

Agenda – Petitions Committee

Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 1 – Senedd

Meeting date: 13 December 2016

Meeting time: 09.00

For further information contact:

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Agenda Item 2.1

P-05-721 Penegoes Speed Limit Petition

This petition was submitted by Isabel Bottoms, Peter Bottoms and Sarah Holgate, having collected 298 paper signatures.

Text of the Petition

We call on the National Assembly for Wales urge the Welsh Government to introduce a 30 miles per hour speed limit throughout the village of Penegoes (from the Penegoes village sign entering from Machynlleth, to the other side of the Maesperthi Caravan Park's Proposed new entrance) on the A489 road towards Newtown; and a 40 miles per hour speed limit from Machynlleth to Pengoes.

Assembly Constituency and Region:

Montgomeryshire

Mid and West Wales

Petition: P-05-721 Penegoes Speed Limit

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 13 Rhagfyr 2016
Petitions Committee | 13 December 2016

Research Briefing:

Petition number: P-05-721

Petition title: Penegoes Speed Limit Petition

Text of petition:

We call on the National Assembly for Wales urge the Welsh Government to introduce a 30 miles per hour speed limit throughout the village of Penegoes (from the Penegoes village sign entering from Machynlleth, to the other side of the Maesperthi Caravan Park's Proposed new entrance) on the A489 road towards Newtown; and a 40 miles per hour speed limit from Machynlleth to Pengoes.

Background

The Welsh Government is the highway authority for the Welsh trunk road and motorway network, including the A489. Maintenance and operation of the network are the responsibility of the [South Wales Trunk Road Agent](#) and [North and Mid Wales Trunk Road Agent](#).

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

The A489 is a strategic East-West route of national, regional and local importance; it runs from the A483 at Newtown to Machynlleth and is split into two distinct lengths by the A470. The southern section links the A483 at Newtown to the A470 at Caersws. The Northern section links the A470 at Cemmaes Road to the A487 at Machynlleth. Both sections are generally a single carriageway road of varying width and standard.

The Southern section of the A489 Trunk Road is 8.5 Kms (5 miles) in length and links the settlements of Newtown and Caersws. The Northern section of the A489 Trunk Road is 9 Kms (5.5 miles) in length and links the settlements of Cemmaes Road and Machynlleth.

A map of the whole Welsh trunk road network is available [here](#).

The [Road Safety Foundation](#), a UK road casualty reduction charity, is a partner of the [European Road Assessment Programme \(EuroRAP\)](#), an international not for profit association whose purpose is to promote safer roads. The Road Safety Foundation publishes annual

British EuroRAP results for Britain assessing the safety of British roads, **including a risk map** providing an assessment of safety. Past reports, including those for [2013](#), [2014](#) and [2015](#), are available on the Foundation's website.

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

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

In 2013 the risk rating for the Northern section (A470 at Cemmaes Road to the A487 at Machynlleth) of the A489 was assessed as **low to medium risk** (based on 2007–2011 data). In 2014 the risk **increased to medium risk** (2010–2012 data) and the most recent rating in 2015 assessed the road as **medium to high risk** (2011–2013 data).

Welsh Government action

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

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

The framework identifies “vulnerable groups” and considers “collision causation”, engineering “safer roads” as well as approach and governance arrangements.

The Welsh Government has reviewed the speed limits on the trunk road network, giving due consideration to the nature of the road, safety of the road and use of the road by the community, in line with the guidance on [Setting Local Speed Limits in Wales](#) (PDF 197kb). This guidance is used for setting all local speed limits on trunk and county roads (excluding motorways) whether single or dual carriageways in both urban and rural areas.

The [Trunk Road Safety Review](#) website details the results of the review of speed limits and safety on the trunk road network. The website says that trunk road safety is continually monitored to identify potential road safety improvements and the review of speed limits is an ongoing process.

Under this review, the A489 trunk road section referenced in the petition consists of three distinct sections, namely:

- The A489 Machynlleth Start 30mph to Clock Tower Junction;

- The A489 Penegoes End of 40mph to Machynlleth Start of 30mph; and
- The A489 Penegoes Start of 40mph to End of 40mph.

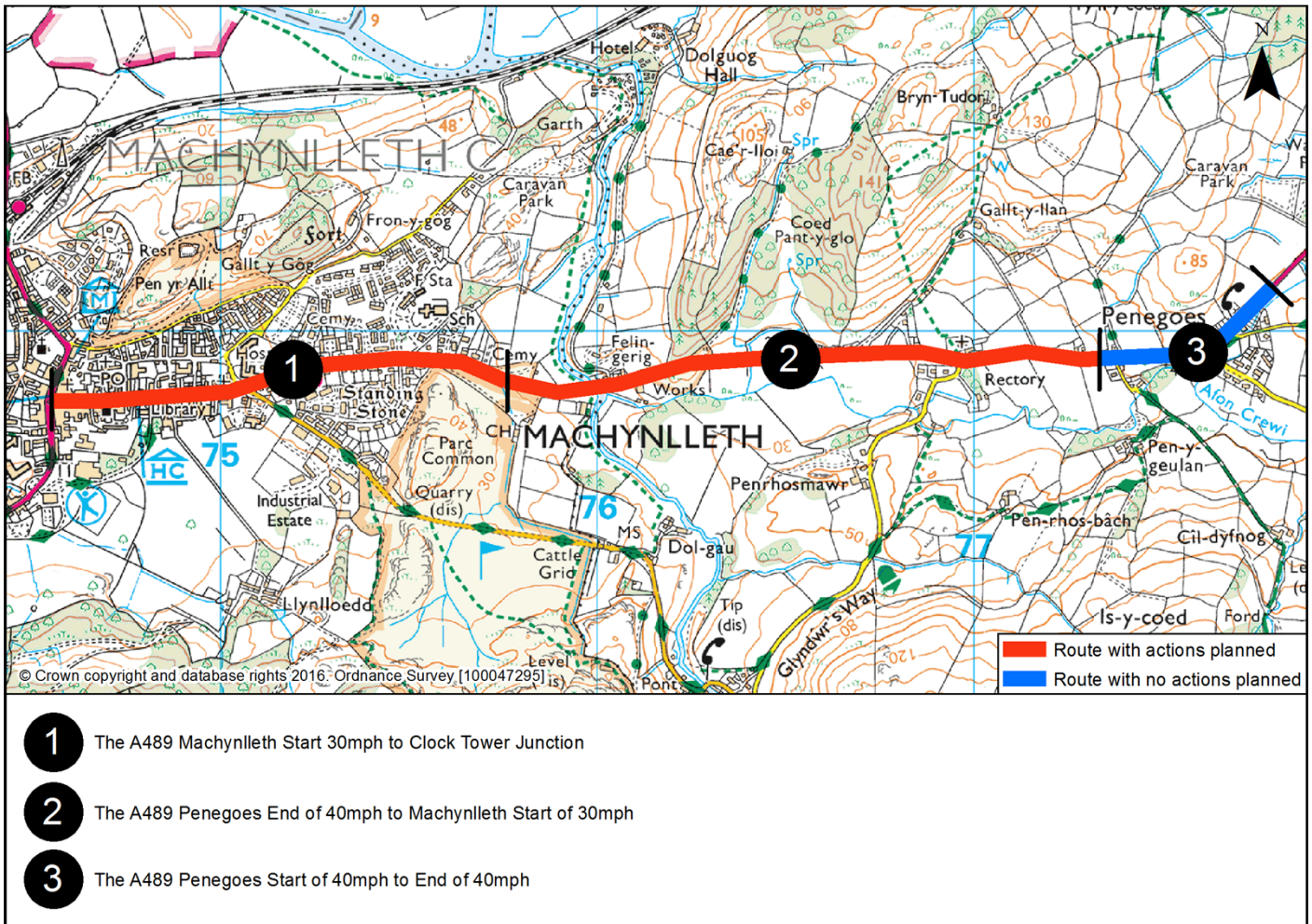


Figure 1 A map showing Trunk Road Safety Review sections between Machynlleth to Penegoes. Source: Produced by the Assembly Research Service using information from the Traffic Wales website [accessed 23 November 2016].

For the A489 Machynlleth Start 30mph to Clock Tower Junction, the review concluded that the existing speed limit of 30mph should be retained with the implementation of a part-time 20mph speed limit outside Machynlleth C.P. School as part of the Safe Routes to Trunk Road Schools rolling programme in 2015/16 (see below). For the A489 Penegoes End of 40mph to Machynlleth Start of 30mph section, the review concluded that the existing 60mph speed limit should be retained along with a detailed study to be undertaken as part of a prioritised programme of engineering work, beginning 2019/20 at the earliest. For the A489 Penegoes Start of 40mph to End of 40mph section, the review concluded that the existing 40mph speed limit should be retained.

The Welsh Government’s [National Transport Finance Plan](#) commits to “deliver the actions set out in the Road Safety Framework for Wales” through to “2020 and beyond”, and to deliver “a programme of road safety improvements outside schools on the trunk road”. In a [written update](#) to all Assembly Members on the Safe Routes to Trunk Road Schools programme

dated 1st October 2015, the then Minister for Economy, Science and Transport Edwina Hart confirmed the identification of 41 additional schools where part-time 20mph speed limits could be implemented as part of a three year rolling programme along with the provision of £4.5 million to support implementation. The supporting annex contained within the update detailed that Machynlleth C.P. School was a priority for the implementation of a part-time 20 mph speed limit in 2015/16.

The letter to the Chair from the Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure regarding this petition refers to the fact that the Trunk Road Safety Review concluded that the current speed limit on the A489 near Penegoes is appropriate and should be retained. The Cabinet Secretary says that the safety and reliability of the trunk road network is one of his key priorities and that the details of this petition will be taken into consideration as part of ongoing work to regularly review collision data and establish the need for road safety improvements.

National Assembly for Wales action

This issue has not yet been considered by the Assembly.

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

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



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-721
Ein cyf/Our ref KS/06957/16

Mike Hedges AM
Chair
Petitions Committee

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

5 November 2016

Dear Mike,

Thank you for your letter of 20 October regarding Penegoes Speed Limit Petition P-05-721.

Our Trunk Road Safety Review concluded that the current speed limit on the A489 near Penegoes is appropriate and should be retained. You can see the full results of the review online using the following link: <http://www.traffic-wales.com/Trunkroadsafetyreview.aspx>.

Speed limits on the trunk road network have been reviewed in line with the Setting Local Speed Limits in Wales guidance, which you can see on our website using the following link: <http://gov.wales/docs/det/publications/091105speedlimitguidelinesen.pdf>.

Ensuring the safety and reliability of the trunk road network is one of my key priorities and we regularly review collision data to establish the need for road safety improvements. I have passed the details of the petition to my officials, who will take it into consideration as part of this ongoing work.

Yours ever,
Ken

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

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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.

**P-05-721 Penegoes Speed Limit Petition - Correspondence from the
Petitioner to the Committee, 07.12.16**

I wanted to draw attention to the fact that a traffic monitoring scheme is now in place within the village signs for Penegoes but outside the 40 MPH so there will soon be actual figures of the speeds of motorists and what type of vehicle they are driving.

This has been put in place by Gwynedd County Council.

The figures will be forwarded to you as soon as available.

Regards,

Sarah Holgate.

Agenda Item 2.2

P-05-722 Protect Special Educational Needs.

This petition was submitted by Nicola Butterfield, having collected 553 signatures.

Text of the Petition

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to ensure that spending on the provision of special educational needs is ringfenced, recognising that this is an investment in the children of Wales, and that local authorities should be directed to ensure that adequate levels of funding are available so that those children who require such services are able to go on and live happy and fulfilled lives, while their families are not left to contend with the fear of competing with one another for placements.

Assembly Constituency and Region:

Aberavon

South Wales West

Research Briefing: Protect Special Educational Needs

Petitions Committee | 13 December 2016

Petition number: P-05-722

Petition title: **Protect Special Educational Needs**

Text of petition:

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to ensure that spending on the provision of special educational needs is ringfenced, recognising that this is an investment in the children of Wales, and that local authorities should be directed to ensure that adequate levels of funding are available so that those children who require such services are able to go on and live happy and fulfilled lives, while their families are not left to contend with the fear of competing with one another for placements.

1. Funding for local authorities from the Welsh Government

Local authorities in Wales use money they receive within the **Revenue Support Grant (RSG)** from the Welsh Government to fund education for pupils with SEN. The amount of RSG each local authority receives to provide services across all of their areas of responsibility is announced annually in the **Local Government Settlement**.

In 2016-17, the Welsh Government has given local authorities a total of **£4.102 billion** through the RSG to deliver **all of their services**. This is a 1.3% decrease (£54 million) from 2015-16, after adjusting for transfers into the settlement.

1.1 Principle of un-hypothecation

The RSG is **un-hypothecated**, which means that local authorities decide themselves how much money to spend on a particular service area such as education, and subsequently on SEN provision for example. For local government and its umbrella representative, the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA), this is a **cornerstone principle of local, accountable and democratic decision-making**. However, the RSG settlement does include an Indicator-Based Assessment (IBA) for each service area, which is a notional calculation of what each Council needs to spend to provide a standard level of service.¹ This is not a spending target and local authorities can decide how much they spend on SEN provision for example, as long as they meet any statutory requirements on them.

In 2016-17, the **notional IBA** for 'Special Education' is £215 million, which is similar to 2015-16. In addition, some funding that is intended for use on SEN provision will also have been included in the 'Nursery and Primary' and 'Secondary' teaching IBAs. Indeed, the total budgeted gross expenditure on SEN provision in 2016-17 is **£362 million**.²

Although the vast majority of local government resource funding is un-hypothecated, there remain some specific grants³ which the Welsh Government pays to local authorities for a specific purpose. These have reduced in number over recent years as part of an agreed approach between the Welsh Government and

¹ The notional IBAs for 2016-17 are listed in table 4d of the Local Government Settlement **Excel tables** available on the Welsh Government's website.

² Welsh Government, Statistical First Release: **Budgeted expenditure on Special Educational Needs (SEN) provision: 2016-17**, 30 June 2016, p1

³ Specific grants are listed in Table 9 of the Local Government Settlement **Excel tables** available on the Welsh Government's website.



WLGA of a **general move towards less hypothecation** and greater local decision-making over use of resources. There are currently **no specific grants relating to SEN**.

Further, more general, information on how schools in Wales are funded is available in the Research Service's publication, *A quick guide to school funding* (July 2016).

2. Arrangements between local authorities and schools

Local authorities fund SEN provision through the following means:

- The **delegated budgets** they provide to schools. This means delegated budgets to special schools where all expenditure is assumed to be on SEN and **notional allocations for SEN** within the delegated budgets for mainstream schools (notional because it is for each school to determine how much they actually spend on SEN). Delegated funding makes up **73%** of total budgeted SEN expenditure in 2016-17.
- Through funds they **retain centrally** within the Local Authority Education Budget or the Schools Budget. **27%** of SEN expenditure is retained centrally by local authorities in 2016-17. This would be because some services, for example specialist interventions, may be **more efficiently and effectively** provided or commissioned at a local authority rather than a school-level.

2.1 Setting of school budgets

Under the provisions of the *School Standards and Framework Act 1998*, the Welsh Government sets the legal framework within which local authorities allocate their education expenditure to schools. The framework is set out in the *School Funding (Wales) Regulations 2010*. The regulations require local authorities to allocate expenditure to three budgets, the Local Authority Budget, the Schools Budget and the Individual Schools Budget (ISB).

The 2010 regulations specify that the ISB must be allocated amongst schools maintained by the authority in the form of budget shares, using a locally determined funding formula. **70% of the funding must be distributed on the basis of pupil numbers**. In their formula, local authorities may weight pupil numbers according to a number of **factors including SEN**.

3. Statistics on funding

The two tables below provide information on SEN funding and may be relevant to the Committee's consideration of this petition.

- **Table 1** shows how much **in total was budgeted by local authorities for SEN provision** and the amount **budgeted per pupil** (calculated per total pupils on roll not just those with SEN). It also shows the **delegation rate**, ie how much of local authorities' SEN budgets was passed directly to schools.
- **Table 2 breaks this data down by local authority**, for the latest year, 2016-17.

Table 1: Gross budgeted expenditure on SEN provision by local authorities in Wales



	<u>£ Million Budgeted gross expenditure on SEN provision</u>	<u>£ Per pupil budgeted gross expenditure on SEN provision</u>	<u>% delegated to individual schools' budgets</u>
2016-17	361.737	800	73%
2015-16	356.306	789	72%
2014-15	357.099	792	70%
2013-14	(r) 359.217	796	69%
2012-13	346.862	769	67%
2011-12	(r) 347.100	770	60%
2010-11	341.755	754	55%

(Source and notes overleaf, below Table 2)

Table 2: Local authorities' gross budgeted expenditure on SEN provision, 2016-17

	<u>£ Million Budgeted gross expenditure on SEN provision</u>	<u>£ Per pupil budgeted gross expenditure on SEN provision</u>	<u>% delegated to individual schools' budgets</u>
Isle of Anglesey	9.059	975	64%
Gwynedd	13.663	830	76%
Conwy	12.436	804	84%
Denbighshire	11.748	773	91%
Flintshire	19.607	858	65%
Wrexham	16.580	881	76%
Powys	15.390	870	73%
Ceredigion	7.618	812	69%
Pembrokeshire	15.231	886	77%
Carmarthenshire	20.431	759	78%
Swansea	32.493	944	67%
Neath Port Talbot	15.696	796	72%
Bridgend	19.236	838	72%
Vale of Glamorgan	12.904	597	83%
Cardiff	46.416	902	83%
Rhondda Cynon Taf	24.233	629	65%
Merthyr Tydfil	7.648	896	74%
Caerphilly	18.407	674	54%
Blaenau Gwent	8.770	1,004	72%
Torfaen	8.758	610	78%
Monmouthshire	8.329	736	71%
Newport	17.083	711	68%
Wales	361.737	800	73%

Source: Welsh Government, Statistical First Releases: [Budgeted expenditure on SEN provision](#) (several editions)

Notes



- a) Tables 1-2: Includes notional allocations to schools for SEN provision as part of local authorities' formulae for distributing funds to schools. As it is for each school to determine how much of its delegated budget to spend on SEN, the actual expenditure within schools may vary from these notional allocations.
- b) Tables 1-2: The £ per pupil expenditure is based on the whole cohort of pupils on roll rather than only pupils with SEN.
- r) Table 1: These are the revised 2013-14 and 2011-12 budgeted gross expenditure figures that were published in the subsequent year's release. Updated £ per pupil and delegation rates were not published, hence some caution is advised in comparing these two fields with gross budgets for these years.

4. Legislative reform

In December 2016, the Welsh Government will introduce the **Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal Wales Bill** into the Assembly's legislative process. The anticipated Bill will replace the current Special Educational Needs (SEN) framework with a reformed system based on Additional Learning Needs (ALN). However, it is **not expected to propose hypothecating or ring-fencing funding** and will maintain the current arrangements for giving local authorities resources through the RSG to fund ALN provision.

The Research Service has recently published a briefing paper, *Additional Learning Needs (ALN) in Wales*, to inform preparations for, and scrutiny of, the Bill.

For some years now, the Welsh Government has recognised that the current system is 'no longer fit for purpose'.⁴ It believes that a 'model introduced more than 30 years ago' should therefore be replaced with a 'more modern approach to multi-agency working to the benefit of the child or young person, which will support them in the journey through education and their life choices'.⁵

As set out during its consultation on a *draft Bill in 2015*, the Welsh Government has **three overarching objectives** for the proposed new system:

- A **unified legislative framework** to support children and young people aged **0-25** with **ALN** in schools and further education;
- An **integrated, collaborative process** of assessment, planning and monitoring with **early, timely and effective** interventions;
- A **fair and transparent system** for providing information and advice, and for resolving concerns and appeals.

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.

⁴ Welsh Government, *Legislative proposals for additional learning needs*, Ministerial Foreword (Huw Lewis, Minister for Education and Skills), May 2014, p2

⁵ Welsh Government, *Forward in partnership for children and young people with additional needs: Proposals for reform of the legislative framework for special educational needs*, June 2012, p4





Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-722
Ein cyf/Our ref ARD/05416/16

Mike Hedges AM
Chair - Petitions Committee
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16 November 2016

Dear Mike,

Thank you for your letter of 25 October to the Cabinet Secretary for Education. I am responding as this matter falls within my portfolio.

Local authorities (LAs) and schools are responsible for providing a suitable education for all learners, including those with special educational needs (SEN).

Funding to LAs for SEN provision is not ring-fenced and it is for LAs to determine how to spend their funding in order to best meet their local needs. LAs are, however, expected to work with schools to ensure school funding arrangements are effective in supporting and raising the achievement of all learners, regardless of their need.

School funding is provided to LAs by the Welsh Government via the Revenue Support Grant (RSG). Once the RSG is distributed, it is the responsibility of individual authorities to set budgets for their schools and the local provision that they support. This approach to funding is a key part of the Welsh Government's policy that LAs are best placed to deliver services in line with the requirements and circumstances of their population, to which they are accountable.

Governing bodies should, with the head teacher, decide the school's general policy and approach to meeting learners' SEN for those with and without statements. They must set up appropriate staffing and funding arrangements and oversee the school's work.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

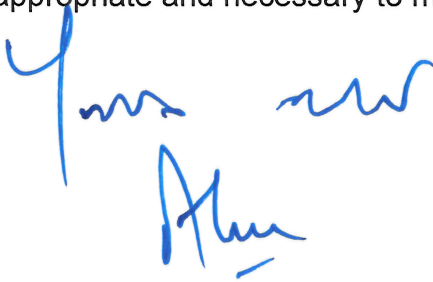
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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

The statistical release *Budgeted Expenditure on Special Educational Needs (SEN) Provision: 2016-17* <http://gov.wales/docs/statistics/2016/160630-budgeted-expenditure-special-educational-needs-provision-2016-17-en.pdf> analyses the budgeted expenditure data supplied by Welsh LAs in respect of SEN provision for 2016-17. Total expenditure on SEN provision is budgeted to be £362 million, an increase of £5.4 million or 1.5% compared with the previous year (table 1 and chart 2).

The Welsh Government is committed to creating an inclusive education system for all learners, regardless of their needs and background, to ensure that they are able to access the highest standard of education and reach their full potential. This is an overarching aim of our Additional Learning Needs Transformation Programme, a fundamental aspect of which is the forthcoming Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Bill, which I recently announced will be introduced into the National Assembly before the Christmas recess. The legislation will provide for a new legal framework for supporting children and young people up to the age 25 who have additional learning needs and require different forms of educational provision in order to meet those needs. This would include provision appropriate and necessary to meet the needs of children and young people.



Alun Davies AC/AM

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

P-05-722 Protect Special Educational Needs – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Chair, 06.12.16

Dear Chair,

Thank you for forwarding me correspondence from the Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language, and for inviting me to respond.

My first observation is that if my experience and the experiences of other parents with autistic children is commonplace, then the system as outlined by the minister does not work on the ground – and it most certainly doesn't work in Neath Port Talbot. Each year, we are all forced into the frankly inhumane process of competing against one another so that our children are given placements. I have heard many of them say again and again that it is harder to secure proper arrangements for their children than it is to care for them. This means that the system is not fit for purpose. At the end of the day, services are supposed to be for service users, not for the benefit of those who run them.

I also believe the system is open to abuse. Increasing funding across the board doesn't mean that ALL local authorities have spent more. I note that the minister does not elaborate on what each local authorities spend on autism services/SENs. If there was, say, a sharp rise in spending in Cardiff but a drop in Neath Port Talbot, then that would make the figures look good but at the end of the day it doesn't mean an end to the problems that parents like myself are facing.

While any increase in funding is welcome, is it enough to meet the need? This has to be the fundamental question for the Welsh Government as funding provider – is the money doing the job?

To that end, how does the Welsh Government test and measure whether its funding is meeting the outcome? It may be for local authorities to decide how to spend it, but it is the job of the Welsh Government, as funding provider, to ensure that money is properly spent. I see no evidence of that in this correspondence.

Lastly, the minister mentions the forthcoming Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Bill, but gives no reassurances that the concerns that have driven this petition will be addressed in this legislation. Consequently, it would not make sense for me to withdraw the petition on the basis of the scant information provided in the minister's correspondence.

Kindest Regards

Nicola Butterfield

Agenda Item 2.3

P-05-724 Rights to Primary Health Care in Welsh

This petition was submitted by Cymdeithas yr Iaith, having collected 766 paper signatures.

Text of the Petition

We call upon the Welsh Government to look again at the proposed Standards in the health field, to include primary health service providers such as surgeries and pharmacies, to ensure that people have full and robust rights in this all-important area.

Research Briefing for the Petitions Committee

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 13 Rhagfyr 2016
Petitions Committee | 13 December 2016

Petition number: P-05-724

Petition title: Rights to Primary Health Care in Welsh

Text of the petition: We call upon the Welsh Government to look again at the proposed Standards in the health field, to include primary health service providers such as surgeries and pharmacies, to ensure that people have full and robust rights in this all-important area.

Background

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 brought about a change in the legal framework around the use of the Welsh language in the provision of public services in Wales. The Welsh Government's consultation on the draft Regulations to specify Welsh Language Standards for the health sector closed on 14 October 2016. These standards will enable the Welsh Language Commissioner to place duties in relation to the Welsh language on Local Health Boards/Trusts in Wales. Until then, Health Boards/ Trusts will continue to operate Welsh Language schemes (a duty placed upon health sector organisations in the Welsh Language Act 1993).

Welsh Government action

Health and social care services in Wales have been offering services in the Welsh Language under their Welsh Language Schemes and the Welsh Government's plan 'More than just words'. To ensure Welsh speakers have more rights to be able to use the Welsh language in health services, the Welsh Government are introducing regulations to make sure this happens. Once regulations have been approved by the Assembly, the Welsh Language Commissioner is authorised to give compliance notices to organisations named in the regulations. These compliance notices explain which standards will be introduced and the level of provision and quality of services that organisations are expected to reach.



Ensuring services will be offered in Welsh will be a challenge for the sector, particularly due to the number and range of different health services in Wales. Organisations will need to work differently in future. The health services the standards will affect are: Local Health Boards/ Trusts, Community Health Councils, NHS Business Services Authority, and inspection bodies. The Welsh Language Commissioner will conduct a standards investigation to decide which standards should be applied to each different type of health service. Not all standards will apply to each organisation, but they are intended to improve Welsh language services across the sector, to make the active offer stronger (i.e. offering a service in Welsh, not just when someone asks), make it clear what health services are expected to offer the public, and place similar standards on similar types of health services.

The standards will not apply however in some cases. The exemptions include, for example, 999 calls, and private hospitals. Introducing Welsh Language standards for primary care, covering GP surgeries, dentists, pharmacies and opticians is complicated because many provide private services as well. The accompanying draft Regulations, [The Welsh Language Standards \(No. \[Health sector\]\) Regulations 2016](#) state:

The Regulations require a body to comply with the standards—

(a) whether it is carrying out the activity or providing the service; or

(b) whether it is carried out or it is provided on its behalf by a third party under arrangements made between them.

Primary care providers, for this purpose, would be regarded as such a third party. However, the draft Regulations go on to state:

Where the third party is a primary care provider, a private hospital in Wales or a hospital outside of Wales, then no standards apply.

Where the body is providing primary care services, only some standards will apply (see standards 83 to 97).

The responses to the Welsh Government's consultation on the standards are currently being reviewed.



Useful information

Welsh Language Commissioner's first statutory enquiry report, [My Language, My Health: The Welsh Language Commissioner's Inquiry into the Welsh Language in Primary Care](#) (June 2014)



Alun Davies AC/AM
Gweinidog y Gymraeg a Dysgu Gydol Oes
Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref ARD/05457/16

Mike Hedges AM
Chair - Petitions Committee

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

16 November 2016

Dear Mike,

Thank you for your letter dated 2 November, to the Cabinet Secretary for Health, Well-being and Sport regarding Petition P-05-724 Rights to Primary Health Care in Welsh. It has been passed to me to respond.

I am already aware of this petition as it was submitted as part of Cymdeithas yr Iaith's response to the consultation on draft Regulations to specify Welsh Language Standards for the health sector. Amongst other issues the consultation asked for views on the proposed new standards for primary care, to be placed on the health boards, in response to the Welsh Language Commissioner's conclusion that '*...primary care services provider must be subject to the Welsh language standards under the same statutory framework as the health organisations that were subject to this standards investigation...*'.

Now that the consultation has closed I will consider all the responses along with the petition from Cymdeithas yr Iaith before laying draft Regulations for the Assembly to consider. Mainstreaming Welsh language services into the health sector is challenging however I am committed to moving this process forward and securing more opportunities for Welsh speakers to engage with the health sector in Welsh.

Yours cord
Alun

Alun Davies AC/AM
Gweinidog y Gymraeg a Dysgu Gydol Oes
Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language

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

Agenda Item 2.4

P-05-725 Widen the A470 from Pontypridd to Coryton to 3 Lanes.

This petition was submitted by Geraint Williams, which collected 130 signatures.

Text of the Petition

We call for the Welsh Assembly to invest into one of the major artery roads into the capital by widening the existing duel carriageway into a 3 three lane road from Pontypridd to Coryton interchange.

The existing road suffers with high levels of congestion on weekday mornings and evenings which is causing misery for motorists travelling to/from the Valleys to the the city. It is believed this is a key limiting factor effecting the prosperity of the people and businesses of Cardiff, as well as the Rhondda, Caerphilly, Merthyr and Rhymney Valleys who rely on good road links with the M4 and the city.

From Pontypridd southbound the road is particularly congested due to several factors which include the build up of traffic queueing to join on to the M4 at Coryton and the large number of cars joining existing traffic from Merthyr and Aberdare at Pontypridd, Upper Boat, Nantgarw and Tongwynlise, all bringing traffic from the Rhondda and Caerphilly Valleys meaning the road struggles to cope.

From Coryton Northbound the road is slightly better, however the high volume of joining traffic from the M4 causes confusion and hesitation for road users at Coryton. The road then continues to be congested and slow until it reaches Pontypridd until lots of traffic have taken exits at various slip roads. When slip roads themselves are congested (such as at Nantgarw and Upperboat) the flow of traffic is exceptionally slow.

While no data is available at present it can be hypothesised that the financial cost benefit ratio of this investment in the regions' infrastructure is positive and we hope at the very least the government consider the proposal seriously.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney
- South Wales East

Petition: Widen the A470 Pontypridd to Coryton to 3 lanes

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 13 Rhagfyr 2016
Petitions Committee | 13 December 2016

Research Briefing:

Petition number: P-05-725

Petition title: Widen the A470 from Pontypridd to Coryton to 3 Lanes

Text of petition: We call for the Welsh Assembly to invest into one of the major artery roads into the capital by widening the existing dual carriageway into a 3 three lane road from Pontypridd to Coryton interchange.

The existing road suffers with high levels of congestion on weekday mornings and evenings which is causing misery for motorists travelling to/from the Valleys to the city. It is believed this is a key limiting factor effecting the prosperity of the people and businesses of Cardiff, as well as the Rhondda, Caerphilly, Merthyr and Rhymney Valleys who rely on good road links with the M4 and the city.

From Pontypridd southbound the road is particularly congested due to several factors which include the build-up of traffic queueing to join on to the M4 at Coryton and the large number of cars joining existing traffic from Merthyr and Aberdare at Pontypridd, Upper Boat, Nantgarw and Tongwynlais, all bringing traffic from the Rhondda and Caerphilly Valleys meaning the road struggles to cope.

From Coryton Northbound the road is slightly better, however the high volume of joining traffic from the M4 causes confusion and hesitation for road users at Coryton. The road then continues to be congested and slow until it reaches Pontypridd until lots of traffic have taken exits at various slip roads. When slip roads themselves are congested (such as at Nantgarw and Upper Boat) the flow of traffic is exceptionally slow.

While no data is available at present it can be hypothesised that the financial cost benefit ratio of this investment in the regions' infrastructure is positive and we hope at the very least the government consider the proposal seriously.

Background

The Welsh Government is the highway authority for the Welsh trunk road and motorway network. It is responsible for maintenance and improvement of the network, including the A470 which the [Welsh Government](#) describes as “our main trunk road linking north and south Wales.”

While statutory responsibility rests with the Welsh Ministers (the Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure), two Welsh Trunk Road Agents are responsible for day to day operation, maintenance and minor improvement of the network:

- the [North and Mid Wales Trunk Road Agent](#); and
- the [South Wales Trunk Road Agent](#).

As part of their operational responsibilities, the Agents manage a team of [Traffic Officers](#) to manage incidents on the network to reduce the impact of congestion.

The Agents operate in partnership with local authorities. Their central planning function was moved into Welsh Government in April 2015, as announced by the then Minister for Economy, Science and Transport in a [statement in plenary](#) on the 11 November 2014, following the conclusion of a review into the management and operation of motorway and trunk roads in Wales. **Welsh Government directly plans, manages and delivers major trunk road improvement and new road schemes.**

The [National Transport Finance Plan 2015](#) (the NTFP) sets out how the Welsh Government proposes to deliver the outcomes identified in the [Wales Transport Strategy](#) between April 2015 to March 2020 (short term) and beyond (medium term). The Plan provides timescales for the financing and delivery of schemes to be undertaken by the Welsh Government, identifies potential funding sources and lists projects which will seek funding under the European Regional Development Fund.

Welsh Government action

The NTFP does not set out any plans for the delivery of an A470 widening scheme between Pontypridd and Coryton, either in the short or medium term. The NTFP delivery schedule does however identify bus priority corridor improvements along the A470 Pontypridd–Cardiff, A470 Sardis Gyratory and A470 Upper Boat Gyratory for delivery in 2015/16 in relation to Metro Phase 1 (scheme reference CCRM5, see NTFP page 34).

These improvements, along with other relevant NTFP and Local Authority delivered schemes, have been highlighted in the letter to the Chair from the Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure regarding this petition. The letter says that:

We have undertaken a number of improvements to help relieve congestion on the A470 between Pontypridd and Cardiff and in the Radyr and Coryton area. These include our most recent schemes at junction 32 of the M4 and improvements to the traffic signals at Coryton gyratory.

Works at the interchange at Upper Boat have recently been completed by Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council and include further traffic signals on the Upper Boat roundabout, lane segregation, widening works, controlled pedestrian crossings, new road markings and enhanced signing. These works aim to increase the flow of traffic in the area and reduce queue lengths from the roundabout onto the A470.

The [M4 Junction 32 Coryton Interchange project](#) work was completed in August 2014 and officially opened in September 2015. The Welsh Government says that the scheme has improved capacity with a review of traffic since scheme completion concluding that:

overall the scheme has been a success, in line with the original model results. The review has shown that the scheme has helped to improve the capacity of the junction, which experiences congestion and lengthy queuing at peak periods. The dedicated lane has eased queuing and delays on the M4 westbound off slip, and so helped save on journey times and increased journey time reliability. The scheme has also improved the local road network by providing improved access at the junctions onto the roundabout.

The Welsh Government invested a total of £9.3m in the Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council Metro linked [Sardis Road Gyratory and Upper Boat Gyratory](#) scheme.

The letter also says that public transport provision and park and ride facilities have been improved along with the extension of the Traffic Officer Service (to include the Radyr and Taffs Well areas) and the progression of South Wales Metro proposals. Overbridges, retaining walls and the local environment and typography are listed as ‘**severe physical constraints**’ which would make a widening scheme in this area ‘**particularly complex, environmentally intrusive and costly**’. The Cabinet Secretary says the Welsh Government is in the process of developing a programme to tackle congestion “at the most heavily congested locations on the trunk road network”.

National Assembly for Wales action

In response to a question in [plenary on 12 July 2016](#) following his statement on the Priorities for Government, the First Minister said:

the metro is hugely important. There is no way, for example, that a solution can be found to congestion on the A470 by widening the road. It’s impossible, because of the way the road narrows towards Cardiff. So, it will be hugely important to see the metro established across the south of Wales, and, indeed, looking at the concept of Metro North, to make sure that that is taken forward as well, because we know that improving public transport is an important part of resolving the issues of traffic on the road.

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-05-725
Ein cyf/Our ref KS/07107/16

Mike Hedges AM
Chair - Petitions Committee

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

21 November 2016

Dear Mike,

Thank you for your letter of 2 November regarding Petition P-05-725 – Widen the A470 from Pontypridd to Coryton to 3 lanes.

We have undertaken a number of improvements to help relieve congestion on the A470 between Pontypridd and Cardiff and in the Radyr and Coryton area. These include our most recent schemes at junction 32 of the M4 and improvements to the traffic signals at Coryton gyratory.

Works at the interchange at Upper Boat have recently been completed by Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council and include further traffic signals on the Upper Boat roundabout, lane segregation, widening works, controlled pedestrian crossings, new road markings and enhanced signing. These works aim to increase the flow of traffic in the area and reduce queue lengths from the roundabout onto the A470.

Public transport provision and park and ride facilities have been improved, and the Traffic Officer Service has been extended to include the Radyr and Taffs Well area of the A470, to assist where incidents occur, coordinating the resources of the emergency services, managing the traffic and re-opening routes as soon as it is safe to do so.

We are also progressing with our South Wales Metro proposals and these include bus corridor and capacity improvements. Further details about the Metro can be found at the following link: <http://gov.wales/topics/transport/public/metro/?lang=en>.

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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.

There are severe physical constraints in the form of overbridges, retaining walls and the local environment and topography which would make a widening scheme on the A470 from Pontypridd to Coryton particularly complex, environmentally intrusive and costly. We are however assessing the degree of traffic congestion in this road corridor and are in the early stages of developing a programme to tackle the congestion at the most heavily congested locations on the trunk road and motorway network in Wales.

Yours ever,

Ken

Ken Skates AC/AM

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

Agenda Item 2.5

P-05-726 Give rate relief to Local Authorities for Leisure and Cultural facilities.

This petition was submitted by Ryan Dansie, which collected 17 signatures.

Text of the Petition

Due to ever increasing budget pressures, Local Authorities in Wales are looking at creating charitable trusts to take over the running of public services like libraries and leisure centres.

The main benefit of such an arrangement is the rate relief which a charity would be entitled to. This amounts to moving money from the central pot of non-domestic rates and into the authorities budget. No public money is saved overall, although there are overheads involved in setting up such arrangements which can involve payments being made to specialist private consultants.

Pembrokeshire County Council is about to begin the process of creating a charity to take over the running of all leisure and cultural services in the whole county. It's almost inevitable that other local authorities in Wales will follow suit in order to deal with their own impossible budget pressures.

I call on the Welsh government to change the rules of rate relief so that all Local Authority run leisure and cultural facilities are covered on an equivalent basis to that which a charity would be entitled to. If this is not done then the end result of losing this business rate income will still happen through the creation of these charitable trusts, but we will be unnecessarily losing control of our public services in the process.

Please take away this unnecessary incentive to outsource our important leisure and cultural services.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Preseli Pembrokeshire
- Mid and West Wales

Briefing for the Petitions Committee

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 13 Rhagfyr 2016
Petitions Committee | 13 December 2016

Petition number: P-05-726

Petition title: Give rate relief to Local Authorities for Leisure and Cultural Facilities

Text of petition: Due to ever increasing budget pressures, Local Authorities in Wales are looking at creating charitable trusts to take over the running of public services like libraries and leisure centres.

The main benefit of such an arrangement is the rate relief which a charity would be entitled to. This amounts to moving money from the central pot of non-domestic rates and into the authorities budget. No public money is saved overall, although there are overheads involved in setting up such arrangements which can involve payments being made to specialist private consultants.

Pembrokeshire County Council is about to begin the process of creating a charity to take over the running of all leisure and cultural services in the whole county. It's almost inevitable that other local authorities in Wales will follow suit in order to deal with their own impossible budget pressures.

I call on the Welsh government to change the rules of rate relief so that all Local Authority run leisure and cultural facilities are covered on an equivalent basis to that which a charity would be entitled to. If this is not done then the end result of losing this business rate income will still happen through the creation of these charitable trusts, but we will be unnecessarily losing control of our public services in the process.

Please take away this unnecessary incentive to outsource our important leisure and cultural services.

Background

[Sections 43 \(5\) and \(6\) of the *Local Government Finance Act 1988*](#) (the Act) provide that registered charities receive 80% mandatory business rate relief, [funded by the Welsh Government](#). The local authority in which the charity's premises are located also has discretion to award relief on the remaining 20% of the business rates liability, via [sections 47](#)

[\(1\) and \(2\) of the Act](#). Of [any discretionary relief awarded](#), the local authority pays 75% with the remaining 25% met by the Welsh Government. **The maximum possible business rates savings for the local authority if it transfers leisure or cultural services to a charitable trust are therefore 85%.** Under [sections 47 \(1\) and \(2\) of the Act](#), a leisure or cultural trust without charitable status may not be able to claim mandatory rate relief but can receive up to 100% discretionary relief, dependent on the decision of the local authority it is located in.

Pembrokeshire County Council [has recently consulted](#) on proposals changing the way that cultural and leisure centres are run. [The preferred option](#) of Winckworth Sherwood, the external firm who provided specialist advice to the council, is to establish a charitable trust to run its culture and leisure services. Looking specifically at business rates, it estimates that this approach will enable the Council to make annual savings of £637,000 in business rates. However, [the UNISON trade union opposes these plans](#), noting that forecast long-term financial savings may not materialise, and that the council will have to bear costs without having power to direct services.

The Welsh Government's website provides details of case studies on community asset transfer. One of these relates to Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council transferring leisure services to [Aneurin Leisure](#) from October 2014. The key drivers of the transfer were to sustain the delivery of social objectives, and to meet the requirements of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy, including the achievement of business rates savings.

The Auditor General for Wales published [Delivering With Less – Leisure Services](#) in December 2015. This found that public sector ownership and management of leisure provision are changing with the transfer of services and assets to other models of operation, however, decisions have not always been based on robust information. It also stated that:

Trust options are very much being promoted by the Welsh Government and are increasingly seen as offering a range of financial benefits in terms of the potential for attracting additional grant funding and possible tax and VAT savings, particularly in terms of National Non Domestic Rates (NNDR) relief.

However, the Auditor General's report also highlighted potential risks around the trust model, such as anticipated savings not being realised and increased subsidy from the council being required, and a weakening of direct democratic control of the service.

The Welsh Government commissioned research into [independent trust and community libraries in Wales](#), which noted that some significant financial savings have been achieved from local authorities transferring running of public libraries to independent trusts, due to savings in business rates and VAT. However, it also notes that for some community libraries

opening hours, issues and visitor numbers have fallen, and very substantially in some instances.

Welsh Government action

The previous Welsh Government commissioned an [expert review of local authorities' current and future plans to deliver public library services](#) in 2014. Following the review, it published guidance on [Community Managed Libraries](#) in May 2015 and [best practice guidance on Community Asset Transfers](#) in March 2016.

Sport Wales published [Facilities for Future Generations: A blueprint for sport and active recreation in Wales](#) in April 2016. This stated that:

- Action is required to review the current momentum that has led to financially driven decisions in respect of future operating models – the principle motivation being based on securing immediate tax savings;
- If facilities are to be transferred by local authorities to a new community, or social enterprise, a prior review of facilities stock is necessary.

The Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government wrote to the Committee on 26 November, in relation to this petition. In this letter, he stated that:

Looking forward, I am keen to explore different options for how the non-domestic rates system could operate in the future. Introducing a new form of non-domestic rates relief could add to the complexity of the system and to the costs of administration for local authorities. Such factors would need to be taken into careful consideration in developing the system.

The current rates system applies to all forms of non-domestic property, with a few specific exemptions. This includes most forms of public property. Charitable organisations receive rates relief because of their designated status as charities. There would need to be a clear rationale for extending relief to public property or particular types of public property. One consideration which would need to be taken into account would be the potential effect on the economy and the risk of distorting market conditions, particularly in areas such as leisure where there is a considerable market for private sector provision. It would be inappropriate for local authorities to be able to grant rates relief to properties they own, particularly if this then increased the demand on other taxpayers in the area.

National Assembly for Wales action

The Fourth Assembly's Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee conducted an inquiry into [Public Libraries in Wales](#) during 2014, which touched on the issue of transferring ownership of libraries.

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

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



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref: P-05-726
Ein cyf/Our ref: MD/05457/16

Mike Hedges AM
Chair - Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
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26 November 2016

Dear Mike,

Thank you for your letter of 2 November, regarding a petition from Mr Ryan Dansie proposing that the Welsh Government should give rates relief to local authorities for leisure and cultural facilities.

Local authorities may consider and explore alternative models for delivering certain local services, provided there is a robust assessment of the costs and benefits to the service. The authority also needs to demonstrate that it has actively engaged with and consulted its citizens to ensure that the alternative approach benefits the local community.

A number of local authorities have already implemented or are considering measures for charitable trusts or other delivery providers to facilitate the running of a range of local services. There can be benefits for citizens and local authorities in adopting such an approach. The availability of charitable relief is one of many considerations. Alternative forms of delivery can offer improved services, for example from specialist providers, and lower running costs. Importantly, they can ensure that a service continues to be delivered where it might otherwise be unsustainable. Such models do not necessarily remove the service from public control. Where a service continues to be funded from a local authority's budget, the authority remains responsible for the oversight of the service, for specifying the level of service required and for ensuring the authority secures the best value for money for its residents.

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Pack Page 60

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.

By way of background, the non-domestic rates system is operated through a collective pooling process in which all the rates collected by billing authorities in Wales are pooled together with those collected centrally and redistributed to local authorities to fund local services. This means any fluctuations in the revenue generated through non-domestic rates are managed across Wales. In addition, the annual funding settlement for local authorities is allocated using a detailed formula which reflects the relative need for services in each area. This formula takes account of the non-domestic rates to be distributed to each area. The provisional local government settlement for 2017-18, which I announced on 19 October, provides the first cash increase in the core funding for local government since 2013-14.

Looking forward, I am keen to explore different options for how the non-domestic rates system could operate in the future. Introducing a new form of non-domestic rates relief could add to the complexity of the system and to the costs of administration for local authorities. Such factors would need to be taken into careful consideration in developing the system.

The current rates system applies to all forms of non-domestic property, with a few specific exemptions. This includes most forms of public property. Charitable organisations receive rates relief because of their designated status as charities. There would need to be a clear rationale for extending relief to public property or particular types of public property. One consideration which would need to be taken into account would be the potential effect on the economy and the risk of distorting market conditions, particularly in areas such as leisure where there is a considerable market for private sector provision. It would be inappropriate for local authorities to be able to grant rates relief to properties they own, particularly if this then increased the demand on other taxpayers in the area.

I will be considering improvements to the non-domestic rates system for 2018-19 onwards to ensure the system best meets the needs of the people of Wales, is fair to taxpayers and ensures the sustainable funding of local services. I will be engaging and consulting widely with stakeholders and welcome the views of all interested parties.

Best wishes,

Mark

Mark Drakeford AM/AC

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

Agenda Item 2.6

P-05-727 Funding for the Education Workforce Council Registration (EWC) Fee for Learning Support Workers in Schools.

This petition was submitted by UNISON Cymru Wales, which is collected 752 signatures.

Text of the Petition

Since April 2016, Learning Support Workers in schools and colleges in Wales have been required to register with the Education Workforce Council (EWC) – the same body that regulates Teachers and Further Education Lecturers.

This year the actual fee for Learning Support Workers to register was £15. It was £45 for teaching and lecturing staff. The fee from April 2017 is not yet clear. UNISON lobbying secured an agreement from 12 Local Authorities to pay, in whole or in part, the 2016 fee on behalf of Learning Support Workers in Schools – therefore recognising that these workers are amongst the lowest paid in the public sector, largely due to their term time worker status.

The remit of the EWC has so far been concerned with Teachers and Lecturers who are on significantly better wages than Learning Support Workers.

Learning Support Workers are predominantly women, the vast majority are paid term time only, unlike teachers and lecturers; their contracts are more likely to be fixed term and at the mercy of school budget cuts. Many work more than one job already.

Those Local Authorities who committed to pay the fee last year should be acknowledged. But, at a time of ever squeezed budgets, there are no guarantees for April 2017. Additional money must be ring fenced in the Local Government settlement to ensure that Learning Support Workers are not expected to bear the burden of the cost of registration next April.

For these reasons we the undersigned call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to ring fence monies in the Local Government settlement to fund the EWC fee for Learning Support Workers in Schools in April 2017

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Cardiff Central
- South Wales Central

Research Briefing:

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 13 Rhagfyr 2016

Petitions Committee | 13 December 2016

Petition number: P-05-727

Petition title: Funding for the Education Workforce Council Registration (EWC) Fee for Learning Support Workers in Schools

Since April 2016, Learning Support Workers in schools and colleges in Wales have been required to register with the Education Workforce Council (EWC) - the same body that regulates Teachers and Further Education Lecturers.

This year the actual fee for Learning Support Workers to register was £15. It was £45 for teaching and lecturing staff. The fee from April 2017 is not yet clear. UNISON lobbying secured an agreement from 12 Local Authorities to pay, in whole or in part, the 2016 fee on behalf of Learning Support Workers in Schools – therefore recognising that these workers are amongst the lowest paid in the public sector, largely due to their term time worker status. The remit of the EWC has so far been concerned with Teachers and Lecturers who are on significantly better wages than Learning Support Workers.

Learning Support Workers are predominantly women, the vast majority are paid term time only, unlike teachers and lecturers; their contracts are more likely to be fixed term and at the mercy of school budget cuts. Many work more than one job already.

Those Local Authorities who committed to pay the fee last year should be acknowledged. But, at a time of ever squeezed budgets, there are no guarantees for April 2017. Additional money must be ring fenced in the Local Government settlement to ensure that Learning Support Workers are not expected to bear the burden of the cost of registration next April.

For these reasons we the undersigned call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to ring fence monies in the Local Government settlement to fund the EWC fee for Learning Support Workers in Schools in April 2017.

Background

The *Education (Wales) Act 2014*, provided for the establishment of the Education Workforce Council (EWC) as a successor to the General Teaching Council for Wales (GTCW). Previously, only teachers in maintained schools were registered with the GTCW. The EWC came into existence on 1 April 2015. The Act set out two principal aims for the EWC:

- To contribute to improving the standards of teaching and the quality of learning in Wales; and
- To maintain and improve standards of professional conduct amongst teachers and persons who support teaching and learning in Wales.

The Act extended the obligation for additional groups of staff to register with the new body - school learning support workers, further education teachers and learning support workers.

The Welsh Government's rationale for establishing the EWC and extending the groups requirement to register was the need for a body with a broader remit that better reflected the close working between different sectors of workers within education. Examples provided of this close working included the greater use of school support staff (teaching assistants) and collaboration at post-16 between schools and colleges.

The requirement for Further Education teachers to register came into effect on 1 April 2015. The requirement on learning support workers in both maintained schools and in further education to register came into effect on **1 April 2016**.



The *Education Workforce Council (Registration of Youth Workers, Youth Support Workers and Work Based Learning Practitioner) Order 2016*, considered in Plenary on 6 December 2016, extended the requirement to register to these youth workers and work based learning practitioners.

Registration fees

The *Education (Wales) Act 2014* gives Welsh Ministers the power to make regulations in relation to fees payable for registration with the Council. Under the former GTCW, the annual registration fee was £45, of which £33 was subsidised by the Welsh Government.

In the first year the EWC was in existence (2015-16), the fee arrangements remained the same for teachers and the Welsh Government subsidised the fees of FE teachers who paid £18 of the £45 fee.

The current regulations, the *Education Workforce Council (Registration Fees) (Wales) Regulations 2016* increased the annual fee paid by teachers from £45 to £78.

Table 1: Current registration fees: 2016–17

Category	Registration fee (£)	Subsidy (£)	Contribution (£)
School teacher	78	33	45
FE teacher	49	4	45
School learning support worker	49	34	15
FE learning support worker	49	34	15

Source: Welsh Government, *Registration fees for the education workforce in Wales (2017)*, June 2016

Teachers have long received a subsidy towards their registration fees which is reimbursed to them from local authorities through their pay. This is provided for by the School Teachers Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD) which is issued by the UK Government as teachers pay and conditions are a non-devolved function.

Instead of directing the funding for the subsidy to local authorities to pass on to teachers, the Welsh Government has committed in plans to give that money to the EWC to enable the fees of **all** registrants to be reduced, rather than just providing a subsidy for teachers. This requires the UK Government making the amendment to the STPCD.

The Welsh Government consulted (until 30 September 2016) on the arrangements for making this change. The net effect for those currently registering would be no different.

Welsh Government Action

The *Cabinet Secretary for Education's evidence* to the Children, Young People and Education Committee on 10 November 2016 said:

“The revised baseline figure for 2017-18 includes the transfer of £1m from the Revenue Support Grant (RSG) in respect of the subsidy for teacher registration fees. In 2015, the General Teaching Council for Wales was reconfigured to create the Education Workforce Council (EWC). This saw professional registration extended to include Further Education (FE) teachers working in FE Institutions in Wales. Professional registration has since been extended further to include all school and FE based Learning Support Workers in Wales. The transfer will enable the sharing of the subsidy towards the EWC teacher registration fee between all teaching practitioners.”



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



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



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-727
Ein cyf/Our ref KW/06062/16
Mike Hedges AM
Chair - Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
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government.committee.business@wales.gsi.gov.uk

25 November 2016

Dear Mike

Thank you for your letter of 2 November about a petition set up by UNISON Cymru Wales relating to the funding of the professional registration fee for learning support workers from 1 April.

I am aware of this petition and appreciate the opportunity to share my views with you and the Committee. The Welsh Government has recently consulted on fee models for the Education Workforce Council to implement from 1 April 2017. A consultation 'summary of responses' along with a Government response will be published on the Welsh Government website shortly.

Since April 2016, the registration fee for both school and FE learning support workers, FE teachers and school teachers not employed through the School Teachers Pay and Condition Document (STPCD) has been set at £49; for school teachers employed under the STPCD, their fee is set at £78.

The Welsh Government recognises that learning support workers in Wales earn significantly less compared to school and FE teachers; and therefore provides a larger subsidy to reduce their actual fee contribution to £15. The teacher categories are provided with a smaller subsidy that reduces their actual fee contribution to £45.

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

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

From 1 April 2017 and thereafter, the Welsh Government has set aside and ringed fenced £1million to subsidise the registration fee for the whole education workforce. This subsidy is aligned to the fact that Welsh Ministers set the fee level that in real terms ensures that practitioners contribution are kept low.

I am also aware that some Local Authorities are choosing pay the registration fees for their employed learning support workers. Employers of education practitioners in Wales are free to fund professional registration fees if they wish, however, this is something that is not encouraged or supported by the Welsh Government. Employers should be mindful that practitioners are already receiving a government subsidy to help reduce their registration fees.

Yours sincerely

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

Kirsty Williams AC/AM

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg
Cabinet Secretary for Education

Agenda Item 2.7

P-05-728 Protect Families First Funding.

This petition was submitted by Whitehead-Ross Education and UNISON Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Branch, which collected 24 signatures.

Text of the Petition

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to protect the Families First budget in order to protect the most vulnerable families across Wales, including in our own area of Neath Port Talbot (NPT).

Families First is a Welsh Government-funded innovation programme that promotes the development by local authority areas of effective multi-agency systems and support, with a clear emphasis on prevention and early intervention for families, particularly those living in poverty.

At the end of August, the Welsh Government's Cabinet Secretary for Communities issued a letter to local authorities about the future of Families First, which is due to end in March 2017. In his letter he outlined the future priorities to address identified gaps in service provision for parents and young people and link the work of the programme clearly with the prevention of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).

The Cabinet Secretary is expected to make a formal announcement on the future of the programme in the autumn and budgetary allocations for each local authority will not be known until late December 2016. With Communities First coming to an end in March 2017, this reinforces the need for Families First to be protected.

In its first full year of operation, NPT's 'Think Family' early intervention and prevention programme supported almost 100 families to make positive changes and tackle issues before they became critical. Based on Government estimates that one troubled family can cost the taxpayer in the region of £75,000 per year, this represents a return on investment of £3.32 for every £1 spent and more than £7.3 million savings to the economy.

The Welsh Government reduced the Families First Grant in NPT by £260,000 for 2016/17, with a grant of £1,964,194. 2,586 individuals accessed a Families First service during 2015-16 in NPT.

Assembly constituency and Region

- Aberavon
- South Wales West

Research Briefing:

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 13 Rhagfyr 2016

Petitions Committee | 13 December 2016

Petition number: P-05-728

Petition title: Protect Families First Funding

Petition wording: We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to protect the Families First budget in order to protect the most vulnerable families across Wales, including in our own area of Neath Port Talbot (NPT).

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What is Families First?

The Welsh Government's Families First Programme was established in 2010 with the aim of improving the design and delivery of the services local authorities provide to families.

The Welsh Government aims for the programme are for:

- working age people in low income families to gain, and progress within employment
- children, young people and families, in or at risk of poverty, to achieve their potential
- children, young people and families to be healthy and enjoy well-being
- families to be confident, nurturing resilient and safe.

Local authorities develop a Families First Action Plan which sets out how they will implement Families First locally. When the plans have been approved by the Welsh Government, local authorities commission services to deliver them. Families First aims to **'develop effective multi-agency systems of support for families, particularly those living in poverty'**¹. It also 'places an emphasis on **early intervention and prevention**, and on bringing organisations together to work with the whole family to help stop problems

¹ Welsh Government, Children and young people wellbeing monitor for Wales, December 2015



escalating towards crisis. A key feature of the programme is that services are bespoke and tailored to individual family circumstances to maximise the effectiveness of interventions.’²

Further information can be found on the Welsh Government’s [Families First webpage](#) and in the [Families First Guidance](#).

Welsh Government’s response

In a letter, in response to the petition under consideration, the Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children said that ‘**at this point I am unable to commit funds to the Families First Programme beyond March 2018** as the Welsh Government is currently working to a one year budget planning period.’

He referred to his recent [Statement](#) regarding the future of the Communities First Programme and said:

Following a transition period next year, **I have decided to refocus the strategic projects commissioned by the Families First Programme** to ensure we are able to address identified gaps in the areas of support for parents and young people and to clearly link the work of the Programme with the prevention of Adverse Childhood Experiences.

I have not made a decision on the future of Communities First as yet. We are in a consultation period in terms of that process. My intention is to make ensure we are absolutely sure we are tackling the issues around poverty and that all our programmes are working well and can intervene in the areas where we are trying to see success. I am not yet convinced that the Communities First programme alone is the only programme that can deliver and tackle poverty, and that is why I’ve asked my team to look at it very carefully. [our emphasis]

Referring to the next financial year he said that **the Families First budget for 2017-18 would remain at the same level as 2016-17**. He also said he was ‘in the process of finalising the allocation of funds within the Families First Budget and that indicative allocations would be sent to each Local Authority in accordance with our normal time table for notifying Local Authorities of their indicative allocations for the coming year. **It will be for each Local Authority to determine how best to allocate its Families First Programme grant** as they are best placed to ensure the interests of the families they serve are best achieved.’

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.

² Ibid



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-05-728
Ein cyf/Our ref CS/05873/16

Mike Hedges AM
Chair - Petitions Committee

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

21 November 2016

Dear Mike

You wrote on me on 4 November inviting my views on a Petition (P-05-728) to protect Families First Funding. I am grateful for the opportunity to comment.

The Families First budget for 2017-18 will remain at 2016-17 levels. This is stated in the narrative to the Welsh Government Draft Budget 2017-18 and I recently repeated this message at the Children Young People and Education Committee on 2 November. I am in the process of finalising the allocation of funds within the Families First Budget. At this point I am unable to commit funds to the Families First Programme beyond March 2018 as the Welsh Government is currently working to a one year budget planning period.

Indicative allocations for the Programme will be sent to each Local Authority in accordance with our normal time table for notifying Local Authorities of their indicative allocations for the coming year. Notifications will allow local Authorities time to finalise their delivery plans for 2017-18. It will be for each Local Authority to determine how best to allocate its Families First Programme grant as they are best placed to ensure the interests of the families they serve are best achieved.

The Families First Programme is an innovative programme that promotes the development by all local authorities of effective multi-agency systems and support for families, with a clear emphasis on prevention and early intervention for families, particularly those living in poverty. Early intervention and prevention is vital if we are to give children and families the best chances. Following a transition period next year, I have decided to refocus the strategic projects commissioned by the Families First Programme to ensure we are able to address identified gaps in the areas of support for parents and young people and to clearly link the work of the Programme with the prevention of Adverse Childhood Experiences.

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

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

I have not made a decision on the future of Communities First as yet. We are in a consultation period in terms of that process. My intention is to make ensure we are absolutely sure we are tackling the issues around poverty and that all our programmes are working well and can intervene in the areas where we are trying to see success. I am not yet convinced that the Communities First programme alone is the only programme that can deliver and tackle poverty, and that is why I've asked my team to look at it very carefully. Once I have considered the findings of the review I will then make a decision on whether to exit or not exit. If a decision is made to close the Programme it will not end suddenly on 31 March. Instead I envisage a phased approach to decommissioning thereby allowing a more managed exit for both Programme beneficiaries and the staff delivering services.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Carl Sargeant".

Carl Sargeant AC/AM

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

Agenda Item 3.1

P-04-628 Access to BSL for All

Petition wording

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to improve access to Education and services in British Sign Language to improve the quality of life for Deaf people of all ages.

Improve Access for families to learn BSL: When a child is diagnosed as being Deaf/hard of hearing parents should be offered free/subsidised BSL lessons (BSL level one costs approximately £300 per person). By using speech alone, Deaf children struggle/fail to develop communication skills missing important milestones. Learning other languages through BSL (English/Welsh) will improve the child's understanding and comprehension.

Introduce BSL on the National Curriculum: Deaf Children and young people who are taught BSL at an early age will have better access to their education and an improved wellbeing. BSL should be available in schools and taught by qualified Deaf teachers, for all to learn as this would achieve better access for all in society. We believe that BSL should be offered as a language for all learners as a qualification. GCSE Welsh (and other modern languages) are not always offered to Deaf students: this also needs to be improved.

Improving access to Education in BSL for Deaf Children and Young People: currently they have limited access to Education in BSL, and often experience under qualified support. There is a massive gap in the education of Deaf children, as many are wrongly treated as having a Learning Disability. This has a negative impact on their development in life, reducing independence with poor education, resulting in under-employment. They need adequately qualified Communication Support Workers available in school.

Making Services and resources accessible in BSL for Deaf young people: enabling BSL users to access information in their preferred language via digital resources to services such as Education, Health care, Social Services and public transport, giving them equality to access as an equivalent to Welsh Language access.

Organisation: Deffo!

Lead petitioner: Cathie Robins-Talbot

First considered by the Committee:

Number of signatures: 502 online signatures. 660 paper signatures . total
=1162 signatures

Agenda Item 3.2

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

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/06009/16

Mike Hedges AM
Chair - Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
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government.committee.business@wales.gsi.gov.uk

3 November 2016

Dear Mike

Thank you for your letter of 25 October, regarding whether the Welsh Government intends to address the issues of autism in initial teacher education (ITE), through the forthcoming Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and Education Tribunal (Wales) Bill.

The Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language has responsibility for the ALN and Education Tribunal (Wales) Bill. He has previously announced his intention to introduce the Bill into the National Assembly before this year's Christmas recess.

The Welsh Government recently considered the inclusion of specific provisions for autism within the Bill and concluded that this would not be appropriate given the Bill's intended scope and the stage it has reached in its development. Instead, we have committed to the consideration of future legislation on autism, once we are in a position to assess the impact of changes introduced by the Social Services and Well-being Act and the refreshed Autistic Spectrum Disorder Strategic Action Plan for Wales.

Earlier this year, the Welsh Government launched the Learning with Autism Programme for primary schools, which raises awareness across the whole school community. In collaboration with WLGA, we are now extending the Learning with Autism Training Programme into Secondary schools and Further Education. This will increase our ability to recognise signs of autism at an earlier age.

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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.

As you will be aware from my previous correspondence, we are reforming the way in which ITE is delivered in Wales. On 20 September, I made an oral statement setting out my priorities for ITE reform. A copy of the full statement is accessible at the link below.

<http://www.assembly.wales/en/bus-home/pages/rop.aspx?meetingid=3990&language=en&assembly=5&c=Record%20of%20Proceedings&keyword=ITE>

Consultation on the draft accreditation criteria for ITE programmes in Wales, and proposals for an enhanced role for the Education Workforce Council, is open until 14 November.

<https://consultations.gov.wales/consultations/initial-teacher-education-accreditation>

Yours sincerely

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

Kirsty Williams AC/AM

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg
Cabinet Secretary for Education

P-04-683 Trees in Towns

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

Text of the Petition

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

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Cardiff South and Penarth
- South Wales Central



Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-683
Ein cyf/Our ref LG/06389/16

Mike Hedges AM
Chair - Petitions Committee
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government.committee.business@wales.gsi.gov.uk

11 October 2016

Dear Mike

Thank you for your letter of 4 October regarding P-04-683 Trees in Towns and the production of guidance.

The Welsh Government will not be publishing further guidance because there is already a large body of research and information which supports the benefits of planting trees in urban areas. With support from the Welsh Government, in 2014 Natural Resources Wales (NRW) undertook a comprehensive survey of canopy cover across the whole of Wales, *Tree Cover in Wales' Towns and Cities*. The survey provides an evidence base and useful information designed to help a range of organisations from community tree interest groups to urban planners and decision-makers in Local Authorities and national government, to plan and manage our urban tree resource in a better way. I enclose an excellent summary of the survey, the full version can be found on NRW's website at:

<https://naturalresources.wales/media/4123/tree-cover-in-wales-towns-and-cities-2014-study.pdf>

Coed Cadw/Woodland Trust Wales may also wish to join the Trees and Design Action Group who are an open collaborative forum facilitating cross-sector and cross-disciplinary dialogue and projects which promote the role of the urban forest throughout the UK. The Group shares the collective vision the location of trees and all the benefits they bring, can be secured for future generations through better collaboration in the planning, design, construction and management of our urban infrastructure and spaces. Its membership, online publications and information are free. This approach enables them to assimilate ideas and knowledge independently of organisational hierarchy, profit or commercial interests.

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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.

They have produced a wide array of guidance about urban tree planting which can be found at the following website link, which Coed Cadw/Woodland Trust Wales may wish to host on their own website or promote further when working with others:

<http://www.tdag.org.uk/guides--resources.html>

On 3rd October I launched NRW's State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR) which identifies an opportunity to enhance green infrastructure such as trees in and around urban areas. The report highlighted the multi-benefits of urban green spaces such as accessible places for health and recreation, connecting habitats and supporting opportunities for community cohesion while minimising negative impacts to health caused by poor air quality. The findings of SoNaRR will inform the Welsh Government's National Natural Resource Policy.

Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lesley Griffiths". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end of the name.

Lesley Griffiths AC/AM

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



**Cyfoeth
Naturiol
Cymru**
**Natural
Resources
Wales**

Tree Cover in Wales' Towns and Cities

Understanding canopy cover to better plan and manage our urban trees

// Study Summary



Wales is the first country in the world to undertake a complete canopy cover study of all its urban areas.

Some **11,000** large trees were lost between **2006** and **2009**.



Emyr Roberts



Peter Matthews

Foreword

Introducing a world first for Wales is a great pleasure, particularly as it relates to greater knowledge about the hugely valuable woodland and tree resource in our towns and cities.

Trees are an essential component of our urban ecosystems, delivering a range of services to help sustain life, promote well-being, and support economic benefits.

Natural Resources Wales is committed to working with colleagues in the Welsh Government and in public, third and private sector organisations throughout Wales to support and build on this work and promote a strategic approach to managing our urban trees.

Dr Emyr Roberts
Chief Executive

Professor Peter Matthews
Chairman

Tree Cover in Wales' Towns and Cities

A study from Natural Resources Wales provides the facts and figures to help us all understand more about the tree cover in our towns and cities.

Trees are found in a range of urban settings: along streets and roads, in parks and cemeteries, in residential gardens, and there are even urban woodlands. Single trees and small groups which particularly enhance public and private areas are often called 'amenity' trees - we'll all have our favourites.

Wales is the **first country in the world** to complete a survey of canopy cover in all its urban areas. Using nationwide aerial photography, we identified and mapped the leafy crown spread of the trees in our towns and cities. As it's mainly through their canopies that trees deliver benefits, the study focuses on this, rather than counting individual numbers of trees. We first analysed aerials from 2006 as our baseline, and then followed this up with 2009 photography to identify any changes in the intervening three years. Full details are set out in the *Tree Cover in Wales' Towns and Cities* study. We'll continue to survey at regular intervals to keep tabs on what's happening to our tree cover.

The study provides an evidence base to help a range of key groups and organisations - from community tree interest groups to urban planners and decision-makers in local authorities and national government - to plan and manage our urban tree resource in a better way.

Urban tree canopy in Wales was **16.8%** in 2009 - mid range in world rankings.



Dafydd Fryer

Survey Headlines

- Urban tree canopy in Wales was 16.8% in 2009 - mid range in world rankings
- Total cover varies dramatically across the country - from just 6% in Rhyl and 9% in Port Talbot to 30% in Treharris and 27% in Abertillery
- Landscape character strongly influences existing tree cover - often low in coastal towns and high in the South Wales Valleys
- 55 out of our 220 towns show an overall decline in canopy cover between 2006 and 2009
- Some 11,000 large amenity trees were lost over 3 years, possibly due to increasing development pressure, or trees planted by the Victorians coming to the end of their lives
- Just 1% of all tree cover is found in areas of high-density housing - often our most deprived areas. Private residential gardens make up 34% of Wales' towns and cities - gardens provide 21% of all urban tree cover
- Public open space hosts 46% of all tree cover in our communities despite making up only 20% of urban land. 27% of graveyards and cemeteries are covered by tree canopy
- Transport routes (including verges and pavements) make up 23% of urban land but they have tree cover of only 8%. Motorised traffic causes much of the urban air and surface water pollution - which trees have the ability to remove
- There is great variation in tree cover within Wales' top 10 most deprived wards - from as little as 2% in Rhyl West 1&2 to 23% in Townhill 1, Swansea
- 44% of total canopy cover is provided by woodland, with 'amenity' trees accounting for the rest. Where high tree cover does occur at ward level, it's often attributed to areas of woodland. Such woodlands can sometimes be unmanaged and inaccessible.

1947



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2008



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“Customers are prepared to pay more for parking and goods (9-12% for some products) in landscaped shopping areas.”¹

Pack Page 86

Children living in areas with more street trees have lower prevalence of asthma.”²

Trees are powerful and versatile natural assets



“Every **5%** increase in tree cover reduces water run-off by **20%**.”³

“Increasing green-cover by 10% can reduce surface temperature of a city by 3 - 4°C.”⁴

Where would you rather live, work and play?



Potential for Tree Cover

Tree Cover in Wales' Towns and Cities also assesses 'green land' sites (areas of soil, grass and shrubs) for potential planting, looking at one major town in each local authority.

If all 'green land' sites identified were planted with the right trees in the right places, cover in those towns could be increased by 35%-52%.

Knowing where trees might be planted helps planners to set realistic canopy cover targets. Many North American and Australian cities have comprehensive tree strategies with tree canopy cover goals. Portland in Oregon, with a similar climate to Wales, intends to increase its cover by 7% from its current level of 26%. In the UK, Bristol City Council has set an aspirational goal of increasing canopy cover from 14% to 30%.

If Welsh towns with lower cover aimed for 20% (the UK Forest Standard woodland definition) in the medium term, we could have a nation of woodland towns!



55 out of our 220 towns show an overall decline in canopy cover between 2006 - 2009.

Pack Page 87
If all 'green land' sites identified were planted, with the right trees in the right places, cover in towns could be increased by 35-52%.

The Way Ahead

Having good evidence is important. Taking action based on that evidence is crucial - the study highlights significant opportunities to enhance Wales' urban tree resource. The Welsh Government wants to see woodlands and trees playing a greater and more valued role in towns and cities⁵, improving quality of life and surroundings. This is how we can work together to make the most of what we now know:

WHAT WE CAN ALL DO:

NATURAL RESOURCES WALES WILL:

Share and build the evidence

What gets measured gets managed. The study has addressed a significant information gap. It's crucial that we continue to share findings and continue the research:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Use and share the data 2 Build on the data to add qualitative information e.g. developing a greater understanding of tree species, their condition and value, surveying the extent of young trees and determining public / private ownership of trees | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Make all data available on our website for download 2 Undertake further survey updates using the latest aerial photography 3 Gather feedback on the study to improve methodology 4 Explore collaborative approaches to data collection and sharing 5 Promote and publish best practice case studies |
|--|---|

Adopt a strategic approach to managing our urban trees

The study has identified significant discrepancies in canopy cover levels between and within individual towns. International best practice shows that the best way to ensure all urban communities achieve adequate canopy cover is to:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3 Develop and adopt local Tree Strategies - particularly in less canopied areas 4 Set local tree canopy cover targets to drive and monitor progress | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6 Develop an enabling programme - supporting local authorities with least canopy cover and most tree loss 7 Encourage and celebrate local success |
|--|--|

Supporting sustainable urban tree management

Significant rates of tree loss have been identified. It's crucial that we:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5 Review the effectiveness and use of existing tools and legislation for tree care and preservation 6 Ensure that the potential of grant programmes is maximised to support Wales' urban treescape. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8 Support the Welsh Government's review of existing tools and legislation for tree care and preservation and their use. |
|--|---|

If Welsh towns with lower cover aimed for 20% (the UK Forest Standard woodland definition) in the medium term - we could have a nation of woodland towns!



Landscape
character
influences tree
cover - often low
in coastal towns
and high in the
South Wales
Valleys...

... from just
6% in Rhyll
to **30%**
in Treharris.

Where to start?

- Give us feedback and comments – urbantrees@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk
- Download the full version of the *Tree Cover in Wales' Towns and Cities* study from the Urban Trees page on our Natural Resources Wales' website
- Look at the tree canopy cover in your local areas, using 1. the Wales Map Viewer on the Forestry Commission website, and 2. County Local Evidence Packages from the Infobase Cymru website
- Download the study datasets in GIS and tabular formats from the Datadownload section on the Forestry Commission website
- Download the county report providing a detailed portrait of the canopy cover of your local county and town (available in 2014-15)
- Additional copies of this *Tree Cover in Wales' Towns and Cities* summary are available from urbantrees@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk

References:

¹'Trees in Business Districts – Positive Effects on Consumer Behaviour'. Wolf K, University of Washington College of Forest Resources (1998)

²Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health 62(7): pp647-9. Lovasi GS, Quinn JW, Neckerman KM, Perzanowski MS, Rundle A (2007)

³'The role of woodland in flood control: a landscape perspective'. Nisbet TR, Thomas H, Forest Research (2006)

⁴Manchester University research programme, Adaptation Strategies for Climate Change in the Urban Environment (2007)

⁵The Welsh Assembly Government's Strategy for Woodlands and Trees 'Woodlands for Wales' (2009)



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Cover image: Dafydd Fryer

Printed on recycled paper

P-04-683 Trees in Towns – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Clerking team, 09.11.16

Dear Kayleigh Driscoll

Many thanks for your message of 2 November regarding the Woodland Trust's petition P-04-683 Trees in Towns.

Could I take this opportunity to thank for the Committee, and indeed the two Ministers concerned for considering our petition. We feel that, as our document '[Wales is better with trees](#)' makes a compelling case for the huge, and cost effective benefits that trees to offer Wales' towns cities and cities all those who live in them.

Can we assure members of the Committee that we shall indeed work closely with local authorities in Wales to help and encourage them to plant to look after more urban trees. We of course welcome the production State of Natural Resources Report and we intend to engage with the production of Area Statements around Wales next year.

If any member of the Committee would like us to engage with any particular local authority within his or her constituency and is keen to help us do this, they are very welcome to contact me and I shall arrange this.

Yours sincerely

Rory



**Cyfoeth
Naturiol
Cymru
Natural
Resources
Wales**

Ruth Jenkins
Natural Resources Wales
Government Buildings
Arran Road
Dolgellau
Gwynedd
LL40 1LW

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

07 December 2016

Dear Mr Hedges

**Coed Cadw (Woodland Trust): Petition P-04-683 Trees in Towns
Submission by Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru/Natural Resources Wales**

The purpose of Natural Resources Wales (NRW) is to pursue sustainable management of natural resources.

Trees are an essential element of our urban ecosystems, forming a key part of the Green Infrastructure that delivers a wide range of services to help sustain life, promote well-being, support economic benefits and mitigate against our changing climate.

With reference to Petition 'P-04-683 Trees in Towns', Natural Resources Wales would support the proposals in principle, and in response to your question Natural Resources Wales does provide limited funding for tree planting, in and around towns through directly working with partners including local authorities via the PLANT scheme. This scheme, run by NRW on behalf of Welsh Government, supports the planting of a tree for every child born in Wales. Whilst many of the trees planted under this scheme are in rural areas the scheme allows for tree planting in urban areas. We also have wide experience of the use of trees through practical projects such as the urban drainage scheme "Greener Grangetown" and would be very happy to provide this further specific evidence.

The value of trees can make a real difference to people in towns and cities across Wales – providing vital services, for example.

- They can remove harmful air pollution, reducing incidents of asthma and heart disease;
- Reduce flood risk by slowing surface water run-off after heavy downpours;

- And absorb and store carbon dioxide, helping to counteract climate change.
- They also provide food and habitat for wildlife such as birds and bees.

Accessible natural greenspace and trees in our towns and cities deliver so many ecosystem service and well-being benefits. We know how much tree canopy cover there is in Wales' urban areas. We have surveyed canopy cover across Wales' towns and cities. The survey commissioned by Natural Resources Wales, is the first of its kind in the world and used aerial photography from 2006 and 2009 to identify and map the canopy spread of trees across all of Wales' towns and cities. It shows how many trees we have, where they are and where they are being lost over time. This will help inform how to manage urban trees in a better way for the future. In summary we have found that:

- Trees covered about 17% of land in Wales' urban areas in 2009, which is average when compared to other towns and cities across the world. In 2013 this figure was down to 16%.
- Tree cover varies widely across Wales – from only 6% in Rhyl to 30% in Treharris.
- Disappointingly the study also identified that in a quarter of towns in Wales the tree canopy cover declined between 2006 and 2013 – with more than 7,000 large amenity trees lost altogether.

Trees are essential to life and provide natural services to improve the quality of life of people in our towns and cities.

The study shows that if we can manage and plan where and which species of trees we plant in our towns and cities – and look after the trees we already have – then they can help improve well-being in our communities and make them more resilient and sustainable. To continue to deliver the range of benefits outlined in the petition (and many others too), it will be necessary to halt and reverse the decline. The character of our settlements suggests that we have great scope for significant increases in canopy cover. We are sharing these findings with local authority planners and decision makers through the Public Service Boards.

The range of benefits provided by urban trees is much wider than just those set out in the petition. Our report, "Tree Cover in Wales' Towns and Cities: Understanding canopy cover to better plan and manage our urban trees" clearly illustrates this much wider range. (<http://naturalresources.wales/media/679615/eng-urban-tree-summary-2016.pdf>). In our recent "State of Natural Resources Report: An assessment of the sustainable management of natural resources" (<https://naturalresources.wales/media/679572/sonarr-summary-september-2016.pdf>) we similarly recognise the important part trees, and green infrastructure generally, has to play in building environmental resilience across Wales.

We have also worked with Forest Research to undertake some i-Tree Eco surveys to demonstrate the monetary value of trees. Using our Greenspace Toolkit we are mapping natural greenspace in urban areas. Urban trees in Wrexham CBC, Bridgend CBC and the Tawe catchment deliver £3.9m in benefits. They:

- Remove 258 tonnes of pollution – saving the NHS £1.55 million each year (by reducing asthma and heart disease)
- Intercept 654 million litres of rainfall – saving £0.95 million each year in sewerage charges
- Capture 6,409 tonnes of carbon from the atmosphere – worth £1.42 million every year
- Store 222,000 tonnes of carbon – worth £50 million

Alongside the study of tree canopies in urban areas, Natural Resources Wales, Forest Research and Wrexham County Borough Council also piloted the first study in Wales to find the true value of the County Borough's urban trees.

The i-Tree Eco study found that in total, Wrexham's trees save the local economy more than £1.2 million every year by:

- Intercepting 27 million litres of rainfall from entering the drainage system, equivalent of saving £460,000 in sewerage charges.
- Absorbing 1,329 tonnes of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.
- Improving people's health by removing 60 tonnes of air pollution which in turn saves the health services £700,000.

We understand that local authorities have to assess a wide range of issues when considering the planting of trees in their urban areas. We believe the studies we have undertaken and supported can help them make these assessments. Many of the benefits are provided whether the urban trees are native or not and it is important to select the right tree species for the right place.

To optimise the opportunities from tree planting, more funding mechanism would be required but this can include planning tree planting into new development plans from the outset by understanding the added value provided through the creation of urban green space for example through the reduction in surface water flooding. The long term success will be as much down to future tree management and protection requiring an increase in wider public awareness of the value and benefits of trees and their management.

As part of a wider green infrastructure approach to the sustainable management of natural resources in urban areas, local tree strategies, developed by local authorities

with local stakeholders, can inform the targeting, planning, design, planting and protecting, managing and monitoring to urban trees.

We hope this provides sufficient information for the Petitions Committee to reach a conclusion.

Regards



Ruth Jenkins
[Pennaeth Is-Adran Strategaeth, Cyfoeth Naturiol A Chynllunio /](#)
Head of Natural Resources Strategy and Planning
[Cyfarwyddiaeth Tystiolaeth, Polisi a Thrwyddedu /](#)
Evidence, Policy and Permitting Directorate
[Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru /](#) Natural Resources Wales

Agenda Item 3.4

P-05-714 Include a Mynachdy and Talybont Station as Part of the Cardiff Metro Proposal

This petition was submitted by Dr Ashley Wood, having collected 137 paper signatures.

Text of the Petition

We, the undersigned, call on Cardiff Council and the Welsh Government to bring forward plans to include a Mynachdy and Talybont station as part of any Cardiff Metro proposal.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Cardiff North
- South Wales Central

**P-05-714 Include a Mynachdy & Talybont Station in Cardiff Metro Proposals
- Correspondence from the Petitioner to the clerking team, 24.11.16**

Dear Jessica,

Thank you for the update, and we are encouraged that work is progressing on the issue. We would like to stress the point, however, that at present the plans simply say that a station is planned in **Gabalfa** – whilst welcome, this is geographically imprecise as such a description could feasibly refer to a site in Gabalfa ward or Gabalfa Estate and the two are geographically separate. Our petition deliberately calls for a station serving Mynachdy & Talybont, and we strongly suggest that this is achieved by land being identified at the former coal yard between Mynachdy Estate and Talybont halls of residence. Such a station would serve an estate of some 600 houses, as well as the student halls (providing a link to the main university campus via Cathays station) serving over 2,000 residents. Moreover, the vacant land offers an ideal opportunity to make this happen. In contrast, there is no similar site in Gabalfa Estate, and residents in that area are already within relatively close distance of Llandaf station.

Regards,

Ashley

Dr. Ashley Wood

Agenda Item 3.5

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

Petition wording:

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

Petition raised by: Geraint Vaughn Jones

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 17 June 2014

Number of signatures : 2,754

P-04-564 Restoration of Inpatient Beds, Minor Injuries Cover and X-Ray Unit to the Ffestiniog Memorial Hospital – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 15.11.16

Dear Kayleigh,

We would be grateful if the following attachments could be brought to the Petitions Committee's attention before they next meet. They are clear evidence that neither the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board nor the First Minister, or his Health Minister for that matter, are prepared to even consider the serious healthcare problems that exist in the Welsh Uplands. We regard the First Minister's curt response to the details that we presented him with as being both disrespectful and insulting and we hope that the Petitions Committee will seek those answers from him or his Minister that have been repeatedly denied to us thus far.

Since he knows full well that BCUHB have time and time again refused to respond to our questions, then it is disingenuous of the First Minister to be saying yet again that the decision lies with the health board, especially in light of the fact that the Betsi has been kept under special measures for 7 – 8 months and is likely to remain so for at least as many months again.

We also attach our latest pamphlet with examples of the level of abuse that elderly residents in the Welsh Uplands are having to suffer.

We hope that such evidence will result in keeping our petition open until such time as your members become satisfied that the Government is not intentionally supporting a discredited health board.

Yours very sincerely,

Geraint V Jones (Chair of Ffestiniog Memorial Hospital Defence Committee)

Y Gwir Anrh/Rt Hon Carwyn Jones AC/AM
Prif Weinidog Cymru/First Minister of Wales



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyfl/Our ref:FM -/05647/16

Mr Geraint V Jones

gv717@btinternet.com

9 November 2016

Dear Geraint,

I am writing in response to your e-mail of 25 October on behalf of the Ffestiniog Hospital Defence Committee.

I was sorry to read about your continuing concerns regarding the provision of health services in the Welsh uplands. I am aware you have corresponded with the Welsh Government about this matter on a number of occasions and appreciate you do not agree with our position.

However, I can only reiterate what has been said in previous responses, which is that we do not intend to reopen this issue. It remains a matter for Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board and any outstanding concerns you have must be resolved locally.

I am sorry that I cannot be more helpful.

Yours sincerely



CARWYN JONES

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Canolfan Cyswilt 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 bedi.

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

P-04-564 Restoration of Inpatient Beds, Minor Injuries Cover and X-Ray Unit to the Ffestiniog Memorial Hospital – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 06.12.16

Dear Kayleigh,

Can I ask you to draw the Petitions Committee's attention to the letters sent by Dr Kate Chamberlain to Mr Tom Brooks and myself (see attachments) and for them to consider seeking her opinion or to request a copy of the conclusions of her investigation into the standard of healthcare in the Welsh Uplands.

Perhaps they might also consider referring such issues to the National Assembly's Health, Social Care and Sport Committee, to ascertain if the Welsh Uplands healthcare failings are unique or symptomatic of wider problems in delivering healthcare in rural Wales.

They might also wish to consider the reply by Dr Evan Moore, Executive Medical Director of BCUHB, to concerns raised recently on our behalf by the Chief Officer of the CHC in North Wales and, in particular, to the disingenuous content of the second paragraph of his letter. He should know perfectly well that the 80+ year old 'client' to whom he refers has been corresponding directly with the health board for many months (copies of her letters and the Board's unsatisfactory responses are readily available) with regard the way her 50+ year old disabled daughter's has been treated and for the Medical Director not to be aware of such correspondence, or to make an excuse of 'proper procedure', is surprising to say the least.

With sincere thanks,

Geraint.

Mr Tom Brooks
By email: draxmont_tjb@btinternet.com

Direct Line: 0300 062 8163
Fax: 0300 062 8387
E-mail: Kathryn.chamberlain@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Eich cyf / Your ref
Ein cyf / Our ref 18290

7 November 2016

Dear Mr Brooks

RE: CONCERNS IN RELATION TO BETSI CADWALADR UNIVERSITY HEALTH BOARD

Thank you for your email dated 2 November 2016 detailing your concerns about healthcare service provision in Ffestiniog and the Welsh uplands.

As outlined to you in my last letter to you dated 21 September 2016, HIW will be requesting updated improvement plans from all health boards relating to recommendations HIW issued during 2015-16, including to Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board. HIW will scrutinise the responses and note where there are still outstanding actions. This will in turn, feed into consideration of any follow-up visits we undertake.

Further to this, in light of your letter, I am planning to write to the health board seeking its response to these broader issues regarding the healthcare provision in the Blaenau Ffestiniog area.

I hope that you find my response helpful. I would like to express my gratitude to you for contacting us.

Yours sincerely



DR KATE CHAMBERLAIN
Chief Executive

SICRHAU
GWELLIANT
TRWY
AROLYGU ANNIBYNNOL
A GWRTHRYCHOL

DRIVING
IMPROVEMENT
THROUGH
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OBJECTIVE REVIEW

Arolygiaeth Gofal Iechyd Cymru | Healthcare
Inspectorate Wales
Llywodraeth Cymru | Welsh Government
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Mr Geraint V Jones
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By email: geraintvaughanjones@gmail.com

Direct Line: 0300 062 8163
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E-mail: Kathryn.chamberlain@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Eich cyf / Your ref
Ein cyf / Our ref 19150

23 November 2016

Dear Mr Jones

RE: CONCERNS IN RELATION TO BETSI CADWALADR UNIVERSITY HEALTH BOARD

Thank you for your email dated 14 November 2016 about healthcare service provision in Ffestiniog and the Welsh uplands.

I note that you have seen a copy of my letter to Tom Brooks, and as such you will be aware that HIW has written to the health board raising matters regarding the healthcare provision in the Blaenau Ffestiniog area. We have received the health board's response and are in the process of determining what further action, if any, we feel is necessary.

Regardless of the above, we are always eager to hear from people about their experience of healthcare in Wales. We do consider all information we receive and use it to inform any future work that we carry out: in particular where there is a pattern of concerns or complaints about a hospital or service.

I hope that you find my response helpful. I would like to express my gratitude to you for contacting us.

Yours sincerely



DR KATE CHAMBERLAIN
Chief Executive

SICRHAU
GWELLIANT
TRWY
AROLYGU ANNIBYNNOL
A GWRTHRYCHOL

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Agenda Item 3.6

P-04-621 Stop Closure of Consultant-led Maternity Unit at Ysbyty Glan Clwyd

Petition wording

We the undersigned request that Betsi Cadwallader University Health Board stop its planned closure of the Consultant-led Maternity Unit at Ysbyty Glan Clwyd. We believe its closure will be detrimental to the welfare of expectant mothers and their families, and will endanger lives. We do not believe it is right or fair for patients to have to travel upwards of 30 miles for treatment, particularly in case of emergency. We believe that the additional pressure placed on staff at Ysbyty Maelor and Ysbyty Gwynedd will be detrimental to maternity services at those hospitals. We ask that the BCUHB consider other options (such as closure of unit to elective procedures) and retain consultants at Ysbyty Glan Clwyd for the safety of expectant mothers.

Lead petitioner: Rebecca Roberts

First considered by the Committee:

Number of signatures: 562 online signatures.

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

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