

Agenda – Petitions Committee

Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 1 – Senedd

Meeting date: 13 September 2016

Meeting time: 08.45

For further information contact:

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Private Pre-Meeting: Members' Continuous Professional Development (08:45 – 09:00)

Members' Brief

1 Introduction, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

2 New petitions

2.1 P-04-688 TATA Steel Port Talbot Power Plant

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2.2 P-05-698 Rename Cardiff Int. Airport to Princess Diana International Airport

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2.3 P-05-699 A Treatment Fund for Wales – There Must be an End to the Healthcare Postcode Lottery

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2.4 P-05-700 Student Finance Funding For Postgraduate Courses

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2.5 P-05-701 Road Safety Improvements Along the A487 Trunk Road between Cardigan and Aberystwyth, to Include Passing Places

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2.6 P-05-702 EMA Attendance Requirements for Young Adult Carers

(Pages 71 – 79)

2.7 P-05-703 Proposal to Postpone the Restrictions on Fishing in Welsh Rivers

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2.8 P-05-706 Keep our Councils Rejuvenated by Introducing a Fixed Term
(Pages 89 – 99)

2.9 P-05-708 To Make Mental Health a Part of the National Curriculum
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3 Updates to previous petitions

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3.1 P-04-683 Trees in Towns
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3.2 P-05-691 A Fair Deal for Forest Rallying in Wales
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3.3 P-05-654 Objection to the Current Proposals for the Designation of SAC's
for Porpoises
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3.4 P-04-547 Ban Polystyrene (EPS) Fast Food and Drinks Packaging
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3.5 P-04-516 Make Political Science Compulsory in Education
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3.6 P-04-637 To Protect the Future of Youth Music in Wales
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3.9 P-05-695 Introduce Compulsory Mental Health Education in Secondary
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3.10 P-04-553 A Full and Independent Investigation in to the Health Risks of
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3.11 P-05-693 Give Every Child in Wales the Meningitis B Vaccine for Free
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3.12 P-05-697 45000 Reasons Wales Needs a Dementia Strategy
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3.13 P-04-564 Restoration of Inpatient Beds, Minor Injuries Cover and X-Ray
Unit to the Ffestiniog Memorial Hospital
(Pages 188 – 191)

Economy and Infrastructure

3.14 P-04-667 Roundabout for the A477/ A4075 Junction
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3.15 P-05-689 Improvements to the Railway Provision at Kidwelly
Carmarthenshire
(Pages 194 – 202)

3.16 P-04-686 Install a Traffic Lights System at Cross Hands Roundabout
(Pages 203 – 204)

3.17 P-05-690 Resurfacing of the A40 Raglan–Abergavenny Road
(Pages 205 – 210)

First Minister

3.18 P-04-672 End Use of Welsh Language
(Pages 211 – 213)

Evidence Session

**4 P-04-668 Support Yearly Screening for Ovarian Cancer (CA125
blood test)**
(10:15 – 10:45) (Pages 214 – 219)

Petitioner – Margaret Hutcheson

Document is Restricted

Agenda Item 2.1

P-04-688 TATA Steel Port Talbot Power Plant

This petition was submitted by Peter Bamsey, having collected 531 signatures.

Text of the Petition

We the undersigned call upon the Welsh Government to use all levers at its disposal, including financial levers, to support the completion of a new power plant planned for Port Talbot steels works. The construction of this plant will create jobs and when it is operational it will reduce emissions, reduce Tata's running costs and help to safeguard vital jobs in the area.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Aberavon
- South Wales West



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

TITLE **Tata Steel Task Force Meeting**
DATE **8 August 2016**
BY **Ken Skates AM, Cabinet Secretary for Economy and
Infrastructure**

On 4 August I chaired the sixth meeting of the Tata Steel Task Force. This was my first meeting as Chair of the Task Force. There was strong attendance from all parties including Tata Steel, Unite and Community Unions and partners highlighting the ongoing commitment across organisations to support those affected by the steel crisis. The UK Government was also represented through the attendance of the Secretary of State for Wales.

Tata Steel in Wales provided an oral update on the business performance which continues to show a turnaround. This is due to a range of external and internal factors but not least the commitment and efforts of the workforce. Tata also provided an update on the redundancy process that has been taking place since January and is now nearing completion. Thanks were given to all the support agencies who have been involved.

The Trade Unions equally commended the achievements and contribution of the workforce to improvements over recent months. The Unions updated the Task Force on their position regarding the current situation, particularly the prolonged uncertainty in relation to the sales process and stressed the importance of securing a long term sustainable future for the plants.

An update was provided on progress by the work streams.

Support to Tata workers through the Training and Skills work stream has progressed and recent advice sessions had been opened up to workers in the supply chain. Support has been provided by a wide range of organisations including the Money Advice Service, UK Steel Enterprise, local voluntary organisations and HMRC. On site presence by Job Centre Plus has continued through until the end of July. Careers Wales had carried out partnership presentations and worked on a one to one basis with a number of Tata and known subcontractor employees. The Unions strongly praised the flexible and sensitive support that has been provided to date by all agencies.

An update was given on the work of the Business and Supply Chain. Through Business Wales, 30 companies have been offered specific support and 24 companies have been, or are, actively participating in that support, whilst some companies have asked that the support offered be deferred given their specific circumstances and business challenges. The work stream will continue to monitor the situation and support from Business Wales remains open for businesses seeking help.

The Health work stream, led by the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, is progressing a programme of work to address both the health and wellbeing needs of Tata staff and workers in the supply chain. This work is focussed on community-based actions that include and support the needs of wider family members including children. An information leaflet has been produced promoting the support available and the work stream is working hard to ensure that this information reaches all those who may need it. Thanks was given to the Unions, Tata, voluntary organisations and the local authority for their support.

The Task Force agreed that going forward the Skills and Training work stream and the Business and Supply chain work stream would be merged to continue the joined-up action between organisations in support of both Tata workers and those in the supply chain. Roger Evans MBE, had kindly agreed to Chair the new work stream, in addition to acting as Deputy Chair for the main Tata Task Force. There will be close working between this work stream and the Health work stream.

The Secretary of State for Wales commented on the strong working relationship by all parties to date. He advised the Task Force that the UK Government was continuing to engage with all potential investors and develop potential support. He advised the Task Force that the responses to the UK Government consultation on the pensions, which closed on 24 June, are currently being analysed.

I updated the Task Force on progress with the Port Talbot Waterfront Enterprise Zone. The Board is working alongside Swansea Bay City Region, universities and research centres, Business Wales, the local authorities and major employers to support local businesses.

Since my appointment I have visited most of the steel plants in Wales, recently spending time visiting Tata sites at Shotton, Llanelli, Newport and Port Talbot. I intend to keep in close contact with all of the plants across Wales as well as those in the wider steel industry in Wales.

This remains a very uncertain time for many steel workers, their families and local communities across Wales. It is vitally important that progress we have made in recent months is not disrupted by a change of personnel in Westminster. We still need to see UK Government take action on pensions and energy which are central to helping move the steel industry in Wales onto a sustainable long term footing.

I will continue to keep Members up-dated as matters develop with this work.

This statement is being issued during recess in order to keep members informed. Should members wish me to make a further statement or to answer questions on this when the Assembly returns I would be happy to do so.

Agenda Item 2.2

P-05-698 Rename Cardiff Int. Airport to Princess Diana International Airport

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

Text of the Petition

We the undersigned call on the Welsh Government to rename Cardiff International Airport to "Princess Diana International Airport"

Additional information

To rename Cardiff International Airport will get more publicity and Welsh customers.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- South Wales Central
- Cardiff West

Rename Cardiff Airport

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 13 Medi 2016
Petitions Committee | 13 September 2016

Research Briefing:

Petition number: P-05-698

Petition title: Rename Cardiff Int. Airport to Princess Diana International Airport

Text of petition: We the undersigned call on the Welsh Government to rename Cardiff International Airport to "Princess Diana International Airport"

To rename Cardiff International Airport will get more publicity and Welsh customers.

Background

The Welsh Government purchased the Airport on 27 March 2013 for £52.0 million, to operate on a commercial basis at arm's length from Ministers.

Three UK airports have been named after individuals:

- In 2001, Liverpool Airport was renamed [Liverpool John Lennon Airport](#);
- In 2006, Belfast City Airport was renamed [George Best Belfast City Airport](#);
- Doncaster Sheffield Airport also uses the name [Robin Hood Airport](#), or Robin Hood Doncaster Sheffield Airport.

Renaming Cardiff Airport has periodically received media attention. In 2014, Geraint Davies MP [put forward the suggestion](#) that it could be renamed Dylan Thomas International Airport Cardiff.

Cardiff Airport last revised its branding in 2009, when the name 'Cardiff Airport' and 'Maes Awyr Caerdydd' replaced Cardiff International Airport, and a new visual identity and logo was also revealed.

Welsh Government action

The Welsh Government has not indicated that changing the name of Cardiff Airport is one of its priorities. However, the Welsh Government has indicated that changing the name of the airport would be an operational matter for Cardiff Airport.

National Assembly for Wales action

In 2014, the Assembly's Petition's Committee considered a [petition](#) to rename Cardiff Airport, Robert Owen International Airport of Wales after the Welsh pioneer of the Co-operative Movement. The previous responsible Minister indicated that there were no plans to rename the airport, so the petition was closed.

Two other petitions calling for Cardiff Airport to be renamed were submitted during the Fourth Assembly, but both were deemed inadmissible. One of those petitions called for the airport to be renamed Awyrle Dewi Sant Airport. It was inadmissible because the Committee had considered a substantially similar petition within the previous 12 months (the petition referred to above). The other petition was deemed inadmissible because it used language that could be deemed offensive.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

Ken Skates AC/AM
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros yr Economi a'r Seilwaith
Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-698
Ein cyf/Our ref KS/06087/16

Mike Hedges AM
Chair - Petitions Committee

SeneddPetitions@assembly.wales

17 August 2016

Dear Mike,

Thank you for your letter of 4 August regarding Petition P-05-698, renaming Cardiff Airport the Princess Diana International Airport.

Cardiff Airport is managed at arm's length from Welsh Government on a commercial basis by Cardiff International Airport Limited. They are responsible for the day to day operation and development of the airport and its services. Any change of name for the airport would be an operational matter for Cardiff Airport.

Yours ever,

Ken Skates AC/AM

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros yr Economi a'r Seilwaith
Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

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

Agenda Item 2.3

P-05-699 A Treatment Fund for Wales – there must be an end to the Healthcare Postcode Lottery

This petition was submitted by the Angharad Roche, having collected 27 signatures.

Text of the Petition

One of the greatest creations to come out of Wales was the National Health Service. It is one of our most valuable assets and we must hold on to it. At present, we are in the desperate situation where treatment for costly, life-saving drug treatments is not fairly or evenly distributed throughout Wales. Patients with a desperate need for life-saving drugs are being denied the treatments that they so urgently require by their Local Health Boards, with grave consequences to their health and life expectancy. I am calling on the Welsh Government to review their procedures in relation to the sanctioning of high-cost drug treatments with immediate effect. I further call on the Welsh Government to assess each patient and each patient's needs on a case-by-case basis as the current requirement for all funded drug treatments to appear on a list of 'Approved Drugs' is too narrow and prevents patients from accessing treatments which are not yet on the list but which Consultants say will have a positive impact on a Patient's long-term health and life-expectancy.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- South Wales Central
- Cardiff West

Briefing for the Petitions Committee

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 13 September 2016

Petitions Committee | 13 September 2016

Petition number: P-05-xxx

Petition title: A Treatment Fund for Wales – there must be an end to the Healthcare Postcode Lottery

Text of petition: One of the greatest creations to come out of Wales was the National Health Service. It is one of our most valuable assets and we must hold on to it. At present, we are in the desperate situation where treatment for costly, life-saving drug treatments is not fairly or evenly distributed throughout Wales. Patients with a desperate need for life-saving drugs are being denied the treatments that they so urgently require by their Local Health Boards, with grave consequences to their health and life expectancy. I am calling on the Welsh Government to review their procedures in relation to the sanctioning of high-cost drug treatments with immediate effect. I further call on the Welsh Government to assess each patient and each patient's needs on a case-by-case basis as the current requirement for all funded drug treatments to appear on a list of 'Approved Drugs' is too narrow and prevents patients from accessing treatments which are not yet on the list but which Consultants say will have a positive impact on a Patient's long-term health and life expectancy.

Background

Appraisal of medicines

Before new medicines can be routinely used to treat NHS patients, they undergo an appraisal process to determine whether the benefit to patients justifies the cost.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) advises the NHS on both the clinical and cost effectiveness of some newly-licensed medicines. This advice has a statutory basis in England and Wales, with Welsh health boards legally obliged to fund NICE-approved medicines.

The All Wales Medicine Strategy Group (AWMSG) has a remit to appraise new medicines that are not on the NICE work programme. Health Boards in Wales also have a legal requirement to fund medicines approved by AWMSG.

Cancer Drugs Fund

In England, the Cancer Drugs Fund routinely funds a number of cancer medicines not generally available on the NHS. Throughout the Fourth Assembly, the Welsh Government resisted calls for a similar fund. It argued that it discriminates against other health conditions, and said that the fund has not resulted in English patients having better access to new, cost-effective medicines than Welsh patients.

Individual patient funding requests

If a particular medicine has not been approved by NICE or AWMSG for routine use within NHS Wales, a clinician can make an Individual Patient Funding Request (IPFR) to a health board. Requests are considered on the basis of 'exceptionality'. An all Wales IPFR policy was published in 2011 to support a consistent approach to decision-making.

There has been continued criticism of the IPFR process. The Fourth Assembly Health and Social Care Committee's 2014 cancer inquiry heard that health board IPFR panels might take different approaches to these requests, and recommended that a national IPFR panel be established to ensure consistency and equity across Wales. A Welsh Government-commissioned review (published in 2014) made a number of recommendations to strengthen the IPFR process, but did not propose moving to a single, all-Wales IPFR panel.

The All Wales Therapeutics and Toxicology Centre has established a potential funding pathway for some new treatments in Wales. The 'One Wales' process will allow for interim commissioning of medicines for specific cohorts of patients, which will be conditional on

manufacturers committing to engage in a subsequent appraisal by AWMSC or NICE. It is envisaged that this process would not be used often. An example of where this route has been followed recently is to enable Welsh prostate cancer patients to receive the chemotherapy drug docetaxel at an earlier stage.

Welsh Government Action

On the [12 July 2016](#), the Cabinet Secretary for Health, Well-being and Sport, Vaughan Gethin AM stated that the Welsh Government were taking forward two measures to help ensure that patients in Wales have access to equitable treatment wherever they live. The Cabinet Secretary announced that the Welsh Government will introduce a New Treatment Fund in Wales, which should be operational by December 2016:

We will make £80m available over the life of this government to ensure new medicines, which address unmet clinical need and represent a significant step forward for the treatment of life-limiting and life-threatening diseases are available. This will be delivered consistently across Wales as soon as possible following a positive recommendation by either NICE or AWMSC.

The Cabinet Secretary also confirmed that an independent review of the IPFR process will be carried out, stating that:

The NHS Wales process has been improved following a review in 2013–14. A further review will now take place to ensure better consistency of decisions across Wales and make recommendations about what clinical criteria should be applied when determining eligibility.

[...] The review will consider in particular the clinical exceptionality criteria and the possibility of a single national IPFR panel.

I want the review to be short and sharply focused to address these issues. I will provide a further update in September.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

Vaughan Gething AC/AM
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Iechyd, Llesiant a Chwaraeon
Cabinet Secretary for Health, Well-being and Sport



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Your ref P-05-699
Our ref VG/05837/16

Mike Hedges AM
Chair - Petitions Committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

SeneddPetitions@assembly.wales

21 August 2016

Dear Mike,

Thank you for your letter of 3 August, seeking my views on the petition raised by Angharad Roche.

I am committed to ensuring that all patients in Wales have equitable access to treatment that has proven clinical and cost effectiveness. This evidence-based approach utilises the independent expertise of the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) and the All-Wales Medicines Strategy Group (AWMSG), which undertake robust, comprehensive appraisals of new medicines. It is our responsibility to ensure NHS resources are invested where the proven benefits are in balance with the cost. All medicines recommended by NICE or AWMSG are made available routinely where clinically appropriate. Since AWMSG was established in 2002, 84% of medicines appraised have received a positive recommendation and, in the last financial year, 96% of medicines appraised have been recommended for use in Wales.

We will continue to place the appraisal process at the centre of our evidence-based approach to medicines in Wales, ensuring people have access to effective treatment for their illness or disease. The new treatment fund I announced in July will support this approach by providing early access to innovative medicines, which offer new treatment options to people with life-long and life-limiting conditions. This new investment will provide health boards the time to plan and prioritise future funding from within their budgets. Work is progressing to refine the criteria and mechanisms needed to manage the fund effectively. I anticipate the fund will be operational by December.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

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

Where a health professional believes a particular treatment that is not recommended is the most suitable, an application can be made under the NHS Wales protocol for the *Individual Patient Funding Request (IPFR)* process. This process involves an assessment of the clinical suitability for a non-recommended treatment with supporting evidence showing why the individual patient will gain more clinical benefit from it than the evidence base suggests; usually referred to as clinical exceptionality.

It is right that we have a process in Wales to enable access to treatments and devices not normally available via the NHS. Each health service in the UK has such a process, with clinical criteria to determine accessibility. The IPFR process has been streamlined and improved following the review in 2013-14. Last month, I announced my intention of arranging a further review looking specifically at the clinical exceptionality criteria and revisiting the issue of reducing the number of IPFR panels we have in Wales. The review will be undertaken by an independent panel and will draw on the expertise and experience of the system in Wales, including that of patients, and bring a fresh perspective from outside Wales. We have made good progress to establish the panel and I will be updating the National Assembly at the end of September.

Taken together, these measures build on our evidence-based approach to accessing new medicines and will help to ensure that patients in Wales have access to equitable treatment wherever they live.

I hope the committee finds this information helpful in considering Ms Roche's petition and may I suggest the committee considers the full text of my announcement "Access to New Medicines" dated 12 July, a copy of which is enclosed?

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Vaughan Gething'.

Vaughan Gething AM/AC

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Iechyd, Llesiant a Chwaraeon
Cabinet Secretary for Health, Well-being and Sport



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

**STATEMENT
BY
THE WELSH GOVERNMENT**

TITLE *ACCESS to NEW MEDICINES*

DATE *12 July 2016*

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

In our manifesto, we made a commitment to improve the introduction of innovative treatments by establishing a new treatment fund in Wales. We also agreed with Plaid Cymru, as part of the Compact to Move Wales Forward, to undertake an independent review of the Individual Patient Funding Request (IPFR) process.

In Wales, we are proud to take an evidence-based approach towards the introduction of new medicines in the NHS.

New treatments are being discovered, licensed and approved for use in the NHS on an almost monthly basis, bringing with them the prospect of a cure or a better quality of life for people with life-long or life-limiting conditions.

Some of these new medicines come with a high price tag for the NHS, placing a responsibility on us to ensure our resources are invested where the proven benefit for patients is in balance with the cost. We will continue to take an evidence-based approach to determine which treatments should be routinely available in the Welsh NHS.

We rely on the expert and authoritative advice from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) and the All-Wales Medicines Strategy Group (AWMSG). Both these organisations undertake robust appraisals of new licensed medicines by assessing evidence of clinical effectiveness for patients against the cost to the NHS charged by the manufacturer.

Over the course of the last five years, we have invested in our own medicines appraisal programme to ensure that Wales can determine which new medicines should be available

in the NHS as quickly as possible, giving people access to the most clinically-effective and cost-effective new medicines.

Since the AWMSG was set up in 2002, it has provided advice on 286 new medicines, recommending 84% for use in NHS Wales. In 2015-16, 45 of the 47 medicines appraised were approved for use in Wales.

To improve the likelihood of a positive appraisal, we introduced the Wales Patient Access Scheme in 2012 to encourage the pharmaceutical industry to offer prices for new medicines more in balance with their clinical benefits. This has created new opportunities for new medicines to be routinely available in Wales. To date, 21 new medicines have been made available through this scheme.

New Treatment Fund

The new treatment fund will support the early introduction of the newest and most innovative high-cost medicines which have been recommended by NICE or AWMSG.

We will make £80m available over the life of this government to ensure new medicines, which address unmet clinical need and represent a significant step forward for the treatment of life-limiting and life-threatening diseases are available. This will be delivered consistently across Wales as soon as possible following a positive recommendation by either NICE or AWMSG.

The new treatment fund will meet the cost of these new medicines for a maximum of 12 months, giving health boards the time to plan and prioritise funding from within their budgets.

The fund has developed from our experience of making new high-cost treatments for a range of life-changing conditions available to people in Wales. Last summer, for example, the Welsh Government provided significant funding from its central reserves to enable the NHS to fund four new treatments for hepatitis C and a new treatment for a rare, genetic and progressive disease called aHUS. The medicines represented a major step forward in treatment and secured significant health and social benefits for patients.

It is essential the new treatment fund is operated transparently and is widely understood. During the summer we will be refining the criteria and mechanisms needed to manage the fund effectively. I anticipate the fund will be operational by December.

Most importantly, it will ensure patients in Wales have faster access to life-changing and life-saving treatments wherever they live.

Individual Patient Funding Request (IPFR) Process

Where a medicine or treatment has not been appraised or approved for use in NHS Wales, a clinician can apply, on their patient's behalf, for it to be made available via the individual patient funding request (IPFR) process.

It is right that we have a process in Wales to enable access to treatments and devices which are not normally available via the NHS. Each health service in the UK has such a process, with clinical criteria to determine accessibility.

The NHS Wales process has been improved following a review in 2013-14. A further review will now take place to ensure better consistency of decisions across Wales and make recommendations about what clinical criteria should be applied when determining eligibility.

I have discussed the scope for an independent review of the IPFR process with the health spokespeople of each of the parties represented in the National Assembly. There is general agreement for the review panel to draw on expertise and experience of the system in Wales and bring a fresh perspective from outside Wales. The patient perspective will also be an essential element of the review. The review will consider in particular the clinical exceptionality criteria and the possibility of a single national IPFR panel.

I want the review to be short and sharply focused to address these issues. I will provide a further update in September.

We will continue to place the appraisal process at the centre of our evidence-based approach to medicines in Wales; ensuring people have access to effective treatment for their illness or disease.

The new treatment fund will support this approach by providing early access to high-cost, innovative medicines, which offer new treatment options to people with life-long and life-limiting conditions.

We are also committed to reviewing the IPFR process to ensure it is both fair and consistent across Wales.

Taken together, these measures will help to ensure that patients in Wales have access to equitable treatment wherever they live.

Embargoed until after Vaughan Gething, Cabinet Secretary for Health, Well-being and Sport has delivered the statement.

Agenda Item 2.4

P-05-700 Student Finance Funding For Postgraduate Courses

This petition was submitted by the Huw Rhys Norvill, having collected 33 signatures.

Text of the Petition

Many people who would like to further their education beyond undergraduate level are put-off by the fact that they are required to attain a bank loan in order to fund their studies.

I believe that the government should do more to ensure that working people can afford to continue their education, something which at the moment, would result in considerable debt, if of course, they even qualify for the bank loan.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- South Wales East
- Torfaen

Funding for Postgraduate Courses

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 13 Medi 2016

Petitions Committee | 13 September 2016

Research Briefing:

Petition number: P-05-700

Petition title: **Student Finance Funding for Postgraduate Courses**

Text of petition: “Many people who would like to further their education beyond undergraduate level are put-off by the fact that they are required to attain a bank loan in order to fund their studies. I believe that the government should do more to ensure that working people can afford to continue their education, something which at the moment, would result in considerable debt, if of course, they even qualify for the bank loan.”

Background

The position on funding for postgraduate courses in 2016/17 is different in England and Wales. The position in Wales is expected to change for the 2017/18 academic year.

The position in England

From 1 August 2016, eligible students, domiciled in England, beginning a full-time or part-time Master’s course can apply for a Postgraduate Loan. Students will be able to borrow up to £10,000 to pay their fees and help with living costs. Eligible students will:

- Be aged under 60;
- Ordinarily living in England;
- Not already having a master’s degree or higher qualification.

The loan will not depend on personal or family income. Further information can be seen on the UK Government website: [Funding for Postgraduate Study in England](#)

The position in Wales

Currently (in the 2016/17 academic year) there is no similar scheme for postgraduate loans in Wales, although, in September 2015, Huw Lewis, the then Minister for Education and Skills said that this would have been the Welsh Government's 'policy goal'.

The Welsh Government is dependent on the Student Loans Company (SLC) as its sole delivery agent for student support for both higher and further education students from Wales. The SLC is a limited company whose sole shareholders are the four UK governments. In a [letter, 28 September 2015](#) to Jo Johnson MP, the UK Minister for Universities and Science, Huw Lewis said:

- Recent changes to the sponsorship and governance framework within which the SLC operates has been driven by the interests of the [UK] Department for Business, Innovation and Skills at the expense of the Devolved Administrations;
- The four sponsor departments across the UK had reached 'a common understanding' that no major policy changes should be implemented until the SLC had stabilised its delivery capacity and replaced its core systems;
- As a result of the 'very considerable' demands made by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, the SLC has been unable to respond to any of the requests of the Devolved Administrations for academic year 2016/17.

Welsh Government consultation

Between March and May 2016, the Welsh Government consulted on [Support for postgraduate study and part-time engineering, technology or computer science degrees](#). The consultation outlined a proposed interim loan scheme to be implemented for academic year 2017/18 to support Welsh postgraduates. The case for change was recognised in paragraph 28:

28. The evidence on the increasing economic importance of postgraduate qualifications, the link between wealth, existing postgraduate study and social mobility, and the early comment from the Diamond review of the relative situation of support in Wales versus England provide a convincing rationale for the provision of financial support. Such provision can support the achievement of the well-being goals of the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015.

The proposed interim scheme for Wales will be very similar to that in England. It is proposed that eligible students, domiciled in Wales, will be able to borrow up to £10,000 to support full-time study. They must:

- Be aged up to 60

- Not already hold an equivalent level postgraduate qualification and
- Must be on an approved course (taught or research).

It is proposed that: repayments will begin at £21,000 (with this threshold frozen until 2021): interest will be charged at RPI+3%; and repayments will be made concurrently with any undergraduate debt repayments.

The Independent Review of Higher Education Funding and Student Finance Arrangements, chaired by Professor Sir Ian Diamond

The final report and recommendations of the [Independent review of higher education funding and student finance arrangements](#) is due to report in September 2016. A key priority for the Review is to make clear recommendations about the future longer term funding and to strengthen provision for Welsh postgraduates.

National Assembly for Wales action

During the [Enterprise and Business Committee's scrutiny of the Draft Budget](#) (14 January 2016), Julie James the then Deputy Minister for Skills and Technology, was asked about introducing postgraduate loans. In reply, she said:

“The postgraduate loan situation has been a very fraught one. I’m sure you’ve seen that the Minister has made several public pronouncements about how distressed we are about the situation of the Student Loans Company and, in fact, Chair, I’d like to suggest, if I may—and forgive me if it’s a bit cheeky—that perhaps the committee would like to ask the Student Loans Company chief executive and chair, to come down and speak to you personally about why they have not been able to support Wales in this next financial year in the way that they’ve supported England, because, quite frankly, we’re very angry about it. So, what they’ve done is that they’ve responded to pressure from English Ministers to do a postgraduate loan, and we have been told categorically that they cannot do that for us in the same period and I just think that that’s not acceptable.”

She went on to say:

“So, the answer to your question is: they know that we want to do it as soon as possible. We would have liked to do it now. We haven’t been able to, just for the administrative problems that they’ve had, but we are on record as saying that we’d like to do it as soon as possible.”

Following this, the Enterprise and Business Committee wrote to the Student Loans Company and to the UK Minister for Universities and Science (3 February 2016), asking for their assessment of the issues. In his response (08 March 2016), Jo Johnson, then the UK Minister of State for Universities and Science wrote to the Committee:

The SLC has a unique operating status as the joint delivery partner for all UK administrations in a devolved policy area. The Company's shareholders are also its customers, and the size of each Administration's shareholding aligns to the contribution it makes to the SLC's operating costs. BIS owns 85 % of the company and fund approximately 85% of its operating costs.

And

Your letter states that it was Wales' policy goal to implement a Postgraduate Loans product in AY16/17. This was not explicitly communicated to BIS officials before the SLC's commission was finalised in July 2015. As documented in the minutes of a quadrilateral meeting between officials from BIS and the DAs on 8 June 2015, Welsh Officials confirmed that the timing of the Diamond Review meant that the earliest timing for a Postgraduate Loan product to be implemented in Wales was AY17/18.

I am pleased that the UK Administrations have been able to work together in recent months to deliver improvements to the SLC's governance arrangements and commissioning process. My

The response from Christian Brodie, Chairperson, Student Loans Company is published here: [Page 58, Letter from the Student Loans Company](#).

In her letter to the Petitions Committee, Kirsty Williams says that she expects the SLC to be in a position to run an interim loan scheme for Welsh domiciled students in 2017.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

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



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref KW/05551/16

Mike Hedges AM
Assembly Member for Swansea East
Chair - Petitions Committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
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CF99 1NA

seneddpetitions@assembly.wales

15 August 2016

Dear Mike

Thank you for your letter of 4 August regarding a petition on postgraduate funding from Huw Rhys Norvill.

Unfortunately, a Student Finance Wales (SFW) postgraduate loan scheme could not be implemented for Welsh students in academic year 2016/17 because of resource issues within the Student Loans Company (SLC), but on 3 March 2016 the Welsh Government published a consultation which closed on 26 May 2016. This consultation outlined a proposed interim loan scheme to be implemented for academic year 2017/18 to support Welsh postgraduate students.

<http://gov.wales/consultations/education/support-for-postgraduate-study-and-part-time-engineering/?skip=1&lang=en>

I expect the SLC to be in a position to run the scheme for Welsh domiciled students in 2017.

Professor Sir Ian Diamond and a panel of experts are also considering postgraduate support as part of a wider review into higher education and student finance. The 'Summary of Evidence' was published in December 2015 and can be found at:

<http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/151215-review-of-higher-education-funding-and-student-finance-arrangements-in-wales-call-for-evidence-summary-of-responses-en.pdf>.

The final report is due to be published this September.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

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

Funding options are therefore limited for Welsh students intending to start Masters courses this year. One option to consider would be deferring entry (with the University's agreement) until AY 2017/18 when a postgraduate loan scheme should be available, or consider a part-time option in 2016/17. Some universities offer a postgraduate bursary depending on the subject area.

There are certain educational trusts and charities that may be prepared to assist by means of small grants or loans. There are standard lists in most public reference libraries including the Educational Grants Directory.

As you have indicated, if no other funding is available, and subject to eligibility, a Professional and Career Development Loan (PCDL) can help to pay for course fees and any associated costs. However, the course provider and course has to be listed on the PCDL register. Further information is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/career-development-loans/overview> or by contacting a careers adviser on 0800 100 900. The need to take up this type of commercial loan should be much reduced in academic year 2017/18 when the SFW scheme is implemented and it is likely that the Diamond review will also give a clear steer about postgraduate support.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kirsty Williams'.

Kirsty Williams AC/AM

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg
Cabinet Secretary for Education

Agenda Item 2.5

P-05-701 Road Safety Improvements Along the A487 Trunk Road between Cardigan and Aberystwyth, to Include Passing Places

This petition was submitted by the Maldwyn Lewis, having collected 93 signatures.

Text of the Petition

Following numerous incidents along the A487 Trunk Road particularly between Cardigan and Aberystwyth, I petition the Welsh Assembly to make improvements along this coastal road, including passing places at various locations, in order to alleviate the build up of traffic behind slower moving vehicles. I'm of the opinion that having strategically located passing places would reduce driver frustration and risk taking when attempting to overtake.

When this Fishguard to Holyhead Trunk road is closed due to an incident, the alternative diversion route is along minor roads which can be a nightmare especially when Heavy Goods Vehicles, buses and coaches meet each other in opposite directions.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Mid and West Wales
- Ceredigion

Petition: Road Safety Improvements Along the A487.

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 13 Medi 2016

Petitions Committee | 13 September 2016

Research Briefing:

Petition number: P-05-701

Petition title: Road Safety Improvements Along the A487 Trunk Road between Cardigan and Aberystwyth, to Include Passing Places

Text of petition:

Following numerous incidents along the A487 Trunk Road particularly between Cardigan and Aberystwyth, I petition the Welsh Assembly to make improvements along this coastal road, including passing places at various locations, in order to alleviate the build-up of traffic behind slower moving vehicles. I'm of the opinion that having strategically located passing places would reduce driver frustration and risk taking when attempting to overtake.

When this Fishguard to Holyhead Trunk road is closed due to an incident, the alternative diversion route is along minor roads which can be a nightmare especially when Heavy Goods Vehicles, buses and coaches meet each other in opposite directions.

Background

The A487 trunk road forms part of the north-south network of trunk roads linking Fishguard in Pembrokeshire with the Northern areas of Wales. It joins the A470 at Cross Foxes near Dolgellau, re-emerging as the A487 north of Trawsfynydd. A map of the Welsh trunk road network is available [here](#).

The Welsh Government is the highway authority for the Welsh trunk road and motorway network, including the A487. Maintenance and operation of the network are the responsibility of the [South Wales Trunk Road Agent](#) (Fishguard to Cardigan) [North and Mid Wales Trunk Road Agent](#) (north of Cardigan).

The [North and Mid Wales Trunk Road Agent website](#) describes the road:

The A487 carries **significant levels of Heavy Goods Vehicles all year and heavy tourist traffic during the summer period and commuter traffic in localised areas**. It also provides a corridor for public transport, serving the surrounding towns and villages, rural businesses, schools and leisure activities.

The A487 corridor is predominantly single carriageway and with varying standard throughout.

The [Road Safety Foundation](#), a UK road casualty reduction charity, is a partner of the [European Road Assessment Programme \(EuroRAP\)](#), an international not for profit association whose purpose is to promote safer roads. The Road Safety Foundation published annual British EuroRAP results for Britain assessing the safety of British roads, **including a risk map** indicating providing an assessment of safety. Past reports, including those for [2013](#), [2014](#) and [2015](#) are available on the Foundation's website.

The Risk maps provide a five level risk rating ranging from low to high risk roads showing the “statistical risk of death or serious injury” occurring on the road. The Foundation describes the methodology used:

The risk is calculated by comparing the frequency of road crashes resulting in death and serious injury on every stretch of road with how much traffic each road is carrying. For example, if there are 20 crashes on a road carrying 10,000 vehicles a day, the risk is 10 times higher than if the road has the same number of collisions but carries 100,000 vehicles.

In 2013 the A487 was assessed as **medium risk from south-west Wales to Dolgellau**, and **low-medium risk for the remainder of its length**. In 2014 the risk increased to **medium to high-risk road to Dolgellau**, and **medium risk for the remaining northern leg**. The 2015 map showed the road as **medium risk along its entire length**.

Welsh Government action

The [Welsh Government's Road Safety Framework](#), published in 2013, sets out the Government's road safety targets and associated actions. For all Welsh roads by 2020 the Welsh Government wants to see the following compared to the average for 2004–2008:

- 40% fewer people killed and seriously injured on Welsh roads;
- 25% fewer motorcyclists killed and seriously injured on Welsh; and
- 40% fewer young people (aged 16–24) killed and seriously injured on Welsh roads.

The framework identifies “vulnerable groups” and considers “collision causation”, engineering “safer roads” as well as approach and governance arrangements. In terms of “safer roads” it says “highway authorities are encouraged to use the collision evidence available to develop engineering measures to positively affect road safety”.

The Welsh Government's [National Transport Finance Plan](#) commits to “deliver the actions set out in the Road Safety Framework for Wales” through to “2020 and beyond”, and to deliver “a programme of road safety improvements outside schools on the trunk road”. The plan lists two highway schemes on the A487: the A487 Caernarfon to Bontnewydd bypass, and the A487 Dyfi Bridge. Both are planned to open in 2019. Further information on both is available on the [Government's website](#). The Welsh Government website lists casualty reduction

among the objectives for both projects. However, both are north of Aberystwyth and therefore outside the area identified as a particular priority by the petitioners.

The letter to the Chair from the Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure regarding this petition says that mid-Wales trunk roads, including the A487, are being surveyed to see whether overtaking opportunities can be introduced. The Cabinet Secretary says that the survey will consider whether “2+1” arrangements are possible, subject to funding, and he will be able to report findings later in the year.

A “2+1” road consists of two lanes of travel in one direction and a single lane in the opposite direction providing overtaking opportunities in the two lane direction, while overtaking in the single lane direction is prohibited. These can, where possible, be alternated at different points along the road permitting overtaking in each direction.

National Assembly for Wales action

Plenary discussion

Plenary discussion of the A487 since the beginning of the Fourth Assembly has focused on plans for delivery of the bypass and Dyfi bridge discussed above.

On 4 April 2014 Elin Jones AM raised the issue of safety on the A487 around the school in Llanarth, suggesting that it is inappropriate to have a speed limit of 40mph on a trunk road near a school. The then Minister for Economy, Science and Transport referred to a review of schools on the trunk road commenting “this is one of the issues that we will be looking at”.

Petitions Committee

The Petitions Committee in the Fourth Assembly considered a petition calling for “a mandatory 40mph speed limit on the A487 at Blaenporth Ceredigion”. The petition was first considered in October 2012 and closed in September 2013 following confirmation from the then Minister that a 40mph speed limit was planned for introduction in early 2014.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

Ken Skates AC/AM
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros yr Economi a'r Seilwaith
Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Your ref P-05-701
Our ref KS/06088/16

Mike Hedges AM
Chair - Petitions Committee

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

16 August 2016

Dear Mike,

Thank you for your letter of 4th August regarding P-05-701 Road Safety Improvements Along the A487 Trunk Road between Cardigan and Aberystwyth, to Include Passing Places.

Ensuring the safety and reliability of the strategic road network is my primary transport concern and we regularly monitor collision data to establish the need for road safety improvements.

My officials are currently reviewing the trunk road network in Mid Wales to identify locations where it may be possible to introduce safe overtaking opportunities. The A487 along with the other corridors are being surveyed to determine where "2+1" arrangements are possible and which will deliver maximum benefits in terms of improving road safety and journey reliability. I hope to be in a position later this year to report on the findings of this review and I am confident, subject to availability of funding, the programme of improvements identified will go towards addressing the concerns expressed by the petitioners.

Yours ever,

Ken Skates AC/AM
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros yr Economi a'r Seilwaith
Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

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



5th September 2016

Mike Hedges AM
Chair- Petitions Committee
Welsh Assembly Government
Tŷ Howell
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Your Ref P-05-701

Re: Road Safety Improvements along the A487 Trunk Road from Cardigan to Aberystwyth.

Dear Chair and Petitions Committee,

As the principal petitioner and a Ceredigion person I write in an attempt to give you some reasons for my action to petition.

1. The A487 runs from Fishguard to Holyhead along the Cardigan Bay, it is the main artery, backbone running North / South and Vice Versa and is essential for trade, tourism, commuters and attracting investment into the County and it therefore needs to be fit for purpose.
2. There is no alternative 'A' road heading North / South and when there is an incident along this road, the diversion route usually means travelling along narrow 'B' and 'C' class roads. A road closure usually results in hours of disruption with confusion as drivers of HGV, PCV, cars, Caravans etc try to negotiate narrow back country lanes to reach their desired destination.
3. The volume of traffic has increased and the infrastructure has not evolved at the same rate. As quoted by a politician recently ' Wales is in danger of falling behind the UK in respect of transport Infrastructure'. Certainly I feel the A487 is falling behind.
4. The volume of HGV and PCV traffic has increased, and there are no guaranteed passing places between Cardigan and Aberystwyth or vice versa whereby an overtaking manoeuvre can be carried out without using the on-coming traffic lane. The only tract of dual carriageway is at Cardigan and this has a speed restriction of 40m.p.h.
5. As there are no dedicated passing places, drivers take risks to overtake slow moving vehicles at locations undesirable.
6. Visibility and safety at junctions along the A487. There are Cross Roads and Junctions which cause me concern or have been brought to my attention along the route including (but not an exhaustive list) :-
 - a. Gogerddan Cross Roads(north of Blaenporth);
 - b. Sarnau Junction with Rhyd Lewis;
 - c. Brynhoffnant Junction with Llangrannog;
 - d. The village of Plwmp and the Cross Roads there

- e. Synod Inn where the A486 Llandysul to New Quay and A487 intersect (although grateful improvements have been made along the A486, concerns have been raised that its very difficult to negotiate at this junction due to the volume of traffic.
 - f. Pen Croes Castell (North of Llanarth) visibility approaching this junction from Pencae is impossible (B4342).
 - g. Junction with Llanddeiniol (North of Llanrhystud)
 - h. Junction with A485 at Llanfarian.
 - i. Junction of A4120 (Devils Bridge Road) and B4340 with the A487
7. There have been other issues raised in respect of pedestrians crossing at various locations within villages along the A487; Blaenplwyf being one and Llanfarian being mentioned to myself.
 8. On the 11th March 2016 I made freedom of Information requests to the Emergency services; Police, Ambulance and Fire Services for figures relating to incidents that they have been in attendance during the last five years. The Ambulance Service noted they had attended to 257 incidents with 382 of their vehicles involved in providing services. The Fire Authority 110 appliances, the police did not provide details. The above incidents are ones where services were called to the scene, there are others where minor incidents have happened and the matters dealt between parties.

It should be noted that the coastline of Ceredigion between Cardigan and Aberystwyth has only the road infrastructure to rely on as a transport link No Railway or Metro !.

Having started the petition I'm quite proud to state that 99 people signed the on-line version and 860 signatures, were received via the written version a **Total of 959**, a statement in itself that people are asking for improvements.

I do not ask for by-passes built for villages, I don't ask for dual carriageways the length of the route, I don't ask for roundabouts or traffic lights at every junction; however I do ask for a study into making improvements which would allow safe overtaking lanes at sensible locations, make modifications at Junctions and Cross Roads in order to increase visibility and safety.

Currently there are tracts of land along the A487 undeveloped, some of them as wide grass verges, others running along straight lengths of road which in my opinion would seem suitable for allowing some improvements.

I understand that the A487 cannot be transformed overnight, but do ask for a forward work political commitment to improve our Main artery in order to Preserve Life, allow better investment, employment, tourism but above all Increase in Road Safety with reduction in incidents.

I thank you for your time in considering the petition.

Yours Faithfully



Maldwyn Lewis

CC:- Elin Jones AM; Ceredigion County Council.

Agenda Item 2.6

P-05-702 EMA Attendance Requirements for Young Adult Carers

This petition was submitted by the, Carmarthenshire Young Adult Carer Project having collected 60 signatures.

Text of the Petition

I call upon the National Assembly to urge the Welsh Government to amend the current Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) criteria in respect of Young Adult Carers (YACs) in Wales.

Currently, the EMA Learning Agreement Form's 'Attendance, Performance and Behaviour Criteria' says 'students must meet the college's attendance requirements of 100% relating to the agreed programme unless prevented from doing so by illness or other good reason agreed by the college'... and 'attend all classes at the correct time and place and submit all work by the deadlines set.'

These criteria act as a barrier to YACs engaging in further education and contribute to the high number of YACs who subsequently drop out due to the demands of their caring role. This is evidenced by the findings of the research 'Time to Be Heard' which says that of the 22,655 YACs in Wales 21% are NEET (Not in Education, Training, Employment) and that they are four times more likely to drop out of college than those without caring commitments.

Under the current EMA guidelines there is no allowance for the caring responsibilities which can impact YAC's ability to engage in education which is discriminatory, which limit their options to realise their full potential, further their career and make a positive contribution to society.

In order for the number of YACs who are NEET to be reduced and the number engaging in and completing further education to increase I believe that the vital role YACs have needs to be acknowledged through making special compensation for their caring responsibilities through introducing a lower attendance requirement of 80%.

I propose that a question be included on the EMA registration form which identifies YACs so as to identify their need for potential support to engage in and remain in further education, encourage YACs to register with a Carers Service and/or Social Services and assist the WAG to monitor the number of YACs in Wales.

Additional information

Real life YAC case studies:

“I have cared for my mum since I was 11 and as mum can’t do a lot herself I do all the household chores, give mum her daily medication and take her to any appointments. We live 14 miles from the nearest town so it takes a long time to get to and from college on the bus. I am in my third year at college and rely a lot on my EMA money as mum is on benefits so money is tight. When mum is having a bad day I am late for class as I miss the school bus and also miss college due to taking mum to her medical appointments. Because of this I have had my EMA money stopped which has meant I haven’t been able to buy food some weeks so I think greater flexibility should be given within the EMA’s attendance requirement.”
(Female YAC aged 18, Carmarthenshire)

I care for my mum who has a brain tumour which has left her virtually blind. Dad works full time and as I am the eldest of 8 children I am the primary carer, also looking after my siblings. I do find this a struggle as I am in my third year at college but am keen to finish my education, though lately have been thinking I may have to drop out as I find it difficult to keep my attendance level high enough and am sometimes late with assignments so think it would help if there was more flexibility for YACs within the EMA’s learning agreement so at least I wouldn’t have to also worry about my EMA being stopped as I rely on this money as my only income.”
(Female YAC aged 18, Carmarthenshire)

I have been the main carer for my mum who has mental health issues since I was 16 so I had to drop out of school to look after her. I would have liked to carry on with my education but money is very tight and I knew I wouldn’t have been able to have 100% attendance because of looking after mum so knew I wouldn’t get EMA. If the

rules were different for YACs then maybe I could have gone to college but now I am what is known as 'NEET'" (Male YAC aged 16, Carmarthenshire).

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Llanelli
- Mid and West Wales

Changes to EMA Attendance Requirements

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 13 Medi 2016

Petitions Committee | 13 Sept 2016

Research Briefing:

Petition number: P-05-702

Petition title: Attendance Requirements for Young Adult Carers

Text of petition: I call upon the National Assembly to urge the Welsh Assembly Government to amend the current Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) criteria in respect of Young Adult Carers (YACs) in Wales.

Currently, the EMA Learning Agreement Form's 'Attendance, Performance and Behaviour Criteria' says 'students must meet the college's attendance requirements of 100% relating to the agreed programme unless prevented from doing so by illness or other good reason agreed by the college'... and 'attend all classes at the correct time and place and submit all work by the deadlines set.'

These criteria act as a barrier to YACs engaging in further education and contribute to the high number of YACs who subsequently drop out due to the demands of their caring role. This is evidenced by the findings of the research 'Time To Be Heard' which says that of the 22,655 YACs in Wales 21% are NEET (Not in Education, Training, Employment) and that they are four times more likely to drop out of college than those without caring commitments.

Under the current EMA guidelines there is no allowance for the caring responsibilities which can impact YAC's ability to engage in education which is discriminatory as it limits their options to realise their full potential, further their career and make a positive contribution to society.

In order for the number of YACs who are NEET to be reduced and the number engaging in and completing further education to increase I believe that the vital role YACs have needs to be acknowledged through making special compensation for their caring responsibilities through introducing a lower attendance requirement of 80%.

I propose that a question be included on the EMA registration form which identifies YACs so as to identify their need for potential support to engage in and remain in further education, encourage YACs to register with a Carers Service and/or Social Services and assist the WAG to monitor the number of YACs in Wales.

Background

The EMA is a financial allowance available to 16, 17 and 18 years olds living in Wales to encourage and support them to continue in education after compulsory school leaving age. It was first introduced for 16 year-olds in 2004/05 and was extended to include 17 year-olds in 2005/06 and 18 year-olds during 2006/07.

A total of [30,465 applications for EMA were received for 2014/15](#). 94 per cent of applications received were approved, 3 per cent were rejected and 2 per cent were incomplete.

Eligible students receive a weekly allowance of £30, which is paid fortnightly. The individual institutions, where students are receiving EMA, are responsible for instructing the Student Loans Company (SLC) to proceed with paying a student's EMA. Institutions ask the SLC to pay students based on satisfactory attendance and the achievement of agreed learning goals. These learning goals and attendance targets are set out in a Learning Agreement signed by the student and institution at the start of the course (see below).

SLC, under the brand name of [Student Finance Wales](#), is responsible for the management and payment of the EMA in Wales. Scotland and Northern Ireland have EMA schemes, although England ended their scheme in 2011, replacing it with a [Bursary Fund for 16–19 year olds](#).

EMA does not affect any money students earn from a part-time job or any benefits paid to families, such as Child Benefit, Tax Credits, Universal Credit or Employment Support Allowance.

Eligibility Criteria

Eligible students, must attend recognised schools or further education institutions in Wales or elsewhere in the UK.

[Household income is a key criterion](#) for awarding EMA. Students are currently only able to receive EMA if their household income is £20,817 or less; or £23,077 or less in certain conditions (such as additional dependants being resident in the household).

The course the student is undertaking must also be considered eligible. For a course to be eligible, it must be:

- an academic or vocational course up to and including Level 3; and
- full-time at school, or involve a minimum of 12 guided hours at college; and
- at least 10 weeks long.

A [full list of the eligibility criteria](#) for EMA can be found online.

Some recent changes to the EMA eligibility criteria were indicated in the [EMA \(Wales\) Scheme 2014/15 Equality Impact Assessment](#). It notes:

The SLC will assess applications made to the EMA Scheme where an applicant meets the eligibility criteria for age, income thresholds and residency, but is unable to meet other criteria (learning sessions at a recognised educational institution) of the Scheme due to the nature of their disability. Successful applicants will receive an equivalent award (of £30 per week).

Learning Agreements

If the student meets all the eligibility criteria then they will have to enter into a Learning Agreement with the college or school where they will undertake their studies. Adherence to this Agreement becomes the basis for the ongoing payment of EMA to the student.

From 2016/17 on, the SLC provides a mandatory template Learning Agreement for institutions to use. This is to provide consistency, to help distinguish between the EMA agreement and the institutions own, separate student agreements, and to reinforce the importance of the EMA agreement. Institutions who administer EMA are responsible for completing the blank spaces with the student.

The SLC also provides Learning Centre Guidance to support institutions to draft their Learning Agreements, as well as manage other aspects of EMA administration. Pages 15 – 20 of this Guidance deals with absences. It states that:

In order to receive EMA the student must have, signed their EMA Agreement and, in respect of the week, to which the award relates, attended every learning session in connection with their eligible course, or **if the student has not attended every learning session, the school or college has authorised their absence [author's emphasis]**.

It goes on to provide examples that 'could be acceptable reasons for authorising absences'.

These include:

- A family emergency, such as the need to look after a family member. (This may be important to students who may have caring responsibilities e.g. young carers / young adult carers responsible for a family member); or

- Medical appointments which could not be made outside of school or college hours. (In the cases of young carers / young adult carers, this may require attendance at medical appointments for the person they care for).

As such there is a relative level of discretion available to colleges to decide the amount of time they will accept as authorised absence and still pay the EMA. Page 21 of the guidance notes that:

Where the school/college has taken the decision that a student has not met the attendance criteria for that week and will not receive a weekly EMA payment, the student has the right of appeal to the school/college only. It is up to the school/college to decide if there are grounds for appeal in the first instance.

Schools and colleges are expected to have their own established appeals process which is published and available to its pupils/students.

It should be noted that all the Guidance Notes are not in the public domain. They are only provided to those institutions registered to administer EMA and have access to SLC's online secure portal.

The Evaluation of the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)

In 2014 the [Welsh Government published an Evaluation of the EMA scheme](#). On the whole it found the EMA scheme to be playing a positive role in the Welsh education systems. Some recommendations that may be of note, include:

- Recommendation 5 – That learning agreements are strengthened and made more meaningful...Learning agreements could also be strengthened by setting out the requirements for attendance within the documents.
- Recommendation 6 – That learning centres adopt more consistent policies in relation to EMA recipient attendance requirements as well as greater consistency in their practices to monitor attendance. This would result in a more equitable provision to EMA recipients, particularly around non-attendance resulting from illness.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.



Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-702
Ein cyf/Our ref ARD/05238/16

Mike Hedges AM
Assembly Member for Swansea East
Chair - Petitions Committee
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17 August 2016

Dear Mike

Thank you for your letter of 4 August, regarding a petition submitted by Melanie Rees to the Petitions Committee, to consider amending the current Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) criteria for Young Adult Carers (YACs) in Wales. The EMA Scheme falls within my portfolio.

I recognise the challenges that young carers and adult carers face and the important role they play in providing care to family members whilst they are studying.

My officials were aware of the petition and met (on 12 July) Melanie Rees, who runs the Young Adult Carer Project in Carmarthenshire, and a small group of YACs from the Project to discuss their concerns. A representative from our delivery partner, the Student Loans Company (SLC), the body delegated to administer the EMA (Wales) Scheme on behalf of the Welsh Ministers, also attended.

A number of options such as including a question in the EMA application were discussed with Melanie and the YACs. Officials are undertaking exploratory discussions with SLC to consider the practicalities, benefits and costs to amend the EMA application form to help identify young carers/YACs in future academic years (applications for academic year 2016/17 are already published and available to students). My officials have also contacted Carers Trust (Wales) who have agreed to take forward some of the issues with their Young Adult Carer Advisory group. The Trust will feed back comments to my officials in due course.

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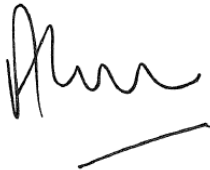
Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

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

In terms of attendance requirements, schools and colleges in Wales are responsible for their own attendance policies and, within reason, a level of discretion can be applied for EMA attendance. The SLC also provides guidance to those schools/colleges who administer EMA annually, setting out examples for authorised and non-authorised absences. Schools/colleges who run EMA are responsible for electronically submitting weekly attendance confirmations to SLC to allow the Company to release eligible payments to EMA students.

My officials also informed Melanie that, prior to her petition, a separate Young Carers Network in Wales, who met the then Health Minister in February 2016, had raised similar concerns in February 2016 about EMA. Following the Network's comments, positive steps were taken to help raise awareness of the issues. The SLC included a session as part of their annual Further Education Seminars (held in April 2016). Around 140 school/college representatives attended. SLC's EMA guidance for academic year 2016/17 has also been strengthened for schools/colleges, acknowledging the important role of young carers/YACs when schools/colleges are making informed decisions about authorised and non-authorised absences. The guidance was issued to those schools/colleges who administer EMA in July.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alun', with a horizontal line underneath.

Alun Davies AC/AM

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

Agenda Item 2.7

P-05-703 Proposal to Postpone the Restrictions on Fishing in Welsh Rivers.

This petition was submitted by the Alex Young, having collected 656 signatures.

Text of the Petition

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to ensure an immediate postponement of the 10-year catch & release proposal for all salmon on Welsh rivers, whilst a full and proper impact assessment is carried out into the effects on local business and tourist economy, at a time when the Welsh economy is already suffering due to the decline in steel production. We believe this matter requires urgent attention.

I am chairman of Abergwili Angling Club, based in Carmarthen and I'm concerned by recent proposals by NRW to impose a ten-year catch and release only policy for salmon on all Welsh rivers, with no scientific evidence that pleasure anglers are responsible for the decline in migratory salmon stock.

A high percentage of our Club members travel into Wales bringing much needed revenue into the local economy. Below you will find extracts from the NRW's own technical report that highlights the losses that may well be incurred, following the expected loss of anglers coming to Wales, should NRW go ahead with a 10-year Salmon catch & release programme.

Additional information

Below are extracts from a recent 'consultation' with anglers, in West Wales :-
NRW B B 40.15 Annex 2 TECHNICAL REPORT: MANAGEMENT OPTIONS TO ADDRESS THE DECLINE IN STOCKS OF SALMON AND SOME SEA TROUT IN WALES

7. Salmon and sea trout are iconic and important species in our rivers. They support recreational fisheries that bring economic benefit (in excess of £74 million annual expenditure in Wales, supporting around 1,500 Welsh jobs and £32 million in household income, Mawle and Peirson, 2009), often to rural communities, and are widely recognised as indicators of good environmental quality. Salmon support the designation of six rivers

designated as Special Areas of Conservation. These are the SAC rivers, as designated under the Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) in Wales. The salmon is also a feature of the Severn Estuary European Marine site (a SAC, and a site also designated as a Special Protection Area under the Birds Directive and a Ramsar site). 8. Welsh Government has set objectives for NRW to contribute to objectives for freshwater fisheries management, broadly by promotion of the conservation and maintenance of the diversity of migratory and freshwater fish, and by enhancing the contribution that migratory and freshwater fisheries make to the economy, particularly in remote rural areas and in areas with low levels of income. NRW also has statutory duties for fisheries under the Environment Act (1995), and obligations as set out in the UK Governments responsibilities to NASCO (the North Atlantic Conservation Organisation) to which the EC is a signatory.

Furthermore, the answer to a recent Freedom of Information request –ref: ATI – 09971a – is set out below:–

As part of any case for proposed new fishing control measures Natural Resources Wales is obliged to consider socio-economic factors. I can confirm that this has yet to take place, therefore regulation 12.4(a) of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 applies.

Information not held. We do not have an expected date of when this will be completed however we do hope to complete it later this year.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Carmarthen East and Dinefwr
- Mid and West Wales

Briefing for the Petitions Committee

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 12 Medi 2016
Petitions Committee | 12 September 2016

Research Briefing:

Petition number: P-05-703

Petition title: **Proposals to Postpone the Restrictions on Fishing in Welsh Rivers**

Text of petition:

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to ensure an immediate postponement of the 10-year catch & release proposal for all salmon on Welsh rivers, whilst a full and proper impact assessment is carried out into the effects on local business and tourist economy, at a time when the Welsh economy is already suffering due to the decline in steel production. We believe this matter requires urgent attention.

I am chairman of Abergwili Angling Club, based in Carmarthen and I'm concerned by recent proposals by NRW to impose a ten-year catch and release only policy for salmon on all Welsh rivers, with no scientific evidence that pleasure anglers are responsible for the decline in migratory salmon stock.

A high percentage of our Club members travel into Wales bringing much needed revenue into the local economy. Below you will find extracts from the NRW's own technical report that highlights the losses that may well be incurred, following the expected loss of anglers coming to Wales, should NRW go ahead with a 10-year Salmon catch & release programme.

Background

There are 31 rivers in Wales that contain some [salmon stocks](#) and of these [23 are classified as principal salmon rivers](#). Of these 23 rivers four are designated as Special Areas of

Conservation (SAC's) under the European Habitats Directive. Conservation limits and management targets are in place for the principal rivers.

Responsibility for managing inland fisheries and salmon fisheries in Wales rests with Natural Resources Wales (NRW). NRW like other fisheries authorities in the UK has powers to create national and local bylaws to assist with the conservation of fish stocks in Welsh rivers. These bylaws put in place a number of effort control measures to ensure that the exploitation of stocks takes place at sustainable levels. These can include measures such as restrictions on what gear can be used to fish different species, the times of year in which different species can be fished and the locations at where different species can be fished. One such method of effort control is known as catch and release. This is a requirement for all anglers to return any fish they catch to the river.

There are a [number of national and local bylaws](#) already in place for salmon fisheries in Wales. These include a national bylaw which states that any salmon in Wales caught before 16 June 2016 should be returned to the river. Catch and release local bylaws are also already in place on the Wye and Taff and Ely rivers.

The Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS) in conjunction with NRW in Wales and the Environment Agency in England produce an [annual report on salmon stocks and fisheries](#) in England and Wales. The preliminary assessment on stock levels for 2015 was published in May 2016. The report provides annual advice on the stock status of principle salmon rivers in England and Wales. The stock status is measured according to four categories:

- Rivers where there is at least a 95 per cent chance conservation and management targets being met are classified as being 'not at risk';
- Rivers where there is at least a 50–95 per cent chance of meeting conservation and management targets are classified as being 'probably not at risk';
- Rivers where there is only between a 5–50 per chance of meeting conservation and management targets are classified as being 'probably at risk; and
- Rivers where there is less than a 5 per cent chance of meeting conservation and management targets are classified as being 'at risk'.

Of the 23 principal salmon rivers in Wales NRW states that all but 2 of these rivers are classified as at risk or probably at risk. All four rivers designated as SAC's are deemed to be in an unfavourable conservation status. A list of the classifications for the individual rivers can be found [on page 65 of the CEFAS report](#).

Welsh Government action

NRW has responsibility for managing salmon fisheries in Wales on behalf of the Welsh Government. NRW has been going through a process of considering what additional actions, if any, may be required to address declines in salmon stocks in Welsh rivers.

On 17 March 2016 [a paper](#) was presented to the NRW Board which provided an update on the action taken by NRW in the last year to address declines and outlines proposals for further action. The paper states that whilst NRW does not believe fishing by rods and nets is the main cause of stock decline it believes that increasing the numbers of fish surviving to spawn in Welsh rivers in the short term 'can only be achieved if rod and net fishermen stop killing altogether'. NRW has stated that catch and release is favourable to the complete closure of a fisheries as it enable many of the socio-economic benefits of the fisheries to be maintained.

NRW states that it has undertaken formal and informal consultation on possible actions to manage salmon stocks with anglers and local fisheries groups including the issuing of a questionnaire. NRW expects to undertake a formal consultation on proposals to address the issue in the autumn of 2016 or early 2017. The earliest that any possible new measures could be in pace would be the 2017 fishing season.

National Assembly for Wales action

This issue has not yet been considered by the Assembly.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

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



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-703
Ein cyf/Our ref LG/05846/16

Mike Hedges AM
Chair - Petitions Committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

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

August 2016

Dear Mike

Thank you for your letter of 4 August, regarding petition P-05-703, a proposal to postpone the restrictions on fishing in Welsh rivers.

Firstly, I must emphasise salmon stocks have been in decline for a number of years throughout all North Atlantic countries. The 2015 salmon stock assessment report undertaken by Natural Resources Wales (NRW) shows most Welsh rivers are now "at risk" and under international conventions, there is an obligation on statutory environmental bodies, including NRW, to address the decline of this iconic species.

The most likely cause of the decline in salmon stocks is climate-moderated changes to habitat, including ocean temperature, salinity and acidity and the availability of prey.

Within Wales, NRW faces the challenge of managing stocks to ensure sufficient survival of fish to spawn, whilst seeking to maintain the socio-economic benefits of fishing opportunities.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

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

NRW is in the process of moving towards a formal consultation on salmon stock control measures around late 2016 or early 2017. This follows extensive informal consultation where NRW has sought stakeholders' views on potential options to tackle declining stock of salmon. One of the options being considered is mandatory measures to prevent the killing of any salmon in Welsh rivers. NRW's formal consultation document will outline all socio-economic and environmental issues associated with any potential course of action.

Following the closing date of this proposed formal consultation, NRW will proceed to collate and analyse objections received. NRW will then present me with all the information, enabling me to arrive at a fully informed decision on this matter.

Regards
Lesley

Lesley Griffiths AC/AM

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

**P-05-703 Proposal to Postpone the Restrictions on Fishing in Welsh Rivers.
Correspondence – 01.09.2016**

SORRY IM SLIGHTLY LATE WITH THIS REPLY.

Not enough research has been done.

The effect on the economy

Taking away disabled anglers fishing methods.

They admitted that rod anglers are not the problem.

Fishing at sea will remain the same.

Small clubs will suffer.

Taking away mans natural instinct " to hunt for food"

With the uncertain times ahead who knows what funding NRW will get now we are out of Europe

Can they afford to loose the money that's paid for rod licences ? (which they have publicised) will increase next year by £10. Who is going to pay over £80 to catch a salmon and return it.

Pollution, environment habitat, poaching and exploitation at sea needs to be addressed before anything else.

NRW got their figures from the catch return section on the licence, people who poach do not send in returns and lots of anglers do not return theirs.

Please consider these points.

Alex Young

Agenda Item 2.8

P-05-706 Keep our Councils Rejuvenated by Introducing a Fixed Term.

This petition was submitted by the Paul Stepczak, having collected 19 signatures.

Text of the Petition

I am proposing that in order to keep our councils and communities moving forward, elected cabinet and council members can only remain in post for a maximum of 2 terms (8years) within our local authorities. This will provide a continuous cycle of local representatives that will bring new ideas and enthusiasm to our communities. It will also provide an opportunity for Wales to develop a new generation of young politicians.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney
- South Wales East

Term limits for local councillors

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 13 Medi 2016

Petitions Committee | 13 September 2016

Research Briefing:

Petition number: P-05-706

Petition title: Keep our Councils Rejuvenated by Introducing a Fixed Term

Text of petition: I am proposing that in order to keep our councils and communities moving forward, elected cabinet and council members can only remain in post for a maximum of 2 terms (8years) within our local authorities. This will provide a continuous cycle of local representatives that will bring new ideas and enthusiasm to our communities. It will also provide an opportunity for Wales to develop a new generation of young politicians.

Background

The petition refers to introducing a 'fixed term' for local councillors, but the more commonly used expression in this context is 'term limits'. A term limit would restrict the number of terms a local councillor could serve, and therefore prevent them from standing for re-election after a prescribed period. Restrictions could also be placed on how long a Member could serve on a Council's executive. At present, there are no time limits.

Unlike some countries, notably the United States, term limits are not a familiar feature of political life in the UK.

It was proposed that Police and Crime Commissioners would only be permitted to serve a maximum of two terms in office, but this provision was removed from the legislation before it became law.

Welsh Government action

The Welsh Government's 2015 White Paper, [*Reforming Local Government: Power to Local People*](#) put forward proposals to limit the number of terms that local councillors could serve. The suggestion was a maximum of five terms. It also proposed limiting the length of time a Member could be part of any Council's executive to two terms.

The White Paper highlighted research that suggested term limits could potentially lead to a more diverse pool of candidates for election. However, the Welsh Government also acknowledged that the research was not conclusive, “not least that the ballot box gives the electorate the opportunity to impose their own term limits”.

The [summary of responses](#) to the consultation showed that while there was some support for the introduction of term limits, there was little consensus about what any limit should be. A total of 21 local authorities, and the WLGA, opposed the proposal for term limits. The summary went on to note:

For all of the suggested term limits there were two main arguments put forward to support respondents’ views. Firstly, it was suggested, any changes to term limits should apply to all levels of political representation across Wales. Secondly, it was argued, the evidence provided by the Welsh Government in the White Paper is insufficient basis to make such a change.

On 17 June 2015, the previous Minister announced in a [written statement](#) that he had decided not to proceed with the proposal.

National Assembly for Wales action

Assembly Members in the Fourth Assembly raised this issue in the context of the proposals in the 2015 Welsh Government consultation. In particular, Members queried why the proposals were restricted to local government, and whether they would indeed increase diversity within local government.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

Mark Drakeford AM/AC
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gyllid a Llywodraeth Leol
Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-706
Ein cyf/Our ref MD/05211/16

Mike Hedges AM
Chair - Petitions Committee
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12 August 2016

Dear Mike,

Thank you for your letter dated 4 August asking for my views on Petition no. P-05-706 *Keep our Councils Rejuvenated by Introducing a Fixed Term*.

The issue of limiting terms for elected members was considered by the previous Minister in the fourth Assembly administration as part of series of consultations on local government reform. The consultation on the White Paper '*Reforming Local Government: Power to Local People*' ran for a 12 week period ending on 28 April 2015. It sought views on limiting the number of terms elected members, leaders and elected mayors may serve. The proposal was to limit elected members to five terms and limit leaders, executive members and elected mayors to two terms.

This particular proposal was not universally favourably received, and there was strong opposition in some quarters. The summary of consultation responses notes that specific arguments put forward against term limits for elected members were that they would restrict the pool of candidates, reduce the level of experience in local authorities, disregard the valuable contribution of current elected members, provide a barrier to diversity by discouraging younger candidates seeking a long-term commitment to their communities and would not be beneficial for democracy.

In his Written Statement, published on 17 July 2015, the previous Minister announced he had decided against taking forward this particular proposal, and the draft Local Government Mergers and Reform Bill, published in the autumn for consultation of 2015 did not contain it.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

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

I published the consultation responses to the draft Bill on 12 July. There is no clear consensus on what the future organization of local government in Wales should be. I am taking the time over the summer to talk to all stakeholders and reflect on the options.

With regard to term limits for elected members: I do not think the evidence for adopting this proposal is strong enough for this issue to be reopened. It would put a limitation on the electorate's choice and this limitation does not apply to other levels of government. I support the need to encourage diversity amongst councillors but there are other methods to do so, which do not impinge on the right of voters to elect whom they chose.

Best wishes,

Mark

Mark Drakeford AM/AC

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gyllid a Llywodraeth Leol
Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government

**P-05-706 Keep our Councils Rejuvenated by Introducing a Fixed Term.
Correspondence – Petitioner to the Committee 31.08.2016**

Petition P-05-706 / Petitions Committee 13/09/2016

This proposal is being put forward to ensure we maintain a flow of new energy into our councils so that communities can continue to move forward, adapt, grow and develop. Without a formal structure at a governance level which states that elected cabinet and council members can only remain in post for a maximum of 2 terms (8 years) within our local authorities, we will not see this taking place. It is important for the future health and wellbeing of our communities that we adopt a system of renewal and change that will provide a continuous cycle of local representatives that will bring new ideas and enthusiasm to our communities. It will also provide an opportunity for Wales to develop a new generation of young politicians.

I understand that some consultation had been undertaken on a similar subject some time ago. However, I am uncertain if this consultation was of a public nature, or with the elected members themselves. If the latter, then this not a true consultation process.

I am also revising this proposal in light of the implementation of the Future Generations Act (2015).

A Diverse Wales Requires Diverse Representation

We are now living in a diverse Wales, yet ironically our “representatives” at local government in no way reflect this with the majority of local authority councillors being white males aged 60+. With less than 30% of councillors being female and with 99% of councillors being white, this is a statistic that in no way reflects the population of Wales and questions the promotion of equality. By maintaining the indefinite period, this allows little flexibility for this to change.

Table of Comparative Survey Data

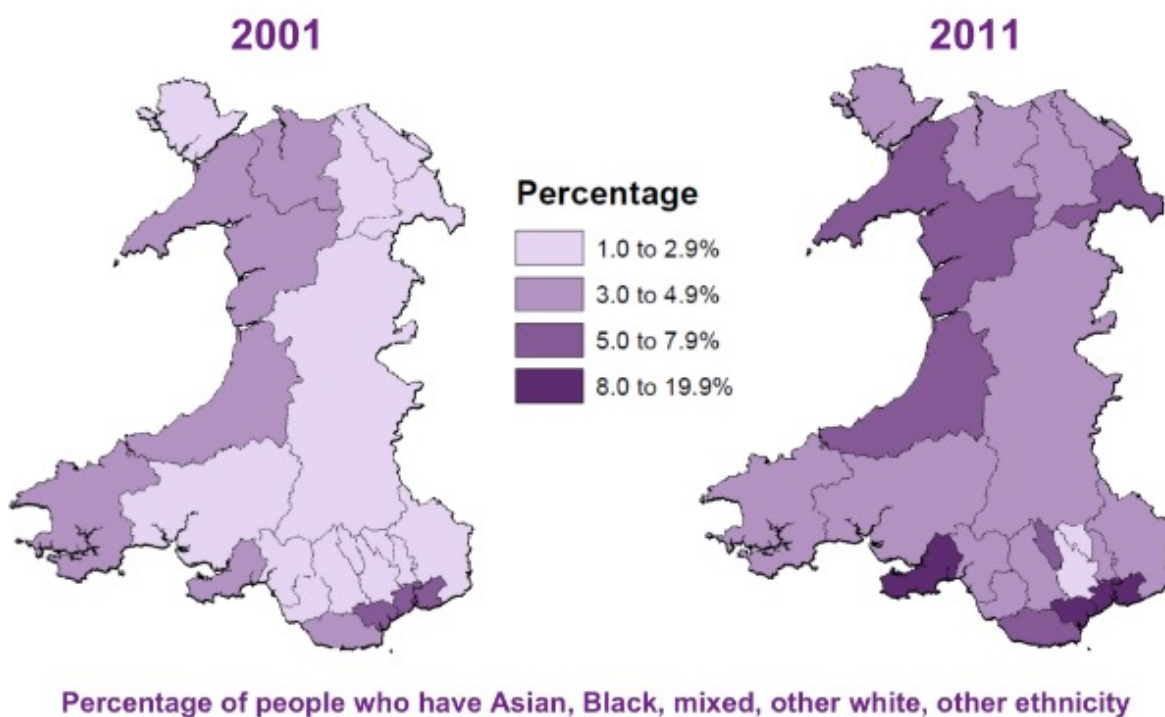
	Wales	England	Scotland	Northern Ireland
Gender				
Male	72%	68.5%	69.6%	76%
Female	28%	30.6%	30.4%	24%
Age				
18-29 years	2.1%	2.4%	3.2%	7%
30-39 years	4.7%	5.3%	6.7%	10%
40-49 years	11.3%	11%	16.6%	20%
50-59 years	25.4%	21.9%	28.3%	27%
60-69 years	38.8%	40.3%	38.2%	25%
70-79 years	17%	19.1%	6.7%	9%
80+ years	1%		03.%	
Ethnicity				
White	99%	96.3%	96.6%	100%
African			0.6%	
Asian			1.3%	
Mixed/Multiple ethnic group	1%	3.6%	1.6%	
Religion		NOT ASKED		
Christian	83%		49.9%	100%
Other	2%		4.3%	
None/no reply	15%		45.6%	
Sexual Orientation				NOT ASKED
Heterosexual	97%	84.2%		
Gay or lesbian	3%	3.3%		
Bisexual				
Other	<1%	0.3%		
Prefer not to say		12.2%		
Married/same sex civil partnership			72.3%	

On Balance: Diversifying Democracy in Local Government in Wales, 2014

Demographics from 2011 Census

Welsh resident population by broad age range										
	Total population	Under 16	16-24	25-44	45-64	65+				
Number	3,063,456	556,296	373,867	756,622	814,118	562,544				
%	100	18	12	25	27	18				
Welsh residents by gender										
	Total population	Male	Females							
Number	3,063,456	1,504,228	1,559,228							
%	100	49	51							
Welsh residents by religion										
	Total population	No Religion	Christian	Buddhist	Hindu	Jewish	Muslim	Sikh	Other	Religion not stated
Number	3,063,456	982,997	1,763,299	9,117	10,434	2,064	45,950	2,962	12,705	233,928
%	100	32	58	0.3	0.3	0.07	1.5	0.1	0.4	7.6
Stats Wales (2016) 2011 Census Results										

Growing ethnic diversity



Wales Race Forum, 2013.

This inequality must also have some impact on the level of interest and turnout at the polls; if the typical councillor is 60+ white male, can they relate to their potential voters such as the younger generation or those of different ethnicity and/or religion? Likewise, do the potential voters feel that they can relate to their councillor? This would answer the steady decline in the number of voters as the voting generation appears to be moving in alignment with the age of the councillor.

Not surprisingly, there has been little change in this local government structure for decades and coincidentally, neither has the level of poverty. If progress is not being made, then something needs to be changed.

I also believe that Wales is a state-dependant country. Its population (especially within its more deprived communities), has become dependent on state provision, whether it be financially via benefits and/or becoming over-dependent on services (both at a significant cost to the economy). So entrenched is the culture of having decisions made *for* them and services delivered *to* them that they have not only lost their voice, but they don't know that they have one. Evidence of this can be seen by the justification of BIG Lottery's Community Voice project throughout the country and/or the increased co-production initiatives that have significantly increased in the recent years. The Future Generation Act of 2015 encourages more community participation in not only decision making, but involvement. This can be alien to a number of long-standing councillors who have subconsciously deferred to an autocratic nature, rather than the democratic process that they represent. Therefore, like with any private organisation, a change in organisation culture usually requires a change in leader.

Length of Service

In addition to inequality, the current length of service also hinders development. It is now not uncommon for councillors to serve 10, 15 or even more than 20 years. Enabling councillors to remain in their position indefinitely leads to councillors becoming entrenched in their posts long after they have lost their effectiveness, long after other people have recognised that they should have stepped down and personal status and

campaigns take precedence over the needs of their constituency. This leads to people losing faith in politics and encourages a “nothing will ever change” culture that has contributed to, and will continue to contribute to the demise of some political parties in some regions. It also contributes to parties becoming less effective as people lose faith in the democratic system and the next generation doesn’t bother getting involved in politics as they can’t see a way through and therefore we don’t get effective opposition. It’s not that we have a limited pool of potential candidates, there’s simply no encouragement with opportunities being far and few between and an old school system that is counter-productive to engaging younger/new candidates. A lack of challenge results in a lack of drive and creates complacency and stagnation.

I understand that in 2012, 100 councillors were elected unopposed. Was this due to the amazing job that they were doing? Was it because other candidates believed that standing up against entrenched individuals (regardless of their political activity) was futile? Or was it because no-one cared? No opposition at such scale does not imply a democratic state.

Proposal

Wales has been a poor nation for too long and in order to tackle poverty, Welsh Government needs to impose a more radical and dynamic approach to engage our citizens; until now, a “do to”/ top-down culture has created a state-dependent population that are needlessly and subliminally using resources at an economic and social cost to the country. If we are to truly embed the Future Generations Act (2015), we need to work more co-productively and fully involve communities. At present, the current local government structure contradicts this – how can we have “A more equal Wales” (Future Generations Act, 2015), with local government having the aforementioned unequal representation? By implementing a fixed term for local government, this will encourage continuous improvement and enthuse wider community participation in local politics.

With wider participation come more skills and experience. Therefore, if councillors are truly committed to supporting their community and local

party, they could still do so in a mentor/consultancy/voluntary capacity, thus maintaining their level of expertise and still valuing their contribution.

If shorter terms cannot be taken forward, then another method of measuring the performance of councillors should be introduced and I encourage the following propositions:-

- There needs to be more promotion to encourage people with new energy and new ideas to let them know that they are welcome in local politics and that there is a viable route for their engagement.
- I also believe that there should be more formal structures made to encourage young people and women into politics.
- More accessible training courses, for all levels of ability in order to gain an understanding and create more community activism.
- Regular mandatory training for existing councillors.
- The establishment of a mentoring scheme.
- The establishment of local specialist boards that feed local and relevant information to the councillor, comprising of different expertise and specialisms.
- A mechanism for the public to report poor performance of their local councillor with independent enquiries to take place thereon.

I am fully supportive of the Future Generations Act and feel proud of our nation for adopting it. However, its ethos needs to be embedded right across our culture, starting with local governance.

Kind Regards

Paul Stepczak

Agenda Item 2.9

P-05-708 To Make Mental Health a Part of the National Curriculum

This petition was submitted by the Sarah Harmon, having collected 224 signatures.

Text of the Petition

It is important to educate young people about the signs and symptoms of mental illness. To promote mental wellbeing, by learning positive coping mechanisms, how to channel emotions positively. It is important to raise awareness of mental health, to smash the stigma and discrimination that millions of people face each and every day. This will bring a better understanding of how to support people with mental difficulties. More people will feel easier to reach out and get the support they so desperately need and early intervention, meaning more NHS money and lives can be saved. Only if we make a difference now. I feel that if mental health was part of the national curriculum, the signs and symptoms of my Anorexia could have been spotted earlier, then left it was too late. I feel that people would have been more supportive and understanding if they had the education. I am just one woman trying my best to educate the next generation thanks to Fixers UK. I run my own project called Black Cat Project. I hope the government take this on board. Let's Make A Difference Now!

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Montgomeryshire
- Mid and West Wales

Briefing for the Petitions Committee

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 13 Medi 2016
Petitions Committee | 13 September 2016

Research Briefing:

Petition number: [P5-05-708](#)

Petition title: To Make Mental Health a Part of the National Curriculum

Text of petition:

It is important to educate young people about the signs and symptoms of mental illness. To promote mental wellbeing, by learning positive coping mechanisms, how to channel emotions positively. It is important to raise awareness of mental health, to smash the stigma and discrimination that millions of people face each and every day. This will bring a better understanding of how to support people with mental difficulties. More people will feel easier to reach out and get the support they so desperately need and early intervention, meaning more NHS money and lives can be saved. Only if we make a difference now. I feel that if mental health was part of the national curriculum, the signs and symptoms of my Anorexia could have been spotted earlier, then left it was too late. I feel that people would have been more supportive and understanding if they had the education. I am just one woman trying my best to educate the next generation thanks to Fixers UK. I run my own project called Black Cat Project. I hope the government take this on board. Let's Make A Difference Now!

Welsh Government

Current position

Following [Professor Graham Donaldson's review of the curriculum and assessment arrangements in Wales](#), there will be a new curriculum available by September 2018 with all schools using it from September 2021.

In relation to the current curriculum, the [Education Act 2002](#) sets out the general requirements of the curriculum, that it should promote 'the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society'.

Mental and emotional health and well-being is covered in the current curriculum by the Foundation Phase, National Curriculum and Personal and Social Education (PSE). Delivery of PSE is a statutory requirement of the basic curriculum in schools although content is at the discretion of schools. The [Personal and social education framework for 7 to 19-year-olds in Wales](#) (2008) provides a recommended approach and learning outcomes. It is non-statutory guidance.

Health and emotional well-being is one of five themes of the PSE framework.

- At Key Stage 3 (age 14), learners should be given opportunities to display a responsible attitude towards keeping the mind and body safe and healthy, and to understand the range of emotions they experience and how to develop strategies for coping with negative feelings and the benefits of accessing different sources of information, support and advice.
- At Key Stage 4, learners should be given the opportunities to accept personal responsibility for keeping the mind and body safe and healthy. They should understand the factors that affect mental health and the ways in which emotional well-being can be fostered. They should understand the statutory and voluntary organisations which support health and emotional well-being and how to access professional health advice and personal support with confidence.
- Post-16 learners should be given opportunities to accept responsibility for all aspects of personal and social development and well-being. They should understand how to critically evaluate personal lifestyle choices in the context of physical health and emotional well-being, considering the short and long term consequences of such decisions and the life experiences which enhance or damage self-esteem and explore how best to cope with the demands of such situations.

New curriculum

As stated previously, [Professor Graham Donaldson's review of the curriculum and assessment arrangements in Wales](#) will result in a new curriculum being available by September 2018 with all schools using it from September 2021. His report, [Successful Futures: Independent review of curriculum and assessment arrangements in Wales](#) (February 2015) states:

A continuing theme in the evidence was the importance of well-being, and in particular mental health. Schools need to care both for children and young people's physical and emotional needs and help them to take responsibility for their own lives, understanding the importance of, for example, diet and fitness and being confident in managing their own affairs.

The Welsh Government published its response to the Donaldson review in October 2015: [A curriculum for Wales: a curriculum for life](#). Its website also provides information on the changes.

One of [the four purposes of the new curriculum](#) will be that children and young people will be healthy, confident individuals who [...]

- are building their mental and emotional well-being by developing confidence, resilience and empathy;
- apply knowledge about the impact of diet and exercise on physical and mental health in their daily lives;
- know how to find the information and support to keep safe and well [...];
- have the skills and knowledge to manage everyday life as independently as they can.

The curriculum will comprise six 'Areas of Learning and Experience' (AoLE) one of which will be health and well-being. Schools will be able to use the AoLEs to determine their own curriculum and how it should be organised.

The new curriculum is being developed by a network of 'Pioneer Schools'. The Cabinet Secretary for Education has stated in a [letter to the Committee](#) (August 2016) that the Pioneer Schools are taking forward the design of the curriculum working with 'education experts, Welsh Government, Estyn, Higher Education, business and other key partners'. She went on to say that 'it is their collective expertise that will shape the new curriculum and they will consider evidence for all topics, including mental well-being'.

National Assembly for Wales

The Children, Young People and Education Committee of the Fourth Assembly published its ['Report into Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services \(CAMHS\)'](#) in November 2014. The then Minister for Health and Social Services, Mark Drakeford, subsequently launched the [Together for Children and Young People \(T4CYP\) programme](#) in February 2015. T4CYP is a three year programme, described as a 'multi-agency service improvement programme' intended to improve the emotional and mental health services provided for children and young people in Wales'.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

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



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-708
Ein cyf/Our ref KW/05559/16

Mike Hedges AM
Assembly Member for Swansea East
Chair - Petitions Committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

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

16 August 2016

Dear Mike

Thank you for bringing to my attention the petition received by the Committee about the inclusion of compulsory mental health education in the new curriculum.

As I mentioned in a recent reply (P-05-695), our plan for realising the new curriculum and assessment arrangements in Wales 'A curriculum for Wales: A curriculum for life' was published last October. The design, as stated in the report, will be taken forward by a network of Pioneer Schools working within an all-Wales partnership with education experts, Welsh Government, Estyn, Higher Education, business and other key partners. It is their collective expertise that will shape the new curriculum and they will consider evidence for all topics, including mental well-being.

Our plan builds on the independent review of curriculum and assessment arrangements in Wales, *Successful Futures*, which recommended that legislation for the new curriculum should not specify detailed prescription of content but provide guidance to allow greater flexibility for practitioners. However, within those parameters, it is clear that the central organising principle of the new curriculum will be the four purposes set out in the report, one of which is to support children and young people to become healthy, confident individuals.

The Pioneer Schools will have a leading role in developing the content and structure of the six Areas of Learning Experience (AoLEs), including Health and well-being. *Successful Futures* notes that this AoLE will draw on mental, physical and emotional well-being. Work on the AoLEs is scheduled to begin in the autumn and as the development work progresses there will be mechanisms for stakeholders and interested parties to feed into the process.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

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

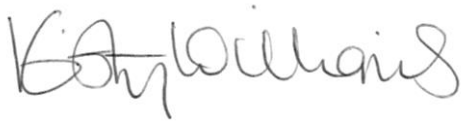
Gohebiaeth.Kirsty.Williams@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Kirsty.Williams@gov.wales

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

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

I envisage the new curriculum will be made available to schools from 2018 and fully available to support learning and teaching by 2021.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kirsty Williams'.

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

Agenda Item 3.1

P-04-683 Trees in Towns

This petition was submitted by Coed Cadw Woodland Trust, having collected 2,258 paper signatures.

Text of the Petition

- *I support the aspiration that every city, town and village in Wales should benefit from at least 20% tree canopy cover, matching the leafy suburbs of the best places to live*
- *I call on the Welsh Government to support this by establishing a challenge fund for tree planting to improve the environment where people live*
- *This should particularly support the planting of native trees, that can provide a habitat and nectar source for pollinators, and also fruit trees, that will provide a sustainable source of food.*

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Cardiff South and Penarth
- South Wales Central

**P-04-683 Trees in Towns. Correspondence - Petitioner to the Chair.
8.07.2016**

Mr Mike Hedges AM

Chair, Petitions Committee

National Assembly for Wales

Dear Mr Hedges

Ensuring that Wales benefits fully from urban trees

Petition P-04-683 on Trees in Towns

I write in response to an invitation from the Petitions Committee of the previous Assembly and am grateful for the opportunity to respond to the letter sent by Carl Sargeant, then Minister for Natural Resources.

Could I say first that Coed Cadw Woodland Trust welcomes the Minister's positive letter. We welcome in particular the recently published Woodland Strategy Action Plan and the actions that it includes to increase and safeguard existing tree cover in towns and cities and to support sustainable tree management. We welcome also the work that NRW is doing to provide up-to-date evidence on the status of canopy cover with communities and towns in Wales and look forward to assisting this body on this, particularly as we are quoted as a delivery partner.

We welcome the duty that the Well-being of Future Generations Act places on Local Authorities to pursue a set of national well-being goals, and we very much hope that, in setting out and publishing well-being objectives,

Local Authorities in Wales will take full account of all the benefits which trees can offer in our towns and cities.

Could I ask, therefore, if guidance will be produced for local authorities on this making clear some of the different benefits which trees can offer in towns and cities?

Our concern is, of course, that there are real pressures on Local Authorities, not least from insurance companies, to cut trees down and not to replace them. Almost every week, there are reports in the press about local people's concerns about the felling of street trees and their non-replacement. Most recently, there have been reports along these lines from Caerphilly Road in Cardiff, and also from Penarth,.

And while almost all Welsh towns benefit hugely from urban trees, to the knowledge of the Woodland Trust, only one, Wrexham, has adopted a formal Tree Strategy. If Local Authorities were encouraged to make clear in their well-being objectives what they will do to protect trees and manage existing trees and to plant more, then this would help hugely in ensuring that the next generation of Welsh people have a healthy attractive environment to grow up in. Could the Minister give an assurance that Local Authorities will be encouraged to do this, through guidance on well-being objectives?

We welcome also the requirement under the Environment Act for Area Statements to be produced to set out the priorities and opportunities for the management of natural resources on an area basis. Could I ask whether guidance will be given to NRW that these statements should include, where appropriate, plans to improve urban environments around Wales by ensuring that tree canopy cover in our towns and cities is not lost, but gradually enhanced, so as to offer greater benefits to those living there?

Finally, I welcome what the Minister write about Glastir Woodland Creation grants. It should be recognised, however, that these grants are specifically designed for the creation of new areas of woodland, whether on farms, in parks or around factories or offices. They are not, generally, suitable for planting individual street trees. Typically, street trees need to be planted at a much larger size, they need to be specially protected and the location of each one has to be carefully planned. The cost per tree is therefore hugely

higher, and Glastir Woodland Creation would not generally provide much of an incentive for this. It was for this reason that, in our petition, we called for the establishment of a challenge fund for tree planting in towns and cities. Could I ask, as part of NRW's work to increase and safeguard existing tree cover, could that body provide positive support for planting individual street trees in towns and cities?

The Minister finishes by strongly urging Coed Cadw Woodland Trust to contact local authorities in Wales to that to that we can work together to ensure that people across the country benefit more from urban trees. I can assure the Minister, and this Committee, that we shall look for opportunities to take forward some partnerships with local authorities that give us opportunities to support their tree programmes and strategies.

Yours sincerely

Rory Francis

Communication Officer

The Woodland Trust / Coed Cadw

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Cardiff / Caerdydd

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Agenda Item 3.2

P-05-691 A fair deal for Forest Rallying in Wales

This petition was submitted by Rally4Wales, having collected 5.246 signatures.

Text of the Petition

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to ensure that future cost increases for the use of forest roads for car rallying in Wales are fair and in line with costs in England and Scotland.

Natural Resources Wales' proposed pricing structure from June 2016 onwards would double the current cost, and is completely at odds with new contracts in place for the same purposes with Forestry Commission's in England and Scotland.

Whilst NRW are seeking to double the current cost – England and Scotland are raising the cost (from the previous contract) by just 0.7%.

Rallying in Wales is a £15 million pound industry with huge tourism benefits to rural Wales. NRW's proposed costs would make future events unsustainable in Wales due to high costs. We request that this is investigated fully to find out why the proposed costs are so hugely inflated by comparison to other regions.

Additional information

#Rally4Wales is a campaign group set up by rally competitors, rally organisers and supporters to lobby the Assembly Government over these proposed cost increases from NRW which are completely at odds with counterparts in England and Scotland.

We have contacted a range of AM's with our concerns, including Ken Skates, Carl Sargeant, Leanne Wood, Llyr Gruffudd and we are aware that supporters of our group have lobbied other AM's in recent days. We also have support from Members of Parliament in Mid Wales.

We have also raised the issue with the Welsh Automotive Forum who support our stance fully.

NRW claim that they have been undercharging for road repairs caused by rallying for many years. However, this argument as a justification for a 100% price increase is impossible to understand due to the complete opposite price hike in England and Scotland. There is no technical difference in road preparation and repair in England, Wales or Scotland.

We cannot believe that these costs are a true reflection of the situation and we call upon the National Assembly to investigate why NRW is taking action that will ultimately close down a vital cog in the rural economy of Wales.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Wrexham
- North Wales

Petition: P-05-691 A fair deal for forest rallying

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 12 Medi 2016

Petitions Committee | 12 September 2016

Research Briefing:

Petition number: P-05-691

Petition title: **A fair deal for forest rallying in wales**

Petition text:

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to ensure that future cost increases for the use of forest roads for car rallying in Wales are fair and in line with costs in England and Scotland.

Natural Resources Wales' proposed pricing structure from June 2016 onwards would double the current cost, and is completely at odds with new contracts in place for the same purposes with Forestry Commission's in England and Scotland.

Whilst NRW are seeking to double the current cost – England and Scotland are raising the cost (from the previous contract) by just 0.7%.

Rallying in Wales is a £15 million pound industry with huge tourism benefits to rural Wales. NRW's proposed costs would make future events unsustainable in Wales due to high costs. We request that this is investigated fully to find out why the proposed costs are so hugely inflated by comparison to other regions.

Background

Natural Resources Wales (NRW) manages the Welsh Government's forest estate on its behalf.

NRW and the Motor Sports Association (MSA) are currently in discussions around the fees that NRW charges the MSA for undertaking rallying activities on the forest roads that it is responsible for.

NRW has [stated](#) that there is a discrepancy in the amount it costs NRW to prepare and reinstate its forest roads for rallying and the fees paid by the MSA. NRW has said:

This meant that in 2015 the MSA paid NRW £339,000 in stage rally charges, including their flagship event Wales Rally GB, but the actual cost to reinstate the roads used for rallying was £655,000.

This represents a difference of £316,000.

Furthermore, NRW has said that the latest agreement for stage rally charges expired in 2015, but that it agreed to hold the existing charge until May 2016 at the MSA's request, to provide further opportunities for discussion.

NRW has [also](#) said that:

In the case of rallying, we realised that for many years we were undercharging for the work we did by more than 50% and, given the pressure on budgets in the public sector, we cannot afford to lose that amount of money from our budget. This is why we started talking with the MSA about the problem earlier this year to try and find a solution to cut the costs or to increase what we charged.

In England and Scotland there is a [joint agreement](#) (PDF 203KB) between Forestry Commission England and Forestry Commission Scotland, and the MSA. The current agreement runs from 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2018. The charges for 2016 have increased in line with the Retail Price Index (RPI) at 0.7% (October 2015). For example the 2016 charge for primary usage for Special Stage Rallies is £688 per mile. The equivalent fee in 2015 was £683 per mile.

Welsh Government action

Lesley Griffiths, the Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs, wrote to the Committee on 3 August 2016. She said:

This is primarily an issue for Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and the Motor Sports Association (MSA). I am aware the two bodies met recently and NRW made a proposal to the MSA who are still considering the offer. Discussions are ongoing and I am hopeful an agreement will be reached shortly.

National Assembly for Wales action

This issue has not yet been considered by the Assembly.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

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



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-691
Ein cyf/Our ref LG/05763/16

Mike Hedges AM
Chair - Petitions Committee
Ty Hywel
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Cardiff
CF99 1NA

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3 August 2016

Dear Mike

Your letter of 27 July, addressed to Ken Skates AM, Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure, regarding Petition P-05-691 A Fair Deal for Forest Rallying in Wales, has been passed to me to reply as this issue falls within my Ministerial portfolio.

This is primarily an issue for Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and Motor Sports Association (MSA). I am aware the two bodies met recently and NRW made a proposal to the MSA who are still considering the offer. Discussions are ongoing and I am hopeful an agreement will be reached shortly.

Regards
Lesley

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

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

Pack Page 115

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

P-05-691 A Fair Deal for Forest Rallying. Correspondence - Petitioner to Clerking team.07.07.16

Thank you.

I would be happy to attend on Tuesday next week to have a discussion informally about this case.

Since the petition was submitted, we have developed a proposal independently to try and bring an alternative solution to this matter. This matter is still ongoing and neither the MSA or NRW have reached an agreement on the future plans as yet. Dialogue is continuing between both sides.

Therefore I strongly believe that the matter remains of importance to the Assembly and I would be happy to help explain the situation in more detail.

Please let me know what is required.

Thanks

Jamie

Agenda Item 3.3

P-05-654 Objection to the Current Proposals for the Designation of SAC's for Porpoises.

This petition was submitted by Stephen De-Waine, having collected 109 signatures.

Text of the Petition

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to change the way in which the current boundaries of the proposed SAC's for Porpoises have been established to include science to support the physical and biological factors essential to the life cycle of the Porpoise, to include where feeding and calving takes place, and not to be established with just a population of 10%, established from mapping which is artificial science.

As you are probably aware the UK is currently under threat of legal action, to designate further SAC's under the Habitats Directive for the protection of Harbour Porpoises.

This objection has been established from the fact that at present it is impossible to quantify the future impact on the fishing industry that a newly designated SAC may have, and to question the science used to establish the proposed areas.

Additional information

The existing European Habitats Directives have proven that under Article 6(3) Habitats Regulation Assessment if used indiscriminately can have a devastating impact for some members

of the coastal communities, which depend on fishing for their livelihoods.

Existing designated SAC's, have restricted fisheries, bringing hardship amongst coastal communities, and at times without sound scientific evidence being in place to support Government decisions, but instead with the use of the precautionary principle.

And even though it has been established that Porpoises are already well protected, the designation of new SAC's which will be overlaid over existing SAC's, may perhaps in the future allow individuals to make a stronger case to the E.U Directorate General for the Environment to implement further restrictions to protect the marine environment at the cost of coastal communities.

The size of the sites suggests that the boundaries have been established using the precautionary principle, rather than science, modelling is effectively artificial science, which is used when facts are limited, and are wholly reliant on the data, which is fed in to the system.

It would be better to establish the physical and biological factors essential to the life cycle of the Porpoise, and where feeding and calving takes place, not just populations of 10% to establish boundaries of the newly proposed SAC's.

The majority of fishermen are no different from the environmentalists, they to enjoy the marine environment that they work in, and take great pleasure from witnessing marine mammals, whilst out fishing.

We are in danger of over regulating the seas around our coast with environmental legislation, which could lead to social exclusion of traditional activities, which coastal communities rely on.

The problem begins when SAC's form the main mechanics to stopping activities, following individuals and organizations misusing legislation in orchestrated appeals to the E.U Directorate General for the Environment, without reliable science to restrict activities, causing the precautionary principle to be used to close fisheries or restrict activities, which in turn lead to serious hardships amongst coastal communities.

It is extremely important that the area is relative and designated based on solid scientific evidence.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Preseli Pembrokeshire
- Mid and West Wales

Briefing for the Petitions Committee

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 12 Medi 2016
Petitions Committee | 12 September 2016

Research Briefing:

Petition number: P-05-654

Petition title: **Objection to the current proposals for the designation of SACs for Porpoises.**

Text of petition: We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to change the way in which the current boundaries of the proposed SACs for Porpoises have been established to include science to support the physical and biological factors essential to the life cycles of the Porpoise, to include where feeding and calving takes place, and not to be established with just a population of 10%, established from mapping which is artificial science.

As you are probably aware the UK is currently under threat of legal action, to designate further SACs under the Habitats Directive for the protection of Harbour Porpoises.

This objection has been established from the fact that at present it is impossible to quantify the future impact on the fishing industry that a newly designated SAC may have and to question the science used to establish the proposed areas.

Background

The harbour porpoise is a marine mammal that is widespread across the cold and temperate seas of Europe including the coastal waters of Wales. According to the [Joint Nature Conversation Committee \(JNCC\)](#), the harbour porpoise population appears to concentrate in the North and Celtic Seas between June and September although a portion of the population remains all year round. Available data indicate that harbour porpoise are currently in “favourable conservation status” around the UK. However they are subject to pressures

including pollution and bycatch ([see question 15 in the attached FAQ sheet](#)). A detailed overview of the ecology and habitat of the harbour porpoise is given in chapter 1 of [a conservation literature review](#) produced by the Joint Nature Conversation Committee (JNCC).

The harbour porpoise is legally protected in UK waters though national, European and international, legislation. A detailed overview of the policy and legislative context for harbour porpoise is provided in chapter 2 of the [JNCC report](#).

In the EU, the key legislation is Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, otherwise known as the [Habitats Directive](#). The Directive requires Member States to designate Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) for species listed in the annexes of the Directive.

As is the case with all European legislation, the European Commission can take action against a Member State it believes is failing to implement the Habitats Directive. This action is known as an 'infringement proceeding'.

In October 2012 the European Commission initiated a [pilot case](#) regarding the lack of SACs for harbour porpoise in UK waters. A pilot case is designed to resolve compliance problems without having to resort to infringement proceedings. In June 2013 a formal notice was issued to the UK Government followed by a '[reasoned opinion](#)' in October 2014. A [reasoned opinion](#) is the first official stage in the infringement proceedings. In December 2014, the UK Government committed to identifying and designating SACs for harbour porpoise.

To determine the position of the proposed SACs (pSACs), the JNCC worked with the Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies in each of the UK countries in order to identify the best sites in UK waters. In Wales this body is Natural Resources Wales (NRW). SACs are intended to be clearly identifiable areas located by the best available scientific evidence.

The harbour porpoise data collected by JNCC was compiled using the [Joint Cetacean Protocol \(JCP\)](#) and is based on porpoise distribution in UK waters spanning an 18 year period from 1994–2011. This has been collected from Government commissioned survey data, NGOs, individuals and industry. It consists of sea-based data collected from shipboard or aerial surveys and land-based data from vantage points at coastal locations. Data was analysed by JNCC and published in two peer-reviewed reports numbered [543](#) and [544](#) which can be found on the JNCC website.

The results of these two reports was analysed by JNCC and the UK Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies. They identified five pSACs, the location of which and supporting documentation can be found on the consultation page of the [JNCC website](#).

The methodology used to identify the pSACs is outlined in JNCC paper [number 565](#):

- Species data was collected from ship and coastal surveys over an 18 year period;

- Environmental data was collated, including current and sea-bed information from hydrodynamic modelling and information such as shipping intensities;
- These two data sources were combined;
- This data was used to produce a spatio-temporal (i.e. place and time) distribution model of porpoise density and its relative uncertainty;
- The model data was used to predict and map porpoise densities, persistency and potential 'hot spot' locations.

The next step of the process involved a consultation to review these locations. In Wales the consultation was carried out by NRW on behalf of the Welsh Government. NRW is responsible for reviewing the consultation responses and using these as a basis to provide advice to Welsh Ministers on whether or not the pSACs should be designated.

Welsh Government action

Between 19 January and the 3 May 2016, [NRW](#) in partnership with the JNCC ran a [consultation](#) regarding the “Proposed new marine Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas”. The consultation sought views on the proposal to create three new SACs for harbour porpoise in Welsh Waters. These areas are the [North Anglesey Marine](#), [West Wales Marine](#) and [Bristol Channel Approaches](#) which cover an area of 16,477km². The Bristol Channel Approaches pSAC is covered in both the English (JNCC) and Welsh (NRW) consultations. Detailed documentation and a map of the pSACs can be found in the [consultation paper](#) which also includes links to site specific assessments, maps and conservation objectives.

For each site, the consultation looked at:

- The scientific basis on which the proposed boundaries are based. This is described in the “Selection Assessment Documentation” in the consultation paper; and
- The draft UK Socio-Economic Impact Assessment. This analysed the possible social and economic impacts of the sites which can help understand their impact and inform the management. These can be found under the “Draft Impact Assessments” in the consultation paper.

It is important to note that any socio-economic considerations that may arise during the consultation process, such as the impact of a SAC on existing or future commercial activities, cannot be taken into account in designating SACs or defining the boundaries. The purpose of the socio-economic Impact Assessment is to inform management decisions taken in relation to any sites that go forward for designation.

NRW is now expected to produce a report on the consultation responses and any consequent revisions. Their recommendations for designations will be submitted to Welsh Ministers for approval. If approved the pSACs will then be submitted to the European Commission (EC), if

the candidate SACs are accepted they are referred to as 'Sites of Community Importance (SCI)' which are upgraded to SACs when they have been formally designated by the Welsh Government. Welsh Ministers have up to 6 years to formally designate the sites and implement all of the necessary management measures. Further information on the timetable and process for designation can be found [in this question and answers document](#) prepared by JNCC and the Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies.

The letter from Lesley Griffith, the Cabinet secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs, on the 18th August 2016 to the Petitions Committee states that no decisions have been made yet on the designation of new sites. The Welsh Government expects to receive final recommendations from NRW on the outcomes of the consultation later this year.

National Assembly for Wales action

The decision to designate the additional SACs was mentioned in a [Written Statement](#) on the 1 April 2015 by Carl Sargeant, the then Minister for Natural Resources. The statement gave an update on the Welsh Governments marine and fisheries action plan.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.



Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-654
Ein cyf/Our ref LG/05766/16

Mike Hedges AM
Chair - Petitions Committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

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

18 August 2016

Dear Mike

Thank you for your letter of 27 July regarding the petition you have received from Stephen De Waine objecting to the proposed Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) for harbour porpoise.

The EU Habitats Directive requires Member States to identify and designate SACs for certain habitats and species to help restore or maintain them at favourable conservation status. Harbour porpoise is one such species and with almost half of the European population of harbour porpoise being found in UK waters there is a clear role for the UK in its conservation. Whilst the UK remains a member of the EU we continue to work towards meeting our obligations.

The UK has undertaken a number of assessments to try to identify areas suitable for consideration as harbour porpoise SACs. The earlier assessments did not provide adequate evidence to determine clearly identifiable areas. However, in June last year, Natural Resources Wales submitted advice to the Welsh Government setting out the results of the most recent analysis by the UK statutory nature conservation bodies. The results, which have been peer reviewed, identified areas within UK waters of persistent high densities of harbour porpoise that are suitable for designation as SACs, including 3 areas partly within Welsh waters. The data used for this process is the most up to date and extensive data sets available in Europe. The multiple sources of data were collated by the Joint Cetacean Protocol, an international cooperative approach for long term monitoring of cetaceans.

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Gohebiaeth.Lesley.Griffiths@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Lesley.Griffiths@gov.wales

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

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

Earlier this year on behalf of the Welsh Government, Natural Resources Wales consulted on the SAC proposals for harbour porpoise as they relate to Wales. A similar exercise was held at the same time in England and Northern Ireland just prior to a similar consultation in Scotland. The consultation provided an opportunity for all to consider and comment on the evidence and methodology used for identifying the proposed areas for harbour porpoise. Natural Resources Wales is working through the large number of consultation responses ahead of preparing its final advice to government. No decisions have been made yet. I expect to receive Natural Resources Wales's final recommendations for the protection of harbour porpoise in Welsh waters later this year.

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 recognises the importance we place on our nature and its biodiversity through the resilient Wales goal. SACs, alongside our other marine protected areas, play a key role in protecting and enhancing the marine environment to support the sustainable use of our natural resources. Coastal and marine activities can and must coexist with the conservation of habitats and species, in fact Wales' existing suite of SACs are functioning marine areas that support a variety of different uses, including fishing.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Regards Lesley". The word "Regards" is written in a cursive style, and "Lesley" is written below it in a similar cursive style.

Lesley Griffiths AC/AM

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

Agenda Item 3.4

P-04-547 Ban Polystyrene(EPS) Fast Food and Drinks Packaging

Petition wording:

The time has come to halt the sight of millions of polystyrene food and drinks cartons littering the beaches and countryside of Wales.

Polystyrene(EPS) is a major component of urban litter and marine debris. It is detrimental to wildlife that ingests it and costs millions for Welsh Councils to remove from our streets. Polystyrene takes hundreds of years to degrade.

Over 100 US (including New York),Canadian, and also European cities have banned polystyrene food packaging as a result of the negative impacts of the Environment. We hope that wales will have the vision to join that list.

Therefore, with so many alternatives to polystyrene(EPS) packaging now available which has significantly less impact on the environment and human health and also to save Welsh taxpayers millions of pounds in street cleansing costs we, the undersigned, request that the Welsh Government introduces a ban on all polystyrene fast food and drink packaging.

Petition raised by: Friends of Barry Beaches

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 29 April 2014

Number of signatures: 295



Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-547
Ein cyf/Our ref LG/05833/16

Mike Hedges AM
Chair - Petitions Committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

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

21 August 2016

Dear Mike

Thank you for your letter of 3 August requesting an update on the work the Welsh Government is undertaking to help reduce the environmental impact of polystyrene and coastal littering in Wales (Petition P-04-547 Ban Polystyrene (EPS) Fast Food and Drinks Packaging refers).

Work is progressing on the MSc student project to analyse pressures and trends of marine litter on Welsh coastlines and is due to be submitted at the end of September. Officials will take account of the findings of this project in their future advice on policy decisions. In the meantime, the Welsh Government continues to work closely with stakeholders to help address the issue of marine litter on our coastlines.

A number of projects and initiatives undertaken as part of "Coast Care" pilot have now been extended by Keep Wales Tidy (KWT), with additional community groups and "Coast Champions" being established across coastal areas in Wales. These volunteer groups are supported by KWT officers to help participate in regular beach clean-ups and other environmental improvements. KWT also continue to promote initiatives such as "2 minute beach cleans" and hold annual 'Clean Coast Week' events.

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Pack Page 128

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

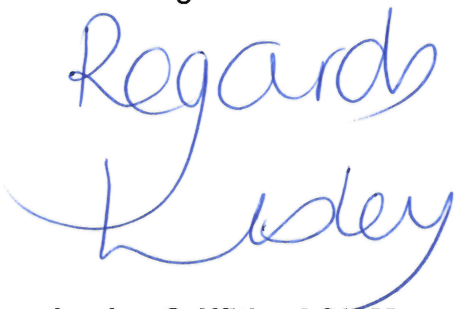
In March KWT published their 2015-16 Local Environment Audit Management System (LEAMS) survey which, for the first time, collected data on the presence of polystyrene on the streets of Wales. The report recorded foam polystyrene litter on an average of 5.2% of the streets surveyed. Fast food items such as “clam shells” and fast food cups were found on almost 2% of streets, however, the majority of polystyrene litter found (3.2%) consisted of “other” types of foam polystyrene (insulation and fragile items packaging). In comparison smoking related litter was found on 82.7% of the streets surveyed. My officials will continue to monitor the data collected by this survey to determine the scale of the problem, which will help direct future policy development.

It should be noted the Welsh Government’s position on polystyrene has not changed since my predecessor last wrote to you (MB/ CS/1351/15 refers). I am not currently considering landfill bans or additional legislation for this material. However, work is being undertaken to address the issue of food waste, as this typically has a higher environmental impact than packaging waste due to the high levels of greenhouse gas generated by producing, storing and transporting food products. When discarded food reaches landfill sites it emits methane, a powerful greenhouse gas 25 times more powerful than Carbon Dioxide.

The Welsh Government recognises packaging plays an important role in preserving food products and minimising damage. Continued innovation around packaging helps to keep food fresher for longer, saves money and reduces waste. The Welsh Government is currently working with WRAP (Waste & Resources Action Programme) to promote the optimisation of packaging and to reduce it where possible regardless of the material.

Through an agreement called Courtauld 2025, WRAP also works closely with retailers, manufacturers and packaging companies to help prevent food and associated waste, including through the optimisation of packaging. This is an ambitious voluntary agreement, which brings together organisations across the food system, from producer to consumer, to make food and drink production and consumption more sustainable. The scheme covers the grocery, manufacturing, hospitality and food service sectors and includes a target to cut waste in the food chain by 20% by 2025, including packaging waste. Current signatories include major supermarkets, takeaway chains and packaging companies.

WRAP is also working with the EU to prevent waste in the food supply chain and to reduce packaging. It is also part of the United Nations *Think.Eat.Save* campaign, which brings together like-minded organisations, such as WWF and the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, to create a global network focussed on increasing the sustainability of grocery products.



Lesley Griffiths AC/AM

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

Agenda Item 3.5

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

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



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref KW/05344/16

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

11 July 2016

Dear Mike

Thank you for bringing to my attention the petition received by the Committee about the inclusion of Political Science as a compulsory element of the school curriculum. I have set out below details of how we are working to shape the future curriculum for the children and young people of Wales.

The four purposes, as articulated in Successful Futures, will be at the heart of the design of the new curriculum. One of those four purposes is to ensure our children and young people will be ethical, informed citizens who understand and exercise their human and democratic responsibilities and rights.

The design of the new curriculum is being taken forward by a network of Pioneer Schools. They are working together as a national network of schools to co-design, consult, inform, support and build capacity in schools across Wales, working in an all-Wales partnership with Welsh Government, Estyn, Higher Education, business and other key partners.

During the development process there will be opportunities for the Pioneer Schools to consider the content and structure of the six Areas of Learning Experience (AoLEs), including Humanities, which is where Political Science would likely sit. Work on the AoLEs is scheduled to begin in the autumn and it is envisaged that there will be mechanisms for stakeholders to feed into this process over time. Ahead of any legislative changes that may be needed to underpin our new approach and the new curriculum, the Welsh Government will consult to seek the views of stakeholders and interested parties.

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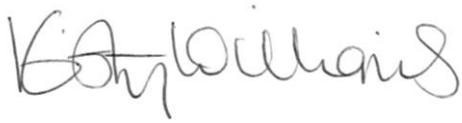
Gohebiaeth.Kirsty.Williams@llyw.cymru
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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

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

The aim is for the new curriculum to be available from September 2018 and used to support learning and teaching from September 2021.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kirsty Williams'.

Kirsty Williams AC/AM

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg
Cabinet Secretary for Education

Agenda Item 3.6

P-04-637 To Protect the Future of Youth Music in Wales

Petition wording:

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to protect musical tuition in schools and in particular to:

- Reinststate central ring-fencing of budgets for professional instrumental tuition in schools;
- Implement a national strategy to reverse the decline of Youth Music in Wales;
- Offer the children and young people of Wales their right to receive an education that develops their unique personalities, talents and abilities to the full.

Petition raised by: The Friends of Bridgend Youth Music

Date petition first considered by Committee: 16 June 2015

Number of signatures: 1,363 Online signatures and 738 paper signatures =2,101 signatures

**P-04-637 To Protect the Future of Youth Music in Wales. Correspondence –
Welsh Joint Education Committee to the Chair 8.08.2016**

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

8 August 2016

Dear Mike Hedges,

Petition P-04-0637 – To Protect the Future of Youth Music in Wales

Thank you for your correspondence in relation to this matter. I apologise for the inordinate delay in replying.

You ask specifically about our "plans relating to resources for the National Youth Orchestra". During the period since June 2015 when you have been considering this petition, a Welsh Government task group (chaired by the Arts Council of Wales) has reported on the prospects for securing the future of youth arts provision at a national level: its report is available here:

<http://gov.wales/topics/cultureandsport/arts/national-youth-arts-ensembles-of-wales/?lang=en>

The recommendations of this report are being taken forward by an Interim Board which is working to set up a National Youth Arts Wales (NYAW) organisation as a company limited by guarantee (which will then apply for charity status). In preparation for this, WJEC (in association with Ty Cerdd, its partner organisation within the current NYAW arrangements) has taken the following steps in order to improve the financial situation for the new organisation:

- standardised the fees charged on members of the youth ensembles at £42 per 24-hour residential period (hence participants in the National Youth Orchestra have each been charged approx. £500 for this year's summer activity)
- established arrangements for administering bursaries from the very generous legacy donation by Mr Haydn Webber of Whitchurch, Cardiff, allowing us to support those young people who have genuine difficulty meeting the increased charges
- reduced the size of the small central team of youth arts staff.

During the period in which the task group was undertaking its work, the local authorities collectively agreed to one further year of funding for the three national youth ensembles that have the longest residential tuition periods (orchestra, theatre and dance). This is at the same level as for 2015–16, being a 30% reduction on their contribution in 2014–15, which followed three consecutive reductions of 5% from the 2011–12 figure of £450k.

Whilst recognising that it is the severe external financial pressures imposed on them that has caused the local authorities' contribution to reduce from £450k to £270k, the potential removal of this element of funding support in its entirety for the 2017–18 financial year presents a significant threat to the future activity of the youth ensembles. As a consequence, it is unclear at present whether the National Youth Orchestra will have a residential tuition period and short concert tour during the summer of 2017 or whether it will be restricted to a single collaborative concert with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales (which features within our programme in alternate years).

In setting up the new National Youth Arts Wales organisation, we are mindful of the emphasis that needs to be placed on fundraising. However, we recognise that this is a considerable challenge for arts organisations in Wales and also that we need to invest in fund-raising capacity. It is indicated in the task group report that (if local authority funding is removed completely) the fundraising target for the new organisation is in the region of £350k and

advice received suggests that this level of fundraising may well require effort that could cost about £100k to source.

With a consequent annual fundraising target of the order of £450k it has to be recognised that, if this level is achievable at all, the new organisation is likely to take several years to reach it. For this reason, we shall continue to remind local authorities of the immense value of their contribution (even at £270k per annum or slightly less) and we also look forward to understanding the Welsh Government's position in relation to two other recommendations within the task group's report:

- (i) the possibility of direct funding from the Welsh Government education and/or arts budgets and/or from other Welsh Government budgets
- (ii) the potential for National Youth Arts Wales to become a key beneficiary of the National Endowment for Youth Music (NEYM), should this be established.

The connection between all of this and the main focus of the petition that you are considering (to protect music tuition in schools) was eloquently made by conductor Carlo Rizzi at the end of the Youth Orchestra's concert at St David's Hall last Friday evening. He suggested that it was "miraculous" that a nation of three million people could produce a youth orchestra of sufficient quality to make such a success of performing the challenging works by Bartok and Strauss that formed the main part of the programme, and that this was evidence of the quality of the underpinning music tuition.

It is clear, therefore, that your petitioners are focussing on an area where there is much at stake in terms of future provision. The national youth ensembles (of which the Youth Orchestra is the oldest, emerging from an initiative in 1946 by the Monmouthshire Education Authority and managed by WJEC for the 65th summer this year) are seen as operating on a pyramid basis, relying very much on the base layers of provision at local and regional level. Whilst we are attempting to address the challenges of securing a

sustainable future for the Youth Orchestra, we are aware that its quality is strongly associated with the availability of local music tuition.

Yours sincerely,

Gareth Pierce
Chief Executive

Agenda Item 3.7

P-04-677 Equal Access to Welsh Language

This petition was submitted by Remigijus Šiaučiūnas, having collected 45 signatures.

Text of the Petition

Welsh language should be as accessible as English language is. Sadly, it is not the case. I am talking from my own experience. I moved to Wales and I would like to learn at least a little bit of Welsh. It is relatively easy to find a free English class and it is impossible to find a free Welsh language class.

The Equality Act states that no one should be treated less favourably than another just because of his or her nationality, ethnic or national origins, religion, religious or philosophical belief or absence of religion or belief.

Learning Welsh should be as accessible as learning English to anyone, including the first generation immigrants.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Cardiff Central
- South Wales Central



Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-677
Ein cyf/Our ref ARD/05235/16

Mike Hedges AM
Assembly Member for Swansea East
Chair - Petitions Committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

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

17 August 2016

Dear Mike

Thank you for your letter, dated 3 August, to the Cabinet Secretary for Education regarding Petition P-04-677 Equal Access to Welsh Language. It has been passed to me to respond.

I recently announced the Welsh Government's aim of reaching one million Welsh speakers by 2050. Therefore, ensuring that all potential learners are able to access Welsh language courses, regardless of their background, will be key to achieving this aim.

As the previous Minister noted in his response, Welsh Government officials are considering the parallels between Welsh for Adults and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision and ESOL providers are encouraged to incorporate some Welsh language training into their classes.

I agree with the petitioner that learning Welsh should be as accessible as learning English. However, it is important to note that at present, there are different policies with regards to the charging of fees, and Welsh for Adults course fees are currently determined by each individual provider, not the Welsh Government.

The National Centre for Learning Welsh was established last year to provide the strategic direction for the Welsh for Adults sector. Its first task was to appoint providers to deliver courses from September 2016. Now that providers are in place, detailed discussions will take place between officials, the National Centre and the providers over the next year on the matter of fees for all learners. We need to ensure that all learners, regardless of their

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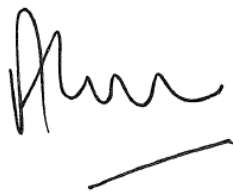
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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

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

background, can access courses across Wales in order to contribute to the aim of one million Welsh speakers by 2050.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alun', with a horizontal line underneath it.

Alun Davies AC/AM

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

P-04-677 Equal Access to Welsh Language. Correspondence – Petitioner to the Committee 25.08.2016

I am encouraged by the following passages from the response of the Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language Alun Davies: "I agree with the petitioner that learning Welsh should be as accessible as learning English" and "Welsh Government officials are considering the parallels between Welsh for Adults and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision".

Nevertheless I am concerned that some other passages don't go far enough ("ESOL providers are encouraged to incorporate some Welsh language training into their classes") and are rather lukewarm, not consistent with the principle of equality and very far removed from the recently announced Welsh Government's aim of reaching one million Welsh speakers by 2050 ("It is important to note that at present, there are different policies with regards to the charging of fees).

Kind regards,

Remigijus Šiaučiūnas

Agenda Item 3.8

P-05-694 School Hours an Hour Later

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

Text of the Petition

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

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

Thank you for your consideration.

Cai Ellerton, 13.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Vale of Glamorgan
- South Wales Central

Briefing for the Petitions Committee

Petition number: P-05-694

Petition title: School Times an Hour Later

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

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

Background

Section 32 of the [Education Act 2002](#) states that in maintained schools, **governing bodies determine the times of school sessions**. Where a local authority considers that a change in any maintained school's session times is necessary or expedient to promote the use of sustainable modes of travel or to improve the efficiency or effectiveness of its travel arrangements, it can determine the time the school's first session begins and its second session ends (or if there is only one session, its start and end). [Regulations](#) set out procedures.

Research into the effects of sleep and academic achievement

There have been numerous research studies into the effects of sleep and academic achievement, [mostly from the USA](#), where many schools start earlier than 8.30 and many as early as 7am. Neuroscientists set out that the biology of human sleep timing changes as we age. As puberty begins, bedtimes and waking times get later. This trend continues until 19.5 years in women and 21 in men. Then it reverses. Studies suggest that this means that for a teenager, a 7am start is the equivalent of a 5am start for a person in their 50s.¹

Beginning in 2009, a small pilot study in Monkseaton School, Tyneside changed the school starting time from 08.50 to 10.00 found that there was an increase in the percentage of pupils getting five good GCSEs, from about 34 per cent to about 50 per cent. Among disadvantaged pupils, the increase was from about 19 per cent to about 43 per cent.² Early results showed that there was also a decrease in absenteeism; general absence dropped by 8 per cent and persistent absenteeism by 27 per cent³. The school starting times reverted to 8.50 when the headteacher who had introduced the pilot left the school.

¹ The New Scientist, [Why teenagers really do need an extra hour in bed](#), Professor Russell Foster, April 2013

² BBC News website, [Later school start time 'may boost GCSE results'](#), 9 October 2014

³ BBC News website, [Lie-in for teenagers has positive results](#), 22 March 2010

Teensleep research project

The [Teensleep research project](#) is part of a joint initiative between the Education Endowment Fund and the Wellcome Trust to explore how neuroscience can be used to improve education. Originally, it aimed to address problems relating to sleep by training teachers to deliver sleep education and assisting schools to move their start times to 10am based on a randomised controlled trial in schools. However, following practical concerns about schools being randomised to delay their start times, [the project will now just focus on sleep education](#) while exploring alternative methods to investigate the adolescent circadian delay. The evaluation will be published in September 2018.

Potential negative aspects

There are potential negative aspects to making changes to school starting times. These include issues relating to school transport arrangements, parents' work schedules and reduced time for after school activities.⁴

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware however that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

⁴ Sleeping Resources, [Pros and Cons of Later School Start Times](#)

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



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-694
Ein cyf/Our ref KW/05520/16

Mike Hedges AM
Assembly Member for Swansea East
Chair - Petitions Committee
Ty Hywel
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government.committee.business@wales.gsi.gov.uk

15 August 2016

Dear Mike

Thank you for your letter dated 27 July seeking my views on a petition received by the Petitions Committee from Cai Ellerton calling for schools to start an hour later in the morning. Cai refers to a test in England that has shown that students achieve better exam results if a school starts an hour later.

Although not clear from the petition, the 'test' referred to appears to relate to a year long project funded by the Education Endowment Foundation and the Science Charity the Wellcome Trust which commenced in September 2015. This involved year 10 and 11 pupils at more than 100 schools in England which were divided into 2 groups, one starting at 10 and the other following the usual school timetables. It appears from the timescales outlined that this study has yet to be concluded.

The responsibility for determining school session times lies with the school governing body. However where a local education authority considers that a change in any maintained school's session times is necessary or expedient to promote the use of sustainable modes of travel or to improve the efficiency or effectiveness of its travel arrangements, it can determine the time the school's first session begins and its second session ends (or if there is only one session, its start and end). Consequently this is not something for the Welsh Government or Welsh Ministers to decide.

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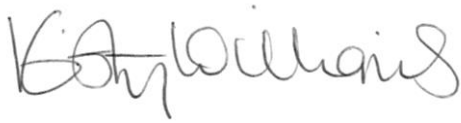
We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Where the local authority or governing body (as applicable) proposes to change the school session times, they must follow procedures set out in the Changing of School Sessions Times (Wales) Regulation 2009. This includes undertaking an appropriate consultation, holding a meeting with parents and others and giving a period of notice of the change in accordance with the regulations. The regulations also set out when the school session times have effect.

I have attached a link to the Regulations for your information.

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2009/572/contents/made>

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kirsty Williams'.

Kirsty Williams AC/AM

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg
Cabinet Secretary for Education

P-05-694 School Times an Hour Later. Correspondence – Petitioner to the Committee. 30.08.2016

Thank you for your email, in response to your letter the Teensleep project (<https://www.ndcn.ox.ac.uk/research/sleep-circadian-neuroscience-institute/research-projects-4/teensleep>) is based on a large number of previous studies which suggests that teenagers struggle to function if they have to get up too early.

Whilst the Welsh government may not hold the ultimate decision on school opening times, guidance to local governments could support these changes.

Thank you again, Cai Ellerton.

Agenda Item 3.9

P-05-695 Introduce compulsory Mental Health education in Secondary Schools

This petition was submitted by Plaid Ifanc Llanelli, having collected 24 signatures.

Text of the Petition

Mental Illness is an issue that has always been heavily stigmatised within society. The words 'Crazy', 'Nutjob', 'Insane' have become a normalised word to use when describing somebody hyper, and worse yet, to describe an individual having a psychiatric episode.

In October 2015, Plaid Ifanc Llanelli chair and Secretary Brett John and Ffion Rees proposed a motion to conference to introduce mental health education in Secondary schools. It passed with flying colours. However, we do not wish to stop there. We believe that by bringing in Mental Health education, we can tackle the stigma attached to Mental Illnesses before it has even properly begun within Secondary students. It will teach students a variety of lessons, such as how it is okay to not be okay, why Mental Illnesses develop, and the help that is available if they are suffering.

Additional information

That is why we are asking the Welsh Assembly Government to introduce compulsory Mental Health education into Secondary schools. Only by beginning the conversation early on can we prevent the stigma attached to Mental Health from developing in our young people.

The young people of today are our future, we must ensure that by providing them with an education on Mental Health and Well-being they never view it as a negative thing. We can and will eventually abolish the stigma, however the conversation to begin this process in our young people starts now.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- LLanelli
- Mid and West Wales

Briefing for the Petitions Committee

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 13 Medi 2016
Petitions Committee | 13 September 2016

Research Briefing:

Petition number: [P5-05-695](#)

Petition title: Introduce Compulsory Mental Health Education in Secondary Schools

Text of petition:

Mental Illness is an issue that has always been heavily stigmatised within society. The words 'Crazy', 'Nutjob', 'Insane' have become a normalised word to use when describing somebody hyper, and worse yet, to describe an individual having a psychiatric episode.

In October 2015, Plaid Ifanc Llanelli chair and Secretary Brett John and Ffion Rees proposed a motion to conference to introduce mental health education in Secondary schools. It passed with flying colours. However, we do not wish to stop there. We believe that by bringing in Mental Health education, we can tackle the stigma attached to Mental Illnesses before it has even properly begun within Secondary students. It will teach students a variety of lessons, such as how it is okay to not be okay, why Mental Illnesses develop, and the help that is available if they are suffering.

Welsh Government

Current position

Following [Professor Graham Donaldson's review of the curriculum and assessment arrangements in Wales](#), there will be a new curriculum available by September 2018 with all schools using it from September 2021.

In relation to the current curriculum, the [Education Act 2002](#) sets out the general requirements of the curriculum, that it should promote 'the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society'.

Mental and emotional health and well-being is covered in the current curriculum by the Foundation Phase, National Curriculum and Personal and Social Education (PSE). Delivery of PSE is a statutory requirement of the basic curriculum in schools although content is at the discretion of schools. The [Personal and social education framework for 7 to 19-year-olds in](#)

[Wales](#) (2008) provides a recommended approach and learning outcomes. It is non-statutory guidance.

Health and emotional well-being is one of five themes of the PSE framework.

- At Key Stage 3 (age 14), learners should be given opportunities to display a responsible attitude towards keeping the mind and body safe and healthy, and to understand the range of emotions they experience and how to develop strategies for coping with negative feelings and the benefits of accessing different sources of information, support and advice.
- At Key Stage 4, learners should be given the opportunities to accept personal responsibility for keeping the mind and body safe and healthy. They should understand the factors that affect mental health and the ways in which emotional well-being can be fostered. They should understand the statutory and voluntary organisations which support health and emotional well-being and how to access professional health advice and personal support with confidence.
- Post-16 learners should be given opportunities to accept responsibility for all aspects of personal and social development and well-being. They should understand how to critically evaluate personal lifestyle choices in the context of physical health and emotional well-being, considering the short and long term consequences of such decisions and the life experiences which enhance or damage self-esteem and explore how best to cope with the demands of such situations.

New curriculum

As stated previously, [Professor Graham Donaldson's review of the curriculum and assessment arrangements in Wales](#) will result in a new curriculum being available by September 2018 with all schools using it from September 2021. His report, [Successful Futures: Independent review of curriculum and assessment arrangements in Wales](#) (February 2015) states:

A continuing theme in the evidence was the importance of well-being, and in particular mental health. Schools need to care both for children and young people's physical and emotional needs and help them to take responsibility for their own lives, understanding the importance of, for example, diet and fitness and being confident in managing their own affairs.

The Welsh Government published its response to the Donaldson review in October 2015: [A curriculum for Wales: a curriculum for life](#). Its website also provides information on the changes.

One of [the four purposes of the new curriculum](#) will be that children and young people will be healthy, confident individuals who [...]

- are building their mental and emotional well-being by developing confidence, resilience and empathy;

- apply knowledge about the impact of diet and exercise on physical and mental health in their daily lives;
- know how to find the information and support to keep safe and well [...];
- have the skills and knowledge to manage everyday life as independently as they can.

The curriculum will comprise six 'Areas of Learning and Experience' (AoLE) one of which will be health and well-being. Schools will be able to use the AoLEs to determine their own curriculum and how it should be organised.

The new curriculum is being developed by a network of 'Pioneer Schools'. The Cabinet Secretary for Education has stated in a letter to the Committee (August 2016) that the Pioneer Schools are taking forward the design of the curriculum working with 'education experts, Welsh Government, Estyn, Higher Education, business and other key partners'. She went on to say that 'it is their collective expertise that will shape the new curriculum and they will consider evidence for all topics, including mental well-being'.

National Assembly for Wales

The Children, Young People and Education Committee of the Fourth Assembly published its ['Report into Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services \(CAMHS\)'](#) in November 2014. The then Minister for Health and Social Services, Mark Drakeford, subsequently launched the [Together for Children and Young People \(T4CYP\) programme](#) in February 2015. T4CYP is a three year programme, described as a 'multi-agency service improvement programme' intended to improve the emotional and mental health services provided for children and young people in Wales'.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

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



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-695
Ein cyf/Our ref KW/05539/16

Mike Hedges AM
Assembly Member for Swansea East
Chair - Petitions Committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

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

16 August 2016

Dear Mike

Thank you for bringing to my attention the petition received by the Committee about the inclusion of compulsory mental health education in secondary schools.

Curriculum changes are being taken forward as part of our plan for realising the new curriculum and assessment arrangements in Wales 'A curriculum for Wales: A curriculum for life', which was published last October. The design, as stated in the report, will be taken forward by a network of Pioneer Schools working within an all-Wales partnership with education experts, Welsh Government, Estyn, Higher Education, business and other key partners.

Our plan builds on the independent review of curriculum and assessment arrangements in Wales, *Successful Futures*, which recommended that legislation for the new curriculum should not specify detailed prescription of content but provide guidance to allow greater flexibility for practitioners. However, within those parameters, it is clear that the central organising principle of the new curriculum will be the four purposes set out in the report, one of which is to support children and young people to become healthy, confident individuals.

The Pioneer Schools will have a leading role in developing the content and structure of the six Areas of Learning Experience (AoLEs), including Health and well-being. *Successful Futures* notes that this AoLE will draw on mental, physical and emotional well-being. Work on the AoLEs is scheduled to begin in the autumn and as the development work progresses there will be mechanisms for stakeholders and interested parties to feed into the process.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

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

I envisage the new curriculum will be made available to schools from 2018 and fully available to support learning and teaching by 2021.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kirsty Williams'.

Kirsty Williams AC/AM

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg
Cabinet Secretary for Education

P-04-553 A full and independent investigation in to the health risks of wireless and mobile phone technologies in Wales including all schools

Petition wording:

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to conduct a full and independent investigation in to the effects of Electro Magnetic Fields created and emitted by wireless technologies, phone masts, mobile phones and other frequency emitters and domestic appliances on the health and general well being of humans and the natural world. There is now an enormous body of evidence demonstrating that the bombardment of modern traffic in electro magnetic fields can be harmful, causing DNA and cellular damage, having an impact on immune function and causing an increased risk of cancer and a loss of fertility – with children being especially susceptible to these threats.

Additional Information

The Council of Europe, World Health Organization, International Agency for UK Trades Union Congress (TUC), European Environment Agency, International Commission for Electromagnetic Safety and the Russian, German and Israeli governments are all asking for these health risks to be addressed and for practical measures such as hard wiring in schools to be introduced instead of Wi Fi. The Welsh Government could also lead in this area and protect the future health of all Welsh citizens by conducting their own independent research as well as consulting with independent organisations such as Powerwatch and WiFiinschools who provide a vast amount of research and strongly advise that the precautionary principle be followed.

Petition raised by: Cymru Sofren / Sovereign Wales

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 13 May 2014

Number of signatures: 11



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

15 August 2016

Dear Mr Hedges

Petition P-04-553 A full and independent investigation in to the health risks of wireless and mobile phone technologies in Wales including all schools

Thank you for your letter of 3 August 2016 in which you refer to previous correspondence between PHE and Welsh Government officials, and advice that PHE has provided in relation to the above petition. You ask what action or consideration PHE has given to a package of information that was sent to us from Mark Drakeford AM in March 2016.

Before answering the question at issue, I should clarify that there is a great deal of information available on the subject of electromagnetic fields (EMFs) and health and that this information has arisen from research spanning several decades. Some idea of how much information is available can be gained from viewing the reference lists in published expert group reports, or perhaps more quickly by viewing the following website: <https://www.emf-portal.org/en>, where over 23000 publications were listed at the time of writing. Against this background, the small selection of studies that have been sent to PHE in connection with this petition is unlikely to represent the evidence as a whole.

Also, not all studies are equal. Some are higher quality than others and some are more relevant to human health than others. Expert committees have developed ways of gathering studies relevant to particular health topics comprehensively and impartially from the literature, then using agreed quality criteria to evaluate those studies critically and in a consistent manner, and using the scientific weight of evidence method to draw the evaluations together and reach overall health-related conclusions.

It would not be practical to repeat the detailed conclusions of recent rigorous expert reviews of the evidence in this letter but a summary of PHE advice (Annex B) has been included with this letter highlighting such reviews and their consistency with the 2012 review conducted by PHE's own independent Advisory Group on Non-ionising Radiation (AGNIR). AGNIR's

overall conclusion was that that, *"although a substantial amount of research has been conducted in this area, there is no convincing evidence that radiofrequency electromagnetic field exposures below guideline levels cause health effects in either adults or children"*. The guideline levels mentioned are those from the International Commission on Non-ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP), which already serve as the basis for ensuring public health protection in the UK (See Annex B).

The AGNIR report gave specific consideration to Wi-Fi, including the results of a careful evaluation by PHE of exposure levels received by children when using the equipment in schools. The evaluation found exposures that were small in relation to exposure guidelines and in relation to those from mobile phones held to the head to make voice calls – a situation for which specific precautionary advice has been given (See Annex B). PHE advice about the use of Wi-Fi equipment in schools can be found at the following webpage and includes that PHE sees no reason why Wi-Fi should not continue to be used in schools and in other places.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wireless-networks-wi-fi-radio-waves-and-health/wi-fi-radio-waves-and-health>

Now, turning to the package of material received by PHE, which comprised 17 articles. Fifteen of these described original scientific studies, which is a very small subset of the literature that it is available. The remaining two articles are commentaries that do not appear to be systematic reviews and represent the opinions of their authors. No explanation was provided to PHE of how the 17 articles were selected or why it was thought that further consideration of them would inform our advice. The main possibilities investigated in the articles, i.e. that exposure to EMFs increases cellular damage via oxidative stress, impacts on the electrical activity of the brain, or causes loss of fertility are principal topics that have been examined in depth in published expert group reviews. In addition, the possibility that children might be more sensitive to exposure than adults, which is considered by one of the review articles, was first suggested in 2000 by the Independent Expert Group on Mobile Phones (the Stewart Report) and still forms the basis for the precautionary advice issued to parents by Government regarding limiting the use of mobile phones by their children (See Annex B).

In terms of process, the material received has been examined by our scientific experts to see if it contains evidence that might help to modify the advice that PHE has developed based on the formal reviews mentioned above. However, we chose not to comment on the material when it was sent to us. In going further now, I should stress that PHE has generally chosen not to comment specifically on individual studies that are sent to us: as an independent organisation, we think it is best if PHE uses its own judgement to decide when particular studies are important enough to comment on them outside the framework of comprehensive reviews. In this instance, and recognising the particular difficulty that this material presents to the committee, we have exceptionally taken the decision to comment on the 15 original articles sent to us in Annex A to this letter. It may be of interest to note that the exposure levels used in these studies are not always clear, but they seem substantially higher than those that typically occur when using Wi-Fi equipment.

Overall, the inclusion of the above studies does not modify our published advice on health effects of radiofrequency fields. In particular, the possible effects on oxidative stress are intriguing, but they are not yet sufficiently robust nor are any implications for public health at all obvious. This is especially true given the lack of epidemiological evidence indicating adverse effects on many health endpoints.

I hope this letter will prove helpful to the committee.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "S. Mann". The letters are cursive and fluid.

Simon Mann
Head of CRCE Radiation Dosimetry Department
simon.mann@phe.gov.uk

Enclosures

Summary of original studies sent to PHE in connection with this Petition (Annex A)

Summary of PHE advice on radiofrequency fields (Annex B)

Annex A

Summary of Original Studies Presented to PHE in Connection with Welsh Assembly Petition P-04-553

Eight studies reported exposure to pulsed 2.45 GHz signals increased various measures of oxidative stress in animal tissues or a human cell line. Six of these studies using animals, which came from the same laboratory and used the same protocol, also reported protective effects with daily administration of melatonin (Oksay et al, 2012; Nazıroğlu et al, 2012b; Aynali et al, 2013; or other antioxidants (Gumral et al, 2009; Nazıroğlu et al, 2009 Türker et al, 2011). A companion study using human cancer cells has deficiencies with exposure and dosimetry (Nazıroğlu et, 2012a) which renders the results largely uninterpretable. Finally, a study (Shahin et al, 2013) reporting that exposures of pregnant mice to a very low intensity field resulted in a complete resorption of fetuses, is contrary to many years of research showing such effects only occur following exposures that cause a significant elevation of maternal temperature.

Undoubtedly, the induction (and avoidance) of oxidative stress is very important in biology. Many well-conducted *in vitro* studies from different laboratories have not found any evidence that exposure increases oxidative stress in a variety of cell types. After reviewing the relevant literature in 2015, the EU Scientific Committee on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks (SCENIHR) concluded “*several studies suggest that RF [radiofrequency] exposure in rodents can cause oxidative stress effects. The studies are however often lacking in proper dosimetry and do not include proper positive controls. The magnitude of the changes are modest, and their biological significance unclear*”.

Two studies reported effects on electrical activity of the brain in female volunteers (but not males) during exposure to Wi-Fi signals (Maganioti et al, 2010; Papageorgiou et al, 2011). Both studies come from the same laboratory and are part of a small series reporting exposure-related effects, possibly using the same set of volunteers. However, the study using an auditory short-term memory task does not appear to have been published in any recognised peer-reviewed journal. The second study reported effects only on one component of the EEG that is associated with decision making (the P300 wave) during the performance of a sentence completion task. Further, the only statistical difference seen was for the exposure X gender interaction in one of the three tested conditions of the test: the P300 amplitude of males was (non-significantly) higher than that of females without exposure and the amplitude of the females increased and that of the males increased during exposure, and this difference was statistically significant at 15 out of 30 electrode sites. P300 is often measured in psychological tests but the underlying neural circuitry responsible for the generation of the signal is uncertain, and AGNIR (2012) pointed out the relevance of this

type of study to human health was unclear. Similar studies have been conducted using mobile phone signals in a number of laboratories, but no consistent effects have been reported on the amplitude or latency for any component of the EEG.

Three of the studies investigated the effects of exposure to radiofrequency fields on sex cells (Atasoy et al, 2013; Avendano et al, 2013; Margaritis et al, 2013). One of these studies investigated effects of various types of field, including mobile and cordless phone signals, on egg-formation in fruit flies (*Drosophila*). Effects were reported with all signals, but the study used commonly available devices as a source of exposure without any measure of absorbed dose in the flies (which would have been far lower than the equivalent for a person in the same field, due to the very small size of the fruit flies). Similarly, the study reporting effects on rat testes from Wi-Fi signals used commercially-available devices, and the study using ejaculated human sperm placed the samples beneath a laptop that was connected to the internet via Wi-Fi. In neither study was there any control of exposure or an estimate of absorbed dose in the tissues. Overall, these deficiencies mean that the results cannot be used in any health risk assessment. The reviews of the literature by AGNIR (2012) and SCENIHR (2015) have both identified problems with studies not using appropriate field-generating systems with adequate control of exposure.

Lastly, two studies (Havas et al, 2010; Havas and Marrongelle, 2013) from the same laboratory suggest that exposure to a cordless phone signal may be associated with an effect on autonomic nervous system function (control of heart rate) and an increased frequency of non-specific symptoms, particularly in persons reporting hypersensitivity to EMFs. But results in one (non-peer-reviewed) study were variable, and it is not clear how the exposures were performed. The second study was retracted in 2014 due to a lack of ethical approval for the work by the host institution. Both these results are in stark contrast to those from other laboratories which did not find any effects in either sensitive people or members of the general population. SCENIHR concluded that symptoms are not associated with EMF exposure. That review also found no evidence that autonomic function was affected by exposure: the two studies highlighted were considered by SCENIHR, but were discounted because of doubts about the exposure system used.

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Annex B

Summary of PHE advice about the health effects of exposure to radiofrequency fields Role of Public Health England

Public Health England (PHE) came into being in April 2013, and advises the Government on all aspects of public health, including exposure to radio waves, the appropriate standards of protection for the general population and any measures necessary to protect sensitive groups. PHE inherited this responsibility from the former Health Protection Agency (HPA) and it continues to develop and provide a range of published information about radiofrequency topics. The material includes comprehensive scientific review reports and position statements, which can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/electromagnetic-fields>

Within this suite of information are statements on the following frequently mentioned topics. The statements highlight assessments that have been done and which support the PHE view that exposures are small in relation to guidelines and not expected to pose a hazard to the public,

- Wireless networks (Wi-Fi), as used in schools and elsewhere
- Mobile phone base stations, including the latest 4G systems
- Smart meters for monitoring of domestic energy usage.

The situation with mobile phones, including their use by children, is somewhat different, as explained below, but also covered by published information.

Public exposure guidelines for radiofrequency fields: scientific evidence and consistency of PHE guidance with the international consensus

Central to PHE advice is that exposures to radio waves should comply with the guidelines published by the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP). ICNIRP is formally recognised by the World Health Organization (WHO). PHE has also issued precautionary advice to discourage the non-essential use of mobile phones by children. This precautionary advice recognises that exposures are much higher than occur in other situations, though still within the guidelines, when mobile phones are held to the head to make voice calls. Similar advice is not considered necessary with the lower exposures that occur from Wi-Fi equipment, smart meters and mobile phone base stations, including the latest 4G systems.

While exposure to radio waves is not new and health-related research has been conducted on this topic for many years, a large amount of new scientific evidence has emerged over the past few years. This knowledge has arisen through dedicated national and international research programmes that have addressed concerns about rapidly proliferating wireless technologies. The UK has contributed to the international research effort through various projects that have been commissioned, including through the Mobile Telecommunications and Health Research Programme (MTHR). As the research programmes have been coming to fruition, scientific expert committees have been reviewing the resulting evidence and coming to considered judgments at international, European and national levels, as explained below.

Alongside other European Union (EU) member states, the United Kingdom supports European Council Recommendation 1999/519/EC on limiting exposure to electromagnetic fields (EMFs), which include radio waves. This recommendation incorporates the 1998 guidelines from ICNIRP, as advised by Public Health England. ICNIRP restated the radiofrequency (RF) parts of these guidelines in 2009 on the basis of its own comprehensive review of the scientific evidence published at that time. ICNIRP concluded that *the scientific literature published since the 1998 guidelines had provided no evidence of any adverse health effects below the basic restrictions and did not necessitate an immediate revision of its guidance on limiting exposure to RF fields*. The 2009 ICNIRP review and statement on exposure guidelines can be found at:

<http://www.icnirp.org/PubEMF.htm>

The World Health Organization states that the main conclusion from its own reviews is that *EMF exposures below the limits recommended in the ICNIRP international guidelines do not appear to have any known consequence on health*. WHO is presently preparing an Environmental Health Criteria (EHC) monograph covering the evidence in relation to radiofrequency exposures and health. This follows earlier EHCs published in 2006 on static fields and in 2007 on low frequency fields. Information from WHO about EMF exposure guidelines can be found at:

<http://www.who.int/peh-emf/standards/en/>

The European Commission is advised on the health aspects of EMF exposures by the Scientific Committee on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks (SCENIHR). SCENIHR takes account of worldwide studies on EMFs and has produced several reports, known as Opinions, in which it expresses views broadly in line with those of PHE, ICNIRP and WHO. The most recent SCENIHR Opinion was published in March 2015 and contains detailed

conclusions on different aspects of the scientific evidence. A plain language summary based on the Opinion explains that *the results of current scientific research show that there are no evident adverse health effects if exposure remains below the levels set by current standards*. SCENIHR publications can be found through the following webpage and EMF Opinions are under the "Physical Risks" category:

http://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific_committees/emerging/index_en.htm

PHE publishes comprehensive reviews of the scientific evidence relevant to radio wave exposures and health from time to time. The most recent PHE-backed review was undertaken by its own independent expert Advisory Group on Non-ionising Radiation (AGNIR) and published at the end of April 2012. AGNIR undertakes comprehensive scientific evidence reviews of the biological effects of non-ionising radiation and suggests research priorities to improve public protection. The AGNIR report considered whether there was evidence for health effects occurring in relation to exposures below the ICNIRP levels. The overall conclusion was that, *although a substantial amount of research has been conducted in this area, there is no convincing evidence that radio wave exposures below guideline levels cause health effects in either adults or children*. The AGNIR report can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/radiofrequency-electromagnetic-fields-health-effects>

Exposure to radiofrequency fields and cancer

A Working Group of the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) reviewed the health effects of exposure to RF fields in May 2011 and concluded that such exposures are “possibly carcinogenic” to humans (Group 2B), based on IARC’s classification scheme. As explained in the monograph itself (published in 2013) there was a minority opinion in the Working Group that that current evidence in humans was inadequate, therefore permitting no conclusion about a causal association. The monograph on RF fields can be found at:

<http://monographs.iarc.fr/ENG/Monographs/vol102/index.php>

In putting the IARC “possibly carcinogenic” classification into context, it is worthy of note that, as of February 2015, 285 substances/situations are graded 2B by IARC, 70 as the higher “probably carcinogenic to humans” classification (group 2A) and 116 as the highest “carcinogenic to humans” classification (group 1). Among all of these classifications are many widespread and familiar substances/situations, including coffee and pickled vegetables (2B), shift working that involves circadian disruption (2A) and alcohol (1). The full lists can be found at:

<http://monographs.iarc.fr/ENG/Classification/index.php>

The IARC classification for radio waves was largely based on personal exposures associated with mobile phone use and the evidence was evaluated as being *limited* among users of wireless telephones for glioma and acoustic neuroma (cancers of brain/nerve tissues in the head), and *inadequate* to draw conclusions for other types of cancers. The evidence from environmental radiofrequency exposures, which include wireless telecommunications, was considered *inadequate* to draw conclusions.

Each carcinogenicity classification has to be looked at on its own merits, along with evidence relating to other health effects, in deciding on what is a proportionate public health response. IARC explains in the preamble to its monographs that their purpose is that of carcinogenic hazard identification, which is (only) the first step in performing a health risk assessment. For some exposures, it may be appropriate to do nothing, while for others it may be appropriate to seek to eliminate the exposure entirely. For radio wave exposures, the UK/PHE approach is between these two extremes and features the targeting of precautionary advice on the situation giving the highest exposure to the largest number of people, i.e. use of mobile phones held to the head in order to make voice calls. There is also a particular emphasis in that advice on those considered potentially most vulnerable, i.e. children, whose use of mobile phones should be discouraged.

HPA (now PHE) issued a response to the IARC classification when it was published and the classification has been taken into account in PHE advice. The response can be found at:

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140714084352/http://www.hpa.org.uk/NewsCentre/NationalPressReleases/2011PressReleases/110531electromagneticfields/>

The topic of cancer effects also occupies a substantial part of the 2012 AGNIR report. The Group reviewed essentially the same evidence as the IARC working group and concluded that, although some positive findings have been reported in a few studies, overall the evidence does not suggest that using mobile phones causes brain tumours or any other type of cancer. The data, however, are essentially restricted to periods of less than 15 years from first exposure because mobile phones have only been in widespread use for that long. AGNIR considered it will be important to continue monitoring the evidence over the coming years, including that from national brain tumour trends, which have so far given no indication of any risk.

Continuing PHE precautionary advice about exposure to radiofrequency technologies

PHE (as the former HPA) responded to the 2012 AGNIR report maintaining its advice to follow the ICNIRP guidelines and also maintaining its long-standing precautionary advice in respect of exposures from mobile phones, which can give rise to exposures that approach the international guidelines when they are held to the head to make voice calls. The decision to maintain the precautionary approach reflected the continuing possibility of: (a) biological effects, although not apparently harmful, occurring at exposure levels within the ICNIRP guidelines, and (b) the limited information regarding cancer effects in the long term. Measures that mobile phone users may take to reduce their exposures were described in the HPA response to the AGNIR report.

In responding to the AGNIR report for situations giving rise to exposures that are already low in relation to guidelines (for example, those from Wi-Fi, smart meters or mobile phone base stations), PHE advised that community and individual measures to reduce exposures are not necessary. PHE is also committed to carefully continue monitoring the emerging scientific evidence, providing any necessary advice and undertaking another comprehensive review of the science once sufficient evidence has accumulated. The PHE response to the AGNIR report can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/radiofrequency-electromagnetic-fields-health-effects>

Electrical sensitivity/hypersensitivity

The AGNIR report has carefully assessed whether certain people are especially sensitive to exposures to RF fields, leading to unpleasant symptoms which affect their health. Many studies have now been carried out, reflecting the importance ascribed to understanding the condition and making appropriate help available to sufferers. AGNIR concludes *there is increasing evidence that RF fields below guideline levels do not cause symptoms and cannot be detected by people, even those who consider themselves sensitive to RF fields*. PHE agrees with AGNIR that this does not undermine the importance of the symptoms that are experienced, but it does suggest causes other than those directly related to RF fields should be considered.

Unfortunately, the symptoms many people complain of are all too common in society, not just in those who consider themselves to be ill. Such findings are not new, for example in 1990, before the advent of modern communications technology, 27% of people complained of having had a headache in the last month (Blaxter). HPA published a review of the public health aspects of electrical sensitivity (EHS) in 2005 and this included comments on the

management of affected individuals and evaluation of treatment options. The report is available at:

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140722091854/http://www.hpa.org.uk/Publications/Radiation/HPARPDSeriesReports/HpaRpd010/>

In terms of a practical way forward, WHO advises in its “backgrounder” document on EHS that *treatment of affected individuals should focus on the health symptoms and the clinical picture, and not on the person's perceived need for reducing or eliminating EMF in the workplace or home. EHS has no clear diagnostic criteria and there is no scientific basis to link EHS symptoms to EMF exposure. Further, EHS is not a medical diagnosis, nor is it clear that it represents a single medical problem.* For more information on WHO’s advice please follow the link below:

<http://www.who.int/peh-emf/publications/facts/fs296/en/index.html>

Acknowledging the range of opinion about the health effects of exposure to radiofrequency fields

Public Health England keeps emerging scientific studies worldwide under review and supports the scientific processes and officially mandated organisations described above. It is also aware of other reports and groups that have made pronouncements on this topic but gives greater weight to documents that use rigorous review processes and base their advice on the entire range of scientific information available.

Among the alternative sources of information on this topic are the 2007 and 2012 Bioinitiative Reports. PHE is aware of the contents of these reports, and of many other reports, and has considered their contents, but it has not responded to them. In part this is because other organisations have already reviewed these reports and drawn attention to problems that have affected their conclusions.

The Council of Europe Resolution 1815 (2011) also makes various recommendations and comes from the Council of Europe’s Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs. It is not clear exactly what evidence was considered or which experts were approached to submit evidence to their review. The Council of Europe is separate from the European Parliament and the European Commission.

Government and Public Health England are aware that there are people and organisations who believe more precaution is warranted for public exposure to radio waves in light of their view of the scientific evidence. However, the published reviews by AGNIR and internationally

recognised bodies do not, in the opinion of PHE, warrant more precaution than is already advised with respect to public exposure to radiofrequency fields.

PHE priorities for health improvement

In 2014, PHE published its report “From evidence into action: opportunities to protect and improve the nation’s health”. The document can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/from-evidence-into-action-opportunities-to-protect-and-improve-the-nations-health>

PHE sets out in the report its seven priorities for the next 5 years, tackling obesity, reducing smoking, reducing harmful drinking, ensuring every child has the best start in life, reducing dementia risk, tackling antimicrobial resistance and reducing tuberculosis. Protection from environmental hazards, including uncertain ones like exposure to radio waves, is an important consideration for PHE, but it is also important to take a broad view across the whole range of health topics in deciding what actions are appropriate and proportionate. Unlike the hazards more specifically mentioned in the “From evidence into action...” document, and despite much research, there remains no clear evidence of harm to health from exposure to radio waves below the internationally agreed (ICNIRP) guideline levels that are already adopted in the UK.

Promotion of UK precautionary advice about exposure to radiofrequency fields

Precautionary advice for the public on radio wave exposures has been published in a leaflet from the Department of Health, on the NHS choices website, and in more technical sources such as the previously mentioned PHE response to the AGNIR report. Leaflets have also been prepared in Wales with the involvement of school children. PHE’s view is that provision of this material on the internet reflects the appropriate priority of this particular topic within the broader context of all messages directed to the public about their health.

P-04-553 A full and independent investigation in to the health risks of wireless and mobile phone technologies in Wales including all schools. Correspondence – Petitioner to the Committee –31.08.2016

Annwyl bawb ar y pwyllgor/tim deisebau,

Please see my response below to the latest reply by Public Health England, dated August 15th 2016 in regards to the Sovereign Wales petition titled: “A full and independent investigation in to the health risks of wireless and mobile phone technologies in Wales including all schools.” My response should be less than four pages worth (in size 14 point) and is hopefully short enough for the full four pages to be sent to all the members sitting on the petitions panel and committee so that they can see the full information and have it all to hand. Extra supporting information and links to numerous reports can be found in the attached 3 files.

I would like to firstly draw your attention to the fact that what this Sovereign Wales petition asks for is for a full and independent investigation by the Welsh Government in to the effects of Wi fi and phone technologies in Wales including in all schools.

The full text is: "We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to conduct a full and independent investigation in to the effects of Electro Magnetic Fields created and emitted by wireless technologies, phone masts, mobile phones and other frequency emitters and domestic appliances on the health and general well being of humans and the natural world. There is now an enormous body of evidence demonstrating that the bombardment of modern traffic in electro magnetic fields can be harmful, causing DNA and cellular damage, having an impact on immune function and causing an increased risk of cancer and a loss of fertility – with children being especially susceptible to these threats."

The petition does not ask for Public Health England to decide what we should do in regards to this matter in Wales. Health is a devolved issue in Wales as can be seen in Schedule 7 of the Government of Wales Act 2006. Therefore it is the duty, morally and legally, of the Welsh Government (and

National Assembly members) to deal with this matter with a full and proper independent investigation.

Next I will deal with the latest response by Public Health England to the subject matter, dated August 15th 2016.

Public Health England (previously called the UK Health Protection Agency) state in their response that their advice in this matter refers to and is consistent with the 2012 report conducted by AGNIR (Advisory Group on Non-ionising Radiation) – a body they claim to be Public Health England's own independent advisory group. However, this is inaccurate and very misleading. They are not independent of each other. There is a serious conflict of interest between these two groups and others associated with them. As can be seen in the attached PDF called 'A need for accurate information' created by the 'Wi fi in schools' group, AGNIR is not independent of PHE, the group to whom they are reporting. Currently, eight (8/18) of the people involved in AGNIR (consultant, representatives, observer, and secretariat) work for PHE/DH. A group cannot provide independent advice when so many of the people represented are employed by the government and are the ones to whom you need to report your findings. It is not surprising that PHE were pleased with the AGNIR report, when they were so closely involved in it.

Also, many members (six at present) of AGNIR are also (or have previously been) members of ICNIRP – the International Commission on Non-ionizing Radiation Protection, the group whose guidelines they are assessing. It is therefore not surprising that AGNIR decided that the ICNIRP guideline values, which they were part of setting and supporting, were still valid. AGNIR is not an independent group if any of its members are also part of the group whose guidelines they are assessing. AGNIR needs to be made up of scientists who are not members of ICNIRP.

The Government clearly benefits financially from the wireless communications industry. An independent group must not have government employees contributing to the group's reports.

This controversial 2012 AGNIR report previously mentioned, titled 'Health Effects from Radiofrequency Electromagnetic Fields', is being used to

support PHE's decision to allow the compulsory use of microwave-emitting wireless technologies by pupils and teachers in UK schools, despite medical and scientific warnings.

The AGNIR report lists many studies finding damaging biological and health effects from radiofrequency electromagnetic fields below current guidelines, but manages to dismiss them for various reasons. Some studies have been omitted.

The attached PDF report put together by the group 'Wi fi in schools' titled 'A need for accurate information' also states that the AGNIR report and statements made by Public Health England are inaccurate and misleading and that the AGNIR statement of: “the literature provides no substantial evidence of such effects (ill effects from radio frequency radiation)” are astonishing and inaccurate conclusions given the large number of studies now published demonstrating damaging effects of radio frequency radiation. As mentioned, many of these studies were left out of the AGNIR report.

The report has also been criticised by Professor Dariusz Leszczynski from the Finnish Radiation Protection Agency. He commented that he considers the report to be biased and misleading. Numerous Medical Associations, medical doctors and leading scientists are calling for safe technologies in schools as can be seen by the attached 'Safe schools' report also by the group 'Wifi in schools' <http://wifiinschools.org.uk/index.html>.

The group Mobilewise have also written to the PHE setting out their criticisms of the PHE statements in response to the AGNIR report and asking the PHE to revise its response (letter also attached). Mobilewise has asked the PHE to consider whether institutions who follow PHE advice, which contradicts the International Agency for Research on Cancer Monograph Assessment, the Council of Europe Resolution and the European Parliament Resolution could be exposed to litigation. This same question of public bodies following misleading and inaccurate advice would also apply to the Welsh Government and both the previous Health Minister Mark Drakeford as well as the current Minister Vaughan Gething. As mentioned and as is enshrined in statute, there is a moral and legal duty on the Government and

these Ministers and Assembly members to hold an independent investigation in to this important matter or they too could be exposed to litigation.

Conclusions

The AGNIR report and statements made by Public Health England are inaccurate and misleading. The Welsh Government, as is enshrined in statute under the devolution agreement, has a moral and legal duty to protect the health of Welsh citizens, especially young children and young adults who are especially susceptible to the damaging effects of radio frequency radiation. As is enshrined in statute, the Welsh Government should not be taking legal guidance and instructions from a public body of another country on a matter that is devolved to Wales, as health is.

The Welsh Government is therefore duty bound and legally obliged to conduct its own full and independent investigation in to the effects of Radio Frequency Radiation and Electro Magnetic Fields created and emitted by wireless technologies, phone masts, mobile phones and other frequency emitters and domestic appliances, on the health and general well being of humans and the natural world in Wales.

All the attached supporting PDF's contain links to countless studies and reports about the ill effects of radio frequency radiation – the number of which are increasing by the day.

Many thanks for your time in considering this information,

Pob diolch,

Gruff Meredith"

Agenda Item 3.11

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

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

Text of the Petition

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

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

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Pontypridd
- South Wales Central

Briefing for the Petitions Committee

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 13 September 2016

Petitions Committee | 13 September 2016

Petition number: P-05-693

Petition title: Give Every Child in Wales the Meningitis B Vaccine for free

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

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

Background

Meningitis B is a bacterial infection that particularly affects children under the age of one. It commonly affects children under five years of age and is also common among teenagers aged 15-19. There are about 1,870 cases of meningitis B each year in the UK and it is fatal about 10% of the time. About one in four of those who survive are left with long-term problems, such as amputation, deafness, epilepsy and learning difficulties.

The UK is the first country to introduce the meningitis B vaccine to its routine childhood vaccination programme. The programme started on 1 September 2015 for those babies due to receive their primary immunisations starting at 2 months of age on or after 1 September 2015 (i.e. those born on or after 1 July 2015). A one off catch-up programme for infants born from 1 May 2015 to 30 June 2015 (aged 3 or 4 months of age when the programme launched) has also been rolled out. This ensured that those infants were offered the vaccine before the winter peak of the disease. By May 2017, all children under the age of two years should have been offered the vaccine. The vaccine is also available for a small number of older children and adults who are at increased risk of infection, such as those with no spleen.

Why not all children?

In 2014, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) – the expert body that advises the UK Government on vaccinations, recommended that babies be given the meningitis B vaccine, from two months of age. The JCVI highlighted that infants under one year are those most at risk from meningococcal disease and the decision was made to protect those most at risk. The [Meningitis Research Foundation](#) states that the current incidence of disease amongst the under 1s is around 22 per 100,000, reducing to 5 per 100,000 in the 1–4 age groups. The incidence of disease amongst older age groups is substantially less.

A [petition](#) that calls for all children, at least up to the age of 11 years, to be given the meningitis B vaccine was created on the UK Parliament and Government petitions website in September 2015. The petition acquired over 820,000 signatures (the highest number of signatures since the launch of the UK Parliament and Government Petitions website), and received increased attention in February 2016 following the publication of pictures of Faye Burdett, a two year old girl who died from meningitis B on 14 February 2016.

The UK Petitions and Health Select Committees [jointly considered](#) the petition on extending the meningitis B vaccination in February 2016 and agreed to schedule a parliamentary debate, which took place on [25 April 2016](#). A number of issues were raised during the sessions. These included consideration of extending the vaccine to older children. Professor Pollard, the Chair of the JCVI reported that the UK Public Health Minister had requested that the JCVI reconsider the meningitis B vaccination in the 1–2 year age group and confirmed that they would be looking at this in the near future.

The UK Government's Department of Health responded to the petition, stating that the programme introduced protects those most at risk from meningococcal B disease, and is in line with the recommendations from the JCVI. It said:

With this programme, our priority is to protect those children most at risk of Men B, in line with JCVI's recommendation. The NHS budget is a finite resource, it is therefore essential that JCVI's recommendations are underpinned by evidence of cost-effectiveness. Offering the vaccine outside of JCVI's advice would not be cost effective, and would not therefore represent a good use of NHS resources which should be used to benefit the health and care of the most people possible.

During the debate UK Health Minister, Jane Ellison MP, announced that – based on the evidence and advice that has been received – the UK Government could not support extending the meningitis B vaccination programme to older children. But that doesn't mean that the UK Government and Parliament won't continue to look into this issue. The Minister confirmed that the UK Government has set up a working group to look at how decisions about the cost-effectiveness of vaccines are made, which is due to report later this year.

The meningitis charities ([Meningitis Now](#) and the [Meningitis Research Foundation](#)) have also recently announced (March 2016) a ten point Meningitis B action plan. This includes calling for the UK Government to fund research into how peace of mind health benefits can be included in cost-effectiveness analysis and that a catch up campaign for under 5s to be reconsidered by the JCVI in light of a new fairer cost effectiveness framework and emerging data on vaccine effectiveness.

It is worth noting that the meningitis B vaccine can be purchased privately in the UK, so people who are not currently eligible for the vaccine on the NHS can get it if they pay for it, but it may be costly. Further, following high demand for the vaccine in 2015, the manufacturer GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) issued a statement regarding a shortage of the vaccine. It has said that the NHS childhood immunisation programme is prioritised and will not be affected but private clinics should not start new courses at present.

Welsh Government Action

The JCVI is an independent expert advisory committee which provides expert advice to UK Health Ministers on all issues relating to immunisation and vaccination. As health is a devolved responsibility it is the responsibility of the Cabinet Secretary for Health as to whether the advice from JCVI is implemented in national policy. However, it has been normal practice for Wales to adopt JCVI recommendations, along with the other UK countries, to ensure UK-wide coverage against the specified disease.

On [8 April 2015](#), the then Health and Social Services Minister Mark Drakeford AM confirmed that the meningitis B vaccine would be introduced to the routine childhood vaccination programme in Wales from 1 September 2015. The Minister confirmed that the Welsh Government had committed to being included in the UK-wide procurement for the vaccine,

and had made £7.7m of funding available to make sure the vaccination was available in Wales as soon as practicable.

Public Health Wales published a document in August 2015 entitled [*Immunisation against meningococcal B disease for infants aged from two months*](#) which clarifies the Welsh position. In line with the rest of the UK, it states that:

starting on 1 September 2015, all infants born on or after 1 July 2015 will be eligible for the meningococcal B vaccine which will be administered together with the other primary immunisations at 2 months, 4 months and 12–13 months.

It also confirms that there would be a catch-up programme for infants attending at age 3 and 4 months for routine immunisations. This would be for infants born from 1 May 2015 to 30 June 2015. Infants born before 1 May 2015 are not eligible to receive the meningococcal B vaccine.

Further information is provided in [Welsh Health Circular \(2015\) 040](#) that was issued in July 2015 and also on the [NHS Direct Wales website](#).

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

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



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-693
Ein cyf/Our ref RE/05275/16

Mike Hedges AM
Chair – Petitions Committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

SeneddPetitions@assembly.wales

9 August 2016

Dear Mike

Thank you for your letter to the Cabinet Secretary for Health, Well-being and Sport, seeking his views about the petition raised by Rhian Cecil regarding the age range of children receiving the meningitis B (MenB) vaccine in NHS Wales. I am responding as Minister for Social Services and Public Health.

Meningococcal infection is a very distressing disease and I appreciate parents' concerns and their understandable wish to protect their children.

The Welsh Government's immunisation programmes, along with those of the other UK countries, are based on independent expert advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI). When any new immunisation programme is introduced, expert advice assists governments to set the criteria that determine eligibility.

The MenB vaccine protects against the "B" strain of meningococcal disease. A new MenB vaccination programme was introduced on 1 September 2015 for those babies who were born on, or after, 1 July 2015, with a catch-up programme for those born from 1 May 2015 who would have missed their first dose. The UK is the first country to offer routine MenB vaccination. As more babies are immunised, it is expected the incidence of the disease will reduce.

For MenB, the JCVI advised that the vaccination should aim to protect babies before they reach five months of age because this is when the risk is greatest. Babies are offered a course of three doses at two, four and 12 to 13 months.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

Pack Page 180

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

The JCVI monitors all vaccination programmes closely and reviews regularly the scientific evidence on their impact and benefits. Any further advice received from the JCVI on extending our national programmes against the effects of meningococcal infection will be given due consideration by the Welsh Government.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rebecca".

Rebecca Evans AC/AM

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

Agenda Item 3.12

P-05-697 45000 Reasons Wales Needs a Dementia Strategy

This petition was submitted by the Alzheimer's Society, having collected 5,861 signatures on an alternative e-petitions website.

Text of the Petition

We call on the Welsh Government to commit to a dementia strategy that improves the lives of people living with dementia in Wales.

There are currently 45,000 people estimated to be living with dementia in Wales, less than 50% of whom have received a formal diagnosis. Receiving a diagnosis of dementia empowers people to make decisions about the care and support they receive; it opens the door to accessing services and, where necessary, medication.

However, even those who have received a diagnosis have most likely not received the information and support that they need in order to live well with dementia. 1 in 10 people with dementia in Wales did not receive any support at all in the first year after their diagnosis, leaving them to deal with their diagnosis alone.

People living with dementia in Wales are less likely to receive a diagnosis, and are less likely to have access to post-diagnosis support than those living in the rest of the UK. This has to change.

We want the Welsh Government to develop a dementia strategy for Wales, one that demonstrates a commitment to improving diagnosis rates, and ensures the access to local services and the quality of care that people living with dementia deserve.

Briefing for the Petitions Committee

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 13 Medi 2016
Petitions Committee | 13 September 2016

Petition number: P-05-697

Petition title: 45000 Reasons Wales Needs a Dementia Strategy

Text of petition: This petition was submitted by the Alzheimer's Society, having collected 5,861 signatures on an alternative e-petitions website.

We call on the Welsh Government to commit to a dementia strategy that improves the lives of people living with dementia in Wales.

There are currently 45,000 people estimated to be living with dementia in Wales, less than 50% of whom have received a formal diagnosis. Receiving a diagnosis of dementia empowers people to make decisions about the care and support they receive; it opens the door to accessing services and, where necessary, medication.

However, even those who have received a diagnosis have most likely not received the information and support that they need in order to live well with dementia. 1 in 10 people with dementia in Wales did not receive any support at all in the first year after their diagnosis, leaving them to deal with their diagnosis alone. People living with dementia in Wales are less likely to receive a diagnosis, and are less likely to have access to post-diagnosis support than those living in the rest of the UK. This has to change.

We want the Welsh Government to develop a dementia strategy for Wales, one that demonstrates a commitment to improving diagnosis rates, and ensures the access to local services and the quality of care that people living with dementia deserve.

Background

According to Alzheimer's Society, one in five people in Wales has a close family member or friend with dementia. Approximately [45,000 people in Wales are currently living with dementia](#), and this figure is predicted to rise steadily over the next decades.

Wales has the lowest rate of dementia diagnosis of all the UK nations. The [latest figures](#) (2015) show that only 43.4% of people living with dementia in Wales have a diagnosis. Diagnosis rates vary across Wales, from 49.5% in Cardiff and the Vale University Health Board, to 37.2% in Hywel Dda University Health Board.

Alzheimer's Society [states](#) that people living with dementia in Wales are less likely to receive a diagnosis and less likely to have access to post-diagnosis support than the rest of the UK. Its [research](#) found that only 58% of people with dementia say they are living well.

Alzheimer's Society welcomed the Welsh Government's recent commitment to a dementia strategic plan (see below), stating there is an urgent need for a new strategy that has clear lines of accountability and adequate resourcing. However, it has highlighted areas in which it would like the Welsh Government to go further, claiming that a diagnosis target of 50% does not go far enough. It wants to see a commitment to **increase diagnosis to at least 75% in each health board by 2021**, with the health boards committing to an annual minimum increase of 5% in the diagnosis rate for their area. Alzheimer's Society also points out that the plans to increase the number of dementia support workers would only equate to around 30 posts, whereas it believes over 300 support workers are needed. It wants to see access to a dementia adviser or similar professional available for all people diagnosed with dementia, to ensure they receive meaningful post-diagnosis support.

For further information see our key issues article: [The escalating dementia challenge](#) (May 2016).

Welsh Government action

The Welsh Government published the [National Dementia Vision for Wales](#) in 2011.

In April 2015 the [Welsh Government announced](#) its ambition for Wales to become a 'dementia friendly nation'. **It set a target to increase diagnosis rates to 50%**, and announced £1m of funding, which included money for 32 new primary care support workers, and four additional primary care link nurses to provide training for staff.

In February 2016 the Welsh Government launched the [ACT NOW to reduce your risk of developing dementia campaign](#), to raise public awareness of the steps people can take to reduce their risk. It suggests that healthier living may reduce dementia risk by 60%.

The Welsh Government also consulted on a new three-year [Together for Mental Health Delivery Plan](#), which highlights dementia as a key priority. The Delivery Plan includes a commitment to produce a new dementia strategic plan by December 2016. **The Minister's paper to the Committee confirms that a strategic plan for dementia will be introduced for the**

period 2017–19, and that a task and finish group (which will include Alzheimer’s Society Cymru) will be established to develop the strategy.

The latest [NHS Outcomes Framework \(2016–17\)](#) contains new measures on dementia training. The Welsh Government will now monitor the percentage of NHS employed staff trained to an appropriate level of dementia care who are in contact with the public, against a new target of 75% of the workforce.

National Assembly for Wales action

There has been a number of recent Plenary debates and questions relating to this issue. On [5 July 2016](#), the Cabinet Secretary for Health, Well-being and Sport, Vaughan Gething AM, stated that the Welsh Government expects to have the new dementia strategic action plan ‘by the end of this calendar year’.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

Vaughan Gething AC/AM
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Iechyd, Llesiant a Chwaraeon
Cabinet Secretary for Health, Well-being and Sport



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-697
Ein cyf/Our ref VG/05786/16

Mike Hedges AM
Chair – Petitions Committee
Ty Hywel
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CF99 1NA

SeneddPetitions@assembly.wales

10 August 2016

Dear Mike,

Thank you for your letter seeking my views on the petition raised by the Alzheimer's Society regarding 45,000 reasons Wales needs a dementia strategy. I am pleased to say that the Welsh Government supports this view.

The Welsh Government is committed to making Wales a dementia-friendly nation. Our new three-year *Together for Mental Health Delivery Plan* includes a commitment that, by December 2016, we will introduce a strategic plan for dementia for the period 2017-19. The plan will set out all of the actions, with associated outcome measures, to be delivered by the Welsh Government and external partners to support those affected by dementia in Wales.

A task and finish group will be established to develop this strategy, with the first meeting due to take place next month. Alzheimer's Society Cymru are among the key stakeholders who have been invited to join the group and will have the opportunity to ensure the issues referred to in the petition, on behalf of the signatories, are considered as the task and finish group develops the strategic plan. Signatories of the petition will also have the opportunity to provide their views on the strategy when it is opened for consultation.

Yours sincerely,

Vaughan Gething AM/AC

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Iechyd, Llesiant a Chwaraeon
Cabinet Secretary for Health, Well-being and Sport

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

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

P-04-564 The Restoration of Inpatient Beds, Minor Injuries Cover and X-Ray Unit to the Ffestiniog Memorial Hospital

Petition wording:

Until the Health Minister has had time to consider Prof Marcus Longley's recommendations on rural healthcare in Wales – a study that was commissioned by the Minister himself in January of this year – we, the undersigned, call on the National Assembly of Wales to urge the Welsh Labour Government to delay decision on Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board's Business Case aimed at downgrading our Memorial Hospital to a mere 'Memorial Centre'.

Petition raised by: Geraint Vaughn Jones

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 17 June 2014

Number of signatures : 2,754

Vaughan Gething AC/AM
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Iechyd, Llesiant a Chwaraeon
Cabinet Secretary for Health, Well-being and Sport



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-564
Ein cyf/Our ref VG/05835/16

Mike Hedges AM
Chair - Petitions Committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

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

26 August 2016

Dear Mike,

Thank you for your letter of 3 August on behalf of the Petitions Committee regarding petition P-04-564: *Restoration of Inpatient Beds, Minor Injuries Cover and X-Ray Unit to the Ffestiniog Memorial Hospital.*

The position remains the same as outlined in the previous Minister for Health and Social Services letter to the Petitions Committee of 29 March and there is nothing further I can add to the response. I wrote to the Chair of the Defence Committee, Mr Geraint Vaughan Jones, on 15 June confirming my position and encouraging him to maintain a constructive dialogue with the health board as the work for the development of the new centre continues.

Yours sincerely,

Vaughan Gething AC/AM
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Iechyd, Llesiant a Chwaraeon
Cabinet Secretary for Health, Well-being and Sport

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
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Pack Page 188

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

P-04 -564 – Restoration of Inpatient Beds, Minor Injuries Cover & X-Ray Unit to the Ffestiniog Memorial Hospital. Correspondence – Petitioner to the Committee 28.08.2016

I understand that the next meeting of the Petitions Committee will be on Tuesday September 13th. The agenda is not yet published so I am unaware as to whether you will have received the information you requested from the Minister, or not, in relation to the Ffestiniog Memorial Hospital by that date.

I, and several members of our campaign group, will be on holiday in early September, hence in anticipation that our petition will be considered by your Committee again on September 13th, I thought it right to provide a brief update on the activities over the summer for the Committee's information.

1. The two CHC local committees involved have reviewed the healthcare services being provided and planned for Ffestiniog and the Welsh Uplands and the North Wales CHC Executive Committee has written to your Petitions Committee asking that you keep the Petition open
2. On July 27th, the MP for Dwyfor Meirionnydd met with the Chair and Chief Executive of Betsi Cadwaladr and with residents of the Welsh Uplands and asked that Betsi Cadwaladr conduct a formal review of the situation.
3. During the summer, Assembly Members from both Plaid Cymru and UKIP have met with residents and pledged their support to this petition for restoration of Inpatient Beds, Minor Injuries Cover & X-Ray Unit.
4. The Older People's Commissioner has exchanged further letters with the Chief Executive of Betsi Cadwaladr and awaits his next response.
5. Health Inspectorate Wales have written to us to ensure us that they will be following up on their adverse report on the last remaining surgery in the Welsh Uplands "in the next few months".
6. The beds in the Memorial Hospital have been replaced by a few beds in an "Intermediate Care Unit" within a local residential home. Neither the "Intermediate Care Unit", nor the residential home in general, have any qualified nursing staff and the patients are dependent on a couple of visits per day from a district nurse during daytime hours. Medication administration has been faulty and the CSSIW has now issued the residential home with a Non-compliance notice in which it states:

We are particularly concerned that some staff members have not completed the medicines training on a regular basis– some staff members since 2008/9. We have

received regulation 38 notices concerning drug errors from the home, two very recently. We cannot, therefore, be confident of the people's safety at the home regarding medicine administration.

7. The Minister has requested that the campaign group work with the Joint Chairs of the Mid Wales NHS Collaborative Board and a meeting was held with the Chairs of that Board in July 14th.

In our opinion there is widespread recognition that the current and currently planned situation in respect of Ffestiniog and the Welsh Uplands is totally unsatisfactory and hence we ask the Committee to keep this petition open and under consideration as the various actions progress.

Yours very sincerely,

Geraint Vaughan Jones

Chair.

Agenda Item 3.14

P-04-667 – A Roundabout for the A477/A4075 Junction

This petition was submitted by Pembroke Town Council, having collected 115 online signatures and 482 paper signatures.

Text of the Petition

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to replace the Fingerpost Junction on the A477/A4075 with a roundabout – The current road configuration has not resolved the problems on this dangerous stretch of road.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire
- Mid and West Wales

Ken Skates AC/AM
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros yr Economi a'r Seilwaith
Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Your ref P-04-667
Our ref KS/06081/16

Mike Hedges AM
Chair - Petitions Committee

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

16 August 2016

Dear Mike,

Thank you for your letter of 3rd August regarding Petition P-04-667 Roundabout for the A477/A4075 junction.

The Road Safety Audit has not been undertaken yet, as we are awaiting information on personal injury collisions recorded by the police.

I can confirm that officials will consider the petitioners comments as part of the audit.

Yours ever,
Ken

Ken Skates AC/AM
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros yr Economi a'r Seilwaith
Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure

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

P-05-689 Improvements to the Railway Provision at Kidwelly Carmarthenshire

This petition was submitted by Phil Thompson, having collected 138 signatures.

Text of the Petition

Kidwelly is a lively town in Carmarthenshire, with many tourist attractions, including a quay overlooking the Gwendraeth estuary with rare bird and wildlife, the Kymer canal, Wales' oldest canal and an Industrial museum.

Demographically, Kidwelly has a higher than the Carmarthenshire average proportion with long term limiting illness and the highest proportion of over 45's in Carmarthenshire according to the Carmarthenshire Policy, Research and Information section 2015 electoral division profile.

Additionally many people commute to work or for social activities outside the Town.

Issues.

1 : The station is a request stop this causes problems, (a) visitors, tourists and new residents do not always appreciate they need to signal to get the train to stop, this causes a reluctance to use and potentially impacts negatively upon the economy of the town (b) on trains with no conductor less ambulant passengers cannot pass down the train to the driver, many people are worried and distressed that they will go past their stop and anecdotally have done so, (c) there is clearly time programmed into the timetable

to allow the train to stop, as this could be requested on every journey, so the request requirement is anachronistic and unnecessary. The station should become a standard stop and not a request stop.

2. The platform height on the westbound platform is so low that even with the train's mobile ramp system a wheelchair and those with other mobility aids cannot board or alight trains. This renders the provision discriminatory in respect of wheelchair and other less ambulant users.

3. The frequency of trains serving Kidwelly is not sufficient to support the community and potential tourist traffic. This limits both social, commercial and tourist journeys, negatively impacting upon the social and economic wellbeing of the community.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Llanelli
- Mid and West Wales

Petition: Improvements to the railway provision at Kidwelly Carmarthenshire

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 13 Medi 2016
Petitions Committee | 13 September 2016

Research Briefing:

Petition number: P-5-689

Petition title: Improvements to the railway provision at Kidwelly Carmarthenshire

Text of petition: Kidwelly is a lively town in Carmarthenshire, with many tourist attractions, including a quay overlooking the Gwendraeth estuary with rare bird and wildlife, the Kymer canal, Wales' oldest canal and an Industrial museum.

Demographically, Kidwelly has a higher than the Carmarthenshire average proportion with long term limiting illness and the highest proportion of over 45's in Carmarthenshire according to the Carmarthenshire Policy, Research and Information section 2015 electoral division profile.

Additionally many people commute to work or for social activities outside the Town.

Issues.

1. The station is a request stop this causes problems, (a) visitors, tourists and new residents do not always appreciate they need to signal to get the train to stop, this causes a reluctance to use and potentially impacts negatively upon the economy of the town (b) on trains with no conductor less ambulant passengers cannot pass down the train to the driver, many people are worried and distressed that they will go past their stop and anecdotally have done so, (c) there is clearly time programmed into the timetable to allow the train to stop, as this could be requested on every journey, so the request requirement is anachronistic and unnecessary. The station should become a standard stop and not a request stop.

2. The platform height on the westbound platform is so low that even with the train's mobile ramp system a wheelchair and those with other mobility aids cannot board or alight trains. This renders the provision discriminatory in respect of wheelchair and other less

ambulant users.

3. The frequency of trains serving Kidwelly is not sufficient to support the community and potential tourist traffic. This limits both social, commercial and tourist journeys, negatively impacting upon the social and economic wellbeing of the community.

Background

Rail Infrastructure

Network Rail is the owner of most rail infrastructure in Great Britain. It owns most of the approximately 2500 railway stations in Great Britain. However, all but 18 of the largest and busiest of these stations are managed by Train Operating Companies as part of their franchise. Kidwelly station is managed by Arriva Trains Wales (ATW).

Rail infrastructure investment is not devolved and the main statutory powers and duties rest with the Secretary of State for Transport. However, the Welsh Government has powers under the *Railways Act 2005* ('the 2005 Act') to invest in rail infrastructure, including stations.

Rail Services

Rail franchising is not currently devolved. However, the Welsh Government is responsible for the day to day management of the Wales and Borders franchise, including the funding of services within Wales ("Wales only services"), and those which start or finish in Wales ("Welsh services").

As well as infrastructure investment, the 2005 Act empowers the Welsh Government to invest in rail service enhancements. This could include any costs associated with a scheduled stop at Kidwelly station. However, it is worth noting that inclusion of additional scheduled stops on a rail service has a knock-on impact on the timetable and journey times.

The Welsh and UK Governments are currently negotiating devolution of executive powers to procure the next Welsh rail franchise from 2018. Powers are expected to be devolved from 2017, and the Welsh Government has begun preparations for the next franchise (see below).

Disability Access and Rail

As the petitioners suggest the rail regulator, the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) requires all licensed train and station operators to draw up and comply with a Disabled Person's Protection Policy. The ORR has published [guidance on writing DPPP's](#) (PDF672 KB).

Section 71B of the Railways Act 1993 requires the Secretary of State for Transport to produce a [code of practice on design standards for accessible railway stations](#). The most recent version was published jointly with Transport Scotland in March 2015 and "is relevant to all passenger train and station operators in Great Britain".

This code is not mandatory. However, all licences issued to passenger train and station operators by the Office for Rail Regulation (ORR) contain a condition that licensees “will pay due regard to the Code of Practice” in drawing up their DPPP.

Compliance with licensing requirements is a matter for the ORR, which is also responsible for enforcing compliance with DPPPs. ATW’s DPPP can be accessed [here](#).

Representations from Kidwelly Town Council

Kidwelly Town Council is also considering the issue in its [General Purposes Committee](#). The minutes of the [meeting on 2 June 2015](#) say:

The number of train stops at Kidwelly station is inadequate, especially at times needed by commuters. Arriva trains have been requested to designate Kidwelly as a definite STOP station rather than a REQUEST STOP. Initiatives such as the RSPB Futurescapes Project and the development of the Gwendraeth Railway Project will attract passengers wishing to use Kidwelly Station. **The response from Arriva Trains was negative. A response from Edwina Hart was also negative.**

Later minutes indicate that a meeting with Arriva Trains Wales was arranged for 5 November 2015, and subsequently the Town Clerk made representations for ATW to consider making Kidwelly a scheduled stop when preparing its new May 2016 timetable.

Welsh Government action

Rail Services

The Welsh Government’s [National Transport Finance Plan](#) covers the period 2015–2020, as well as “medium term” objectives for 2020 and beyond. This includes a number of schemes related to rail services and infrastructure, among them proposals for a range of frequency and other enhancements, and a commitment to “a review of currently proposed service enhancements” between 2016–17 and 2018–19.

The plan also sets out objectives for procurement of the next Welsh rail franchise by Welsh Government. The Government is currently working with the rail industry and other stakeholders to develop the next franchise.

In anticipation of devolution of powers to award the next rail franchise, the Welsh Government launched a public consultation, [Setting the Direction for Wales and Borders Rail](#), in January 2016. This consultation sought views on rail services themselves, including the “range of future services”. It also sought views on “how [Welsh Government] can most effectively fulfil the public sector equality duty under the Equality Act 2010”.

A [summary of consultation responses](#) has now been published. From an accessibility perspective this comments:

Disability groups told us that improvements to accessibility should also be built into the contractual arrangements. It was suggested that operators should be encouraged to develop a solution which

enables disabled travellers to 'turn up and go', as currently many disabled passengers have to pre-book support in order to use the railway with confidence.

The Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure made a statement giving an update on the [Wales and Borders Franchise and Metro Programmes](#) on 12 July 2016. In outlining the next stages in the process the Cabinet Secretary referred to a further public consultation:

The process will include a programme of engagement activities with stakeholders and, after we have a clear set of proposals for a new contract early next year, there will be a further formal public consultation. Subject to a successful process, we will award that contract at the end of 2017.

The Cabinet Secretary's letter to the Chair of the Petitions Committee says that he will ask officials to look at possible improvements to the way in which request stops are communicated.

Accessibility

In terms of accessibility, the National Transport Finance Plan includes schemes to improve accessibility under the "Access For All Programme" and "Station Improvement Programme". The station improvement programme element refers to an "easy access installation programme for small stations across Wales to provide wheelchair access by use of on train ramps". Both the "delivery period" for both programmes does not extend beyond 2015-16.

However, the Cabinet Secretary's letter to the Chair highlights that rail infrastructure is not devolved but says that the Welsh Government is:

actively looking at designing platform raising humps to assist with low platform heights and Kidwelly would be considered with others, if budget becomes available in future years.

National Assembly for Wales action

The Fourth Assembly's Enterprise and Business Committee undertook an inquiry into [Integrated Public Transport in Wales](#). In considering the "quality and accessibility" of public transport services in Wales it published evidence of what it described as "a catalogue of problems faced by disabled passengers in travelling on bus and train services in Wales". The report recommended that the Welsh Government revisit recommendations made by the [Equality of Opportunity Committee](#) of the Third Assembly in its inquiry into the impact of Welsh Government policy on the accessibility of transport services for disabled people in Wales.

Subsequently, the Enterprise and Business Committee undertook an inquiry into [The Future of the Wales and Borders Rail Franchise](#) which reported in December 2013. The report highlighted evidence emphasising the importance of access for people with disabilities. The also report included a "charter for the next Wales and Borders Franchise" which included recommendations that the Welsh Government should undertake extensive consultation and should:

base the development of routes, service levels and future infrastructure requirements on a detailed understanding of the socio-economic drivers of rail traffic flows within the Wales and Borders Franchise area, and the potential market and future demand scenarios, including cross-border flows.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.



Ein cyf/Our ref KS/06020/16

Mike Hedges AM
Chair - Petitions Committee

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

17 August 2016

Dear Mike,

P-05-689 Improvements to Railway Provision at Kidwelly

Thank you for your letter of 27 July regarding the above petition you have received.

As outlined in the letter, Arriva Trains Wales (ATW) services calling at Kidwelly station are currently designated by ATW as 'request stops'. I understand that Kidwelly Town Council has written directly to ATW campaigning for this designation to be removed.

I have asked my officials to discuss this issue with ATW. Any such changes to the request stop designation at Kidwelly, however, will need to be considered in relation to the extended journey times that they will cause including the potential impacts on the robustness and reliability of the timetable.

I will ask my officials to ask ATW to look at possible improvements to the way in which request stops are communicated to passengers both on-board and at stations.

I note the petition also makes reference to request stops causing issues "on trains with no conductor". All ATW services are required to have a conductor on board and I consider it to be of the utmost important that on-board staff are visible to passengers. If this is not the case then this should be raised with the company.

I am pleased to be able to report that Kidwelly has benefitted from a significant increase in the number of services calling at the station in recent years including direct long-distance services to Manchester. Currently on weekdays, services calling at Kidwelly significantly exceed the franchise minimum requirement of eight services.

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The power to award the next Wales and Borders Franchise is due to be transferred to the Welsh Ministers by the beginning of 2017. This means that decisions about the services provided as part of the next franchise will be taken in Wales. Transport for Wales (TfW) is undertaking procurement of the franchise on behalf of the Welsh Government and, to ensure the views of passengers are integral to the final specification, a programme of consultation and engagement activities with stakeholders has begun. Inputs from stakeholders, such as the users of Kidwelly station, are encouraged to participate in this process.

With regard to the platform height on the westbound platform, despite rail infrastructure being non-devolved, we are actively looking at designing platform raising humps to assist with low platform height and Kidwelly would be considered with others, if budget becomes available in future years.

*Yours ever,
Ken*

Ken Skates AC/AM

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros yr Economi a'r Seilwaith
Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure

Agenda Item 3.16

P-04-686 Install a Traffic Lights System at Cross Hands Roundabout

This petition was submitted by Rhodri James, having collected 27 online signatures.

Text of the Petition

A recent published statistic shows that Cross Hands roundabout is the 3rd most dangerous in Wales for traffic accidents and people hurt. Anyone who is based in the area or travels through regularly will know how treacherous it has become. Please sign and share to force through a resolution.

Additional information

Opposition argue that traffic lights will slow down an already busy road. Carmarthen and Pont Abraham roundabouts had traffic lights installed long ago and congestion in both locations is not a serious issue. As the roads get busier, it is only a matter of time before somebody gets seriously hurt. Please let common sense prevail and help force through action to make this stretch of road a great deal safer for all motorists.

Assembly Constituency and Region

Carmarthen East and Dinefwr

Mid and West Wales



Your ref P-04-686
Our ref KS/06082/16

Mike Hedges AM
Chair - Petitions Committee

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

28 August 2016

Dear Mike,

Thank you for your letter of 3 August regarding P-04-686 Install a Traffic Lights System at Cross Hands Roundabout.

The collision mitigation study concluded last year, and recommended some improvements to relocated street furniture and improve the signing at the roundabout to make it more visible, and improve safety. Design of these improvements is planned for this financial year, subject to funding.

In 2015/16 we provided funding of £1.325 million to Carmarthenshire County Council, through our Local Transport Fund, towards the cost of the Cross Hands Economic Link Road. They have completed the first phase of this road, which runs from the A48 Meadows Road bridge to Black Lion Road. Carmarthenshire County Council has also recently completed a new road, south west of the roundabout from the A476 to Cefneithin Road running parallel to the A48, but it is not yet open to traffic.

These improvements have been made to improve traffic flows and safety at the roundabout. Once the roads have been completed there will be another opportunity to consider if any changes are required to the roundabout.

Yours ever,
Ken

Ken Skates AC/AM
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros yr Economi a'r Seilwaith
Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure

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

Agenda Item 3.17

P-05-690 Resurfacing of the A40 Raglan-Abergavenny Road

This petition was submitted by Sara Jones, having collected 22 signatures. The petition also collected 142 signatures on an alternative e-petition website

Text of the Petition

This petition calls on the Welsh Government to replace the old concrete surface on the A40 road from Raglan to Abergavenny with whispering tarmac.

The Noise Action Plan (2013-18) states that this road is a priority, after the consultation responses received and the measurements taken. Yet no progress has been made despite repeated calls from residents, the local County Councillor, Assembly Member and Member of Parliament.

We, the undersigned, state that this road should be given immediate priority, given the numerous concerns raised from both public and representatives and that it has been identified under the existing Welsh Government Noise Action Plan.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Monmouth
- South Wales East

Petition: P-05-690 Resurfacing of the A40 Raglan–Abergavenny Road

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 13 Medi 2016
Petitions Committee | 13 September 2016

Research Briefing:

Petition number: P-05-690

Petition title: Resurfacing of the A40 Raglan–Abergavenny Road

Text of petition:

This petition calls on the Welsh Government to replace the old concrete surface on the A40 road from Raglan to Abergavenny with whispering tarmac.

The Noise Action Plan (2013–18) states that this road is a priority, after the consultation responses received and the measurements taken. Yet no progress has been made despite repeated calls from residents, the local County Councillor, Assembly Member and Member of Parliament.

We, the undersigned, state that this road should be given immediate priority, given the numerous concerns raised from both public and representatives and that it has been identified under the existing Welsh Government Noise Action Plan.

Background

The Welsh Government is the highway authority for the Welsh trunk road and motorway network. It is responsible for maintenance and improvement of the network, including the A40.

While statutory responsibility rests with the Welsh Ministers (the Minister for Economy and Infrastructure), **two Welsh Trunk Road Agents are responsible for day to day operation, maintenance and minor improvement of the network:**

- the [North and Mid Wales Trunk Road Agent](#); and
- the [South Wales Trunk Road Agent](#).

The agents operate in partnership with local authorities. Their central planning function was moved into Welsh Government following in 2015 following a review. **Welsh Government**

directly plans, manages and delivers major trunk road improvement and new road schemes.

The “Environmental Noise Directive” ([2002/49/EC](#)) established a common approach to the assessment and management of environmental noise and was implemented through the [Environmental Noise \(Wales\) Regulations 2006](#) and the [Environmental Noise \(Wales\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2009](#).

The Regulations required the Welsh Government to produce strategic noise maps for urban agglomerations (populations greater than 100,000 people), major roads and major railways by June 2012, and to draw up action plans for these by July 2013. The [Noise Action Plan for Wales 2013-2018](#) was published in December 2013.

The A40 between Raglan and Abergavenny, approximately 10 miles, is one of three stretches of concrete trunk road remaining in Wales. The others are the A465 between the Aberdulais interchange and Cwmgwrach roundabout and the A4232 between Culverhouse Cross and Junction 33 of the M4.

All three are identified in the Noise Action Plan which notes that “concrete is the noisiest surface to be found nowadays on the Welsh trunk road network”.

Welsh Government action

The Noise Action Plan says:

In 2013 the South Wales Trunk Road Agent commissioned noise assessments for all three remaining stretches of concrete trunk road. **The measurements taken showed elevated noise levels along all three roads.** In addition, the 2012 noise mapping has flagged parts of the concrete A465 and A4232 as candidate priority areas, and fourteen responses to the consultation on this plan concerned excessive noise from the concrete A40, including from residents of three different villages and the managing director of a residential home. All fourteen strongly advocated an improved road surface.

In light of the consultation responses and the measurements taken, **all the residential properties situated along the three concrete stretches of trunk road will be listed as priority areas** under this action plan. **The timing of any resurfacing will be dependent on the budgets available to the Welsh Government for carrying out such work.**

The Welsh Government’s [National Transport Finance Plan](#) was published in 2015. The purpose of the plan is to provide timescale for financing and delivery of Welsh Government transport schemes, along with details of estimated expenditure required and likely sources of finance.

The letter to the Chair from the Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure regarding this petition says:

The A40 at this location is not life expired and there are currently no plans to resurface this section.

The section, adjacent to Raglan Castle, has not been identified as an area requiring noise mitigation works at the present time. However, a section of the A40 to the west of the A40/Usk Road roundabout has been identified as a Priority 1 area. This section is approximately 650 metres long

from the roundabout to just past the over-bridge that carries the roadway leading to The Dell and Cefn Coch farm.

The letter says funding is allocated annually on a priority basis and work is budget dependent. The priority list will be reviewed following the next noise surveying exercise of the trunk road network scheduled for 2017.

National Assembly for Wales action

This issue has not yet been considered by the Assembly.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

Ken Skates AC/AM
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros yr Economi a'r Seilwaith
Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-690
Ein cyf/Our ref KS/06021/16

Mike Hedges AM

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

16 August 2016

Dear Mike,

Thank you for your letter of 27 July regarding Petition P-05-690 Resurfacing of the A40 Raglan-Abergavenny Road.

The A40 at this location is not life expired and there are currently no plans to resurface this section.

The section, adjacent to Raglan Castle, has not been identified as an area requiring noise mitigation works at the present time. However, a section of the A40 to the west of the A40/Usk Road roundabout has been identified as a Priority 1 area. This section is approximately 650 metres long from the roundabout to just past the over-bridge that carries the roadway leading to The Dell and Cefn Coch Farm.

Funding is allocated annually on a priority basis and the commencement of work is dependant on the budgets available. For this reason I am unable to give an exact forecast of when the works will take place.

The current priority list will be reviewed following the next noise surveying exercise of the motorway and trunk road network, which is programmed to start in 2017.

Yours ever,
Ken

Ken Skates AC/AM
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros yr Economi a'r Seilwaith
Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure

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

P-05 -690 – Resurfacing of the A40 Raglan– Abergavenny Road – Nick Ramsay AM to the Committee 31.08.2016

Submission to the Petitions Committee from Nick Ramsay AM ref P-05-690 date: 13th September 2016

A40 Resurfacing between Abergavenny and Raglan

I have been supporting local residents in my Monmouth constituency for over eight years in their campaign for the concrete surface of the A40 between Abergavenny and Raglan to be replaced with modern “whisper tarmac” to reduce noise levels for those living near the busy road. The concrete surface is nearing the end of its life and is one of the few remaining surfaces of its type in Wales.

In December 2013 the then Minister for Natural Resources and Food, Alun Davies AM, wrote to me confirming that the A40 between Abergavenny and Raglan had been listed as a priority area under the new noise action plan and stated in his letter that “The timing of any resurfacing work will however be dependent on budgets available.”

Subsequent correspondence with Edwina Hart AM, as Minister for Economy and Transport implied that the road surface would be replaced once the necessary funding was in place. However, in late 2015 the Minister advised that rather than resurfacing the road it was now proposed to erect fencing to reduce noise levels for local residents.

This latest proposal by the Welsh Government to erect a noise barrier alongside part of the A40 is not considered acceptable by my constituents as it will not offer protection from noise to all properties. Throughout their campaign my constituents have been fighting for modern tarmac to reduce the existing noisy concrete surface. As the concrete surface is nearing the end of its life its replacement will in any event be required before much longer.

I have been in correspondence with the Welsh Government and a succession of Ministers over the last eight years supporting my constituents in their campaign and hope that their views will be given serious consideration and the road surface replaced without further delay.

Nick Ramsay

Nick Ramsay AM Constituency office – 16 Maryport Street, Usk. NP15 1AB

Tel. 01291 674898

Agenda Item 3.18

P-04-672 End Use of Welsh Language

This petition was submitted by Chris Neilsen, having collected 12 signatures.

Text of the Petition

Scrap the compulsory expensive provision of Welsh language by public sector and put the millions wasted into front line services.

As we are aware, Wales is the poorest country in western Europe, devolution has been a disaster to anyone living outside of Cardiff, our public services are a mess and Wales cannot afford this daft novelty language.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Newport East
- South Wales East



Eich cyf/Your ref: P-04-672
Ein cyf/Our ref:FM -/00005/16

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

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21 January 2016

Dear William,

I am writing in response to your letter of 6 January seeking my views on a petition presented to the Petitions Committee regarding the use of the Welsh language by the public sector.

The Welsh Government believes that the Welsh language is an integral part of our culture and society. This is reflected, for instance, in the recent Wellbeing of Future Generations Act made by the National Assembly which includes 'A thriving Welsh language' within the seven National Wellbeing Goals. These goals were thoroughly consulted upon with the people of Wales through a 12 month National Conversation on the Wales We Want campaign.

The Welsh Government appreciates the financial pressures on public bodies. The Welsh language standards will shortly replace the Welsh Language Schemes currently operated by most public bodies in Wales that were developed under the 1993 Welsh Language Act. We would expect those who are required to comply with the requirements of the standards to do so with minimal effort, as most standards relate closely to the requirements already found in current Welsh Language Schemes.

The standards include duties to be placed on organisations to offer individuals the opportunity to specify the language (Welsh or English) in which they would wish to communicate with the organisation. This would be documented so that future communication is made in the language of choice, resulting in improved efficiency and ultimately reduce waste.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
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English Enquiry Line 0300 0603300
Llinell Ymholiadau Cymraeg 0300 0604400
YP.PrifWeinidog@cymru.gsi.gov.uk • ps.firstminister@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

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

The Draft Budget for 2016-17 was published on 8 December and reflects the Welsh Government's focus on the services which mean the most to the people of Wales. This includes nearly £300m extra for the Welsh NHS and £230m new capital investment to support public service infrastructure.

The full draft budget along with a narrative outlining Welsh Government priorities can be found here:

<http://wales.gov.uk/funding/budget/final-budget-2015-16/?lang=en>

Yours sincerely

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

CARWYN JONES

Agenda Item 4

P-04-668 – Support Yearly Screening for Ovarian Cancer (CA125 blood test)

This petition was submitted by Margaret Hutcherson, having collected 104 signatures.

Text of the Petition

We, the undersigned, call upon the Welsh Government to support yearly screening for ovarian cancer (CA125 Blood Test)

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Vale of Glamorgan
- South Wales Central

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