

Agenda – Petitions Committee

Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 1 – Senedd

Meeting date: 11 October 2016

Meeting time: 09.00

For further information contact:

Graeme Francis – Committee Clerk

Kath Thomas – Deputy Clerk

0300 200 6565

SeneddPetitions@assembly.wales

1 Introduction, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

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2 New petitions

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5 Review of the National Assembly for Wales Petitions System

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Document is Restricted

Agenda Item 2.1

P-05-704 Bring Back January Exams for AS/A level Students.

This petition was submitted by Jasdeep Dhariwal, having collected 84 signatures.

Text of the Petition

This petition aims to raise the issue that AS/A level students do not have the opportunities they need to achieve what they are capable of. This petition is to bring January exams back for AS/A level students

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Caerphilly
- South Wales East

Briefing for the Petitions Committee

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 11 Hydref 2016
Petitions Committee | 11 October 2016

Research Briefing: January A and AS level exams

Petition number: [P5-05-704](#)

Petition title: Bring back January exams for AS/A level students

Text of petition:

This petition aims to raise the issue that AS/A level students do not have the opportunities they need to achieve what they are capable of. This petition is to bring January exams back for AS/A level students.

Background

A levels are usually taken as two-year courses during Year 12 (age 16 at start of year) and Year 13 (age 17 at start of year).

AS levels can be taken as a stand-alone qualification, or as the first part of an A level course. In Wales, they are usually completed at the end of Year 12. 'A2' exams and coursework are added on to an AS level at the end of Year 13, making up a full A level qualification.

January examinations were most commonly used for **AS level resits** during Year 13. They were **discontinued in Wales after January 2014**. The last year students had the opportunity to take them in England was January 2013.

The main reason for their discontinuation was to limit the number of opportunities candidates have to re-sit AS level examinations to one (in the summer of Year 13) and address what some people have termed '**a resitting culture**'.

Decision to end January exams

Decision in England

In November 2012, following a [consultation](#) on A and AS level reform, the qualifications regulator in England, [Ofqual](#), [announced](#) that from September 2013 students in England would no longer be able to sit A or AS level exams in January. Ofqual said this would '**address recent concerns over how many times students can sit their exams** by reducing resit

opportunities'. The changes applied to students who had already started their A and AS level courses in September 2012, who were therefore not allowed to resit AS level examinations in January 2014 (which they had originally taken at the end of Year 12 in summer 2013).

Policy in Wales

Following the developments in England, the Welsh Government [decided in 2013](#) that the opportunity to sit exams for A and AS level courses qualifications in January should also not be available in Wales and that this would take effect for the **cohort of students starting courses in September 2013**. However, students who started A level courses in September 2012 and were in Year 13 at the time of January 2014 were offered January examinations.

A decision in [Northern Ireland](#) adopted a similar position to Wales.

Retention of 'coupled' A and AS levels

The current position in each of Wales, England and Northern Ireland is that no January examinations are offered for A or AS level. However, a key difference is that in Wales and Northern Ireland, an AS qualification is still awarded after Year 12 (and still counts towards the A level), whereas **in England A and AS levels have been 'decoupled'** and are now separate qualifications, both awarded at the end of Year 13.

Therefore, for applicants from Wales and Northern Ireland, universities consider the actual AS level grades of **applicants to higher education** during the applications process that takes place during Year 13 rather than projected grades as they must now do in England.

Rationale for abolishing January exams

Most of the changes the Welsh Government has made to qualifications in Wales follow [Huw Evans' Review of qualifications for 14 to 19 year olds in Wales](#), published in November 2012.

On the specific issue of January examinations, Huw Evans' review found mixed views but recommended the Welsh Government:

- retain the AS/A2 structure
- allow **only one resit opportunity**, with the higher mark counting
- recognise the **range of views expressed by stakeholders** about the continued use of units within AS and A2 and **January assessment opportunities**. (Recommendation 25) [my emphasis]

The [statement in June 2013](#) from the then Minister for Education and Skills, Leighton Andrews, which announced the changes, said:

The removal of January assessments will **reduce the amount of time spent on assessment rather than learning**; will make the system **simpler** and more **cost effective**; and will **reduce the examination burden** for teachers and learners. (...)

Whilst the removal of the January assessment window will significantly reduce the opportunities for learners to resit modules, **limiting re-sits to one per module**, as is currently the case for GCSEs, will

also be consistent with the recommendations of the Review of Qualifications – as are all these announcements.

The then Minister added that the Welsh Government sought stakeholder views on January assessment opportunities, holding a **six week online survey in late 2012 / early 2013**.

Reducing opportunities to resit AS level examinations

The literature accompanying/supporting the decision to discontinue January exams in England was relatively more explicit about the objective to limit resit opportunities than the Welsh Government's.

Ofqual's 2012 consultation document said

56. Our national research found that **students do not always treat exams seriously if they know that they have the opportunity to resit**. (...) With only one resit allowed, continuous resitting will be eliminated, so we think that it is reasonable to allow students to count the highest mark when they resit. [my emphasis]

Similarly, Ofqual's *Impact assessment of A-level reforms: A study commissioned by Ofqual* said:

Currently, students are able to re-sit exams multiple times, with between two-thirds and three-quarters of students re-sitting at least one unit. There is concern that the ability to do so results in a **reduction of the prestige associated with A-levels**, as students can just 'get over the finish line' by re-sitting multiple times. It may also contribute to **grade inflation** – for example the percentage of students who gain a grade A at AS (where re-sitting is much more common) is always higher than the percentage achieving a grade A at A2 level. [my emphasis]

Several years earlier in 2007, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) in England published *A level resitting: a summary of research findings* which reported:

It is first important to note that **nearly all GCE resitting activity relates to AS units**.

The percentage of students achieving a grade A at AS is, across all centre types and subjects, always higher than the percentage achieving an A at A2 or at A level, a reflection perhaps of the resitting patterns of candidates.

The resitting of AS units during year 2 has a noticeable impact on students' A level grades. The percentage receiving an A grade in a nominal A level result based on year 1 AS results is lower than the actual percentage of A grades achieved by the same candidates at the end of year 2. **It appears that the AS resitting in year 2 is boosting their grades**. [my emphasis]

Other views

A [petition against the decision in England](#) to abolish January exams was submitted to the UK Parliament in 2012/13. The UK Government said the decision was a matter for the qualifications regulator in England, Ofqual, but said 'there are **no plans to reverse and allow January assessments**' in England. [Ofqual's summary of the consultation it held in 2012](#) (PDF 1.82MB), which preceded the decision in England, reported:

There was ... strong support for removing the January assessment window, as assessments in January were generally considered to disrupt teaching and learning. Some stakeholders, however, proposed that the **January assessment window should be maintained in special circumstances**, with many commenting that it was important for some protected groups, including students with special educational needs (SEN) or a disability. [my emphasis]

During the Ofqual consultation, the [Russell Group](#), comprising 24 'leading universities' in the UK, commented:

The proposed reduction in the number of re-sits that students are allowed to do would be a step in the right direction. We think it's fair that people are given a second chance if they have good reasons for under-performing in an exam, but more recently **students have been allowed to do re-sits too frequently**. Our universities are concerned that many of the students who don't get the grades first or second time around don't go on to do as well in their chosen degree course. [my emphasis]

However, the Council for Independent Education (CfIE), which is the professional body for sixth form colleges in England provided [information on the groups of students affected](#) by the abolition of January exams. This includes:

- Students **retaking A levels** who now have to wait until June rather than January to resit examinations, potentially causing them to have a **gap before they prepare again** for the exam and leaving them less time to plan for university.
- **One-year A-level students** compressing an A level into one year for a variety of reasons: rather than taking the AS exams in January and then using the final six months to focus on A2, they must now take all exams at the same time, in the summer
- Some schools entered **Year 12 students** for AS exams in January rather than June, primarily to gain exam experience but also to generate a sense of urgency. CfIE acknowledge 'it was always a somewhat questionable practice in terms of broader educational objectives'.
- Students **resitting AS exams in Year 13**: not only to improve a poor result but often to bump up a good AS grade to an excellent one. Such students **must now wait until the summer**, and retake AS units alongside A2.

The [National Union of Students \(NUS\)](#) (PDF 144KB) published the outcome of joint research with the awarding body, OCR, based on a survey of further and higher education students between January and March 2014. The NUS said:

There was also considerable opposition to the reduction in the opportunity to re-sit, as January exams are removed under the new format. Eighty-nine per cent said that this will **unfairly penalise students** who have faced significant upheaval in their education and need a second chance. [my emphasis]

Qualifications Wales

In her response, the Cabinet Secretary for Education, Kirsty Williams, states this is a matter for [Qualifications Wales](#).

Qualifications Wales was established in September 2015 by the [Qualifications Wales Act 2015](#), which transferred the **functions of qualifications regulation** away from the Welsh Government to the new independent organisation. The 2015 Act requires that Qualifications Wales exercises its functions in line with the following two principal aims:

- a) Ensuring that qualifications, and the Welsh qualifications system, are **effective for meeting the reasonable needs of learners** in Wales.
- b) **Promoting public confidence** in qualifications and in the Welsh qualifications system.

Members will note from Qualifications Wales' response, that it believes 'the reintroduction of January examinations would **weaken public confidence** in qualifications taken by Welsh learners and threaten portability'. It is its 'regulatory opinion' that the **current position 'continues to be in the best interests of learners 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

Ein cyf/Our ref KW/05556/16

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

22 August 2016

Dear Mike

Thank you for your email of 4 August informing me of a petition received from Jasdeep Dhariwal calling for the Welsh Government to bring back January exams for AS/A level students.

I note the points raised by the petition. The Welsh Ministers' functions relating to the regulation of qualifications were repealed in September 2015 with the establishment of Qualifications Wales as the independent regulator. Assessment arrangements, such as the January examinations for AS and A levels, are a matter for Qualifications Wales. I suggest that Mr Dhariwal contact Qualifications Wales with this issue.

I trust that you will find this information useful.

Yours sincerely

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

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.



Mr M Hedges AC/AM
Chair
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

By Email to: SeneddPetitions@Assembly.Wales

23 September 2016

Dear Mr Hedges

Petition P-05-704 Bring Back January Exams for AS/A level students

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to offer our views on the petition to bring back examinations in January for AS/A level students.

Welsh Government made the decision that January examinations would no longer be available to learners starting AS and A levels from September 2013. This followed an earlier decision made by the Department for Education in England that was based, in part, on Ofqual's research into the perception of A levels.

"This showed that the qualifications are considered to be largely fit for purpose, but that there were some structural changes that could be made to improve them. There were also concerns expressed by teachers, employers and universities over what they term a resit culture. Teachers in particular said A-level students approach examinations with the expectation that they will always get a second chance."

In the Review of Qualifications conducted by Welsh Government, which reported in 2013, stakeholders were keen to stress the importance of portability and the need for Welsh learners to have qualifications that are regarded as credible and robust in the eyes of universities and employers. To ensure this we need to have regard to the nature of AS/A levels in England and Northern Ireland, where these qualifications are also taken. Whilst there are differences in qualifications policies between countries the degree of divergence between countries needs to be actively managed and we believe that the reintroduction of January examinations would weaken public confidence in qualifications taken by Welsh learners and threaten portability.

Qualifications Wales

Q2 Building, Pencarn Lane
Imperial Park,
Newport
NP10 8AR
☎ 0333 077 2701



YouTube
Pack Page 29

www.qualificationswales.org

Cymwysterau Cymru

Adeilad Q2, Lôn Pencarn
Parc Imperial,
Casnewydd
NP10 8AR
☎ 0333 077 2701

It is our regulatory opinion that the course of action taken by Welsh Government continues to be in the best interests of learners in Wales. Removing January assessments frees up time for additional teaching so that learners can develop greater knowledge and understanding of their subjects. Time which would be dominated by assessment, and preparation for assessment, if January exams were reintroduced.

Yours sincerely



Philip Blaker

Agenda Item 2.2

P-05-707 Teachers' Training Must Include Statutory Training in Autism

This petition was submitted by Tim Thomas, having collected 313 signatures.

Text of the Petition

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to ensure that teachers' training must include statutory training in Autism.

One of the major concerns for people caring for people with Autism is the lack of understanding from teachers and others working in the education profession. While teaching in Wales is of high quality, improvements could be made in raising awareness of Autism, especially given how common it has become in society.

It is proposed, as part of the English Teacher's training review, Special Education Needs, including Autism will be a key part of teachers' training in England.

The review of the Initial Teacher Education in Wales must ensure that teachers get specific and statutory training in supporting people with Autism within the school environment.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Bridgend
- South Wales West

Briefing for the Petitions Committee

Petition number: P-05-707

Petition title: Teachers' Training Must Include Statutory Training in Autism

Text of petition: We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to ensure that teachers' training must include statutory training in Autism. One of the major concerns for people caring for people with Autism is the lack of understanding from teachers and others working in the education profession. While teaching in Wales is of high quality, improvements could be made in raising awareness of Autism, especially given how common it has become in society. It is proposed, as part of the English Teacher's training review, Special Education Needs, including Autism will be a key part of teachers' training in England. The review of the Initial Teacher Education in Wales must ensure that teachers get specific and statutory training in supporting people with Autism within the school environment.

Background

Currently the Welsh Government does not specify the content of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) courses (sometimes also called initial teacher training (ITT)). Institutions accredited to provide ITE courses design the content, structure and delivery of training to enable trainee teachers to demonstrate that they have met the [Qualified Teacher Status \(QTS\) Standards](#). These are outcome statements that outline what ITE trainees must know, understand and be able to do at the end of their course. They are periodically updated by the Welsh Government, the most recent being made in 2009.

In June 2015, the then Minister for Education and Skills, Huw Lewis [said that he accepted the need to revise and align the qualified teacher status standards](#) to the wider professional standards for the education workforce and that he had commissioned an internal reference group to start work on developing the professional standards.

In her letter to the Committee, the Cabinet Secretary for Education, Kirsty Williams said that reforms will require accredited ITE providers to design and deliver courses that support the four purposes and the six areas of learning of the new curriculum being developed following [Professor Graham Donaldson's review](#).

Previous Assembly action

The issue of special educational needs (although not specifically autism) and ITE has been considered three times by different Assembly Committees.

The Education and Lifelong Learning Committee's [Inquiry into the early identification of Special Educational Needs](#) (2004), and the Enterprise and Learning Committee [Rapporteur Group on Dyslexia](#) (2008) recommended that ITE should provide trainee teachers with a greater understanding of special educational needs (SEN). The Public Accounts

Committee's consideration of [Services for children and young people with emotional and mental health needs](#) (2010) also raised this issue with Welsh Government officials.

The responses provided by the Welsh Government were similar. In summary, they said that the time available in ITE courses for more specialist areas of study is limited and that there cannot be comprehensive coverage of every single aspect. More detailed specialist training in SEN is best undertaken once a teacher has completed their ITE and induction year.

Autism Bill

As part of the deal between Labour and Plaid Cymru following the May 2016 election, a pledge was made to introduce an Autism Bill. In July 2016, the [First Minister said](#) that the Welsh Government were considering what legislation might be necessary to strengthen the rights of service users. In July 2016, the First Minister said that the issue of an Autism Bill is being considered by the liaison committee, to consider in what way legislation on autism can be developed, and whether the Autism Action Plan can be strengthened through being placed on a statutory basis.

The National Autistic Society have been lobbying for the Assembly to introduce an Autism Bill. Their [Act Now: An Autism Act for Wales report](#) suggests that an Autism Bill could include 'ensuring that there is a clear framework for training for teachers'.

In a [statement on 12 July 2016](#), the Cabinet Secretary for Education said:

"All practitioners should have the core skills development to support a wide range of low complexity, but high incidence ALN [additional learning needs] within settings, and access to ongoing professional development. Each school setting should have immediate access to one individual with advanced skills. I want to develop the role of additional learning needs co-ordinators, who will replace the current SENCOs [SEN co-ordinators]. And all education settings should have access to individuals with specialist skills, for instance, educational psychologists, teachers of the visually or hearing impaired, and speech therapy."

At the [Children, Young People and Education Committee on 13 July 2016](#), the Cabinet Secretary for Education was asked about specific modules within ITE for autism. She said:

"we are looking at the additional learning needs legislation that we're bringing forward. It is about ensuring that everybody in a classroom situation does have some knowledge of high-incidence, low-complexity additional learning needs."

Teacher Training Review in England

In England, as in Wales, the Government do not specify the content of ITE courses, but ITE providers are required to ensure that the design and provision of courses will enable trainees to demonstrate the standards requires to gain QTS.

In March 2015, Stephen Munday CBE was appointed to chair an independent expert group to develop a new core content framework for initial teacher training courses. His report, [a Framework of Core Content for Initial Teacher Training](#) was published on 12 July 2016.

In relation to autism the framework states:

“[ITT] Providers should equip trainees to analyse the strengths and needs of all pupils effectively, ensuring that they have an understanding of cognitive, social, emotional, physical and mental health factors that can inhibit or enhance pupils’ education. Providers should ensure that trainees understand the principles of the SEND [special educational needs and disability] Code of Practice, are confident working with the four broad areas of need it identifies, and are able to adapt teaching strategies to ensure that pupils with SEND (including, but not limited to, autism, dyslexia, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), sensory impairment or speech, and language and communication needs (SLCN)) can access and progress within the curriculum. Providers should ensure that SEND training is integrated across the ITT programme.”

In [response](#), Nicky Morgan, the then Secretary for Education accepted the recommendation that the Department for Education adopt the framework. She said that all ITT providers will need to ensure that their programmes align with the framework. The Department expects to use the framework as part of the quality criteria for ITT allocations for the 2018/19 training year.

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



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-707
Ein cyf/Our ref KW/05558/16

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 your letter of 4 August about a petition received by the Petitions Committee to make autism training mandatory in Initial Teacher Education (ITE).

The Welsh Government is committed to creating an inclusive education system for all learners, regardless of their needs and background, to ensure all learners are able to access a high standard of education and reach their full potential.

On 26 June, the First Minister announced this Government's intention to bring forward an Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Bill. The Bill will reform the current legal frameworks for supporting children and young people with SEN and Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities (LDD). The changes we intend to make will directly benefit Wales' most vulnerable learners and will also improve the operational landscape for practitioners. The legislation is a key milestone in our reform journey, but it is just one part of the picture. A Transformation Programme has been developed to take forward the wider policy developments needed to ensure implementation of the new legislation is a success. Some of this transformation is already underway.

We have recognised the need to improve the capacity of the education workforce to better support the needs of learners with SEN and in 2015 concluded a study to better understand the workforce development requirements of the general education workforce, including in relation to Autism. The final report has been published and can be accessed via the Welsh Government website:

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.

<http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/publications/reports/an-assessment-of-special-educational-needs-workforce-development-requirements/?lang=en>

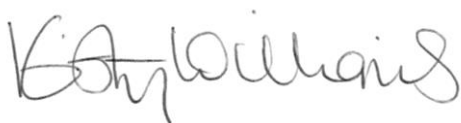
We are reforming the way in which initial teacher education (ITE) is delivered in Wales and the reforms planned will require future accredited providers of ITE to design and deliver courses that support the four purposes of the new curriculum and address the six areas of learning and experience, which has inclusivity at its heart. In addition, planned changes to support the Education Workforce aim to offer practitioners, support staff, teachers, leaders and FE Lecturers in Wales an entitlement to access professional learning opportunities to develop their practice. This will include training to enable practitioners to deliver on the new curriculum.

Pioneer Schools have been appointed to support the development of a range of high quality professional learning to ensure that all practitioners in Wales have the skills in pedagogy and leadership to be able to successfully deliver the requirements of the new curriculum. Going forward the Pioneer Schools will have a key role in ensuring that professional learning needs in relation to SEN are met and they will work in partnership with schools from across Wales to ensure that this is achieved.

With regard to the professional learning that practitioners engage in after their initial training, teachers are required to demonstrate that they take account of the needs of learners with SEN/ALN as part of the requirements of the professional standards. The standards are currently under review but the revised standards will continue to require teachers to demonstrate their understanding of the diverse learning needs of all learners.

Meeting the diverse needs of learners may also be identified as a priority in the school's development plan (SDP) which all schools are required to have in place and review at least annually. The SDP will contain the school's improvement priorities and objectives, together with a plan for how they intend to achieve them, including the development needs of the school workforce. At an individual level, practitioners are required to reflect on their practice and identify areas for further development through the performance management cycle.

Yours sincerely



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

**P-05-707 Teacher Training must Include Statutory Training in Autism -
Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Clerking team, 03.10.16**

Hi Jessica,

Nothing really to add other than the purpose of the petition is to raise the need for specific attention towards autism and that future developments in teachers training do not appear to support this.

Thanks,
Tim

Agenda Item 2.3

P-05-709 The Circuit of Wales

This petition was submitted by Don Wilcox, having collected 3,279 paper signatures.

Text of the Petition

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to expedite the start of work on the Circuit of Wales as quickly as possible in order to help with the regeneration of Blaenau Gwent, the Heads of the Valleys and South Wales generally.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Blaenau Gwent
- South Wales East

Circuit of Wales

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 11 Hydref 2016
Petitions Committee | 11 October 2016

Research Briefing:

Petition number: P-05-709

Petition text: We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to expedite the start of work on the Circuit of Wales as quickly as possible in order to help with the regeneration of Blaenau Gwent, the Heads of the Valleys and South Wales generally.

Background

The Heads of the Valleys Development Company was established in 2009 with the purpose of developing and operating the 'Circuit of Wales' race track, a £370m development encompassing 830 acres of Blaenau Gwent.

The Cabinet Secretary's letter to the Petitions Committee on this matter notes that 'the developers have identified that on completion the Circuit could create 170 full-time jobs with a further 1,500 part-time positions'.

Welsh Government action

The Cabinet Secretary's letter also notes that the Welsh Government has been engaged with the company since 2011 and that the company has sought financial support from the Welsh Government at each key stage in the project's development.

According to a May 2016 Welsh Government [response to a Freedom of Information request](#), which sets out the level of financial support the Welsh Government had provided to the project, 'a £2 million grant was paid to the Heads of the Valleys Development Company in 2012 and a £7 million loan guarantee was used to pay external subcontractors and advisors commissioned by the Heads of the Valleys Development Company to deliver financial close'.

The Cabinet Secretary's letter to this committee outlines that earlier this year the Circuit of Wales also 'sought a Welsh Government guarantee to underwrite 100% of a project finance facility provided by Aviva Investors of £357.4 million'. The then Minister for Economy,

Science and Transport, Edwina Hart AM, decided that it would be an ‘unacceptable risk to underwrite the entire investment for the project’.

In April the Circuit of Wales put forward another proposal which would have involved around 83% of the total £370 million cost of the project being underwritten by the Welsh public sector. The Cabinet Secretary states in his letter that, in his view, the project ‘does not currently provide the level of value for money necessary for the amount of public funding being put at risk’. He has urged the developers to revise their bid such that at least 50% of the project should be funded and 50% of the risk underwritten by the private sector. The letter states that the developers ‘have accepted this principle’.

National Assembly for Wales action

On 19 September 2016 the Public Accounts Committee discussed, in private, correspondence between David TC Davies MP and Nick Ramsay AM (as chair of the Committee), and a letter from the Auditor General for Wales. The [Public Accounts Committee webpage](#) states:

The Committee has received correspondence regarding the [Circuit of Wales] project and the Auditor General for Wales has indicated that his staff will undertake an audit on some of the issues raised. On receipt of that report, the Committee will consider whether to undertake an inquiry.

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-05-709
Ein cyf/Our ref KS/06332/16

Mike Hedges AM
Chair - Petitions Committee

SeneddPetitions@assembly.wales

19 September 2016

Dear Mike,

Thank you for your letter of 24 August regarding Petition P-05-709 the Circuit of Wales.

The Heads of the Valleys Development Company was established in 2009 with the purpose of developing and operating the proposed race track and, as I stated in an oral statement on 13 July, the Welsh Government has been engaged with the company since 2011. The company has sought financial support from us at each key stage in the project's development.

The developers have identified that on completion the Circuit could create 170 full time jobs with a further 1500 part time positions. The 2 year construction programme will also create significant employment opportunities. This level of new employment would clearly greatly benefit the Heads of the Valleys and for this reason the Welsh Government have sought to facilitate delivery of the project.

Earlier this year the Circuit of Wales sought a Welsh Government guarantee to underwrite 100% of a project finance facility provided by Aviva Investors of £357.4 million. The previous Minister for Economy, Science and Transport, decided that it would be an unacceptable risk to underwrite the entire investment for the project, but stressed that our door remained open if sufficient private investment could be secured that represented a fair sharing of risks between the public and private sectors.

The most recent proposal put forward by the Circuit of Wales in April asked the Welsh Public Sector to underwrite around 83% of the total £370 million cost of the project. This leaves only around 17% of financing risk being taken by the private sector. That amount of risk falling on the Welsh taxpayer, through Welsh Government and local authority support, is unacceptable, especially at a time when we are facing significant economic uncertainty following the EU referendum result.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400
Gohebiaeth.Ken.Skates@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Ken.Skates@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.

Pack Page 41
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 my view, this project does not currently provide the level of value for money necessary for the amount of public funding being put at risk. On that basis, I have told the developer that I believe further work is needed on this proposal. My door remains firmly open and I have urged them to revise their bid in such a way where the private sector takes more of the risk in order for this project to be taken forward.

At least 50% of this project should be funded and 50% of the risk underwritten by the private sector to justify value for money for Wales, and they have accepted this principle.

My officials continue working constructively with the Circuit of Wales team to seek a funding solution that enables this project to be successful and delivered to benefit the local economy of Ebbw Vale and Wales at large.

Yours ever,



Ken Skates AC/AM

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

COMMENTS RELATING TO THE MINISTERS LETTER TO MIKE HEDGES AM

Jobs –What is outlined are the direct racetrack jobs. I would still suggest that the 170 full time jobs and 1500 part time jobs would equate to roughly 500 full time equivalent, significant benefit to the Blaenau Gwent area. The Ministers response also fails outline the benefits in the local supply chain that would be created by the anticipated 750K anticipated visitors annually this alone has the potential to create several hundred jobs and fits neatly with the WG aim of growing tourism. this year is The Year of Adventure, motorsports would add to this theme). The Ministers letter completely ignores the other business elements of the scheme.

At the Planning meeting giving consent to the circuit the Council received a letter asking the Council to refuse planning consent on the grounds that they felt it would relocate jobs from their area to Wales. Reports were prepared by Grant Thornton, South Wales University and the Cardiff Business School outlining the potential for several thousand jobs via the attraction of a cluster of engineering based industries. One final thought on jobs is that no mention is made of the hospitality jobs likely to be created.

Risk – On. July 13th the Minister gave his latest update on The circuit of Wales following this Adam Price and Neil Hamilton asked the Minister to clarify where he felt the risk was, the two opposition AMs went on to outline their understanding of the risk saying that it was a guarantee that would not be activated until construction is complete and does not involve WG paying any money to the developers. As their own officers have confirmed it is a robust business case and the risk of the guarantee being called in is negligible.

– Can the Minister confirm that he has instructed his most senior officers to engage in daily conversation to reach the 50% risk share he has outlined as desirable and as Martin Whittaker CEO of the COW has stated in press comments that the developer will be able to meet WG requirements will he now take action to ensure a speedy and successful conclusion so that construction work can commence.

Agenda Item 2.4

P-05-710 Ensure Disabled People can Access Public Transport As and When They Need it.

This petition was submitted by the Whizz-Kidz, Cardiff Ambassador Club, having collected 22 online signatures and 75 paper signatures = 97 signatures

Text of the Petition

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to ensure that [young] disabled people get the right to accessible public transport when required without the need to plan assistance at least 24 hours in advance. This will then give us the ability to be independent, seek employment, travel to work and meet friends at short notice. Whizz-Kidz Ambassadors are also campaigning to get essential training for taxi and bus drivers as well as train staff in disability awareness and disability support.

Additional information

Young people at the Cardiff Ambassador Club have worked hard to campaign for improvements to public transport. All have had difficulties with taxis, buses and trains over the years and their independence is being compromised by not being able to travel as they need to. Whilst they recognise improvements have been made there is still a lot of work to do.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- N/A

Petition: Ensure disabled people can access public transport when they need it

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 11 Hydref 2016
Petitions Committee | 11 October 2016

Research Briefing:

Petition number: P-5-710

Petition title: Ensure disabled people can access public transport when they need it

Text of petition: We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to ensure that [young] disabled people get the right to accessible public transport when required without the need to plan assistance at least 24 hours in advance. This will then give us the ability to be independent, seek employment, travel to work and meet friends at short notice. Whizz-Kidz Ambassadors are also campaigning to get essential training for taxi and bus drivers as well as train staff in disability awareness and disability support.

Background

Accessibility of public transport is a matter for the Secretary of State for Transport, and anti-discrimination legislation is not a devolved matter. However, the Welsh Government and other relevant public authorities are required to act in accordance with the public sector equality duty under s149 of the *Equality Act 2010*, and the Welsh Government has significant powers and responsibilities in relation to many, if not all, forms of public transport.

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 Rail Franchise, including the funding of services within Wales (“Wales only services”), and those which start or finish in Wales (“Welsh services”).

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.

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 (DPPP). The ORR has published [guidance on writing DPPPs](#) (PDF672 KB).

Compliance with licensing requirements is a matter for the ORR, which is also responsible for enforcing compliance with DPPPs. In terms of training, [ATWs the DPPP](#) says:

Training is provided for staff to identify and assist passengers with additional needs and we will continuously improve the way services and facilities are delivered to all passengers.

In terms of assistance to passengers, the DPPP says:

We participate in Passenger Assist. This system enables older and disabled passengers to reserve a seat or wheelchair space on a train, to book assistance in advance and to buy tickets. As well as booking assistance for travel on ATW's services, we can help you to book assistance on journeys on the National Rail network where you are travelling with other train operating companies.

Bus Services

While the Welsh bus market is deregulated, the Welsh Government develops bus policy which it implements largely through funding provided to local authorities to support bus services in their area.

The Welsh Government's [Bus Policy Advisory Group reported in June 2014](#) and considered issues related to disabled passengers in its report. In terms of disability awareness training, the report said:

We considered practical ways of ensuring that drivers are aware of the needs of disabled passengers. Drivers are already required to maintain their Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (DCPC) which includes some disability awareness, either provided in-house or externally procured. This advantage is that there is 100% participation and regular updating. There is potential for a Welsh module to be developed which would ensure consistency across Wales and reflect disabled people's concerns.

The group recommended:

- The introduction of an all Wales standard '[orange wallet](#)'-type scheme as soon as practicable, capturing existing best practice in smaller schemes around Wales.
- Further work to introduce a Welsh DCPC module on disability awareness be undertaken.
- A project to explore increased use of low cost digital technology to assist disabled people's use of public transport be established.

Taxi services

While taxi licencing and regulation are handled at local authority level, they are not currently devolved. However, the Wales Bill currently before parliament will devolve powers over taxi and private hire vehicle licencing and private hire vehicle operator licencing to the Assembly.

The Department for Transport (DfT) published its most recent [guidance on taxi and private hire vehicle licensing](#) in March 2010. This considers accessibility issues in the context of the duties established by the then *Disability Discrimination Act 1995*, which has subsequently been repealed and consolidated with other legislation into the *Equality Act 2010*. On driver training it says at paragraph 15:

Local licensing authorities should also encourage their drivers to undertake disability awareness training, perhaps as part of the course mentioned in the training section of this guidance that is available through Go-Skills.

Welsh Government action

Strategic Equality Objectives

The Welsh Government published its [Equality Objectives 2016–2020: working towards a fairer Wales](#) in March 2016. The purpose of these is:

to strengthen the Welsh Government’s performance of the public sector equality duty and ensure the Welsh Government is making year on year progress in advancing equality and inclusion for all protected groups.

Objective 1 says Welsh Government will:

Put the needs, rights and contributions of people with protected characteristics at the heart of the design and delivery of all public services, in particular health and mental health services, education, housing, social services and transport. Specifically ensure support and tackle barriers to enable disabled people to enjoy their right to independent living and have voice, choice and control in their lives.

Rail Services

In anticipation of devolution of executive 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 “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 draws attention to the fact that three quarters of stations managed by ATW within the Wales and Borders Franchise are unstaffed which "presents particular challenges to the train operator in Wales to maintain access to our rail services to disabled people and people with restricted mobility".

Bus Services

The Welsh Government has [published guidance for local authorities and bus operators](#) which includes guidance on "Inclusivity and Accessibility of the Consultation Process on Changes to Transport Services in Wales".

Additionally, following the report of the Bus Policy Advisory Group the Welsh Government published [Voluntary Welsh Bus Quality Standards](#). It is the Government's intention that "operators not achieving the agreed core standard would not be entitled to apply for public funding made available from the [Bus Services Support Grant (BSSG)]", a key Welsh Government funding mechanism to support bus service which is administered via Welsh local authorities.

The standards comprise two levels: core requirements; and enhanced requirements. **Core requirements** must be met to maintain eligibility for BSSG. The accessibility requirements included are that:

- vehicles operated must be compliant with the *Public Service Vehicle Accessibility Regulations 2002* and any associated legislation; and
- audio / visual next stop information equipment is installed on vehicles acquired after 2015 and in use during passenger carrying journeys – this applies as a core requirement only on operators with 50 or more vehicles operating in Wales.

Enhanced requirements include a requirement related to the "proportion of drivers having completed Disability Awareness and Equality [Certificate of Professional Competence] module." Points are awarded according to the proportion of drivers meeting this standard. Achieving enhanced requirements should entitle operators to a premium payment from their local authority.

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.

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-05-710
Ein cyf/Our ref KS/06302/16

Mike Hedges AM
Chair - Petitions Committee

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

10th September 2016

Dear Mike,

Thank you for your letter of 24 August seeking my views on petition P-05-710 raised by Whizz Kids, calling on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to ensure disabled people can access public transport as and when they need it.

Accessibility to public transport is not devolved to the Welsh Government and is a matter for the Secretary of State for Transport. Our expectation is that the devolution settlement for transport will be further strengthened with the passage of Wales Bill currently before the UK Parliament and the transfer of responsibility for rail franchising in Wales currently being negotiated with the Secretary of State for Transport. This improved devolved settlement for transport matters will not however, transfer responsibility for anti discrimination legislation to the Welsh Ministers. This shall remain a matter reserved to the UK Government.

That said, the Welsh Ministers and public authorities in Wales are required to exercise functions in accordance with the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty introduced by section 149 of the Equality act 2010. On this basis, I would welcome the opportunity to contribute to the consideration of the issues raised by Whizz-kids, that will serve to shine a light on some of the areas in which accessibility to public transport can be improved.

There are two specific matters highlighted in the text of the petition on which I would like to take this opportunity to comment to help the committee consider this important issue.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

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

Gohebiaeth.Ken.Skates@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Ken.Skates@gov.wales

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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.

Firstly, in relation to accessible public transport when required without the need to plan assistance at least 24 hours in advance. This relates to the passenger assistance programmes offered by rail operators and is a licence requirement imposed on Train Operating Companies (TOC) as regulated by the Office of Rail and Road (ORR). The ORR is working with train operators to improve access to stations and trains by strengthening their disabled people's protection policy (DPPP), which must be approved by the ORR. A DPPP sets out, amongst other things, the arrangements and assistance that an operator will provide to protect the interests of disabled people using its services and to facilitate such use.

The committee will appreciate that with more than three quarters of stations within the Wales and Borders franchise being not staffed, this presents particular challenges to the train operator in Wales to maintain access to our rail services to disabled people and people with restricted mobility. Requiring advance notification of passengers' requirements to travel on our railways provides an opportunity to ensure that passengers' travelling experiences are as positive as they can be across the whole of the railway network in Britain. Our ultimate objective is to enable passengers to travel without additional assistance being required.

Secondly, I agree that making disability awareness training available to train crew, bus, taxi and private hire vehicle drivers is a key requirement if inclusive and accessible public transport services is going to become a reality. This is an issue that has been considered previously by the Bus Policy Advisory Group, in respect of bus services in Wales, and we are considering how best this training can be delivered either as part of the Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (DCPC) regime, or as part of the Voluntary Welsh Bus Quality Standards. The UK Government's Disabled Passengers Transport Advisory Committee is also undertaking research into the quality and availability of disability awareness training in Great Britain. The findings from this research will inform how best we can improve disability awareness training available to operators across all modes of public transport in Wales.

Yours ever,



Ken Skates AC/AM

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

Agenda Item 2.5

P-05-711 Ensure Disabled People's Housing Adaption Needs Are Adequately Met.

This petition was submitted by the Whizz-Kidz Cardiff Ambassador Club, having collected 30 online signatures and 95 paper signatures = 125 signatures.

Text of the Petition

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to commit to ensuring that disabled people in Wales do not have to wait for more than three years to receive the essential housing adaptations/houses they need and to work with local authorities to ensure staff dealing with adapted housing cases are adequately trained and accountable to ensure individual needs are met.

Additional information

Some of the Young Ambassadors at the Whizz-Kidz Cardiff club have had long struggles to get their housing needs met. There is a lot of inconsistency in dealing with cases and one young person in the group has not been able to live with their parents for over 7 years while they wait for a suitable house. We believe this is unacceptable and with more consistency and accountability when dealing with cases and better staff training the situation can be improved.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- N/A

Home adaptations

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 11 Hydref 2016
Petitions Committee | 11 October 2016

Research Briefing:

Petition number: P-05-711

Petition title: Ensure disabled people's housing adaption needs are adequately met

Text of petition: We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to commit to ensuring that disabled people in Wales do not have to wait for more than three years to receive the essential housing adaptations/houses they need and to work with local authorities to ensure staff dealing with adapted housing cases are adequately trained and accountable to ensure individual needs are met.

Background

Issues surrounding home adaptations, such as funding, awareness of the help that is available and delays in carrying out work, have been high on the political agenda for some time in Wales.

The best known funding stream for adaptations is the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG). The DFG is funded by local authorities and can be provided across different tenures – though in practice it is generally used to help owner occupiers and private tenants. The DFG is a statutory grant, and is subject to a means test (except where the adaptation is for a child). The DFG system has been criticised for being overly bureaucratic, with particular criticism focused on the means test and delays in the system – such as the initial assessment. While a local authority **must** tell the applicant whether they are eligible for a DFG within 6 months of an application, the whole process can take significantly longer than that in some cases.

Latest [statistics](#) show that the average number of calendar days taken to deliver a Disabled Facilities Grant has fallen from 349 days in 2009–10 to 241 days in 2015–16. Data on other adaptations programmes is more limited.

It is often quicker for adaptations to be delivered outside of the DFG framework on a non-statutory basis. For some time, local authorities have been encouraged to provide small scale adaptations in this way and the Welsh Government has provided specific funding for

this to happen in certain cases. Housing association tenants will normally be provided with adaptations funded either by their landlord's own resources, or with Welsh Government support. Again, this will be outside of the DFG system. Delivering grants outside of the DFG system means there is no requirement for a means test.

In March 2016, the Welsh Government [announced](#) a new framework for the delivery of home adaptations – *Enable: Support for Independent Living*, including some additional funding. This new system should be more straightforward for applicants to understand as it will be less relevant how the adaptation is being financed. The Cabinet Secretary notes in his letter to the Committee that he expects all local authorities and housing associations to be delivering adaptations under the revised arrangements from April 2017.

Some areas in Wales now have adapted housing registers, which allow the needs of prospective and existing tenants to be better matched to existing accommodation. It also reduces the likelihood of adaptations having to be removed from existing properties.

Welsh Government action

The Welsh Government commissioned a [review](#) of home adaptations in 2014, and this was published in January 2015. The review contained 18 recommendations addressed to both local authorities and the Welsh Government. Amongst the recommendations were that the Welsh Government should make a long term commitment to remove means testing from the adaptations process, accessible housing registers should be developed in all areas, staff should be suitably trained and that adaptation provision should be reorganised into a tiered system that is consistent across Wales – something that is now being taken forward and is noted in the Cabinet Secretary's letter.

National Assembly for Wales action

A number of Assembly Committees have looked at the issue of home adaptations in recent years. Most recently, the Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee published the findings of its [Inquiry into Home Adaptations](#) in July 2013. Recommendations included setting target times for the delivery of home adaptations, delivering more adaptations outside of the DFG system where possible, and an improved system of performance monitoring for all adaptation services. The Welsh Government commissioned its own review following that inquiry which came to similar conclusions.

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.

Carl Sargeant AC/AM
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gymunedau a Phlant
Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-711
Ein cyf/Our ref CS/05441/16

Mike Hedges AM
Chair - Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

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

127
September 2016

Dear Mike

Thank you for your letter dated 24 August requesting my views on a petition expected to be submitted by *Whizz-Kidz*. The petition calls for an introduction of maximum waiting times for delivery of adaptations. The petition also calls for adequate training for local authority staff who deal with the applications for adaptations.

Following the Review of Independent Living Adaptations published in early 2015, we recently began implementing our enhanced adaptations system, *Enable – Support for Independent Living*. All applicants will receive a better service irrespective of age, disability, tenure or location. Emphasis will be on the individual and their family. Which organisation delivers and pays for the adaptation is secondary to people getting the support they need, when they need it. The enhanced system is currently being rolled out and I expect all local authorities and registered social landlords to be delivering adaptations under the revised arrangements from next April.

It will be a simple, clear system with just three broad levels of assistance. Once the need has been identified, advice and information will be provided. The next step is a needs assessment, with an action plan developed and implemented as quickly as possible.

I am aware that there are many factors which can throw obstacles in the way of delivering adaptations within a reasonable timeframe. However, I have not heard of any adaptations taking up to three years to deliver from the first identification of need. Despite the fact that there may be extenuating circumstances out of anyone's control, I would be interested to find out more about any cases in Wales which are taking this long, as clearly this is unacceptable.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

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

Gohebiaeth.Carl.Sargeant@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Carl.Sargeant@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.

As a result of *Enable – Support for Independent Living* providers of adaptations will be expected to work more efficiently to deliver much needed adaptations more quickly. This is why I have made a commitment that local authorities, along with other providers, will receive sufficient training in order to help deliver the aims of our ambitious enhanced scheme.

Yours sincerely



Carl Sargeant AC/AM

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gymunedau a Phlant
Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children

Agenda Item 2.6

P-05-712 A Welsh Government Department for Europe Would Ensure a Clear, Strategic and Accountable Voice for Wales in Ongoing Negotiations.

This petition was submitted by Tegid Roberts, having collected 22 online.

Text of the Petition

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to create a Department for Europe as a matter of urgency, tasked with understanding and developing a strategy for Wales' continued engagement with the EU and our future relationship with the European partners.

Since the Brexit referendum the UK Government's response has been slow and ambiguous – A Cabinet office unit for Brexit was initially proposed then abandoned to be replaced with the new post of “Minister for Brexit”, a role seemingly bereft of clear objectives, and led by an MP who has spent the last 20 years on the back benches.

In Wales the Welsh Government response has been muted to say the least and it is time now that Wales itself took action so that negotiations between the UK and the rest of the EU work smoothly and that Wales – a net beneficiary of EU membership – has a decisive role in shaping our future relationship with the EU. As things currently stand, England and Scotland dominate all negotiations with the wider EU and without a concerted strategic plan of action from the Welsh government, this situation is likely to continue.

This Department should have a strong Cabinet Secretary with experience of working in Europe who can work across all departments. The Secretary should be supported by a cross-party committee to scrutinise all areas of current engagement and to help devise what our future relationship with the EU should look like. This committee should in turn be advised by a group of external expert advisors brought in from legal, economic, business, agricultural, cultural, and academic sectors.

A Welsh Government Department for Europe would ensure a clear, strategic and accountable voice for Wales in ongoing negotiations. We also need a strong voice in Europe to make sure that we continue to benefit and contribute to the areas we are already involved in and to develop relationships with the EU in sectors that we are not currently fully engaged with post Brexit.

Research Briefing:

Petition number: P-05-712

Petition title: A Welsh Government Department for Europe Would Ensure a Clear, Strategic and Accountable Voice for Wales in Ongoing Negotiations

Text of petition: We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to create a Department for Europe as a matter of urgency, tasked with understanding and developing a strategy for Wales' continued engagement with the EU and our future relationship with the European partners.

Since the Brexit referendum the UK Government's response has been slow and ambiguous – A Cabinet office unit for Brexit was initially proposed then abandoned to be replaced with the new post of “Minister for Brexit”, a role seemingly bereft of clear objectives, and led by an MP who has spent the last 20 years on the back benches.

In Wales the Welsh Government response has been muted to say the least and it is time now that Wales itself took action so that negotiations between the UK and the rest of the EU work smoothly and that Wales – a net beneficiary of EU membership – has a decisive role in shaping our future relationship with the EU. As things currently stand, England and Scotland dominate all negotiations with the wider EU and without a concerted strategic plan of action from the Welsh government, this situation is likely to continue.

This Department should have a strong Cabinet Secretary with experience of working in Europe who can work across all departments. The Secretary should be supported by a cross-party committee to scrutinise all areas of current engagement and to help devise what our future relationship with the EU should look like. This committee should in turn be advised by a group of external expert advisors brought in from legal, economic, business, agricultural, cultural, and academic sectors.

A Welsh Government Department for Europe would ensure a clear, strategic and accountable voice for Wales in ongoing negotiations. We also need a strong voice in Europe to make sure that we continue to benefit and contribute to the areas we are already involved

in and to develop relationships with the EU in sectors that we are not currently fully engaged with post Brexit.

Background

The Welsh Government's response to Brexit has been summarised in a letter from the First Minister to the Committee, and is referenced below. The UK and Scottish Government have both appointed ministers with specific responsibility for the implications of the UK's vote to leave the EU.

The UK Government has appointed David Davis MP as Secretary of State for Exiting the EU. David Davis MP is the Minister for the 'Brexit' department in Whitehall: [Department for Exiting the European Union](#).

The Scottish Government has [recently announced](#) the appointment of Michael Russell MSP as Minister for UK Negotiations on Scotland's Place in Europe.

The Northern Ireland Executive has not appointed a Minister with specific responsibility for this area.

Welsh Government action

The First Minister has written to the Committee responding to the petition. Whilst outlining the Welsh Government's overall response to the vote to leave the EU, he notes that:

I have established a Cabinet Sub-Committee specifically to focus on European Transition, which is supported by a European Transition Officials Group comprised of senior officials with a particularly strong direct involvement in this work. These are helping to shape the Welsh Government's initial response to the result of the EU referendum.

I have also established a new team to co-ordinate the Welsh Government's work and negotiating strategy, which will work closely with the Welsh Government Offices in London and Brussels.

Externally, we are setting up a European Advisory Group to advise the Welsh Government on challenges and potential opportunities for Wales arising from the UK's decision to leave to the European Union. The Group will first meet later this month.

National Assembly for Wales action

The [External Affairs and Additional Legislation Committee](#) is conducting work on examining the implications for Wales of the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union. This work involves ensuring that Welsh interests are safeguarded during the withdrawal process, in any new relationship with the European Union and in the intra-UK post-withdrawal arrangements for relevant policy, finance and legislation.

The Committee held one initial evidence session with the First Minister on [12 September 2016](#), and will hold a further evidence session with him on 7 November 2016.

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-05-712
Ein cyf/Our ref: FM -/05433/16

Mike Hedges AM
National Assembly for Wales
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

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

9 September 2016

Dear Mike

I am writing in response to your letter of 24 August regarding a petition received by the National Assembly for Wales Petitions Committee calling for a Welsh Government Department for Europe to ensure a clear, strategic and accountable voice for Wales in ongoing negotiations on the UK's departure from the European Union (EU). This is a welcome opportunity to highlight the significant progress which the Welsh Government has been making on this matter.

As First Minister it is my duty to ensure that Wales plays a full and active role in the negotiations to leave the EU making certain our interests are fully protected. There has been intense activity in Welsh Government on these issues since the referendum on 23 June. I, my Cabinet Secretaries and my officials have met, spoken and corresponded extensively with the Department for Exiting the European Union and other UK Government departments since the EU referendum.

These discussions span the full range of issues concerning the consequences for Wales of a UK exit from the EU, including both devolved matters and those issues which, while not devolved, have a major impact on life in Wales. I expect this extensive contact to develop and continue during the period ahead. I discussed the key Welsh Government priorities in July with the Prime Minister, who has ultimate responsibility for the UK's departure negotiations. Work is also in progress to establish new arrangements for communications.

Many aspects of the work of the Welsh Government will be impacted by the UK's departure from the EU and a wide range of officials across Government are engaged in this work. I have established a Cabinet Sub-Committee specifically to focus on European Transition, which is supported by a European Transition Officials Group comprised of senior officials with a particularly strong direct involvement in this work. These are helping to shape the Welsh Government's initial response to the result of the EU referendum.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400
YP.PrifWeinidog@llyw.cymru • ps.firstminister@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 have also established a new team to co-ordinate the Welsh Government's work and negotiating strategy, which will work closely with the Welsh Government Offices in London and Brussels.

Externally, we are setting up a European Advisory Group to advise the Welsh Government on challenges and potential opportunities for Wales arising from the UK's decision to leave to the European Union. The Group will first meet later this month.

I do not believe that establishing a new department to deal with this work would provide any advantage over the arrangements I have described. I am confident that the structures we have set up are well grounded and flexible enough to meet the enormous challenges presented by leaving the European Union. All Welsh Government Departments are strongly engaged with this and the measure we have put in place will help us, alongside our partners, to achieve the best possible outcome for Wales.

Yours sincerely

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

CARWYN JONES

Mike Hedges AM
Chairman
Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff CF99 1NA

29th September 2016

Ref: P-05-712

Dear Chairman

Thank you very much for your response relating to the petition: Welsh Government Department for Europe to ensure a clear, strategic and accountable voice for Wales in ongoing negotiations on the UK's departure from the European Union.

I see from the First Minister's response that many of the items I included in the petition document and the accompanying paper in the Institute of Welsh Affairs (dated the 29 of July) have been implemented. I am pleased to see, in particular, the cross party committee as well as the external advisory board. However I do have a few comments to make, that if considered and implemented, could greatly strengthen what are already positive steps:

1. I am concerned that given it is likely that the Brexit process will take a number of years, requiring full renegotiation of up to 60 trade deals (if we are to indeed leave the single market as well as the European Union - an important distinction between the two has unfortunately been lost on some in the Assembly of late), the First Minister will be distracted from the other important matters of government including the Wales Bill currently being read in the House of Lords and the potential for a new Act of Union Bill being discussed by the Constitution Reform Group led by Lord Salisbury. Both of these are important pieces of legislation for Wales and the Assembly's future. It would therefore be advisable to delegate many of the most important EU-related functions to a dedicated Department for Europe with its own minister.
2. With regards to the composition of the external advisory board; I am pleased to see that so many eminent European politicians and ex-diplomats of note as well as the VCs of the larger Universities in Wales will be consulted. I do however note that the business and economic communities are not adequately represented. Sixty percent of Welsh private sector employment and 99% of companies in Wales are SMEs - it would be good to see representation from the FSB as well as the IoD on the board. This is crucial because it is the economy that could be the most affected by Brexit. I would also like to see better representation of the Financial services community in Wales - they could be hit very hard if the UK loses its EU passporting through withdrawal from the single market.

I would like to finish by offering my thanks to the committee for discussing the petition, taking the contents seriously and in the spirit it was intended; to offer friendly concern and I hope constructive criticism.

With kind regards

Tegid Roberts


Agenda Item 2.7

P-05-713 The Wildlife Warriors

This petition was submitted by Lee Kabza, having collected 13 online signatures and 83 paper signatures.

Text of the Petition

Caerphilly Junior Forum works with children aged 7-11 years old in Caerphilly borough to give children a voice on issues which are important to children.

Each year the Junior Forum identifies a priority issue to address. The priority for 2015-2016 is to protect the natural habitat of wildlife.

Junior Forum members believe that every primary school in Wales should have an environment club called the "Wildlife Warriors" to help to protect the natural environment of local wildlife.

This club would:

- be different from schools eco committees as it would allow anyone to join at any age. Children would not need to be elected to the club.
- be active all year to help protect wildlife.
- be hands on in their community and do practical activities to help protect wildlife. These activities could include, cleaning rivers, building wildlife homes, planting flowers and trees.
- be flexible so different people can join at different times.

Briefing for the Petitions Committee

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 11 Hydref 2016
Petitions Committee | 11 October 2016

Research Briefing:

Petition number: [P5-05-713](#)

Petition title: The Wildlife Warriors

Text of petition:

Caerphilly Junior Forum works with children aged 7–11 years old in Caerphilly borough to give children a voice on issues which are important to children. Each year the Junior Forum identifies a priority issue to address. The priority for 2015–2016 is to protect the natural habitat of wildlife. Junior Forum members believe that every primary school in Wales should have an environment club called the "Wildlife Warriors" to help to protect the natural environment of local wildlife. This club would:

- be different from schools eco committees as it would allow anyone to join at any age. Children would not need to be elected to the club. – be active all year to help protect wildlife;
- be hands on in their community and do practical activities to help protect wildlife. These activities could include, cleaning rivers, building wildlife homes, planting flowers and trees;
- be flexible so different people can join at different times.

Introduction

[Caerphilly Junior Forum](#) is calling for every primary school in Wales to have an environment club called the 'Wildlife Warriors' to help to protect the natural environment of local wildlife. However, the Forum has not specified how it intends this should be achieved nor to whom its call for action is directed.

According to the Welsh Government's [Address list of schools](#), updated on 26 September 2016, there are currently **1,292 maintained primary schools in Wales**. The [School Governors' Guide to the Law](#) sets out the various responsibilities for education and schools. The **local authority** 'maintains' schools, which means that it has an interest in them being governed

and managed well and that, as a whole, schools in the authority area deliver effective and efficient provision. School **governing bodies** are responsible for setting the aims and objectives of the school, while the day to day running of the school is the responsibility of the **headteacher**.

Curriculum reform

The Welsh Government is currently working with schools on developing a new [Curriculum for Wales](#) following [Professor Graham Donaldson's independent review](#) of curriculum and assessment arrangements in Wales. The new curriculum is scheduled to be ready for schools to use from 2018 and fully rolled out in 2021. It will replace the national curriculum established in England and Wales in 1988.

Professor Donaldson recommended the curriculum be built around four purposes, one of which is that, upon leaving school, young people should be **'ethical, informed citizens'** who show their commitment to the **sustainability of the planet'**.

Annex A contains a brief overview of the current statutory requirements for the curriculum in maintained schools.

The Welsh Government's sustainability policies

The [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2016](#) established seven 'Well-being goals' which public bodies (including the Welsh Ministers and each local authority) are required to work towards as part of a duty to carry out sustainable development. One of these well-being goals is **'A Resilient Wales'**, which is defined in the Act as:

A nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with **healthy functioning ecosystems** that support social, economic and **ecological resilience** and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change). [my emphasis]

The Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs, Lesley Griffiths, refers to this Well-being Goal and the Welsh Government's [Nature Recovery Plan](#). One of these objectives of this plan centres on **greater participation and understanding of biodiversity** through, for example (as the Cabinet Secretary refers), 'education and training through **schools**, colleges and knowledge transfer initiatives'.

Existing Eco-Schools scheme

The Cabinet Secretary says she 'would see the Wildlife Warriors initiative as **closely complementing** our existing Eco-Schools Programme', which she adds is 'designed to be a pupil-led scheme that involves the whole school'.

[Eco-Schools](#) is an international programme run in Wales by Keep Wales Tidy and funded by the Welsh Government. It is run in both primary and secondary schools. 97% of schools in Wales are registered on the programme, including every school in Caerphilly County

Borough. **Keep Wales Tidy** announced in June 2015 that it had been awarded **£2.7 million** to ‘continue and build on its work in Wales over the next two and a half years’.

Keep Wales Tidy says the programme is designed to be run by pupils themselves, with an adult co-ordinator acting as mentor and facilitator. The wider community is also involved through participation, campaigns, active communication and action days. Keep Wales Tidy has **provided information to the Research Service** which states:

The programme allows young people to lead the way and the combination of learning and actions make it an ideal way for schools to embark on a meaningful path to improving their school and their local communities, and for pupils to influence the lives of people and wildlife around them.

The Eco-Schools programme covers eight topic areas across a range of environmental and sustainability matters: Litter; Waste; Energy; Water; Healthy living; Transport; Global citizenship; and School grounds. Keep Wales Tidy says ‘many of the topics have either direct or indirect **wildlife benefits**’ and that many schools also have an ‘environment club to help to protect the natural environment of local wildlife’.

Schools can apply for awards recognising their eco-school status at one of four levels: bronze, silver, gold and platinum.

Eco-Committees

Keep Wales Tidy has advised of the following in respect of schools’ Eco-Committees.

The cornerstone of the [Eco-school awarding] process involves the setting up of an Eco committee which needs to:

- Represent the whole school
- Feed back to the rest of the school
- Have an element of democracy

Members of the Eco Committee are either voted on by their peers or some committees are made up of volunteers. The process [is] flexible to the needs of the school and the wishes of the pupils. Eco-Committees should also have representation from different areas of the school e.g. teachers, site manager/caretaker, catering staff, governors and PTA to make it as inclusive as possible.

Annex A: Current curriculum statutory requirements

Part 7 of the *Education Act 2002*, as amended, sets out the statutory requirements of the school curriculum in Wales.

Section 99 of the Act states that the curriculum provided by a maintained school should be balanced and broadly based and satisfy the following two general requirements:

- a) Promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society.
- b) Prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

As part of the **basic curriculum**, maintained schools are required to deliver personal and social education, work-related education from key stage 3 (year 7/age 11 onwards), and sex education in secondary schools. The Welsh Government provides non-statutory guidance on content but schools have discretion in how they deliver these aspects of the curriculum. The other requirement of the basic curriculum is to deliver the national curriculum. The content of the **national curriculum** is prescribed and maintained schools must follow programmes of study for each subject.

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-05-713
Ein cyf/Our ref LG/06135/16

Mike Hedges AM
Chair - Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

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

18

September 2016

Dear Mike

Thank you for your letter of 24 August, regarding Petition P-05-713 The Wildlife Warriors.

You refer to a petition from Caerphilly Junior Forum, which works with children aged 7-17 years of age. The Forum believes every primary school in Wales should have an environment club, Wildlife Warriors, to help protect the natural environment and local wildlife.

I would offer my support to Caerphilly Junior Forum as they take forward this initiative as it aligns very nicely with the objectives contained in our Nature Recovery Plan. The plan builds on our ground-breaking new legislative framework. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act challenges us all to look at the long-term impacts of decisions and to work to meet our seven Well-being Goals, including increasing the resilience of our ecosystems, while the Environment (Wales) Act enshrines the principles of the UN's Convention on Biological Diversity in law by adopting an ecosystems approach to how we manage our natural resources in the future.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

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

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.

Back Page 71

The first objective of the Nature Recovery Plan is to engage and support participation and understanding, to embed biodiversity throughout decision making at all levels. It acknowledges the need for a major effort to improve understanding and raise awareness of the importance and value of our nature and its biodiversity across Wales. We need to make it easier for everyone to act by:

- describing simple actions which will meet our objectives
- education and training through schools, colleges and knowledge transfer initiatives.

I would see the Wildlife Warriors initiative as closely complementing our existing Eco Schools Programme.

Eco-Schools is a voluntary international environmental education programme run in some 70 countries. Welsh Government provides financial support to Keep Wales Tidy to operate the programme in Wales. Some 95% of schools in Wales are part of the programme, one of the highest participation rates in the world. Over 850 schools have achieved the prestigious international Green Flag award by carrying out practical projects on eight topics (energy, transport, water, biodiversity, global citizenship, litter, waste minimisation and healthy living). Pupils derive curriculum benefits from carrying out practical projects in their school and in the wider community. They also gain confidence, skills and knowledge in environmental issues, develop sustainable behaviours and influence their peers, parents and the wider community. The Eco-Schools programme is designed to be a pupil-led scheme that involves the whole school.

Finally, my officials have supported the development of a new initiative by the Action Plan for Pollinators Task Force, Bee Friendly/Caru Gwenyn, designed to encourage more organisations and communities to take action to help pollinators in Wales. This initiative may be of interest to the Caerphilly Junior Forum, and I will write to you and send a web link to the Bee Friendly/Caru Gwenyn documents when they are available in the public domain.

Regards
Lesley

Lesley Griffiths AC/AM

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

Agenda Item 3.1

P-04-539 Save Cardiff Coal Exchange

Petition wording:

This petition seeks a commitment from the Welsh Government to set up a public enquiry into the events surrounding the Coal Exchange and to support public opinion which seeks to protect and conserve the building.

The Coal Exchange is one of Cardiff's most important buildings and one of the finest buildings in Wales. It's where the world's first million pound deal was struck during the city's industrial heyday (equivalent to over £100m today). Yet far from cherishing this building, Cardiff council proposes to demolish the main body of the building, keeping only the facades.

If this happens, then the magnificent interior with its immense historical significance will be lost forever. This grade 2* listed building deserves better, and the views of the public need to be heard.

The Council have been claiming for the past year that it is on the point of collapse. No works have been done, yet there is no apparent evidence that the building is about to collapse. It is questioned if Cardiff Council were able to use section 78 powers under the building act to progress their plans, and this needs to be investigated openly.

So much of Cardiff Bay's social and built heritage has already been destroyed; it seems inconceivable that more can be cast aside with cynical abandon.

It's unclear why the council refuses to see the value of restoring the Coal Exchange to protect this iconic building for the use and enjoyment of future generations.

The issues are of the highest level of public interest, and it is considered essential that an open public consultation occurs to review matters.

Petition raised by: Jon Avent

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 11 March 2014

Number of signatures: 389 signatures. An associated petition hosted on another website collected 2680 signatures.

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-04-539
Ein cyf/Our ref KS/06083/16

Mike Hedges AM

Chair - Petitions Committee

SeneddPetitions@assembly.wales

28 August 2016

Dear Mike,

Thank you for your letter of 3 August regarding Cardiff Coal Exchange Petition No P-04-539.

I understand that Cardiff Council is engaged with a Developer over the restoration and reuse of the building. However, the Welsh Government is not involved in this process.

I note your concerns regarding the events surrounding the Coal Exchange, but as previously communicated to the Petitions Committee, this is a matter for the Council to respond on and it would be inappropriate for me to comment further.

*Yours ever,
Ken*

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

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400
Gohebiaeth.Ken.Skates@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Ken.Skates@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.

**SWYDDFA'R ARWEINYDD
OFFICE OF THE LEADER**

Fy Nghyf / My Ref: CM35461

Eich Cyf / Your Ref:

Dyddiad / Date: 22nd September 2016

Mike Hedges AM
National Assembly Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Phil Bale
Arweinydd Cyngor Dinas Caerdydd
Leader of the City of Cardiff Council

Neuadd y Sir
Caerdydd, CF10 4UW
Ffon:(029)2087 2500
E: Arweinydd@caerdydd.gov.uk

County Hall
Cardiff, CF10 4UW
Tel: (029)2087 2500
E: leader@cardiff.gov.uk

www.caerdydd.gov.uk
www.cardiff.gov.uk



Annwyl / Dear Mike

Petitions Committee - Save Cardiff Coal Exchange

Thank you for your letter requesting an update on progress to safeguard the future of the Coal Exchange.

I would be very pleased if you would advise the committee that in the relatively short time since they considered the matter in July, that there has been considerable and very tangible progress in respect of saving the building.

Cardiff's Planning Committee Granted Planning Permission for the Change of Use of the Building to a hotel and nominated ancillary uses on 15th July 2016. The planning application established the use of the building in land use terms and provided comfort to funders/investors.

Subsequent to this a number of Listed Building Consent Applications have been submitted to the Local Planning Authority to progress the works necessary to fully survey the building, and to gain a better understanding of its condition, and to progress a conservation plan to inform future repairs, refurbishment and alterations as detailed below:

- Application 16/01879/MJR discharged conditions 20 and 21 of Planning Permission 16/01024/MJR and initiated a room by room and elevation referencing of the building and provided a point in time photographic record.
- Listed Building Consent Application 16/01727/MJR proposes the demolition of the stairs and access ramp and the removal of the balustrade and surfacing material associated with the 1970s reinforced concrete car park to the south (front) elevation of Coal Exchange to allow for the building to sit in an enhanced landscape setting. This application is currently with Cadw.

- Listed Building Consent Application 16/1764/MJR seeks Listed Building Consent for the strip out of modern fabric from the building to allow access to the historic structure of the building to assess its condition. Soft stripping of the building has revealed significant wet rot and dry rot and fungal decay but there are still further affected areas which are currently masked by intervening fabric. This application is also currently with Welsh Government (Cadw).
- Listed Building Consent Application 16/01935/MJR seeks Listed Building Consent for the fit out of three rooms within the building as show pieces of future intentions for the building. The application will allow a better understanding of the practicalities of providing hotel guest rooms within the existing building and working with historic fabric. The application is currently with Welsh Government (Cadw).
- Listed Building Consent Application 16/02026/MJR is one of a number which will seek Listed Building Consent for topic based repair works and covers the management of stonework repairs to the building and currently with the local planning authority for consideration, and will be referred to Cadw upon expiry of the statutory consultation period.
- Listed Building Consent Application 16/02037/MJR seeks Listed Building Consent for the management of window repairs to the building and similarly is currently with the local planning authority for consideration, and will be referred to Cadw upon expiry of the statutory consultation period.

Details of all of the above applications are available on the Council's website, have been advertised on site and in the Local Press , and made available for public comment.

Outside of regulatory processes, the Council's Planning Conservation Officer has been in regular contact with Signature Living and their contractors to oversee soft stripping works and to advise on the removal of decayed fabric; repair works; and more generally to provide advice on conservation matters. Signature Living also advise that their conservation consultants are near completion of the conservation plan for the building which will hopefully be forthcoming in the next few weeks. Given the short space of time that Signature Living have had control of the building and their opportunity to investigate its condition, I find this quite remarkable and would applaud their commitment to realising such a plan. To date dialogue between Council officers and Signature Living suggests that the renovation/conversion of the building interior will likely be undertaken in 2 phases, with an application to undertake the first phase of works concentrating on the restoration of the main hall and ante rooms and the fire damaged SE wing to be submitted very shortly; the second phase, which will relate to the northern areas of the building will follow on from this, thereby prioritising the restoration of the best architectural and historic elements of the building in terms of protection and restoration and re-establishing the structural integrity of the building as first priorities. Moreover, Signature Living's plan is to make their commercial scheme work within the existing frame of the building, and as far as is possibly this will also include the retention of the existing internal frame.

I therefore remain convinced that the use of the building as a hotel is the most appropriate use to secure its future, and that Signature Living have both the best interests of the building at heart; and the greatest potential to deliver what they have proposed.

I trust this is sufficient to reassure your Committee that the Council's activities in managing any danger to the public presented by the building, and in encouraging proposals for its development and restoration have been completely appropriate and have provided the best possible outcome for the building in the given circumstances.

The Local Authority will continue to manage the development in accordance with due regulatory process.

Yn gywir,
Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Phil Bale', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**CYNGHORYDD / COUNCILLOR PHIL BALE
ARWEINYDD, CYNGOR DINAS CAERDYDD
LEADER, THE CITY OF CARDIFF COUNCIL**

Agenda Item 3.2

P-04-457 The Charitable Chaplaincy Campaign

Petition wording:

We call upon the National Assembly to urge the Welsh Government to cease the use of National Health Service budget for religious care and to work with the leaders of organised religion to establish a charitable trust to fund religious care in the hospitals of Wales.

Supporting Information:

The charitable chaplaincy campaign comprises an informal network of citizens who are concerned that every million pounds of public money allocated to the NHS in Wales should be used to promote public health and to treat those who need medical attention.

Our campaign has no funds and needs none. It is sponsored by no other organisation within or without Wales. Modern internet based services allow us to communicate with each other and with our democratically elected representatives.

All our supporters have seen and concur with two documents which are provided in support of this petition, Principles which sets out our motivation and Proposal which states our case with supporting evidence and rational argument.

We provide a third document Employment which provides evidence of how the monies drawn from the NHS Budget for hospital chaplaincy services are currently spent.

Petition raised by: The Charitable Chaplaincy Campaign

Date petition first considered by Committee: 19 February 2013

Agenda Item 3.3

P-04-474 Support for NHS chaplaincy services

Petition wording:

We recognise the positive contribution of hospital chaplaincy services in delivering spiritual care within the Welsh NHS and recognise the tremendous work that the chaplaincy service in the NHS is providing.

This service plays an important role in the spiritual wellbeing of both patients and NHS staff, not only for those with a religious affiliation but also for others with no association with a religious group. We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to continue with its commitment to funding hospital chaplaincy services and to extend the benefits of chaplaincy services to other care settings, including primary and social care settings.

Petition raised by: Jim Stewart

Date petition first considered by Committee: 16 April 2013

Number of signatures: 1077

Vaughan Gething AM
Cabinet Secretary for Health, Well-being and Sport
Welsh Government
Tŷ Hywel
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

24 August 2016

Dear Cabinet Secretary

NHS Chaplaincy – Consideration of the following Petitions:

P-04-457 The Charitable Chaplaincy Campaign
P-04-474 Support for NHS Chaplaincy Services

The above petitions about the provision of Chaplaincy services in the National Health Service were submitted in the previous Assembly and considered by the 4th Assembly's Petitions Committee.

Background

The full text of both petitions is attached as an annexe to this letter. However, the essential points made by the respective petitions are:

- that Chaplaincy services should be funded through charitable fundraising rather than public expenditure (*Charitable Chaplaincy Campaign*);
- that Chaplaincy services should continue to be funded in, essentially, the same way as now (*Support for NHS Chaplaincy Services*).

The Charitable Chaplaincy campaign's petition was first considered by the then Committee in February 2013. The petition in support of NHS Chaplaincy services was submitted as a response to this and was first considered by the Committee in April 2013 when the Committee agreed that, as both petitions addressed the same issue (albeit from very different perspectives), it would group them together for consideration.

The Committee subsequently took oral evidence from both sets of petitioners. Following this my predecessor as Chair of the Committee wrote to Mark Drakeford, the then Minister for Health and Social Services, to highlight the Charitable Chaplaincy Campaign's concerns about definitions of spiritual and



religious care and to ask whether the Welsh Government required LHBs to provide chaplaincy services.

The Committee also wrote to Local Health Boards asking whether any data in relation to use of chaplaincy services is recorded and how funding is allocated for these services across the range of sites that an LHB is responsible for and how they ensured equity of service provision.

The Committee received a range of responses from LHBs, which were published on our website and can be found at the following hyperlink.

<http://www.senedd.assembly.wales/ieIssueDetails.aspx?Id=6288&Opt=3>

The Minister replied on 26 July 2013 (your ref MD/01729/13) and his reply was considered at the same meeting. The Committee also received a detailed response from the Charitable Chaplaincy Campaign petitioners and this can also be found at the above link.

In the light of the responses received, the Committee agreed to write again to Mark Drakeford to highlight some of the issues that arose during consideration of the petitions.

Unfortunately, pressure of other competing work led to this action being delayed and at the end of the previous Assembly the Committee had not written to the then Minister.

However, the advent of the new Assembly and Committee, together with your appointment as the new Cabinet Secretary for Health, Well-being and Sport, provides an opportunity to consider again some of the key points raised by the competing petitions.

I would, therefore, be grateful if you, as the new Minister responsible, could consider the points raised by both petitions and whether, in the time since your predecessor wrote to mine, there are any material changes that might lead you to reassess the arrangements for chaplaincy services in the NHS in Wales.

In doing so I would be grateful if you could address the following questions in particular.

Issues for Consideration

The Charitable Chaplaincy Campaign petitioners claim that between 2007-08, when they first started collecting information, and 2013-14 over £9million has been spent on religious care in hospitals in Wales. If these figures are accurate, this suggests of annual expenditure of around £1.3 million across the NHS in Wales. Are you happy that this level of funding is sustainable given current budget restraints?

There seems to be some confusion as to whether chaplaincy services are required to be provided by the NHS in Wales. Is there any requirement on Local Health

Boards to fund these services and if so what arrangements are in place to monitor their effectiveness and ensure equitable provision across Wales?

Conversely, do you believe there is a case for greater spending on these services or that consideration should be given to extending them to other care settings, such as primary and social care settings, as the Support for Chaplaincy Services petitioners have suggested?

The Charitable Chaplaincy petitioners do not seek the end of chaplaincy services in the NHS but instead advocate these services being funded through charitable giving. Is that an option you would be prepared to consider and do you believe that doing so would put chaplaincy services at risk?

The petitioners in support of Chaplaincy Services have suggested that if this route was followed it would lead to inequalities in service provision, with areas with an abundance of faith communities faring differently to areas that do not. Do you agree with this position and would it in any event necessarily be a bad thing?

Conclusion

Given the amount of time that has passed since the previous Petitions Committee considered these petitions it is only right that the current Committee should revisit some of the issues of substance that they raise before deciding how to proceed. Your response will be of considerable assistance in helping the Committee consider its next steps.

I would be grateful if you could send your response by e-mail to the Committee Clerk at SeneddPetitions@assembly.wales.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mike', is written over a diagonal line that extends from the bottom left towards the top right.

Mike Hedges AM
Committee Chair

Annexe – Text of Petitions

P-04-457 The Charitable Chaplaincy Campaign

We call upon the National Assembly to urge the Welsh Government to cease the use of National Health Service budget for religious care and to work with the leaders of organised religion to establish a charitable trust to fund religious care in the hospitals of Wales.

Supporting Information:

The charitable chaplaincy campaign comprises an informal network of citizen who are concerned that every million pounds of public money allocated to the NHS in Wales should be used to promote public health and to treat those who need medical attention.

Our campaign has no funds and needs none. It is sponsored by no other organisation within or without Wales. Modern internet based services allow us to communicate with each other and with our democratically elected representatives.

All our supporters have seen and concur with two documents which are provided in support of this petition, Principles which sets out our motivation and Proposal which states our case with supporting evidence and rational argument.

We provide a third document Employment which provides evidence of how the monies drawn from the NHS Budget for hospital chaplaincy services are currently spent.

Petition raised by: The Charitable Chaplaincy Campaign

P-04-474 Support for NHS chaplaincy services

We recognise the positive contribution of hospital chaplaincy services in delivering spiritual care within the Welsh NHS and recognise the tremendous work that the chaplaincy service in the NHS is providing.

This service plays an important role in the spiritual wellbeing of both patients and NHS staff, not only for those with a religious affiliation but also for others with no association with a religious group. We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to continue with its commitment to funding hospital chaplaincy services and to extend the benefits of chaplaincy services to other care settings, including primary and social care settings.

Petition raised by: Jim Stewart

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-04-457/P-04-474
Ein cyf/Our ref VG/06092/16

Mike Hedges AM
Chair - Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

19 September 2016

Dear Mike,

Thank you for your letter of 24 August on behalf of the Petitions Committee regarding funding spiritual care in NHS Wales.

The NHS Spiritual Care Standards were introduced by the Welsh Government in May 2010 under section 47 of the Health and Social Care Community Health and Standards Act 2003. The Standards committed NHS organisations to provide the appropriate funding for spiritual care services to patients, their families, carers and staff.

The Standards were introduced to facilitate the audit of spiritual care services, to ensure equality across services and to develop an integrated approach to the delivery of religious and spiritual care.

Progress on the implementation of the Standards has been good with many of the criteria in each Standard having already been met across all NHS organisations in Wales.

From May 2013, Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW) has been responsible for ensuring NHS organisations are compliant with the Spiritual Care Standards as they are linked to the *Doing Well, Doing Better – Standards for Health Services in Wales*. HIW undertake testing and validation of the self assessment against the Standards for Healthcare as part of its public assurance role.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400
Gohebiaeth.Vaughan.Gething@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Vaughan.Gething@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.

In April 2015, the revised Healthcare Standards for NHS Wales incorporated specific reference to spiritual care, standard 4.1 and standard 6.2. Health boards and trusts must comply with the standards as set out and determine for themselves how they will offer such services locally. There is no protected budget line for chaplaincy or spiritual care as provision should come out of the basic allocation to services. Therefore, the health boards and trusts would be using their discretionary revenue allocation to fund the service in their area.

The Welsh Government would not support moving charitable funds for a service that should be part of the standard provision for care as articulated by the Healthcare Standards.

I hope this clarifies the current situation.

Yours sincerely,

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

Vaughan Gething AC/AM

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

**P-04-457 The Charitable Chaplaincy Campaign – Correspondence from the
Petitioner, 04.10.16**

Comment on the Cabinet Secretary's reply Ref: VG/06092/16

The Cabinet Secretary argues that as part of the Health Care Standards some Standards for Spiritual Care were enacted in 2010. Consequently UHBs are required to provide such services.

This does not present a problem since our Proposal does not challenge the provision of such services by the NHS Wales but suggests a way in which they may be facilitated without cost to the NHS Wales budget.

However it may be useful to examine the origin of these standards for spiritual care and this is done in an appendix below.

The Cabinet Secretary ends his response with the sentence:-

The Welsh Government would not support moving charitable funds for a service that should be part of the standard provision for care as articulated by the Healthcare Standards.

It is not clear what is meant by "moving charitable funds". The Charitable Chaplaincy Campaign proposes the establishment of a new Charitable Trust which will raise new funds to support the delivery of chaplaincy care as currently provided. The UHBs would **facilitate** the provision of chaplaincy care exactly as now provided, with exactly the same staff employed under exactly the same terms and conditions as at present. It would receive from the putative Charitable Trust re-imbursment for the cost of this service. We are sure that many research posts and even clinical posts in the NHS Wales are currently funded by charities in this way.

The Cabinet Secretary has not addressed our Proposal nor given reasons why charitable funding is impossible or unthinkable in the case of the Hospital Chaplaincy Service.

We base this Proposal upon the precedent that a service in Wales that is life saving and which can also reduce consequent disability from trauma, stroke and myocardial infarction [The Welsh Air Ambulance Service] is reliant on a Charitable Trust to fund its work. We have been able to find no peer-reviewed references that

indicate hospital chaplaincy has clinical efficacy. In a time of strict budgetary discipline this situation is clearly hard to defend.

A number of supporters of our Petition [P-04-457] strongly believe that the hospital chaplaincy service in Wales fails to meet the requirements of Article 9 of the ECHR, which requires equal provision of services for religious and non-religious citizens. Given the social trend towards no religious belief indicated by the 2001 and 2011 census returns for Wales and more recently by the annual British Social Attitudes Survey, correction of this inequitable position in the present service is likely to increase the cost of hospital chaplaincy. This matter is discussed in detail in an appendix below.

Alan Rogers
for the Charitable Chaplaincy Campaign

4th October 2016

Note on the Standards for Spiritual Care.

These were written in 2009 by the College of Health Care Chaplains. They drew greatly upon the similar standards written by the Scottish sister organisation the Scottish Association of Chaplains in Healthcare.

The then Minister for Health and Social Care Edwina Hart signed off these documents in 2010.

The origin of the documents is revealed by the following list of participants.

In the *Standards for Spiritual Care Guidance* document (2010) the

Acknowledgements section is as follows:-

Rosemary Kennedy, Chief Nursing Officer, (WG appointee)

Rev. Peter Sedgewick

Rev. Alan Tyler

Rev. Chris Lewinson

Rev. Peter Gilbert

Rev. Cliff Chonka

Rev. Wynne Roberts

Rev. Edward Lewis

Rev. Robert Lloyd-Richards

Rev. Lance Clark

Imam Farid Khan

Carol English UNITE (The College of Health Care Chaplains is a branch of UNITE)

Steve Sloan UNITE

Apart from the CNO and the UNITE officials, all participants were members of CHCC.

A letter was sent to the RCN (Wales) for comment which received a brief reply.

No representatives of the public appear to have been included. There was no public consultation about the need for or the content of the hospital chaplaincy service.

In short it would seem that the job description for hospital chaplains was written by the hospital chaplains (all clerics, and incidentally all men) and their union officials. It was then signed off by the Minister.

The list of participants above demonstrates that term “Spiritual” is a smoke screen. This document is about Religious Care. I believe that the title should be ***Standards for Religious Care.***

The present Hospital Chaplaincy Service is not a universal spiritual care service.

Necessary provision

Whilst the Charitable Chaplaincy Campaign does not challenge chaplaincy services as they currently exist – just the funding – we do not accept the unwritten assumption that chaplaincy services are required in order to achieve the Standards for Spiritual Care. The minister has already said that there is no ring-fenced budget for chaplaincy. There is in fact no requirement for chaplaincy services. Spiritual care can be delivered by each member of a compassionate, suitably trained workforce. In fact outsourcing of spiritual care to religious chaplains, as happens now, without acknowledging the role that all healthcare professionals play in delivering holistic care including attention to patients' spiritual needs, serves to detract from the holistic care that could be provided to all patients. In particular, patients without religious affiliation stand to lose out from spiritual care if it is assumed only to be available via a chaplain and particularly a chaplain who currently can only be appointed if they are supported by a religious body.

So the chaplaincy service can co-exist with good spiritual care and might even complement it providing additional support for those patients with explicitly religious needs but neither needs to be funded by the NHS nor does it provide spiritual care for all patients – some of whom will not wish to share their spiritual concerns with a member of the religious clergy. These people risk being disenfranchised and discriminated against if spiritual care is considered only in the limited role of the current NHS Wales chaplaincy service.

Equal Provision of Services

According to official social surveys, rather more than half the population of Wales now has no religious beliefs or affiliations, and a significant minority rejects religion entirely, but the health board's own data show that spiritual care in NHS Wales is provided exclusively by ministers of religion. That situation appears clearly to be incompatible with Article 9 of the ECHR, which requires equal provision of services for religious and non-religious citizens. That being the case, the spiritual care policy as currently operated is *ipso facto* unlawful under Section 94(6)(c) of the Government of Wales Act 2006.

The incompatibility of religiously provided spiritual care services with the ECHR has now been recognised by NHS England, which, following a thorough review of the

matter, has modified its practice so as to provide non-religious care for non-religious patients. The existence of the 2006 Act makes the anomaly of the existing situation in Wales even more apparent. If the spiritual care service were provided voluntarily by charitable funding, and it were open to secular organisations to supply charitable spiritual care services on an equal basis, we submit that the spiritual care service would not fall foul of the ECHR and the 2006 Act, as it now clearly does.

Agenda Item 3.4

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

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
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

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

Correspondence.Rebecca.Evans@gov.wales
Gohebiaeth.Rebecca.Evans@llyw.cymru

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 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

**P-05-693 Give Every Child in Wales the Meningitis B Vaccine for Free –
Correspondence to the Petitioner to the Committee, 04.10.16**

Thank you

I would like to draw attention to the government website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/national-childhood-immunisation-programme-boosted-by-menb-vaccine>

To the section: entially prevent up to 4,000 cases of meningococcal disease in children younger than 5 years in the UK.

The risk to 5 years and under is still significantly higher and it will the peek again to children of comprehensive age.

I believe we should be vaccinating all children in Wales, however I have seen with first hand parents with two children under 5 years old and they have one child immunized and one child who is not covered! How can this be right?? These people can't afford to the over inflated price of the vaccine privately therefor are left with a guilt and a worry in this situation.

Known the risk I would call for all children to be vaccinated at a minimum 5 years and under.

Thank you

Agenda Item 3.5

P-04-519 Abolition of Park Homes Sales Commission

Petition wording:

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

Petition raised by: Caerwnon Park Residents Association

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 10 December 2013

**P-04-519 Abolition of Park Homes Sales Commission - Correspondence
from the Petitioner to the Clerking team, 04.10.16**

Dear Kathryn,

thank you for your e.mail regarding our petition to abolish the 10% commission charge on the private sale of park homes.

This issue has been ongoing for a long time now and with the changes in Ministers whose responsibility it has been to investigate the issue, to say it has been frustrating is a gross understatement. We are aware that the investigation into the "economics of the Park Home Industry" by PACEC has concluded and the Minister should be giving a statement to the Assembly in the very near future. I have spoken to PACEC who advised me that the investigation has concluded and that their report has been sent to The Senedd, I also believe that Kirsty Williams AM has raised the issue with the Minister. Apart from that I don't think there is anything else I can add, apart to say, we were very grateful that your committee accepted our petition in the first place and hopefully this unfair practice will be put to bed in the very near future and ease the worry of thousands of OAP's living in Park Homes across Wales.

Many thanks and Kind regards

Sue Richardson for Bob Mountford

Caerwnon Park Res/Ass

Agenda Item 3.6

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



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
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

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

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.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

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

Gohebiaeth.Alun.Davies@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Alun.Davies@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.

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



October 3rd 2016

To Whom It May Concern

I would like to thank the Petitions Committee for considering the petition to amend the current Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) criteria for Young Adult Carers (YACs) in Wales. Also, I would like to thank Alun Davies for his letter following up the actions to date and by way of reply would just like to clarify the following points:

- There was a very productive meeting at the YAC group on July 12th when a representative from the Student Loans Company (SLC) and Simon Gough (a delegate from the Welsh Government) attended and discussed the petition with the YACs. As a consequence, the representative from the SLC agreed to add a question to the enrolment form in time for the academic year 2017/18 with the purpose of identifying any YACs.
- The question asking “do you help care for someone?” will identify any YACs, and by way of verifying the fact they are a YAC they will be asked to provide proof, such as a letter from a supporting agency, whether it a be a statutory or third sector organisation (e.g. Social Services, local Carers Service).
- The benefit of asking such a question is not only that it will help identify YACs to colleges which in turn would lead to additional support from Student Services, but also, if the young adult carer is not currently accessing support it will encourage them to do so, which in turn may help them engage with and remain in education.

www.carmarthenshirecarers.org.uk



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- As such, I feel the cost attached to amending the form to incorporate this question is negligible when compared to the potential benefit, especially given the fact that currently within Wales more than 20% of all YACs are not in education, training or employment (NEET).
- Whilst it is acknowledged that schools and colleges within Wales have their own attendance requirements, I believe that by formally recognising the responsibilities that YACs have due to their caring roles, it will help raise awareness amongst education providers and set a more realistic expectation upon YACs in terms of attendance.
- As a final point, with regard to authorised and non-authorised absences, I feel that once again it needs to be recognised that a YAC may not always be able to give advance notice or even proof after the event where they may be late or need to stay home to look after the person they care for where there are exceptional circumstances, such as unforeseen illness.

I hope my letter may help the ministers to further consider the petition favourably and I am more than happy to answer any further questions arising, either in person or on the telephone.

Yours sincerely

Melanie Rees

www.carmarthenshirecarers.org.uk



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Unit 3, The Palms
96 Queen Victoria Road
Llanelli
Carmarthenshire
SA15 2TH

Tel: 0300 0200 002 / 07535 449 686
melanie@carmarthenshirecarers.org.uk

YAC Development Worker

www.carmarthenshirecarers.org.uk



Charity Registration Number/Rhif Elusen Gof 1121666. Crossroads Care Sir Gâr Limited is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales number/mae yn gwmni cyfyngedig trwy warant Cofrestrwyd yng Nghymru a Lloegr rhif 6199277. Registered Office/Swyddfa Gofrestredig: 105 Lammas Street, Carmarthen SA31 3AP. Crossroads Care is a collective mark/Mae nod masnach Gofal Croesffyrdd yn nod cyfun. CSSIW registration certificate number/Rhif tystystgrif AGGCC W080001146

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