approved. One councillor commented that planning is being "held over a barrel" with no respect for the Planning Committee.

The farm owner failed to meet the planning conditions of one of the first retrospective applications. However the local authority failed to enforce the conditions. A letter from the Head of Planning at the local authority dated 18 April 2013 following a visit to the farm, states that at least four conditions were not met and were therefore breached. However, nothing was done about this and instead another building was erected to house calves and again, planning was granted retrospectively.

One of the local residents we spoke to said that a Memoranda of Understanding between the farm and the local community action group was drawn up and agreed in 2011. One of the key agreements reached between the two parties was that the farm owner would not increase the herd size beyond 1800 cows +/-5% at any time.

This number has already been exceeded and the local community action group representative expressed concern at the time of the 2011 meeting with the farm owner that the community was alarmed by rumours of his intention to increase to a herd size of up to 3,000.

Mrs X said:

“I personally feel that we are a little island here. Nobody helps us. We have to be aggressive to protect ourselves, and it shouldn’t be like that. There’s a ring of protection around this farm, and there has been from the word go.”

“Because of the intensive rearing, they are fed high protein feeds, so the slurry is absolutely horrific – I’ve never smelt anything like it. It’s an unnatural smell. We can’t open the windows. People are having problems with their eyes.”

“The slurry is coming into our stream, into our water courses.”

Mr Y said:

“The noise during the night can be intolerable. There are feed machines, tractors beeping and reversing. You become accustomed to general noise, but when somebody starts shouting, it wakes you up. At 2.30am, we are awake. We go back to sleep, then we are woken again at 5am.”

“When there was a public meeting for concerned residents, [the owner of the farm] gathered together all the farm boys, all his contacts. These are people who are selling him feed, transporting milk, nobody who lives here. So the people who live here and wanted to speak, couldn’t. The atmosphere was quite menacing. They have no respect for people who have lived in this area their whole lives, and are now suffering.”

Mrs Z said:

“All we hear is rattle, rattle, rattle of lorries going past. We get noise from the farm 24 hours too. It’s wearing. You lie in bed and hear the noise. I don’t sleep very well.”

“I feel that there’s nobody in authority that we can talk to. However much we shout, we are shouting to deaf ears.”

“I was hospitalised 10 times last year. I’ve got a heart condition and I’ve got asthma. I don’t know whether it’s pollution that triggers it off, but I’ve lived here for 40 years and it’s got noticeably worse.”

Case study 2

A local campaign group formed to fight the planning application for a two acre slurry lagoon.

Dr Y, a local GP and one of the community campaign members who opposed the slurry lagoon had a range of fears about the lagoon including the threat to human health. From his letter to the local authority Dr Y highlighted the two main concerns related to the large amount of waste to be stored in the slurry lagoon as dangerous bacteria and potentially harmful gas emissions. Dr Y gave evidence to show how local people had been suffering from ammonia conjunctivitis – due to ammonia from slurry spreading, something that has happened to local residents living near to two other intensive indoor dairy farms.

The application for the slurry lagoon was eventually turned down. However, the larger slurry lagoon at the case study 3 farm was approved.

Case study 3

Mrs A bought an old rectory which is a Grade II listed building and lives there with her family. The next door farm was a traditional dairy farm with somewhere in the region of 250 cows. Since then the farm has more than trebled in size, both in acreage and herd size.

Between late 2008 and early 2009, some very large sheds were erected at the farm without planning permission. In July 2010 Mrs A was notified by the local authority about an application to build a large slurry lagoon less than 200 metres from the front of her home and approximately 180 metres from the boundary.

The application was granted and since then Mrs A has been living with the environmental and health impacts.

Mrs A 12th July 2012:

"In mid-May my daughter had a Respiratory Tract Infection (RTI) with a bad eye infection, she had to have time off work, she had a five day course of antibiotic drops for her eyes, followed by a five day course of oral antibiotics, because the drops didn't clear the eye infection, within 24 hours of finishing the antibiotics, her eyes were red and sore again, so back to the eye drops. The Doctor she saw didn't discount the possibility of odourless gasses or airborne bacteria coming from the slurry lagoon as being a possible cause.

"Her eyes are still not better, she has also seen an optician, who asked her to go back 2 weeks later if her eyes were still bad, after that 2 weeks she (optician) referred her to an eye specialist, who she chose to see privately because of the time factor. He said she had clusters of virus in one eye and virus and bacteria in the other. If she's not better in a couple of months, go back and see him again. Her eyes are still red and sore, especially by evening.

"My son had the same sort of infection, he also had time off work, his eyes are not 100% but he hasn't been seen by anyone other than the Doctor initially to get antibiotics, same pattern, drops, followed by oral, back to drops again. It is only since their infections that I realised it was exactly the same as I had had earlier in the year. Both my children are teachers, neither of whom like taking time off."

However despite objections the planning officer recommended that planning permission for the large slurry lagoon at the farm should be granted.

CONCLUSION

- **It is accepted that the proposed development is required for the continued and improved operation of the existing farm complex. The siting of the proposal is appropriate, being well related to the farm complex. It is not considered that the proposal will result in any significant adverse impacts in terms of visual amenity and the amenity of neighbouring occupiers. There will no adverse impact upon the setting of the Listed Building and as such the proposal complies with the requirements of the relevant policies. It is recommended that planning permission should be forthcoming.**

The Conservation Officer stated to Mrs A that he has never been informed of any planning applications at the farm and that neither his objections nor those of Mrs A had ever been lodged. Due to its close proximity to the Grade II listed church and

house he should have been consulted as all heritage assets are accorded statutory protection under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Mrs A pursued her complaints against the local authority to the Ombudsman which found in her favour. The report summary stated:

'The complainant complained about the grant of planning consent for a slurry lagoon on a farm adjacent to her property, and the retrospective grant of consent for unauthorised agricultural buildings. She said that the Council had not taken adequate account of the adverse effects of the development, in particular the slurry lagoon, would have on her amenity.

The Ombudsman found that there were errors in the Council's handling of the slurry lagoon application, including the failure to identify the unauthorised buildings and the failure to ensure comments on the development were recorded on the file. He considered the recordings contained on the file to be inadequate, meaning there was no clarity about the way in which the Council categorised the development for environmental impact purposes.

The Ombudsman also found that the information submitted with the application for the retention of the agricultural buildings was inadequate, and there was an apparent lack of detailed scrutiny of the application, as evidenced by the scarcity of information contained in the file.

The Ombudsman recommended that the Council should review its procedures and its record-keeping, as well as apologising to 'Mrs A' and paying her £1000 in recognition of the distress she had suffered and the time and trouble to which she had been put in pursuing her complaint. The Council accepted the Ombudsman's recommendations.'

The Head of Planning at the local authority said in a letter to Mrs A that:

"The detailed finding of the ombudsman has identified procedural deficiencies, as well as failure in some respects to follow existing procedures. I am very aware of the importance of learning lessons from this experience so that we minimise the

risk of similar failings in the future. To this end relevant officers have been briefed on the importance of following agreed procedure...”

P-04-521 Regulating Caravan Sites

Petition wording:

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to investigate whether legislation relating to safety of holiday and residential caravan parks in Wales is adequate and/or properly enforced. If not, we urge the Welsh Government to take appropriate action. We are especially concerned about the following safety hazards:

1. The space between caravans;
2. The storage of bottled gas; and
3. The siting of caravans and other combustible structures in the 3 metre clear area round the site boundary.

All of these examples present safety risks which do not appear to be adequately enforced at present.

Petition raised by: Brian Silvester

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 10 December 2013

Number of signatures: 37

Lesley Griffiths AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Llywodraeth Leol a Busnes y Llywodraeth
Minister for Local Government and Government Business



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-521
Ein cyf/Our ref LG/00477/14

William Powell AM

committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

// June 2014

Dear Bill

Thank you for your letter of 30 April on behalf of the Petitions Committee in relation to the petition from Brian Silvester, which calls for the Welsh Government to investigate whether legislation relating to the safety of holiday and residential caravan parks in Wales, is adequate and properly enforced.

Responsibility for enforcement of standards at 'Y Fron' caravan park rests with Ceredigion County Council and the Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRA) and in the case of 'Y Fron' caravan park, Mid and West Wales FRA. Both of these bodies have sector competence in this field and are well placed to respond to matters concerning the application of standards and guidance.

Fire safety at caravan sites is covered by the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (RRO), for which the Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRA) are the enforcing body.

I have been informed by Mid and West Wales FRA they are already aware of the issues contained in the petition and have consulted on these issues with the Council. I am assured by Mid and West Wales FRA following an inspection of the site by a Fire Safety Inspector, 'Y Fron' caravan site conforms to the RRO.

I have seen Carl Sargeant's AM letter (CS/0009/14) to you of January this year. I confirm neither I, or my officials are aware of any evidence the regulations governing fire safety on holiday or residential mobile home sites is either inadequate or not being enforced.

Regards

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

Lesley Griffiths AC / AM

Y Gweinidog Llywodraeth Leol a Busnes y Llywodraeth
Minister for Local Government and Government Business

The representative body of the parks industry including
caravans, chalets, lodges, park homes, tents and
all types of self catering accommodation.

By email to Stephen.George@wales.gov.uk



William Powell AC/AM
Chair
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28 May 2014

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Dear Mr Powell,

Re: Petition P-04—521 Regulating Caravan Sites

Thank you for your letter of 30 April and the accompanying correspondence.

The petition seeks an investigation whether safety legislation for holiday and residential caravan parks is adequate and/or properly enforced. In response, we question the basis for the petition's assertion of 'safety risks which do not appear to be adequately enforced at present' as we are unaware of evidence of uncontrolled hazards giving rise to accidents/incidents on parks in Wales

In his letter of January 2014, the Minister for Housing and Regeneration explains that caravan parks fall within the scope of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. In common with other businesses, caravan parks' obligations under the order include to:

- carry out a fire risk assessment
- consider who may be at risk
- reduce the risk from fire as far as is reasonably possible and provide general fire precautions to deal with any risk remaining
- ensure any flammable or explosive materials are properly stored.

The petition's concerns should therefore be addressed through appropriate enforcement of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. We note the letter from Ceredigion County Council of 10 February 2014 confirming the adequacy of the fire risk assessment in respect of Y Fron.

With my good wishes

Ros Pritchard
Director General



President:
Professor
David Bellamy OBE

Director General:
Ros Pritchard OBE
MBA, BA(Hons), DipM, FTS



Member, European Federation
of Campsite Organisations
& Holiday Park Associations

Registered Office - as above. Registered No 713398 England.



Mr Steven George
Committee Clerk
Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Stephen.George@wales.gov.uk

Gofynner am/
Please ask for:

Deputy Chief Fire Officer
P Bates

Rhif Est/Extn. No.

4402

E-bost/E-mail:

p.bates@mawwfire.gov.uk

Fy Nghyf/My Ref:

PB/MT

Eich Cyf/Your Ref:

Dyddiad/Date:

10 June 2014

Dear Mr George

Petition P-04-521: Regulating Caravan Sites

I write in response to the letter dated 30th April 2014 written by Mr William Powell AM requesting our views on the above. Please accept my apologies for the delay in my reply.

Over the past three years, Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service (M&WWFRS) has received and dealt with a significant amount of correspondence from the petitioner- Mr Sylvester over his grievance with Y Fron Caravan Park, Ceredigion including matters such as the spacing between caravans, the storage of bottled gas and the siting of caravans relative to boundaries. Despite our investigations and numerous detailed responses, Mr Sylvester refuses to accept our explanations. The following is a summary of a briefing we provided to the Assistant Fire Advisor to Welsh Government, but should you require more detailed information, we hold a comprehensive file on the matter.

Mr & Mrs Lloyd run two neighbouring caravan parks in Borth that form part of 'Y Fron Leisure Ltd'. They are responsible persons who take much pride in their business. They have invested heavily in the business and have recently erected and opened a new clubhouse at one of their sites, Brynrodyn. Y Fron Caravan site shares a boundary with a number of private dwellings. One such property is 'Braeside' owned by a Mr Bryan Sylvester.

Over the years, Mr Sylvester has made a number of complaints to Ceredigion County Council in relation to the proximity of holiday caravans to these properties including his own. His main concern has always been that of fire spread. He has also, in the past, complained about the location of the refuse collection point as well as safety issues relating to Liquefied Petroleum Gas bottles on site. Site inspections by Health and Safety officers have not revealed any issues in this respect.

The proximity matter has been an issue for Mr Sylvester for many years. He has argued that the Local Authority is under a duty to enforce its licensing conditions which state that a 3 metre gap shall be maintained between any 'vans and a boundary'. There has previously been controversy as to whether or not any such condition could be imposed on caravan parks as it would not appear that the previous administration consulted properly with the trade as required under Section 5 of the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960. The model conditions have always recommended that a 3 metre distance is maintained between 'vans and boundaries'. Some local authorities including Cardiganshire District Council, no doubt with good intent, sought to impose this condition on caravan parks, sometimes as mentioned, without having proper regard to the consultation process.

Eventually, in September 2011, the Lloyds turned to specialist solicitors, Tozers, for legal advice in relation to their position.

Tozers wrote to Ceredigion County Council's Licensing Section requesting that the site licence be varied under Section 8 of the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 so that the condition relating to boundary distance be removed as it was of no effect insofar as it related to fire safety matters as the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 had effectively rendered any licence condition relating to fire related matters void. Ceredigion Council having had discussions with the Fire Service and with neighbouring local authorities on the matter, sought the advice of Counsel and in view of Counsel's opinion, it was decided to grant a new licence for 'Y Fron' with the condition relating to boundary distance being removed.

It should be noted that in accordance with the provisions of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, the site owners have prepared a fire risk assessment that is acceptable to the Fire Service.

Mr Mark Williams MP, Mr William Powell AM, Councillor Ray Quant, County Councillor and Mr Sylvester were advised of the outcome and that this concluded the matter insofar as the Licensing Section of the Authority was concerned. Mr Sylvester immediately responded in writing indicating that he would not accept the situation and that the Authority will be hearing further from him. None of his neighbours have had reason to complain.

This matter has been before the Local Government Ombudsman on two separate occasions and on both those occasions the Ombudsman has found in favour of the local authority.

We have investigated the matter fully following complaints made to M&WWFRS and after numerous e-mails and phone calls we corresponded with several people to clarify the legal situation.

Mr Sylvester continued to correspond with M&WWFRS prompting our Head of Business Fire Safety to send a final letter in February 2014 stating that the matter was closed.

I would summarise the salient points as follows:

- 1) The Caravan Site was adjacent to Mr Sylvester's property when he purchased his property in 1989 and the first correspondence relating to his complaints of the boundary breaches did not occur until 2000/2001.
- 2) Since that time Mr Sylvester has made numerous complaints to various bodies including M&WWFRS all of whom have failed to uphold his complaint.
- 3) There has been a new Site Licence and Conditions issued which have removed the boundary requirements.
- 4) The Site comes under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and as such has been audited by M&WWFRS and deemed to be compliant.
- 5) The owners of the site have provided a fire safety risk assessment that has been deemed suitable and sufficient.
- 6) There is no caravan adjacent to Mr Sylvester's property only a storage chalet type building.

In relation to the details of the petition we do not accept that these safety risks are not being adequately enforced.

Yours sincerely



P Bates
Deputy Chief Fire Officer

P-04-521 Regulating Caravan Sites – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Clerking Team, 19.06.2014.

Further to the other documents sent, I now make the following notes for consideration by the Committee.

The bodies who deal with the caravan sites are required to give regard to the model standards in respect of the conditions of the license provided by the Minister.

The Fire and Rescue Service have accepted that the fire risk assessment overrides those conditions but failed to provide a copy of the document which might explain how the fire risk under the conditions of the license is no longer a fire risk under the risk assessment without any physical changes on the site layout.

The use of LPG cylinders does not comply with the regulations under their use in gas law and Gassafe should be consulted. The local authority with others has decided that the conditions of the site license can be ignored which might be a breach of Health and Safety Legislation in respect of caravans sited against the boundary which restricts avenues of escape for users of the vans. Access for dealing with fires is also restricted. The fire risk to adjoining properties is also compromised.

The rights of owners of property adjoining the site boundary are affected by the failure of the Authority to consult about the changes which is a contravention of the 1960 Act where the public at large could be affected and the three meter gap is also to ensure privacy for adjoining owners of property.

The Fire and Rescue Service should be ordered to produce their records and reports for incidents of caravan fires throughout Wales. There have been many reports in the press and news on these fires and loss of life.

I also question the right of Authorities to alter, ignore or omit sections of the model standards which are part of legislation approved by Parliament.

This document was originally handwritten, however due to publication purposes it is being presented as a typed document.

Agenda Item 3.5

P-04-540 Stop Sexism In Domestic Abuse

Petition wording:

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to stop Domestic Abuse (DA) by treating it as a gender inclusive and human phenomenon in which many men and women share both suffering and responsibility.

Practical NOT Politics

The current proposal blames men, and only men, for all violence and puts a radical gender based prejudice before the real needs of women, men and children and where 97% of men do NOT fit this profile.

Fear of repercussions and lack of publicity in Wales have prevented open and vocal dissent.

This Petition invites an alternative approach that recognises that 86% of DA is the responsibility of both women and men. It also offers greater protection to children and removes the discrimination that arises solely from radical gendered prejudice against those people in same sex female relationships.

Petition raised by: Healing Men

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 11 March 2014

Number of signatures: 238

Lesley Griffiths AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Llywodraeth Leol a Busnes y Llywodraeth
Minister for Local Government and Government Business



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

William Powell AM
Chair Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales

21 May 2014

Dear Bill,

Petition – P-04-540 Stop Sexism in Domestic Abuse

The petition considered by the Petitions Committee on 11 March 2014 relates to the Welsh Government's policies on domestic abuse. Committee has invited my views on the petition, particularly on whether the forthcoming legislation will address any of the issues in the petition.

The Welsh Government undertook a White Paper consultation on policy and legislative proposals aimed at tackling violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence between November 2012 and February 2013. A total of 147 consultation responses were received, with strong support for the proposals. A summary report, together with the consultation responses, can be found on the Welsh Government's website at the link below:

<http://wales.gov.uk/consultations/people-and-communities/vawwhitepaper/?status=closed&lang=en>

The response of all respondents to the consultation, including a response from the petitioner, have been used to inform the development of legislation, which the Welsh Government plans to introduce to the National Assembly in June this year. As the Bill is yet to be introduced, I am unable to provide detailed information on the content of the Bill at this stage.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

*Wedi'i argraffu ar bapur wedi'i ailgylchu (100%)
paper*

English Enquiry Line 0845 010 3300
Llinell Ymholiadau Cymraeg 0845 010 4400
Correspondence.lesley.Griffiths@wales.gsi.gov.uk
Printed on 100% recycled

However, it is important to highlight the Welsh Government remains committed to supporting all victims of such abuse and violence. However, we recognise in Wales, consistent with the rest of the world, women are disproportionately impacted by all forms of intimate violence. Statistics from the 2012/13 Crime Survey for England and Wales self-completion module on intimate violence, asked of adults aged 16 to 59 show:

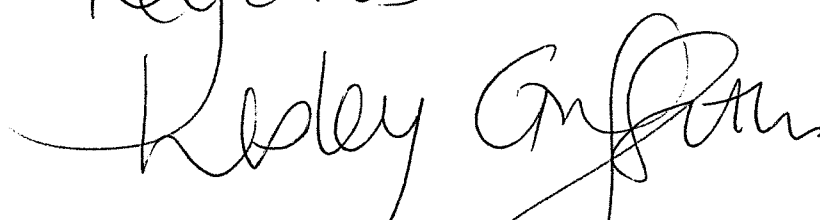
- 7.1% of women and 4.4% of men reported having experienced any type of domestic abuse (inclusive of sexual violence) in 2012/13. These figures have been estimated as equivalent to 1,151,000 female victims and 721,000 male victims in England and Wales.
- Overall 30.0% of women and 16.3% of men had experienced domestic abuse since the age of 16. These figures were equivalent to an estimated 4.9 million female and 2.7 million male victims.
- 2.0% of women and 0.5% of men who had experienced some form of sexual assault (including attempts) in 2012/13. This is equivalent to an estimated 331,000 female victims and 75,000 male victims.
- 19.1% of women and 2.7% of men who had experienced some form of sexual assault (including attempts) since the age of 16. This is equivalent to an estimated 3.1 million female victims and 451,000 male victims.

Further to these stark statistics, the Welsh Government recognises and agrees with the Council of Europe (Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence) regarding the gendered nature of domestic abuse and sexual violence. The fact perpetrators are predominantly men and victims mostly women, recognising this, as not only violations of human rights, but also forms of gender-based discrimination.

Whilst the Welsh Government recognises the disproportionate impact on women, as stated above, we remain committed to supporting all victims of such violence and abuse and this will be reflected in the forthcoming Bill.

I would further like to clarify a point in the petition document, which incorrectly attributes a quote to the Welsh Government regarding the link between masculinity and violence. This statement was not made by the Welsh Government. It is a quote from an independent Task and Finish Group Report provided to the Welsh Government to inform the policy development underpinning the Bill. In conclusion, I do not consider the petition accurately reflects either the position of the Welsh Government or the widely evidenced disproportionate impact of domestic abuse on women.

Regards



Lesley Griffiths AC /AM

Y Gweinidog Llywodraeth Leol a Busnes y Llywodraeth
Minister for Local Government and Government Business

William Powell AC/AM
Chair, Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
CARDIFF
CF99 1NA

25th June 2014.

Dear Mr Powell,

Petition P-04-540 Stop Sexism in Domestic Abuse

I refer to the letter from Ms Lesley Griffiths AC/AM dated 21st of May 2014 in connection with the above petition and I thank the Minister for her response and for confirming the Welsh government's (WG) commitment to supporting all victims of domestic abuse and violence (DA). There are concerns, however, that the Minister's response does not address certain key issues as described below.

Healing Men's Petition (HMP) refers to domestic abuse (DA) and the intimate personal nature of this phenomenon. The forthcoming legislation was originally entitled Domestic Abuse (Wales) Bill before it was radicalised by the Task and Finish Group (TFG) and adopted by the WG. This response is focused on that element that constitutes the original pre-radicalised concept of the new legislation i.e. domestic abuse in Wales.

DA is universally understood to be a complex phenomenon involving intimate personal relationships. The radicalised ideology put forward by the TFG divides the entire 7,000,000,000+ population of the world into two groups regardless of country, culture, situations, circumstances, age, history and any personal factors etc and then goes on to discriminate against one group as a violent stereotype and stereotypes the other group as non-violent – purely, and only, on the basis of a person's sex. An ideology framed in this way cannot hope to effectively recognise the subtleties and complexities of the intimate human relationships involved in DA in Wales. It is simply too crude and insensitive. It is old fashioned and backward facing, based in radicalised theories from the 1960s that are becoming increasingly discredited. The world has moved on in the last 50 years.

There is a hidden crisis as a result of these radicalised ideologies and that is the huge scale of under-reporting of DA by men. The barriers that men face include cultural, societal, institutional, lack of awareness, shame, profound shame and the fear of being shamed and other personal and gender issues. Some men stay with, and do not report, violent and abusive partners because they love them and want things to get better. They also stay to take the abuse and violence on themselves in order to protect their children from abuse. Men fear reporting DA from a female partner because radicalised and institutionalised sexism (TFG; “*..masculinity is associated with violence..*”) may well blame the man and arbitrarily exclude him from his partner, his children and his home.

The two sets of DA statistics quoted by the Minister start to come into line when the huge scale of this under-reporting is taken into account and the prevalence of DA starts to come into something like parity between the sexes. The use of severe force tends to mitigate the effect of under-reporting and, of those that suffered partner abuse in 2012/13, proportionately more men (34%) suffered from severe force than women (28%) (*ONS BCS Focus on Violent Crime and Sexual Offences 2012/13 <http://tinyurl.com/nb4xga>; Table 4.11*). Research shows that suicide among men after suffering the effects of DA brings the deaths attributable to DA into approximate parity between the sexes.

The Equality Act 2010 and the WG's Gender Equality Duty requires the WG to ensure that an individual (as distinct from groups) is not discriminated against because of a protected characteristic i.e. this woman is not treated differently from this man because of her sex. Thus the prevalence, or otherwise, experienced by a group is not the issue under this legislation as it is one person's experience of discrimination that is the criterion. Although the Minister confirms the WG's support for all victims of DA, the Minister does not confirm that all victims of DA will be treated with equality regardless of that person's protected characteristics i.e. sex and/or sexual orientation. The current legal view is that the WG is already exposed to legal action by its adoption of the radicalised TFG Report but this is being in abeyance pending a detailed review of the proposed new legislation.

The Minister's response does not address the most important issue raised in the HMP and that is the protection of girls and boys from all instances of witnessing abuse or being abused themselves regardless of the sex of the instigator of the abuse. Boys and girls are at three times the risk when both parents are abusive, underlining the need to recognise all forms of abuse especially when it is bi-directional and girls and boys are also involved.

It can be shown that some 75% to 100% of both male and female instigators of DA witnessed or experienced abuse as children and were traumatised or assimilated this as acceptable or "normal" domestic behaviour. All incidents of DA must be recognised and addressed, especially where boys and girls are involved, if the WG is to succeed in its aim of reducing DA in Wales. Explicitly and specifically in response to the Minister's letter, this must include recognising the true extent and prevalence of DA that is instigated by abusive and violent women on their partners (of either sex) and any girls and boys that may be associated within the relationship.

The Minister does "not consider the petition (*treating [DA] ... as a gender inclusive and human phenomenon in which many men and women share both suffering and responsibility*) accurately reflects ... the position of the Welsh government ...". However, the direct budgetary costs of DA in Wales run into £millions every year with the indirect costs to the Welsh economy said to be far greater. DA in Wales will be actively perpetuated by the WG until all causes of DA are recognised and responded to effectively and intergenerational transmission effectively disrupted.

The forthcoming legislation provides the Assembly with the opportunity urge the WG in the strongest possible terms to move on from an outmoded, insensitive and radicalised ideology and to frame new forward facing legislation based on equality, humanity and fairness in order to;

- Address all incidence of DA regardless of the sex of the instigator
- Equally support and protect all victims regardless of that person's sex
- Intervene effectively where there are girls and boys present to break the cycle of intergenerational transmission of learned abusive and violent behaviours.

Thank you very much for your kind consideration.

Please let me know if I can provide any further information or clarification to assist the Committee in its consideration of my Petition.

Yours sincerely,

Tony Stott

Healing Men

P-04-544 Ban the Shooting of Greenland White-fronted Geese

Petition wording:

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to reverse their decision not to ban the shooting of an endangered species, the Greenland White-fronted goose, meaning that Wales remains the only country on the flight path of this endangered species where they can still be legally shot and killed. Scientific evidence has shown that the species is extremely vulnerable to hunting pressures. In their consultation report, the Welsh Government also admit that failure to take appropriate steps to reduce as far as possible Greenland White-fronted geese adult mortality could be seen as a failure to meet conservation obligations. Unlike Scotland, Ireland, Iceland and Greenland there is no current ban on the shooting and killing of this endangered bird in Wales. A voluntary ban is in place on part of the Dyfi estuary in Wales but there is evidence that the geese also use other areas away from the estuary in mid and North Wales where no voluntary agreements are in place.

The population of these geese, as a whole, is declining and they have been of conservation concern since the late 1970s when sharp declines triggered protection from hunting on their wintering grounds. They receive heavy statutory protection. However, since the mid 1990s the population has again declined sharply. While WOS has acknowledged that long running voluntary bans on shooting are in place at some wetlands such as the Dyfi Estuary, it believes that nothing less than a statutory ban on shooting will ensure its protection. The society is concerned that any voluntary ban could be lifted at any time and that the current approach does not cover all the sites where this declining subspecies spends the winter.

Petition raised by: Aaron Davies

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 29 April 2014

Number of signatures: 240



Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-544
Ein cyf/Our ref AD-/00911/14
William Powell AC
Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor Deisebau
Tŷ Hywel
Bae Caerdydd
Caerdydd
CF99 1NA

10 Mehefin 2014

Acwyd 15:14,

Deiseb P-04-544 Gwahardd Saethu Gwyddau Talcenwyn yr Ynys Las

Diolch yn fawr am eich llythyr dyddiedig 30 Mai ynghylch yr uchod. Rwyf eisoes yn gyfarwydd â'r safbwyntiau a fynegir am y ddeiseb hon ac fe'u cymerais i ystyriaeth y llynedd yn dilyn yr ymgynghoriad cyhoeddus ar y pwnc hwn. Yn hytrach na chyflwyno deddfwriaeth i wahardd saethu ar draws Cymru gyfan, penderfynais gymeradwyo'r moratoriwm gwirfoddol presennol ar saethu yn Aberoedd Afonau Dyfi, Dysynni a Mawddach. Rwyf hefyd wedi ymdrechu i ehangu'r moratoriwm ac annog partneriaid i weithio gyda'i gilydd i wella'r amodau ar lawr gwlad i'r adar mudol hyn.

Yr unig safle arwyddocaol i Wyddau Talcenwyn yr Ynys Las (GTYL) yng Nghymru yw Aber Afon Dyfi, sydd wedi ddynodi'n Ardal Gwarchodaeth Arbennig (AGA) ar gyfer y rhywogaeth hon o dan Gyfarwyddeb Adar yr UE. Mae'r gwyddau'n hedfan dros rannau o Ynys Môn a Gogledd-orllewin Cymru wrth fudo yno.

Mae fy swyddogion wedi bod yn gweithio gyda Phanel Ymgynghorol Rheoli Adar Dŵr Dyfi sy'n cynnwys cynrychiolwyr o gymdeithasau Adar Dŵr Gogledd a Gorllewin Cymru, yr RSPB a Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru. Mae'r Panel wedi cyflwyno nifer o gamau gweithredu eleni, gan gynnwys y canlynol:

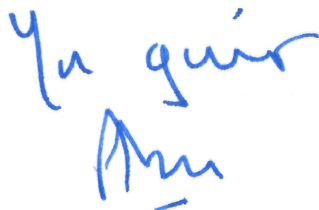
- 1) Gwella'r dulliau o gofnodi a rhannu data;
 - i) Datblygwyd a darparwyd taflenni penodol ar gyfer cofnodi'r GTYL a welir yng Nghymru. Caiff y taflenni hyn eu cyflwyno i Gymdeithas Saethu a Chadwraeth Prydain eu cydgasglu.

- ii) Rhannu'r data newydd hyn a'u cyfuno gyda data cyfredol a hanesyddol yr RSPB er mwyn sicrhau bod y cynigion i reoli cynefinoedd yn canolbwyntio ar y dystiolaeth orau sydd ar gael o dueddiadau ymddygiad yr adar.
- 2) Gwella'r ddealltwriaeth o'r berthynas rhwng y safleoedd clwydo craidd a thirlun ehangach Cymru;
- i) Datblygwyd a chyflwynwyd cynigion ar gyfer tracio GTYL yn electronig y gaeaf nesaf.
- 3) Ehangu'r moratoriwm;
- i) Ehangwyd y moratoriwm gwirfoddol i gynnwys holl sefydliadau Hela Adar Dŵr Cymru sydd ar lwybrau hedfan GTYL i'r gogledd o Afon Dyfi; mae'r gwaith yn parhau i ehangu'r trefniant gwirfoddol hwn ymhellach ar draws Cymru.

Gwahoddir aelodau o'r cyhoedd i fynd ar-lein i gofnodi unrhyw Wyddau Talcenwyn yr Ynys Las a welant ar dudalen Facebook yr astudiaeth o'r Gwyddau <https://www.facebook.com/greenlandwhitefront>.

Er bod ymwybyddiaeth uchel a gwyliadwraeth a monitro clos, ni chafwyd unrhyw gofnod o saethu Wyddau Talcenwyn yr Ynys Las yng Nghymru am o leiaf ddegawd, ac ychydig iawn cyn hynny. O gofio mai'r helwyr adar dŵr eu hunain sydd wedi cyflwyno'r gwaharddiad gwirfoddol ar saethu gwyddau gwyllt ar Afon Dyfi a'i fod wedi aros mewn grym am y 40 mlynedd diwethaf, nid wyf yn credu y byddai'r cymdeithasau hyn yn codi'r gwaharddiad heb roi ystyriaeth ddyledus i'r mater.

O ystyried dosbarthiad daearyddol GTYL yng Nghymru a'r cydweithio da sy'n digwydd, ni welaf unrhyw reswm dros adolygu fy safbwynt. Ond byddwn yn barod i ailystyried pe cawn i dystiolaeth gref o gynnydd yn nifer y gwyddau talcenwyn sy'n cael eu saethu.



Alun Davies AC
Y Gweinidog Cyfoeth Naturiol a Bwyd



Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-544
Ein cyf/Our ref AD-/00911/14
William Powell AM
Chair Petitions Committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

 June 2014

Dear Bill,

Petition P-04-544 Ban on the Shooting of Greenland White-fronted Geese.

Thank you for your letter of 30 May regarding the above. I am already familiar with the views expressed in this petition and took them into consideration following public consultation on the subject last year. Rather than introduce legislation to ban shooting across the whole of Wales I took the decision to endorse the existing voluntary shooting moratorium on the Dyfi, Dysynni and Mawddach estuaries. I have also sought to expand the moratorium and encourage relevant partners to work together to improve conditions on the ground for these migratory birds.

The only remaining site of significance for Greenland White-fronted Geese (GWfG) in Wales is the Dyfi estuary which is designated as a Special Protection Area (SPA) for this species under the EU Birds Directive. Parts of Anglesey and north-west Wales are on its migratory flight path.

My officials have been working with the Dyfi Wildfowl Management Advisory Panel, which includes representatives of wildfowling associations from west and north Wales, the RSPB and Natural Resources Wales. The panel has initiated a number of actions this year including:-

- 1) Improved data recording and sharing;
 - i) Developed and provided specific recording sheets for Welsh sightings of GWfG for submission to and collation by the British Association for Shooting and Conservation.

- ii) Shared and combined this new data with current and historic RSPB data to ensure habitat management proposals are focused on the best available evidence on trends in behaviour.
- 2) Better understanding of relationships between core roosting sites and the wider landscape of Wales;
- i) Developed and submitted proposals to electronically track GWfG during the coming winter.
- 3) Expansion of the moratorium;
- i) The voluntary moratorium has been expanded to all Welsh wildfowling organisations on GWfG flight-paths north of the Dyfi; work continues to extend that voluntary coverage more widely across Wales.

Members of the public are also able to register sightings on-line via the Greenland White-fronted Goose study facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/greenlandwhitefront>.

Even though there has been a high level of vigilance, awareness and monitoring, there are no official records of GWfG being shot in Wales for at least the last decade, and very few before that. Given the wildfowling themselves instigated the voluntary ban on shooting grey geese on the Dyfi, and that it has remained in place for the last 40 years, I do not believe the associations would lift their restrictions without all due consideration.

In light of the geographic distribution of GWfG in Wales and the good progress in joint working, I see no reason to review my position. I would however be prepared to reconsider if I received robust evidence of a rise in actual shooting of these birds.



Alun Davies AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Cyfoeth Naturiol a Bwyd
Minister for Natural Resources and Food

Shooting of White-fronted Geese in Wales – evidence from the Welsh Ornithological Society to the Welsh Assembly Petitions Committee.

The Welsh Ornithological Society (WOS) is a membership organisation that promotes the conservation of birds and their habitats across Wales. The Society encourages the study of wild birds and a high standard of bird recording in Wales through its publications, annual conference and grant scheme.

The Society was pleased when the Welsh Government appeared to take the initiative to cease the hunting of White-fronted Geese in Wales. We were very disappointed when, despite the overwhelming evidence presented, the decision was made to continue the current lack of protection.

This is the only area on the flyway where this species is not protected. While WOS acknowledges the role of the shooting fraternity in the long running voluntary bans on shooting in places such as the Dyfi, we would like to see a statutory ban to ensure protection of this species. Whilst the voluntary ban has worked well on the Dyfi, there is no guarantee that it works everywhere the geese might stage, and not all wildfowlingers are members of BASC and therefore not necessarily signed up to the ban. Between 1998 and 2010 a total of 29 Greenland White-fronts were shot on Anglesey. With the current decline in the population this is not sustainable - there is a very strong scientific case that hunting of Greenland White-fronted Geese on the wintering grounds is additive to normal levels of mortality, based on studies at Wexford Slobbs in Ireland, where the difference in population size from one year to the next matched the predicted change based on perfectly additive mortality in the population. In other words, every goose shot was not part of a "hunnable surplus" that would have died anyway from other causes, but their loss was in addition to other sources of mortality and meant one less goose the following year. As a result, the population is extremely sensitive to hunting mortality, and this was clearly demonstrated by the fact that the steep annual decline in population size through the early 2000s was arrested to a large extent following the cessation of hunting in Iceland in 2006.

Wales and England are the only two states where hunting is theoretically legal (and only as a result of a legal anomaly). This is despite the need to remove all sources of avoidable mortality agreed by the UK, Irish, Iceland and Greenland governments under the international population action plan for Greenland White-fronted Geese. The plan notes the international consensus "that hunting cannot currently be undertaken on a sustainable basis and any kill would exacerbate the current unfavourable conservation status of the population". The action Plan also stresses the need "to take all possible steps to eliminate avoidable sources of mortality and disturbance, particularly shooting". The scientific case for removing hunting completely to safeguard the population is overwhelming.

We further believe that there should be a ban on the shooting of White-fronted Geese in Wales throughout the year. Although two races of White-fronted Geese occur in Wales, neither are common. The European White-fronted Goose used to be regular in Wales but is so no longer, and is becoming increasingly rare in the United Kingdom because of short stopping in continental Europe (where its conservation status is favourable), so there is a powerful argument both from the point of view of scarcity and risk of

misidentification (since they are very difficult to differentiate in the field) to simply ban the shooting of all White-fronted Geese in Wales.

We do not believe that continuing the status quo of a voluntary ban is sufficient for the Welsh Government to meet their international commitments under AEWA. Although poor reproductive success in recent years has been responsible for the unfavourable conservation status of the population in recent years, we cannot change factors operating on the breeding areas in Greenland that affect this. However, we know the rate of change in overall population size is dramatically affected by even small changes in survival, so even modest changes in reducing mortality can have dramatic effects on overall population size in this long-lived species.

We therefore urge the petitions committee to take note of the overwhelming scientific evidence and the level of public support indicated by the petition. The Society is happy to provide further detailed evidence if required.

Mick Green BSc, MA, CEnv, FIEEM. Council member, Welsh Ornithological Society.

Mick@gn.apc.org.

www.birdsinwales.org.uk

Agenda Item 3.7

P-04-514 A Welsh clean coal and/or renewable energy power station instead of the proposed Wylfa B nuclear plant at Anglesey

Petition wording:

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to work with the new owners of Wylfa B, Hitachi, to encourage the use of clean Welsh coal or our other plentiful supplies of viable technologies/resources instead of a dangerous nuclear power plant.

In a report on clean coal technology from the 2010 XXI World Energy Congress in Montreal Canada, Hitachi state that they are developing a full portfolio of new clean coal technologies aimed at further efficiency improvement, 90% CO2 reduction, and near-zero emissions of other pollutants. As world leaders in clean coal technology, why don't Hitachi work alongside the Welsh Government to implement this technology at Wylfa B instead of an archaic and poisonous nuclear plant station like the failed Fukushima plants they helped to build?

Additional information:

Nuclear plants are a dangerous and uneconomical method of producing electricity, with a short unviable operational time span which costs tax payers tens of billions in development, subsidies and decommissioning costs. As well as being vulnerable to attack and natural disasters as seen in Fukushima, nuclear power has known health risks. A major German government report showed increased rates of childhood cancers and leukaemia around nuclear sites. With no known method of disposing of the nuclear waste, it will also contaminate the planet for thousands of years.

Welsh clean coal, gas, hydrogen, solar, wave, tidal, hydro, Maglev wind, geo thermal, refuse incineration, anaerobic digestion, biomass or a combination of all of these could be implemented at Anglesey and elsewhere instead of nuclear power. Ynys Mon's PAWB manifesto states that, whilst the current Wylfa only has up to 600 workers, up to 3650 new jobs could be found by developing local renewable energy projects alone.

Petition raised by: Sovereign Wales

Date petition first considered by Committee: 26 November 2013

Number of signatures: 104



Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-514
Ein cyf/Our ref AD-/00616/14

William Powell AM
Chair, Petitions committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

21 April 2014

P-054-514 – Sovereign Wales – Hitachi Clean Coal Technology

Thank you for your letter dated March received by my office on 8 April, requesting further information following my letter to you of 15 January.

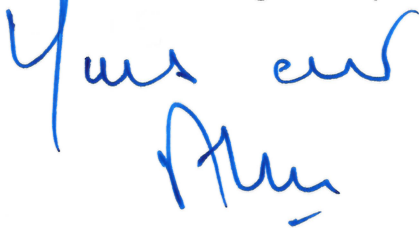
I have nothing to add to my letter in respect of development of Wylfa Newydd and will therefore confine my response to your questions around Hitachi and Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) technologies.

I believe my response of 15 January clearly set out the Welsh Government's position on CCS. The Welsh Government is always happy, where appropriate, to work in partnership with companies to exploit new technologies. However, in the case of CCS, at operational level to bring down costs and allow CCS to be more widely used, the full chain of capture, transport and storage needs to be built and operated on a commercial scale, and fully tested. The technologies used aren't particularly new or unique. They have been used for many years individually (notably in the oil and chemical sectors), but there are no projects that use all three together at commercial scale to capture and store carbon dioxide from a power station. As far as I am aware, Hitachi has not yet progressed beyond demonstration projects.

At UK level, government is engaged on one of the most comprehensive programmes in the world to help create a new CCS industry. Through the programme, DECC are running a competition (with £1 billion capital funding available) to support practical experience in the design, construction and operation of commercial-scale CCS; funding a 4-year co-ordinated research, development and innovation programme, and working with industry to reduce costs of CCS technology, develop the supply chain, create storage and help develop CCS infrastructure.

There are two key projects underway. The Peterhead CCS Project is in Aberdeenshire, Scotland. This project involves capturing around 85% of the carbon dioxide from an existing combined cycle gas turbine (CCGT) power station at Peterhead, before transporting it offshore and storing it safely in the Goldeneye depleted gas field 2.5km beneath the North Sea. The project involves Shell and SSE. The Peterhead CCS project is the world's first planned CCS project on a gas power station. If built, the project would capture 1 million tonnes of CO2 each year and provide clean electricity to over half a million homes. The White Rose CCS Project is in Yorkshire, England. This project involves capturing around 90% of the carbon dioxide from a new super-efficient coal-fired power station at the Drax site in North Yorkshire, before transporting offshore and storing it in a saline rock formation beneath the North Sea. The project involves Capture Power Ltd (a consortium of Alstom, Drax Power, BOC) and National Grid.

These projects, together with the other work underway, will give us a clearer picture of the potential and applicability of CCs technologies. I believe that would be the appropriate point at which to investigate the possibility of deployment in Wales.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Yours truly Alun', is positioned above the printed name and title.

Alun Davies AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Cyfoeth Naturiol a Bwyd
Minister for Natural Resources and Food

P-04-514 W A Welsh clean coal and or renewable energy power station instead of the proposed Wylfa b nuclear plant at Anglesey – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 20.06.14.

"It's very encouraging to see that Mr Alun Davies is a proponent of clean coal technology. The £1 billion pound fund that the DECC is running to support developing commercial Carbon Capture Storage sounds like a very constructive plan. Would Mr Davies therefore agree that it would also be prudent for the Welsh Government and Hitachi to wait for the outcome of this work before starting development of a nuclear station of any kind?

However, there's not even a need to wait that long in my view. Mr Davies is incorrect in his statement that there are no projects that use the full chain of capture, transport and storage. This New Scientist article reports on a new retro fitted CCS plant in Canada (Boundary Dam) that is the first commercial station to become a working coal-fired power station with 90% of its CO2 emissions

captured. <http://www.newscientist.com/article/mg22129593.300-trailblazing-power-plant-is-first-to-bury-its-carbon.html#.U6HS0bEhUdV>

The turbines/generator for the plant are supplied by General Electric and Hitachi. Kemper County power station in Mississippi will soon follow to become the second CCS coal power station.

According to this report by Hitachi, last updated in 2014, their next generation power plants with CCS will enable carbon storage and near-zero emissions within the next

decade http://www.hitachi.com/rev/pdf/2010/r2010_03_111.pdf. This below extract can be found in their conclusion:

"Hitachi's next generation ultrasupercritical power plants with CCS will enable carbon storage and near-zero emissions within the next decade"

I also attach a letter I received from the German Government regarding their research into Leukemia in children under 5 around nuclear power stations. Germany is closing all its nuclear power stations by 2022.

Considering Hitachi's great work on developing clean coal technology and Carbon Capture Storage, and in view of all the arguments presented against a nuclear Wylfa Newydd by Sovereign Wales and the group with the most knowledge and expertise on this in Wales, PAWB / Pobol Atal Wylfa B, will the Minister and Welsh Government now work with Hitachi in abandoning the archaic plan for a nuclear power plant on Ynys Mon and instead invest in clean coal and/or renewable energy technology in Wales?

I greatly look forward to hearing from Mr Davies and others on this matter, thank you again for your time,

Gyda diolch,

Gruffydd Meredith"



Federal Ministry for the
Environment, Nature Conservation,
Building and Nuclear Safety



Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety, RS II 2, Postfach 12 06 29, D-53048 Bonn, Germany

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Vereinigtes Königreich

Your enquiry from February 10th, 2014

Reference: RS II 2 - 07023 II

Bonn, 28.03.2014

Dear Mr. Meredith,

— thank you for your E-Mail and your enquiry regarding the risk of childhood cancers and leukaemia in the vicinity of nuclear power plants.

— From 2003 to 2007, the “Deutsches Kinderkrebsregister” (German Childhood Cancer Registry, <http://www.kinderkrebsregister.de/>) conducted a survey, the “Epidemiologische Studie zu Kinderkrebs in der Umgebung von Kernkraftwerken” (epidemiological study on childhood cancer in the vicinity of nuclear power plants, KiKK-study), for the Federal Office for Radiation Protection (BfS) to analyse childhood cancer in the vicinity of nuclear power plants. The survey found an increased rate of childhood leukaemia for children under the age of 5 for those children living within a radius of 5 km of a nuclear power plant.

— A re-evaluation of the raw data of the KiKK-study was performed by Kaatsch et. al. and published in the International Journal of Cancer: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/ijc.23330/full> While the results of the KiKK-study were generally confirmed by Kaatsch et. al., they also

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Page 2

point out that “the radiation exposure near a nuclear power plant in routine operation is extremely small compared to exposure to ionising radiation of the general public from other sources” [e. g. cosmic radiation, natural radioactivity in foodstuff, etc.] and therefore: “The reported findings were thus not to be expected under radiation biological and epidemiological considerations.”

Furthermore, the German Commission on Radiological Protection (SSK) evaluated the KiKK-study, including the study by Kaatsch et. al.:
http://www.ssk.de/SharedDocs/Publikationen/BerichtederSSK/Heft_58.html?nn=2881108 The SSK concludes the following: The exposition to radiation resulting from a standard operation of a nuclear power plant is too low in order to cause such an increase of childhood leukaemia as was found in the KiKK-study.

Hence, at this point, further epidemiological studies as the KiKK-study are not suited to provide a clear answer on the causality of the observed elevated rate of leukaemia. Therefore, to understand the cause for the increase of childhood leukaemia in certain regions, the German government supports and funds research investigating the aetiology of leukaemia.

Sincerely,

Dr. Böttger



Agenda Item 3.8

P-04-408 : Child and Adolescent Eating Disorder Service

Petition wording:

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to fund the Child and Adolescent Eating Disorder Service in Wales to the same degree as the Adult Eating Disorder Service in Wales.

It has come to my attention that there is a disparity in funding between Adult Services and Child and Adolescent Services as regards funding for Eating Disorder Treatment. At the present time Adult Eating Disorder Services receive £1 million per year from the Welsh Assembly, as well as 4 specialist trained provider groups.

Sadly research points to the fact that Eating Disorders, especially Anorexia Nervosa, are predominantly first experienced around puberty. Historically puberty was around 12–15, however, puberty is becoming younger and therefore statistics are beginning to show the prevalence of Anorexia Nervosa starting at younger ages is apparent. Bulimia Nervosa is generally a disease with an onset age of 18–25, however as with Anorexia this may differ from person to person. The fact that in both disorders, and indeed all diagnosable Eating Disorders, early intervention is the key to a quick recovery, therefore preventing long term financial implications for the WAG, makes this plea more pertinent.

I therefore implore the Assembly to consider this a priority for debate and to mend this disparity by giving equal finances and services to the Child and Adolescent Eating Disorder service in Wales as already given to Adult EDS.'

Petition raised by: Helen Missen

Date petition first considered by Committee: 17 July 2012

Number of signatures: 246

Agenda Item 3.9

P-04-505 Eating Disorder Unit in Wales

Petition wording:

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

Additional Information:

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

Petition raised by: Keira Marlow

Date petition first considered by Committee: 8 October 2013

Number of signatures: 526

Mark Drakeford AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref MD/02252/14

William Powell AM
Chair
Petitions Committee

Stephen.George@wales.gov.uk

11 June 2014

Dear William,

Thank you for your recent letter on behalf of the Petitions Committee regarding Petition P-04-408 about Child and Adolescent Eating Disorder Services (CAMHS ED).

When I made the announcement of additional funding for CAMHS ED services in October 2013, I was clear that this was specifically to improve ED services in south Wales and this is still the case. I made this announcement for south Wales, as the north Wales CAMHS unit already has experience and over capacity of provision, per head of the population. I also undertook to consider the wider needs of all-Wales following evaluation of activity in south Wales. Nevertheless, north Wales will benefit from the training being delivered by the funding; north Wales is also covering north Powys, while southern Powys is provided for from south Wales.

The funding is intended to provide dedicated specialist staff with experience in ED treatment, enhanced ED training for existing CAMHS staff and enable community outreach clinics to be expanded in south east and west Wales and also southern Powys. Local Health Boards are now progressing this and a dedicated training package has been developed in association with the South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust, the exemplar Eating Disorder Service in the country.

Recruitment is also progressing and, until the posts have been filled substantively, the Welsh Health Specialised Services Committee (WHSSC) have appointed a part time locum CAMHS Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist and Senior Nurse who began working from 1 June. Both the locum staff have a significant amount of experience in this field. The Consultant will be working one session per week in June and July and two per week from August. The Senior Nurse will provide two sessions a week. These sessions are in addition to the ones being provided into the existing Eating Disorder clinic at Ty Llidiard.

I have been clear from the outset that the funding is intended to ensure that more young people can be repatriated to Wales instead of being sent out of area. The savings on these out of area placements then being reinvested back into general provision CAMHS in Wales, instead of funding CAMHS services elsewhere in the UK.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

English Enquiry Line 0845 010 3300
Llinell Ymholiadau Cymraeg 0845 010 4400
Correspondence: Mark.Drakeford@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Wedi'i argraffu ar bapur wedi'i ailgylchu **100%** **Recycled Paper**

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With regard to the comments about providing a state of the art facility for children with ED, this already exists in the two CAMHS inpatient facilities we have invested over £42m in at Abergele and Bridgend. A key priority of mine is to ensure these expensive resources are fully utilised and occupancy levels are increased, though this should be coupled with more community provision, as I believe hospitalisation should be the last resort. This is why the funding will also expand community clinics, these working in association with the expansion of Local Primary Mental Health Support Services, which have been created with £3.5m of Welsh Government funding as part of our Mental Health (Wales) Measure to ensure services are delivered as locally as possible.

I have previously stated that ED has always comprised a significant proportion of the CAMHS caseload, with, at any given time, around 40% of the inpatients in the south Wales Unit being there as a result of ED. Figures provided to me by WHSSC to inform the discussion we had in the Committee last October showed that during 2012-13 11 of 36 out of area placements were for an ED. These will have been for a variety of reasons, including the need for very highly specialised treatment only available at a handful of clinics in the UK, a lack of capacity within Wales, and risk factors.

I hope this is helpful.

Best wishes,

Mark

Mark Drakeford AC / AM

Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services

P-04-408 Child and Adolescent Eating Disorder Service – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Clerking Team, 24.06.14.

Dear Kayleigh

Thank you for sending a copy of Mark Drakeford's letter through for my consideration.

For fear of sounding like a dripping tap I would still like the Health Minister to realise, and acknowledge, and then act upon the fact that there remains a disparity in funding between Adult Eating Disorder Services and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services as regards the treatment of Eating Disorders across Wales.

There may well have been provision of money for South Wales since October, and for Abergele and Bridgend units in the past; but the fact remains that Adult Eating Disorder Services still have a rolling, ring fenced £1 million annually given specifically for the 4 specialist tier 3 Adult Eating Disorder Services. This has yet to be matched or exceeded by Mr Drakeford for CAMHS Eating Disorder services.

I am thrilled to hear that action has been taken for South Wales in appointing 2 specialists for the area, still sadly too few in my opinion. It still remains a vast geographical area to be covered by too few specialists in illnesses that require early intervention. Mr Drakeford is right in pointing out that community care should be a priority above in patient care, but this is still woefully lacking and seems to be something he is happy to 'sweep under the carpet'.

I am also pleased to hear that the Maudsley practice of care and I assume Family Based Therapy will be rolled out across Wales as best practice. This is a great move towards improvement of care. Mr Drakeford seems to have grasped that Eating Disorders should be cared for with the best evidence based treatment.

I shall remain his dripping tap, until I feel he has matched, or exceeded funding for CAMHS eating disorder services across Wales, and not just in South Wales. I stand by the fact that early intervention is key to good prognosis, that this intervention should be by specialists in the field of Eating Disorders and should be made a priority. As I have pointed out before, the financial implications of putting this in place far outweigh that which he has to invest in adult services. Once again, simplistically put, spending the money in early intervention in children and adolescents will save in the long run as less people will require adult services in the future.

Thank you again for your continued support of this petition.

Helen Missen

Dear Kayleigh

In addition to the email I sent yesterday I would like to add that there appears to be some muddying of the waters.

The original petition that I submitted does not ask for a facility to be built in Wales, though I would see this as a great addition to any resource for Eating Disorder services. Let it be made clear that the petition I submitted should stand on its own right.

As yet the Adult Eating Disorder services do not have a facility for in patients. The Minister for Health has written his reply as if the two Eating Disorder petitions which are running at the same time, are infact conjoined by the fact that they come out of the same diagnosis'.

Prior to October 2013, I had no knowledge of Kiera or her petition. I do now support her and her petition, but the petitions should not be regarded in the same way.

Mr Drakeford and the petition committee must, I feel, think of these two as separate pleas. The petition I submitted is for funding for Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services that is equal to or above that which is already given to the out patient system in Wales for adults.

This funding is used for 4 separate teams of tier 3 specialists for Adult Eating Disorder outpatient services.

This remains my petition and request: that early intervention, and therefore funding for this within CAMHS should be his priority, thus once again reducing his financial commitment in the majority of cases.

Once again, I applaud the fact that Mr Drakeford has obviously understood that outpatient care is still the primary, and indeed most widely accessed in the majority of cases, with the minority of patients requiring in patient care.

Thank you

Helen Missen

Agenda Item 3.10

P-04-456 Dementia – This Could Happen to you

Petition wording:

We, the undersigned, call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to:

- i. Bring to an end the discrimination against dementia sufferers in Wales who apply for N.H.S. Continuing Care Funding, by allowing for the cognition category of need (known as the "domain") to go up to the level "Severe" in the Welsh version of the Decision Support Tool. This would bring it in line with the English version; and
- ii. Direct Local Health Boards to implement the National Framework for N.H.S., Continuing Care Funding correctly in terms of patient eligibility and without regard to budgetary constraints.

Petition raised by: Helen Jones

Date petition first considered by Committee: 19 February 2013

Number of signatures: 1413

Mark Drakeford AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-456
Ein cyf/Our ref MD/01315/14

William Powell AM
Chair, Petitions Committee

committeebusiness@wales.gsi.gov.uk

15 June 2014

Dear William,

Thank you for your letter of 30 May regarding the consultation arrangements for the revised National Framework on Continuing NHS Healthcare (CHC).

I can confirm my officials have spoken to Mrs Helen Jones and her comments have helped inform the revised version of the CHC Framework and supporting documentation. Mrs Jones has also agreed to provide material for a series of training workshops with practitioners, so we can ensure the concerns of users are adequately addressed.

In relation to the involvement of users more generally, representatives of user groups were engaged throughout the formal consultation process. The revised Framework is due to be published by the end of this month, however I can confirm that in relation to any future changes, we will ensure there is wide engagement with users.

Best wishes,
Mark.

Mark Drakeford AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services

Agenda Item 3.11

P-04-490 Antiretroviral Medication in Cardiff

Petition wording:

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

Petition raised by: Joerg Thieme

Date petition first considered by Committee: 18 June 2013

Number of signatures: 150

Mark Drakeford AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-490
Ein cyf/Our ref MD/01856/14

William Powell AM

committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

12 June 2014

Dear William,

Thank you for your letter of 30 April on behalf of the Petitions Committee regarding Petition P-04-490 – Antiretroviral Medication in Cardiff.

The quoted figure of £15 million of medicines waste per year in Wales is an estimate. It is based on information from waste contractors regulated by the then Environment Agency (now Natural Resources Wales) who collected 254 metric tons of pharmaceutical waste in Wales. Subsequent audits in community pharmacies then determined the approximate cost of a metric ton of waste and revealed the cost of waste medicines was between £15 million and £50 million a year. The proportion that can be specifically attributed to antiretroviral HIV medicine is unknown.

The national guidance on prescribing durations was produced by the All Wales Medicines Strategy Group. I must again reiterate that this is generic guidance for the NHS and it is for the prescriber to determine the appropriate interval, taking into account such factors as possible reactions, the need for monitoring, patient compliance, a possible need to change the prescription and the potential to waste NHS resources.

I expect all Health Boards to ensure the needs of the patient are taken into account when adopting the 28 day prescribing policy and that they work closely with patients to ensure a degree of flexibility in the delivery of the medicines. I have been reassured by my officials that this is the case for patients receiving antiretroviral HIV medicine from the Cardiff clinic.

*Best wishes
Mark.*

Mark Drakeford AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services

P-04-490 Antiretroviral Medication in Cardiff – Petitioner to the Committee, 02.05.14.

Many thanks for that.

As I stated earlier the 28 days prescription cycle is wrong and the Minister of Health only refers to the Wales implementation. Not to mention that probably not a single hospital in England is effected by this nonsense.

Furthermore please bear in mind that the hospital pharmacy is only open 3 times a week and patients are forced to march through the HIV waiting area exposing themselves and pick up the medication (if they do not opt for home delivery).

Under these circumstances I still prefer to have my treatment in London where I pick up my medication every 6 months.

Also this is VERY important that not a single HIV patient has to see a nurse or doctor every single months. They are just forced to pick up the medication on a monthly basis. This is totally unjustified.

kind regards

Jörg

P-04-490 Antiretroviral Medication in Cardiff – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 18.06.14.

Joerg Thieme

Petition: P-04-490

Thank you for your detailed agenda and the response of the health minister dated 12th June 2014. I wish to respond in detail:

- 1. Finally it came to light that the definite answer about waste reduction of HIV medication is unknown.**
2. The Minister mentions "national guidance on prescribing durations" but fails to mention that specifically for HIV patients the interval seen by a consultant or a nurse is 6 months. The European standard on stable patients is going towards yearly interval!
3. If a patient with HIV is not even seen by a doctor or nurse monthly how can be a monthly prescription interval be justified?
4. The Minister is arguing that prescribing policy meets patient's needs and that he was reassured by "his officials" that this is the case. The Minister has not even consulted one single HIV patient, has not even seen the HIV clinic himself. So I would ask whether his "officials" are reliable. Even I was not able to talk to the Minister in person, instead he sent his "official" to me, not having a clue what's going on. I feel betrayed.
5. The fact is that HIV is rising and that Cardiff as the capital needs urgent changes to the way it treats HIV. That is a fact that was supported by the patient advocacy team.
6. Bluntly the current prescription of a monthly interval for HIV medication is totally out of touch with reality. I am still not willing to come back to Cardiff for treatment. Instead I rather go to London where it is easier and hassle free.
7. I can only reiterate what I said before. Some people in the gynaecology department suggested a monthly prescription of HIV medication

without consulting one single HIV patient and that is sheer a disgrace! Patient representatives might have been consulted in this but they do not have a clue about the demands on HIV and the patients who have to walk through a waiting area every single month. Feeling stigmatised and guilty when passing through waiting patients just to pick up the monthly medications for the sake of it (without seeing a health care profession). I feel ashamed of this as it reminds me of treatment 20 years ago but has nothing, absolutely nothing to do with the world we live in 2014. Cardiff needs to adapt, it needs dignity for patients, it needs patients included in this process. Certainly it needs decisions not by the gynaecology consultants but by consultants who treat HIV!

8. I cannot stress enough that HIV is rising and there needs to be a change in this monthly prescription policy. My previous statement that not a single hospital in England is taking part in this monthly interval that was not even contested!
9. It might actually help if the Minister is speaking to HIV patients himself rather than relying on his "officials".

P-04-485 Abuse of casual contracts in Further Education

Petition wording:

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to use its influence to ensure that the use of hourly paid (zero hour) and fixed term contracts are not abused in the Further Education sector and only used when there is a genuine objective justification for a short term contract with flexibility.

Petition raised by: Briony Knibbs

Date petition first considered by Committee: 4 June 2013

Number of signatures: TBC

Document is Restricted

Agenda Item 3.13

P-04-516 Make political science compulsory in education

Petition wording:

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to make political science a compulsory part of the school curriculum.

Petition raised by: Mark Griffiths

Date petition first considered by Committee: 26 November 2013

Number of signatures: 12

Document is Restricted

P-04-528 All Primary Schools in Wales taught through the medium of Welsh

Petition wording:

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to make all primary schools in Wales taught through the medium of Welsh. If we and the Welsh Assembly are truly committed to restoring the Welsh language and creating a bilingual Wales then action is required. I agree this is something that cannot be done overnight, there are issues such as teacher numbers and the transition between changing the schools from English to Welsh medium. The Welsh Assembly have emphasised the importance of having communities of Welsh speakers. This will only occur if the majority of children leaving school over many generations can speak fluently in Welsh.

We call for the Welsh Government to draft a preliminary plan of action and timetable of how such a change could in theory occur.

Petition raised by: Phillip Worth

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 21 January 2014

Number of signatures: TBC



Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-528
Ein cyf/Our ref HL/00219/14
William Powell AM
Chair Petitions committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

11 February 2014

Dear William,

Thank you for drawing my attention to the petition from Mr Philip Worth which calls on the National Assembly of Wales to make all primary schools to teach through the medium of Welsh. I understand that the purpose of this is to ensure that all pupils become bilingual in both English and Welsh. The petition also calls for the Welsh Government to draw up a preliminary plan of action.

The Welsh Government is committed to seeing the Welsh language thrive and views the education system as a key means of ensuring this. The Welsh-medium Education Strategy aims to

To have an education and training system that responds in a planned way to the growing demand for Welsh-medium education, reaches out to and reflects our diverse Communities and enables an increase in the number of people of all ages and backgrounds who are fluent in Welsh and able to use the language with their families, in their communities and in the workplace.

One of the key measures introduced for planning Welsh-medium education, introduced by the Strategy, was the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan. As a result of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, these plans became a statutory requirement for all local authorities. The statutory guidance for these Plans asks local authorities how they intend to extend the provision of Welsh-medium education.

In addition to this, the Welsh Second Language Action Plan has introduced a project in the primary schools of two secondary school clusters to support the teaching of Welsh through the medium of curriculum subjects.

The National Sabbatical Scheme also supports teachers to gain the skills necessary to teach Welsh and subjects through the medium of Welsh.

The implementation of the Welsh-medium Education Strategy goes some way towards fulfilling the request of the petition. However, the Strategy also acknowledges that not all parents will want their children to be educated through the medium of Welsh and that is why we are exploring the best ways to ensure that these pupils should also have better opportunities to develop Welsh-language skills which enrich their experience of living in a bilingual country.

Under the circumstances outlined above, I do not think it is appropriate to agree to this petition.



Huw Lewis AC / AM

Y Gweinidog Addysg a Sgiliau
Minister for Education and Skills

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-528
Ein cyf/Our ref HL/00219/14

William Powell AM
Chair Petitions committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

11 February 2014

Annwyl William,

Diolch am dynnu fy sylw at y ddeiseb yn enw Mr Philip Worth sy'n galw ar y Cynulliad Cenedlaethol i wneud pob ysgol gynradd yn ysgol fydd yn dysgu drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg. Rwyf yn deall mai pwrpas yr alwad hon yw sicrhau y daw pob disgybl yn rhugl yn y Gymraeg a Saesneg. Mae'r ddeiseb hefyd yn galw ar Lywodraeth Cymru i ddrafftio cynllun gweithredu.

Mae Llywodraeth Cymru'n ymrwymedig i weld y Gymraeg yn ffynnu ac yn barnu bod y system addysg yn allweddol er mwyn sicrhau hyn. Nod y Strategaeth Addysg Cyfrwng Cymraeg yw:

Cael system addysg a hyfforddiant sy'n ymateb mewn ffordd wedi'i chynllunio i'r galw cynyddol am addysg cyfrwng Cymraeg, sy'n cyrraedd ein cymunedau amrywiol ac yn eu hadlewyrchu ac sy'n sicrhau cynnydd yn nifer y bobl o bob oedran a chefnidir sy'n rhugl yn y Gymraeg ac sy'n gallu defnyddio'r iaith gyda'u teuluoedd, yn eu cymunedau ac yn y gweithle.

Un o'r camau pwysicaf a gyflwynwyd ar gyfer cynllunio addysg cyfrwng Cymraeg gan y Strategaeth oedd Cynllun Strategol y Gymraeg mewn Addysg. O ganlyniad i basio Ddeddf Safonau a Threfniadaeth Ysgol (Cymru) 2013, daeth y Cynlluniau hyn yn ofyniad statudol ar gyfer pob awdurdod lleol. Mae'r canllawiau statudol ar gyfer y Cynlluniau hyn yn gofyn i awdurdodau lleol nodi sut maent yn bwriadu ehangu darpariaeth addysg cyfrwng Cymraeg.

Yn ychwanegol at hyn, mae Cynllun Gweithredu Cymraeg Ail Iaith wedi cyflwyno prosiect mewn ysgolion cynradd dwy ysgol uwchradd i gefnogi dysgu Cymraeg drwy gyfrwng pynciau'r cwricwlwm.

Mae'r Cynllun Sabothol Cenedlaethol hefyd yn cefnogi athrawon i ennill y sgiliau angenrheidiol i ddysgu Cymraeg a phynciau drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg.

Felly mae gweithredu'r Strategaeth Addysg Cyfrwng Cymraeg yn mynd rhywfaint tuag at gyflawni cais y ddeiseb. Beth bynnag, Mae'r Strategaeth hefyd yn cydnabod na fydd pob

rhiant yn dymuno i'w plant dderbyn addysg cyfrwng Cymraeg a dyna pam rydym yn archwilio'r ffyrdd gorau o sicrhau bod y disgyblion hyn yn derbyn cyfleoedd i ddatblygu sgiliau iaith Gymraeg sy'n cyfoethogi eu profiad o fyw mewn gwlad ddwyieithog.



Huw Lewis AC/AM
Gweinidog Addysg a Sgiliau
Minister for Education and Skills



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CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE:

Welsh teaching in primary schools

About NUT Cymru:

NUT Cymru represents primary and secondary school members and is the largest teaching union in Wales and the UK. We welcome the opportunity to contribute views to the petition committee's evidence gathering exercise.

The Petition:

'We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to make all primary schools in Wales taught through the medium of Welsh. If we and the Welsh Assembly are truly committed to restoring the Welsh language and creating a bilingual Wales then action is required. I agree this is something that cannot be done overnight there are issues such as teacher numbers and transition between changing the schools from English to Welsh medium. The Welsh Assembly have emphasised the importance of having communities of Welsh speakers. This will only occur if the majority of children leaving school over many generations can speak fluently in Welsh.'

'We call for the Welsh Government to draft a preliminary plan of action and timetable of how such a change could in theory occur.'

NUT Cymru Response:

As a union NUT Cymru are fully committed to the use of Welsh. Our office operates a bilingual policy and members are able to access information, guidance and support through the medium of Welsh.

We represent a significant number of Welsh language teachers operating both in Welsh medium and English schools.

In recent years the union has helped increase Welsh language participation amongst teachers by providing a Welsh language course which caters for individuals of all standards, from absolute beginners to those who wish to refresh their Welsh language skills. We are proud to say that individuals who had previously limited Welsh language skills, but who undertook our Welsh language training courses, have gone on to secure appointments in Welsh language schools.

The take up of the above course and its popularity has been extremely positive and does suggest there is an appetite amongst the existing profession to access high quality Welsh language training. However, while our commitment to the language is a core objective of the unions work, we do have reservations about the proposal put forward by the petition.

Parental choice:

We may wish to see the Welsh language thrive but there are parents who have made a conscious decision not to send their children to a Welsh language school. We suspect that making teaching through the medium of Welsh compulsory for all lessons at primary level could in fact create resentment towards the language and become counter-productive. It would be far more beneficial to engage parents as to the positives of learning the language and to see it grow organically as a result.

Supportive but non-Welsh speaking parents could become alienated as they will not have the linguistic skills to support their pupils (already an issue in Key Stage 3 schools teaching through the medium of Welsh). How, for example, will they support their children in listening to them reading?

English as additional language (EAL) pupils, who are only staying for a year or two in this country, will be done a disservice as English will be a much more transferable skill when they return home or move on.

We have to question if we will see pupils being withdrawn from schools on the border to English schools which are already better resourced and which, following the previous Minister's criticism of the education service and the most recent Estyn report, may already be perceived as more successful ?

Also we question how this will prepare pupils for Key Stage 3 in a more linguistically mixed secondary sector.

Capacity:

Currently, as acknowledged by the petition, the capacity is not there to ensure this could become a reality. The fact is we are a very long way off having the amount of Welsh speaking teachers to achieve such an aim.

What should also be taken into account when considering the issue of capacity is the fact that we are already struggling to recruit graduates with specialities in specific subjects, e.g. physics, mathematics or chemistry. Filling these posts and attracting graduates with backgrounds in these subjects must be a priority before specifying a Welsh language provision. While subject specialism is not as apparent an issue for primary school teachers as it is for secondary there is still a need to target the right skill sets. Placing a language barrier on the profession may very well lead to greater difficulties in making teaching a desirable role for individuals with qualifications and experience in areas currently lacking in Welsh schools.

Impact:

There is a concern that setting the ability to speak Welsh as a core requirement for teaching could deter not only talented individuals from considering the profession but also individuals who wish to learn the language.

Some teachers who are working within the English medium system do take up Welsh through short-term courses, such as those provided by the NUT, or by taking a sabbatical. This is an excellent way in which to access professional development and learn the language while being a teacher. In turn those individuals are able to bring those new language skills back into the classroom. They are often champions of the language and support the confidence of fellow teachers or pupils in also learning Welsh. However, this language support isn't available to those who have yet to enter the sector. There is a big question as to if such individuals would have considered teaching had they been expected to learn Welsh first. Not only would they not have had the same opportunity to learn Welsh they would have been lost to the profession as standalone teachers regardless of language.

There is a case to extend and better resource the sabbatical programme. Access to the scheme is variable across Wales. Ideally a funding commitment should

be examined to ensure it is more readily available for those that wish to take advantage of it. Allowing practitioners that wish to learn Welsh, or improve their Welsh, to immerse themselves in the language for a defined period of time would be hugely beneficial to ensuring proficiency exists across institutions

It is also worth noting the Education Minister did accept option 1:13 of the ‘future for education delivery’ consultation that stated the Welsh Government should;

‘Invite the review of Welsh second language teaching that is already under way to consider:

- *extending the use of immersion groups and secondments to Welsh-medium schools to boost the language skills of teachers teaching Welsh as a second language*
- *Whether or not functional skills in Welsh should form part of the core requirement.’*

Progress on this option may be something the committee would like to pursue as an ongoing matter with the Welsh Government.

Finally in terms of impact we would also question how this proposal will influence school standards in Wales. There is consistent evidence that shows the standard of teaching is the primary driver for educational attainment.

If a requirement to have all teachers operating in the primary sector fluent in Welsh is introduced there is a potential that high quality candidates for teachers training could be rejected, or dissuaded from applying. This could be on the basis that they are not Welsh speakers or even that they simply do not have the confidence that their standard of Welsh is of a high enough quality.

National Assembly for Wales Petitions Committee – Welsh-medium Primary Education

Summary

We are grateful to the Petitions Committee for seeking UCAC's opinion on a petition calling on the Welsh Government to ensure that every primary school in Wales teaches through the medium of Welsh.

UCAC is a union representing teachers, school leaders and lecturers in all education sectors across Wales.

The Welsh Government's Vision

The Welsh Government's vision in relation to the Welsh language is clearly set out.

The **Welsh-medium Education Strategy** (2010) notes the following vision:

"To have an education and training system that... enables an increase in the number of people of all ages and backgrounds who are fluent in Welsh and able to use the language with their families, in their communities and in the workplace." (p.4)

The Welsh-language strategy, **A living language: a language for living** (2012), outlines the following vision:

"Our vision is to see the Welsh language thriving in Wales.... The purpose of this strategy is to move towards our long-term aim... to 'strengthen the use of the Welsh language in everyday life'... To this end... we would want to see:

- an increase in the number of people who both speak and use the language
- an increase in people's confidence and fluency in the language
- an increase in people's awareness of the value of Welsh, both as part of our national heritage and as a useful skill in modern life
- the strengthening of the position of the Welsh language in our communities (p.14)

In addition to this general vision, the Welsh-medium Education Strategy explains the best mechanism for encouraging bilingualism and fluency in the Welsh language:

"2.11 Welsh-medium education from the early years, with robust linguistic progression through every phase of education, offers the best conditions for developing future bilingual citizens." (p.7)

"2.13 It is generally accepted that at least around 70% of curricular time should be through the medium of Welsh if learners are to acquire a sufficiently sound command of the language to enable them to use it across a broad range of contexts with confidence and fluency." (p.8)

UCAC agrees entirely with the Government's vision. We believe very strongly in giving every learner in Wales an equal opportunity to become fluent in the Welsh language. This, in turn, ensures that everyone has equality of opportunity when applying for posts where the Welsh language is required or desirable. However, the Government's own evidence, as well as the Census figures in 2011, shows that the steps that the Government is taking at present are not having a sufficient effect. According to the Welsh-medium Education Strategy: Annual Report 2012-13:

"...despite all this activity there has been little progress made against the strategy's targets. For instance, we are unlikely to see 25 per cent of seven-year-old children being taught through the medium of Welsh by 2015."

It appears to UCAC that the idea of ensuring that every primary school teaches through the medium of Welsh is a very direct way of reaching the Government's targets in relation to the Welsh language. After all, this is an age at which languages can be learnt almost effortlessly, given the right pedagogical environment.

Of course, there are practical matters that must be considered.

There are insufficient linguistic skills within the education workforce to achieve this at present.

The measures already in place, such as the Sabbatical scheme, language courses, courses aimed at increasing confidence in Welsh and support for staff from Teachers of Welsh in Education, would have to be intensified and expanded. Workforce planning methods would need to be improved and changes made to Initial Teacher Training.

Not all parents would be content for their children to receive Welsh-medium education.

Parents and governors would need to receive information about the value and importance of ensuring bilingualism, as well as certainty that learning Welsh does not impair the ability to develop skills in English.

One way of getting to grips with these practical problems would be a phased approach toward ensuring that:

- **the Foundation Phase is provided through the medium of Welsh on every site;** a report by Carmarthenshire's Welsh Language Census Results Working Group, published this week, recommends that 'all English medium primary schools over a period of time, will deliver the curriculum in the Foundation Phase mainly through the medium of Welsh'.
- **an increasing number of subjects are taught through the medium of Welsh,** beginning with one subject in schools that currently teach through the medium of English. Two clusters of English-medium primary schools have been piloting a similar model (one in the south east and the other in the north west); it is likely that the Department for Education and Skills could provide additional information about

these. Also, Ceredigion Country Council has a great deal of experience of moving schools 'along the language continuum'.

UCAC is more than willing to provide additional information should the Committee desire it.

Agenda Item 3.15

P-04-542 Practical Opportunities for Young People

Petition wording:

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to provide more opportunities for unemployed young people to undertake voluntary work to help them develop new skills, particularly skills that are more practical in nature.

Petition raised by: George Colville

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 29 April 2014

Number of signatures: 32



Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-542
Ein cyf/Our ref KS/00524/14

William Powell AM
Chair Petitions committee

committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

12 June 2014

Dear William,

Petition – P-04-542 Practical Opportunities for Young People

Thank you for your letter of 30 May regarding the above petition from George Colville, and seeking our views.

The Welsh Government is already delivering much of what Mr Colville has stated in his petition via our national employability programmes. I would suggest you use the information I have outlined below as a basis to provide a response to Mr Colville.

A key priority for the Welsh Government is to progress young people and adults into employment at the earliest opportunity - and key to achieving this is to ensure unemployed young people gain the requisite skills and work experience to enable them to enter and remain in sustained employment. Our national employability programmes provide high quality vocational training which will entail work experience and the development of skills that are practical in nature. As part of the Programme of Government, the Welsh Government has established:

- **Traineeships** (for 16-18 year olds), which commenced in August 2011;
- the **Jobs Growth Wales Programme**, which commenced in April 2012; and
- **Apprenticeship** opportunities for young people.

In relation to the specific request to allow for more voluntary work to help in the development of new skills, in particular practical skills, both our Traineeship and Apprenticeship programmes have provision of this nature.

Traineeships

The Traineeship programme for 16-18 year olds, supports young people to gain sustained employment by helping them with their confidence and motivation, and looks to address barriers to learning – all of which may prevent a young person moving into employment or learning at a higher level. The programme seeks to improve skills levels through the delivery of entry level qualifications up to NVQs Level 1 in their chosen occupational area.

Young people on Traineeships also receive valuable work experience and the support and help they need to learn at a pace suitable to them. This can sometimes be with a dedicated employer or through a simulated work environment depending on the level of support the young person requires. The programme includes the use of employer work placements, community projects, centre based learning opportunities as well as voluntary work opportunities to deliver the NVQ learning and to enhance each learner's development prior to entering employment or further learning. By nature the Traineeship programme offers skills training in practical occupations in areas such as construction, mechanical vocations, and hairdressing.

Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships offer individuals the opportunity to earn money while they learn, obtain vocational training and build a sustainable career. Apprenticeships are available at all levels in a wide range of occupations at Foundation (level 2), Apprenticeships (level 3) and Higher Apprenticeships in certain occupations at levels 4 to 6. Some Higher Apprenticeships may include options to study Higher Education qualifications such as HNC, HND or Foundation degrees.

Young Recruits

The Wales Young Recruits Programme (which is a part of the Apprenticeship scheme) is an all Wales programme that provides funding to employers offering high quality apprenticeship programmes to recruit and train additional young apprentices (16-24 years old). Small to medium sized employers could also be eligible for a one off payment of £500 to help cover the cost of recruiting an apprentice.

European Social Funding (ESF)

Volunteering and participation on work trials and work experience is an eligible activity for young people within the current 2007-2013 European Social Fund (ESF) programmes. As noted, Welsh Government ESF projects such as Traineeships and Apprenticeships already offer such opportunities. Volunteering will continue to be an eligible activity for young people within the new 2014-2020 ESF programmes, enabling the Welsh Government and sponsors throughout Wales to use this as a means of providing unemployed young people with new, practical skills

Welsh Baccalaureate

In addition to the above, we have the Welsh Baccalaureate which provides opportunities for learners to be actively engaged in the Community. The revised model that is being developed following the Review of Qualifications will enable learners to develop and demonstrate skills through a series of 'challenges', including a 'Community Challenge'. We are currently engaged with a range of stakeholders to develop appropriate Challenges, which will be robust, real-life challenges that demonstrate the acquisition of World-Class skills that prepare learners properly for employment and Higher Education.

There has been an excellent response from charitable organisations who are keen to be involved in providing worthwhile challenges. An event was held in April for organisations in both the Private and Voluntary Sector to enable them to be involved in the development of challenges. Some of these will be trialled in 10 schools and colleges from September 2014 and others will be used when the qualification is rolled out in September 2015.

National Youth Work Strategy (2014-2018)

We also have the Welsh Government's new National Youth Work Strategy, which I launched on the 20 February. The Welsh Government, voluntary youth organisations, and local authorities will work together to successfully implement the identified actions within the strategy to drive youth work forward. I have included a link to this strategy. <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/skillsandtraining/national-youth-work-strategy-for-wales/?lang=en>

Youth work in Wales provides and facilitates an environment within which young people aged 11-25 can relax, have fun, feel secure, supported and valued. Through non-formal and informal educational opportunities, youth work approaches challenge young people to enhance their personal, social and political development. By engaging in youth work young people can learn to take greater control of their lives and be supported to recognise and resist the damaging influences which may affect them.

The National Youth Service audit provides information on youth services including the range of projects offered to young people, this can be found at <http://wales.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/youth-services/?lang=en>.

GwirVol

There is also GwirVol – a youth led volunteering initiative and a partnership of organisations in Wales who represent and promote youth volunteering in Wales through all of its projects. GwirVol is led by GwirForce who are all young people and are referred to as the youth led partner. GwirVol aims to provide a specific focus for the further development of volunteering in the wider community and in non-formal education through working with young people, organisations and structures. The Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA) is the administrative partner for GwirVol.

WCVA support and represent Wales' Third Sector and represent and campaign for voluntary organisations, volunteers and communities. They have a strong volunteering ethos and promote volunteering opportunities. I have included links to both organisations for Mr Colville.

<http://www.gwirvol.org/>
<http://www.wcva.org.uk/about-us>

Careers Wales Advice and Guidance

Young people have access to careers information and guidance via our Careers Wales services. Careers Wales is the impartial all age careers information, advice and guidance service for Wales, which became a wholly owned subsidiary of the Welsh Government on 01 April 2013. Its remit now has a much stronger focus on services to young people aged up to 24 years and offers a differentiated service with more intensive guidance and support provided to identify priority client groups, one of which is unemployed 16 – 17 year olds. Careers Wales is also a key stakeholder and delivery partner for the new Youth Engagement and Progression Framework which is seeking to reduce the number of young people who are not in employment, education or training.

Services can be accessed in a number of different ways to suit the individual, ranging from its website careerswales.com, telephone information helpline, social media such as web chat, text messaging, and face to face interview, if appropriate, at one of its high street careers centres. Different options will be explored with the client. This may include opportunities for volunteering in order to pursue career options or progress towards employment. Careers Wales also works with Job Centre Plus unemployed clients, who are not on the Work Programme, providing information, advice and guidance.

Jobs Growth Wales

Finally, we have our Jobs Growth Wales (JGW) programme. Jobs Growth Wales gives unemployed young people aged 16-24 a job opportunity, providing valuable and practical work experience highly valued by employers, for a 6-month period, with the intention that the job is sustainable after the 6 month. This is paid at or above the National Minimum Wage for a minimum of 25 hours per week. The programme aims to create 16,000 jobs over four years.

Within JGW a specific strand targets the creation of job opportunities with Third sector organisations. As at 10 May 2014, 1,965 job opportunities have been created and 1,490 jobs have been filled in the Third Sector strand alone. In addition, this strand also creates job opportunities for those young people requiring a more supported employment environment.

I trust that the above information will provide clarity to Mr Colville that the Welsh Government are providing quality training programmes to equip young people for the world of work or to go on to learning at a higher level.

Yours ever



Ken Skates AC / AM

Y Dirprwy Weinidog Sgiliau a Thechnoleg
Deputy Minister for Skills and Technology

Document is Restricted

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

Document is Restricted

P-04-475 Wanted – Buses for Meirionnydd

Petition wording:

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to:

- Review the funding for rural bus services to ensure adequate levels of service for the whole of Gwynedd but particularly south Meirionnydd.
- Consider funding to be ensured for additional services to improve access to health services, education, and employment, and thus support the economy and tourism of the area.

Petition raised by: Barbara Snowball

Date petition first considered by Committee: 30 April 2013

Number of signatures : 174

Agenda Item 3.17

P-04-513 Save the Wrexham/Barmouth X94 bus service

Petition wording:

Arriva Buses has announced that they will cut the X94 service which links the towns of Barmouth, Dolgellau, Bala, Corwen, Llangollen and Wrexham and 5 other bus services on December 21st this year. All of these bus services connect communities across Wales from north to south and east to west. We call on the Welsh Government to investigate how cutting these bus services might be avoided and what is the best way of securing and promoting national bus services that link the regions of Wales, especially where there is no equivalent railway service.

Petition raised by: Karen Dunford

Date petition first considered by Committee: 11 November 2013

Number of signatures: 494

P-04-515 Increase Funding for Welsh Bus Services

Petition wording:

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to provide increased funding to bus services so that it adheres to its own policy aims of reducing poverty and exclusion, ensuring that people across Wales are not socially or economically disadvantaged by their location.

Additional information: This petition aims to increase the level of funding given to hard to reach, and disadvantaged areas of Wales. A number of local authority areas have had to reduce the frequency and range of bus routes since the Regional Transport Services Grant was introduced. This has left some residents isolated, especially on weekends and bank holidays.

Petition raised by: Daniel Thomas

Date petition first considered by Committee: 26 November 2013

Number of signatures: 246